



Oral Certifying Examiner Guide

Interventional Radiology/
Diagnostic Radiology

2025

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Introduction

Thank you for volunteering to be an examiner for the Interventional Radiology/Diagnostic Radiology Oral Certifying Exam. The ABR depends heavily on volunteers such as you to prepare and administer our exams. We know you are taking time away from other activities to do this, and we appreciate your commitment to our mission.

In response to the COVID pandemic in 2020, ABR staff, with input from many volunteers, developed a remote oral exam platform. This platform closely mimics the previous face-to-face oral exam experience. The number of questions, the scope and difficulty of the questions, the coverage of the relevant domain, and the scoring model are the same as in the traditional in-person oral exam.

What has changed is that candidates and examiners choose their preferred exam location, subject to certain technical and logistical requirements. In addition, there is slightly more time between exam sessions to allow for connectivity interruptions.

IMPORTANT NOTE: This guide and the resources provided are confidential and meant only for ABR Interventional Radiology/Diagnostic Radiology Oral Examiners. Please *do not share* or discuss with anyone else.

Before the Exam

Examiner Resource Page

The [Examiner Resource Page](#) that you used to access this guide provides a wealth of additional information about the oral exam. Please go over the materials to prepare for the exam.

Webinars

In the month before the exam, there will be several webinars conducted by the IR associate executive director and IR Trustees:

- General orientation
- Category and panel chair orientation
- New examiner orientation (required, if needed)
- ADA examiner orientation (required, if needed)
- Examiner Q&A

You will receive calendar appointments from Exam Delivery for the webinars. The webinars will be recorded and posted on the Examiner Resource Page 24 to 48 hours after each event. Exam Delivery will send a notification when recordings are posted. Please make every effort to attend the webinars specific to your role in the exam. If you are unable to attend, please review the recordings.

Software Demo Videos

Several oral exam software demo videos are available on the [Examiner Resource Page](#).

Self-Guided Software Training and Technical Check

Before the exam, you are required to complete a self-guided training to familiarize yourself with the oral exam software. If you are examining remotely, you must also complete a technical check to ensure your system meets minimum connectivity and internet browser compatibility requirements. This training and technical check must be completed each time you serve as an oral examiner.

Hands-on Training

New examiners will receive individual hands-on training with the oral exam software from ABR staff before the exam. All examiners can request this one-on-one training if they desire additional guided review.

Content Review

Five business days before the exam, you will receive an email with a link to the content for your review. You will be able to review content throughout this pre-exam period. On exam days, you can review content up to five minutes before your first session, anytime you have an open period, and during lunch.

Conflict Review

You will have an opportunity to review the candidates you could possibly examine. Please review the candidates carefully for anyone you may know personally, have trained, or have worked with. Please refrain from doing a web search of potential candidates you see on your list. We want to limit the possibility of you developing a bias toward the candidates based on where they trained, where they practice, or where they live.

Pre-exam Q&A

If you have remaining questions, you will have a chance to ask them during an optional Q&A session before the exam.

Technical and Location Requirements for Remote Examiners

Computer System Requirements*

The requirements listed below provide a basic overview of a system that will meet the technical requirements for ABR remote exams. If you are missing any necessary equipment, please refer to the email you received on Technical Requirements and Reimbursements for recommended links for purchases and the Examiner Purchase Expense Form.

If you need assistance with your computer setup, please contact our Systems Operations Help Desk at 520-790-2900, Monday – Friday, 9 am to 7 pm Eastern.

