



## NPTE School Reports Interpretive Guide

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## Introduction

The purpose of this document is to assist school faculty to understand the contents of the NPTE school reports – the information they contain and how the data might be interpreted.

In March of 2015, based on input from a survey of school report users and a task force of PT and PTA faculty, FSBPT introduced substantial revisions to the NPTE School Score Reports. This project had the following goals.

- Make the individual reports clearer in purpose.
- Increase the reliability of the information contained in the reports.
- Increase the interpretability of the reports.
- Provide a free report of all information given to CAPTE, available on the web.
- Provide a better user experience for schools to purchase and review reports.
- Address criticisms of the school report interface and purchasing process.
- Provide additional, frequently requested, information to schools (e.g., licensure information, aggregate PEAT scores).
- Assist schools to report information to external stakeholders.

To accomplish these goals, FSBPT revised the school reports in several ways.

- Made the Basic Pass Rate Report available to schools for free on the internet.
- Revised the look and feel of the school interface to be more consistent with the FSBPT.org website, including making some information easier to find using a “dashboard” for each school.
- Created a periodic report update and quality assurance process, to prevent issues with school reports being generated “on the fly.”
- Removed the report access window; from 2015 on, reports purchased for a graduating class will be automatically updated and remain available for a period of five years.
- Reorganized and renamed the reports so the information in each report is more consistent with the report name.
- Linked the class rosters to the Exam Licensure and Disciplinary Database (ELDD) so that schools can see if a student has obtained a license in one of the states that participates in the database.

Subsequent to March of 2015, FSBPT implemented further improvements to the School Reports, as follows.

- Created the school cohort uploading process to speed up access to and improve the accuracy of school reports.
- Allowed schools to digitally approve graduation status to speed access to NPTE registration.
- Introduced the Benchmarking Report to allow schools to compare their student’s NPTE performance against a group of peer institutions of their choosing.
- Worked with member jurisdictions to create the Alternative Approval Pathway, which simplifies the registration and eligibility determination process for candidates applying for licensure in states that agree to accept FSBPT’s general eligibility requirements and decision.



## Types of Reports

There are five types of reports available in the school reports system.

1. The Basic Pass Rate Report provides a report of the data provided to CAPTE relating to graduating class pass rates for the last three years. In addition, there is information about the mean NPTE scale score for each class, a confidence interval for the mean, and the mean and standard deviation for all students from CAPTE institutions. Pass rates are provided for candidates' first attempts as well as their ultimate pass rate. The report also includes a roster for each graduation year.
2. The Content Area Report includes the average score for one graduating class broken out by content areas (professional work activities and body systems) from the NPTE content outline. The report also includes confidence intervals for the mean scores, and the mean and standard deviations for students from CAPTE institutions. The report presents this information in tables and box plot graphics.
3. The Graduate Performance Report provides information on NPTE scores for each student in a graduating class for up to six NPTE attempts, including testing dates, provided that they have authorized FSBPT to release their scores.
4. The Benchmarking Report allows a school to compare their school's NPTE scores and pass rates to the NPTE scores and pass rates from a set of peer institutions of their choosing. The Benchmarking Report provides similar information to the Content Area report.
5. The Group PEAT Score Report is available at no cost to schools which have purchased PEAT through their schools at the discounted price. Essentially, this report is the same as the Content Area Report, but for PEAT rather than the NPTE. The report also contains a listing of candidates included in the report, and individual PEAT exams can still be reviewed through the school interface while their access period is valid.

FSBPT is continuing to develop reports to be introduced in the future.

## Verifying Class Rosters and Requesting Corrections

Several reports include class rosters so that the school may verify that the students included are assigned to the correct schools and graduating class. Recent changes to the process for linking candidates to schools through the cohort creation process has vastly improved the accuracy of these rosters. However, report can still contain errors.

It is very important to verify your graduating class rosters prior to reports being updated. Reports will be updated quarterly, usually within 3-4 weeks of the latest fixed-date test. It is vital that any incorrect information about your class rosters be reported to FSBPT well in advance of the next planned update. Reports will not be updated in between planned updates.

Information about the date of the most recent update, next planned update, and the deadline for submitting corrections is available in the "Alerts" section of the Dashboard. Corrections may be submitted to [schoolreports@fsbpt.org](mailto:schoolreports@fsbpt.org). Additionally, each report includes information at the bottom of the report stating the date at which the report was last updated.



