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# STATE BOARD EXAMINATION

CANDIDATE HANDBOOK  
2019





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*Updated June 7, 2019*

# Introduction

## About The Candidate Handbook

This Handbook serves as the primary source of information for those applying to take the State Board Exam (SBE) for funeral service. Since every situation and every circumstance cannot be cited in a document like this, other International Conference of Funeral Service Examining Boards (The Conference) policies, procedures, and instructions may also apply.

This Handbook provides the information you will need regarding exam policies, eligibility requirements, application procedures and fees, exam scheduling, exam content and scoring, as well as your obligation to exam security. You are advised to periodically check our website ([theconferenceonline.org](http://theconferenceonline.org)) for any changes that may be made after this Handbook is published. Although The Conference gives candidates as much advance notice as possible when policies and procedures change, it is always your responsibility to make sure you are fully informed about the current requirements and policies.

The policies and procedures in this Handbook may be modified, amended, or canceled by The Conference at any time, with or without notice. This edition of the Handbook supersedes all prior policies or procedures as to the subjects addressed in it and all representations, oral or written. It is recommended that candidates utilize the web version of this Handbook on The Conference's website in order to access the hyperlinks and ensure they are reviewing the most up-to-date version.

The Conference recommends carefully reading and thoroughly understanding every topic in this Handbook, as candidates agree to the terms of this Handbook at time of application.

## About The Conference

The Conference is a not-for-profit voluntary association providing examination services, information, and regulatory support to funeral service licensing boards and educators, governmental bodies and other regulatory agencies.

### Vision Statement

To be the collective voice of the funeral service regulatory community and promote excellence in regulation through the sharing of best practices and the facilitation of open dialogues across all jurisdictions.

### Mission Statement

To be the premier source for examination services, information and regulatory support for the death care profession by continually monitoring the regulatory environment and providing services to meet the needs of our membership.

### Goals

1. Define and enhance the identity and the role of The Conference to increase stakeholder understanding.
2. Increase the effectiveness of The Conference through the development of the Board and staff.
3. Enhance and expand communication to member boards, associate members, and exam candidates for understanding the purpose of The Conference.
4. Expand and enhance The Conference member services to support the regulatory community.

### Contacting Us

If you have questions about a policy or procedure, please visit our website at [theconferenceonline.org](http://theconferenceonline.org), email us at [info@theconferenceonline.org](mailto:info@theconferenceonline.org), or call us at (479) 442-7076. The Conference office is open Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. CST. Any office closures will be posted on our website.



## Contacting You

The Conference's primary form of communication with you will be via email. It is your responsibility to keep The Conference apprised of your current contact information. If you do not have an email address, please contact The Conference office for updates.

## Privacy

For security reasons, before any information is released over the phone, the caller may be asked for identifying information. This security measure helps The Conference protect your information from being inappropriately released. Exam results are never released over the phone or through email.

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## About The State Board Exam

### Purpose

The purpose of the State Board Examination (SBE) is to provide official licensing agencies with an evaluation of an applicant for licensure in the diverse areas of competency required to practice as a licensed funeral director and/or embalmer. The Conference develops, administers, and provides score reporting services to these agencies as part of the licensure process.

## Exam Structure & Content

The SBE is administered in two sections: SBE Arts and SBE Sciences. Each exam contains 150 multiple choice questions.

The SBE is developed by The Conference's Examination Committee to reflect current practice in the funeral service profession. The committee consists of licensed funeral service professionals from diverse ethnic, gender, geographic, and practice backgrounds.

Each question on the SBE is tied to the Content Outline (exam blueprint), the American Board of Funeral Service Education (ABFSE) Curriculum Outline, and at least one reference from the approved textbook list.

As of January 1, 2018, the exam measures the following areas of competency:

<b><u>SBE Arts Section</u></b>	<b><u>Total # of Questions:</u></b>
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Funeral Arranging and Directing	51
Funeral Service Marketing/Merchandising	21
Funeral Service Counseling	22
Legal and Regulatory Compliance	36
Cemetery and Crematory Operations	20

<b><u>SBE Sciences Section</u></b>	<b><u>Total # of Questions:</u></b>
------------------------------------	-------------------------------------

Embalming	58
Restorative Art	34
Preparation for Disposition	31
Funeral Service Sciences	27

## Basis for SBE Content

The current examination blueprint was developed from a Job Task Analysis Survey conducted in 2017 utilizing a diverse group of practitioners from across the nation. This survey is conducted every five to seven years by The Conference under the guidance of testing and psychometric experts, and is used to determine the significance/importance of the various activities performed by current practitioners across the country. From the analysis of data, the new content outline is developed. This job analysis produces a practitioner-oriented outline, which is the basis for an exam possessing substantial content validity.

This content validity approach (domain sampling and expert review of the questions by practicing professionals and educators) resulting from the job analysis conducted by The Conference is recommended by the Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures and the Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing.

## Administration

The SBE is a computer-based exam administered by Pearson VUE, the global leader in electronic testing services, at authorized high-security test centers located throughout all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

The testing program will allow you to move freely through the exam, change answers, flag questions for later attention, skip questions, add notes, and review questions prior to ending your exam. Taking the exam requires little or no computer experience, and you will receive a brief tutorial to help you become comfortable with the program.

# Application Process

## 1. Application

Candidate reviews Handbook, ensures they meet all exam eligibility requirements, & submits exam application.

## 2. Processing

The Conference receives application and verification of eligibility. The application is processed within 3 business days.

## 3. Authorization to

The Conference/Pearson VUE sends Authorization to Test (ATT) via email. Candidate must test within one year of application date.

## 4. Schedule SBE

Candidate may schedule online or call toll-free (1-800-709-0180), selecting date, time, and location.

## 5. Confirmation

Appointment confirmation is sent to the candidate via email. If needed, candidate must reschedule or cancel appointments at least 24 hours in advance.

## 6. Take SBE

Candidate will receive pass/fail results at the test center and The Conference sends official results to the designated licensing board within 2-3 business days.



## Application & Eligibility Requirements

Before you submit an application to take the SBE, make sure you will meet the eligibility requirements with enough time to schedule and take your exam within the one-year timeframe. Otherwise, you will forfeit your exam fee, as all applications and payments expire one year from the application date.

