



AMERICAN OSTEOPATHIC ASSOCIATION

142 East Ontario Street, Chicago, IL 60611-2864 ph 312 202 8000 | 800 621 1773

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27

# **Policies and Procedures of the American Osteopathic Board of Pathology**

**Adopted in its Entirety November 2012  
Amended April 2016**

CONTENTS

1  
2  
3 Article  
4 I Procedures..... 3  
5  
6 II Committees..... 3  
7  
8 III Board Eligibility..... 3  
9  
10 IV Certification Eligibility Requirements..... 3  
11  
12 V Examination..... 4  
13  
14 VI Rules for the Conduct of Examinations ..... 5  
15  
16 VII Reexamination..... 7  
17  
18 VIII Certificates..... 8  
19  
20 IX Osteopathic Continuous Certification (OCC) ..... 9  
21  
22 X Appeals ..... 11  
23  
24 XI Compliance with Federal Regulations ..... 12  
25  
26 XII Inquiries Regarding Status of a Physician ..... 12  
27  
28 XIII Amendments..... 12  
29



1 C. To be eligible for certification in anatomic pathology a period of three (3) years of AOA  
2 approved training in the specialty shall be required. (4/10)

3  
4 D. To be eligible for certification in laboratory medicine a period of three (3) years of AOA  
5 approved training in the specialty shall be required (4/10)

6  
7 Section 3. Eligibility Criteria – Certification of Special Qualifications (CSQ) in Forensic Pathology

8 To be eligible for the certification of in forensic pathology, applicants must:

9  
10 A. Hold current AOA certification in either Anatomic Pathology or combined Anatomic  
11 Pathology/Laboratory Medicine and have completed a fellowship in an approved Forensic  
12 Pathology program of at least one year, OR (4/10)

13  
14 B. Complete two (2) years each of AOA approved training in Anatomic Pathology and Forensic  
15 Pathology (Note: A candidate utilizing this pathway will not be considered “Board Eligible” in  
16 Anatomic Pathology until all four (4) years of combined training are completed. Candidates  
17 utilizing this pathway will not be allowed to take the Forensic Pathology examination until they  
18 are certified in Anatomic Pathology). (4/10)

19  
20 Section 4. Additional Certification Requirements

21 Subject to the recommendation of the Bureau of Osteopathic Specialists and to the approval of the  
22 AOA Board of Trustees, the Board may require such further training in each of the specialty fields  
23 coming under its jurisdiction. The additional requirements for each specialty must be clearly set forth in  
24 these rules and regulations. Additions to requirements shall go into effect one (1) year subsequent to the  
25 announcement of such change. (4/10)

26  
27 Section 5. Additional Requirements

28 The Board, at its discretion, may determine an on-site evaluation is required to fulfill a candidate’s  
29 eligibility for certification.

30  
31  
32 **Article V. Examination**

33  
34 Section 1. General Examination Information

35 Following satisfactory compliance with the prescribed requirements for examination, the applicant is  
36 required to pass appropriate examinations planned to evaluate an understanding of the scientific basis of  
37 the problems involved in the specialties under the jurisdiction of the AOBPa. Eligibility for the written,  
38 oral and practical portions of the examinations for certification shall be at the first scheduled  
39 examinations after the applicant’s completion of one (1) of the following:

40  
41 A. Three (3) years of AOA approved residency training in either anatomic pathology or laboratory  
42 medicine.

43  
44 B. Four (4) years of AOA-approved residency training in combined anatomic pathology and  
45 laboratory medicine.

- C. Two (2) years each of AOA approved training in Anatomic Pathology and Forensic Pathology, or AOA certification in Anatomic Pathology or combined Anatomic Pathology/ Laboratory Medicine and one (1) year of AOA approved training in Forensic Pathology. (4/10)

Section 2. Examination Opportunities

The AOBPa Policy and Procedure for re-examination is found in Article VII of this document.

