



2027 Oral Certifying Examination Handbook

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Table of Contents

Mission	3
Vision	3
Organization	3
Board Certification Examinations	4
About the Oral Certifying Examination	4
Timeline	5
Getting Started	5
Application Requirements.....	5
Hospital Staff Privileges	6
Licensure.....	7
Badge Image	7
What to Expect on Examination Day	7
Examination Structure	8
Scoring of the Examination	9
Dress Code	9
Examination Security	10
Examination Observations	11
Examiner Conflict Policy	11
Release of Examination Results	13
Accommodation Policy	13
Other Policies.....	15
Contact Information	18



Mission

The American Board of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery (ABOMS) ensures that Diplomates meet our standards of training, education, and professionalism through our certification process. As the certifying body in Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, ABOMS provides contemporary and innovative programs that promote optimal care and service to the public.

Vision

To be the recognized leader in Board Certification of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery and related disciplines.

Organization

ABOMS is the certifying Board for the specialty of oral and maxillofacial surgery in the United States and is recognized and approved by the Council on Dental Education of the American Dental Association.

A committee was authorized at the 1945 annual meeting of the American Society of Oral Surgeons to establish an American Board of Oral Surgery, which would conduct examinations for the certification of specialists in oral surgery. In 1946, the American Board of Oral Surgery was incorporated under the laws of the State of Illinois. During the following year, the American Board of Oral Surgery was approved by the Council on Dental Education of the American Dental Association and was authorized to proceed with the certification of specialists in oral surgery. The American Board of Oral Surgery was renamed the American Board of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery in 1978 to reflect the scope of the specialty. The name modification was incorporated under the laws of the State of Illinois.

The operation of ABOMS is entrusted to an eight-member Board of Directors. These Directors are [Diplomates](#) of the American Board of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery and Fellows of the



American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons. One Director is elected each year to an eight-year term during the Oral Certifying Exam by the Oral Certifying Exam Committee and ratified by the Board of Directors. The elected Director is affirmed during the annual meeting of the House of Delegates of the American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons. Members of the ABOMS Board of Directors serve without salary.

Board Certification Examinations

The ABOMS certification process in oral and maxillofacial surgery is comprehensive, covering both the biological sciences and clinical practice. It consists of two examinations: the Qualifying Examination (QE) and the Oral Certifying Examination (OCE).

About the Oral Certifying Examination

The Oral Certifying Examination (OCE) is administered at the AIME Center in Raleigh, North Carolina. It is an oral examination designed to assess an OMS Candidate's ability to apply essential knowledge, sound judgment, and critical thinking in the management of clinical scenarios.

Candidates who have successfully completed the Qualifying Examination (QE) are eligible to apply for the OCE. It is important to note that each Candidate has three consecutive opportunities to take and pass the examination. Non-submission of an application, cancellations, no-shows, and unsuccessful attempts each count as one opportunity.



Timeline

It is the Candidate's responsibility to be aware of and meet all deadlines.

2027 OCE Timeline	
Applications Open	June 10, 2026
Applications Due	September 23, 2026
Individual Exam Day Information Emailed	Mid-December
Examination Administered (Raleigh, NC)	February 1–5, 2027
Examination Results Posted	Mid-March 2027

Getting Started

To apply for the OCE, all required materials must be uploaded through your ABOMS account. Use the same account that was used to register for the Qualifying Examination (QE). **Do not create a new account.** All materials must be received by the application deadline for review. The application will be available in your account starting June 10, 2026, through September 23, 2026.

All submitted materials will be reviewed for approval. ABOMS reserves the right to withhold results if any application materials are found to be deficient, expired, or inaccurate.

Application Requirements

- Verification of Hospital Staff Privileges Appointment
 - ABOMS will accept proof of pending hospital privileges if full privileges have not been obtained by the OCE application deadline.
 - Do not apply for the OCE if you do not expect to have proof of pending hospital privileges in time for the OCE application deadline.
- Copy of Current Dental/Medical Licensure
- Professional Badge Image



- Application Fee of \$465.00 USD (*Waived for OCE Candidates on their second and third opportunity*)
- Examination Fee of \$2,935.00 USD

All fees are listed in U.S. dollars and include applicable credit card processing fees. Fees are non-refundable and non-transferable.

