



**Policies and Procedures**  
**Examination Development Process**  
**Extracted from Operating Procedures Document No.: OP-001**  
**Effective Date: 04/01/2019**

**Policy for Examination Development, Maintenance and Administration**

The BPS has the responsibility to ensure that all BPS specialty certification programs are built and maintained in compliance with psychometric best practice as promulgated by international assessment/certification Standards, including the ISO Standard 17024-2012, and the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA) Standards for the Accreditation of Certification Programs. The BPS will ensure compliance with these Standards and guidance documents, providing researched-based evidence that the BPS specialty certification programs are valid, reliable, job-related, fair and legally-defensible.

BPS' staff and consultants are required to act in the best interests of BPS and its candidates and certificants. Appropriate security and confidentiality policies and procedures are required to be maintained with regard to BPS proprietary information at all times. BPS will maintain appropriate documentation of confidentiality from BPS specialty council members and other subject matter expert volunteers who participate in BPS certification activities.

Unless specifically stated, all of the policies and processes described herein apply to every specialty certification offered by BPS. All BPS specialty certification examinations are currently administered in English only, in a computer-based format, with 175, 4-choice multiple choice items per examination. Per the BPS Candidate's Guide.

Exams are administered annually, on dates determined by the BPS Board of Directors. The 175 items are randomly distributed between two testing sessions on the day of testing, with the first 100 items administered in the first session and the second 75 items administered in the second session. Candidates for recertification by examination take only the first 100 items, and both parts 1 and 2 of the full exam are in alignment with the weightings listed in the content outline. The BPS Board of Directors, in consultation with the testing expert, can make adjustments to the examination length and format with advanced notification provided to candidates.

The BPS in fulfilling its responsibilities to ensure that its specialty certification programs are in compliance with best practice and testing industry standards shall perform the following tasks:

**A. Job Task Analysis/Role Delineation Study**

**1. General Policy**

- a.** Each BPS specialty examination is supported by a psychometrically sound, legally defensible Job Task Analysis (**JTA**) or Role Delineation Study (**RDS**), which is conducted by a qualified testing company, contracted consultant or BPS staff member, in conjunction with the relevant

BPS Specialty Council and other subject matter experts convened by BPS. BPS has outlined the desired expertise, practice setting, and experience in the recruitment of BPS Specialty Council members and subject matter expert volunteers.

**b.** BPS Specialty Councils strive to maintain a mix of practice expertise and practice setting, as well as other demographic diversity attributes representative of the relevant characteristics of the population to be certified as the program defines them. As such the needs of each Specialty Council are different and will vary accordingly and BPS shall maintain a matrix of each panel composition to monitor representativeness. An example of this composition matrix is included in the BPS Appendices Manual – BPS Specialty Council Composition and Recruitment Matrix - **Appendix 4.**

**c.** The RDS is conducted initially when a new specialty is being considered for recognition by BPS, and its findings must be referenced in the Petition to recognize a specialty submitted to BPS.

**d.** The RDS is repeated periodically as needed to ensure that the specialty remains current. Frequency of resurveys depends on the rate of change in practice and other factors, but generally they occur five years apart.

**e.** The results of these surveys directly determine the “Content Outline” or “Examination Specifications” of the related BPS specialty examination.

**f.** The testing expert issues a comprehensive report at the conclusion of each RDS or update, which includes the following information:

- Introduction
- Methodology
- Results of the Survey of the Specialty Practice
- Development of Test Specifications
- Subject Matter Expert Qualifications and Participation
- Review of Results
- Final Decisions of the Council
- Appendices, including Survey Instrument, Narrative responses, Survey user comments, etc.

**g.** An Executive Summary of the Job Task Analysis report is made available by BPS to interested parties upon request.

## **2. BPS Role**

**a.** For newly proposed specialties, prior to development of the petition document to BPS, an interested organization may commission the initial RDS. In that case, the organization is responsible for all aspects of the study, conducted in a psychometrically sound and legally defensible manner. Documentation of the process and results are part of the petition, and are subject to scrutiny by BPS, the profession, and psychometric experts as part of open hearings on the new specialty. The policies and procedures required for completion of a full petition by which an individual or group may request that BPS consider exploration of a new pharmacy practice specialty can be found on the BPS website. (See **The Petitioner’s Guide for Recognition of a Pharmacy Practice Specialty**).

**b.** All other RDS and update studies are commissioned and funded by BPS in accordance with the General Policy above.

**c.** In accordance with exam development policy, BPS will:

- Convene one or more face-to-face meetings or teleconferences with Specialty Council members, other subject matter experts, and testing experts to identify new/changed parameters of the practice. Efforts are made to ensure the participation of a cross-section of the community of interest within the pharmacy profession.
- Convene one or more face-to-face meetings or teleconferences with Specialty Council members and other subject matter experts and the testing expert to draft knowledge and task statements and other components for the survey instrument;
- Convene one or more face-to-face meetings or teleconferences with Specialty Council members, other subject matter experts and the testing experts to review and endorse survey results and recommend approval of new/modified Content Outline to the BPS Board;
- Facilitate Board review and approval of the recommended Content Outline;
- Publicize the new Content Outline via News Release, BPS Web Site, and other media;
- In cooperation with the testing expert(s), utilize the new Content Outline for subsequent examinations of the specialty, until replaced.

