

The written certification examination in Diagnostic Radiology for radiologists consists of both a physics and a clinical test. The physics test is created by a committee composed of diagnostic radiologists and of practicing medical physicists who are content experts specializing in diagnostic radiology. There is input and review by officers and trustees of the ABR before and after the exam is administered. The test is composed of a predetermined number of used and unused question items and a predetermined number of items in the three general content areas of diagnostic radiology, nuclear medicine and radiobiology. All items are randomized on the final exam. The process of new item development begins about 18 months before exam administration, while the exam assembly meeting occurs about 10 months before the test date. Throughout the process, the committee is conscious of the need for the subject material to be current and relevant to the practice of clinical radiology. Every attempt is made to ensure the accuracy and clarity of the question items and that all distractors (incorrect choices) are plausible but clearly incorrect. Items are reviewed and revised as needed at each stage of the process. Following the assembly meeting, the ABR staff edits the items and prepares them for the test. The committee chair reviews all edits to ensure that item content and accuracy have not been altered. The staff then formats the exam and prepares proofs, which are again reviewed by the chair before it is sent to the printer. Following the exam, the statistical performance of each question is analyzed by the ABR psychometrician for difficulty and discrimination (point-biserial correlation) to flag potential problem items and any such items are reviewed for possible ambiguity or inaccuracy of the key. Production of each test is a long and meticulous process with every effort expended to ensure a fair and meaningful certification examination.

Educational Objectives:

1. To describe the process used in assembling the physics examination
2. To provide an overview of the content areas covered on the exam.
3. To review some of the changes that have been implemented by the ABR over the past several years