Pre-test Questions for API 510, 570 & 653 Examinations

The API 510, 570 and 653 exams contain 125 scored questions, plus 25 questions that are not scored, otherwise known as "pre-test".

Pre-test questions are usually newly-written or recently revised questions. These questions need to be vetted by the candidates before being approved and used for scoring.

Using pre-test items on an exam does not impact scoring or test taker performance, since test takers are unable to identify which questions are scored and which are not. Exam grading is based on the number of correct responses. The minimum passing score is calculated based on the 125 scored items, and each scored item is worth 1 point.

API utilizes the statistical method of equating in order to maintain the same level of exam difficulty. The equating process takes into account that 25 of the test questions are "pre-test" questions and accordingly establishes passing grade for all exams. The pre-test questions appear on all tests for all candidates, so each test taker receives the same fair experience.

FAQs

What is the purpose of using pre-test questions?

Using pre-test 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.

Pre-testing allows us 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 pre-test 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.

Does the use of pre-test questions impact how scoring works?

Absolutely not. 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 pre-test 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.

Are exams marked on a curve?

No. 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.