Section 3. Examination Fees

- A. The registration fee for Board eligibility, as determined by the Board, shall cover the six (6) year period.
- B. The application fee for taking the certifying examination, as determined by the Board, shall be applied to the total fees for certifying examinations.
- C. The examination fee, as determined by the Board, shall be payable upon notification of acceptance of the application, prior to taking the examination.
- D. The reexamination fee, as determined by the Board, shall be payable prior to taking the reexamination.
- E. A schedule of fees required is identified on all application forms, or may be obtained in writing from the Board.
- F. All fees submitted to the Board are non-refundable; however, in certain circumstances the Board may allow the fee to be applied as credit towards the next exam. No refunds will be allowed within 30 days of the scheduled exam. (4/10)

**Article VI. Rules for the Conduct of Examinations**

Section 1. Examination Information

The Board will notify the applicant of the time and place of the examinations. The applicant will be assigned a number to be used in place of the applicant's name on the examination books. (4/10)

Section 2. Examination Construction

The examinations for all specialties and subspecialties shall include a written, a practical and an oral portion. The table of specifications will be developed through a job task analysis and will be published on the board's website.

- A. A prerequisite for examination in forensic pathology is certification in anatomic pathology or combined anatomic pathology/laboratory medicine.
- B. All examinations will be designed to insure a candidate's understanding of osteopathic concepts and principles.

1 C. Examinations shall be proctored by either the “Board and its designee(s)” or “Examination  
2 Committee(s) and its designee(s).” (11/12)  
3

4 D. The Examination Committee(s) shall use the number assigned to the applicant by the Board in  
5 identifying the examination. The applicant's name must not be stated anywhere in the  
6 examination book, sheets and/or score sheet, except on the individual score sheet provided for  
7 the oral examination.  
8

9 Section 3. Osteopathic Continuous Certification (OCC) Cognitive Assessment

10 The examination shall include a written and practical part, and all categories will include evaluation of a  
11 diplomate’s understanding of osteopathic principles and concepts. The table of specifications will be  
12 developed through a job task analysis and will be published on the board’s website.

13 Section 4. Scoring Process – All Examinations  
14

15 A. The examination committee for each examination shall provide the examination questions and  
16 answers and complete information about the examination to the Board. (8/08)

17 B. The examination committee for each examination shall use the number assigned to the candidate  
18 by the Board in identifying the examination. The candidate’s name shall not appear anywhere on  
19 the examination.  
20

21 C. There shall be a single final score determined by a psychometrician in conjunction with Board  
22 review.  
23

24 D. The final score shall be determined by the Board in keeping with the policies and directives of  
25 the BOS and generally accepted psychometric processes.  
26

27 E. A record of each examination must be signed and dated by the examiner upon issuing the score  
28 of the examination, but in no instance is the individual examiner's record to be placed upon the  
29 examination booklet paper, except for the oral score sheet.  
30

31 F. A minimum of three (3) examiners' scores shall be utilized to compute the final average score for  
32 any portions of an examination that are not in multiple choice format.  
33

34 G. Each examiner grading the oral examination must initial the final score on the examination  
35 grading sheet(s).  
36

37 Section 5. Weighting – Certification Examination (11/12)

38 The average score of the practical examination constitutes fifty percent (50%) of the final score. The  
39 written examination constitutes forty percent (40%) of the final score. The oral examination constitutes  
40 ten percent (10%) of the final score.  
41

42 Section 6. Weighting – OCC Cognitive Assessment

43 The written examination will constitute 45% of the final score, and the practical examination 55% of the  
44 final score. (4/10)

1  
2 Section 7. Examination Scoring  
3 The Board shall use a criterion-referenced standard for oral, written and practical portion of the exam.  
4 Passing standards are established by psychometric evaluation after examination administration and are  
5 approved by the AOBPa. (4/10)  
6

7 Section 8. Notification to Applicants  
8 Following the examinational meeting of the Board, the Board shall notify each applicant of the results of  
9 the examination and inform the applicant that the action of the Board is subject to the final approval of  
10 the BOS. The AOBPa will follow the procedures outlined in Article X of the *Policies and Procedures of the*  
11 *BOS*.  
12  
13

14 **Article VII. Reexamination**

15  
16 Section 1. Initial Certification Examination  
17 Failure to achieve a final passing score on the examination shall require the applicant to be reexamined  
18 in all parts, unless the applicant failed only one part and only by 10% of the cut score. In such a  
19 situation, the board may allow a candidate to be re-examined only on the part the candidate failed the  
20 next time that examination is offered. If the candidate then fails to achieve a passing score, he/she must  
21 take the complete examination on subsequent attempts. The fee for reexamination will be set by the  
22 Board.  
23