### Eligibility Requirements

To take the SBE, you must complete all of the following requirements:

- Thoroughly review the SBE Candidate Handbook;
- Watch the [Exam Security Video](#);
- Submit a complete SBE Application;
- Pay the required exam fee;
- Acknowledge and agree to The Conference's policies at time of application;
- Meet state eligibility requirements;
  - Most SBE eligibilities are released from your state board. Maryland, Oklahoma, Tennessee, and Texas SBE eligibilities are released from an ABFSE program pre-approved by the state licensing board.
- State or pre-approved ABFSE program will provide verification of eligibility to The Conference through the official process. Once verified by The Conference, eligibility will be kept on file for future SBE administrations.

### How to Apply for the SBE

Candidates can apply for the SBE online (recommended) or by postal mail. To complete the online application, select the SBE tab on [theconferenceonline.org](http://theconferenceonline.org) and click [Apply for the SBE](#). Online applications must be submitted with a credit card payment. Printable applications can be accessed on [theconferenceonline.org](http://theconferenceonline.org) and mailed with a money order or cashier's check.

## **Application Approval**

Submission of an application does not guarantee your eligibility to take the SBE. Once your application is received and all eligibility requirements are completed, there is typically a three-business-day period to process your application and review your eligibility.

## **Authorization to Test**

After your eligibility is verified and your application is processed, The Conference will release an Authorization to Test (ATT) to its testing provider, Pearson VUE. You will receive an email confirmation of the ATT, which will include scheduling instructions and important reminders. If you do not receive an email, you may contact Pearson VUE or The Conference. Once you have an ATT in the Pearson VUE system, you will be able to schedule your exam, using your Social Security Number as your ICFSEB Candidate ID. Authorizations that are not utilized within one year from the original application date will automatically expire and the exam fee will be forfeited.

If you do not receive an ATT, it is likely that The Conference has not received your verification of eligibility. It is the candidate's responsibility to ensure the official proof of eligibility is submitted to The Conference.

## **Application/Authorization Expiration**

The Conference retains all applications and payments on file for one year from the original application date. After that time, the application, exam authorization, and exam fee will automatically expire. If an expiration occurs, another application, along with the appropriate exam fee, will be required for a new exam authorization. Refunds and/or extensions will not be given for unused exam applications/authorizations.

## Signature and Acknowledgment

Your signature on the SBE application or submission of your SBE application electronically means that you understand and agree to the conditions of the Candidate Handbook as part of your application. Specifically:

1. You acknowledge and agree to abide by all Conference policies and procedures.
2. You attest that you personally completed the application and the information contained in the application or in connection with your application is true and accurate. If it is determined by The Conference that any information provided to The Conference regarding your application is not true, falsified, or inaccurate, your application may be denied and/or your exam results may be invalidated. Member boards, including where you are seeking licensure, may also be notified.
3. You authorize The Conference to obtain additional information about your qualifications and application for testing.
4. You acknowledge and agree that sharing information about Conference exam questions or content to others by any means (oral, written, electronic or otherwise) in whole or in part, can result in a denial to release examination results, invalidations of examination results, notification to member board(s), suspension from access to the SBE and other Conference examinations and services, as well as legal action against you.

The Conference has provided a video explaining exam security which can be viewed at [theconferenceonline.org](http://theconferenceonline.org). Please remember that you will attest to viewing the video when you submit your application.

## **Exam Fees**

The current exam fee is \$250 for the SBE Arts and \$250 for the SBE Sciences. All fees must be paid in U.S. (\$) funds by credit/debit card (online only) or cashier's check/money order (postal mail only). Fees are due at the time of application.

Exam results will be released to the relevant state board, which is included in your application fee. If future release of results is needed, it will be subject to the standard fee of \$50.

Exam fees are subject to change, so please check The Conference's website for the most up-to-date information.

## **Exam Retake Fees**

Candidates who apply to retake the SBE are required to pay the same exam fee of \$250, along with submission of a new exam application. If directed by a state board or licensing agency to retake a section of the SBE after previously passing it, the same application process and exam fee applies. In addition, the candidate must be approved to retest in writing by the requiring licensing agency before an ATT will be issued.

## **Payments and Refunds**

Payments cannot be refunded and are non-transferable. Each payment is tied to a specific exam authorization which cannot be transferred.

## Scheduling Exam Date and Location

All scheduling is arranged through Pearson VUE:

**Online:**

[pearsonvue.com/theconference](https://pearsonvue.com/theconference)

(available 24/7)

**Call Center:**

1-800-709-0180

(available M - F, 7am - 7pm CST)

Your ICFSEB Candidate ID will be your Social Security Number.

The Conference examinations are administered on a daily basis, year-round at Pearson Professional Centers (PPC) test sites across the United States. Once you are approved to test, you will receive an email from The Conference and an Authorization to Test (ATT) email from Pearson VUE, which will include information on how to register for the exam date and test site of your choice.

Review the spelling of your name on the ATT email (first and last name only). If it does not match the two forms of identification you will take to the testing site, be sure to contact The Conference immediately. The Conference does not utilize middle names at the testing sites. If you have a middle name or initial on your ID and not on your ATT email, or vice versa, it will not prevent you from testing.

The ATT includes the beginning and end dates of the time period in which you are eligible to schedule and take your exam. Note that your exam fee will be forfeited for failure to appear for a scheduled appointment or upon expiration of the ATT. We recommend that you schedule your exam as far in advance as possible to have the best opportunity to reserve the date and location that you prefer. Same day appointments and walk-ins are not permitted.

To schedule your exam appointment, you may use the online scheduler at [pearsonvue.com/theconference](https://pearsonvue.com/theconference), or call the Customer Service Call Center at 1-800-709-0180. Monday through Friday, 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM US Central Time. Make sure to complete the entire scheduling process to confirm your exam appointment.

The SBE Arts and SBE Sciences must be scheduled separately, but may be scheduled on the same day depending on availability at the testing center.

## Registration Confirmation Notice

After scheduling your exam, you will receive a registration confirmation notice with specific information from Pearson VUE via email confirming the date, time, and location of the exam. The information will also include directions to the test site and reporting time; however, it is the candidate's responsibility to locate the test site. It may be helpful, although it is not required, to bring your registration confirmation notice with you to the test center. If you do not receive a confirmation email, contact Pearson VUE immediately to confirm the details of your scheduled exam.

## Changing Your Exam Registration

Within your authorization window you may change your test date and/or test site online or via the Customer Service Call Center. To avoid forfeiture of exam authorization and application fee, all changes must be made at least 24 hours prior to your appointment. Changes or cancellations cannot be made by leaving a phone message; you must speak with a Pearson VUE scheduling representative or reschedule online.

