

ACUPUNCTURE BOARD

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DATE	February 14, 2014
TO	Acupuncture Board
FROM	Exam Committee
SUBJECT	Policy on Number of Times CALE can be Taken

Issue: Should there be a limit on the number of times that applicants retake the California Acupuncture Licensure Exam (CALE) in order to ensure competence and protect public safety.

Problem: There are people who have taken the CALE more than 18 times. Generally, repeat test takers don't pass if they have taken it more than four times. Additionally, those who do not pass the CALE the first time tend to do worse, not better with repetition of the exam, which indicates that they do not have the competency required. In other professional licensures exams, repeat test takers tend to do better. For protection of public safety and to ensure competency within the profession, creating a policy that sets a limit on the number of times applicants can retake the CALE may be necessary.

Background:

The prior Board discussed and approved a limit of five times as the limit for someone to retake the CALE. Other Boards place a limit on the number of times repeat test takers can take the licensing exam. The Medical Board limits the number of times applicants can take their three part exams to no more than four times for the final exam. The Dental Board limits the number of times applicants can take the licensing exam to three times but provides specific remedial education requirement for any addition repeat testing. See attached.

Discussion:

There are several issues related raised by Acupuncture's multiple repeat test takers. The fact that repeat test takers are doing worse not better indicates that there is a competency issue with exam takers. The limit on the number of times applicants can take the exam is a common solution that licensing boards use to ensure competency. The public safety concern is that since the CALE only tests for minimal acceptable competency, to allow applicants unlimited number of times to take the exam does not provide adequate safeguard to ensure competency. Since the purpose of the licensing exam is to ensure minimal acceptable competency, allowing unlimited repeat exams undermines the effectiveness of the licensing exam for ensuring competency.

The policy consideration is what would be a reasonable number of times to allow applicants to retake the CALE. An additional policy consideration is whether to allow a combination of remedial education

requirements as a means to allow applicants to retake more than the limit. Setting a limit is an effective solution to ensuring competency. Providing any exceptions to that limit, such as remedial education, undermines the effectiveness of the limit and competency.

Setting a limit on the number of times an applicant can take the CALE would require a regulatory change.

Recommendation:

Set a limit on the number of times applicants can retake the CALE. Assign to the Exam Committee to prepare proposed regulatory language.

Attached:

Exam statistics by Language

Exam statistics by Repeat Testers by language

Power Point Repeat vs. First Time Testers 2009-2013

Other Boards' Policies