



American Board of Endodontics

Oral Examination Guidelines

February 27, 2024

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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 to support the specialty of endodontics and wish you the best of luck in completing your goal.

Hotel Accommodations and Orientation

Sheraton Westport Plaza Hotel St. Louis
900 Westport Plaza Drive
St. Louis, MO 63146

Additional Travel and Logistics Information

A block of hotel rooms is reserved for each exam to make your travel experience as easy as possible. Please plan on taking advantage of these convenient arrangements, as it is mandatory that you stay onsite.

Each Candidate traveling to St. Louis for the Oral Exam is expected to stay at the Sheraton Westport Plaza Hotel and book a room using the ABE room block. The ABE is required to fill our Sheraton room block. If the room you book at the Sheraton Westport Plaza Hotel St. Louis is not in your name, or not reserved using the ABE room block or if you decide to share a room, please send a check for \$125 made payable to the ABE, 750 W. Lake Cook Road, Ste 137, Buffalo Grove, IL 60089. Your exam results letter will not be released without payment.

Health and Safety

The American Board of Endodontics is committed to maximizing the safety of all participants while we fulfill our mission in Board certification. ABE continues to monitor and follow recommendations from the CDC for preventing the spread of COVID-19. We will notify participants by email if there are any requirements or changes.

Orientation

Each Candidate must present a valid Photo ID at orientation.

Candidates challenging the Oral Exam will meet in a room located near the lobby of the Sheraton Westport Plaza Hotel for their check-in and Orientation. An ABE staff member will then escort candidates to the Westport Conference Center for the exam. The indoor walking time from the hotel to the conference center is approximately 5 minutes.

During orientation, each candidate is required to sign the ABE Candidate Examination Confidentiality Statement and receive your badge.

No food is served at orientation or the exam, so please plan accordingly.

Electronic devices (including but not limited to laptops, smart phones, tablets, smart watches, etc.), backpacks, tote bags, luggage, briefcases, and books are not allowed and cannot be brought to the orientation room or to the exam location. If you plan to travel directly after your exam, please either leave these items in your hotel room or plan to leave with the concierge PRIOR to your Orientation time.

Examination Location

Candidates will be escorted to the exam location by ABE staff after they have completed their Orientation.

Westport Conference Center

600 Westport Plaza Drive
St. Louis, MO 63146

Exam Cancellations

If a Candidate must cancel their exam, a written confirmation is a requirement and should be sent by email to staff@amboardendo.org. Phone calls regarding cancellations are not accepted – the notification must be received by the ABE in writing. Candidates who register and decide to withdraw from an exam are required to complete a new online registration and submit a new payment for the next open exam. The Central Office will not apply your canceled application fee to a new exam. Exam eligibility does vary for each Candidate; please contact ABE staff to inquire about your period of eligibility.

Contact Information

Please help us to get all notifications to you, including exam results, in a timely manner by keeping all your contact information up to date, including your email address and cell phone number. If you have any changes to your contact information, please notify ABE staff as soon as possible via email at staff@amboardendo.org.

Exam Center Protocol

Professional dress is expected. Standard business attire is requested on examination day.

Candidates are not allowed to bring guests nor take anything into the exam room. **Cell phones, smart watches, handbags, and wallets will be checked in and kept in the reception area while you are in the exam room.** Eating, drinking, or smoking is not allowed. Water will be provided.

Each candidate will be escorted to an examination room and will stay in the same room for the entire process (the examiners will move--candidates will not). There will be two examiners per exam and each candidate will be examined by a total of 6 examiners. Drinking water, paper and a pen to take notes will be provided to each candidate. The notes will be removed from the room after each exam. Candidates are not allowed to bring any notes into the exam room.

Oral Examination Information and Format

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 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.

Each examination will take 30 minutes, and each candidate 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 in order 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 full scope of endodontics. Questions are developed from a clinical case history that is presented to the Candidate. The questions are standardized 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 and 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. The following are question topic examples 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 prior to the first questions.

Subjective and Objective Examination

In this section, the candidate will be provided information about the examination and diagnostic testing for the patient but something will be missing. The candidate will need 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 an endodontist will see frequently during their practice lifetime. How the patient's medical history might impact treatment is a common subject of questions for this topic.

Diagnosis/Differential Diagnosis

Diagnosis is the next section. In this part of the exam, a candidate will be asked to formulate a pulpal and periapical diagnosis based on the information provided. Candidates are expected to use current diagnostic terminology when asked to make a diagnosis. Also, a candidate should 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. A candidate should be prepared to answer questions regarding the origin and causative factors for the patient's diagnosis. Keep in mind, etiology can be multi-faceted, and not due to a single entity.

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

Treatment

Next, a candidate will be asked for treatment recommendation as well as all reasonable alternative treatment plans. The candidate should explain their preferred course of treatment as well as discuss advantages and disadvantage of different options.

Application of Biologic Principles

The next topic 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 includes 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

Questions regarding prognosis may include the specific case under discussion, or questions about the prognosis for treatment in general.

Post-treatment Evaluation

Lastly, post-treatment evaluation questions may be related to timelines 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 specifically asking the candidate to cite references. Candidates are also encouraged to cite references with any answer for which citation is appropriate. In quoting literature, familiarity with the hierarchy of evidence will be expected.

Time Management

As a timed exam, examiners may control the pace to ensure the candidate is allowed the opportunity to answer each question. Don't interpret "let's move on" as approval or disapproval, in fact, examiners will try not to show verbal or non-verbal approval or disapproval to avoid bias. A candidate may pass on a question they are not prepared to answer at that moment and if time permits, may return to that question.

Scores

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

Examination Confidentiality

Prior to the examination, candidates sign the following confidentiality statement and examination policy on transcribing examination data:

"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 candidates by email whether they passed or failed the examination.

Appeal Policy**I. No Appeal for Failing Grade**

No appeal may be taken from an adverse decision based on an individual's receipt of a failing grade on the Oral Examination.

II. Appeal Mechanism for the Oral Examination

A. Upon completion of the examination and prior to issuance of a grade, the Candidate may contact the ABE Chief Operating Officer if he/she believes there were extenuating circumstances that may have affected their performance during the examination. The request with an explanation of why an appeal is needed must be made in writing and received via email or certified mail within **five (5)** calendar days of his/her examination. The written request for appeal and review of the examination should be dated, and a detailed explanation of specific reasons why the examination performance was adversely affected should be provided. The

Candidate will be notified in writing of receipt of the appeal, and informed that the appeal will be reviewed and responded to within 30 days of the receipt of the appeal. Each appeal is subject to a nonrefundable fee in the amount of \$350.

B. All appeals will be reviewed by the Oral Examination Committee Chair and the ABE Executive Committee for evaluation and decision. During this time, results of the examination in question will not be disclosed to the Candidate. Examination performance will not be re-scored, but only the circumstances and administration of the examination will be reviewed. The final decision will be communicated to the Candidate by the Chief Operating Officer.

1. If the appeal is granted:
 - a. the result of the appealed examination, regardless of whether pass or fail will be sealed and not disclosed. Requests for additional information regarding an examination result are not considered part of the appeal process.
 - b. a second examination will be provided at the next regularly scheduled exam cycle.
 - c. the candidate must resubmit any required application materials excluding the examination fee.
2. If the appeal is denied:
 - a. the Candidate may choose to continue with the Board Certification process, but their appealed exam result is sealed and will not be disclosed. No future examination fees will be waived and there will be no refund of the \$350 appeal fee.
 - b. Candidates in their last year of eligibility may appeal their examination but will lose their Board Eligible status and must reestablish eligibility and pay the appropriate eligibility fees.