

Subject Matter Experts (SMEs)

Question: *How should SMEs be selected?*

Answer: Subject Matter Experts should come from the population of certificants and should represent, as closely as possible, the general body of certificants in diversity of ethnicity, gender, age, practice setting, experience, and geography. The SMEs participating in a cut score study may need to serve only once, but item writers tend to get better with experience and should be sought for longer service, particularly as mentors to new item writers. SMEs are more likely to serve long term with some incentive. Some organizations pay their item writers per usable item, while others offer continuing education credit, reduction in recertification fees, acknowledgement in newsletters, or other forms of appreciation.