

SOME POSSIBLE STRATEGIES FOR SETTING CUT SCORES USING ONLY THE ESSAY PORTION OF AN EXAM

- 1) Candidates should pass only if they gave minimally competent answers on all six essays.
- 2) Candidates should pass if they earn enough points somewhere in the group of essays to match the total points that would be achieved by minimally competent answers to all six essays.
- 3) This averaging passing rate idea is ok for setting a target score, but questions that appear problematic after reviewing the answers should be removed from the calculation. Performance on questions with low passing scores should be checked against performance elsewhere to see if the question was inappropriate.
- 4) Again, I can work with the average passing rate idea, but since the test is only for minimum competence, I would exclude from the computation the one or two questions that appear to have been the most difficult for candidates.
- 5) I want to look at the full package for a sufficient group of sample candidates and pick a total score for the essay section taken as a whole that I feel demonstrates minimum competence
- 6) I reject your premise: I want to evaluate candidate performance on the entire range of the examination.