Also note that reports and some data for schools with very small class sizes (less than 5 students) might not be available.

## Basic Pass Rate Reports

Basic pass rate reports include information on the NPTE pass rates for the most recent three consecutive graduating classes, as reported to CAPTE. Data are reported for first time attempts and all (ultimate) attempts. The report includes the following fields.

- The number of candidates attempting the NPTE.
- The number of candidates passing the NPTE.
- The pass rate (as a percentage) for candidates attempting the NPTE.
- The mean (average) NPTE scale score for candidates attempting the NPTE. For ultimate candidates, the mean includes all attempts.
- The confidence interval of the mean. This value reflects the variability one would expect in the mean as a function of year-to-year student classes and the expected variation due to items selected for the NPTE.<sup>1</sup>
- The percentile rank of the pass rate statistic, as compared with CAPTE accredited schools.
- The mean pass rate for candidates from CAPTE institutions, and corresponding mean and standard deviation for those candidates.
- The total percentage of candidates who attempted the NPTE in a graduating class who have passed the NPTE.

The Basic Pass Rate Report can be used as follows, and with the noted cautions.

- Reconciling the pass rate information CAPTE uses for accreditation evaluations.
  - Note that the timing of the pass rate reports available on the web might not coincide exactly when CAPTE uses the pass rate information to make accreditation decisions.
- Determining your program's first-attempt and ultimate NPTE pass rates.
  - Note that pass rates are typically based on small sample sizes and can fluctuate considerably from year-to-year.
- Determining the percentile rank of your program's pass rate relative to other CAPTE accredited institutions for each graduating class.
  - Note that pass rates tend to be high, and small variations in pass rates tend to result in large differences in percentile rank.
- Determining your program's average NPTE score, how that relates to the average scale score of all CAPTE graduates, and whether those averages are substantially different.
  - A basic statistical test of whether your program's average is truly statistically different from the CAPTE mean would be to compare your program's mean against the CAPTE mean, using the confidence interval like you would use a Z-score. If the CAPTE mean is more than 2 confidence intervals from your school's mean, your school would be considered significantly different from the CAPTE mea. This test is conservative, so you

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<sup>1</sup> The simple formula for this value is available in any basic statistic textbook as the standard error of the mean. However, the NPTE school reports use an adjusted value that takes into account not only the standard error of the mean but the uncertainty associated with individual student scores as a result of item sampling.



may want to consult a statistician on how different your school mean is from the CAPTE average.

Note that all of these metrics only reflect one aspect of program quality, success on the NPTE, and may be influenced by many things other than program quality, such as the academic preparedness of the students your program accepts, whether those students are truly committed to the field, the extent to which your program focuses on content areas not covered by the NPTE, and last but not least, luck (e.g., a candidate is sick on the day of the NPTE and doesn't do as well as she should).

## Content Area Reports

The Content Area Reports include information about your program's average scores for first-time NPTE test-takers broken out by professional work activities and body systems, as outlined in the [NPTE Content Outlines](#). The report also includes the average of all first-time NPTE test-takers for comparison. The report includes candidates from one graduating class.

The report includes the following fields.