If you cancel/reschedule your appointment online, be sure to complete the entire process and confirm that it has successfully been updated. You will receive an email with your cancellation confirmation when you complete the cancellation/rescheduling process (by phone or online). If you do not receive a rescheduling/cancellation confirmation email, contact Pearson VUE immediately to confirm that your exam has been canceled/rescheduled to avoid forfeiture of your exam authorization and fee. It is the candidate's responsibility to keep record of all exam scheduling confirmations.

## Test Center Locations

The SBE is administered at approximately 275 Pearson Professional Centers (PPC) throughout all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Please check the website [pearsonvue.com/theconference](http://pearsonvue.com/theconference) for current test center information.

# Examination Day

## Confidentiality and Exam Security

The Conference requires you to maintain the confidentiality and security of the test questions on its examinations. By applying for and/or taking the SBE, you are agreeing to maintain the confidentiality and security of the test questions, answer choices and content of the exam. All those who take the SBE are required to acknowledge that they understand and agree to the following:

- The examination is the exclusive property of the International Conference of Funeral Service Examining Boards, Inc. (The Conference).
- The Conference's examinations and the questions contained therein are protected by United States copyright law.
- Copying, reproducing, memorizing or otherwise transmitting by any means (oral, written, electronic or otherwise) any exam content in whole or in part, is forbidden.
- The theft or attempted theft of an examination, in part or in whole, is punishable as a felony.

Your participation in any irregularity occurring before, during or after the examination, such as giving or obtaining unauthorized information or aid, as evidenced by observation or subsequent statistical analysis, or any other exam irregularity, including but not limited to the failure to report any information about any irregularity or any suspected irregularity, may be sufficient cause for The Conference, at its sole discretion, to terminate your participation, invalidate the results of your examination, seek monetary compensation, notify member boards, or take other appropriate action.

## Arrival and Check-In

Pearson VUE has provided a video about what to expect at the testing center which can be viewed at [theconferenceonline.org/examinations/exam-security](http://theconferenceonline.org/examinations/exam-security). We strongly advise all candidates to view the video prior to the examination.

- Arrive at the test center at least 30 minutes before your appointment to allow sufficient time to complete the check-in process.
- Give yourself sufficient time to find the test site, allowing for any unexpected delays, as candidates are solely responsible for locating and arriving to their appointment on time. Transportation issues and problems locating the test center will not be considered for excused absence requests. You will be considered absent if you arrive late.
- All candidates must present two valid identifications, as outlined under “Required Identification”.
- All candidates are required to sign the [Candidate Rules Agreement](#) during the check-in process before being admitted into the testing room.
- A digital photograph and biometric security procedures, such as palm vein recognition, will be employed as part of the check-in procedures. Failure to complete the check-in procedure (including refusal of being photographed or submitting palm vein scan) will result in being refused access to the exam and forfeiture of your exam authorization and fee.
- Candidates are directed to their computer station by the Testing Administrator and logged into the exam, beginning the appointment. The timed Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) will appear immediately.
- Candidates will be provided an erasable note board and marker, however you are prohibited from writing on the board until the NDA is accepted and the exam has begun. Candidates may also request noise canceling headphones for use during their exam.
- Calculators are not permitted for use during Conference exams.



# Non-Disclosure Agreement

Once the Pearson VUE Testing Administrator logs you into your exam, you will have three minutes to agree to the Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA). All SBE candidates are required to agree to the terms of the NDA in order to have access to the exam. Failure to agree to the NDA in the time allotted will result in forfeiture of the exam authorization and a loss of funds. This includes declining the NDA terms and/or letting the three-minutes expire.

For reference, the NDA is as follows:



## NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENT AND GENERAL TERMS OF USE

**\*\*If the three minute timeframe to accept these terms and conditions expires, your session will end and you will forfeit your exam fees.\*\***

This exam and all content is proprietary, confidential and protected by copyright, trade secret and other intellectual property rights owned by The International Conference of Funeral Service Examining Boards (The Conference). It is made available to you, the examinee, solely for the purpose of obtaining licensure in the funeral service profession. **You are expressly prohibited from disclosing, publishing, reproducing, or transmitting this exam, in whole or in part, in any form or by any means whatsoever, verbal, written, electronic, mechanical, or otherwise, for any purpose, without the prior express written permission of The Conference.**

By selecting the **“YES, I AGREE”** button, you signify that you have read, understand and agree to the terms of this agreement and all Conference policies and procedures.

By selecting the **“NO, I DO NOT AGREE”** button, your session will end and you will forfeit your exam fee. Please see the test administrator.

### YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE READ, UNDERSTOOD AND ACCEPT THESE TERMS.

Agree Y. YES, I AGREE.

Disagree N. NO, I DO NOT AGREE.

## Required Identification

You must bring TWO forms of identification (ID) to the test site: one ID from the primary list and one ID from the secondary list; or two IDs from the primary list. Accepted IDs are provided in the chart below:

Primary ID <i>Must contain your name, a permanently affixed photo, signature, and cannot be expired.</i>	Secondary ID <i>Must contain your name, signature and cannot be expired.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Driver's license</li> <li>• Passport</li> <li>• Military ID</li> <li>• Permanent Resident Visa/Green Card</li> <li>• Government issued ID</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any Primary ID</li> <li>• Credit or debit card</li> <li>• Social Security card</li> <li>• Professional License ID card</li> <li>• Work ID</li> <li>• Student ID</li> </ul>
<p><i>Please note: You will not be allowed to test and will forfeit your examination fee without proper identification. For name changes, please see the name change section of this candidate handbook.</i></p>	

IDs cannot be expired and the same version of your name must appear on your application, the Authorization to Test, and on the identifications you present at the testing center. The accuracy of your first and last names on your ID is critical and must match your name as submitted on your SBE application.

Your middle name or initial is not used at the Pearson VUE testing center and is not a required field on the SBE application. If you have a middle name or initial on your ID and not on your SBE application, or vice versa, it will not prevent you from testing.

You will not be admitted to the exam without proper identification. If the test center staff question the identification presented, you may be asked for additional proof of identity. You will be refused access to the exam if you have not proven your identity using the identifications as stated and your exam authorization and fee will be forfeited.

Admission to the test center and access to the exam does not imply that your identification is authentic and does not preclude subsequent invalidation of your SBE results due to misrepresentation, impersonation, forgery or fraud.

