



Policy 2.2 Item Writer Selection

Subject matter experts (SMEs) who write items for Board of Certification for Emergency Nursing (BCEN®) examinations are selected to represent various aspects of emergency, pediatric emergency, transport (both ground and flight), trauma, and burn nursing (BCEN Exam Programs). Qualifications of individuals involved in item development are documented, consistent with the stated level and purpose of BCEN examination(s), and representative of the clinical practice skills and amount of experience found in the certificants population. BCEN strives to screen applicants to ensure geographic and practice diversity.

Eligibility requirements:

1. Current status as a registered nurse, BSN preferred.
2. Has an unencumbered nursing license.
3. Holds a current certification in a BCEN Exam Program.
4. Actively employed in a clinical practice setting as an emergency nurse, pediatric emergency nurse, flight/transport nurse, trauma nurse, or burn nurse.

BCEN chooses new item writers for its programs approximately every two (2) years. A two-day item writing workshop is required for new writers. This training provides basic instruction in sound item writing and item review principles, including bias and sensitivity training (Policy 2.5 – Elimination of Bias and Sensitivity in Items and Testing Materials). The workshop also includes didactic and interactive activities in which item-writing principles, the structure of the test blueprint, confidentiality and security issues, and timelines are presented and discussed. Exam Construction Review Committee (ECRC) members also participate in the workshop and serve as mentors to new item writers. All new item writers are assigned an ECRC mentor.

New item writers must also sign a nondisclosure and confidentiality agreement and assign copyright to BCEN for all materials they create during their item writer term. Item writers may not use generative artificial intelligence to create any portion of items they are assigned to write. Item writers' work is evaluated by ECRC mentors

each item writing cycle to determine if additional instruction is needed. New item writers serve an initial 2 (two) year term and may serve for no more than three (3) consecutive terms or six (6) years.

In the event an item writer needs to take a leave of absence, consideration for continuing the term once the leave has concluded will be determined on a case-by-case basis with input from the Director of Certification and Accreditation and the respective ECRC Chairperson. If the leave of absence exceeds more than 24 months, continuation as an item writer will not be granted and the individual would need to reapply for an item writer position in the future.

Procedure

1. A call for item writers is published on BCEN's website and in other communication vehicles at least six (6) months prior to the item writing workshop.

Interested applicants who meet the eligibility criteria are encouraged to apply via BCEN's SME management platform. Those applicants who meet the initial criteria are asked to complete a sample item writing assignment, specific to their respective certification exam program.

2. Utilizing specific criteria about performance and diversity needs, the corresponding certification program ECRC Chair, a senior member of the respective ECRC, and the BCEN Director of Certification and Accreditation evaluate and discuss each application.
3. New item writers are selected based on their item writing performance, and on demographic and geographic needs.
4. Chosen items writers are notified of their selection and supplied with details about the item writing workshop
5. New item writers attend the required workshop and are assigned an ECRC mentor.

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