

THE ORAL EXAMINATION GUIDANCE FOR CANDIDATES

IMPORTANT NOTES

Academy policy forbids any oral examination panel member from discriminating against any candidate because of ethnicity, cultural background, race, sex, age or disability in the conduct of the peer review. However, discrimination is permitted with respect to the individual's qualifications for specialty certification. If the candidate has reason to believe that improper discrimination occurred during the oral examination, the candidate has a responsibility to immediately inform the Academy, by letter to its Executive Director, of the name(s) of the person responsible and the specific circumstances pertaining thereto.

Further, Academy policy forbids an examiner to take part in the examination of a candidate employed by the same organization as the examiner. While every effort is made to compose examination panels without this potential conflict of interest, sometimes oversights occur. If confronted with an examiner knowingly employed by the candidate's organization, the candidate is to inform the Peer Review Panel Chair who shall have the examiner excuse him/herself from the examination room until the examination is complete and the Oral Report Form completed by the remaining panel members.

Finally, it is permissible for the candidate to inquire as to the certified specialty of each panel member of the oral examination panel, before the examination begins.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the peer review is two-fold. First it is to determine the candidate's ethical concepts, maturity, presence of mind, sense of values and similar professional attributes. Secondly, the technical component of the peer review is to determine the candidate's interpretive skills and problem solving abilities. These components assess those aspects of the candidate's qualification for specialty certification that cannot be objectively measured by written examinations or a review of work history.

THE EXAMINATION

The examination is conducted by a panel of BCEE/BCESs of the Academy, usually three (3), although a minimum of two (2) or a maximum of four (4) may be used. Every attempt is made to compose panels with at least one person certified in the specialty for which the candidate is seeking certification. However, since panel members are volunteers and existing demographics control, this ideal may not always be achieved.

The examination consists of two parts, a Professional Component lasting about 20 minutes and a Technical Component lasting about 40 minutes. A uniform report form is provided each panel member on which to rate the candidates performance.

The Professional Component

The panel will ask the candidate four (4) standardized questions. These may be supplemented by non-structured follow-up questions from panel members according to the candidate's response. Each panel member will rate the answers provided to these questions as – Poor, Fair, Good or Excellent.

The Technical Component

The Technical Component consists of two test items developed by the Academy's Examinations Development Committee pertinent to the specialty in which the candidate is seeking certification. These test items are based on adaptations of case histories and consist generally of a problem statement and then five questions about that statement which the candidate is to answer, although the problem statement may be interspersed with examination questions depending upon the specifics of the case history.

As a guide, each panel member is provided with information which the Examination Development Committee believes the candidate should provide in answering each test question. However, this guidance is not intended to limit the candidate in responding according to his/her professional judgment. In turn, each panel member rates the candidate's response to each test question on a scale from 1 to 8.

EXAMINATION SCORING

For certification purposes, a Good or Excellent answer to the Professional Component questions and a numerical rating of 5 to 8 on the Technical Component questions have been established as acceptable for certification. Other scores are considered unacceptable. Additionally, after compiling the individual question scores, each panel member is asked to provide an overall assessment of the candidate's fitness for certification.

Candidates are not ranked or compared with each other. The panel may discuss a candidate's responses during the examination before each panel member makes his/her own judgments regarding the candidate's performance.

Each panel member's completed Oral Examination Report Form is reviewed by the Academy's Admissions Committee in deciding whether or not to recommend the candidate for certification. The authority to grant certification is vested in the Academy's Board of Trustees.

RESULTS/RECORDS

The Oral Examination Report Forms completed by panel members are maintained as part of the candidate/member's permanent personal file at Academy Headquarters.

The Oral Examination Reports are confidential. They are not released to the candidate. However, if a decision is made not to recommend or not to grant certification, the candidate, upon request, will be informed orally and in general terms of the oral examination results without revealing the ratings or comments of individual examiners. Nor will the oral examination results be discussed with any person at any time after the examination is given unless the examiners are contacted by the Admissions Committee or Headquarters Staff to obtain clarification of the examination results. If required in the course of the Academy's Board of Trustees deliberations on a candidate's certification, the Oral Examination Report Form results will be presented to the Board in executive session.