



Policy on Quality Assurance

BACKGROUND

ABEM provides an objective, fair, and standardized process to certify emergency physicians who meet its educational, professional standing, and examination standards. To support these objectives, ABEM routinely evaluates its certification process through quality assurance practices that ensure the consistent application of policies and procedures, detect needed corrective measures, and identify opportunities for improvement.

POLICY

Frequency

ABEM already reviews many of its procedures every six months through the deliberations of the Test Administration Committee. ABEM will conduct an additional annual internal audit to review key program components. The audit will be presented to the Test Administration Committee at its winter meeting. The purpose of the audit is to identify opportunities for improvement, policy updates, or resolution of program issues. ABEM may conduct additional audits as needed.

Areas of Focus

The internal audit will focus on the following program areas.

Certification Program Area	Goal of Internal Audit
Policy Review	Verify consistent implementation of all certification program policies and/or identify necessary updates for the Board's consideration.
Application Processing	Ensure applications for both initial certification and continuing certification are reviewed in a fair and timely manner consistent with the established policies and procedures in order to verify that candidates meet established requirements.
Published Information	Verify that published documents related to board certification are accurate and current.
Examination Development	Verify consistent implementation of all exam development policies and procedures, including those associated with the job analysis, item development and review, form assembly and review, standard setting, and technical review for both the Qualifying Exam and Oral Certification Exam. Confirm that examination development activities are conducted under the oversight of a qualified psychometrician and are adequately documented.
Examination Administration	Evaluate all exam administration policies and procedures, including, but not limited to, ensuring proctor and test center quality, reviewing candidate feedback, monitoring the accuracy of the scoring process, score reporting.
Security	Ensure ABEM and its testing vendor consistently implement required security practices to keep confidential exam information secure. Confirm that ongoing monitoring of the contracted testing company has occurred.
Document Management	Ensure documents and records are developed, kept, and disposed of in accordance with any Record Retention Policy.

Confidentiality	Verify confidential information is handled appropriately and that current, signed agreements are on file for individuals with access to confidential information.
Conflict of Interest	Verify that those who are subject to the Policy on Conflict of Interest have current, signed agreements on file.
Complaints, Disciplinary Actions, and Appeals	Ensure that complaints and appeals are reviewed and processed in accordance with ABEM policy and that disciplinary actions are carried out fairly and consistently and in accordance with established policies and procedures.
Training	Confirm that Board members received orientation and necessary training. Confirm physician item writers (SMEs) have participated in training to perform exam development activities. Confirm that physician oral examiners have participated in training to perform exam development activities.
Physician Support Service Standards	ABEM will establish and monitor standards for physician support (customer service).
Vendor Monitoring	ABEM will monitor vendors performing work related to the program against the agreed upon scope of work. ABEM will conduct an annual audit of the vendor performance.

PROCEDURES

Auditor Selection

The internal audit may be conducted by an ABEM staff member or use an external consultant. To avoid any conflicts of interest, the individual conducting the audit will not evaluate his/her own work.

Reporting

The auditor will submit a written summary report of the audit findings to the ABEM staff and the Chair of the Test Administration Committee.

Management Review

The Test Administration Committee Chair will report on the findings of the audit to the Board. The Board, or a subcommittee of the Board on the Board's behalf, will conduct and document a management review. During the management review the Board (or its subcommittee) will determine necessary corrective and preventative actions for identified issues, develop a timeline for each action item, and assign responsibilities as needed. These decisions will be documented in a management review report or meeting minutes. ABEM will track items identified in the management review to include the status and effectiveness. Recommended policy revisions will be referred to the Board for review and approval.

Errors Found During Normal Program Operations

Errors discovered during the course of normal program operations will trigger a required review to quickly address correction of the error. The ABEM staff will work with the testing vendor and/or all involved parties (vendors, consultants, etc.) to gather information, determine a plan of action, and allocate resources for the resolution of the issue. An action plan, based on the specific error and any associated risk to the integrity of the certification process, will be developed and documented. The ABEM staff, or other applicable party, will write a summary report of the event and resolution and distribute it to the ABEM Board. The report may include strategies for preventing similar errors from future occurrence and will be included in routine updates on audit status to the Board.

Financial Management

ABEM hires an independent CPA firm to prepare financials statements and to file annual tax returns. The ABEM Board receives and reviews monthly financial statements. Moreover, ABEM uses an independent auditing firm to verify the accuracy of ABEM's accounting statements as well as to ensure proper business practices.

EXCEPTION

None

Review date: April 2021