Examination of Special Competence in Adult Echocardiography (ASCeXAM®) Application

Monday, July 23, 2018
Apply online at www.echoboard.org
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AScE XAM® Examination Important Dates

IMPORTANT! Application registration will end at 12:00 PM (Noon) EST on Monday, April 30, 2018.

Early Registration Deadline................................. Monday, March 26, 2018
  before 12:00 PM (Noon) Eastern Standard Time
  $995.00 USD

Late Registration Deadline ................................. Monday, April 30, 2018
  before 12:00 PM (Noon) Eastern Standard Time
  $1195.00 USD
  (includes $200.00 non-refundable late fee)

Deferment Request Deadline............................... Monday, June 4, 2018
  before 12:00 PM (Noon) Eastern Standard Time
  ($200.00 additional non-refundable fee applies)

Examination Date......................................................... Monday, July 23, 2018
Requests for Special Accommodations ............... Monday, April 30, 2018
2018 Scores Emailed (Anticipated) ................. Approximately 10 weeks following the examination
Certificates Mailed (Anticipated) ....................... Approximately 12 weeks after score reports are released

*NEW* Examination Administration Grievance Policy – Within 3 days after the exam administration. See page 7 for more details.
Introduction

National Board of Echocardiography, Inc.

The National Board of Echocardiography, Inc. (NBE) was formed in December 1998. The NBE is a not-for-profit corporation established to:

• Develop and administer examinations in the field of Clinical Echocardiography,

• Recognize those physicians who successfully complete either the examination of Special Competence in Adult Echocardiography (ASCeXAM), or the Perioperative Transesophageal Echocardiography examination (PTE), and

• Develop a certification process that will publicly recognize those physicians who have completed an approved training program in echocardiography, as specified in this application, and have additionally passed the ASCeXAM.

The examination and certification of Special Competence in Echocardiography are not intended to restrict the practice of echocardiography. The process is undertaken, rather, in the belief that the public desires an indication from the profession regarding those who have made the effort to optimize their skill in the performance and interpretation of cardiac ultrasound.

The first examination in clinical echocardiography was given under the auspices of the American Society of Echocardiography (ASE) as a field test in 1995. An examination of special competence was given in 1996, again under the ASE, and in 1997 and 1998 under ASCeXAM, Inc. Since 1999, the exam has been administered annually by the NBE. For these examinations, the title of “Testamur” was designated for successfully passing the examination. This designation was chosen since applicants were not requested to supply information regarding successful completion of training dedicated to the study of cardiovascular disease nor completion of special training in echocardiography. With a mature and well-tested examination, a well-defined body of knowledge, published training guidelines, and published continuing quality improvement guidelines, the NBE began offering certification in 2001.

Eligibility

ASCeXAM

Applicants for the ASCeXAM must hold a valid (unexpired) license to practice medicine (including training or temporary licenses) at the time of application or must currently be in an ACGME accredited training program and in good standing.

If you do not have a medical license, you must submit an original, notarized letter from the program director verifying this information. The letter must also be on appropriate letterhead and include the ACGME program number.

• See Sample Letter in FAQ’s at www.echoboard.org

PLEASE NOTE that if you are in an ACGME accredited training program and you DO have a valid license to practice medicine (training license) you DO NOT need to submit the letter from your program director also. A copy of the valid license to practice medicine will suffice.

Non-North American Trained Physicians: Non-North American Trained Physicians applying for the ASCeXAM examination must supply the following:

Current License to Practice Medicine.

If your medical license does not have an expiration date, you are required to supply ONE of the following:

• An original letter from the Medical Council stating your license is permanent, OR

• An original certificate of good standing, dated no more than 12 months prior to date application received.

All documentation must be supplied in English. If original documentation is not in English, a certified translation must be attached to each document. The examinee will be responsible for all costs associated with certified translation. Please allow yourself appropriate time if you need to obtain your medical license from a third party or translation is necessary.