Help Desk:

520-790-2900

Monday – Friday

9 am - 7 pm EST

Basic computer requirements:

- Internet/Network: reliable broadband internet connection, minimum 5 Mbps (megabit per second) download and 1 Mbps upload
 - [Check your connection speed](#)
- Computer: desktop or laptop (no tablets) with Windows 10 or MacOS X 10.11 or higher
- Computer memory: minimum of 4GB RAM
- Computer drive/storage: minimum of 10GB of free disk space
- Monitors: **TWO** monitors. One must be ≥ 20" and 1080p minimum resolution
 - [Check your monitor resolution](#)
- Keyboard and mouse
- **Headset: wired headset with microphone required to ensure optimal audio for examiners and candidates**
- Internet browser: latest version of Google Chrome or Microsoft Edge
 - [Check your version of Google Chrome](#)
 - [Check your version of Microsoft Edge](#)
- Adapters: any adapters/cables needed to implement this setup
- Camera: integrated or external webcam with a minimum of 640 x 480 @ 10 frames per second

If you plan to administer the exam at a hospital or work institution, we recommend that you contact your IT department to have them whitelist all sites required for the exam. The necessary information can be found on the [Remote Exam Technical Specifications for Institutions page](#).

** If you are examining in the Tucson Exam Center, your computer will be set up for you. You do not need to purchase equipment. This list is for remote examiners only.*

Monitor Performance Self-Check (perform prior to technical check)

The [monitor performance self-check](#) is intended to show imaging findings that should help determine if your laptop or desktop monitor is sufficient for ABR remote exams.

Webex® Compatibility Test (perform prior to technical check)

Webex® will be used for the category and panel meetings and for the examiner Break Room. To verify that Webex® is compatible with your system, please visit [here](#).

**Location Requirements**

Please make sure your location is sufficiently private where there will be no interruptions during the exam. It should also be free from background noise.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Make sure you are using the equipment at the location where you plan to conduct the exam.

Exam Day Logistics

Exam Day Support

If you are examining in the Tucson Exam Center, there will be support available to assist with any issues that arise. How to indicate that you need assistance will be discussed in your examiner training/orientation the day before the exam. Exam Delivery will send a text to you from an 833 number on the morning of the first exam day. Please use this number to text them for exam day related issues.

You can also call the exam support team on exam days at 520-519-2177. This number will be available in the menu function when you click on “Help” in the top right corner of your exam screen. If you have questions prior to exam day, please contact Exam Delivery at examdelivery@theabr.org.

Dress Code

You should wear professional workplace attire (no medical scrubs, please).

IMPORTANT NOTES: The exam must be your only commitment on exam days.

- Do not do any other work while examining.
- Do not allow interruptions.
- Do not check your email.
- Do not plan clinical activity during scheduled breaks.

Exam Day Timing

Sessions

Each exam session has four 30-minute periods, with a 10-minute break after each period. On exam days, there will be one session in the morning and one in the afternoon. Exams will occur simultaneously across time zones. Candidates begin each exam session with a 30-minute check-in, so the total possible exam time for candidates will be 3 hours and 10 minutes.

The number of periods you will examine will depend on the scheduled number of candidates. We will make every attempt not to schedule you for more than three periods in a row. The examiner schedule in the oral exam software tool will display your schedule on each exam day. If your schedule changes during the exam day, an exam delivery specialist will send a text to notify you.

If needed, there will be a 30-minute recovery period after the last session each day. If a candidate or examiner experiences a major technical issue during an exam period, the candidate will be rescheduled for this recovery period. This will be followed by category meetings and then a panel meeting for discussion of candidates from the morning and afternoon sessions. If the recovery period is not needed, examiners will go straight to the category meeting. All category and panel meetings will be held in the examiner Break Room Webex®. Examiners will be notified via text message during the final exam period when to proceed to the category meeting.

Breaks

There is a 10-minute break after each exam period. If there are minor disruptions during the exam period, up to five minutes of this time can be used as make-up for the candidate. Examiners can also use break time to finish scoring and make notes on previous candidates. There will be a lunch break between sessions on each exam day.

Break Room

There will be a Webex® examiner Break Room, where you can go to talk with other examiners. You are free to enter the Break Room any time you have a break (in between sessions or during empty periods you may have). This is a place to socialize, but it is not a place to discuss individual candidate scoring. The associate executive director (AED) will spend most of their time in this room and will be available to answer general questions. Other ABR staff may be available in the Break Room during the day. The Break Room will open approximately one hour before the first exam period. The Break Room is where you will access your category and panel meetings.

