ABR | American Board of Radiology

Oral Certifying Examiner Guide

Radiation Oncology

2026

Contents

Introduction 2

Before the Exam 3

Technical and Location Requirements for Remote Examiners 5
- Computer System Requirements
- Monitor Performance Self-Check (perform prior to technical check)
- Webex® Compatibility Test (perform prior to technical check)
- Location Requirements

Exam Day Logistics 7
- Exam Day Support
- Dress Code

Exam Day Timing 8
- Sessions
- Recovery Period
- Breaks
- Break Room

Exam Day Process 9
- New Examiners
- Relief Examiners
- ADA Examiners
- Navigating the Exam Platform
- Check-In
- Pre-Exam Screens
- Entering Exam Period
- Media Window

Exam Software 11
- Exam Scripts
- Presenting Cases
- Case Scoring
- Ending an Exam Period
- Troubleshooting

Category and Panel Meetings 15

Exam Security 16
- Reportable Events
- Actions

Oral Exam FAQs 17

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Introduction

Thank you for volunteering to be an examiner for the Radiation Oncology 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.

ABR staff, with input from many volunteers, has developed a remote oral exam delivery 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 may choose their preferred exam location, subject to certain technical and logistical requirements. In addition, there will be 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 Radiation Oncology Oral Examiners. Please *do not share* or discuss with anyone else.

Before the Exam

Examiner Resource Page

The Examiner Resource Page 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 RO associate executive director and RO Trustees:

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

You will receive calendar appointments from Exam Delivery for the webinars. All webinars, except the category content review and ADA examiner orientation, 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 and 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. One-on-one training is available to any examiner upon request.

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 examdelivery@theabr.org.

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
- 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

IMPORTANT NOTE: Whitelist all ABR sites.

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 in the IT Requirements for Institutions section on the ABR website.

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

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 eight 30-minute periods, a 10-minute break after each period, and a 30-minute lunch break. 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 six hours and 20 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 of the change.

Recovery Period

If needed, there will be a 30-minute recovery period during lunch and 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 a recovery period. This will be followed by 60-minute category meetings and then 30-minute panel meetings. If a recovery session is needed at the end of the day, examiners will receive a text message when category meetings may begin.

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 exam periods four and five on each exam day.

Break Room

There will be a Webex® examiner "Break Room," where you can talk remotely with other examiners. You are free to enter the Break Room any time you have a break (in between sessions or during empty periods). 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

New Examiners

New examiners will observe two different experienced examiners for the first two exams on the first day before examining a candidate. After a new examiner examines their first or second candidate, they will receive feedback from an experienced examiner who observed their exams.

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 contacted immediately from 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.

ADA Examiners

Examiners with candidates requiring ADA accommodation will be notified and briefed with a required webinar before 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 examiner will access the oral exam platform using the link provided in the email from the ABR. You can also locate this link in your myABR account. If you lose your connection at any point during the day, use this same link — whether from your email or myABR — to log back into the platform.

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 your phone 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 call exam support staff.

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 click here.

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

When you enter the Exam Period, you will see a "Pre-Exam Instructions" pop-up with important reminders. After reading the reminders, click "Ok." Once the candidate is ready, you will receive another pop-up with instructions to open a script. Click "Open Script" and you will be taken to the scripts section where you can let the candidate in and read the script.

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 click here 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.