NOTE: Only a copy of the Applicant’s current license to practice medicine or a letter from current program director, completed application, and application fee are required in order to sit for the ASCeXAM. Documentation for certification is not required when registering to take the ASCeXAM. Documentation required to gain certification can be submitted at any time.

Certification

Licensed physicians who meet the criteria for certification may apply for Certification at the same time of application for the ASCeXAM. The Board Certification application, checklist, and all documentation may be submitted along with the Examination application. The Certification Committee will meet to review applications for certification. Applicants will be notified in writing of the decision of the Committee. Review of application for certification will be contingent on successful completion of the ASCeXAM. Applicants will receive notification of the decision of the committee within the year.

Individuals who pass the ASCeXAM may apply for certification at any point in which they meet the clinical experience requirements as long as their testamur status remains valid.

Testamur Status

For licensed physicians not meeting the criteria for certification, the NBE will continue to allow access to the examination. This is to encourage physicians to test and demonstrate their knowledge of echocardiography based on an objective standard and to allow the medical community the opportunity to recognize individuals who elect to participate in and successfully complete a comprehensive examination in echocardiography. Those who successfully pass the examination, but do not fulfill the necessary criteria for certification, will continue to be designated as “Testamur” of the National Board of Echocardiography.
Application Details

Application Fees and Deadlines

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fee Category</th>
<th>Early Registration Period</th>
<th>Late Registration Period</th>
<th>Deferment Request Deadline</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Early Registration Period</strong></td>
<td>Monday, March 26, 2018, <strong>before</strong> 12:00 PM (Noon) EST</td>
<td>Monday, April 30, 2018, <strong>before</strong> 12:00 PM (Noon) EST</td>
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Submitting Applications

Please visit www.echoboards.org to complete the online application. If you wish to pay by check or money order, please contact NBE at 919-861-5582 ext. 1259 or email krussell@echoboards.org

To contact our office:
Phone: (919) 861-5582
E-mail: info@echoboards.org
Web site: www.echoboards.org

Confirmation of Receipt of Application

It is recommended that you submit your application as early as possible. Applications will be processed in the order that completed applications are received. We will make every effort to accommodate as many candidates as possible. Applications that are incomplete, unsigned, or do not include payment will not be processed.

The NBE will confirm receipt of your application once complete via e-mail. Please allow six (6) weeks after we have received your completed application before confirmation is received. A valid e-mail address is required on the application for confirmation.

Refund/Cancellation and Deferment Policy

Candidates who wish to cancel their application for the 2018 ASCeXAM application **MUST** notify NBE in writing via email at krussell@echoboards.org.

The refund/cancellation process is as follows:

Candidates registered during the early registration period* who wish to cancel/withdraw their application will receive a partial refund of $795.00 (the initial fee of $995.00 minus a $200.00 processing fee). All written requests to cancel/withdraw **MUST** be received via email to krussell@echoboards.org **before** 12:00 PM (Noon) EST on Monday, March 26, 2018. Any requests received after this deadline will not be processed.

- Please Note: Candidates that submit an application during the late registration period **after** 12:00 PM (Noon) EST on Monday, March 26, 2018 are **NOT** subject to a refund. Withdrawal or cancellation will result in forfeiture of ALL exam fees.

OR

Candidates may defer, for any reason, their 2018 ASCeXAM application and fee paid to the 2019 examination registration, as a one-time courtesy, if requests and payments are received **before** 12:00 PM (Noon) EST on Monday, June 4, 2018 for an additional fee of $200.00. Any requests received after this deadline, without medical documentation, will not be considered or processed.

The deferment process is as follows:

- A written request to defer **MUST** be received via email to krussell@echoboards.org **before** 12:00 PM (Noon) EST on Monday, June 4, 2018.

- The completed Deferment Request and Payment Form **MUST** be returned by fax (919-787-4916) or email to krussell@echoboards.org on or before the deadline.

  - The administrative fee payment of $200.00 is due **at** the time the deferment is requested. Deferments will not be processed until payment is made.

