



NBME®

Web-Based Self-Assessment Services



Comprehensive Basic Science
Comprehensive Clinical Science
Comprehensive Clinical Medicine

Evaluate Your Readiness to Take USMLE®
www.nbme.org/sas

October 2011

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INTRODUCTION

The National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME®) offers three web-based self-assessments for US and International medical students and graduates. Built to the same content specifications as USMLE® Step 1, Step 2 Clinical Knowledge (CK) and Step 3, these self-assessments may be valuable tools for anyone preparing to take USMLE.

Comprehensive Basic Science Self-Assessment

The Comprehensive Basic Science Self-Assessment (CBSSA) uses multiple-choice items based on information typically covered during basic science medical education courses. The content of the CBSSA items resembles those in Step 1 of the United States Medical Licensing Examination® (USMLE®).

Comprehensive Clinical Science Self-Assessment

The Comprehensive Clinical Science Self-Assessment (CCSSA) uses multiple-choice items based on information typically covered during the core clinical clerkships. The content of the CCSSA items resembles those of USMLE Step 2 Clinical Knowledge (Step 2 CK).

Comprehensive Clinical Medicine Self-Assessment

The Comprehensive Clinical Medicine Self-Assessment (CCMSA) presents items that are based on information typically covered in clinical encounters and reflects the content of the multiple-choice component of Step 3.

KEY FEATURES

Authenticity

All self-assessment questions previously appeared in USMLE.

Flexibility

- Accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- Can be taken at more than one sitting – you have 20 days to complete a self-assessment once you start it.
- Available in two pacing options: similar to USMLE or at your own pace.

Variety

Multiple forms offered with no overlap of questions.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The material presented in CBSSA, CCSSA and CCMSA is provided by the NBME for educational purposes only. NBME research demonstrates that under certain circumstances there is a moderate relationship between performance on the CBSSA and CCSSA and USMLE Step 1 and Step 2 CK, respectively (*see Sample Reports for references*).

Since the content of CBSSA, CCSSA and CCMSA reflects the format and content of USMLE Steps 1, 2 CK and the multiple-choice content of Step 3, respectively, students may find the self-assessments valuable as they prepare to take these USMLE examinations.

RESOURCES

Please visit the NBME Self-Assessment Services (NSAS) website at www.nbme.org/sas for information about self-assessment services including CBSSA, CCSSA, CCMSA, access to the assessment and updates.

For more information about topics covered in each content area of Step 1, Step 2 CK and Step 3 visit www.usmle.org

Participants are provided with immediate feedback in the form of performance profiles which indicate the relative strengths and weaknesses in general topic areas. For CBSSA and CCSSA, participants will receive a performance profile and a score interpretation guide immediately after completing a self-assessment. These profiles are similar to those that candidates receive for Step 1 and Step 2 CK. The score interpretation guide allows participants to “translate” an assessment score to an approximate corresponding Step 1 or Step 2 CK total score. For CCMSA, participants receive a performance profile only. The performance profile provides an assessment score and graphically displays relative strengths and weaknesses in general topic areas. The NBME does not warrant that any individual performance on the self-assessments will predict performance on Step 1, Step 2 CK or Step 3 and cautions participants against making any predictive inferences.

SELF-ASSESSMENT FORMATS, TIMING AND PERFORMANCE FEEDBACK TYPE

All forms are built to the same content specifications and have been equated to allow for differences in difficulty. The more current forms have higher numbers.

	CBSSA	CCSSA	CCMSA
Format	Six forms: 200 multiple-choice items each. Item formats are similar to those used on Step 1. Four forms have an expanded feedback option. Forms are not numbered consecutively. <i>While not all content areas are included in every form, overall content coverage is comparable in the various forms of CBSSA.</i>	Four forms: 184 multiple-choice items each. Item formats are similar to those used in Step 2 Clinical Knowledge (CK). One form has expanded feedback option.	Two forms: 180 multiple-choice items. Item formats are similar to those used in Step 3. Currently, no expanded feedback option available.
Standard-Paced	Four sections, 50 items each. Up to 1 hour, 5 minutes to complete each section.	Four sections, 46 items each. Up to 1 hour, 3 minutes to complete each section.	Five sections; 36 items each. Up to 45 minutes to complete each section.
Self-Paced	Four sections; 50 items each. Up to 4 hours, 20 minutes to complete each section.	Four sections, 46 items each. Up to 4 hours, 12 minutes to complete each section.	Five sections; 36 items each. Up to 3 hours to complete each section.
Performance Feedback	Immediate feedback; profiles indicate strengths and weaknesses. Profiles similar to those Step 1 candidates receive. Forms with expanded feedback provide a count of incorrect items with an opportunity to review them. Longitudinal performance profiles are included for the six most recently completed exams started on or after April 6, 2011.	Immediate feedback; profiles indicate strengths and weaknesses. Profiles similar to those Step 2 CK candidates receive. Forms with expanded feedback provide a count of incorrect items with an opportunity to review them. Longitudinal performance profiles are included for the six most recently completed exams started on or after November 17, 2010.	Immediate feedback; profiles indicate strengths and weaknesses. Profiles similar to those Step 3 candidates receive. Longitudinal performance profiles are included for the six most recently completed exams started on or after November 17, 2010.