Exam Day Process

Relief Examiners

A pool of relief examiners will be immediately available during the exam in case an examiner has difficulty joining an exam period. A relief examiner will be notified via text message by Exam Delivery as soon as a problem with an examiner is detected so they can be ready to go if needed. If the examiner cannot be connected within the first five minutes of the exam period, the relief examiner will take over. If you are called on to be a relief examiner, you will be notified when to refresh your schedule. The new candidate's name will appear as a link on your schedule, which you can click to enter the exam period.

ADA Examiners

Examiners with candidates requiring ADA accommodation will be notified and briefed with a required webinar the morning of the ADA candidates' exams.

Navigating the Exam Platform

The exam will be presented on the ABR's oral exam platform. When your candidate is ready, you will be notified by the system to admit them and a separate tab will open for that interaction.

The entry point for the examiner is the link emailed to you by the ABR to log in to the oral exam platform. If your connection is lost at any point during the day, this is the link you should use to log in again.

Please keep this link readily available so you can quickly get back into the software.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

- During the exam, the only software that should be running on your computer is the oral exam software. This will ensure the best performance. Do not have email, Microsoft Teams®, Microsoft Word®, or other programs running in the background, except for the program you are using to keep your exam link handy.
- It is vital that you have your phone with you during the exam. (Please set it to vibrate to avoid disruption.) If there is a technical issue or you are needed as a relief examiner, exam delivery staff will contact you through text message.

Check-In

When you log in at the beginning of the day, you will be presented with an identity verification and your schedule. If your name and the day/date is correct, click “Yes, this is me.” If it is not, click “No, this is not me” and notify floor support (if you are at the Tucson Exam Center) or call exam support staff (if you are examining remotely).

If you click “Yes, this is me,” an “Enter Exam” button will appear. Click it to proceed. The software will walk you through the rest of the check-in process, which includes the ABR Recording Agreement, selecting your audio and video output, and confirming candidate conflicts. For a video demonstration of the check-in screens, please [click here](#).

Pre-Exam Screens

If you have entered the exam software more than five minutes before the exam, you have the option to review cases. You can access Review Cases from the menu in the upper right corner of the Exam Schedule screen or (if there are more than 30 minutes until the exam) at the top of your schedule. When you are in Review Cases mode, the background is yellow. For more information on reviewing content in the exam software, please [see this video](#).

When it is time to start the exam, a pop-up box will prompt you to enter the session. When fewer than five minutes remain until your next exam period, you can also enter the exam period by selecting “Join your next exam period with [candidate’s name],” which will appear at the top of your Exam Schedule screen.

Entering Exam Period

Before you enter the Exam Period, you will see a “Pre-Exam Instructions” screen with important reminders. After reading the reminders, click “Ok,” and you will enter the exam software.

Media Window

The media window is where you interact with the candidate. This screen allows you to see what you are presenting to the candidate, the movements of their mouse, anything they draw on an image, and the video feed of their face. From here, you can also control your video and microphone.

The media window will open automatically when a candidate is let into the room. You can also activate it by clicking on an image to present a case. After either action, you will be asked to split your screens by dragging the media window onto your second monitor. Please see [this video](#) for instructions on how to split/separate your tabs.

You can turn your camera and microphone on and off using the device controls in the upper right corner of the media window. When the video and/or microphone are off, the icons will be grayed out with a slash through them.

Exam Software

Presenting Cases

The cases screen is separated into three columns. Case selection is in the left column. Images to present to the candidate are in the top center. Supplemental information about the case for the examiner is below the images in the center column. The scoring section is in the right column. There are two text boxes where you can take notes about the candidate: Case Evaluation for notes on each case and Final Evaluation for overall notes on the candidate's performance. Between these boxes are radio buttons where you can quickly mark how the candidate performed in certain areas.