## Testing Administrators

Testing Administrators will assist you with the check-in process at the test center and will observe examinations in progress. If you need technical assistance, have an issue, or need to take a restroom break during your examination, raise your hand and wait for assistance from the Testing Administrator, keeping in mind that your examination time does not stop.

Testing Administrators can review test center protocol and procedures but are prohibited from answering questions about exam content or from providing support for any computer screen prompts. Testing Administrators monitor breaks and require you to provide biometric verification if you need to leave and reenter the exam room during the examination.

Pearson VUE facilities, including the lobby and testing room, are audio and video recorded for security purposes.

## Prohibited Items

Cell phone access is prohibited at any time while at the test center. Lockers are provided to store a small number of personal belongings. It is the candidate's responsibility to surrender all items voluntarily, prior to testing. The Conference and/or Pearson VUE is not responsible for any items that are lost or stolen at the test center. Any person possessing prohibited items or accessing lockers during the examination, whether inside or outside of the testing room, will have their exam terminated and an Incident Report will be filed with The Conference. The Conference and/or Pearson VUE reserves the right to confiscate any prohibited item.

Items that can NOT be taken into the testing room include (but are not limited to):

## Translators

Backpack or bag	Computers of any kind	Large jewelry of any kind	Radio transmitter or receiver
Beverage of any kind	Cup or container of any kind	Magazine	Recording device or player
Bluetooth devices of any kind	Digital scanning or imaging device of any kind	Notebook	Ruler or slide rule
Books or textbooks	Earplugs	Notes of any form	Study material of any kind
Briefcase of other luggage	E-cigarettes or gum	Outline	Sunglasses
Calculator	Electronic device of any kind	Pager or beeper	Umbrella
Calendar, day planner, or other organizer	Electronic, printed or live translators	Paper of any kind	USB storage device
Camera of any kind	Eyeglasses case	Paper or electronic dictionary	Wallet or clutch
Car or house keys	Food or snacks of any kind	Pens, Pencils, erasers	Watch of any kind
Cellphone or smart phone	Good luck charms	Pencil sharpener	Weapon of any kind, including pocket knife
Cigarettes or tobacco products	Hat, cap, visor or head covering	Plastic bag	
Coat, jacket, gloves	Headphones or earphones	Purse or handbag	

Translators or interpreters are not permitted at any test center, including print, electronic or in person. Test center proctors and staff are prohibited from acting as translators at any point in the check-in and testing experience.

Candidates are prohibited from bringing a translator to translate for them during any part of the examination appointment, including check-in.

## Clothing

Candidates are advised to wear clothing that will be comfortable for various temperature conditions at the test center. Note that eye glasses, layered clothing and accessories will be inspected prior to granting access to the testing room and examination.

## Exam Time

You will have three minutes to agree to a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA), seven minutes for a tutorial, and 150 minutes to complete the examination.

Be aware that you have limited time to read and respond to the introductory screens. While there is adequate time to read and respond, there is not enough time to leave the testing room or do anything other than proceed to the exam. Failure to agree to the NDA will result in forfeiture of the exam authorization resulting in a loss of funds.

EXAMINATION	NUMBER OF ITEMS	TIME ALLOWED
Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA)	N/A	3 minutes
Exam Tutorial	N/A	7 minutes
State Board Exam Arts or State Board Exam Sciences	150 on each exam	150 minutes for each exam

## Exam Breaks

You are prohibited from leaving the testing room, except to use the restroom facilities that are closest to the testing room. If you need to take a restroom break during your examination, raise your hand and wait for assistance from the Testing Administrator. The clock does not stop if you take a break during the examination, so plan your exam time carefully. Security protocols will be in effect as you exit and reenter the testing room; there is no time adjustment for security checks.

Unless authorized by The Conference in advance, based upon identifiable needs (such as access to essential medications), you are prohibited from accessing any personal items during your examination, including during breaks. If you have received such authorization, you must notify the Testing Administrator prior to the start of the exam administration of your approval to access approved personal items.

Candidates are not permitted to leave the building or test center during the examination.

If any of these policies are violated, the administration of your exam will be terminated and an Incident Report will be filed with The Conference. The Conference has the authority to invalidate your test score, prohibit you from reexamination, notify The Conference membership, including the state(s) in which licensure is sought, as well as any other remedy determined by The Conference necessary to protect the integrity of the examination and licensure processes.

## **Exam Administration Concerns**

Should you experience any concerns, challenges or difficulties during the administration of the examination (temperature, noise, technology issues, etc.), it is your responsibility to notify a Testing Administrator immediately and before you leave the test center.

If the test center experiences a power outage or a situation in which the testing room needs to be evacuated, such as in a fire drill, candidates should resume testing if the event lasts fewer than 30 minutes. If the event is longer than 30 minutes, Pearson VUE will give the candidate an opportunity to either reschedule the exam or resume testing after the event has passed. Candidates who resume testing waive their right to reschedule the exam.

Candidates should also notify The Conference in writing within two business days after the exam administration about concerns that were reported at the test center so that appropriate action can be taken. The Conference, in consultation with the Testing Administrator, will investigate and verify the incident.

Please submit a detailed account of the issue through The Conference's website: [theconferenceonline.org/comments](http://theconferenceonline.org/comments).

# Exam Appointment Issues

## Late Arrival

You must arrive to your examination appointment by the report time on your registration confirmation notice or you will not be admitted to the test center. You will be considered absent if you arrive late.

## Absences on the Day of the Exam

The Conference is liable for all associated test delivery costs for a candidate, whether the candidate tests or not. If you do not appear for the exam for which you have registered, your Authorization to Test (ATT) will no longer be valid and you will forfeit your application and exam fee. If you choose to reapply to take the SBE, you will be subject to application and fee requirements at that time.

## Excused Absences

In rare circumstances, The Conference may excuse an absence. This can be due to a severe illness of the candidate, a death in the immediate family, or other disabling emergency situations.

Requests for an excused absence must be submitted in writing, accompanied by supporting documentation, and sent to The Conference within 30 days from the missed exam. Where applicable, excused absence requests must contain the original signature of the qualified health care practitioner and be on official letterhead, with a clear and unavoidable reason for missing the exam. Stamped signatures will not be accepted. If you think your absence may qualify as an excused absence, contact The Conference at 479-442-7076 immediately following the missed examination appointment.