Note: You cannot change the timing mode of a self-assessment once you have accessed it.

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

- ❖ Microsoft® Internet Explorer 6.0 or higher or Netscape® 7.0 or higher, Firefox 1.5 and Safari 3.0; all later versions are also supported. Internet Explorer is recommended.
- ❖ Color monitor capable of displaying 800 x 600 with 32 bit color. For best results, use a 17" or larger monitor with 800 x 600 resolution.
- ❖ Your computer must accept cookies.
- ❖ Popup window software must be disabled.
- ❖ **You can verify that your hardware and software are properly configured to take the self-assessment by accessing the sample items on the NSAS website.**

LONGITUDINAL PERFORMANCE PROFILES

Participants now receive longitudinal performance profiles that display the six most recent completed assessments. For CBSSA, this includes all assessments started on or about April 13, 2009 – April 5, 2011; forms begun on or after April 6, 2011 will appear on a different profile due to changes in the Step 1 passing score. For CCSSA and CCMSA, this includes all assessments started on or after November 17, 2010. This option allows participants to track their progress over time, and view a graphical display of their progress in each content category. A sample of a longitudinal performance profile is shown on page 13.

EXPANDED PERFORMANCE FEEDBACK FOR FOUR CBSSA FORMS AND ONE FORM OF CCSSA

Participants now have the option of purchasing four forms of CBSSA and one form of CCSSA with expanded feedback which includes the:

- Number of items answered incorrectly by category
- Average time spent on each incorrect item
- Percentage of items answered incorrectly
- Ability to review the text of incorrectly answered items

A sample of the expanded feedback performance profile is shown on page 11.

ACCESS TO SELF-ASSESSMENTS & ADMINISTRATION PERIOD

Thirty-Day Access Period After Purchase of Any Self-Assessment

- After you purchase a self-assessment service, you may start it at any time within a 30-day access period.
- You may take a self-assessment at home or any other location you choose, using a PC with access to the internet (see system requirements).

Twenty-Day Administration Period After Accessing Any Self-Assessment

- Once you start (access) a self-assessment you must complete it within a 20-day administration period.
- You may pause (exit) and resume the self-assessment in the section and at the item in which you were working at any time during the 20-day administration period. However, if you exceed 20 days, you will NOT be able to resume the self-assessment.

ANSWERING, SKIPPING AND REVIEWING ITEMS IN EACH SECTION

During the defined time to complete the items in each section, you will be able to answer the items in any order, skip items, review your responses and change answers.

COMPLETING EACH SECTION OF THE SELF-ASSESSMENTS AND THE TOTAL ASSESSMENT

- When you complete a section of the assessment, you must select "End" before proceeding to the next section.
- Once you intentionally end a section, or if time expires for a section, you will not be able to return to that section to review items or change answers.
- Unanswered questions will be marked as incorrect. Once you have completed a total assessment, you cannot return to review any part of it.

PAUSING AND RESUMING THE ASSESSMENT DURING THE 20-DAY ADMINISTRATION PERIOD

Pausing a section allows you to exit the assessment and resume it later, returning to the same section and item in which you were working, ***provided total administration time allotted for your assessment (the 20-day period) has not run out.*** If you select "Pause" while you are working in a section, the time clock for that section **ONLY** stops and your browser will close.

When you restart (resume) you will return to the same item and section you were working in when you stopped. You may continue working for the remainder of the time allotted for each section, as long as the 20-day administration period has not expired.

