



NORTH CAROLINA BOARD OF BARBER EXAMINERS

Memo

TO: Board members

FROM: Dennis Seavers

DATE: December 6, 2021

SUBJECT: Written exams in languages other than English

At its December 14, 2021 meeting, the board will revisit the question of whether it should offer the written exams in languages other than English. This memo describes the history of the board's approach to that question. Please note that this memo doesn't advocate for a particular position but only explains what led to the current practice.

The board's vendor offers the exams in the following languages: English, Spanish, Korean, and Vietnamese. Up until 2014, the board offered the written exams in those other languages. But in 2014, the board decided to stop offering the exam in other languages. The board's primary rationale was that barbers must be able to read the manufacturer's instructions, which are only available in English, for the preparation and use of disinfectants. Otherwise, the disinfectants might not be effective, and the public would be at risk of harm.

In 2018, the board adopted a strategic plan, and one of the goals was for board to determine whether it should accommodate language diversity in written exams. The goal included an objective to examine common chemicals used in barber shops and determine what languages the manufacturer instructions use. The board's view was that if the instructions are available in other languages, the board might change its practice of only offering the exam in English. The board completed this objective in November 2018 after determining that the manufacturer instructions are still only available in English. Based on that determination, the board again decided to continue offering the exam only in English.