

Preparing for the Qualifying Examination (QE)

A frequent question received by the ABPD headquarters staff is, “How can I prepare for the board exam?”

There is not a “one plan fits all” approach. Here are some tips that you can follow to successfully complete the challenging, yet rewarding, first part of the board certification process.

1. Review the ABPD website (www.abpd.org) soon after registering for the QE
2. Be systematic in your study approach
 - a. Begin preparations soon after registering
 - b. Consult colleagues regarding how they prepared
 - c. Organize study materials
 - d. Utilize a study partner to review material
 - e. Set a study schedule
 - f. Study a little bit every day so that it does not become overwhelming
 - g. Cover all of the 8 domains listed on the ABPD website in your studies
 - h. Create flash/study cards
3. Become familiar with the examination specifications
 - a. Intended to assess understanding of the scientific and biological principles that support the practice of pediatric dentistry, as well as current literature relating to pediatric dentistry.
 - b. Comprised of domains (www.abpd.org for a detailed blueprint)
 - Microbiology (24 items)
 - Prevention and anticipatory guidance (30 items)
 - Craniofacial growth and developing dentition and occlusion (24 items)
 - Restorative dentistry and oral rehabilitation (22 items)
 - Oral diagnosis/oral pathology/oral medicine (30 items)
 - Special health care needs (18 items)
 - Child development/behavior guidance (28 items)
 - Pulp therapy/orofacial trauma (24 items)
 - c. 200 objective, single – best answer, multiple choice items
 - d. Four-hour examination session
 - e. Administered at PearsonVue testing centers
4. Consider using multiple resources/references in your preparation.
 - a. Review the suggested references on the ABPD website, including the
 - i. American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry Reference Manual, focusing on background information and the Resource Section (rather than treatment recommendations)
 - ii. Most recent AAPD Handbook of Pediatric Dentistry
 - b. Attend a pediatric dentistry comprehensive review course, such as the AAPD Comprehensive Review Course
 - c. Review recent scientific literature especially regarding systemic review, hot topics and new procedures, materials and technology

- d. Review didactic materials from advanced educational training program(s)
5. Optimize your thinking, reasoning and memory
 - a. Reduce your stress/avoid stressful people
 - b. Eat healthy and exercise
 - c. Take breaks (for every hour that you study, take a 10-minute break)
 - d. Visualize the test going well
6. Follow some general test-taking tips
 - a. Read the entire question carefully
 - b. Try to answer without referring to the answer choices
 - c. Read all the answer alternatives carefully
 - d. Use the process of elimination if you do not immediately know the correct answer
 - e. If you are struggling with a question, flag it so you can return to it later
 - f. Select the response that best answers the questions.

The Qualifying Examination may be one of the most challenging events in your professional career. If you have prepared systematically, you should be confident that you are well prepared to succeed. The ABPD wishes you success on the Qualifying Examination and your journey toward board certification.