Hospital Staff Privileges

All OCE Candidates are required to provide proof of hospital staff privileges. Candidates must demonstrate the ability to manage patient care at a hospital where they hold privileges to perform core oral and maxillofacial surgery procedures. A hospital is defined as an institution primarily engaged in providing, by or under the supervision of physicians, inpatient diagnostic and therapeutic services or rehabilitation services, and is accredited by The Joint Commission or approved by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. Privileges at an ambulatory surgery center are acceptable if the center is affiliated with a hospital where the Candidate maintains surgical privileges.

ABOMS will accept proof of pending hospital privileges if full privileges have not been obtained by the OCE application deadline. However, scores will not be released without verification of full hospital privileges, and failure to provide such verification may result in a voided examination outcome.

Fellowship Hospital Privileges

Candidates actively enrolled in an ADA-accredited fellowship may use the hospital privileges obtained through their fellowship. Documentation from the institution must be provided to verify enrollment and must include the fellowship start date and anticipated completion date.



Licensure

Candidates must hold an active dental/medical license from the appropriate authority that permits independent practice in the specialty of oral and maxillofacial surgery. Limited licensure, which permits practice only under supervision, such as a “resident license” or a “fellowship license,” is not enough to satisfy this requirement.

Badge Image

A professional photo must be uploaded to your ABOMS account by the application deadline and will appear on your exam-day badge. Images will be reviewed by the ABOMS Board and Examiners. Photos must not include logos, university names, selfies, or other individuals. Scrubs, athletic attire, and military uniforms are not permitted. Images must have a neutral, non-descript background.

What to Expect on Examination Day

The examination will be administered February 1–5, 2027. Candidates will be assigned to a specific examination date and session. Assignment information will be available in the ABOMS dashboard by mid-December.

On the examination day, Candidates must report to the Raleigh Marriott Crabtree Valley Hotel (4500 Marriott Drive, Raleigh, NC, 27612) for check-in. A discounted guest room rate at the hotel will be provided to Candidates in mid-December. Breakfast and lunch are not provided on exam day

Following check-in, Candidates will be transported to the testing center, where they will attend a brief orientation. After the orientation, Candidates will be directed to their assigned testing room and will remain in the same room throughout the examination. The examination consists of three 48-minute sections with a seven-minute break between sections.



All Candidates must use ABOMS-provided transportation to the testing center. Upon completion of the examination, Candidates may choose to use ABOMS-provided transportation back to the hotel. Candidates who fail to check in with ABOMS staff or miss the scheduled transportation will not be permitted to take the examination and will forfeit their examination opportunity and associated fees.

Sample Exam Day Schedule	
30 min	Candidate Registration at Candidate Hotel Bus departs for Testing Center
15 min	Briefing at Testing Center
48 min	Examination Session
7 min	Break
48 min	Examination Session
7 min	Break
48 min	Examination Session
7 min	Break
10 min	Debrief at Testing Center Bus Departs Testing Center Bus returns to Candidate Hotel

Examination Structure

Candidates will receive a brief patient introduction followed by a series of questions related to the case. Open-ended questions are used to assess the Candidate’s ability to interpret information and apply sound clinical judgment. Candidates are encouraged to provide evidence-based responses and manage each case as they deem clinically appropriate. Examiners recognize that more than one treatment approach may be acceptable. If additional information is needed, Candidates may request clarification.

If a Candidate is unable to answer a question or series of questions, they should inform the Examiner, who may adjust the line of questioning or proceed to another topic. Examiners have



limited time to evaluate each Candidate's knowledge and judgment and must cover assigned content areas in a fair, consistent, and comprehensive manner.

Candidates should be aware that Examiners will not indicate whether a response is correct or incorrect. When developing a treatment plan, Candidates should proceed based on their clinical assessment and present the treatment approach they believe is most appropriate for the condition.

Scoring of the Examination

The final examination score is based on 72 individual scoring data points. For each patient scenario (case), two Examiners independently evaluate the Candidate's performance across multiple assessed skills. Assessed skills include data gathering, complication management, clinical management, ethics, and professionalism.

Dress Code

Candidates are required to wear business professional attire throughout the examination. Acceptable attire includes a business suit with a tie or a conservative dress or skirt. Athletic footwear, sandals, and other casual attire are not permitted.

ABOMS reserves the right to deny admission to any Candidate who does not comply with the dress code requirements. Candidates who are denied admission for this reason will forfeit their examination opportunity and all associated fees.

What to Bring

Candidates must bring one form of government-issued identification with a picture (i.e., driver's license, passport, military ID, or federal/state/country-issued ID). Candidates may carry a wallet. If a Candidate does not have a pocket, ABOMS will provide a small plastic bag for essential items, including identification and a hotel key card.



