

Q1: Did the cut scores change from 2014 to 2015?

A: The cut scores did not change from 2014 to 2015. See the posted cut scores at <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/irs/ela-math> (the "Scale Score to Performance Level Conversion Charts" for 2014 and 2015).

Q2: What is "equating" and why did the State participate in equating in 2015?

A: Equating is a standard process that is followed in every state almost every year in every assessment program.

The purpose of the 2015 equating was to maintain the level of difficulty established by the standard setting process in 2013, when 95 teachers from across the state recommended the level of difficulty necessary to achieve proficiency (Level 3) and partial proficiency (Level 2).

Based on student performance on common anchor test questions (the same items used on different years' tests), the raw scores needed for each performance level were adjusted slightly to ensure that scale scores and performance levels are comparable from year to year. If the test is slightly easier, the number of raw score points needed to earn a performance level may increase slightly in order to maintain the performance standard. If the test is slightly harder, the number of raw score points needed to earn a performance level may decrease slightly in order to maintain the performance standard.

As you know, equating occurs each year with Regents Exams, where the cut score needed for passing (65) remains the same, but the raw score needed to achieve a cut score of 65 changes from year to year.

A good document that helps explain this can be found at http://www.ets.org/Media/Research/pdf/RD_Connections16.pdf.

Q3: Why did the raw scores change?

A: The raw scores that map to each of the scale score cut scores change almost on a yearly basis. See the "Raw Score to Scale Score Conversion Charts" at <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/irs/ela-math>. These charts are available back to 2006.

Q4: How did the raw scores change in 2015?

A: On the 2015 tests, year-to-year raw score changes for Level 3 were small and varied by grade. Raw scores went down slightly on 5 tests (indicating slightly harder tests in 2015 compared to 2014 for Grade 6 ELA and Grades 4, 5, 6, and 7 Math) and went slightly up on 5 tests (indicating slightly easier tests in 2015 compared to 2014 for Grades 3, 5, and 7 ELA and Grades 3 and 8 math). Raw scores stayed the same on two tests (Grades 4 and 8 ELA).