  - If $200.00 fee is not received **before** 12:00 PM (Noon) EST on Monday, June 4, 2018 the deferment will not be processed. Candidates will need to take the examination or forfeit ALL exam fees.

*IMPORTANT*

If an examination location and time has been scheduled with Prometric, it is the applicant’s responsibility to cancel the appointment at www.prometric.com. Upon cancelling the appointment with Prometric the candidate **MUST** provide NBE with a copy of the cancellation confirmation that Prometric will email you. Requesting to cancel or withdraw with NBE **DOES NOT** cancel your examination appointment with Prometric.

Important

Please remember to enter your name on the application in the SAME way as it appears on the unexpired, photo-bearing, signed, government-issued identification you will be using at the Prometric Testing Site. The name you provide on the application will be used to create the Scheduling Permit. Discrepancies in your first and last names will cause you to be denied admittance to the examination. Middle name(s) or initial(s) are not considered at the test center on exam day.
Frequently Asked Questions

Please visit our web site at www.echoboards.org for answers to frequently asked questions and a content outline. Sample letters to document education and experience in the required format are also available to download.

Notification of Change of Mailing Address or Email

Please notify the NBE immediately if your mailing and/or email address has changed since applying for the ASCeXAM. Email is NBE’s preferred method of communication; therefore, failure to do so will cause delay in receiving correspondence from the NBE. You may submit your change of address on our website at www.echoboards.org.

Special Accommodations

NBE will provide, upon approved request, reasonable accommodations necessary to afford an individual with a documented disability an equal opportunity to participate in the ASCeXAM. To support a request for special accommodations, please provide an original letter signed by an evaluator and an evaluator, qualified psychologist, physician, or other health care professional who specializes in the stated disability. The documentation must:

- Be current (completed within the last five years)
- Clearly state the diagnosed disability or disabilities
- Describe the functional limitations resulting from the disability
- Describe the specific accommodations requested and the rationale for such accommodations
- Be typed or printed on official letterhead and signed by the evaluator qualified to make the diagnosis
- Include example, when possible, of where special accommodations have been requested and granted. If no prior accommodations have been provided, the evaluator, psychologist, physician, or health care professional should include a detailed explanation as to why no accommodations were given in the past and why the accommodations are needed now.

The purpose of the documentation is to validate that the candidate is covered under the ADA as a disabled individual. Additional documentation may be required to support the request. All documentation submitted in support of a request for special accommodations will be kept confidential.

Requests for special accommodation must be received at NBE headquarters by Monday, April 30, 2018.

Change in Certification Policy

This change in Certification Policy affects all fellows who will complete their training after June 30, 2009 (i.e. those who began their training on or after July 1, 2006). Specifically, fellows completing their fellowship after June 30, 2009 can ONLY qualify for certification by completing level II training in echocardiography (6 months of formal training in echocardiography) during their fellowship including the satisfactory performance of at least 150 transthoracic echocardiograms and the interpreting of at least 300 transthoracic studies. Additional certification in stress echocardiography requires the performance and interpretation of at least 100 stress echocardiograms while additional certification in transesophageal echocardiography requires the performance of at least 50 transesophageal echocardiograms. Individuals who fail to satisfy these requirements during their fellowship can only qualify for certification by obtaining additional training in an ACGME accredited or other nationally accredited fellowship program. For this group, practice experience will no longer be accepted as an alternative to formal training.

American Board of Internal Medicine (ABIM) for Maintenance of Certification (MOC)

The National Board of Echocardiography (NBE) Examination of Special Competence in Adult Echocardiography (ASCeXAM) AND the Recertification Examination of Special Competence in Adult Echocardiography (ReASCeXAM) have been accepted by the American Board of Internal Medicine (ABIM) for Maintenance of Certification (MOC) points. An ABIM Board Certified physician who passes one of these exams since January 1, 2014 may earn 20 points in ABIM’s Maintenance of Certification (MOC) program. For additional information about ABIM’s MOC program requirements visit http://www.abim.org/maintenance-of-certification/.

