

TESTPOINTS®

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TESTPOINTS® is the official newsletter of the National Board of Examiners in Optometry (NBEO) sharing with the various optometric communities the news, events, and changes that are happening here. Please send any comments or questions that you may have to the editor at info@optometry.org.

IMPORTANT NEWS/NOTE

The first administration of the new Continued Professional Development in Optometry (CPDO) exam was held on March 3, 2014 at Pearson VUE testing centers. Registration is now open for the second administration which will be held on **September 26, 2014**.

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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



What does the National Board of Examiners in Optometry (NBEO) really do? Everyone in optometry would readily agree that the NBEO develops, administers, scores, and reports valid exams. But, why and for whom?

There are many uses for NBEO exams but the essential purpose is to PROTECT THE PUBLIC. The public expectation is that those providing optometric care are qualified to deliver this care.

Arguably, the past 42 years have brought on an even greater expectation for public protection as the scope-of-practice for optometry has **DRAMATICALLY** expanded.

All groups in optometry have been involved in this sizeable transformation of optometry. With only a few Diagnostic Pharmaceutical Agent (DPA) states in 1971-73, the NBEO stepped forward very rapidly and added "Ocular Pharmacology" as a Section 9 by 1974-75. Why move so quickly? The NBEO had a responsibility to protect the public by providing an assessment of practitioners' and students' knowledge of this subject matter in optometry.

With therapeutic laws enacted in a few states, by 1983, the NBEO, in conjunction with the Association of Regulatory Boards of Optometry (ARBO), developed the Treatment and Management of Ocular Disease (TMOD) exam which was first administered in 1985. Why? The TMOD exam offered a highly credible and valid method to credential optometrists desiring therapeutic privileges in their states. Again, this functioned to protect the public. Since most optometrists who took TMOD had been practicing for a number of years, the TMOD also served to foster life-long learning from graduation to that point in their careers.

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As the National Board began the arduous process of embedding the TMOD into Part II, the NBEO sponsored several task forces to review the Part I and Part II content outlines to assure that the basic science requisite knowledge necessary to use therapeutics was being tested.

The NBEO expanded the content of the Part I and Part II exams commensurate with the needs of therapeutics. The NBEO's efforts were combined with the efforts of other organizations to establish the fundamental link between NBEO exams and protection of the public. By 1993, TMOD was embedded within Part II, Human Biology was expanded within Part I, and Systemic Conditions was expanded within Part II.

From 1987-93, the NBEO recognized that implementing a Clinical Skills exam that included numerous essential skills such as Binocular Indirect Ophthalmoscopy (BIO) and gonioscopy was fundamental in protecting the public. Involving huge effort, the Clinical Skills Exam (CSE) was administered at all institutions beginning in 1993. In 2011, the NBEO took the next step in evolving the Part III CSE by developing the National Center of Clinical Testing in Optometry (NCCTO). The enhanced validity of the results ensures that the public interest is safeguarded.

In March 2012, the NBEO developed a revised Candidate Agreement that includes an updated Ethics Policy, and the explanatory Security Dilemmas to clarify candidate responsibilities to ensure that the NBEO results are valid and truly protect the public interest.

The NBEO has been unwavering in its drive to construct exams and programs that represent the highest standards to protect the public. As Dr. Larry Davis, former President of the NBEO Board of Directors so aptly put it, constantly "advancing the assessment of competence" is the vision of NBEO. The motivation behind the NBEO changes have been consistent: Do what is right from a public protection perspective!

It truly is a pleasure to serve as the Executive Director of the NBEO, where doing the right thing to advance competence in order to protect the public drives the NBEO's justification for existence.

Jack E. Terry, O.D., Ph.D., NBEO Executive Director

CPDO EXAM INFORMATION



Register Now For The Next CPDO Exam!

The NBEO has developed the new **Continued Professional Development in Optometry (CPDO)** assessment. The CPDO is a 3.5-hour computer-based testing (CBT) examination given at Pearson VUE test centers within the United States. The first administration of CPDO was March 3, 2014 at Pearson VUE testing centers across the country. Registration is currently open for the next administration on **September 26, 2014**. For more information and/or to register for this examination please visit our website at www.optometry.org.