00:12 until next period **PERIOD: 1- Doug Solomon** Exam Tools Examiner | Mark Rambo

Cases - 01 ARTERIAL AND VENOUS

- 504268
TechCheck 1 - US Maps
- 604269
TechCheck 2 - Cars
- 3002469
TechCheck 3 - Jaguar Car
- 3002479
TechCheck 4 - Desert Critters

Scripts

- REQUIRED
Period Intro
- REQUIRED
Period Conclusion
- TECHNICAL TROUBLESHOOTING
Resolve connection or video issues

History

Image A **Image B**

1. History/Clinical: A 79-year-old man with coronary artery disease on coumadin presents with flank pain and fever 8 months after cystectomy with ileal conduit for bladder cancer.

History Image - (OPTIONAL) History text

2. Further work-up or imaging:

Image A - Axial contrast-enhanced CT shows left hydronephrosis with perinephric stranding (scrolling stack)

3. Differential/Diagnosis:

Image B - Placement of left nephrostomy

4. Procedure:

Data:

- Creatinine 1.8
- WBC 16
- Fever 101.5
- INR 2.4

Renal imaging (ultrasound or CT)

Diagnosis:

- Obstructed distal left ureter

Differential:

- Anastomotic stricture
- Recurrent tumor
- Renal stone
- Infection

Treatment options:

- Percutaneous nephrostomy
- Nephroureteral catheter placement

Case Evaluation

Type note here...

○ 68
○ 69
○ 70
○ 71
○ 72

Final Evaluation

Type note here...

EXAM MODE

Example of the cases and scoring screen.

When the exam begins, candidates see a black screen that says, “Waiting for examiner to present.” Select a case using the case selection list on the left (under the timer), then select the first image (top center) by clicking on the thumbnail. The candidate will see only what is in the image box, not the thumbnails or the case description.

Candidates will also see the examiner in the bottom right corner of their software window. They can resize, switch, and minimize the windows. Candidates cannot see any portion of the supplemental information or scoring sections.

The software will sort the cases into the correct order for presentation. Start with the first case in the selection list and continue to the last one. When you click on a thumbnail to present an image, the border will turn gold to indicate it is the image being shown. A green checkmark will appear on each thumbnail image after it has been shown to the candidate. If you don't want the candidate looking at anything while you speak, click the case again and the gold border around the thumbnail will disappear from your screen and remove the image from the candidate's screen. The candidate will return to the black screen that says, "Waiting for examiner to present."

Some cases may require questions to be asked in the correct sequence. For example, candidates may have to answer a question related to Image A before you move on to Image B, which may hint at the answer to the first question. Do not click on Image B before the candidate has fully responded to questions about Image A.

Tools on the left side of the image include zoom, contrast/brightness, contrast inversion, drawing pencil, eraser, and reset. The candidate has the same tools. The examiner and the candidate cannot draw on the image or scroll through a stack of images at the same time. There is a control box in the top right corner of the examiner's image box. The candidate has default control of the image tools. When you want to take control of the image tools, click on "Examiner." To return control to the candidate, click on "Candidate."

Please be aware when you are presenting a case that the candidate can always see your cursor and you can always see theirs. If you are pointing at different parts of an image, they will see it in their window.

IMPORTANT NOTE: To help keep track of time, there is a countdown clock in the upper left corner of the screen. It will be green at first, turn yellow when there are five minutes left in the exam, and turn red when time has expired. In addition, chimes will sound at the five-minute and time expired mark for the examiner. The candidate will not see this countdown clock nor hear the chime. It is the examiner's duty to keep track of time when presenting cases.

The exam period is 30 minutes. The only reason to go over time is to recover time lost if the period started late or the candidate or examiner had brief technical outages. However, to keep the schedule on track, the exam period can only run over by five minutes. If the candidate needs more than five minutes to make up for lost time, they should be rescheduled to the recovery period at the end of the day. The examiner should notify Exam Delivery that the period needs more time, and they will reschedule the candidate to the recovery period at the end of the day (or on a different day for multi-day exams, depending on what other issues may have occurred for that candidate).

For more information on presenting cases, please see [this video](#).

Case Scoring

There is a Case Evaluation box in which you can type comments about each case, and a box to enter notes about the candidate's overall performance. The Final Evaluation box stays the same throughout the exam period, and you can add to it during each case.