If your absence is excused by The Conference, you may reschedule your examination once a new Authorization to Test has been issued, which will still expire one year from your original application and payment date. If your absence is not excused by The Conference, you will be subject to application and fee requirements at that time.

## Weather

In the event of inclement weather or unforeseen emergencies, Pearson VUE will determine whether circumstances warrant the closure of a particular test center.

The examination will not be rescheduled if the supervisor is able to open the test location. You may contact the Pearson VUE Customer Service Call Center at 1-800-709-0181 to determine if your test center is closed.

If an examination is canceled by Pearson VUE, candidates scheduled for that center will be contacted by Pearson VUE to reschedule another exam date. You will not incur any additional exam fees if your test is canceled by Pearson VUE or The Conference for any reason.

The Conference is not responsible for any personal expenses (e.g., travel, food, and lodging) incurred for an exam administration that is canceled for any reason, including inclement weather or unforeseen emergencies.



# Exam Results

## Completing Your Exam

At the completion of the State Board Exam, your pass/fail results will appear on the computer screen. If you pass the exam, “Pass” will be displayed. If you are unsuccessful, “Fail” will appear on the screen.

You will also receive an unofficial printout of exam results for your personal records which will include additional information regarding next steps and a reminder about your obligation to exam security. Altering these printouts in any way is violation of Conference policy. The official exam results will be sent directly from The Conference to the state licensing board(s) indicated on your exam application.

Candidates do not receive a numerical score for the SBE under any circumstance. However, if you fail an exam, you will receive a Performance Feedback Chart (PFC) to guide the preparation for your next exam attempt.

## Scoring

The SBE is a pass/fail examination and is not designed to distinguish between varying levels of competence; only to distinguish whether a candidate has at least the minimum level of competence required to practice as an entry-level funeral director and/or embalmer. The passing standard is a scaled score of 75; therefore, any score of 75 or higher is a passing score, and any score below 75 is a failing score.

In order to pass the SBE, you must pass both the Arts and Sciences sections. While The Conference does not have a time limit to pass both sections, we recommend checking with the state board where you are seeking licensure, as requirements may vary.

Once you pass both the Arts and Sciences sections, you will receive a wall certificate mailed to the address provided on your application within two to three weeks. Wall certificates are for decorative use only, not for licensure purposes.

# Scaled Scores

## Overview

Scaled scores are part of how The Conference makes sure the exam is a fair and valid measure of your professional knowledge. The SBE questions are pulled from The Conference's question bank in accordance with accepted psychometric procedures. Since some questions are more difficult than others, one form of the exam might be slightly easier or harder than another. Scaled scores take into account the varying degree of difficulty of each question, so that regardless of which version of the test you take, the total score represents an equivalent level of knowledge. Using scaled scores in testing ensures that no candidate receives an unfair advantage by taking an easier form of the exam or is unfairly evaluated by taking a more difficult form. It is a complex, but much fairer, method of calculating scores.

## Analogy

An analogous situation is with reporting temperature, in that 0° C and 32° F both represent freezing, but are presented on numerically different temperature scales. Both of these temperatures represent the same level of coldness, but are on different measurement systems. The same concept can be applied to scaled scores.

## Why Are Numerical Scores Not Provided?

The key factor is that you meet the threshold for minimum knowledge required to function as an entry-level practitioner, not how much you exceed it. As a minimum competency exam, the purpose of the SBE is to provide state licensing boards with a content-valid evaluation of candidates for licensure in the field of funeral service. While we understand that you may be curious about the numerical score that you achieved, there is no significance to that information outside the licensing board setting.

The Conference uses scaled scoring, which is a completely different scoring system from percentages most candidates are accustomed to in a classroom setting. Because of the nature of scaled scoring, a candidate would not be able to calculate the number of questions they answered incorrectly. Instead, The Conference provides a Performance Feedback Chart which illustrates content mastery, or poor performance areas, to guide an unsuccessful candidate's preparation for their next exam attempt.

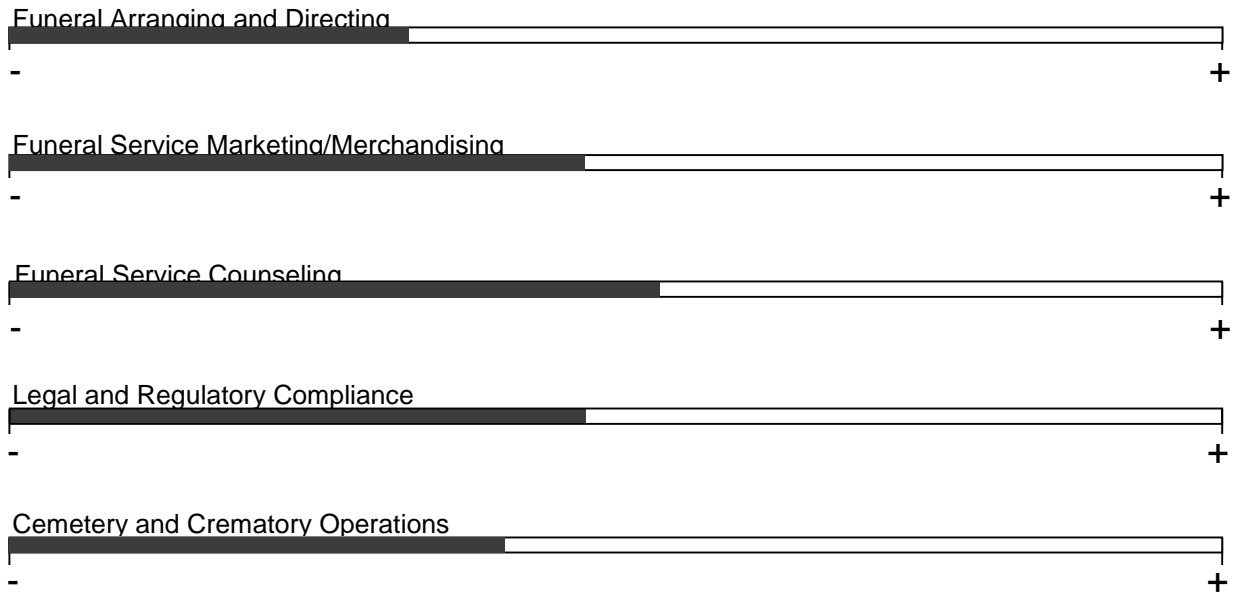
## Understanding the Performance Feedback Chart

The Performance Feedback Chart (PFC) gives a visual representation of your exam performance. The purpose of the PFC is to provide candidates an indication of where they should concentrate their studies for the next exam attempt, so only candidates that fail the exam will receive the PFC.

