



American Board  
of Ophthalmology®

ADVANCING EXCELLENCE IN EYE CARE

# 10 Things Every Candidate Should Know About the Written Exam

## Meet Your Presenters



**Esther Bowie, MD**  
**Board Director**



**Martha Wright, MD**  
**Board Director**



**George Bartley, MD**  
**CEO**

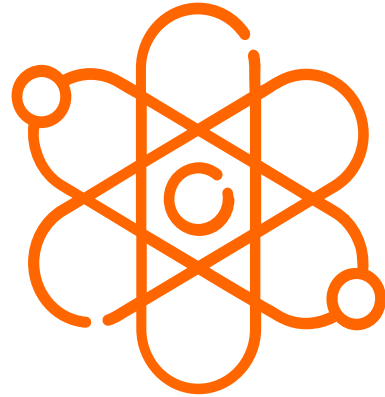
01

**What is the WQE  
designed to test?**



## The Test Purpose

250 multiple-choice questions will evaluate the breadth and depth of **basic science** and **clinical knowledge** in candidates who have completed an ophthalmology residency program.



02

**Who determines the  
content of the exam?**



## Exam Development Volunteers

A teal-colored outline map of the United States is centered on the page. The number '86' is written in a large, white, sans-serif font in the middle of the map.

86

Practicing ophthalmologists representing different regions, ethnicities, subject areas, and practice types volunteered to write and review this exam.

03

**What are the clinical topics on the exam?**



## Content Allocation

Lens and Cataract	12%
Cornea, External Disease, and Anterior Segment	13%
Glaucoma	13%
Neuro-ophthalmology	10%
Oculofacial, Plastics, and Orbit	10%
Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus	11%
Refractive Management and Optics	8%
Retina, Vitreous, and Intraocular Tumors	15%
Uveitis	8%



04

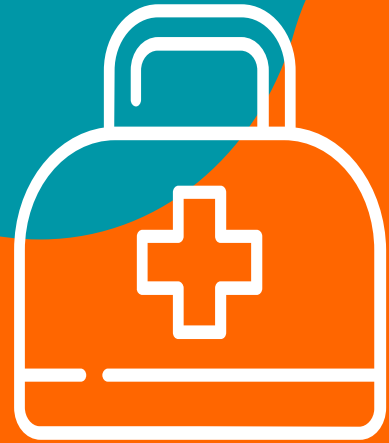
**What will the  
questions look like?**



# The Aspects of Patient Care

Each question addresses one of four aspects of patient care:

1. Presentation (history, clinical exam, differential)
2. Diagnostic Testing
3. Management / Outcomes/ Complications/ Prognosis
4. Pathophysiology / Basic Science/ Histology/ Epidemiology / Risk Assessment



## Some Questions May Incorporate

- Landmark Studies
- General Medicine (related to ophthalmology)
- Patient Safety
- Quality Improvement
- Risk Management
- Diagnostic Error
- Ethics
- Pathology
- Communications and Team-Based Care

## Sample Question

Which of the following oral medications increases the risk for development of meibomian gland dysfunction?

- A. Acyclovir
- B. Erythromycin
- C. Isotretinoin
- D. Tetracycline

## Answer

Which of the following oral medications increases the risk for development of meibomian gland dysfunction?

- A. Acyclovir
- B. Erythromycin
- C. Isotretinoin
- D. Tetracycline

05

**How should I prepare  
for this exam?**



## How to Prepare Effectively



Start with the candidate manual.



Practice using the sample questions.



Use the test blueprint to build a study plan.



Use the exam tutorial to preview the test platform.



Give yourself enough time (start now!)



Balance study time with self-care.

06

**What can I expect on  
test day?**





## Exam Day Information

The total examination appointment time is as follows:

- 5.5 hours at the testing center
- 5 hours in the examination appointment
- **4.5 hours of in-exam time**

The 250-question, 4.5-hour test is divided into two equal sections:

- 2.25 hours in Section 1
- 10 minutes for optional break
- 2.25 hours in Section 2

Print a confirmation before you leave. Immediately call us to report any issues.

07

**What if something  
goes wrong?**



# Stay Calm.

Call the ABO at **610-664-1175** with any questions or concerns. You can also request that your Test Center Proctor phone the ABO for clarification about any issues.

Candidates who arrive on time and comply with all candidate policies will have an opportunity to test, even if the appointment must be rescheduled due to circumstances beyond your (and our) control.

08

**How is the exam  
scored?**



## It's Just You vs. the Standard

- Sometimes candidates believe they are competing against their peers or that a pre-designated portion of candidates fail. Neither are true.
- Though statistically unlikely, it's possible for every candidate to pass in October as long as they earn a scaled score of 700 or above.
- Our standard-setting methodology requires quality assurance checks before and after your test. That's why it takes 6-8 weeks to get your results and why we can't tell you in advance precisely how many questions you'll need to answer correctly.



09

**How can I interpret  
my score report?**



# Reading Your Score Report



## **Scaled Score:**

Ranges from 200 - 1000

## **Pass/Fail Decision:**

Pass requires 700 or better

## **Performance Levels:**

Proficiency rating per subject

10

**How do candidates  
typically perform?**





## Exam Statistics

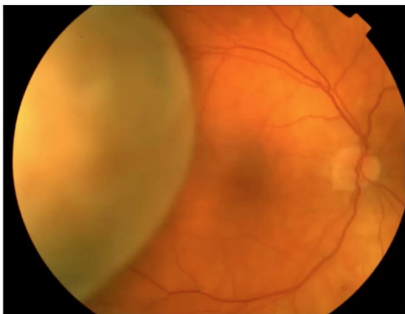
- Historically, more than 8 out of every 10 candidates pass the written test on the first attempt.
- In 2019, there was an administration where nearly 99% of first-time test takers passed.
- Remember what you learned about our test purpose and scoring -- this exam is designed to verify the basic science and clinical knowledge necessary for practice, never to "weed out" or block a certain percentage of people.
- Failure is an event, not a person.

# Oral Exam Preview



# The Oral Examination

58-year-old man is seen for blurred vision in the right eye.



- Administered online
- 2022 dates TBA (spring + fall)
- Candidates sign on at a scheduled date and time
- Case-based format where examiners present 42 scenarios and candidates explain how they would care for each patient
- Exam is timed (14 cases / 50 minutes)

# Approaching the Case Discussion



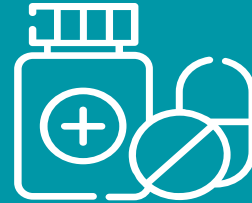
## Data Acquisition

Obtain historical and examination information to fully evaluate a particular case



## Diagnosis

Synthesize historical and physical evaluation information, along with appropriate ancillary testing data, to arrive at a correct diagnosis and reasonable alternative diagnoses



## Management

Arrive at an appropriate treatment plan, including prognosis, follow-up, and the ability to manage complications.

Join us August 25



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THE CANDIDATE'S GUIDE TO THE

# ORAL EXAM



WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 25 | 7:00 PM ET

# Becoming Certified



32,441

and counting...

“I propose that board certification, which is voluntary and, unlike licensure, is not required to practice medicine, can be considered as akin to an oath or pledge to professionalism.”

**We hope you'll join us in this pursuit.**



**Q&A**