

## What is Standard Setting?

In its most essential form, standard setting refers to the process of establishing one or more cut scores on a test. It is probably more accurate to refer to the process of standard setting as one of “standard recommending” in that the role of the panels engaging in the process is technically to provide informed guidance to those actually responsible for the act of setting, approving, rejecting, adjusting, or implementing any cut scores.\*

New Mexico educators are invited to participate in these panels. There are several steps involved in this activity. Participants:

- receive training in the cut score setting process;
- experience the test to establish familiarity;
- review available materials: content standards, test booklets, test blueprints, last year’s performance level descriptors (PLDs) and threshold descriptors;
- write performance level descriptors and threshold descriptors;
- identify skills, knowledge, and abilities of students at each performance level as reflected in the test;
- discuss with peers performance level descriptors and threshold descriptors with consideration of test items;
- individually write down their cut points for round 1;
- return to group and repeat the process for three rounds.

Definitions:

- Performance level descriptors are broadly descriptive definitions of a range of students.
- Threshold descriptors are narrowly focused and descriptive of relatively few students just entering into a level.

\* The Secretary of Education makes the final determination.