IMMEDIATE PERFORMANCE PROFILE AND FEEDBACK

You will receive immediate feedback in the form of a performance profile. The profile will indicate the relative strengths and weaknesses in general topic areas and is similar in format to those provided to candidates for Step 1, Step 2 CK and Step 3.

If you have purchased a form that includes expanded feedback you will see your total number of incorrect items, and be able to review the items that you answered incorrectly (or left blank). Additionally, you will be provided with the average number of seconds spent on the missed items as well as a count of the percent of incorrect items you had marked while taking the assessment.

Your scores will be available only to you or to the institution that paid for any voucher you may have used. Your scores for the assessment are for your purposes only, and will not be used or recognized by any academic organization. **A sample of the expanded feedback profile is shown on page 11.**

SAMPLE ITEMS

- A small number of sample items are available on the NSAS website at www.nbme.org/sas for review prior to purchasing a self-assessment
- You do not have to purchase a self-assessment or have a password to take the sample self-assessments.
- The sample items provide a tutorial on how to use the self-assessment delivery software.
- Sample items are NOT the same as those provided in the sample test materials for Step 1, Step 2 CK and Step 3

PURCHASING SELF-ASSESSMENT SERVICES

You may purchase all forms of the self-assessments, including the self-paced and standard-paced options for each form. There is no limit to the number of times you may purchase and take any form of a self-assessment.

You can only take a self-assessment once during the access and administration period for which you have purchased it.

Payment

- \$50 US currency for each self-assessment
- ***\$60 US currency for expanded feedback forms***
- Full payment for all services is due at the time of purchase
- Non-refundable

PRIVACY AND SECURITY POLICY

The NBME recognizes that your privacy is an important issue to you and takes extensive measures to ensure the safety and security of its website. The NBME does not collect any personal information from users browsing its website. For detailed information, please review our privacy policy online.

TUTORIAL

An optional tutorial will be available prior to starting the self-assessment to provide you with basic information to assist you with your self-assessment experience. You will also be able to access information in the tutorial throughout the assessment by clicking the “help” button.

OWNERSHIP AND COPYRIGHT

The materials presented on the self-assessments are owned and copyrighted by the NBME. Any unauthorized reproduction of these materials, by any means, including but not limited to, storage in a retrieval system, transmission, printing, memorization or distribution is strictly prohibited.

TERMS, CONDITIONS AND DISCLAIMERS

You must read and agree to the NBME’s Terms, Conditions and Disclaimers before proceeding with a self-assessment service. The terms and conditions will appear automatically on your screen before you take the assessment.

CONTACT US

If you have any questions about our self-assessment services, please feel free to contact us.

Medical School Inquiries

medicalschoolservices@nbme.org
215-509-9259

For Student Inquiries

assessmentservices@nbme.org
215-590-9700, option 2

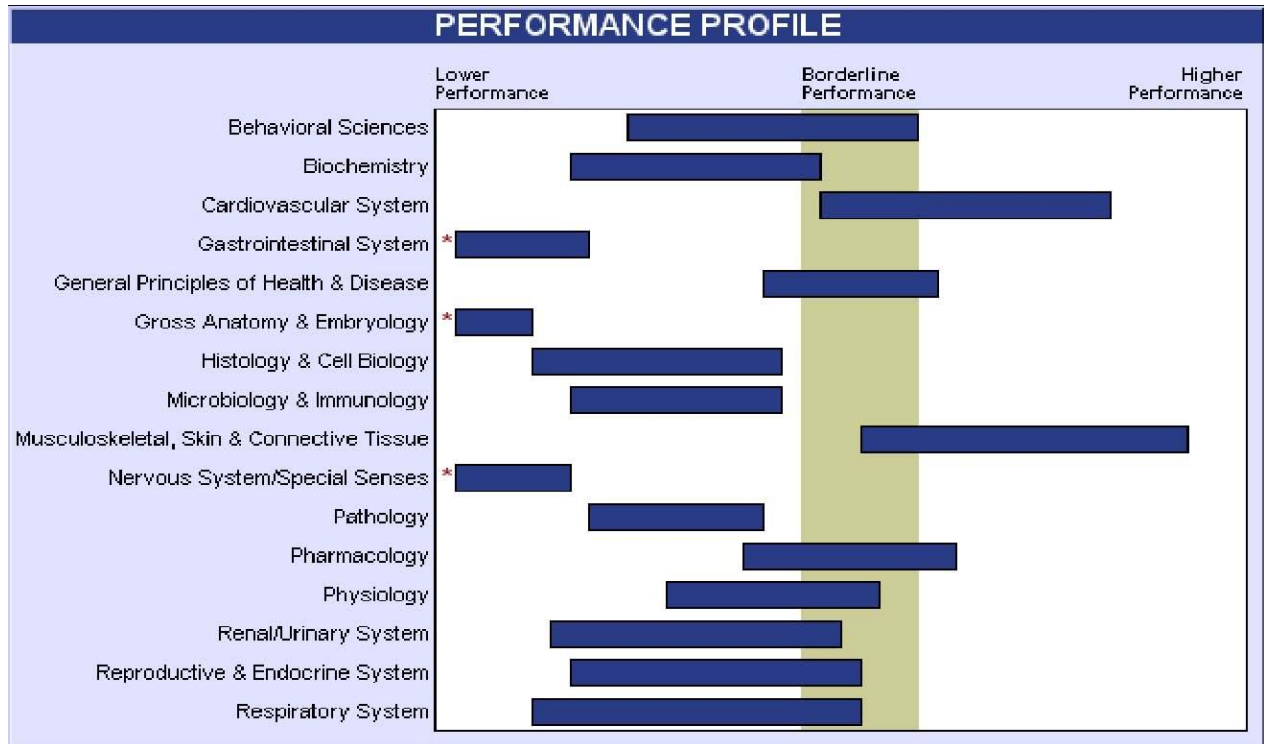
National Board of Medical Examiners[®]