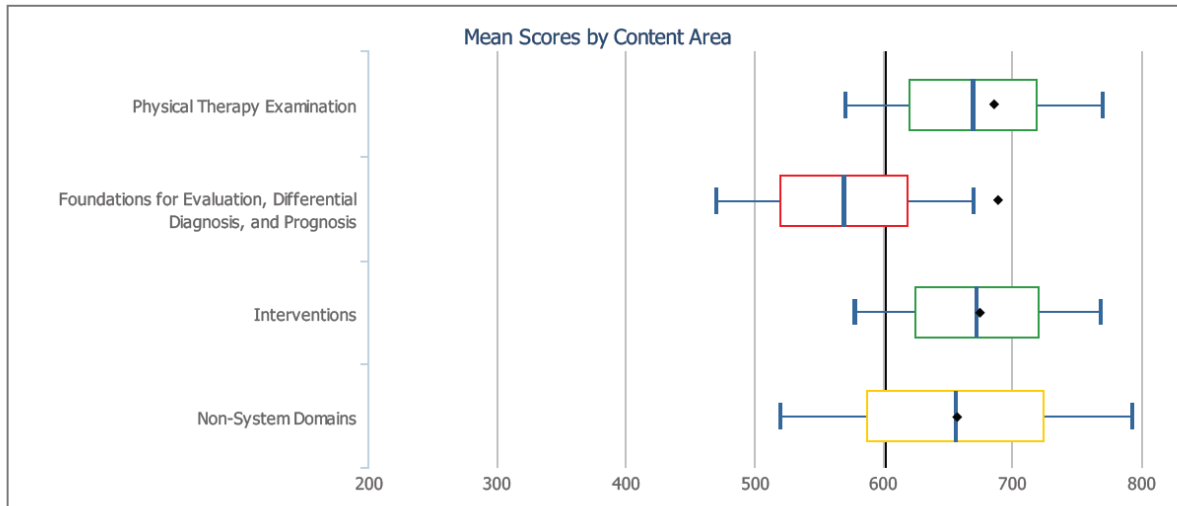
- The percentage of and number of items pertaining to each content area or body system.
- The mean (average) scale score for your graduating class on each content area or body system and a confidence interval for that mean.<sup>2</sup>
- The mean (average) scale score for all graduates of CAPTE accredited institutions on each content area or body system and the standard deviation of that mean.
- A graphic representation of the information in “box-and-whisker” plot form. See Figures 1 and 2 for examples of the box and whisker plots.
  - Each content area mean is represented by a box-and-whisker plot.
  - In the middle of each box is a blue vertical line that represents your program's mean score.
  - Each box has a color.
    - Green boxes signify that your program's mean is higher than the NPTE passing standard, by one confidence interval or more.
    - Yellow boxes signify that your program's mean is above, but within a confidence interval of the NPTE passing standard.
    - Red boxes signify that your program's mean is below the passing standard.
  - The size of the box corresponds to one confidence interval above and below your program's mean.
  - The whiskers on each box correspond to a second confidence interval. This range creates a “95% confidence interval” around the mean.
  - There is a black diamond on each row, signifying the mean for first-time NPTE test takers from CAPTE institutions.

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<sup>2</sup> As with the confidence interval of the mean from the Basic Pass Rate Report, this confidence interval reflects expected variation due to the students that comprise each class as well as the questions that comprise each content area.

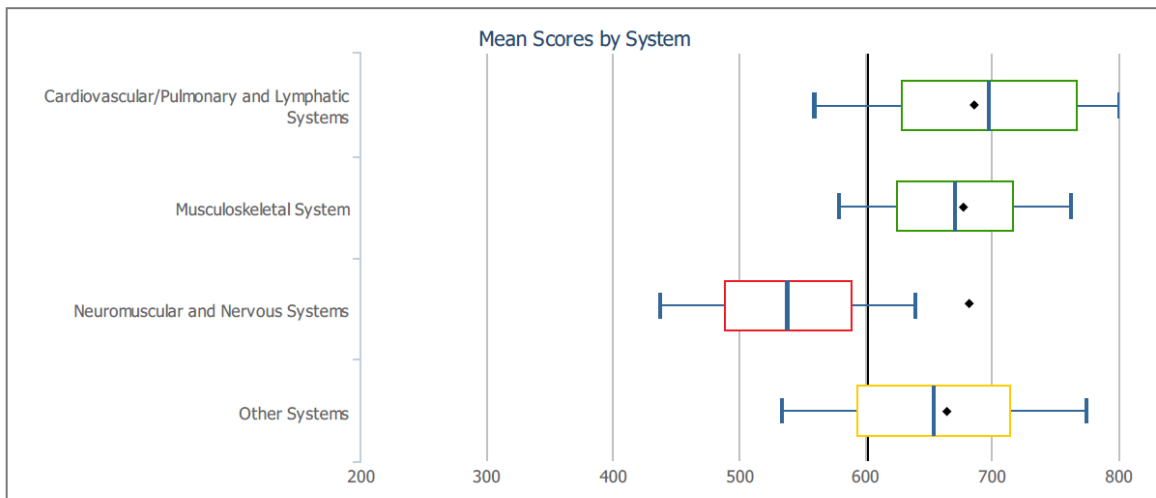


Figure 1: Box-and-Whisker Plot for Professional Work Activities from the Content Area Report



◆ Denotes the national mean scale score

Figure 2: Box-and-Whisker Plot for Body Systems from the Content Area Report



◆ Denotes the national mean scale score

The Content Area Reports can be used as follows, and with the noted cautions.