Prometric Testing Center Information

The examination will be administered at Prometric Test Centers (PTCs) globally. All PTCs are set up similarly. This not only helps enhance security, but also provides uniformity for all candidates. Workstations at all Prometric test centers available to host the NBE examinations conform to Board-approved specifications.

Candidates are encouraged to submit applications early. Candidates will not be able to schedule their test until their application is complete and their Scheduling Permit has been received. Scheduling Permits will be available online.

Please see page 7 for Policies and Procedures for the Computer-Based Examination.

Determination of a Passing Score

The passing score is based on an expected level of knowledge in echocardiography; therefore candidates are not measured against each other, but rather against the minimal level of knowledge established by the NBE.

All candidates will receive an emailed score report that indicates the minimum score required to pass the examination. The score reports also list the examinee’s performance on each of the main areas of the examination. Total score and performance scores for each section of the examination will be reported only to the examinee.

A list including candidates who pass the exam, year that exam was passed, city and state, along with level of certification will be posted on the NBE web site. The American Society of Echocardiography (ASE) will be supplied the names of those who pass the exam.

A certificate will be mailed to those who pass the examination. The score reports are emailed approximately ten (10) weeks after the exam date. Certificates for passing the exam will be mailed approximately twelve (12) weeks after the score reports are received.

RESULTS WILL NOT BE GIVEN OVER THE TELEPHONE, VIA EMAIL, or VIA FAX.

Examination Information

Examination Date
Monday, July 23, 2018

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Examination Content Outline

I. Physical Principles, Instrumentation, Examination Principles
   A. Routine Doppler Examination
   B. Transesophageal Echocardiography, Intraoperative Echocardiography, and Catheter-Based Echocardiography (ICE)
   C. Physical Principles of Ultrasound
   D. Cross-Sectional Echocardiographic Examination
   E. Principles of Doppler Flow Measurement
   F. Cross-Sectional Scanning: Technical Principles and Instrumentation
   G. Standard Plane Positions – Standard Imaging Planes
   H. Doppler Instrumentation
   I. Principles of Flow
   J. Principles of Color Flow Mapping
   K. M-Mode Echocardiography
   L. Digital Image Processing
   M. Doppler Signal Processing, Tissue Characterization
   N. Three-Dimensional Echocardiography
   O. Place (Role) of Echocardiography
   P. Hand-Held Echo
   Q. Laboratory Accreditation

II. Valvular Heart Disease
   A. Aortic Valve, Aorta, and Subvalvular Outflow Tract
   B. Mitral Valve
   C. Echo-Doppler Assessment of Prosthetic Heart Valves
   D. Echocardiographic Findings in Infective Endocarditis
   E. Fluid Dynamics of Regurgitant Jets
   F. Tricuspid Valve
   G. Pulmonic Valve
   H. Pulmonary Hypertension

III. Chamber Size and Function
   A. Coronary Artery Disease, Stress Echocardiography
   B. General Considerations, Assessment of Chamber Size and Function
   C. Echocardiographic Assessment of the Cardiomyopathies
   D. Diastolic Function
   E. Left Atrium, Pulmonary Veins, and Coronary Sinus
   F. Right Ventricle
   G. Right Atrium
   H. Interventricular Septum
   I. Inferior and Superior Vena Cava
   J. Doppler Estimation of Volumetric Flow
   K. Coronary Arteries

IV. Congenital Heart Disease
   A. Complex Congenital Heart Disease
   B. Aortic Valve, Aorta, and Subvalvular Outflow Tract
   C. Tricuspid Valve Anomalies
   D. Mitral Valve
   E. Doppler Estimation of Volumetric Flow
   F. Pulmonic Valve Anomalies
   G. Coronary Arteries Anomalies
   H. Fetal Echocardiography
   I. Terminology and Anatomic and Physiologic Basis of CHD
   J. Principles of Medical and Surgical Management
   K. Echo Evaluation of Post-Op Congenital Heart Disease