NBME[®] Comprehensive Basic Science Self-Assessment (CBSSA)

Performance Profile

Name: Sample Performance Profile

Test Date: 4/11/2011
Assessment Score: 330



This is a sample performance profile. Your form may have slightly different score categories.

The material presented in this self-assessment is provided by the National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME[®]) for educational purposes only. The CBSSA is not intended to predict a participant's performance on USMLE[®]. Rather, the CBSSA is designed to serve as a tool to determine areas of relative strength and weakness in the basic sciences.

The score you received, indicated above in the top right hand corner, ranges from 10 to 800. It is scaled to have a mean of 500 and a standard deviation of 100 in a reference group of USMLE Step 1 first-takers from accredited U.S. medical schools.

The Performance Profile is provided to aid in self-assessment. The shaded region defines a borderline level of performance for each content area. Performance bands indicate areas of relative strength and weakness. Some bands are wider than others. The width of a performance band reflects the precision of measurement: narrower bands indicate greater precision. An asterisk indicates that your performance band extends beyond the displayed portion of the scale. Small differences in the location of bands should not be over-interpreted. If two bands overlap, performance in the associated areas should be interpreted as similar. Because CBSSA is designed to be integrative, many items contribute to more than one content area. Thus, caution should be used when interpreting differences in performance across content areas. While not all content areas are included in every form, overall content coverage is comparable in the various forms of CBSSA.

Additional information concerning the topics covered in each content area can be found in the USMLE Step 1 Content Description and Sample Test Materials (www.usmle.org).

National Board of Medical Examiners® Self-Assessment Services

Score Interpretation Guide

NBME® Comprehensive Basic Science Self-Assessment (CBSSA)

This guide will help you interpret the Assessment Score you received on your CBSSA Performance Profile. While the CBSSA is provided by the NBME for educational purposes only and is not intended to predict performance on Step 1, NBME research demonstrates that under certain circumstances there is a moderate relationship between performance on CBSSA and subsequent Step 1^{[1][2]}.

Step 1 scores are reported on a three-digit scale with a mean ranging from 220 to 230 and a standard deviation of approximately 20. CBSSA scores are scaled to have a mean of 500 and a standard deviation of 100. Both means are based on the performance of USMLE Step 1 first-time examinees from accredited U.S. medical schools. The following information is provided in response to user requests to “translate” the CBSSA score scale to the USMLE score scale. The NBME does not warrant that any individual performance on CBSSA will predict performance on USMLE Step 1 and cautions users of CBSSA against making any predictive inferences.

In the following table, locate your CBSSA score and find the approximate corresponding Step 1 score in the adjacent column. (For example, if your CBSSA score is 390, it approximates a Step 1 three-digit score of 196.)

The level of proficiency required to pass USMLE Step examinations is reviewed periodically and may be adjusted at any time. Visit the USMLE website at www.usmle.org for the most current information about the level of proficiency required to pass Step 1.

