



Exam Integrity Policy

Policy:

All examination material is the sole property of the American Board of Radiology and is subject to copyright protection.

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, interventional 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.

Examinee Guidelines

Examinees are expressly prohibited from disclosing, publishing, reproducing, or transmitting exam content, in whole or in part, in any form or by any means, verbal or written, electronic or mechanical, for any purpose. Examples of unauthorized use are listed below. This list is not all inclusive.

- ✓ Accumulating memorized questions
- ✓ Sharing recalled questions
- ✓ Giving or receiving confidential exam information at any time prior to, during or after the exam administration (please refer to guidelines listed below)
- ✓ Study materials in any media in an examinee's possession during the time period of an exam

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 graduate educational programs (exam preparation activity):

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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 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.

Irregular Behavior on Examinations

All ABR computer-based examinations are administered in secure testing centers by test administrators who are responsible for maintaining the integrity and security of the certification process. Test administrators are required to report to ABR any irregular or improper behavior by an examinee such as leaving the building, accessing electronic devices, copying or sharing answers, using notes, or otherwise giving or obtaining unauthorized information or aid. Any such behavior may constitute grounds for the invalidation of the examination and may lead to an examinee being judged unacceptable for certification. Notes, scratch paper, textbooks, calculators or other reference materials are prohibited from the examination room.

- a. For residents; the program will be notified if 1) Exam scores are invalidated; 2) an investigation continues beyond exam release date (in this situation the program will be notified at the time exam results are released to others and at the conclusion of the investigation and decision-making)
- b. For MOC exams, the diplomate will be notified by letter of investigation

Electronic Device

All electronic devices, including any with communications, photographic or recording capability, are prohibited in the examination rooms. As well, access to any such devices is prohibited during the examination session. The examination session begins when you check-in for an exam through the completion of exam parts on a given day; **including any and all schedule or unscheduled breaks**. Any such device visible at any time will be grounds for immediate dismissal from the examination. In that event, the examination may be invalidated and further disciplinary action may be taken, including penalties outlined in this policy.

Policy Violations

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 examinees.
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.
 - a. Any barring from the examination or certification process will result in an immediate change of the Board Eligibility status to "Not Certified, Not Board Eligible" for the duration of that penalty. No extensions of the Board Eligibility period would be provided as a result of "Board Eligible" time lost.
2. Program director or faculty penalties may include certificate action based on breach of professionalism

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.

ABR Security Measures:

1. Copyright

All American Board of Radiology (ABR) materials are protected by the federal Copyright Act, 17 U.S.C § 101, et seq. Access to all such materials, as further detailed below, is strictly conditioned upon agreement to abide by ABR's rights under the Copyright Act and to maintain examination confidentiality. The (ABR) has a responsibility to protect the integrity of its examination material from unauthorized use. ABR exams are considered intellectual property. Hence, the ABR chooses to copyright to protect the works of authorship on all published examination forms on an annual basis. Copyright Infringement need not be intentional and can be defined as the use of ABR exam content without explicit consent from the ABR

The copyright process is meant to:

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1. Mitigate risk to the ABR
2. Discourage infringement

Infringement is defined as:

1. Deliberately selling copyrighted ABR examination materials
2. Any attempts to gain materially in any way from copyrighted ABR examination materials
3. Memorizing and sharing copyrighted ABR examination materials

2. Biometrics

To maintain security measures during examinations, the ABR captures examinee palm vein scans and photos at the time of exam admission.

Palm Vein technology is a non-invasive scan of an examinee's palm veins. More information regarding the use of this technology can be found at <http://www.fujitsu.com/us/services/biometrics/palm-vein/>. It is important to note that palm vein technologies are not used by government security agencies.

- All ABR examinees are required to participate in the palm vein scanning and have their photos taken. Examinees who refuse to participate in palm vein scanning and/or photo capture will not be allowed to take their scheduled examination(s).
- With advance written approval of the ABR, an examinee may be excused from palm vein scanning and/or photo capture upon check-in.
- Examinees unable to participate: ABR may excuse from palm vein scanning and/or photo capture certain examinees who are physically unable to participate and those adhering to religious restrictions or prohibitions.

3. Exam Content Submission and Storage

Paper

All Paper copies of test items are secured in locked fireproof cabinets in the designated secured area at the end of each business day. The keys to these cabinets are maintained by the Assistant Director of Exam Production, and access to the secured areas is restricted to designated personnel at all times.

Electronic

Submission of ABR Exam content is limited to one of two methods:

- **Item Banking:** All content is stored on ABR controlled servers at the ABR co-location facilities. Access to this system is password protected and limited to the appropriate personnel and volunteers. ***Once a volunteer or employee has resigned, or no longer serves the ABR, the account will be disabled immediately.***

- **FTP:** The ABR maintains a web-based password protected secure FTP server for the submission of exam content. All content submitted to the ABR will be removed 3 times per day and placed on secure internal servers housed at the ABR main office. Passwords for the FTP site will be changed on an annual basis.

Note: As of April 2, 2012, submission of content outside of these two methods (email, digital media, hard copy, etc.) is not accepted and the submitter will be asked to resubmit via the approved methods.

4. Transfer of Exam Materials

Paper

- Items are transferred via a secured express delivery service (UPS/FEDEX) with tracking ability. Signatures are required for the receipt of delivery. All material will be packaged in TYVEK Tamper indicating envelopes. Sender and recipient will receive a confirmation email that the shipment has been sent and the estimated delivery date. Packages are tracked, and automatic delivery confirmations are requested and sent to the designated personnel at the Board office.

Electronic

- Electronic review of material should be done within the ABR secured online system. All requests to review content outside of the approved methods (ExamDeveloper™/WebEx) must be sent to the Associate Executive Director of that discipline. If a special request has been granted to review material outside of the online system, content is to be copied to an encrypted flash drive. Shipment of the flash drive will be the same as shipment of paper materials.
- All digital documents will be password protected.

5. Secure Volunteer Access

- It is the ABR's expectation that when volunteers are granted access to proprietary information (exam content, exam blueprint, etc.) that access is restricted to only the specific volunteer. The security and integrity of ABR exam content is dependent upon full compliance by all. ABR volunteers must not provide their access information or instructions to any other persons, including but not limited to: assistants, colleagues, residents, etc.
- In the event that a violation of this policy occurs due to the actions of a volunteer, the ABR reserves the right to relieve the volunteer of his/her responsibilities.