The CPDO examination was intended periodically to assess licensed practitioners' optometric knowledge regarding *life or sight issues* by identifying any existing knowledge gaps. The interpretation of CPDO results can provide direction toward lifelong learning programs. The assessment also serves as a pathway toward maintaining NBEO-BC Board Certification as it documents professional knowledge over the course of an OD's career. Through these several functions, the CPDO contributes toward the protection of the public health and welfare.

CPDO eligibility is broad. ODs need only be licensed to practice optometry in any state or United States territory to take the CPDO assessment, given that licensure classically implies that proof of graduation from an ACOE-accredited school or college of optometry and proof of passage of the NBEO exams designated by that state or territory have been rendered and confirmed. There is no eligibility restriction based on having completed a residency or the number of years that a practitioner has been involved in active optometric practice, though potential candidates should keep in mind that the content targets experienced practitioners.

Subject matter included within the CPDO examination is intended to assess practice-level competence in ocular disease and related systemic conditions. The incidence and prevalence of the ocular conditions found on the exam are varied to accommodate the different professional experiences. Exam items primarily focus on the diagnosis and treatment of ocular disease though some items cover related systemic conditions (such as diabetes, hypertension, Graves' disease) that affect the eye. Other items involve the clinical correlation of basic science principles.

Practitioners wishing to take the CPDO assessment register using the NBEO's online registration system at www.optometry.org. They then visit the Pearson VUE website and select a Pearson VUE test center. The exam may be scheduled for any 4-hour time slot that is available on the test day, at the chosen Pearson VUE site.

The exam documents professional currency throughout an optometrist's professional career. NBEO-BC board-certified ODs who wish to maintain their BC status must pass the CPDO exam every 7 years as part of the NBEO-BC Maintenance of Certification program. The resulting CPDO scores are used by the NBEO-BC to customize the designation of continuing education subject matter areas in which individual practitioners most need to refresh their optometric knowledge bases.

PART II (PAM/TMOD) INFORMATION

Two-day Test Window for December 2014 PAM Examination:

There will again be a two-day test window available to candidates who take the Part II PAM examination in December 2014. Candidates will have a choice of testing days, either **Tuesday, December 2, 2014** or **Thursday, December 4, 2014**. Each candidate will still test on a single day, over an 8-hour period. By offering the exam on two days for the targeted administration, rather than a single day, twice as many seats at Pearson VUE test centers will be available to the Part II PAM candidates. This has proven beneficial to the candidates looking for convenient testing locations and has cut down on the need for candidates to travel to an available test site. Different forms of the examination will be administered on the two days and these forms will be comparable in difficulty and content.



PAM Composition For The December 2014 Administration:

For the December 2014 administration of Part II PAM, the distribution of content and total test items will remain the same as previous administrations. Part II PAM will be made up of 45-55 full patient cases, 15-20 solo items, and 15-25 minicases. An updated content matrix and detailed explanation of item types are available on our website to reflect the minicases and solo items. Where condition areas used to be listed by number of cases, they are now listed by number of total items. In other words, items associated with a particular condition area may be distributed over full cases, solo items, and/or minicases.

This inclusion of solo items and minicases will allow the testing of condition areas which were previously difficult to test as full cases. The full cases will continue to follow the current template: a patient scenario, images, and 4-7 associated items. Solo items are individual items not linked to a patient scenario. Minicases are abbreviated patient cases with 2-4 associated items.

This year, Pearson VUE is holding seats for NBEO candidates up until 90 days prior to the exam. Once the hold is lifted on September 4, 2014, any unscheduled seats will be made available to other testing organizations, and it will be increasingly difficult for NBEO candidates to locate a convenient test center. Candidates wishing to take the December 2014 PAM examination are urged to register early. Registration opened on May 7, 2014. The registration deadline is **September 3, 2014** to insure that candidates register and schedule their appointments with Pearson VUE before the hold on seats is released.

The TMOD examination will be administered only on Thursday, December 4, 2014 and is a 4-hour exam given in a single session. TMOD registration follows the same schedule as the PAM registration.

PART III (CSE/ISE) INFORMATION

Which states require Part III CSE?

All 50 States require a passing score on the Part III CSE exam. Florida and North Carolina do require a specific number of raw points for certain skills. Candidates are encouraged to contact their individual states to determine state-specific requirements.