The black bar in the graph represents the percent of questions answered correctly within each subsection. It is important to keep in mind that each subsection contains a different set number of questions. For reference, those totals are provided on the printout you receive at the testing center. Because this graph shows the percent of questions correct, it's important to remember the graph does not represent your numerical scaled score.

To further clarify, the farther the black bar is to the right, the more questions you answered correctly. The farther the bar is to the left, the fewer questions you answered correctly. For example, if the bar is halfway across the graph, you mastered approximately 50% of the content in that particular area. It is recommended that you concentrate on the areas where you performed the weakest, while noting the number of questions per section.

## Sample Performance Feedback Chart:



For reference, the total number of questions in each subsection are listed below:

Exam Section	Total # of Questions:
Funeral Arranging and Directing	51
Funeral Service Marketing/Merchandising	21
Funeral Service Counseling	22
Legal and Regulatory Compliance	36
Cemetery and Crematory Operations	20



## Retaking an Exam

A new application and payment must be submitted each time you retake an exam. Eligible candidates may sit for the SBE up to three times in a 12-month time period beginning the day of your first exam attempt. In all cases, you must wait 30 days before retaking a failed section of the SBE. If you pass a section of the SBE, you may not take that section again unless The Conference receives written notification that the retake is required for licensure purposes from a Conference member licensing board.

## Achieving Licensure

The State Board Examination is used by state licensing boards and agencies as part of their licensing requirements. The Conference provides the SBE results, which is only one component of the licensure process, directly to the board(s) indicated on your exam application. We recommend following up with the state in which you are seeking licensure for any additional requirements.

## Reporting SBE Results to Licensing Boards

All passing and failing SBE results, including any previous attempts, will be released to the state licensing board for which you are testing. The first exam results request to a licensing board is fulfilled at no additional cost to the candidate. If exam results need to be re-released to a licensing board more than six months after the original release date, candidates must submit an order form and payment for the service. Candidates can place an order to release their exam results to additional licensing boards at any time. Candidates are solely responsible for submitting exam results requests in a timely manner. Please check with the state where you are applying for licensure-related deadlines.

When The Conference reports your official SBE results to the designated licensing board, it may be reported along with the identification and educational information that you provided to The Conference on your application. This ensures your exam result is matched correctly to the licensing application you submit to the licensing board.

In the event of a discrepancy or inaccuracy that questions your eligibility to sit for the SBE, The Conference may request documentation to verify or otherwise substantiate the information provided on your SBE application. If any of the information on your SBE application is determined to be inaccurate, misrepresented or falsified, The Conference reserves the right to invalidate your SBE results, suspend future access to the SBE or other Conference programs and services, or impose other conditions on access to the SBE. The Conference also reserves the right to impose fees to offset any administrative or legal costs associated with the investigation and/or adjudication of the case.

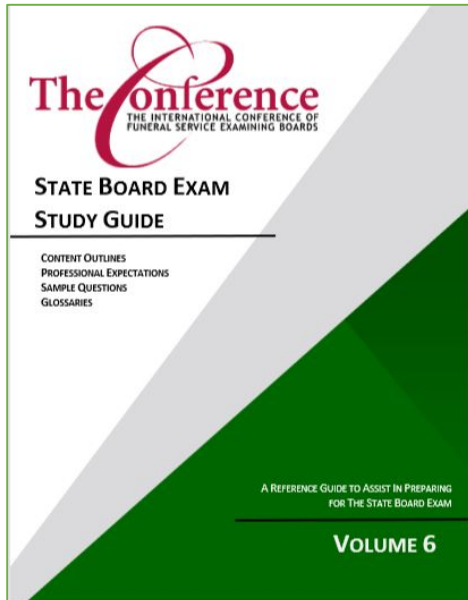
# SBE Study Material

The Conference offers two official study options for the State Board Exam. These study tools are the only official SBE preparation resources, published by the organization that owns and governs the exam.

## SBE Study Guide

[The official study guide for the SBE](#) is available in a soft cover, spiral-bound book. The SBE Study Guide is the only official, printed SBE preparation resource published by and affiliated with The Conference.

Each section includes professional expectations, SBE content outline, sample questions, instructive questions, and answer key. In addition to test taking principles, a section on the structure of item, and a list of helpful recourses, glossaries are also provided.



### SBE Study Guide

**Order online:** [theconferenceonline.org](http://theconferenceonline.org)

**Cost:** \$43 plus shipping & handling

## Practice SBE - Arts

The Conference also produces an online [Practice State Board Exam \(PSBE\)](#), which provides a realistic exam experience to assist in your SBE preparation. There are two versions of the PSBE-Arts. As long as you are signed into the same Practice Exam Pearson VUE account, the versions alternate each time you take the exam, so you may find it beneficial to take each section more than once.

The PSBE is timed at one hour and 15 minutes, includes 75 multiple-choice questions, and is representative of the exam blueprint. Candidates taking the PSBE will also receive general feedback for content areas in which questions were answered incorrectly and percentage scores for each subsection to help identify areas where you may need additional preparation.

While payment is required each time you take the PSBE, prior approval to access the exam is not required. Exam authorization and payment expires seven days from purchase, so it is recommended that you do not purchase the PSBE until you are ready to take it.

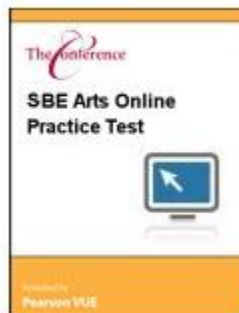
### Practice SBE— Arts

**Order online:**

[pearsonvue.com/theconference](http://pearsonvue.com/theconference)

**Cost:** \$60 for each section/attempt

Two versions of the PSBE-Arts are available.





## Testing Accommodations

The Conference complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and will accept requests, from qualified candidates with a diagnosed disability, for accommodations to take the State Board Examination (SBE) if the request is reasonable, properly documented and does not fundamentally alter the examination or jeopardize exam security.

Exam candidates who wish to request testing accommodations must notify The Conference at the time of submitting their SBE application by choosing the accommodations selection on the application and indicating the accommodation(s) they are requesting. In conjunction with the SBE application, the applicant must submit an [ADA Accommodations Request Form](#) and documentation of any applicable diagnosis. Please note the first page is submitted by the exam candidate and the second page must be submitted directly from the health practitioner on identifying letterhead or equivalent.

