The Family Medicine Board Exam

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UCSF Dept of Family and Community Medicine
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The Board Exam

- No limit to the times a qualified candidate may take the exam
- Those who fail, may take again in December
- Must have completed 3 years of residency training, valid medical license and have completed 300 credits of CME
- Application and test-center selection is online. First come-first serve
- If license is revoked, certification is rescinded

American Board of Family Medicine administers

- Primary Certification and Recertification Exams
  - In 2008 July 21st – August 9
  - In 2008 July 8th, July 25
  - Deadline to withdraw without seat fee 7/15/08
  - Deadline to change date/location 7/15/08
- In-Training Exams
- Certificates of Added Qualifications
  - Adolescent Medicine Exam
  - Sports Medicine Exam
  - Geriatric Medicine

The Board Exam

- As of 2005 only offered in Computer-Based Format and in all 50 states
- Extra features like brief practice test, time remaining, & unanswered questions shown
- Do not need advance computer skills
- Able to review previous items and change answers
The Board Exam

- Tests cognitive knowledge and problem solving ability
- Questions include diagnosis, management and prevention of illness
- Bring Valid e-ticket and 2 pieces of ID to be admitted
- Registration includes a digital photograph and fingerprint

The Board Exam

- No purses, bags, pagers, PDAs, phones or reference materials-locker provided, snacks okay
- May not take written notes of exam
- May not leave room or make calls
- Erasable board provided for written preparatory work

The Board Exam

- Multiple versions of exam exist. You may have a different version than the person next to you.
- If you need to repeat the exam in December, you will have a different version
- In 2008, repeat exam offered December 4th and 6th

Morning Session

- The morning session is 3 hours and 30 minutes & consists of 120 questions covering the breadth of the specialty,
  - plus two 45-question modular examinations chosen during the application process.
- Modular exams are composed of multiple-choice questions designed to assess the candidate’s knowledge in the subject area
- Certification and Recertification candidates now must choose 2 modules from a list of 8
Module Options

- Ambulatory Family Medicine
- Child and Adolescent Care
- Geriatrics
- Women’s Health
- Maternity Care
- Emergent / Urgent Care
- Hospital Medicine
- Sports Medicine

Certification/ Recertification Exam Content 2008

I. Cardiovascular 12%
II. Endocrine 8%
III. Gastrointestinal 7%
IV. Hematologic/Immune 3%
V. Integumentary 6%
VI. Musculoskeletal 12%
VII. Nephrologic 3%
VIII. Neurologic 3%
IX. Nonspecific 9%
X. Psychogenic 7%
XI. Reproductive—Female 4%
XII. Reproductive—Male 1%
XIII. Respiratory 13%
XIV. Special Sensory 2%

Certification/ Recertification Exam Content 2008

• XV. Population-based Care 5%
  - This includes topics such as biostatistics and epidemiology, evidence-based medicine, prevention, health policy and legal issues, bioterror, quality
  - improvement, and geographic/urban/rural issues.
Certification/Recertification Exam Content 2008

- XVI. Patient-based Systems 5%
  - This includes topics such as clinical decision-making, communication and
  - doctor-patient interaction, family and cultural issues, ethics, palliative care, and end-of-life care.

Afternoon Session

- Lunch break is from 12:00-1:15
- The afternoon session is 3 hours 15 minutes & consists of 160 multiple-choice questions
  - 20 of these are field-test items and will not be included in the scoring process.
- “Process B” option over
- No True/False Questions

Strategies for Passing!

- If guessing, questions with “all, never, always” usually wrong
- If completely unfamiliar, it is probably wrong
- If series of numbers, midrange values more often correct
- If an answer involves an impaired clinician, that is probably your answer

Strategies for Passing!

- If 2 answers are opposite or very similar, one is usually correct
- If answer is against the principals of Family Medicine, usually wrong
- First hunch often correct
- Longest answer more often correct, if you are unsure
Strategies for Passing!

• You have roughly 1 minute per question, (slightly longer in the afternoon)
• Pace yourself!

• Read questions carefully
• Read all responses carefully and cross out incorrect options

Strategies for Passing!

• Flag unanswered question or guess and note items to return to
• When returning to a question, only change answer if you are sure since 1st thoughtful answer is more likely to be correct

Strategies for Passing!

• Always answer the questions
• Don’t get stuck on difficult question, come back to it later
• Study where you did poorly in past and in areas you are least comfortable with
• Focus on established medicine- remember there is a 9 month development cycle for the exam- so no brand new information

Strategies for Passing!

• “FailSafe ABFM Exam Study Tips- 18 page guide
  https://www.theabfm.org/cert/failsafe.pdf
• Candidate information booklet- on line and mailed to you
Free Practice tests!

- Practice test and tutorial ABFM website- [www.theabfm.org](http://www.theabfm.org)
- Residency In-Training Exam [www.theabfm.org/residency/ITEBook1.pdf](http://www.theabfm.org/residency/ITEBook1.pdf) requires a login
- [www.familypractice.com](http://www.familypractice.com) go to Board Prep Review Question section

More Test help

- FailSafe-ABFM Exam Study Tips: 18 page guide in recertification section of ABFM website

Scoring

- Pass/ Fail
- Does not depend on how other candidates do- each question graded separately
- Will receive percentile rank and scores by discipline

Scoring

- Score reports will be available online only about 6-8 weeks after end of testing
- Program directors receive scores of recent graduates
- 2005 showed the highest test rates in many years
Certification Exam 2006

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<td>96.6%</td>
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Recertification Exam 2006

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Maintenance of Certification

- All successful Certification or Recertification candidates will receive a seven-year certificate from the ABFM and will be required to participate in the Maintenance of Certification for Family Physicians (MC-FP) program.
- Any Diplomate who has certified or recertified since 2003 may earn an extension to their seven-year certificate.

How to earn the MC-FP Extension

- Process is sectioned into three-year Stages with requirements that must be completed by the end of each Stage.
- The requirements for each Stage are:
  - two Part II modules: Self-Assessment Modules or SAMs- 60-question Knowledge Assessment followed by a Clinical Simulation
  - one Part IV module: Performance in Practice Modules (PPMs) designed as Quality Improvement activities
MC-FP Section on Web Site (track your progress)

- Web site also has tutorial
- Shows modules required & completed
- Shows payment info
- Can request status verification letter
- Show Knowledge Assessment and Clinical Stimulation module status, references, and can begin or resume test

Reciprocity agreements

Diplomates of the ABFM may be eligible to seek certification by these colleges

- The College of Family Physicians of Canada
- the Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners
- the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners

Questions?

- Call the support center- 877-233-7437
- Or e-mail help@theabfm.org
- Open Monday- Friday 8:30-9pm
- Saturday 9-5pm

Good Luck !