



AYSO Referee Exams Frequently Asked Questions and Answers for Referee Instructors

Why are we changing our exams? Weren't they good enough before?

For many years, we've found it awkward to retest candidates who failed to pass an exam, since we had only a single exam at each level. Now we will have multiple exams at each level with the ability to quickly create new ones from a database of questions. The database also enables us to update questions systematically across our entire suite of exams when Law changes occur.

Are the new exams more difficult?

Each question in the database has a difficulty rating, and the process of creating each exam allows us to control the number and type of questions at each level of difficulty that are included in each test. Since the database is chiefly populated with questions from our existing tests, we can easily arrange to maintain the same level of difficulty, or change it if we choose. We could easily create a "hard" exam and an "easy" exam for each certification level, if we wish, although there are no plans to do so at present.

Can these new exams be administered online? Can they be graded automatically?

No. We deliberately chose to maintain the existing paper testing procedure. Although software is used to maintain the question database and generate the exams, we are not adopting any online testing at this time. However, the *distribution* of exams to instructors will be electronic, as the exams can be downloaded from the AYSO Help web site and printed at the instructor's convenience.

How many exams are there?

We have created two exams for each of our training levels: U-8 Official, Basic Referee, Intermediate Referee, Advanced Referee, and National Referee. Instructors may choose either one for testing at the level at which they are teaching and may use the other one for retesting purposes.

How are the exams distributed?

Exams are available on the AYSO Help website (<http://www.aysohelp.org>) on the referee page. There is a separate PDF file for each exam. Each file contains the complete exam and instructor answer key. It is recommended that instructors

download the exam(s) they need, print one copy in double-sided form, then duplicate (e.g., at a local copy center) the pages that comprise the exam proper. Note that access to the exam files is password-protected and that the password is available to instructors by contacting the Officiating Department at NSTC or through Section Directors of Referee Instruction.

How often will the exams change?

We will revise the exams at least annually in order to accommodate changes in the Laws. We have the ability to revise them more frequently if the need arises.

How do I know if I have the correct exam for my class?

Each exam is identified by the referee level to which it applies. Each exam also has a version identifier, which is the year and month in which it was created. Since two exams are created for each level, a version identifier looks like "0412b", which specifies that the exam was created in December, 2004, and that it was the second such exam at that level (the "b"). Since the Laws change every July, you should ensure that you use an exam whose version indicates it was created no earlier than the previous July. The most current exams are available on the AYSO Help web site.

How are the number of points on the exams computed?

The questions on the exams are either true/false, multiple-choice, or fill-in. Each true/false and multiple-choice question is worth one point. Each fill-in question, unless explicitly noted otherwise, is worth one point *per blank*. So, for example, a question that asks the student to list four penal fouls is worth four points.

Some complex restart questions (confined to Advanced and National exams) have a more complicated scoring. The instructions preceding these questions in the exam form explain how they are scored. Essentially, one point is given for properly naming the misconduct (if any), one point is given for correctly identifying the misconduct *and the guilty team(s) color(s)*, and one point is given for correctly specifying the restart *and the team color*.

The total number of points in the exam and the number required to pass are given on the cover sheet of the exam.

Has the grading procedure changed?

No. Each exam has an answer key, and each answer has a short explanation for the instructor's use. Because of the inclusion of explanations, these keys look different from previous ones. However, the process of grading is essentially the same. You may find the format of the new answer keys (which are created automatically by the test generation software) less convenient than the old one. If so, transcribe the answers to a blank exam and use that as your answer key,

since the page-by-page correspondence of student-exam and answer-key will make grading easier.

Are results reported to NSTC differently?

No. Tests are retained by instructors and successful completion is reported on the *Application for Referee Upgrade* form.

May students keep their exams?

No. Although the questions are drawn from a database, there is still significant overlap in the questions that appear on exams. If students were to keep their exams, it would not be long before the entire database had been “discovered”.

What are those numbers in the right margin next to each question?

On most tests, there is a pair of numbers, such as 14/3, following each question. This information identifies the question in our database of questions. If you find an error in a question or think a question needs to be rewritten to be clearer, this is the information we need to locate the question in the database.

How do I report errors in the new exams?

We have developed the *Referee Exam Feedback* form to enable instructors to report problems with the exam questions and to suggest new questions. The form is available on the AYSO Help web site. It may be printed, completed, and mailed, or the equivalent information may sent by email to NSTC. The form contains complete instructions on how to do this.

Have you gotten rid of those trick questions that my students always miss?

The question database contains over 500 questions, each of which has been reviewed carefully by the National Referee Commission's Technical Committee. There are no intentional “trick” questions, and each exam states that fact on its cover page. Moreover, the wording of many questions has been adjusted to reduce ambiguity where it has led to problems in the past.

Nevertheless, it is impossible to anticipate all the ways in which students can misinterpret test questions. Inevitably, situations will arise in which students claim the question is poorly or improperly worded. While instructors have the power to deal with such situations by adjusting a test score to discount an unsuitable question, this should be a rare occurrence. In such cases, it is best to confer with Section or National staff before deciding that a question is unsuitable, and a *Referee Exam Feedback* form should be submitted so that problem can be corrected for everyone's benefit.

Who creates these exams? How do I get my favorite question on one?

The National Referee Commission, through its Technical Committee, has responsibility for the exams. To submit a question for consideration, fill out *Referee Exam Feedback* form, available on the referee page of the AYSO Help web site (<http://www.aysohelp.org>).

Will other AYSO disciplines begin creating exams this way?

AYSO's officiating program has the most extensive need for written testing, which is why the National Referee Commission decided to move away from manually created tests. The coaching and management disciplines may adopt a related approach in the future, but there are no plans to do so at present.