Accommodation requests will be reviewed once the application, payment, exam eligibility, and completed Accommodations Request Form have been received. There are no additional fees assessed to the exam candidate for testing accommodations. Candidates may request the same or different accommodations if retaking the examination.

Candidates who have been granted testing accommodations will receive an email listing the approved accommodations, along with instructions for scheduling. If a requested accommodation cannot be approved, an email will be sent notifying the candidate of the reason.

All exams with accommodations must be scheduled by calling Pearson VUE's Accommodations Coordinator at 1-800-466-0450, option 3. Please confirm your accommodations at time of scheduling. Accommodations cannot be requested on the day of the exam.

If you require accommodations in the application process itself or for scheduling, please contact The Conference for assistance.

## **Additional Exam Information**

### **Fraud and Exam Irregularities**

In the event of a fraudulent application, submission of fraudulent documents, inaccuracies, misrepresentations or discrepancies, the introduction of fraud at any point in the application or examination process, sharing exam content after your exam administration, advance access to exam content prior to your exam administration (exam irregularities), or violation of any Conference and test site rules, policies or procedures, The Conference reserves the right to impose fees to offset any administrative or legal costs associated with the investigation and/or adjudication of the case.

### **SBE Result Invalidations**


Violation of any Conference examination policy or Pearson VUE testing center rule may be grounds for a candidate's SBE result being invalidated by The Conference. In the event of an examination policy violation or other application or exam irregularity, The Conference will request that you submit a written response to the policy violation and any documentation supporting your position. The Conference will then review all information received and available to determine the necessary action(s), which includes, but is not limited to, the invalidation of your SBE result and/or suspension of future access to the SBE or other Conference programs and services. The Conference reserves the right to notify all state licensing boards and agencies of all SBE result invalidations.

### **Exam Language**

The Conference offers the SBE in the English language only.

### **Name Changes**

If your name changes during your experience with The Conference, please submit the "Request For Name Change" form found at [theconferenceonline.org/name](http://theconferenceonline.org/name) along with the appropriate supporting documentation, e.g. marriage certificate, divorce decree or court documents showing a legal name change. Please allow time for review and



processing, noting this process will not extend any timeframes or application expirations.

## Payments

Applications and orders must be paid for at time of submission. If paying online, The Conference accepts Visa, MasterCard, and Discover credit or debit cards, which are processed through PayPal.

If paying by mail, The Conference accepts money orders and cashier's checks made payable to The Conference and submitted to the address on the order form. Any personal or business checks received will be returned.

- The Conference does not accept applications, orders, or payments over the phone.
- The Conference does not issue refunds.

## Exam Reviews

The Conference does not allow reviews of any examination. If you have concerns about examination content, feedback is welcomed during the exam through the “comment” feature available for each exam question. Examination development is ongoing and we use these comments as one of the many phases of the review process.

## Examination Development

The SBE is developed in stages. In the first stage, a job analysis is outlined by a panel of expert practitioners from varying demographics in the field of funeral service. These outlines describe the functions of a practitioner and the knowledge needed to perform those functions. The job analysis is then validated by surveying practitioners throughout the United States. The SBE content outline is created from this survey. The second, ongoing stage of development involves other representative groups of practitioners across the country who work with The Conference to write questions based on the SBE content outline. These new questions are reviewed by a committee of subject matter experts and are edited to ensure they are clearly written and there is only one correct answer to each question. Examination review is ongoing to ensure the examination remains relevant to current practice standards.



## **Commitment to a Fair, Valid, and Reliable Examination**

The Conference contracts with an independent vendor for the ongoing development and psychometric analyses of the SBE. Pearson VUE, the global leader in electronic testing for regulatory and other credentialing boards, is the professional testing agency contracted by The Conference to assist in the administration, scoring, and reporting of the SBE.

## Summary of Policies & Procedures

With a high-stakes exam such as the SBE, come many policies and procedures. To help fully understand the rules of applying and taking the exam, we've condensed the majority of those policies below for quick reference.

### Top Five Exam Policies to Remember

The following policies are the most commonly asked about by exam candidates:

1. Applications and payments expire after one year.
2. Payments are non-transferable and cannot be refunded.
3. Identifications presented at the test center must match the name on application (first and last name only, as middle names are not submitted to Pearson VUE) and cannot be expired.
4. Candidates are responsible for confirming their appointment date, time, and location. Late arrivals or missed exams will be treated as “no shows” and payments will be forfeited.
5. Exam content cannot be discussed or shared with any one, in any format (written, verbal, electronic, etc.), in whole or in part.

### At a Glance – Conference Exam Policies

#### Application and Payment

- Your first and last name on your exam application must match the two forms of identification presented at the test center (primary ID and secondary ID, as outlined in the handbook). Middle names are not submitted to Pearson VUE for scheduling.
- It is vital that your Social Security Number is entered correctly on your application. If it is entered incorrectly, you may experience a delay in processing or scheduling.
- All examination fees are non-refundable.
- Applications and payments automatically expire one year from the payment date. If you do not take the exam in that timeframe, your fees will be forfeited.

- Exam fees are non-transferrable.
- If you require accommodations, please state that at time of application and [follow the steps to request accommodations](#), which includes submitting an [Accommodations Request Form](#). All approved accommodations must be scheduled over the phone with the Pearson VUE Accommodations Coordinator.
- If you apply to take a Conference exam using a different name than you previously sat for an exam under, you must submit [name change documentation](#), which must show a legal change from your previous name to the current name.
- In any instance where a chargeback is filed for an online payment, your file will be placed on hold with The Conference until full payment is verified, after which only cashier's checks or money orders may be accepted as payment options.

