



ABO Scenario-Based Clinical Exam

(rev. 04.08.2026)



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Purpose of Presentation

- Introduction to the ABO
- Encourage pursuit of board certification
- Describe the Scenario-Based Clinical Examination design and process
- Address FAQs
- Provide available resources

“...to elevate the standards of orthodontia...to protect the public against irresponsible and unqualified practitioners.”

- Dr. Albert Ketcham, Founder





The Mission

The mission of The American Board of Orthodontics is to elevate the quality of orthodontic care for the public by promoting excellence through certification, education and professional collaboration.



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ABO Certified Orthodontists

- There are over 5,000 Board Certified orthodontists.
- This represents approximately 68.7% of the AAO active membership.



Our Specialty

We have an opportunity to collectively strengthen our specialty by distinguishing ourselves from other unqualified practitioners providing orthodontic care.



It Takes A Specialist Video

[Click Here](#)





Foundation for Change

Martin Dewey:

“We should not make our requirements for examination so high that the average orthodontist may not perfect himself so that he may pass the board’s examination.”

Why Change the Clinical Exam?

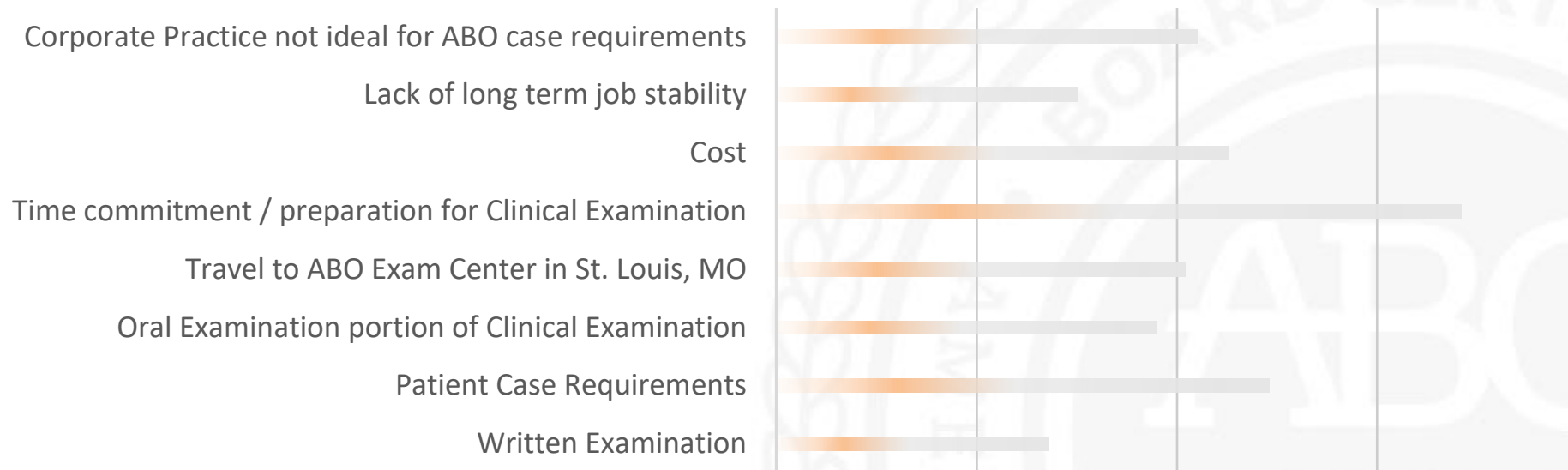
How The Decision Was Made

The Research Process



ABO Certification Survey

Please rank the following ABO requirements that commonly prevent orthodontists from becoming board certified:



Conditions for Change

- Educational Barriers
 - Leadership/Faculty Commitment
 - Length of Program
 - Patient Population Changes
 - Types of Patients
 - Total Number of patients
- Practice Models

Barriers



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Conditions for Change

Environment

- Student debt continues to increase, potentially limiting practice options.
- Practice models have significantly changed, making the board requirements difficult or impossible for some to meet.

Why Cases are Eliminated

- Eliminates unnecessary barriers.
 - All orthodontists have the ability to go through the certification process, regardless of their practice environment or where they are within their career.
- More objectively tests for proficiency.
- Accurately examines critical thinking in all areas of the four domains.



Purpose of the Scenario-Based Clinical Examination

- Objectively evaluate an orthodontist's knowledge, abilities, and critical thinking skills.
- Format allows for testing a large amount of material in a relatively short period of time.
- Questions are graded objectively based on pre-determined desired responses.

Examination Administration

- The Scenario-Based Clinical Examination is presented as an Objective Clinical Examination
- For detailed examination preparation materials, please refer to:
 - Examinee Orientation PowerPoint Presentation
 - Study Guide

In the Past

- The ABO Scenario-Based Clinical Exam was given only at the ABO Testing Center in St. Louis, Missouri.



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The ABO now offers the Scenario-Based Clinical Examination at Pearson Professional Centers Worldwide



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ABO Scenario-Based Clinical Exam

- The ABO proactively identified a solution to modify the exam to comply with CDC safety requirements and social distancing, while protecting the health and safety of examinees, examiners, and all involved.
- The change in the exam was made to maintain the integrity of the examination.
- This change enabled the ABO to uphold its mission, while administering a certification exam in the most valid, reliable, and safer method possible.
- By reducing barriers, more orthodontists have the opportunity to go through the certification process.



Examination Administration

- Patient records and pertinent documentation are provided for each question.
- Questions measure proficiency related to the tasks and skills required by the domains that the scenario is intended to test.
- Examinee responses will all be in a written/typed, numbered format.
- Examinees should respond with evidence-based answers when applicable and cite references to support answers as appropriate.



