Pretest Questions FAQs

1. What is the purpose of using pretest questions?

Using pretest items is a standard practice in the certification industry. It helps determine whether the new questions are valid, reliable and fair to be used for scoring on future exams.

Pretesting allows API to improve the overall quality of the exam questions and reduce the number of challenges received after exam administrations. Candidates are able to challenge every item on the test. When reviewing the challenges we receive on pretest questions, we are able to determine whether those questions are misleading, unfair, or not well written. We are then able to improve the questions before they appear on subsequent exams.

2. Does the use of pretest questions impact how scoring works?

Pretest questions do not impact how scoring will work. . Exams are scored in terms of number of correct responses. The passing score depends on a level of difficulty of a given exam as compared to the benchmark, and is based on 125 items. The use of pretest items does not impact the overall exam difficulty or question difficulty in any way.

The equating process essentially adjusts the passing point of each examination to compensate for differences in the difficulty level of the two exams. Thus, the passing point always represents the minimum knowledge required and the absolute knowledge standard is held constant. The test results of candidates only reflect whether they have this minimum amount of knowledge.

3. Are exams marked on a curve?

Exams are not marked on a curve. Marking an examination on a curve means comparing the scores of one candidate to all of the other candidates who took the examination and assigning grades, or passing status, according to a fixed percentage. That implication is that whether an individual passes the examination or not might depend on the ability level (or preparation) of all the other candidates who took the exam. This would not be fair for a credentialing examination.