Scoring is done within a range from 68 to 72, both for individual cases and for the summary score for the session. A score is given by the examiner for each case, with a 72 corresponding to an exceptionally strong performance, 71 for an above average performance, and 70 for an acceptable performance. A 70 is the passing standard. A 69 is for a weak performance: marginal but still failing. A 68 is for a complete miss, with the candidate performing very poorly and possibly dangerously if the case were encountered in practice.

The summary score is automatically calculated as the mean of the scores for each case, always rounded down to the next whole number. For example, if a candidate takes six cases in a session, five with a score of 70 and one with a 69, the candidate's summed score for the session would be 69. For each session, a score above 70 may partially or completely offset a failing score. Thus a 71 and a 69 average to a 70, a passing grade. A score of 68 on a single case must be offset by at least two scores of 71 or a single score of 72 on other cases within the session for the candidate to pass that section.

To pass the exam, the candidate must have a passing score on each section. If the candidate has a 68 final score on any section, they will fail, regardless of the score on the other sections. If the candidate has a score of 69 on two or more sections, they will fail. If a candidate has a 69 in one section and passes the rest of the exam, that single 69 can be raised to a passing grade by the examiner who gave the 69. If the examiner feels strongly that the fail should remain in place, then the candidate will fail the exam. Candidates who have a failing score in a section will be discussed in the category meeting, but the decision regarding the raising of single sessions with a score of 69 is made at the panel meeting.

To select a score of 68 or 69, you are required to enter a comment in the case evaluation section. Candidates who fail any section are permitted to request clarification of their deficiencies. These requests are handled directly through the ABR office by the associate executive director (AED). These clarifications necessitate sufficient notes/comments as to why candidates have received a 68 or 69 on any exam. You are also encouraged to add notes for a score of 70 to indicate whether it is a weak or strong 70. Your notes will also be useful to you when you attend the category and panel meetings. Examiners should have no communication with candidates regarding their performance and, if examiners are contacted by a candidate about their performance, the AED should be notified immediately. Candidates are instructed not to reach out to examiners for scoring clarification.

IMPORTANT NOTE: To select a score of 68 or 69, you are required to enter a comment in Case Evaluation.

If an exam period ends before you have finished scoring and taking notes, you can use some of the break time to go back to that candidate's scoring section by clicking on your schedule and the word "Scoring" next to the candidate's name. This will take you back to what looks like the exam period you were just in, but in the bottom left corner of the screen, instead of "Exam Mode," it will now say "Scoring Mode." In the image below, there are scores for the first two cases but not the other three. You could open any of these again to add more notes or change the score. When you are finished scoring, click on the menu (upper right) and click the "Home" button. If you are still between periods, this will take you to the schedule screen. If the next period has already started, it will prompt you to join that active exam period.

Ending an Exam Period

There are different scenarios for when a period can end, as detailed below.

Period complete with no technical issues (five to zero minutes left in the regular period): If your period had no technical issues and/or you have completely examined the candidate in the allotted amount of time, you may "Wrap Up Period" with up to five minutes left in the exam period.

You will hear steady chimes indicating the end of the normal allotted time. The software will prompt you to complete the period.

Period has technical issues and you need a couple of minutes to complete (zero to five minutes over regular period): If there were small technical issues during the period, you can use up to five minutes over the regular period time to complete the exam.

Period has technical issues and needs more than 10 minutes to complete (>5 minutes over regular period): At this point in the period, to keep your and the candidate's schedule on time, the system will force you out of the exam and complete the period. If you get to this point and have NOT completed the exam questioning, you will need to notify Exam Delivery to schedule this candidate for the recovery period at the end of the day.

