Script for explaining scoring

Q. What's the passing score?

A. It's a scaled score of 550

Q. Yes, but what percent is that? How many do I have to get right?

A. In general terms, I can tell you that most of the tests require candidates to get between 70 and 80% of the questions right in order to pass the exam. The primary reason why I can't give you the exact number or percentage is because we don't simply establish a pass point and leave it at that. We go to great lengths to ensure that each test is comparable to the previous one, not just in terms of having the same number of questions in each area of the BOK, but also in terms of difficulty level.

We put together a new test for each administration. And, as I'm sure you know, some test questions are hard, some are easy, and some are in between. When we use <u>new</u> test questions, we don't always know just how hard or how easy they will be. So we always look at the results of an exam and compare it to the last test we gave. For example, let's say we gave a test in June and the <u>mean</u> score of the test was 69 out of 100; that is, the average score for the whole group of candidates for that exam was 69%. And let's say that the last time we gave that test, in December, the mean score of the candidates was 75%.

So, did we give an easier test in June? Or did we give a <u>comparable</u> test – an equally difficult test – to a group of candidates who were just better prepared?

We can't answer that question unless we know more about the candidate groups. To do that we "seed" the June test with questions from the December test. These common questions are called "equaters," and they help us compare the two groups of candidates. Let's say that 25 questions in the test are equaters: these exact same questions are in the same place in both exams. They cover all of the topics in the exam, and their difficulty level runs the gamut from easy to medium to hard. Not only is this set of questions a kind of "mini" exam, but because they're exactly the <u>same</u> questions, we have now effectively given the same "mini" exam to two different groups of people.

Now we can measure the candidate performance on this common set of questions (equaters). Let's say the results of this comparison show that the mean scores for the equaters was 19 out of 25 for the December exam and 19 of 25 for the June exam. This would prove that we had <u>equally able candidates</u> but tests of different difficulty.

We would then adjust the cut to make the two tests equivalent. In this example described above, we would lower the cut – the passing score – by a calculated number of points, as indicated by a regression analysis that is specially designed for use on multiple-choice tests.