

AMERICAN BOARD OF VETERINARY OPHTHALMOLOGY

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Exam Questions Validation and Construction

1. All exam committee members are assigned a specific subject area (i.e.-cornea, lens, etc.) to write 10 new multiple choice (MC) and 10 new image recognition (IR) questions to bring to the planning session where the exam is to be constructed. The references from which the questions were taken are also supplied. The questions assigned for the MC exam are based on the exam 'blueprint' which is determined by the Job Task Analysis performed every ten years by the ACVO.
2. Prior to the planning session, Committee Chairs are responsible for removing about 1/3 of exam questions from the previous year's MC and IR. Questions are removed based on their performance, a statistical analysis of which is provided by the ABVO's testing service each year. Questions removed are those that are considered too easy (over 90% answered correctly), too difficult (less than 20% answered correctly), or which fail to discriminate between candidates, i.e.-candidates who performed well on the rest of the test and those who did poorly.
3. At the planning session, the new questions are then distributed for validation to a group of three committee members. There are three groups of three committee members in total who are involved in validating questions and constructing the next year's exam. The validation process consists of verifying that the answer to the question is correct, judging whether the question is important clinically, and checking the reference provided, specifically is the reference from an appropriate year and is the answer to the question included in the reference. Groups only validate questions that they were not involved in writing.
4. Questions are either accepted or rejected by the group. Accepted questions are then either used to replace the questions removed from the previous year's exam or are stored in a question bank for use in future years if needed.
5. After insertion of newly validated and accepted questions into the exam, each group of committee members reviews a part of the examination that contains questions they have not been involved in writing or validating. The Exam Chairs then review the entire exam (all parts).
6. Two test standardization methods, Angoff and Hofstee, are used to help determine the passing point for the Multiple Choice (MC) and Image Recognition (IR) parts of the examination. These standardization methods account for the fact that the MC and IR have different questions each year, consequently the degree of difficulty of the exam changes. The Angoff method consists of a panel of experts (the EC members) who rate the likelihood that a minimally competent veterinary ophthalmologist will answer each exam question correctly; this provides an estimate of the difficulty of each individual question. The Hofstee method uses the same experts who estimate the difficulty of the entire exam by providing a recommended range for the highest failing score and the lowest passing score. The entire committee is asked to use the Angoff and Hofstee methods on ALL the new exam questions.