- Determine strengths and weaknesses of your program relative to the NPTE Content Outlines.
  - Professional work activities and body systems with yellow boxes are areas where your students are above the NPTE standard, but near enough to the standard to warrant consideration. Some candidates from your program might not be adequately prepared for the NPTE in these areas. In Figure 1, “Non-Systems Domains” is identified by a yellow box, and in Figure 2, “Other Systems” is identified.



- Professional work activities and body systems with red boxes are areas where your students are below the NPTE passing standard. These areas hurt them in their attempts to pass the NPTE, and your program might want to consider efforts to address these areas. In Figure 1, “Foundations for Evaluation, Differential Diagnosis, and Prognosis” is identified with a red box. In Figure 2, “Neuromuscular and Nervous Systems” is identified.
- Similarly, you can use the Content Area Reports to determine your program’s strengths and weaknesses on the NPTE content relative to the average scores of first-time candidates from CAPTE-accredited institutions.
  - You can accomplish this by looking to see whether the black diamond representing the CAPTE average is above or below the average for your program.
  - In Figure 1, the program mean for “Physical Therapy Examination”, represented by the blue vertical line in the middle of the green box, is just slightly lower than the national average. However, since the national average is inside the box, this difference probably should not be considered significant.
  - “Non-Systems Domains” in Figure 1 has a blue line right on top of the national average, suggesting they are about the same. However, the box is yellow because the confidence interval for this area includes 600. Non-Systems Domains has a small number of items, so the confidence interval is large. This example shows that comparisons of your program’s average with the national average and the NPTE passing standard don’t always lead to the same conclusions.
  - In Figure 1, the black diamond for the national average for “Foundations for Evaluation, Differential Diagnosis, and Prognosis” is outside of the whiskers for the program mean. In this case, it is clear that this program performs significantly worse than the national average in this area. It is not surprising that this area has a red box.

Note that all of these comparisons might be based on a small number of test questions, and students. Year-to-year variations in factors outside of the program’s control might have a substantial impact on these data. It is advisable to be cautious in interpreting small differences between average scores.

## Graduate Performance Reports

The Graduate Performance Reports contain information on up to six NPTE attempts for candidates from three graduating classes. The report contains the following fields.

- The year the candidate reported graduating from your program.
- The last name and first name of each candidate.
- An asterisk denoting if a candidate took the NPTE prior to your program’s reported graduation date.
- Whether the candidate has authorized the release of their exam scores.
- Exam score ordered sequentially by date for up to six NPTE examinations.

The Graduate Performance Report can be used as follows.

- Confirm which students have taken and passed the NPTE, provided they have authorized their scores to be released to the school.





- Get NPTE scores for each student for research purposes, such as correlating them to class grades or entry and selection criteria.
  - Note that small sample sizes can affect the relationship of school variables to NPTE scores. It should not be surprising to sometimes see negative correlations between the NPTE and valid predictors of program success, just based on sampling error.
- Identify students who have not passed the NPTE, whether their scores are improving, and how far they are from the NPTE standard.

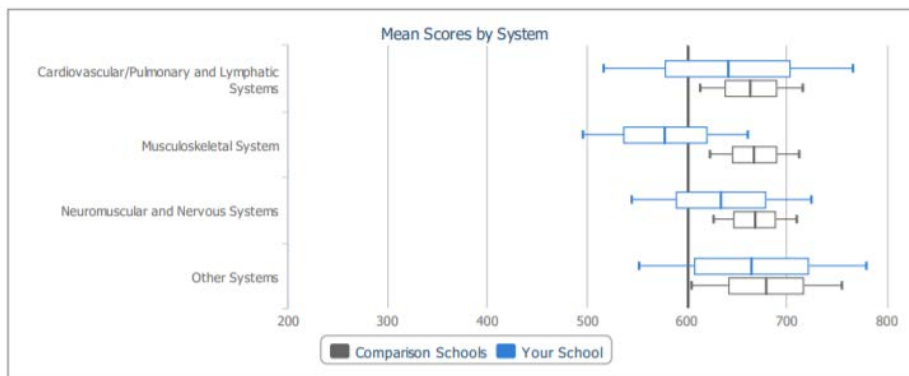
## Benchmarking Reports

The Benchmarking Report allows a school to select between five and ten schools that your school for comparison in terms of 1<sup>st</sup> time pass rates and content area scores. Comparison schools are reported in aggregate. This report allows your school to compare itself to a selection of schools to determine areas of relative strength and weakness for a given graduation year. Like the content area report, the Benchmarking Report presents this information in tables and box plot graphs. The report contains much of the same information as the Content Area Report, but the focus is on comparisons to the selected peer intuitions rather than the national average. It includes the following information.