Will the NBEO offer break-out exams for certain Part III skills?

Currently, the NBEO only offers a break-out exam for the Injections Skill Exam (ISE) portion of Part III.

When are Injections Exams scheduled?

While the NBEO has routine openings for ISE, Injections Exams can also be scheduled on an as-needed basis. If the dates on the schedule do not work for you, you are welcome to call the NCCTO to determine if additional Injections Exam Sessions can be opened.

When will information be posted for the 2015 Administration of Part III CSE?

Evaluations Forms, Candidate Guides, Orientation Videos and other updated material for the 2015 administration will be posted online at <http://www.optometry.org/nccto.cfm> by **July 1, 2014**.

When should Candidates arrive for the Part III CSE Exam?

Arriving at the time listed on your registration is appropriate as Candidate Registration and Orientation will not begin until that time (i.e.: 8:30 AM or 12:00 PM). However, the earliest Candidates should arrive to the test center is 15 minutes prior to their exam time. If you find you have arrived to the building early, the 3rd Floor of the BB&T building has an Overstreet Mall which contains numerous shops, cafes, and restaurants where you are welcome to wait before your registration time begins.



The following are recommendations for taking the Part III exam:

Study the evaluation forms!

This is an "open book" test. The evaluation forms highlight exactly what will be scored. The evaluation forms are processed through a simple "Yes/No" grading system. Either the item is completed in its entirety or it is not. Items not fully completed are marked "No."

Pay attention to multiple criteria items. For instance, if the evaluation form says "Did the Candidate properly examine the fovea and macula" and a Candidate examined the fovea, but did not examine the macula, then that item was not completed in its entirety and would be marked "No."

Make sure you have a view!

- Candidates are strongly encouraged to make sure their views are visible for recording purposes for all Slit Lamp and BIO skills.
- For Slit Lamp skills, the video camera is mounted on the left ocular of the slit lamp. By checking this ocular, you can ensure your views are being recorded as you obtain them.
- For BIO, the camera is mounted centrally for both oculars. As long as an image is present in one ocular, the camera will record the image as it is obtained.
- Candidates also are encouraged to confirm the presence of a view with their Proctor. As a reminder, when a Proctor states they have a view, this only indicates that they see something on the monitor. It does not indicate the clarity or quality of the view, or whether the view meets the minimum criteria. However, Candidates can be assured that their views will be recorded exactly as they obtain them, so long as the view is not obstructed.

Watch your time!

Candidates are responsible for monitoring their own time during the exam. Standardized, synched clocks are provided and Candidates are encouraged to write the time down when the exam rotation begins. By monitoring your time, you will know if you have enough time to repeat a Skill or more time to focus on a particular Skill.

2014 NBEO EXAM DATES AND DEADLINES

2014 National Board of Examiners in Optometry Exam Schedule

<u>2014 Exam</u>	<u>Test Date</u>	<u>Registration Deadline</u>	<u>Late Registration Deadline</u>	<u>Withdrawal and Site Change Deadline</u>
Part I ABS	August 5 – 6	June 3	June 18	June 18
Part II PAM/TMOD*	December 2 or 4	September 3	September 18	November 4
Part III CSE/ISE	all year	7 days prior	N/A	30 days prior to exam
ACMO	June 5	May 26	N/A	May 28
CPDO	September 26	September 19		

* TMOD stand-alone exam will be offered only on December 4, 2014

For special site and/or ADA application deadlines, please check the NBEO website for more information.

ACMO UPDATE

Layout Changes for ACMO Exam



The Advanced Competence in Medical Optometry (ACMO) exam had a somewhat new look for 2014. The layout of the exam has been modified to take advantage of the larger monitors now in use at Pearson VUE testing centers. In late 2013, Pearson switched from using 17-inch size monitors to 24-inch size monitors at its testing centers in the U.S. With the increased monitor size, the National Board decided to change the layout of cases for the ACMO exam.

The case history will now appear on the left side of the screen, and individual exam items will appear, one at a time, on the right side of the screen. In the past, exam items appeared on a separate screen from the case history, so candidates who wanted to check the case history when answering items had to toggle back and forth between screens. ACMO candidates should note that, even with the new layout, they will have to use the scroll bar to see all of the history information for each case.