V. Cardiac Masses, Pericardial Disease, Contrast and New Applications
   A. Pericardial Disease
   B. Cardiac Tumors and Masses
   C. Contrast Echocardiography
   D. Assessment of Myocardial Perfusion with Contrast
   E. Echocardiography in Disorders of Cardiac Rhythm and Conduction
   F. Echocardiography in Cardiac Transplantation

VI. Miscellaneous Topics (Role of Echo)
   A. Heart Failure
   B. Cardiac Sources of Embolism (PFO, ASA, SEC, Aortic Atheroma, etc)
   C. Pulmonary Heart Disease
   D. Systemic Diseases
   E. Atrial Fibrillation
   F. Trauma
   G. Athlete's Heart
   H. Aging Changes
   I. Pregnancy
   J. Interventional Echocardiography
   K. Digital Lab
   L. Quality in the Echo Lab

Reference Statement

NBE does not endorse or recommend any third-party review course or material. Any text in cardiovascular techniques and evaluation, cardiac patient care and management may be used. Current standards and guidelines endorsed by professional societies are also appropriate.
Your Scheduling Permit

A Scheduling Permit with instructions for making an appointment at a Prometric test center will be available to you online no later than two months prior to the examination. You must print and bring your Scheduling Permit and an unexpired, government-issued form of identification (such as a driver's license or passport) that includes both your photograph and signature to the testing center on your examination day. If your identification contains your photograph and not your signature, you can use another form of unexpired identification that contains your signature, such as an employee identification card or a credit card, to supplement your photo-bearing, government-issued identification. The first and last names on your identification must exactly match the names on your permit. The only acceptable difference would be the presence of a middle name, middle initial, or suffix on one document and its absence on the other. Please contact NBE immediately at (919) 861-5582 if you have not received a Scheduling Permit 5 weeks prior to the test date or if the name on your permit is misspelled or different from your name on your identification. Name changes or corrections cannot be made within 7 business days of your scheduled testing appointment.

Each Scheduling Permit contains a unique Candidate Identification Number (CIN) that you must enter into the computer to unlock your examination. Test center staff do not have access to this number. Keep the permit in a secure location until your test date. If you do not bring your Scheduling Permit and acceptable identification to the test center, you will not be admitted to the test.

Scheduling Your Test

You must have your Scheduling Permit before you can contact Prometric to schedule a testing appointment. You should contact Prometric as soon as you receive the permit. Prometric schedules testing appointments on a first-come, first-served basis. The sooner you schedule your appointment, the more likely you will receive your preferred test time and location. While the NBE tries to accommodate location preferences, preferred testing sites are NOT guaranteed and travel may be necessary.

When you call to schedule your examination appointment, you will be asked to provide the program code, exam code, and scheduling number, which will be located at the top of the permit. Prometric will provide you with an appointment confirmation number, the test center location, and telephone number. Please call the test center for directions.

Confirm your testing center location one week before your appointment via Prometric’s website or by contacting Prometric at the telephone number listed on your permit.

Test Center and Testing Conditions

Prometric provides computer-based testing services for academic assessment, professional licensure, and certification. Prometric testing centers are set up similarly. This not only helps enhance security, but also provides the same standards for comfort and uniformity for all examinees. Prometric testing centers provide the resources necessary for secure administration of the examination, including video and audio monitoring and recording, and use of digital cameras to record the identity of examinees.

Admission to the Test

You should arrive at the Prometric test center 30 minutes before your scheduled testing time on your testing date. If you arrive late, you may not be admitted. If you arrive more than 30 minutes after your scheduled testing time, you will not be admitted.

On arrival, you are required to sign in on the test center log and to present your Scheduling Permit plus one form of unexpired, government-issued identification (such as a driver's license or passport) that includes both your photograph and signature, after which, a digital photograph will be taken. All of your personal belongings, food, and beverages must be placed in a small, designated locker outside the testing room. Pages and cellular telephones must be turned off before placing them in the locker.