Water will be provided in each testing room, and menstrual products will be available in the restrooms. Snacks will not be provided at the testing center; however, Candidates may bring a small snack (e.g., a granola or protein bar).

Although time spent outdoors will be minimal, Candidates may choose to wear a coat to the testing center or leave it in their hotel room. If a coat is brought to the testing center, it may be left on the Candidate's chair in the briefing room.

Do Not Bring

Candidates are not permitted to bring any of the following items:

1. Purses, backpacks, luggage, or bags of any type or size.
2. Electronic equipment (i.e., laptops, calculators, cell phones, wearable smart devices such as watches and glasses, etc.).
 - i. If any electronic equipment is discovered on a Candidate, the Candidate's examination will be immediately terminated, and they will be escorted from the testing center. The Candidate's examination will not be scored, and they will forfeit their examination opportunity and examination fee.
3. Paper, pens, books, or other materials are prohibited.
4. Beverages or excessive snacks/food.

Examination Security

Candidates' performance is continuously monitored and may be analyzed to detect fraud. This rigorous process is in place to ensure the fairness and integrity of the examination. To protect this integrity, Candidates are expected to adhere to the following behavior:

- During testing, between exams, and after the exam, there shall be no conversation regarding the examination with the Examiners or other Candidates.
- Any Candidate who violates security measures by giving or receiving help from other



Candidates during the examination will be asked to leave the examination.

- All examination materials, including all questions and all forms of the examination, are copyrighted and the property of ABOMS—any distribution of these materials or information through reproduction or memorization, whether oral or written, is prohibited.
- Anyone involved in such behavior is subject to the following disciplinary actions: their examination scores will be invalidated, the associated examination fee will be forfeited, and any involved Candidates will be permanently prohibited from taking any future ABOMS examinations.

Examination Observations

Examination rooms are equipped with live video and audio equipment. Examinations will be observed from a separate outside observation room. The purpose of the observations is to evaluate the assigned Examiners' conduct of the examination, not the Candidate's performance. At no time will the information gathered in these live observations be used for Candidate evaluation or scoring.

Examiner Conflict Policy

ABOMS makes every attempt to ensure that no Candidate is examined by an individual from their residency training program, living in the same state, or otherwise familiar in a manner that could cause a perceived conflict of interest. ABOMS requires all Examiners to complete a Candidate conflict list.

A conflict includes Examiners who:

- are former instructors.
- are friends or acquaintances.
- previously examined the Candidate.



It is not considered a conflict when a Candidate:

- attended a course presented by the Examiner.
- knows of the Examiner or their work within the specialty.
-

Examination Roadmap

The OCE is an oral-based examination designed to assess a Candidate's clinically applicable knowledge and judgment. The examination consists of three surgery sections for a total testing time of 144 minutes.

Within Surgery Sections I and II, each case is 12 minutes. Surgery Section III contains a combination of 12-minute cases and shorter timed assessments, including Focused Additional Short Topics (FAST).

Surgery Section I

TMJ

Infection

Orthognathic Surgery

Pathology

Surgery Section II

Trauma

Reconstruction

Dentoalveolar

Dental Implants



Surgery Section III

Adult & Pediatric Medical Assessment and Anesthesia

Emergency Management

Focused Additional Short Topics – FAST*

- Focused Additional Short Topics (FAST) are integrated throughout examination cases and are not presented as standalone cases. These topics may be used to assess clinically applicable knowledge and judgment across a range of subject areas. Examples include Aesthetic Surgery, Sleep Apnea, MRONJ, Ethics and Professionalism, Pre-prosthetic Surgery, and Soft Tissue Grafting. This list is not exhaustive.

Release of Examination Results

ABOMS does not release examination results by phone or email and does not disclose examination pass/fail information to third parties. Following completion of the certification process, passing the Oral Certifying Examination, ABOMS provides the American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons (AAOMS) with a list of newly certified Diplomates.

Accommodation Policy

ABOMS will provide appropriate and reasonable efforts to accommodate requests in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Issues such as a second language, test anxiety, slow reading without an identified underlying physical or mental deficit, and failure to achieve a desired outcome are not learning disabilities and are not covered by the Americans with Disability Act.

ABOMS administers all examinations in English only. Requests for additional time or other accommodations may be granted upon submission and approval of a Special Accommodations application.



Candidates that require special accommodations must contact Linh Le (Lle@aboms.org) to receive detailed information concerning documented disability or qualifying medical conditions by the application deadline. Supporting documentation must not be older than three years.