The National Board has developed a new tutorial for the ACMO exam so that candidates can familiarize themselves with the new screen layout. The tutorial is available from the ACMO description page on the National Board website (http://www.optometry.org/acmo_description.cfm).

One other new feature for 2014 is that ACMO utilized a video on the exam for the first time. The National Board hopes to add additional videos to the exam in the future.

The ACMO exam was administered on Thursday, June 5, 2014 at Pearson testing centers nationwide. The 2014 exam was the first time that the exam was administered on a Thursday. The exam was switched from Friday to Thursday due to scheduling issues at Pearson testing centers.

The 2014 exam marked 10 years since the National Board first administered ACMO. The ACMO exam was developed at the request of the National Association of Veterans Affairs Optometrists (NAVAO). The impetus was to provide a standardized assessment of mastery at the conclusion of a VA residency. Because other VA doctoral-level health professions administer such assessments, NAVAO's position was that VA Optometry would benefit from an exit examination. In addition to residents, VA staff who supervise residents were also included in the initial candidate pool. In 2008, eligibility for the ACMO examination was expanded to include optometrists clinically privileged to provide optometric patient care services to VA patients. The exam is now also used by the American Board of Certification in Medical Optometry (ABCMO) in ABCMO's Board Certification process.

ACMO was the first computer-based exam administered by the National Board. The Board now administers the Part II exam, the TMOD exam, and the CPDO exam by computer.

Sleep Important For Test Taking

A recent study showed that sleep deprivation among healthy males in their 20's resulted in significantly increased serum levels of stress hormones, such as cortisol, epinephrine, and norepinephrine. Importantly, sleep deprivation decreased attention and working memory especially at the highest level of test complexity during test performance.

Sleep deprivation also increased the likelihood of making errors at every level of test complexity.¹ While test preparation is crucial, sleep deprivation appears to induce negative physical and cognitive effects.

1. Joo, E. Y., Yoon, C. W., Koo, D. L., Kim, D., and Hong, S. B. (2012). Adverse effects of 24 hours of sleep deprivation on cognition and stress hormones. *J Clin Neurol* **8**, 146-50.

Did You Know ... ???

- ... that the computer based testing (CBT) format for Part II (PAM)/TMOD is NOT a continuous-type test administered through-out the year? It remains an event-based exam. The Part II PAM and TMOD exams are given two times per year, in December (targeted) and April (non-targeted).
- ... that candidates are strongly encouraged to register for their Part II PAM (and TMOD) exams on the NBEO website **now through September 3, 2014?** Following registration, schools and colleges will verify eligibility. When candidates receive notice within a few days that eligibility has been approved, they should log on to the Pearson VUE website right away to schedule their Pearson VUE exam seat appointments in order to secure a seat in a preferred test center.
- ... that registration for Part III CSE is now open for Class of 2015 candidates? Test takers may select their preferred test date and session online under *Register for an Exam* on the NBEO website. CSE testing is most popular from January through April. To avoid an unnecessary delay in testing and score release due to a lack of available exam appointments toward the end of the academic year, candidates are encouraged to schedule their Part III exams as soon as they feel comfortable in their clinical skill levels.
- ... that Part III testing is offered one **Saturday** per month?
- ... that registration now is open for the next CPDO exam to be held at Pearson VUE testing centers on **September 26, 2014?**
- ... that NBEO examination scores can be withheld from candidates who share confidential written or clinical skills exam materials with others following a testing event? NBEO exam material is copyrighted and may not legally be reproduced verbally or in writing and subsequently disseminated to, or in any manner shared with, other students, optometry school/college faculty, study guide representatives, or anyone else.
- ... that watches are prohibited from exam rooms on test days? Large wall clocks are provided in each Part I exam room so that candidates are able to keep track of their remaining exam time. Part II and ACMO exams are taken in CBT (Computer-Based Testing) format which provides access to the time via the test center computer in each exam booth. There is a wall clock in each Part III exam room.
- ... that personal earplugs are not permitted in Part I or II exam rooms without prior authorization? Parts I and II test centers provide **standard** earplugs for those candidates who would like to use them; candidates requiring the use of special earplugs should apply for a test accommodation. Test accommodation application instructions are on the NBEO website.