Oral Clinical Examination Candidate Overview

After candidates successfully complete the Qualifying Examination, they can apply for the Oral Clinical Examination (OCE).

I. Format

The Oral Clinical Examination is designed to evaluate the candidate’s knowledge and ability to solve clinical cases in pediatric dentistry. The examination is conducted only in English. The examination is administered in Dallas, at a facility specifically designed for administration of professional specialty board oral examinations (see figure).

The examination is composed of two one-hour sessions administered successively by two examiners from the ABPD’s Examination Committee, Consultant Examiners, or a Board Director. Each session consists of clinical vignettes that are presented to the candidate for discussion. The topic areas covered by the vignettes include:

- Comprehensive Care
- Hospital Dentistry
- Behavior Guidance
- Management of the Developing Occlusion
- Oral Pathology
- Prevention
- Special Health Care Needs
- Trauma

The candidate will be presented a brief introduction of the patient to be discussed, followed by a series of questions regarding the patient’s medical/dental history, diagnosis and treatment options. Many, but not all, cases will include images projected on a flat-panel monitor. The candidate will be permitted to ask questions about the patient and request that an image or images be revisited.

Examiners utilize ‘open-ended’ questions to assess the candidate’s knowledge and skills. Candidates will benefit by giving evidenced-based answers and occasionally citing references to support rationale. Candidates will be expected to have evidenced-based knowledge of all currently acceptable therapy whether they perform the procedures in practice or not and in all types of pediatric patients.

The Board has contracted with a professional testing organization to develop a format designed to ensure the reliability, validity, and objectivity of the exam in order to identify those individuals who possess the necessary knowledge, skill and judgment to achieve Diplomate status.
II. Scoring
The ABPD utilizes the following criteria for scoring. Questions and acceptable answers are developed for each of the ‘Skill Sets’ of a vignette. Candidates receive a score for each of these Skill Sets:

1. Data Gathering/Diagnosis
2. Management/Treatment Planning
3. Treatment Variations/Complications

The Scoring Categories are as follows:

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<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Demonstrates full and in-depth understanding of the application of the skill within the context of the case.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Demonstrates use of the skill appropriately within the context of the case.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Demonstrates less than full understanding of the application of the skill to the case.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Demonstrates wrong or inappropriate understanding of the application of the skill to the case.</td>
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- The Examiners independently score each Skill Set based on the candidate’s response. Examiners do not discuss scores or come to a consensus.

- **To assure valid and reliable examinations, the Examiners are not allowed to give candidates any feedback on their responses.**

- Candidates are encouraged to apply knowledge to a clinical situation, defend a point of view in a convincing manner and not use stalling tactics by being excessively slow in response leading to insufficient information in the time allotted.

- It is most important that the candidate proceeds through all skill sets in the vignettes. Results of all examinations are analyzed and processed by a professional psychometrician. The final score is reported to the candidate as either a Pass or a Fail.

- Examination results are reported to candidates via the ABPD website within 6 weeks.

III. Examination schedule
The Oral Clinical Examination is currently offered annually in Dallas, Texas.

All applications must have a photograph upload with the application form or the application will not be processed. Applications are processed on a first come first serve basis.

A government issued ID is required during registration.

While the examination consists of a two-hour time period, check-in and identification procedures, and pre-exam orientation will require candidates to be prepared to spend a total of up to four hours for the entire process.

You cannot bring personal items (including but not limited to pagers, cellular phones, computers, PDA’s, recording devices, smartwatches, reference materials, purses, backpacks or briefcases) with you to the registration, orientation, or testing center. The presence of any of the above devices will be cause for immediate dismissal from the examination and an automatic failure.
IV. Preparation for the Examination
The Oral Clinical Examination is designed to assess the candidate’s clinical knowledge and judgment. While there is no standard method to prepare for the Oral Clinical Examination, candidates should consider reviewing the AAPD Reference Manual, attending continuing education preparation courses, reviewing their favorite pediatric dentistry textbook and atlas, keeping current by reading contemporary journals and/or oral examination role-playing with colleagues.

V. Confidentiality Agreement
All candidates are required to ‘sign’ a confidentiality agreement which is presented as a check box on the application. The application cannot be submitted for processing if left unchecked. The information and cases presented as part of the Oral Clinical Examination are confidential and copyrighted. The candidates must agree not to discuss or in any way disseminate information regarding the content of the examination.

If ABPD is informed that a candidate has breached the confidentiality agreement an investigation will be initiated by the Ethics Committee and if the candidate is guilty, sanctions will be imposed on the candidate as outlined in ABPD’s Enforcement of the Ethical Obligations of Diplomates and Candidates.

VI. Re-examination Policies
The candidate who fails the OCE may retake the examination annually within their five-year eligibility period. If the candidate fails to successfully complete the OCE in the 5-year eligibility period, their QE score is forfeited and the candidate must start the process over.

VII. Monitoring of Oral Examinations
To assist with training, candidate examinations will be monitored using closed circuit television. Two cameras will be used in the testing room, one focused on the candidate and one focused on the examiner. Recordings will be used only in connection with ABPD’s training and calibration of OCE examiners. The candidate’s face will be electronically hidden to protect identity.

VIII. Licensure Issues
Candidate will not be scheduled for any of the ABPD examinations if their license to practice dentistry has been suspended or revoked.

Direct questions to:
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