



## **ABR Exam Security Policy January 2012**

### **History:**

Initial Approval: May 2011 (BOT, EOF Committee, Professionalism Committee)

Editorial Revision: September 28, 2011 (Admin)

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Editorial Revision: December 21, 2011 (Communications & Editorial Services)

### **Policy:**

The ABR's policy is to maintain a sufficient level of exam security to protect the integrity of all of its certification decisions, which are based on examinations. Maintaining security ensures that the exam results issued by the ABR always reflect only examinee attainment or maintenance of the standard of knowledge, skill, and understanding essential to the practice of diagnostic radiology, radiation oncology, and medical physics, and conversely, do not reflect unauthorized examinee access to information sources that may lead the examinee to answer questions differently than he/she would have based solely on his/her own knowledge, skill, and understanding. Such unauthorized access to sources may include, but is not limited to: (1) giving or receiving confidential exam information at any time prior to, during, or after the administration of the exam and/or(2) possession of study materials in any medium by an examinee during the time period of the exam.

### **Guidelines**

For individuals (before and after an examination):

1. **It is permissible** to discuss topics covered on the exam, the manner of test administration, and test-taking strategy. It is fine to say, "There is a lot of \_\_\_\_\_; I had almost no \_\_\_\_\_." Examinees should realize that each exam form is a sample of an overall domain, and the samples included on subsequent forms will be different.
2. The objective is for examinees to study and master the knowledge, skill, and understanding required for practice. **It is NOT permissible** to memorize specific questions and answers that might be encountered on a future exam.
3. **It is NOT permissible** to give or receive explicit recollection of exact questions, answer choices, and (supposed) correct answers. Both oral and written transmissions are prohibited by the policy.

For residency training programs (exam preparation activity):

1. Exam preparation groups, as well as topical reviews, **are permitted and encouraged** as means of preparation for examinations. The writing of sample questions and sample examinations, and

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the simulation of the exam setting, are also permitted and encouraged, as long as the questions used are not recalled questions.

2. The objective is for examinees to study and master the knowledge, skill, and understanding required for practice. **The program should NOT facilitate or condone** the memorization of specific questions and answers that might be encountered on a future exam.
3. No collections of recalled items should be tolerated in any media format.
4. Program directors should monitor their programs for evidence of violations in examination security and take necessary steps to prevent and stop this behavior.

### **Responsibilities**

**Any individual observing a violation of this policy by an examinee or someone associated with a residency training program should:**

1. Exercise the principles of professionalism to maintain the integrity of the examination and of the certifications held by ABR diplomates.
2. Follow appropriate channels of communication within the program to ensure that all such activity ceases.
3. Put the individual/program in touch with the ABR, or the ABR in touch with the individual/program if there is any question about what is and is not permissible.
4. Report persistent violations directly to the ABR.

### **Penalties**

For individuals:

1. An individual can receive a letter of warning, have his/her exam results invalidated, be required to retake an examination, be barred from the examination process for a period of time and/or until a specified milestone has been met, have the incident reported to other parties, be permanently barred from certification, and/or be prosecuted for copyright violation.

For programs:

1. A program can receive a letter of warning, be requested to conduct an investigation and report findings to the ABR, have the exam results of its candidates invalidated, be required to have its candidates retake an examination, have culpable candidates barred from admission to ABR exams for a period of time and/or until a specified milestone has been met, be reported to other parties (such as chair, dean, DIO, accrediting bodies, institutional sponsors, etc.), and/or be prosecuted for copyright violation.
2. Program director or faculty penalties may include certificate action based on breach of professionalism.

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### Supporting documentation

1. From examination registration form for computer-based exams, signed by examinee in advance:  
I further understand that irregular behavior before, during or after the examination such as copying answers, sharing information, using notes, or otherwise giving or obtaining unauthorized information or aid—evidenced by observation, statistical analysis of answers, or otherwise—on any portion of the examination will be reported to the Board and will constitute grounds for the invalidation of my examination, and may lead to my being judged unacceptable for certification by the Board. I recognize that examination booklets, examination questions, props for the computer based examination, and questions on the computer based examination are copyrighted as the sole property of the American Board of Radiology and must not be removed from the test area or reproduced, in whole or in part, and that any reproduction of copyrighted material, whether from memory or otherwise, is a federal offense and that I may be liable to pay damages incurred by the Board.

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2. From proctor manual - announcement given orally at each computer-based exam:

Any diplomate or diplomates suspected of any irregularity, such as copying or sharing answers with other diplomates, will risk having their examinations invalidated. Therefore, do not communicate with other diplomates during the examination. Such communication may be grounds for the invalidation of your examination regardless of whether information concerning the exam was actually exchanged. All examination materials are the sole property of the American Board of Radiology. There will be nothing available for review after taking the examination, and nothing may be copied or removed from the examination room. There is no scheduled break. You are not permitted to leave the examination area during the exam session except to go to the restroom. If you must leave your work station during the examination, the proctor must be notified. Only one person of each gender may be out of the area at any one time. No extra exam time will be given for the time you are out of the area.

3. **Statement Agreed to Before "Written" Exams at Pearson VUE:** All examination material is the sole property of the American Board of Radiology and is subject to copyright protection. You are expressly prohibited from disclosing, publishing, reproducing, or transmitting this exam, in whole or in part, in any form or by any means, verbal or written, electronic or mechanical, for any purpose. All electronic devices, including any equipment that has photographic or recording capability, are prohibited in the examination room. Possession of these devices or any activity that raises suspicion that you are attempting to commit any of the acts listed above may be cause for the invalidation of your exam and may subject you to legal action for violation of copyright. Examinees are not permitted to communicate with one another in any way during the exam. If your behavior suggests that you are communicating or attempting to communicate with other examinees, your exam may be invalidated.