The Candidate’s Guide to the Oral Exam
Meet Your Presenters

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Board Director

Don Kikkawa, MD
Board Director

George Bartley, MD
CEO
Test Purpose
The Test Purpose Statement

The Oral Examination is designed to evaluate how candidates apply and communicate clinical knowledge, judgment, and decision making in the care of patients in a professional and ethical manner.
Peer-Developed Content
Exam Development Volunteers

86

Practicing ophthalmologists representing different regions, ethnicities, subject areas, and practice types volunteered to write and review this exam.
Clinical Subject Areas
## Content Allocation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Posterior Segment of the Eye</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>External Eye and Adnexa</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anterior Segment of the Eye</td>
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<td>Optics, Visual Physiology, and Correction of Refractive Errors</td>
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<td>Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neuro-Ophthalmology and Orbit</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Number/Timing of Cases
Exam Breakdown

● 42 cases per exam
  ○ 14 cases x 3 appointments
  ○ 7 cases per subject area
● Each appointment is 50 minutes long
● Examiners manage the clock, not candidates
Examiner Qualifications
Examiner Qualifications

- Board certified in good standing
- Willing to volunteer significant time and expertise
- Completes extensive training on examining
- Adheres to strict guidelines on scoring
- Commits to principles of fairness and professional behavior
- Attends unconscious bias training
The Role of Examiners
Examiner Responsibilities

- Delivery and display of case material
- Clock management and pacing
- Evaluation of candidate performance
Case Format
Sample PMP:

65-year-old man comes for a second opinion one month after cataract extraction in his right eye because of dissatisfaction with his uncorrected visual acuity.

Uncorrected VA OD = 20/100
Preop Manifest refraction OD: $-2.25 + 0.50 \times 180 = 20/80$
Postop Manifest refraction OD: $+3.00$ sphere $= 20/20$
The Candidate-Examiner Conversation
Handling Case Discussions

- “Show your work”
- Anticipate interruptions
- Transitions will be abrupt
- Give each case your best attempt
The Performance Criteria
Three-Part Format

Data Acquisition  Diagnosis  Management
Sample PMP #1
from American Board of Ophthalmology
More About Evaluation
Weighting, Scoring, & Standards

- Each case contributes equally to your score. There are no trick questions or automatic failures!
- Scoring is “compensatory,” meaning strong performance in one area can compensate for poor performance in another.
- Passing or failing the exam is based on whether your performance meets the standard -- not how anyone else performs.
- Results are pass/fail only.
Exam Day Experience
Online Testing Environment

- In 2020, the ABO transitioned to a virtual exam in response to the pandemic.
- Test environment is designed to replicate the in-person oral exam experience.
- Can be done at your home office provided your test environment and equipment complies with the basic requirements specified in the manual.
Exam Technology
Equipment & Technology Prep

- Zoom platform supports the exam; basic computer, camera, and audio required
- Candidate tech support available before and during exam
- Examiners get training on how to screenshare and transition cases
- No special tech expertise needed
Exam Day Flow
Exam Day Overview

1. Zoom Waiting Room
2. Security Checkpoint
3. Candidate Orientation
4. Appointment #1 - First 14 cases
5. 10-Minute Break
6. Appointment #2 - Next 14 cases
7. 10-Minute Break
8. Appointment #3 - Final 14 cases
9. Disconnect
Exam Personnel
Exam Personnel

