

Non-compensatory scoring for the CKE 2

The phrase ‘compensatory scoring’ refers to the situation where a high score in one functional area can compensate for a low score on another. This will happen when an overall cut-score is used. Here is an example, say that an exam-writer knows nothing of *Health, wellness, and safe workplace* (although *Health, wellness, and safe workplace* is a required course, exam-writers who qualified via the alternative route may not have taken the course, for others their *Health, wellness, and safe workplace* course may be ten years old), their score on that functional area will be close to 25% (which is chance when there are four options). The overall cut-score established using the standard-setting process is 139 or 61.7%. However, by keeping an average of 65% over the remaining eight functional areas, this exam-writer’s overall score would be 139, which is at or above the cut-score.

Consider the following scores for Exam-writer A:

	Strategy	Professional Practice	Organizational Effectiveness	Workforce planning and talent management	Labour and employee relations	Total rewards	Learning and development	Health, wellness, and safe workplace	Human Resources metrics, reporting, and financial management	Total
Number of questions	22	27	31	31	23	22	24	18	27	225
Cut-score (threshold)	8	14	13	15	9	8	8	8	11	139
Candidate A score	14	18	20	20	15	14	16	4	18	139
At or above threshold	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes

Under compensatory scoring rules, Candidate A would pass the exam although they seem to know little or nothing about *Health, wellness, and safe workplace*. This is not the expectation for *Certified Human Resources Leaders* (CHRLs).

The purpose and idea of non-compensatory scoring is that strength in one or more functional areas cannot compensate for weaknesses in other areas. The way in which this is implemented for the CKE 2 is as follows.

The overall cut-score remains. For the November 2015 CKE 2, exam-writers must still answer 139 or more questions correctly out of 225; but in addition, exam-writers must earn a score above a cut-score established for each functional area.

The individual functional areas cut-scores were set such that it is extremely unlikely that someone who is sufficiently knowledgeable in all the functional area would get a score below the threshold on one or more of the functional areas. The overall cut-score (threshold) reflects the overall level of knowledge that is expected of the minimally qualified CHRL, the cut-scores (thresholds) on the individual functional areas reflect a minimal level of knowledge in each area. The thresholds on the functional area scores are considerably lower than the threshold on the overall score. This reflects a minimal level of knowledge in each functional area.

The cut-scores (thresholds) were converted to percentages to make it easier to make comparisons—the effective cut-score is the number of correct questions. The average cut-score (threshold) across the nine functional areas is 41.39%, with the lowest cut-score (threshold) being 33.3% and the highest cut-score being 51.9%. The cut-scores (thresholds) are different across functional areas to take into account the fact that the scores on some functional areas are more reliable than others.

	Strategy	Professional Practice	Organizational Effectiveness	Workforce planning and talent management	Labour and employee relations	Total rewards	Learning and development	Health, wellness, and safe workplace	Human Resources metrics, reporting, and financial management	Total
Number of questions	22	27	31	31	23	22	24	18	27	225
Cut-score (threshold)	8	14	13	15	9	8	8	8	11	139
Cut-score as percent	36.4%	51.9%	41.9%	48.4%	39.1%	36.4%	33.3%	44.4%	40.7%	61.8%

Remember that the chance level of performance on any functional area is about 25%.

Using non-compensatory scoring, Candidate A, with only four correct answers on the *Health, wellness, and safe workplace* functional area would fall below the cut-score (threshold) for this functional area, which is 8 and would consequently fail the exam.

Candidates must obtain an overall score above the overall cut-score (threshold) and obtain a score above the minimum cut-score (threshold) for each of the functional areas to pass the exam.

How is it possible to score above the threshold on each functional area and still fail the exam?

It is like the coursework requirement. The coursework requirement states that a candidate must obtain an average of 70% over the 9 required courses, with no course having a grade of less than 65%.

A candidate with a grade of 66% on each of the nine courses would have an overall average of 66%. This candidate would be above the threshold on each individual course and yet fail to meet the course average threshold. A candidate could have a score above the threshold on each of the 9 functional areas and still not meet the overall cut-score.

Consider Candidate B below:

	Strategy	Professional Practice	Organizational Effectiveness	Workforce planning and talent management	Labour and employee relations	Total rewards	Learning and development	Health, wellness, and safe workplace	Human Resources metrics, reporting, and financial management	Total
Number of questions	22	27	31	31	23	22	24	18	27	225
Cut-score (threshold)	8	14	13	15	9	8	8	8	11	139
Candidate B scores	10	16	15	17	11	10	10	10	13	112
At or above threshold	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

To recapitulate:

- It is possible to be above threshold on the overall score and yet be below threshold on one or more of the functional areas—this results in a fail.
- It is possible to be above threshold on all 9 functional areas and yet be below threshold on the overall score—this also results in a fail.

Note that the cut-scores will depend on the difficulty of the exam. Although the intent is to create exams of similar difficulty from one administration to the next, some differences will always occur. The cut-scores (thresholds) on the overall score and on the individual functional areas will vary somewhat from one administration to the next. The cut-scores above were those that obtained for the November 2015 exam, the cut-score for the June 2016 exam and subsequent exams may differ.