## Scheduling:

- It is the candidate's responsibility to schedule their appointment through Pearson VUE, confirming the time, date, and location.
- If you cannot make your scheduled appointment, you must reschedule or cancel your exam at least 24 hours in advance by contacting Pearson VUE directly at [pearsonvue.com/theconference](http://pearsonvue.com/theconference) or by phone at 1-800-709-0180. Otherwise, you will be counted as a "no show" and must submit a new application and payment in order to reschedule your exam.
- You will receive a confirmation email for every exam that you schedule/reschedule. It is your responsibility to keep the email you receive from Pearson VUE confirming the canceled/changed appointment. If a change is made via phone, keep a record of the date, time, and the name of the representative you spoke with. If you do not receive an email, it is your responsibility to contact Pearson VUE to confirm your appointment details.
- In rare instances, absences may be excused due to illness (either you or an immediate family member), death in the immediate family, or in certain emergency situations. A request for an excused absence must be submitted in writing, accompanied by supporting documentation, and submitted to The Conference for review within 30 days of the missed appointment. Absences cannot be excused for traffic/transportation issues, late arrivals, or weather (unless the test center is closed). Immediate family members are defined as the candidate's spouse, domestic

partner, parents, siblings, children, stepparents, stepchildren, grandparents, grandchildren, father-in-law, mother-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, son-in-law, or daughter-in-law.

- The Conference cannot be held responsible for any travel expenses or lost wages if an exam is missed or canceled for any reason.
- In addition to the application and payment, we will need your eligibility to schedule an exam:
  - NBE – Verification of graduation from an ABFSE program is required to sit for the NBE. This can be submitted by the program director or by sending an official, sealed transcript to The Conference directly from your school.
  - SBE – Depending on which state you are testing for, your eligibility comes directly from your school or the licensing board.
  - LRR – Eligibility varies by state and is submitted directly by the licensing board.
  - An international licensee can follow the [International Endorsement procedure](#) to apply for the National Board Exam. If approved, this path would allow the international candidate to sit for the NBE with the endorsement of a recognized member regulatory jurisdiction.

## Test Center:

- The Conference uses Computer-Based Testing (CBT) for all exams. Exams are administered in English at Pearson Professional Centers (PPCs) within North America.
- It is the candidate's responsibility to locate the test center and arrive 30 minutes early for the check-in process. Late arrivals are treated as "no shows" and the application/exam fee will be forfeited.
- You must present two forms of identification at the test center (primary ID and secondary ID, as outlined in the candidate handbook). Both IDs must contain your name, signature, and cannot be expired. The primary ID must also include a photo.
- Your first and last names on your IDs must match what was submitted on your application in order to be granted access to test (middle names are not used).

- During the check-in process, each candidate is required to read and sign the [Candidate Rules Agreement](#).
- You will be required to have your photo taken and your [palm vein scanned](#) during the check-in process. If you take a break during your exam, your palm vein will be scanned again when exiting and entering the testing room.
- Calculators are not permitted for use during Conference exams.
- If you have any questions during your exam, raise your hand and wait for a proctor to assist you.

## Exam Security

- Once seated at the testing center, candidates must agree to the [Non-Disclosure Agreement](#) within the three minute timeframe. Failure to agree to the Non-Disclosure Agreement within this timeframe will result in forfeiture of exam; resulting in a loss of funds. This includes declining the NDA or letting the time expire.
- You are not permitted to begin writing on the provided dry-erase board until you agree to the NDA and your exam begins.
- You are prohibited from leaving the testing room, except to use the closest restroom. The exam timer does not stop for any breaks that you take.
- Accessing personal items, including those in your locker or vehicle, is prohibited. If you are discovered to have left the testing room without authorization for any other reason or to have accessed unapproved items, the administration of your exam will be terminated, an Incident Report will be filed, and your exam fees will be forfeited.
- If any policy is violated, The Conference has the authority to invalidate your test scores, prohibit you from reexamination, notify The Conference membership, including the state in which licensure is sought, as well as any other remedy determined by The Conference necessary to protect the integrity of the examination and licensure processes.
- As stated in the NDA, candidates are prohibited from disclosing, publishing, reproducing, or transmitting any part of an exam, in any form or by any means, verbal or written, electronic or mechanical, for any purpose, without the prior express written permission of The Conference. Discussing exam content with others, including study groups, email, internet forums, etc., violates Conference policy.



- Any violations of the policies outlined in the candidate handbook, Candidate Rules Agreement, Exam Security Video, or NDA, as well as other irregularities, may be reported to Pearson VUE, The Conference, and Conference membership, including the state in which licensure is sought,. Candidates who violate security will have their examination scores invalidated, will be reported to their licensing board, and will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. The Conference Board of Directors reserves the right to require candidates found to have violated policies and/or procedures regarding access and administration of the exam program to seek and receive permission from the relevant member board before further access to such exam program. Candidates found guilty of a violation could face a range of administrative, civil, and criminal charges.

## Retake Policies

- NBE Arts & Sciences – Eligible candidates may sit for each section of the NBE up to three times in a 12-month time period. In all cases, you must wait 90 days before taking a failed section of the NBE. If you pass a section of the NBE, you may not take that section again unless The Conference receives written notification that the retake is required for licensure purposes from a Conference member board. An application and payment must be submitted each time you retake an exam.
- SBE Arts & Sciences – Eligible candidates may sit for each section of the SBE up to three times in a 12-month time period. In all cases, you must wait 30 days before taking a failed section of the SBE. If you pass a section of the SBE, you may not take that section again unless The Conference receives written notification that the retake is required for licensure purposes from a regulatory board. An application and payment must be submitted each time you retake an exam.
- LRR – Eligible candidates must wait 30 days before taking an LRR exam. If you pass a particular state's LRR, you may not take that exam again unless The Conference receives written notification from the regulatory board that it is required for licensure. An application and payment must be submitted each time you retake an exam.

## Exam Results

- At the completion of your exam, you will receive an unofficial score report. The Conference will transmit your official score report to your state board.

- The NBE and SBE use scaled scoring. Candidates will receive a “Pass” or “Fail” notification at the test center immediately following the completion of their exam. Numerical scores are released to regulatory boards for licensing purposes only. For unsuccessful exam attempts, candidates will also receive a Performance Feedback Chart which shows a visual representation of candidate exam performance within each subsection.
- The LRR exams are scored using a percentage. Candidates will receive a “Pass” or “Fail”, along with the percentage score.
- Exam results, including any previous attempts, will be released to the licensing board indicated on your application. If exam results need to be re-released to a licensing board more than six months after the original release date, candidates must submit an order form and payment for the service. Candidates can also place an order to release their scores to additional licensing boards at any time.
- The NBE, SBE, and most LRR Exams cannot be reviewed and no score adjustments can be made.

## Study Material

- Returns and/or refunds are not available.
- Practice Exams must be utilized during the stated delivery period, otherwise the fees will be forfeited. Any technical issues should be reported within the delivery period.
- Study material is copyrighted content and cannot be shared or reproduced.





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