- **Hosts:** Greet you upon arrival; help you navigate from room to room as well as breaks
- **Troubleshooters:** On call, just ask your Examiner when tech help is needed
- **Panel Leaders:** Perform QC on the exam delivery, provide candidate orientation
- **Mentor Examiners:** Train and supervise new examiners
Troubleshooting
### What If...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I need an unscheduled break.</td>
<td>You can take additional break time, but the clock does not stop. Frequent breaks that disrupt the exam may be flagged as an exam security violation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I accidentally exit the test. My internet/equipment fails.</td>
<td>Restart your computer or connection as quickly as possible. Use the same Zoom link to re-join. Call the ABO to let us know what happened and that you're working to get back online. If the issue is with your audio or video, a troubleshooter can help. If your sound drops, use the chat to ask your examiner to call for help.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My examiner’s equipment fails.</td>
<td>The other examiner in your room will pick up where the previous examiner left off. A troubleshooter will work behind the scenes to address the issue with your examiner -- meanwhile, you'll proceed with the exam with other exam personnel who may be asked to temporarily step in.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Resources & Reminders
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examination Topic Areas</th>
<th>Percent of Exam</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Posterior Segment of the Eye</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retinal and Choroidal Vascular Disorders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neovascularization and Macular Disease</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degenerative and Degenerations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trauma, Trauma, and Inflammation Disorders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disorders of the Intraocular Interface and Retinal Detachment</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) External Eye and Adnexa</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inflammation and Conditions</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Neoplasms (Benign and Malignant)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fact and Malfunctions</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Degenerative Conditions (Including Exudation)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trauma</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Anterior Segment of the Eye</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Iris/Ciliary Body Anatomy, Miosis and Neurovascularization</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inflammation and Infection</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trauma</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Optics, Visual Physiology and Correction of Refractive Errors</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refractive, Imaging, Lens, Intracoronal, and Pediatrical Refraction</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Refractive Error: Non-Surgical</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refractive Error: Posterior Segment Abnormalities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strabismus</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Inferior Conditions</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6) Neuro-Ophthalmology and Ocular</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Optic Nerve Pathology</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ocular Neuronal Disorders</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7) Oral Examination and Oral</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oral Anatomy</td>
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<td>Oral Pathology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ocular Myology</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Eyelid Abnormalities</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Dry Total Diseases</td>
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[https://abop.org/become-certified/oral-exam/oral-test-blueprint/](https://abop.org/become-certified/oral-exam/oral-test-blueprint/)
Sample Cases

https://abop.org/become-certified/oral-exam/preparing-for-the-oral/#samples
Sample Videos

https://abop.org/become-certified/oral-exam/preparing-for-the-oral/#videos
Tech Appointments

https://go.oncehub.com/CandidateEquipmentSupport?name=ADD_DYNAMIC_FIELD&email=ADD_DYNAMIC_FIELD&skip=1
Text Alerts

Candidate Concierge

Find their contact information at https://abop.org/portal
New editorial accessible online

https://www.aaojournal.org/action/showPdf?pii=S0161-6420%2820%2930464-4

Editorial

The American Board of Ophthalmology Virtual Oral Examination: Crisis Catalyzing Innovation
George B. Bartley, MD - Rochester, Minnesota
Sarah D. Schuabel, PhD - Doylestown, Pennsylvania
Beth Ann Comber, BA - Doylestown, Pennsylvania
Steven J. Gedde, MD - Miami, Florida

In March 2020, for the first time in its 104-year history and as a result of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, the American Board of Ophthalmology (ABO) canceled its oral examination (OE) on the cusp of its administration. To offer a pathway to certification for the more than 600 candidates who had prepared for the examination, the ABO opted to rapidly transition the assessment to an online format, even though conducting a “virtual” oral examination (VOE) had not been done successfully by any member board of the American Board of Medical Specialties. We describe the ABO’s experience administering 11 VOEs to approximately 1000 candidates during the past year and offer observations about future directions.

The ABO certification requires passing both its written qualifying examination (WQE) and the OE. The WQE assesses medical knowledge using multiple choice questions to online) and the content could introduce what psychometricians term “constance-irrelevant variance,” potentially eroding the examination’s integrity.

After evaluating several video conferencing platforms, the ABO determined that Zoom (Zoom Video Communications, Inc.) would work most effectively for its purposes. The OE relies heavily on clinical photographs and diagnostic images. Embedding the images within portable document format files allowed the examiner to toggle quickly between screens when requested to do so by the candidate.

Transitions to a VOE administration afforded the ABO the opportunity to make 2 modifications that had been under consideration for some time. The first was to have a candidate assessed simultaneously and independently by 2 examiners, rather than the one-to-one interaction that had been conducted
Q&A