



AMERICAN OSTEOPATHIC
BOARD OF FAMILY PHYSICIANS

Examination Guidelines

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I. Procedure for the Written (Cognitive) Examination

The written (cognitive) examinations are computer-based examinations administered at regional test sites made available by Pearson VUE. Once the AOBFP receives your completed application for an exam, it may take 4-6 weeks for its review, processing and approval.

Once candidates are approved, the AOBFP staff sends an authorization-to-test letter confirming the approval. Once candidates receive this letter, it is recommended they quickly contact Pearson VUE (www.pearsonvue.com/aobfp) to select preferred test sites because availability is on a first-come, first-served basis.

- **Initial and Re-Entry Exam:** The complete written examination consists of approximately **400** multiple-choice questions as standalone questions or as part of a clinical case. This is a 7.5 hour exam with one 30 minute break. Candidates are permitted to leave the building during scheduled breaks. During **scheduled breaks**, candidates can access personal items except for mobile phones, exam notes, and study guides.
- **Early Entry Initial Certification Exam:** The complete written examination consists of 200 scored single-option multiple choice items and 15-25 unscored items. This is a 3.5 hour exam with one optional 15-minute break. Candidates are not permitted to leave the building during this break. Candidates may access personal items such as medication and food only if necessary.
- **OCC Recertification Exam:** The complete written examination consists of approximately **200** multiple-choice questions as stand-alone questions or as part of a clinical case. This is a 3.5 hour exam with no scheduled breaks. Candidates are not permitted to leave the building during this break. Candidates may access personal items such as medication and food only if necessary.

Written (Cognitive) Exam Results

Approximately 8 weeks after the exam administration, candidates receive a detailed score report of their exam results. The unsuccessful completion of the examination requires a retake at another exam administration; a total of two retake examinations are allowed prior to further approval. Retake examinations are limited to two administrations prior to further board review with a recommendation for further educational requirements.

II. Procedure for the Performance OMT Examination

When you apply for the Performance OMT Exam, you will also select your preferred exam date.

Please note: When the OMT Performance is given over a number of consecutive days, there is no guarantee you will be scheduled for the day you select. Candidates should not make travel arrangements until they receive an authorization-to-test from the AOBFP staff.

- Candidates are assigned a time at which to appear for their exam. Times are sent to scheduled candidates approximately four to six weeks prior to the exam.

- Each candidate will have a partner (another candidate) who will act the role of the patient during the examination. Partners cannot be related by blood or marriage and cannot be in an employed relationship (e.g., Chief Medical Officer and attending physician).
- Upon admittance to the exam room, candidates complete a waiver and are randomly assigned three case histories on which they will be examined. Time is provided for the review of those cases prior to examination.
- The candidate will be asked by a team of examiners to diagnose the assigned cases and demonstrate osteopathic manipulative treatment. A time limit is applied.

Performance OMT Exam Results

A pass/fail designation is provided for the Performance OMT examination on site. If needed, an opportunity to retake the performance exam is offered during the session.

III. Process for the Performance OMT Examination

A. Dress Code/Professionalism – AOBFP Performance OMT Examination

Participation in the American Osteopathic Board of Family Physicians (AOBFP) OMT Performance Examination requires candidates comply with the appropriate dress code as stated below.

Dress conservatively (Business casual/Professional Attire). Avoid constrictive or revealing clothing (including anything that reveals the chest, back or abdomen). Avoid accessories that may interfere with your being physically examined or your physically examining another. We also expect that you and your clothing are clean, groomed and free of fragrances, odors, tobacco smoke, etc. that may trigger allergic reactions in others.

Recommended Dress:

- Khaki or dress, leg-length pants (should be able to pull pant leg up to the knee)
- Collared, button-down, or conservative shirt
- Shirts are to be loose enough to show the top of the neckline, elbows, forearms and hands
- Closed-toe, low heel shoes with nylons or socks (all easily removable)

Candidates will *not* be admitted into the examination room if wearing any of the following:

Watches	Hospital/surgical scrubs	Athletic pants/shorts
Jeans/denim pants	Jackets/coats	Athletic shoes
Long neck ties/bow ties	Halter/tube tops	Bathing suits
Scarves	Skirts/dresses above the knee	Sandals/flip flops
Hats/visors	Sweaters/sweatshirts	High heel shoes
Dangle/large hoop earrings	Tank tops/T-shirts	Any visible undergarments

Candidates that do not adhere to the dress code will not be admitted into the examination room and asked to return in proper attire at a new time assignment (pending availability).

