Dear Candidate,

Earlier this week, NCARB shared a blog post that answered several frequently asked questions from candidates about our development of online proctoring. It has generated a lot of discussion around the answer to one FAQ in particular: the decision to replace scratch paper with a digital whiteboard tool, both online and in physical test centers beginning November 16.

We've received many questions and concerns about this decision, so we would like to thoroughly explain this decision to you and let you know what to expect moving forward.

Scratch Paper Will Be Replaced With a Digital Whiteboard

Candidates will still be able to take notes, outline potential solutions, and more using an online whiteboard option. More details regarding this tool, including the ability to become familiar with the tool via the Demonstration Exam in My NCARB, will be available in mid-October.

NCARB understands this is a major change for some candidates, and it was not a decision that was made lightly. Below is additional information explaining NCARB's reasoning behind this decision:

Candidates must have a consistent exam experience regardless of test delivery. In order to maintain fairness across delivery modes, NCARB needs to ensure candidates are provided the same tools while testing, whether they are testing online or onsite. To launch online proctoring appropriately, NCARB will ensure consistent delivery tools for all candidates.

NCARB must ensure the security of exam content. The ARE is an essential measure of candidate competency used by all 55 U.S. licensing boards. Allowing physical scratch paper for candidates testing via online proctoring would introduce a major security risk for exam content. It is more difficult to monitor the use and disposal of loose paper when candidates are testing from a remote location, as opposed to in a test center. Because of this, online proctoring cannot launch with the allowance of physical scratch paper.

A "clean desk" policy is recommended by testing experts. The replacement of scratch paper follows best practices in testing recommended to NCARB by our psychometrician experts. Requiring a "clean desk" is the most reliable way to ensure that candidates are not violating the ARE Candidate Agreement. The desire to make online proctoring available may have moved the timeline for this decision forward, but it is not the only reason behind the change.

What to Expect Next

NCARB is in the process of finalizing several additional adjustments in order to launch online proctoring. Please be on the lookout for further announcements regarding changes to the number of questions per division, test times of each division, and other policy shifts. **In mid-October, you will receive an invitation to test the new digital whiteboard tool through the demo exam in My NCARB.**

We are committed to informing you on our roll out progress as early as possible. We will do our best to keep you informed of all adjustments as we approach the online proctoring launch date of November 16.

To share any further questions or concerns with our exam experts, please visit the ARE 5.0 Community.