You will be provided with laminated writing surfaces and markers. You will be instructed to write your name and Candidate Identification Number (CIN) on one of the laminated writing surfaces provided. Your Scheduling Permit will be retained at the Test Center Administrator’s station. You may request access to the permit during the examination if it becomes necessary for you to rewrite the CIN on the laminated writing surface. Test center staff will escort you to your assigned testing station and provide brief instructions on use of the computer equipment. Laminated writing surfaces and markers issued are to be used for making notes and/or calculations during the testing session. They should only be used at your assigned testing station, and only after you have begun your examination by entering your CIN. You must enter your CIN to start the examination, which begins with a brief tutorial prior to the first test block. Depending upon the type of markers provided, you may also be provided an eraser. Otherwise, if you have filled the laminated writing surfaces and need additional space for making notes, you will need to notify test center staff and a replacement will be provided. Laminated writing surfaces must be returned to test center staff at the end of the testing session.

You will be asked to empty and turn your pockets inside out prior to entry into the testing room to confirm that you have no prohibited items. You will be asked to repeat this process prior to every entry into the testing room after a break.

Testing Regulations and Rules of Conduct

Test center staff monitors all testing sessions for the examination. You must follow instructions of test center staff throughout the examination. Failure to do so may result in a determination of irregular behavior.

Test center staff are not authorized to answer questions from candidates regarding examination content, testing software, or scoring.

If staff observe you violating test administration rules or engaging in other forms of irregular behavior during the examination, the center staff will not necessarily tell you of the observation at the time of the examination. You may not bring any personal belongings in to the testing area. If you bring any personal belongings to the test center, you must store them in a designated locker outside of the testing area. Personal items and their contents may be subject to inspection. Any materials that reasonably appear to be reproductions of any NBE examination materials will be confiscated. Making notes of any kind during the examination, except on the materials provided by the test center for this purpose, is not permitted. Removal of those materials from the secure testing area is prohibited.

For your examination, you may bring cordless soft-foam earplugs into the testing room. However, they must be out of the packaging and ready for inspection by test staff during check-in. Earplugs must be left at the workstation during all breaks.

Exam Administration

Occasionally issues arise in the creation, administration and scoring of examinations. For example, power failures, hardware and software problems, human error, or weather problems may interfere with some part of the examination process or delay the reporting of scores. When such problems arise, NBE may provide the affected candidates with an opportunity to take the examination at the next scheduled examination date. This shall be the candidate’s sole remedy. NBE shall not be liable to any candidate for inconvenience, expense, or other damage, including administration, or scoring of an examination, including delays in score reporting. In no circumstance will NBE reduce its standards or overturn the candidate’s score as a means of correcting a problem in examination administration. Issues or problems arising during the administration of the examination must be reported to Prometric test center staff by the candidate experiencing the issue or problem at the time the exam is being administered and prior the candidate departing the test center site on the day the examination is scheduled.

In the rare event of a technical problem, testing software is designed to allow the test to restart at the point it was interrupted. In most cases, the test can be restarted at the point of interruption with no loss of testing time.

Examination Administration Grievance Policy

If you wish to file a grievance regarding the administration of your examination, you must submit, in writing via email (krussell@echoboard.org and/or info@echoboard.org), a detailed description of the grievance(s) that occurred. You will have three (3) business days after the exam administration in question to submit your complaint(s) along with any appropriate or verifiable supporting documentation to the NBE office via the email addresses listed above.
ATTENTION Candidates taking the ASCeXAM outside of the United States: For NBE to prepare, it is helpful to know at which testing location outside the U.S. candidates are planning to test. Please find the country where you plan to test and enter the Region Code and Location ID in the appropriate place on your application.

IMPORTANT: While NBE tries to accommodate location preferences, selecting a testing center location ID during the application process DOES NOT guarantee the selected location will be available for scheduling. The below list of available test centers was provided on the date the application was created and is subject to change. Please visit www.prometric.com for a complete list of NBE approved Prometric testing locations.

### Testing Centers

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