### **3. Testing Expert Role and Responsibility**

**a.** Following discussion with the BPS Executive Director concerning needs, the testing expert will draft a contract covering needed work in conjunction with the RDS. This will be signed by BPS and the testing expert when a non-staff testing expert is used.

**b.** The RDS will be planned and conducted by the testing expert in accordance with accepted practice in the field, with appropriate quality control measures in place. BPS will monitor this process for procedural quality by having staff and council members review validation survey questions, and take the on-line survey.

**c.** Testing expert will facilitate all meetings and prepare reports of all activity with Specialty Council members and other subject matter experts identified in above.

**d.** Testing expert will develop, refine as needed, and distribute the RDS validation survey to a mutually agreed upon sample, identified by BPS or other appropriate sources. The sampling methodology will be psychometrically defensible.

**e.** Testing expert will collect and analyze surveys, and submit a detailed written report to BPS regarding the survey and its results.

**f.** Testing expert will propose a psychometrically defensible new or modified examination Content Outline, based on results of the RDS process. When approved by the Specialty Council and BPS, this will become the blueprint for subsequent examinations until formally modified by another RDS.

**g.** At the conclusion of each initial or update RDS for BPS approved specialties, testing expert will facilitate a Passing Point Study. Participants include Specialty Council members and other representative BPS-certified specialists in the specialty. The testing expert provides detailed instruction to participants, and leads them through a psychometrically appropriate and justified

methodology (e.g. Modified Angoff, Direct Standard Setting Method, Direct Consensus Method) to establish a new passing point for the new exam form. The testing expert documents the results of this process.

## **B. Item Development/Maintenance Process**

### **1. BPS role and responsibilities for item writer/reviewer recruitment and workshop organization:**

- a. Specialty Council subject matter experts, in conjunction with the BPS Testing expert, test administrator and/or staff member, identify rubrics in which items are most critically needed. Rubrics are a coding system for knowledge and task statements that appear in the content outline.
- b. BPS and its Specialty Councils develop plans for generation of needed item bank items from certificants and other practitioner subject matter experts.
- c. BPS staff works with Specialty Councils to recruit volunteers who are representative of the area of interest to submit draft items to the testing expert. Item development panels may be organized by BPS staff and Specialty Council members to help generate needed items.
- d. Item writers are normally board certified pharmacist specialists. However, non-board certified pharmacist specialists may submit items for review but they are not permitted to attend Item Development Workshops because of item exposure in the event they choose to sit for the examination.
- e. The use of proprietary/trade names for drugs, delivery systems, manufacturers, publications, publishers, etc. must be avoided when developing items for specialty certification examinations.
- f. BPS convenes Item Development Workshops, frequently at national meetings of subject matter experts, where invitees review draft items under guidance of a test developer/expert and other BPS staff. Items are accepted, rejected, or corrected, and rubrics are developed or verified for items to be placed into the item bank.
- g. Logistics Policy for Item Development Workshops:
  - BPS contracts for meeting space, and group meals (usually breakfast and lunch) for the meeting.
  - When the Workshop is held in conjunction with another national meeting, BPS reimburses attendees for one night's lodging at single rate, plus taxes and non-provided meals for the meeting day only.
  - BPS arranges for internet connectivity for item research and PowerPoint projection system for a detailed orientation session.
  - If subject matter experts wish to bring or arrange for research materials to be available at the meeting, they may do so, with reasonable expenses reimbursed by BPS.
  - Upon recommendation of the testing expert and/or Specialty Council members, Item Bank Maintenance Workshops are convened and funded by BPS, and led by the testing expert or test developer. Here, the specialty's entire item bank is reviewed by Specialty Council members and other BPS-certified specialists, and items are endorsed, modified (or marked for future modification) or discarded from the bank as appropriate. Rubrics are also verified or modified.

## **2. Testing expert's role in collecting items, leading workshop, editing and storing items:**

- a.** The testing expert or test developer staffs and leads Item Development Workshops and Item Bank Maintenance meetings for BPS and provides other services related to items and banking.
- b.** Testing expert is responsible for secure shipping, handling, and oversight of all draft and approved items, consistent with the BPS Control of Records standard operating procedure, throughout all phases of Item Development and Bank Maintenance meetings.
- c.** Testing expert collects, records, and photocopies all items submitted in advance for a Workshop. Items may be submitted in hard copy with references attached, or using electronic means. Draft items are also accepted or drafted at the Workshop.
- d.** Testing expert provides PowerPoint overview of the item-writing process, a tutorial on writing multiple-choice items, and other materials (specialty-specific style guides, content outlines, rubric tables, etc. as needed) to attendees.
- e.** Testing expert provides procedural, non-subject matter assistance to item writers and reviewers as needed and collects approved, disapproved, and amended items for tallying and further processing.
- f.** Testing expert, in conjunction with Specialty Council members, develops and maintains a specialty-specific Style Guidelines document for reference by item developers and consultant's editorial staff.
- g.** Testing expert provides editorial review/correction of accepted items, verifies completeness of rubrics, and enters them into the appropriate item bank within the appropriate secure database.
- h.** Testing expert maintains the BPS item banks in its secure database, while BPS retains intellectual property ownership of content in accordance with contractual terms. Testing expert and any subcontractors are bound by confidentiality requirements of the service contract with BPS.
- i.** Testing expert provides reports annually or as requested by BPS of the status of each specialty's item bank by rubric.
- j.** The Bank Maintenance Workshop logistics are similar to those for Item Development Workshops (**1.g, above**), except that they may be of 2-3 day duration as needed.