CBSSA Score	Approximate Step 1 Three-Digit Score	CBSSA Score	Approximate Step 1 Three-Digit Score
800	292	400	198
790	289	390	196
780	287	380	193
770	285	370	191
760	282	360	189
750	280	350	186
740	278	340	184
730	275	330	182
720	273	320	179
710	271	310	177
700	268	300	175
690	266	290	172
680	264	280	170
670	261	270	168
660	259	260	165
650	257	250	163
640	254	240	161
630	252	230	158
620	250	220	156
610	247	210	153
600	245	200	151

Score Interpretation Guide (continued)
NBME[®] Comprehensive Basic Science Self-Assessment (CBSSA)

590	242	190	149
580	240	180	146
570	238	170	144
560	235	160	142
550	233	150	139
540	231	140	137
530	228	130	135
520	226	120	132
510	224	110	130
500	221	100	128
490	219	90	125
480	217	80	123
470	214	70	121
460	212	60	118
450	210	50	116
440	207	40	114
430	205	30	111
420	203	20	109
410	200	10	< 109

February 2011

[\[1\] Using the NBME Self-Assessments to Project Performance on USMLE Step 1 and Step 2: Impact of Test Administration Conditions, *Academic Medicine*, Vol. 79, No. 10/ October Supplement 2004](#)

[\[2\] Relationship Between Performance on the NBME Comprehensive Basic Sciences Self-Assessment and USMLE Step 1 for U.S. and Canadian Medical School Students. *Academic Medicine*. 85\(10\):S98S101, October 2010.](#)

National Board of Medical Examiners[®]
NBME[®] Comprehensive Basic Science Self-Assessment (CBSSA)

Name: Sample Performance Profile

Test Date: 4/11/2011

Performance Profile with Expanded Feedback


	Total Incorrect*	% Marked
Overall Assessment	69	1%

Detailed Analysis by Content			
	Total Incorrect*	Average Time per Question in Seconds	% Marked
Behavioral Sciences	7	59.8	0%
Biochemistry	9	69.1	0%
Cardiovascular System	3	87.2	0%
Gastrointestinal System	5	69.8	0%
General Principles of Health & Disease	20	69.4	0%
Gross Anatomy & Embryology	13	81.8	0%
Histology & Cell Biology	12	66.7	0%
Microbiology & Immunology	11	68.2	0%
Musculoskeletal, Skin & Connective Tissue	3	59.3	0%
Nervous System/Special Senses	17	69.9	3.4%
Pathology	33	75.1	1%
Pharmacology	12	76.2	2.4%
Physiology	17	74.1	3.6%
Renal/Urinary System	5	55.5	0%
Reproductive & Endocrine Systems	7	69.3	0%
Respiratory System	5	75.9	0%

*Because CBSSA is designed to be integrative, many items contribute to more than one score category.

National Board of Medical Examiners®

Incorrect Question Example

 2. This is a sample of incorrect question review. A question having an incorrect answer will appear as it did during the exam, but with a red "X" to the left.

- A) Choice 1
- B) Choice 2
- C) Choice 3
- D) Choice 4
- E) Choice 5

Your answer is indicated by the filled-in circle.

DISPLAY FORMAT FOR AN INCORRECT QUESTION

National Board of Medical Examiners[®]
NBME[®] Comprehensive Basic Science Self-Assessment (CBSSA)

Longitudinal Performance Profile
History of Performance Across Multiple Completed Tests

Name: Sample Performance Profile

Report Date: 4/12/2011

Take	Test Date	Timing	Assessment Score
1	4/8/2011	Standard	380
2	4/10/2011	Standard	350

