Optometry Admission Test

Frequently Asked Questions

Scoring the OAT

1. **How is the OAT scored?**
   When an examinee takes the OAT, a raw score is produced for each area of the test that equals the number of correct answers. This raw score is converted to a standard score so that an examinees' performance on the test can be compared to other examinees' performance. In the OAT, scores range from 200 to 400 with a mean of 300.

2. **Why are standard scores used?**
   Standard scores allow comparison among examinees who take different version of the OAT at different times. For example, if one examinee tests in January and receive a score of 390 in Biology and another examinee tests in March and receives the same score of 390, they both have the same ability level in biology. This allows optometry schools to compare scores of applicants who tested at different times.

3. **Is the mean always 300?**
   The mean may not always be exactly 300 and while some variation is inevitable, the amount of drift from the ideal mean of 300 is constantly monitored.

4. **Is scoring for the OAT going to change?**
   As part of the ongoing validation process for the OAT, it has been noted that the mean is drifting past 300. To correct this drift, the OAT will be recalibrated so that the mean is again close to 300 and the standard deviation is 40.

5. **When is this going to happen?**
   The new score scale will go into effect May1, 2009.

6. **Will it still be possible to compare OAT scores among examinees who test at different times?**
   The new score scale and scores based on the old score scale are not comparable. Scores based on the new scale cannot be compared to the old scale. A 300 on the old scale is not the same as a 300 on the new scale. If an examinee tested in January 2009 and retested in July 2009, the two sets of scores cannot be compared to each other.

   However, going forward, scores will be able to be compared as they have been in the past. For example, an examinee testing in May 2009 and December 2009 will be scored on the same score scale and those sets of scores can be compared to each other.

7. **I have never taken the OAT, how will this change effect me?**
   You will not notice any difference.

8. **I have taken the OAT before and plan to retake it, will my scores be affected.**
   If you are repeating the OAT, it is possible that your scores may be slightly lower even though your ability level has improved or stayed the same because the mean score has been reset to 300. This does not mean the test is harder and no one will be disadvantaged by the change in the scoring system. All optometry schools and pre-health advisors will be provided information about the change in the score scale and how to interpret scores on the new scale.