NOTE:

- Any request for exemption to the above dress code should be submitted to AOBFP at least 30 days in advance.

B. Entering the Registration Area

Candidates are required to present one government-issued photo ID with a signature. Candidates will sign-in

and receive an ID badge, which is to be worn throughout the examination. Insert the government-issued photo ID in the back of the badge holder with your name and photo visible.

Certification candidates within the same exam time assignment select their exam partners. If an odd number of candidates, a surrogate patient will be assigned to a candidate. Partners will then await entrance to the exam room. Once you get your badge and are admitted to the room, you may not leave. Any exits from the room will result in a failure, and require returning at the next test administration in 4-7 months.

Partners cannot be related by blood or marriage and cannot be in an employed relationship (e.g., Chief Medical Officer and attending physician). Note that the exam process includes palpatory examination, which will require both the partner candidate (male or female) and the examiner (male or female) to place their hands on a candidate to identify landmark identification.

C. Waiver

Upon entering the case room with your partner, you will be presented with a waiver form to sign. The form states that you understand that if your treatment involves an active correction, thrust, or HVLA, you are to set the patient into the proper position only and verbalize the mechanism and direction of your correction. You are not to complete the active correction. Performing an active correction, thrust or HVLA is grounds for immediate failure of the entire exam.

D. Case Room

You will receive one case from each of the following categories: spine, extremities and systemic diseases. Enter your name and ID number along with your partner's ID number on each of these three cases. Do not turn the papers over until instructed. On the signal to begin, you will have 15 minutes to review and choose the one best answer from the four choices listed on the front side of each sheet. After you have selected the diagnosis for each case, use the remainder of the 15 minutes to plan your treatment strategy. This is all the data that will be given. **If necessary, you may direct any questions to a proctor but may not talk with your partner or fellow candidates.** Reference materials may not be used. Notes may only be made directly on the case form.

E. Examination

Exam proctors direct all candidates to the examination area and the exam stations. Candidate guidelines will not be repeated at stations two and three. If partnered with a surrogate patient rather than another candidate, wait until the time elapses before advancing to the next station.

Case Diagnosis: Examiners will review your case diagnosis and indicate whether or not it is correct. Correct diagnoses earn points. If incorrect, you will be informed of the correct diagnosis.

Demonstrate/Discuss OMT: Each partner is given 4 minutes in which to demonstrate and discuss appropriate OMT for the first case. Speak loud enough and clear enough for examiners to hear and understand you. Scoring is based on the explanation and demonstration of treatment for the correct diagnosis. If your treatment involves an active correction, thrust or HVLA, you are to set the patient into the proper position only and verbalize the mechanism and direction of your correction. You are not to complete the active correction.

The official timer announces the start/end times for each station. Upon completion of the exam at the third station, the candidate will remain seated at that station until directed to exit the room to receive their results.

F. Scoring

Each case is scored on the following criteria:

- Diagnosis
- Identification of landmarks appropriate to the technique
- Implementation and demonstration of appropriate technique/s
- Ability to discuss each technique
- Professionalism

G. Results

A candidate must receive a passing score on two of the three cases in order to pass. (May involve two exam attempts if necessary.) In the event a candidate does not receive a passing score on the first attempt, that candidate may be given another opportunity to retake the Performance OMT exam either on the same day or the next day, time permitting. The candidate will be retested with three new cases using the same examination protocol and scoring system. In the event of a failure on the second attempt within that same administration, the candidate will be deemed to have failed the Performance OMT examination.

IV. Special Accommodations for Examinations

Test accommodations are individualized and considered on a case-by-case basis.

A. Disability (American with Disabilities Act--ADA)

(https://www.ada.gov/regs2014/testing_accommodations.html)

Candidates seeking special ADA accommodations for either the written or OMT Performance must submit the required documentation as specified within the AOBFP 'Criteria Policy for Documentation of a Disability – Request for Accommodation Candidate Handbook' along with the AOBFP 'Request for Accommodation Application'. The information and application are on our website. The request for accommodation application and supporting documentation must be submitted with the completed application for examination and submitted by the initial application deadline date.