- The list of selected comparisons schools.
- The total number of and pass rates of 1<sup>st</sup> time test-takers from your school and from the comparison schools, along with an estimated standard error for the passing percentage.
- The average NPTE scores for 1<sup>st</sup> time test-takers from your school and from the comparison schools, along with confidence intervals (one standard error) for each mean, broken out by total score, professional work activity, and body system.
- A graphical representation (box and whisker plots) of the mean scores described above.

See Figure 3 below for an example of the box-and-whisker plots for the score breakdowns. The box and whisker plots can be interpreted in the same way as those in the Content Area Reports, with the exception that there are two box-and-whisker plots for each score breakdown: one for your school (in blue) and one for the comparison school (in grey) and national means are not presented.

Figure 3: Box-and-Whisker Plots for System Scores in the Benchmarking Report



## Group PEAT Reports

The Group PEAT Report is a free report available to schools who purchase 10 or more copies of PEAT through the group PEAT purchase process. The report contains much of the same information as the Content Area Report.

- The number of PEAT product keys included in the purchase, keys assigned to students, keys still available to be assigned, PEAT assessments completed, assessments in progress, scores included in the report, and excluded from the report for various reasons (e.g., appearing to be an invalid attempt by getting a very low score, or completing the assessment very quickly).
- The average NPTE score for students taking the PEAT retired NPTE form. Practice form scores are not included in the average.
- Breakdowns on the NPTE scale score by content area and body system.
- Box and whisker plots of the scores by content area and body system.
- A roster of candidates who have taken the PEAT retired form and are included in the report.

The box and whisker plots can be interpreted in the same way as those in the Content Area Reports, with the exception that the Group PEAT Report does not include national averages for PEAT scores. Scores, score reports, and PEAT sessions are available for individual PEAT users through the Group PEAT page by selecting the transaction number associated with the product keys.

The Group PEAT Reports can be used in the following ways.

- Determining how well the group who has taken the PEAT is doing relative to the NPTE passing standard.
- Determining whether there are any knowledge areas that are weaknesses for the group of students preparing to take the NPTE.

## A Note on Reports that Span Content Outline Years

In January of 2018, FSBPT rolled out new content outlines and standards for the NPTE. Some schools have graduation dates that closely coincided with this transition. As a consequence, students from those schools might have taken the NPTE for the 1<sup>st</sup> time before or after this transition (i.e., in October of 2017 or January of 2018). If this is the case for your school, you should be aware of how FSBPT handles this scenario.

Data from NPTE administrations from different content outlines cannot be precisely combined with each other for reports that break down scores by content areas. To address this issue, the data included in content outline specific reports (i.e., Content Area Reports and Benchmarking Reports) only include NPTE scores from corresponding to the content outline that **the majority** of your students took on their 1<sup>st</sup> attempt. For example, if you had a student cohort graduating in December of 2017, and 20 of them took the NPTE for the first time in October of 2017 with 15 waiting until January of 2018 to take the NPTE, you would receive a Content Area Report or Benchmarking Report that included **only** students who took the NPTE in October of 2017. Basic Pass Rate Reports and Graduate Performance Reports would not be affected.



Another issue to note is that your selection of comparison schools for the Benchmark report might be affected. For example, if you had a cohort that graduated in January of 2018, but were able to take the NPTE early in October of 2017, the schools that you would be able to select from would be limited to schools whose students took the NPTE for the first time in 2017.

### **Suggestions or Comments?**

FSBPT continues to improve the user experience for schools. If you have comments or suggestions on ways the school reports could be made more user friendly, provide more helpful information, or feedback on any other aspect of the school report, please send them to [schoolreports@fsbpt.org](mailto:schoolreports@fsbpt.org).