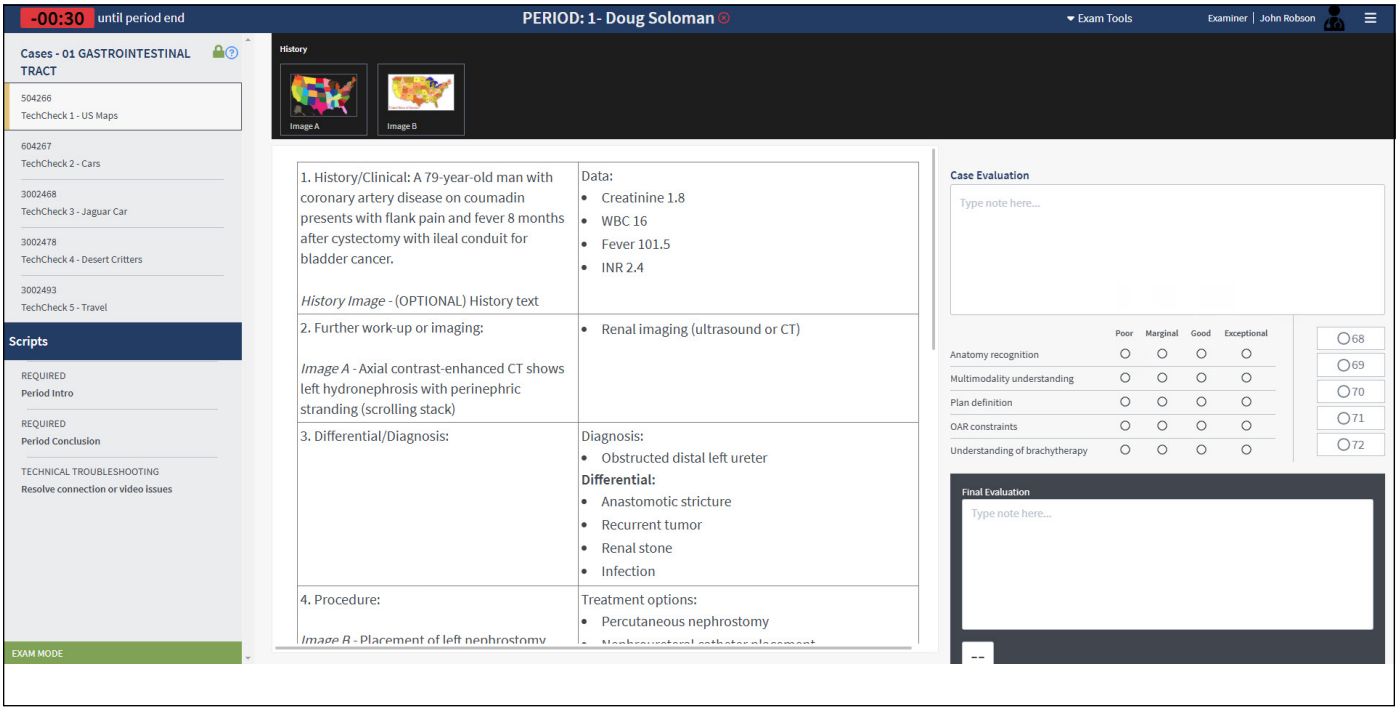
Exam Software

Exam Scripts

Several scripts are included in the exam software to aid in admitting a candidate, concluding an exam period, and troubleshooting. Please refer to the self-guided technical check for functionality.

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.



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.

Candidates will also see the examiner in the bottom right corner of their software window. They can resize, switch, and minimize the windows.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Candidates cannot see any portion of the case information, images not presented, or scoring sections.

Cases and images can be presented in any order. 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 image 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.” Ideally, examiners will present a minimum of three or four cases. For the head/neck category, a skin case should be included if possible, and for the lung category, a sarcoma case should be included if time allows.

In the media window, 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.

For more information on presenting cases, please click here.

Case Scoring

To expedite note-taking, the scoring section for each case has a series of radio buttons that will allow you to quickly identify issues the candidate might be having. Use of these shortcut buttons is optional. There is a Case Evaluation box in which you can type comments about each case, and a Final Evaluation 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.

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.

- 68 = a complete fail, with the candidate performing very poorly and possibly dangerously if the case were encountered in practice
- 69 = weak performance: marginal but still failing
- 70 = acceptable performance and is the passing standard
- 71 = above average performance
- 72 = exceptionally strong performance

To pass the exam, the candidate must receive a passing score in each category. Candidates with only one or two failing scores condition the exam and will return to take only those categories.

If the candidate has a 69 in one or two categories and passes the rest of the exam, the 69 can be raised to a passing grade by consensus during the panel meeting, and the candidate will pass. Otherwise, the candidate conditions in one or both categories.

A 68 cannot be raised under any circumstances after the category meeting. Again, the decision to raise a 69 to 70 is made by consensus during 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 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.

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 up to five minutes beyond the regular exam period to complete (0:00 to -5:00 minutes on the countdown clock): If there were small technical issues during the period, you can use up to five minutes over the regular period time to complete your examination.

Period has technical issues and you need more than five minutes beyond the regular exam period to complete (-5:00 to -10:00 on the countdown clock): 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.

For more information about ending an exam period, please click here.

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.

Category and Panel Meetings

At the end of each day, after all exams are completed (including any requiring a recovery session), there are two examiner meetings: a category meeting and a panel meeting. At these meetings, only candidates who have received scores of 68 or 69 should be discussed. Only the chairs will have access to the category and panel screens in the exam software. They will share their screens 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. If you are asked to attend multiple panels, please advise the first panel chair that you need to attend several panels so they can prioritize your discussion.

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 and panel meetings.
- 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 associate executive director (AED) or a 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.

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Useful Resources

Monitor Performance Self-Check:
https://www.theabr.org/exam-dates-and-information/remote-exams/#testing-your-setup

ABR Main Line:
520.790.2900

Exam Delivery Staff:
examdelivery@theabr.org