Benefits of the Scenario-Based Clinical Examination

Fair, reliable, and valid testing methodology using high standard psychometric procedures and concepts.

- Fair, standardized for all examinees.
- Reliable, consistently good in quality and performance.
- Valid, psychometrics are applied to all aspects of the examination.
- Demonstrates clinical proficiency in an objective manner.

Examination Components

Domain	Weighted % of Exam
1. Data Gathering and Diagnosis	25%
2. Treatment Objectives, Planning, and Prognosis	25%
3. Treatment Implementation, Evaluation, and Management	25%
4. Outcomes Assessment and Critical Analysis	25%



Domain 1: Data Gathering and Diagnosis

Tasks:

- Perform a screening examination using established guidelines after ascertaining the chief concerns and obtaining required informed consent to determine if and when treatment is indicated.
- Gather pertinent records using established guidelines to diagnose the nature of facial, dental, and skeletal problems and determine their etiologies.
- Develop a comprehensive diagnosis based on the screening examination and records gathered to serve as the basis for treatment planning.



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Domain 1: Data Gathering and Diagnosis

Sample Questions:

- Identify all of the dental problems for this patient. Please respond in numbered list format below.
- Identify the skeletal factors associated with the open bite. Please respond in numbered list format below.





Domain 2: Treatment Objectives, Planning, and Prognosis

Tasks:

- Determine treatment objectives based on the diagnosis to optimize dentofacial health, neuromuscular function, esthetics, and posttreatment stability.
- Develop ideal and alternative treatment plans taking into consideration risks, benefits, limitations, treatment duration, and case prognosis to address treatment objectives.
- Coordinate interdisciplinary cases through appropriate referrals to pertinent healthcare professionals in order to provide optimal care.
- Obtain a properly documented informed consent in fulfillment of medical, legal, and ethical responsibilities to help ensure the patient and family understand the benefit, risks, and limitations of treatment options.

Domain 2: Treatment Objectives, Planning, and Prognosis

Sample Questions:

- What would be your treatment plan for this patient? Please respond in numbered list format below.
- What are your dental treatment objectives? Please respond in numbered list format below.





Domain 3: Treatment Implementation, Evaluation, and Management

Tasks:

- Manage facial, dental, and skeletal problems in accordance with the treatment plan using orthodontic modalities, biomechanics, and technology to achieve treatment objectives.
- Evaluate the progress of treatment and its relationship to the objectives and timeline based on appropriate records to identify necessary modifications and optimize treatment and outcomes.
- Implement retention protocols to maintain treatment outcomes.

Domain 3: Treatment Implementation, Evaluation, and Management

Sample Questions:

- What steps are appropriate to regain control of this case? Please respond in numbered list format below.
- Which treatment adjustments are necessary to finish the case with acceptable results? Please respond in numbered list format below.



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Domain 4: Outcomes Assessment and Critical Analysis

Tasks:

- Evaluate treatment outcomes comparing pretreatment and posttreatment records to assess facial, dental, and skeletal changes with respect to the initial diagnosis and treatment objectives.
- Analyze posttreatment occlusion using accepted standards.
- Assess dental, periodontal, and neuromuscular health using established guidelines to communicate with patients, guardians, and other healthcare professionals.
- Evaluate the efficacy and efficiency of the overall treatment.

Domain 4: Outcomes Assessment and Critical Analysis

Sample Questions:

- Interpret the provided superimpositions. Please respond in numbered list format below.
- What dental changes occurred as a result of treatment? Please respond in numbered list format below.
- What skeletal changes occurred as a result of growth? Please respond in numbered list format below.

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How to Prepare

- Review ABO Study Guide and Sample Cases
- Critical thinking exercises
- Presenting an examinee's own clinical cases to follow residents, colleagues, educators and/or mentors
- Opportunity for self-evaluation and reflection on case outcomes



How to Prepare

ABO case outcomes assessment tools:

- Cast-Radiograph Evaluation (CRE)
- Case Management Form (CMF)
- Cephalometric Superimposition Technique and Interpretation



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Rating Scales and Examiner Training

- Responses independently scored
- Anchored rating scale
- Examiner training calibration program





Exam Results

- Weighting system
- Psychometric assessment
 - *Reliability, validity, and objectivity*
- Results presented in pass/fail format



Scenario-Based Clinical Exam Statistics

	Nov. 2020	Feb. 2021	Jul. 2021	Nov. 2021	Feb. 2022	Oct. 2022	Feb. 2023	Feb. 2024	Sept. 2024
Exam Type	Scantron	Scantron	Scantron	Pearson VUE	Pearson VUE	Pearson VUE	Pearson VUE	Pearson VUE	Pearson VUE
Pass Rate	75%	89%	90.60%	64.40%	78.80%	82%	74%	89.10%	88.60%



Test Technique Pointers

- Read the question carefully
- Use the images presented for each question
- Be mindful of time and number of questions
- Remember you cannot go back to previous questions
- Provide detailed short and concise answers
- Review ABO study guide
- Practice outcomes assessment tools including CRE
- **All written responses will be considered when evaluating and scoring the question**

Prepare!!!

With each patient ask yourself:

- What happened
- Where did it happen
- Why did it happen (is it good/bad?)
- What is next?
- Are we still on target?
- Prepare by being a continuous serious student!!!

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Certification Makes a Difference

- **For you**....personal accomplishment, ongoing self-assessment, and commitment to being a continual learner .
- **For your future**....a way to differentiate yourself, for future employment and from other practitioners performing orthodontics.
- **For our specialty**....commitment to the highest standard of patient care.

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Thank You!