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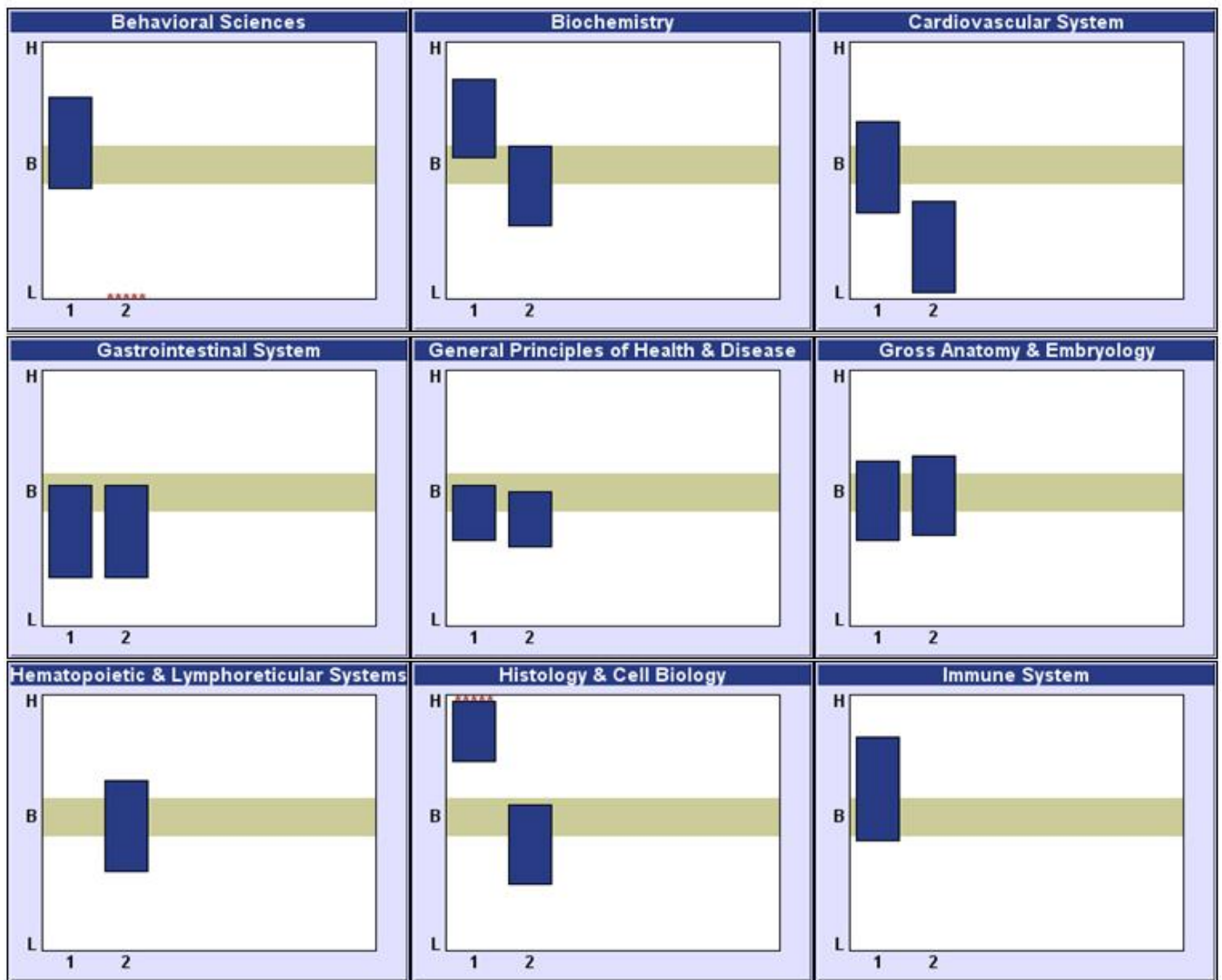
The graphical performance profiles are provided to aid in self-assessment and are a compilation of profiles for up to the six most recently completed assessments started on or after April 6, 2011*. The performance profile graphs provide an indicator of your performance across multiple completed assessments for each content area. The shaded region defines a borderline level of performance for each content area. Performance bands indicate areas of relative strength and weakness. Some bands are wider than others. The width of a performance band reflects the precision of measurement: narrower bands indicate greater precision. A row of asterisks indicate that your performance band extends beyond the displayed portion of the scale. Small differences in the location of bands should not be over-interpreted. If two bands overlap, performance should be interpreted as similar. Because the CBSSA is designed to be integrative, many items contribute to more than one content area. Thus, caution should be used when interpreting differences in performance across content areas. While not all content areas are included in every form, overall content coverage is comparable in the various forms of CBSSA.

Additional information concerning the topics covered in each content area can be found in the *Step 1 Content Description and Sample Test Materials* (www.usmle.org).

*CBSSA exams started after April 5, 2011 cannot be longitudinally compared against those started before or on April 5, 2011.

Longitudinal Performance Profile (continued)
History of Performance Across Multiple Completed Tests
 Name: Sample Performance Profile

Performance Profile Bands	
L	Lower Performance
B (shaded area)	Borderline Performance
H	Higher Performance



Longitudinal Performance Profile (continued)
History of Performance Across Multiple Completed Tests
 Name: Sample Performance Profile