B. Religious Observance

Candidates finding conflict with scheduled examination dates (for either exam) due to religious observances must provide a written explanation of the conflict with letters of verification from the clergy on official stationery with original signature and dated, which is to accompany the completed application and supporting documents due by the initial postmark deadline date.

C. Comfort Aid

Comfort aids do not require pre-approval for the written examination site. They will be allowed in the testing room upon visual inspection by the PearsonVue Test Center staff.

([https://home.pearsonvue.com/Documents/Accommodations/Comfort-aids-\(2\)/pvue_comfort_aids.aspx](https://home.pearsonvue.com/Documents/Accommodations/Comfort-aids-(2)/pvue_comfort_aids.aspx))

D. Other Considerations

Candidates seeking nursing mother consideration (e.g., expressing breast milk) for the written examination should inform AOBFP and PearsonVue of their intent *in advance* of the event.
(<https://home.pearsonvue.com/test-taker/Test-accommodations/Testing-Exceptions-for-Nursing-Mothers.aspx>)

V. Recommendation for Certification

Candidates fulfilling the following requirements will be presented to the American Osteopathic Association's Bureau of Osteopathic Specialists (BOS) for recommendation for certification by the AOA.

Initial Certification

- A final pass status on the initial written (cognitive) exam **or** early entry initial certification (cognitive) exam
- A final pass status on the Performance OMT exam (*NOTE: Residents completing their programs on or after June 30, 2020 may opt out of the OMT Performance Exam and become board-certified in Osteopathic Family Medicine only. If you select this option, you may complete the OMT Performance Exam at any point in your career to become certified in Osteopathic Family Medicine/OMT.*)
- Valid and unrestricted license to practice medicine in a State or Territory of the United States
- AOA confirmation of completed residency training

Recertification, i.e., Osteopathic Continuous Certification (OCC)

- A final pass status on both the written (cognitive) exam and the Performance OMT exam (*Beginning on January 1, 2020, the Osteopathic Manipulative Treatment (OMT) performance examination is no longer required for diplomates whose certification expires 12/31/2020 and thereafter. Diplomates holding certificates with expiration dates of 12/31/19 or earlier must still take the OMT performance examination as part of their OCC process.*)
- Valid and unrestricted license to practice medicine in a State or Territory of the United States
- Fulfillment of Component 2 and Component 4 requirements

Re-Entry to Certification

- A final pass status on the written (cognitive) exam
- A final pass status on the performance OMT exam (if seeking certification in Osteopathic Family Medicine and OMT)
- Valid and unrestricted license to practice medicine in a State or Territory of the United States
- Documentation per AOA activity reports of 150 applicable CME hours for the previous three years

VI. Re-Examination

OMT Performance Exam and Written (Cognitive) Exam

A candidate who has failed either the OMT Performance or Written (Cognitive) Exam may apply for re-examination at the next scheduled exam. Retake examinations (written and/or Performance) are limited to two administrations prior to further board review with a recommendation for further educational requirements.

OMT Performance Exam. If time and space allow, an opportunity to retake this exam is offered during the same exam administration either later in the day or on another consecutive day of testing. In the event of a failure on the second exam attempt within that session, the candidate will be required to document completion of an in-person review course in osteopathic principles and techniques before retaking the OMT Performance at a future date.

VII. Appeals

OMT Performance Exam and Written (Cognitive) Exam

Any appeal of a failure decision must be received in writing by the AOBFP administrative office within 30 days of the failure. Issues that can be appealed include:

- Unequal application of the regulations and requirements or standards
- Unwarranted discrimination, prejudice, unfairness or improper conduct of the examination

The AOBFP will not consider appeals addressing exam content, exam evaluation or the determination of the minimum passing score. Appeal documentation, including the rationale as to why the candidate believes the examination results should be reviewed, will be evaluated by the AOBFP Executive Committee and a decision rendered within 30 days of receipt of the original appeal. In the event that the candidate still wishes to contest the examination results, the candidate may then appeal to the AOA Bureau of Osteopathic Specialists (BOS).