

September 8, 2000

Mr. Bill Fitzpatrick, Manager
Accreditation Training Department
Institute of Nuclear Power Operations
700 Galleria Parkway
Atlanta, Georgia 30339-5957

Dear Mr. Fitzpatrick:

The July 5, 2000, Generic Fundamentals Examination (GFE) was administered to 56 candidates at 14 facilities. The number of utilities and candidates participating in this exam was somewhat lower than normal. Typically, the GFE is administered to candidate groups of 125-150; however, because this July GFE was a newly initiated third exam introduced into the annual schedule, it had the effect of redistributing the total numbers of the annual test population to a smaller number. Nonetheless, the examination operated smoothly and efficiently.

The summary statistical results of this exam are as follows:

	BWR	PWR
No. of examinees:	23	33
Mean score:	89.9	86.7
Median score:	90.0	88.0
High score:	97.0	96.0
Low score:	75.0	72.0
Failures:	1	6

Failures by facility:

Wolf Creek--PWR
3 of 13 (79, 77, 72)

South Texas Project--PWR
1 of 9 (74)

Beaver Valley--PWR
1 of 1 (78)

Indian Point 3--PWR
1 of 1 (75)

Grand Gulf--BWR
1 of 6 (75)

The statistical results of the BWR exam, e.g., mean scores and range were consistent, stable, and in line with past GFE exam performance. Overall exam difficulty level (i.e., mean score) is targeted at 87.00, and actual BWR exam difficulty levels of 89.9 are near to expected results and consistent with past GFE performance.

PWR exam results, however, were slightly lower relative to past PWR trends. Although the PWR mean score of 86.6 is also near targeted levels, past PWR mean scores typically have hovered in the 89-90 range. The PWR failure rate was also notably higher than past failure rates. However, the relatively small number of applicants taking this July 2000 PWR exam (N=33) compared to past exams PWR exam groups of 90-100 could explain the wider variance of scores and higher failure rate.

Moreover, it may be a noteworthy observation that prior to this examination, five (5) BWR facilities withdrew eight (8) examinees (or 26 percent of the registered 31 BWR examinees) due to unknown reasons but possibly because of unsatisfactory performance on facility training exams. However, only one (1) PWR facility withdrew three (3) examinees (or 8 percent of the registered 36 PWR examinees). Therefore, a possible explanation for the difference between the BWR and PWR numbers of failures (1 BWR vs. 6 PWR) may lie in a more effective pre-examination screening of GFES examinees performed by the BWR facilities.

Facility Comments and Answer Key Changes

This GFE was a good, moderately discriminating exam. Only 2 of 14 facilities submitted comments covering 4 of 200 test items — an indicator of a relatively problem-free exam.

BWR Examination

One facility commented on one question -- Form A, item #51. Upon careful review of the facility comments, support data, and research, we determined that this item warranted two correct answers, B or D. The answer key was changed and final grading adjusted to accept the answer key change. This problematic item was not entered into the examination bank. The BWR utility who submitted the comment was provided an explanation to its comment and final resolution.

PWR Examination

One facility made three comments on three questions. Upon careful review of the facility's comments, one item -- Form A, item # 24 -- was determined to warrant two correct answers, B or D. The remaining two items (Form A, # 36 and #43), for which comments were received, were determined to be sound as written and to have only one valid and correct answer. Similarly, the PWR answer key was changed to reflect final grading adjustments. The problematic item, #24, was not entered into the examination bank. The PWR utility who submitted comments was provided an explanation to its specific comments and final resolution.

As in previous exams since February 1992, this exam was developed using the merged INPO/NRC test bank from your catalogs. Overall, we believe this exam was a good product and a valid measure of generic fundamental knowledge.

As we have routinely done, we are enclosing both BWR and PWR hard copies of the exam as well as the floppy diskettes which contain the contents of this examination along with its associated input data needed for updating your catalogs.

If you have any questions, please contact George M. Usova at (301) 415-1064.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Glenn Tracy, Branch Chief
Operator Licensing, Human Performance
and Plant Support Branch
Division of Inspection Program Management
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Enclosures: As stated

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