Improving the American Board of Anesthesiology (ABA) Primary Certification Examination System

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ABMS Standards for Initial Certification

GS-1. Each ABMS Member Board’s Standards for Initial Certification will incorporate all six ABMS/ACGME Core Competencies: Practice-Based Learning & Improvement; Patient Care & Procedural Skills; Systems-based Practice; Medical Knowledge; Interpersonal & Communication Skills; and Professionalism.

GS-4. Each ABMS Member Board will work to maintain the value of Initial Certification to the Public and profession through systematic efforts to evaluate and improve the initial certification program to reflect advances in medical practice and assessment methodology. These efforts should seek to increase program quality, relevance, and meaningfulness while remaining sensitive to the time, administrative burden, and costs (monetary and other) to candidates and training programs.
# From Traditional to Staged Exams

## Traditional Exams

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part 1 Exam</th>
<th>General medical and specialty-specific knowledge</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part 2 Exam</td>
<td>Judgment, adaptability, ability to communicate in an organized and effective manner, and application of medical knowledge</td>
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## Staged Exams

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BASIC Exam</th>
<th>Foundational general medical and specialty-specific knowledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADVANCED Exam</td>
<td>General medical and specialty-specific knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standardized Oral Exam</td>
<td>Judgment, adaptability, ability to communicate in an organized and effective manner, and application of medical knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OSCE</td>
<td>Communication &amp; Professionalism and Technical skills</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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The Staged Exam System

• Beginning in 2014 the ABA’s Part 1 Examination was replaced by a new two-staged written examination process.
  
  • The **BASIC Examination** is administered at the midpoint of residency training.
  
  • The **ADVANCED Examination** is administered after residency has been successfully completed.
  
• The BASIC and ADVANCED Exams continue to be SBA MCQ examinations that test medical content knowledge.
The Staged Exam System

• Beginning in 2018 the ABA’s Part 2 Examination will be replaced by a new two-component APPLIED examination process.

  • A **Standardized Oral Examination (SOE)** will be identical to the Traditional Part 2 Exam.

  • An **Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE)** will be administered after residency has been successfully completed.

• The SOE and OSCE Exams will be scored independently and candidates must pass each component of the APPLIED Exam.
The Part 2 Examination

The Traditional Part 2 Exam and the SOE will be identical

The Traditional Part 2 Examination is used to determine whether the candidate possesses the qualities and attributes that are fundamental to performance as a Board certified anesthesiologist:

- Judgment
- Ability to apply their knowledge
- Clarity of expression
- Adaptability to changing circumstances
The Part 2 Exam/SOE Structure

- The Part 2 exam/SOE is conducted in two sequential 35-minute sessions.
- Two examiners are present for each session.
- Both examiners are in active practice and are ABA diplomates.
OSCE Purpose & Content Outline

The OSCE will assess domains that are difficult to assess in written or oral exam formats

- **Two (2) major content domains:**
  - Communication & Professionalism
  - Technical Skills Related to Patient Care

- **Nine (9) skills:**
  - 6 Communication & Professionalism Skills
  - 3 Technical Skills
Communication & Professionalism Skills

1. Periprocedural complications
2. Informed consent
3. Patient autonomy
4. Treatment options
5. Communication with other professionals
6. Practice-based learning and Improvement

These stations utilize standardized patients
Technical Skills

7. Applied ultrasound anatomy for invasive procedures
8. Interpretation of Transesophageal Echocardiograms (TEE)
9. Interpretation of Monitors

*These stations utilize examiners in room*
Exam Format & Logistics

• 7-station circuit
  • 5 Communication & Professionalism stations
  • 2 Technical Skills stations

• Maximum 8-minute encounters with 4 minutes between stations

• 84 minutes of total OSCE testing time

• 4 hours, 20 minutes total exam administration time across SOE and OSCE
OSCE Station Layout: Examination Room
OSCE Station Layout:
PACU/Procedure Room
OSCE Station Layout: Consultation Room