



The American Board  
of Endodontics

# Oral Exam Guidelines



**September 2018**

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## ABE Oral Examination

On behalf of the ABE Board of Directors, we congratulate you on your decision to pursue Board Certification and support the specialty of endodontics and we wish you the best of luck in completing your goal.

### Exam Location and Hotel Information

#### Examination Location

The American Board of Orthodontics Testing Facility  
401 N. Lindbergh Boulevard Suite 300  
St. Louis, MO 63141

#### Hotel Accommodations, Orientation and Transportation

Marriott St. Louis Airport  
10700 Pear Tree Lane  
St. Louis, MO 63134

To make your travel experience as easy as possible, a block of hotel rooms is reserved for each exam which includes shuttle service between the hotel and the testing center. Please plan on taking advantage of these convenient arrangements for your accommodations in St Louis, as it is mandatory that you arrive and depart the testing center via the provided shuttle. All Candidates that travel to St. Louis for the exam are expected to stay at the Marriott. We are required to fill our room block to have shuttle service and prevent having to pay attrition to the hotel. To ride the ABE shuttle, you must book a hotel room in your name using the ABE room block at the Marriott or pre-pay the round-trip fee of \$125 to ride the ABE shuttle

#### Orientation

**Identification Requirements:** You must present a valid Photo ID at orientation.

On the scheduled day of your exam, you will first have an orientation at the hotel.

It is mandatory that you report on time to the designated meeting room at the Marriott for the orientation (you will be notified which meeting room when you receive your schedule email).

During orientation, you will sign the ABE Candidate Examination Confidentiality Policy and receive your badge. Please Note: **No food is served at orientation.**

**Backpacks, tote bags, luggage, briefcases, electronic devices and books are not allowed at the testing center and therefore cannot be brought to the orientation room. You will not be allowed to board the shuttle with the items listed above and they cannot be left in the orientation room while you go to the testing center. The shuttles are on a strict schedule, bringing any of these items to orientation could result in you missing the shuttle and your exam.**

At the end of the orientation, you will be directed to the correct shuttle and you will be driven to the American Board of Orthodontics Testing center. **You must take the shuttle back to the hotel.** It normally takes approximately 30 minutes from the time your exam finishes to be back at the hotel.

## Exam Center Protocol

### Professional dress is expected.

Upon arrival at the testing center, you will be checked in and all personal items are required to be stored at the front desk prior to the exam. Candidates are not allowed to bring guests nor take anything into the exam room. **Cell phones, smart watches, handbags, wallets and outerwear coats will be checked in and kept in the reception area while you are in the exam room.** Eating or smoking is not allowed. Water will be provided

Once check-in is complete, you will be taken to an examination room where you will stay for the entire process (the examiners will move--you will not). The exam consists of three sessions of 30 minutes each with two examiners during each session. You will be provided with paper and pen to take notes and drinking water. The notes will be removed from the room after each exam. Candidates are not allowed to bring in any notes into the exam room. There will be a 10-minute break between each exam. **Do not discuss the exam process with any of the other examinees between or after the session.**

### Exam

Examiners are assigned on a random basis, considering any exclusions for examiners familiar with a specific candidate. The pairing of examiners is also assigned at random, and as this a criterion referenced exam, the severity of each examiner is considered during the statistical analysis of the scores. The difficulty of each clinical scenario is also accounted for during the analysis. Each variable will be addressed in analyzing the raw scores to arrive at the final score for each candidate.

### Your Contact Information

**One point of frustration for both the Central Office and our Candidates is when information is sent to an outdated address. Please email us at [staff@amboardendo.org](mailto:staff@amboardendo.org) with new contact information.**

### Cancellations

Candidates who request to withdraw from the Oral Examination must follow the instructions below.

Notify the Central Office at [staff@amboardendo.org](mailto:staff@amboardendo.org) that you will be submitting written notification that you are withdrawing from the exam. The notification must be sent to ABE, 750 W. Lake Cook Road, Ste 137, Buffalo Grove, IL 60089.

**Phone calls regarding cancellations are not accepted – the notification must be via email and followed-up with a written letter.**

Candidates who withdraw will be required to submit a new payment for the Oral Exam fee with their subsequent Oral Examination Registration forms. You are required to submit a new registration form for the next exam that you wish to participate in.

### Oral Examination Format

Each examination will take 30 minutes, and you will be given a 10-minute break between exams. **Do not discuss the exam process with any of the other examinees between or after the sessions.**

It is critical that all exam sections be scored; therefore, the examiners will control the pace to complete each scenario within the allotted time. Do not try to control the pace with your answers. Don't interpret "let's move on" as approval or disapproval, in fact, the examiners will try not to show verbal or non-verbal approval or disapproval to avoid any bias.

**Support your responses with literature; most especially when asked to do so (your grade depends upon it), but also anytime it would be appropriate.**

Each examiner gives a score for each of the ten sections of each scenario, resulting in a total of 60 raw scores compiled following completion of the Oral Examination. These scores are examined and statistically analyzed by an external psychometric service hired by the ABE to ensure that the process is unbiased and fair, and that everyone who deserves to pass will pass.

Given the number of scores tallied, don't let one or two uncertain answers shake your confidence!

### **Description**

Examination questions cover the scope of endodontics as described in the *American Dental Association Accreditation Standards for Dental Education Programs*. Questions are developed from a clinical case history that is presented to the Candidate. The questions are standardized, weighted and based on competencies that define the level of knowledge expected of Board Certified endodontists. A broad foundation of literature is essential for successful completion of the Oral Examination.

### **Sessions**

- ◆ There are three sessions in the examination.
- ◆ During each session, the Candidate spends thirty minutes with two Directors/Examiners.
- ◆ Each Examiner independently completes a confidential evaluation immediately after every examination session.

