

42 Day Wait Period Justification

(Time between Examinations)

August 18, 2020

Personnel Certification Governance Committee Meeting

Background

The 42 day period has existed since the first System Operator Certification (SOC) credential was established. The wait period was established and set at 42 days for essentially two reasons:

1. The initial SOC exams were built on two 'static' forms due to the lack of having enough questions in the item bank for more forms. This introduced a concern where an individual would get repeat questions if they took the exam multiple times, possibly passing the exam through memorization.
2. The wait period allowed adequate time for the candidate that failed the exam to review prior to being allowed to sit again.

One of the intentions of Linear On-The-Fly Testing (LOFT) was to create an exam where the content was uniquely generated to where we would no longer be concerned about item number one above.

With LOFT implemented, the Policy Oversight Task Force (POTF) was tasked with providing a review of the 42 day wait period for discussion at the August 2020 Personnel Certification Governance Committee (PCGC) meeting. To support discussion the POTF reached out to PSI (Psychometric Consultant) with questions/responses as noted below.

Question:

Is the item bank mature enough (# of questions/content area) where PSI feels that we can reduce or eliminate the wait period?

PSI Response:

I think that the wait period can be reasonably reduced. The item bank is in decent shape, but I would not describe it as well off enough to reduce the wait period completely. Actually, no matter how theoretically outstanding an item bank may be, I would probably never recommend removing the wait period completely. In addition to potentially seeing the same items, the wait period also allows an examinee who is retesting the opportunity to study up on the areas where they are weaker.

Question:

What is the general recommendation from PSI on retaining a wait period in general, but perhaps reducing it to 10-14 days?

PSI Response:

I feel that reducing the wait period from 42 days down to 10 with no intermediate gap may be a bit sudden. For a program like NERC, I would recommend something more like reducing it down to 25-30 days.

Question:

What additional factors do we need to consider prior to potentially removing the wait period altogether?

PSI Response:

As mentioned above I would have a hard time recommending this course of action for any program.

Conclusion

The POTF did not come to a recommendation prior to the August 2020 PCGC meeting; however, discussion during the meeting led to a motion to keep the 42 day wait period as is and provide this document as justification.

The motion passed.