Required Documentation:

- Documentation of previous accommodations provided by educational institutions
- Evaluation from an appropriate licensed professional (physician and/or psychologist). The report must be on professional letterhead and must include but is not limited to, the following:
 1. The professional’s qualifications, address, telephone number and original signature.
 2. The applicant’s name and date of evaluations.
 3. The specific diagnostic tests or procedures administered. Diagnostic methods used should be appropriate to the disability and in alignment with current professional protocol.
 4. The results of the tests or procedures and a comprehensive interpretation of the results.
 5. The specific diagnosis of the disability, with an accompanying description of the applicant’s limitation due to the disability.
 6. A summary of the completed evaluation with recommendations for the specific accommodations requested and how they will reduce the impact of identified functional limitations and how they pertain to participation in the ABOMS examination.

The following documentation will not be accepted:

- Handwritten/emailed letters from licensed professionals
- Handwritten patient records or notes from patient chart
- Diagnoses on prescription pads
- Self-evaluations
- Research articles



Other Policies

Candidates' Responsibilities Policy

The timely submission of applications and the accuracy of all information provided are the sole responsibility of the Candidate. ABOMS recommends carefully reviewing and following all instructions.

It is the Candidate's responsibility to maintain a current mailing address, email address, and telephone number on file. Should any of these fields change, the Candidate is encouraged to update their profile immediately. ABOMS does not share contact information with any other organization. Third-party requests for information regarding a Candidate's application, Board status, or results will not be granted. Time-sensitive matters related to applications, examination registration, and results require direct communication with ABOMS.

ABOMS is not responsible for missed communications resulting from outdated contact information. Candidates may review and update their contact information and check the status of their applications by logging into their profile at www.aboms.org.

Upon attaining ABOMS Diplomate status, Diplomates are responsible for maintaining compliance with all ongoing certification requirements, including Annual Reporting (AR) and Continuing Maintenance (CM) requirements, as applicable. Failure to maintain these requirements may affect certification status. Diplomates are responsible for remaining informed of applicable requirements and deadlines and maintaining current contact information with ABOMS.

Refunds

All fees are non-refundable and non-transferable.



Receipts for Fees Paid

Candidates who submit application materials online will receive e-mail confirmations including transactions numbers for any fees paid. Candidates can also visit their profile and locate their receipt under “View my Past Payments.”

Examination Concerns

Candidates who believe that any aspect of the examination process adversely affected their ability to complete the examination should promptly bring their concerns to the attention of an ABOMS Director or staff member.

Following the examination, Candidates will receive a Candidate Exit Survey via SurveyMonkey and are encouraged to provide candid feedback. Information gathered through Candidate feedback and post-examination debriefing is reviewed by ABOMS and used to evaluate and improve the examination process.

Appeal Mechanism

- A. Upon completion of the examination, the Candidate must contact the ABOMS headquarters if they believe the examination has not been conducted in a fair manner. The request with an explanation of why an appeal is needed must be made in writing and received via e-mail or certified mail within **five (5)** calendar days of their examination.
- B. All appeals will be reviewed by the OCE Chair for evaluation and decision. During this time, the results of the said exam will not be disclosed to the Candidate.
- C. If the request is granted:
 1. The result of the appealed examinations, regardless of whether pass or fail, will be discarded and never disclosed.
 2. A second examination will be provided one year later at the regularly scheduled time.
 3. A Candidate must resubmit any required application materials and submit an amended examination fee as defined by the OCE Chair.



- D. Candidates on their last year of eligibility may appeal their examination however will lose their “Candidate” status. A Candidate cannot appeal two years in a row.
- E. The ABOMS will not consider appeals based on Candidate result, examination content, delivery or scoring of the examination, or psychometric validation.

ABOMS Examination Fairness

ABOMS abides by the Principles of Fairness, developed by *The Council on Licensure, Enforcement and Regulation (CLEAR)*, to ensure fairness through the design, development, administration, and scoring of the examinations. ABOMS makes every attempt to provide the necessary information before, during and after the examination to candidates to ensure testing fairness.

The decision of the ABOMS Board of Directors shall be considered final.



Contact Information

ABOMS Administrative Mailing Address

American Board of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery (ABOMS)
8770 W Bryn Mawr Ave, Suite 1370
Chicago, IL 60631

Website: www.aboms.org

Telephone: 312-642-0070

Direct Examination Contact:

Ms. Linh Le

Coordinator of Examination and Diplomate Services

TEL: 312-642-0070 x127

EMAIL: LLe@aboms.org

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