24 Section 2. OCC Cognitive Assessment  
25 Failure to achieve a final passing score on the examination shall require the applicant to be reexamined  
26 in all parts unless the applicant failed only one part and only by 10% of the cut score. In such a situation,  
27 the board may allow a candidate to be re-examined only on the part the candidate failed the next time  
28 that examination is offered. If the candidate then fails to achieve a passing score, he/she must take the  
29 complete examination on subsequent attempts. A candidate who fails the OCC cognitive assessment  
30 will be allowed to repeat the examination upon reapplication to the board an unlimited number of times.  
31 This candidate will retain certified status if the candidate has a lifetime certificate. If the candidate has a  
32 time-limited certificate, failure of the examination will result in loss of certification if the candidate fails  
33 to pass the examination by the expiration date of the diplomate's certification.  
34

35  
36 **Article VIII. Certificates**

37  
38 Section 1. Process  
39 The AOBPa will issue and maintain certificates of certification and OCC in accordance with the *Policies*  
40 *and Procedures of the BOS*.  
41

42 Section 2. Certificate Dates – Primary Certification  
43 The date carried by primary certification certificates shall correspond with the date on which successful  
44 completion of all Board requirements is confirmed by the Board. All primary certifications issued after  
45 1994 shall be time-limited to ten (10) years. The certificate will expire on December 31 of the tenth year

1 following issuance of the certificate. Lifetime primary certifications issued prior to this date without a  
2 time limit, will remain in effect.

3  
4 Section 4. Certificate Dates – OCC Certificates

5 The date carried by OCC certificates shall correspond with the expiration date of the previous certificate  
6 once the candidate has successfully completed all Board requirements and is confirmed by the Board.  
7 All OCC certificates shall be time-limited to ten (10) years. The certificate will expire on December 31 of  
8 the tenth year following issuance of the certificate. (4/10)

9  
10 Section 5. - Inactivation, Revocation, Reinstatement, and Reactivation

11 The AOBPa will follow the procedures regarding certificate inactivation, revocation, reinstatement and  
12 reactivation in accordance with Article XI of the *Policies and Procedures of the BOS*.

13  
14 Section 6. – Lapsed Certifications

15 The AOBPA will follow the procedures as defined in the policies and procedures of the BOS for all  
16 lapsed certifications of no more than 3 years. Certifications that have lapsed for over 3 years will require  
17 the individual to complete and pass the part II oral/clinical examination and the osteopathic continuous  
18 certification examination. The individual will also be required to complete an additional 25 1-a, or 1-b  
19 CME credits within the last year prior to sitting for the part ii oral/clinical examination.

20  
21  
22 **Article IX. Osteopathic Continuous Certification**

23  
24 Section 1.

25 Osteopathic Continuous Certification is offered on a voluntary basis to those diplomates holding  
26 AOBPa certificates issued prior to 1995. Diplomates certified after 1994 must satisfactorily complete the  
27 OCC process during the ten (10) year period of their time-limited certificate in order for certification to  
28 be continuously valid.

29  
30 The Board will abide by all requirements for OCC in accordance with the Policies and Procedures of the  
31 BOS. All examination information including examination dates, board-specific requirements for  
32 Components 2, 3 and 4, and fees will be posted on the board website, and all instructions will be strictly  
33 observed.

34  
35 Section 2. Notification of OCC Deadline

36 The AOBPa will notify all holders of time-limited certificates at least two (2) years prior to such time as  
37 certification is to expire. (4/10)

38  
39 Section 3. Timeline for OCC Cognitive Assessment

40 The applicant must hold certification for a period of not less than eight (8) years prior to applying for  
41 the OCC cognitive assessment. This requirement may be waived under special circumstances by the  
42 specialty board. The new OCC certificate will become effective as of the date of the expiration of the  
43 previous certificate.



1 Section 4. Eligibility for OCC

2 To be eligible for OCC, a diplomate must demonstrate eligibility as outlined in Article XII of the *Policies*  
3 *and Procedures of the BOS*.

4  
5 Section 5. OCC Application Requirements

6 Candidates must submit the required application, fees, written evidence of continuous compliance with  
7 the initial requirements for certification in the specialty for which OCC is requested, and any other  
8 supporting documents required by the Board within established deadlines as determined by the Boar  
9

10 Section 6. CME Credit

11 Sixty (60) CME credits are required for each 3-year AOA CME cycle beginning with the 2019-2021  
12 CME cycle, regardless of the number of primary certifications held through AOBPa. Prior to January 1,  
13 2019, the CME requirement was for 120 total CME credits, with a minimum of 50 specialty CME and  
14 15 subspecialty CME (as applicable).