### **Process**

The Oral Examination requires the Candidate to demonstrate his/her ability to:

- ◆ Apply basic and dental sciences to diagnostic and treatment decisions.
- ◆ Justify diagnostic and treatment decisions.
- ◆ Formulate primary and secondary treatment plans.
- ◆ Assess short and long-term outcomes.
- ◆ Alter patient management because of local or systemic pathologic conditions, psychological status and ethical considerations.
- ◆ Quote Literature
  - ◆ Whenever appropriate
  - ◆ Certainly, when asked....
  - ◆ Familiarity with hierarchy of evidence.....

### **Case Based Format**

- ◆ Questions are designed to assess the Candidate's higher level cognitive skills including problem solving, decision-making, and the abilities to analyze, create and evaluate.
- ◆ The questions are based on competencies that define the knowledge base of a Diplomate of the American Board of Endodontics.

### **Topics**

Each clinical scenario will have questions that are divided into 10 sections. Each section will have two or three questions. Following are some examples of the question topics for each section

### **Radiographic Examination**

This topic can include questions regarding interpretation of images, radiation safety and hygiene as well as radiographic techniques to mention just a few. Radiographic images and possibly photographs for the case will be presented to you prior to the first questions.

### **Subjective and Objective Examination**

Here you will be provided information about the examination and diagnostic testing for the patient – but something will be missing. It will be up to you to determine what additional information is required. Additional questions may be based upon intra or extraoral exam techniques or findings, methods of pulp and periapical testing for example.

### **Medical History**

Medical History is the topic of the third section. Just remember, none of the patients are completely healthy. A detailed medical history is provided that will involve disease entities or syndromes that you will undoubtedly see frequently during your practice lifetime. How the patient's medical history might impact treatment is a common subject of questions.

### **Diagnosis/Differential Diagnosis**

Diagnosis is the next section. In this part of the exam you will be asked to formulate a pulpal and periapical diagnosis based on the information provided. You are expected to use the most currently accepted terminology for each diagnosis. Also, be prepared to provide a differential diagnosis of what other entities might present with similar findings.

### **Etiology and Pathogenesis**

Etiology of the patient's condition will be explored next. You will need to be prepared to answer questions regarding the origin and causative factors for the patient's diagnosis. Keep in mind that etiology can be multi-faceted, and not due to a single entity.

You will also be asked questions to assess your knowledge of how a disease process develops and progresses. This can include some medical diagnoses as well as dental conditions.

### **Treatment**

Next you will be asked for your treatment recommendation as well as all reasonable alternative treatment plans. You should be able to explain your preferred course of treatment as well as discuss advantages and disadvantage of different options.

### **Application of Biologic Principles**

The next topic is application of biologic principles. This section can cover a wide range of material. Some examples would be indications and mechanism of action of medicaments, pharmacokinetics of common medications, possible drug interactions. The influence of anatomical variations on treatment might also be a topic of questions in this section.

### **Complications of Treatment**

Our eighth section will include questions regarding complications or potential complications that might arise during treatment or become evident after treatment is completed. Management of these occurrences will also be included in the questions from this part of the exam.

### **Prognosis**

Next, you will be asked questions regarding prognosis. These can be questions regarding the specific case under discussion, or they may be questions about the prognosis for treatment in general.

### **Post-treatment Evaluation**

Lastly, you will be asked questions regarding post-treatment evaluations. They may be related to time lines in general or specific to the case or condition.

Evaluation criteria for success and failure as well as recommendations on evaluation interval may also serve as topics for questions.

## **References**

During the exam, there will be questions where you will be specifically asked to cite references. In addition, we encourage you to cite references for any answer for which you have an appropriate citation. In quoting literature, familiarity with the hierarchy of evidence will be expected.

## **Time Management**

As this is a timed exam, the examiners may control the pace to ensure that you have an opportunity to answer each question. If an examiner gently interrupts you to move onto the next question, you should not interpret this as a problem with your answers. It is simply time management. If you encounter a question that you are not quite prepared to answer at that moment, you can pass and return to that question, time permitting. Don't interpret "let's move on" as approval or disapproval, in fact, the examiners will try not to show verbal or non-verbal approval or disapproval to avoid any bias.

## **Scores**

Each examiner gives a score for each of the ten sections of each scenario, so there are a total of 60 raw scores compiled following completion of the Oral Examination. These scores are examined and statistically analyzed by an external psychometric service hired by the ABE to ensure that the process is unbiased and fair, and that everyone who deserves to pass will pass.

Given the number of scores tallied, don't let one or two uncertain answers shake your confidence!

## **Examination Confidentiality**

Candidates sign the following confidentiality statement and examination policy on transcribing examination data prior to the examination:

"I understand that the content of the certification examination is proprietary and strictly confidential information. I hereby agree that I will not disclose, either directly or indirectly, any questions or any part of any questions from the examination to any person or entity. I understand that the unauthorized receipt, retention, possession, copying or disclosure of any examination materials, including but not limited to the content of any examination questions, before, during, or after the examination, may subject me to legal action. Such legal action may result in monetary damages and/or disciplinary action including denial or revocation of certification."

## **Examination Results**

The results of the Oral Examination are presented to the Directors of the Board by the Oral Examination Committee. The Secretary of the Board will notify the Candidates by letter whether they passed or failed the examination.

## **Appeal Policy**

*The Appeal Process for Adverse Decisions Affecting Certification or Diplomate Status* document is available upon written request to the Central Office of the ABE.

- Appeals must be received within 30 calendar days after receipt of the failing grade.
- If an appeal is received for a failing grade on the Oral Examination, the Oral Examination Review Committee will conduct a review in conjunction with Measurement Incorporated to assure that all grades were accurately reported.