The determination of a pass-fail standard is one of the most important aspects of developing and scoring a certification test. The procedure used, and an evidence-based demonstration of its validity, are essential elements in the program’s attainment of accreditation.

Since its inception in 1985, IBLCE has applied a procedure in which subject matter experts (SMEs) apply a performance standard to each item by a judgmental determination of difficulty. The procedure involves an evaluation of each of the item’s distractors (i.e., wrong answers).

IBLCE conducts an empirical validation of the process and outcome of how the pass-fail standard is established as part of the scoring process. The validation involves comparisons between the judgmental levels of difficulty set by the SMEs, and the statistical levels of difficulty resulting from candidate scores and responses.

For the 2012 administration of the IBLCE certification test, the comparisons served as validation that the pass-fail standard was determined in a fair, logical manner, and at a reasonable level, consistent with the level of prior tests.