Troubleshooting

If you have trouble logging in to the exam software or something goes wrong during an exam period, please try the following:

- De-select and re-select the image if there are any issues presenting a case.
- Refresh your browser. (Click the "Refresh" icon. It's the circular arrow-shaped icon at the top of the browser window, typically on the upper left side.) Try doing this several times.
- Exit the exam software and close all browsers completely. Then, using the access link sent via email each exam day, enter again.
- If problems persist, please use an alternative browser. The ABR supports Google Chrome and Microsoft Edge. If switching to the other browser does not resolve the issue, please contact ABR Sysops.
- If you are examining at the Tucson Exam Center, ask for floor support assistance.

Category and Panel Meetings

At the end of each day, after all exams are completed (including any requiring a recovery session), there will be two examiner meetings – a category meeting and a panel meeting.

The category meeting will include all examiners in a particular category, for example “Core IR,” with the purpose to discuss candidates who received a failing score (68 or 69). The examiner will be expected to present the reason for the failing score and the category chair will lead a group discussion. The other examiners in the category meeting, who have examined candidates in the same section with the same cases, can then offer input as to whether they agree with the scoring. The intent is to provide a means for normalizing the criteria for passing or failing. The individual examiner retains the right to decide whether to adjust the score, and the process is intended to help that examiner reach their final decision. If the examiner decides, after the discussion, to raise a candidate’s score, that change will not occur in the category meeting but during the panel meeting, when the examiner also has the input of the other examiners who saw the same candidate.

The purpose of the panel meeting is to review the performance of candidates across all four sections. Only candidates who have received category scores of 68 or 69 in one or more categories will be discussed. A candidate who enters the panel meeting with a 69 in two or more categories or a single 68 cannot have their scores raised, regardless of the prior discussion at the category meeting. As before, only a single failing score of 69 can be raised by the relevant examiner at the panel meeting.

All decisions to fail a candidate in either the category or panel meeting must be supported by written (typed) comments regarding performance on individual cases and overall performance. There must be sufficient documentation of the deficiencies in performance to justify the decision to fail.

In both the category and panel meetings, only the chair will have access to the candidate screen in the exam software. The chair will share that screen with the other examiners through Webex®. All examiners will have access to their scores and notes on the candidates to inform the discussion.

Category and panel meetings will be held in the Examiner Break Room. When you click on “Join Category Meeting” or “Join Panel Meeting” in your schedule, it will take you to the Break Room. There will be breakout sessions listed with the category number that you can choose to join. After category meetings are complete, the panel meeting breakout sessions will appear. For examiners with multiple panel meetings, a display of examiner names will indicate which panel meeting to go to first.

Panel chairs must finalize all scores even if the candidate passed.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

- The performance of the candidates is confidential and cannot be discussed outside the category or panel meeting.
- Exam content is also confidential and cannot be discussed with anyone except other examiners.

Exam Security

All candidates have been oriented and briefed regarding the essential elements of exam decorum and security. All sessions will be recorded for possible review of candidates, but recordings will not be retained long term. Examiners are the first and most significant elements of reporting for decorum or security breaches.

Reportable Events

- Apparent or actual use of any electronic device during an active exam period.
- Apparent review of reference materials during the session.
- Apparent presence of other people in the room.

Actions

- Warn the candidate of the breach.
- Complete the period.
- Concerns or actual observation of breaches must be reported to the IR associate executive director (AED) or an IR Trustee immediately after completion of the individual candidate. You will receive information about how to contact the AED on exam day.

Oral Exam FAQs

1. What if a candidate needs to use the restroom during the exam?

There is a 10-minute break after each exam period.

2. Is the exam being recorded?

All exams are recorded for possible review but will not be stored long term. Candidates are recorded the entire time. Examiners are only recorded when in an exam period.

3. Do examiners have to keep their cameras on the entire time?

Examiners should keep their cameras on the entire time they are examining a candidate. If you require technical assistance, you may turn off your camera and mute your microphone while speaking with ABR staff.

4. Do candidates have to keep their cameras on the entire time?

Yes. The candidate must stay in view of the examiners throughout the exam.

Useful Resources

Monitor Performance Self-Check:

<https://www.theabr.org/monitor-performance-self-check-dr-and-ir>

IT Help Desk:

520-790-2900

Exam Delivery Staff:

examdelivery@theabr.org

