



American Board of Endodontics

Oral Examination Guidelines

September 8, 2025

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Introduction

On behalf of the ABE Board of Directors, we congratulate you on your decision to pursue Board Certification in endodontics. This guide will help you prepare for the Oral Examination. We wish you success in achieving this important milestone.

Hotel Accommodations and Orientation

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

All candidates must stay at the Sheraton Westport Plaza Hotel using the official ABE room block. The ABE is contractually required to fill this block. If your reservation is not made under your own name, not booked through the ABE block, or if you share a room, you must send a check made payable to the ABE, 750 W. Lake Cook Road, Ste 137, Buffalo Grove, IL 60089. Exam results will not be released until this payment is received. Contact ABE staff at staff@amboardendo.org to confirm the required amount.

Exam Cancellations

If a candidate must cancel their exam, a written confirmation is a requirement and must be sent by email to staff@amboardendo.org. Please do not call the office regarding the cancellation, especially on the day of your exam. 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.

Check-In and Orientation

Candidates will meet in a room near the lobby of the Sheraton Westport Plaza Hotel for check-in and orientation. An ABE staff member will escort candidates to the Westport Conference Center (approximately a five-minute indoor walk).

At orientation, you will:

- Sign the ABE Candidate Examination Confidentiality Statement
- Receive your examination badge (photo ID required)

Important Notes:

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

- No food is served during orientation or the exam. Please plan accordingly. Water will be provided.
- Candidates are not allowed to bring guests or take anything (including food or drinks) into the exam room.
- Electronic devices, backpacks, luggage, and reading materials are not permitted in the orientation or exam rooms. If you plan to travel immediately after the exam, arrange to store belongings in your hotel room or with the concierge before orientation.
- 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).
- 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.
- There will be two examiners per exam, and each candidate will be examined by a total of 6 examiners.

Examination Format

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.
- Each candidate will be given a 10-minute break between sessions. **Do not discuss the exam process with any other examinee between or after the sessions.**

Examination Content

The Oral Examination evaluates the full scope of endodontics through case-based clinical scenarios. Questions are designed to assess higher-level cognitive skills, including problem solving, decision-making, analysis, and evaluation.

Candidates are expected to:

- Apply scientific and clinical principles to diagnosis and treatment
- Justify treatment decisions with evidence-based reasoning
- Formulate primary and alternative treatment plans
- Assess outcomes and adjust management based on systemic, psychological, or ethical considerations
- Cite relevant literature whenever appropriate (and especially when asked), demonstrating familiarity with the hierarchy of evidence

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 all relevant information about the patient's medical and dental history along with the findings of the clinical examination and diagnostic testing. Questions may relate to intraoral and extraoral examination methods or findings as well as the rationale, technique, and accuracy of various pulpal and periapical diagnostic tests.

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 a 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 disadvantages of different options.

Application of Biologic Principles

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

Complications of Treatment

The 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.

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.

Scoring

Each candidate is examined by six examiners across three sessions. Examiners independently score each section. A total of 60 raw scores are compiled and analyzed by an external psychometric service to ensure fairness and reliability. Statistical adjustments account for examiner severity and case difficulty.

Key Point: One or two uncertain answers will not determine your outcome—focus on demonstrating your overall competence.

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 non-refundable 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.