

FAQs AND MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT CORE EXAM

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How is this exam scored?

- Criterion (not norm) referenced
 - Measures what a candidate does relative to standard vs. how he/she does relative to others
 - Passing score determined by “Angoff committees” who ask “Would just-competent candidate answer this question correctly
 - 100% could theoretically pass exam

- Two stage scoring process
 - Step 1: Must achieve overall score above the Angoff standard for exam as a whole.
 - Yes? Move to step 2
 - No? FAIL
 - Step 2: Must achieve conditioning threshold for each category (all 18). This is higher for Physics than other categories
 - Yes? PASS
 - No? if 5 or fewer categories, CONDITION. If > 5 , FAIL

What were the results of 2013 exam?

- PASS - 87%
- FAIL - 11.5% (n=146)
- CONDITION - 1.5% (n=16) -all in Physics
- This is similar to combined results of prior physics, clinical and oral exams

Why didn't anyone condition any section other than physics?

- Conditioning standard for physics is higher than other categories
- If weak in multiple categories, failed exam

Why do I have to pass all 18 categories?

- Last comprehensive exam taken by candidate
- ABR trustees think it is important that all have knowledge in each category which meets a minimum standard

Who writes these questions?

- Item writer committees in each category
 - Composed of diverse group of ABR certified volunteers, all of whom must be in MOC
 - Academic, private practice, geographical distribution; core committees generally faculty in accredited residency programs
 - Includes medical physicist on each committee
- Questions vetted, edited by entire committee
- Test Assembly meeting – each question vetted by all attendees. Many discarded because of content.

Why doesn't the ABR just write a new exam each time?

- Validity and reliability of exams is increased when some exam questions (with good performance statistics) are re-used, and when versions of the exam are “equated” to maintain a constant level for the passing standard
- Thus, must repeat questions form to form and year to year

What can I study for Quality and Safety?

- NIS syllabus on ABR website has been updated to include material on Core exam

Does it matter to the ABR what the candidates think about the process?

- Complaint: no breaks
 - Time added (30 minutes) to each day to accommodate breaks tho few took entire exam period
- Complaint: there was nothing I liked/could eat in the snacks you provided
 - Candidates can bring own snacks. ABR will provide water but not snacks

- Complaint: the hotel breakfasts were way too expensive, room service was way too slow, and internet was way too costly
 - Internet and breakfast now included in price of hotel room at Renaissance

Why can't I just go to a PearsonVUE center to take this test?

- Modular content difficult for PV
- PV can't handle case structure on their software
- PV monitors aren't calibrated, can't control lighting
- Aim: to have distributed exam. We are working on system to implement

Why didn't I get better feedback ?

- Concentration was on producing valid, reliable exam in a stable environment
- Feedback to candidates in 2014 will be more robust and give results relative to other candidates (ie quartile/category) as well as relative to passing standard