15  
16 Section 7. OCC Cognitive Assessment

17 An examination will be required and conducted in the case of each applicant. The method and content  
18 of the examination shall be determined by the Board. Each applicant shall be notified of the results of  
19 the examination and informed that the action of the Board is subject to the approval of the BOS.  
20 Candidates will not be permitted to review past examinations or questions at any time.

21  
22 Section 8. OCC Period

23 Successful candidates will be recertified for a period of ten (10) years.

Section 9. Item Writers

24 Item writers for the OCC examination must wait at least one (1) year after writing items to take the  
25 examination.  
26  
27

28 **Article X. Appeals**  
29

30 Section 1. Right of Appeal

31 If a candidate feels that the actions of the Board, with regard to any part of the examination, constitute  
32 unequal application of the regulations and requirements or standards, unwarranted discrimination,  
33 prejudice, unfairness or improper conduct of the examination, the candidate has the right to appeal to  
34 this Board.  
35

36 Section 2. Appeal Timeframe

37 All appeals must be made in writing to the Board and must be received within 30 days of receipt of  
38 notification of failure. If the exam in question is an oral exam, appeal must be made within two (2)  
39 hours after completion of the oral exam process. If these deadlines are not met, no further appeal is  
40 permitted. (4/10)  
41  
42  
43  
44

1 Section 3. Level of Appeal

2 In accordance with the policies of the American Osteopathic Association (AOA), candidate for  
3 certification may appeal decisions of the AOBPa to the AOA Bureau of Osteopathic Specialists (BOS).  
4 Thereafter, where necessary, candidates may appeal the decision of the BOS to Board of Trustees.  
5 Before pursuing an appeal with the AOA, candidates for certification from the AOBPa shall first appeal  
6 decisions related to any examination to the AOBPa as set forth in the policy outlined in Section 5.

7  
8 Section 4. Limitations

9 During any level of appeal described above the candidate will not be allowed by this Board to review any  
10 previous examination items.

11  
12 Section 5. AOBPa Appeals Policy

13 The AOBPa is committed to assuring that aggrieved candidates for certification have access to an appeal  
14 process to address concerns regarding all certification and recertification examinations and other  
15 decisions of the AOBPa.

16  
17 A. Scope of Appeal

- 18 1. Appealable Issues. Candidates may appeal to the AOBPa to raise concerns relative to the  
19 examination's administration (i.e., alleged bias/prejudice/unfairness of the exam or of a  
20 member of an examination team or failure to follow established examination procedures).  
21 2. Non-Appealable Issues. The AOBPa will not consider appeals based on examination  
22 content, sufficiency or accuracy of answers given to examination questions, scoring of the  
23 examination, scoring of answers to individual questions, and/or the determination of the  
24 minimum passing score.

25  
26 B. Procedure for Appeal.

- 27 1. Appeal Petition. In order to appeal concerning the examination, a candidate must set forth  
28 the basis for his/her appeal on an Appeal Petition and submit the form to the Board. Appeal  
29 Petitions will be provided to all certification candidates prior to the commencement of the  
30 examination. The appellant must submit the completed Appeal Petition to the Board or  
31 Board representative within thirty (30) days after he/she has completed the written/practical  
32 examinations only or within **two hours** after he/she has completed any oral examination.  
33 2. Late Appeals. All appeals submitted after the **two (2) hour** deadline for oral exams and  
34 thirty (30) day deadline for written/practical be denied.  
35 3. Evaluation of Appeal. Each appeal submitted on an Appeal Petition the timeframe set forth  
36 in Paragraph A above will be considered by the AOBPa's Examination Committee. A  
37 majority vote of the Committee will determine whether the AOBPa accepts or denies the  
38 appeal.  
39 4. Notification of Candidates. Candidates will be advised by the AOBPa of the Examination  
40 Committee's decision, by certified mail.

41  
42 C. Effect of Decision.

- 43 1. Decision to Accept Appeal.  
44 a. No Scoring or Recording of Exam. If the Appeal Committee accepts an appeal, then the  
45 candidate's examination will not be scored or recorded.  
46



1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12

**Article XII. Inquiries Regarding Status of a Physician**

The AOBPa will process inquiries regarding a physician’s application and certification status as outlined in Article XIII, Section 13, of the *Policies and Procedures of the BOS*.

**Article XIII. Amendments**

Amendments to the Policies and Procedures of the AOBPa may be adopted for submission to the BOS for approval by the vote of a majority of the members of the board at any meeting, provided the proposed amendments have been submitted in print or electronic format to each member.