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American Board of Ophthalmology  
**Guide to the Demonstration of Ophthalmic  
Cognitive Knowledge (DOCK) Examination**

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Registration for the September DOCK is held from Feb. – June 1 annually.

### Table of Contents

Page	Topic
2	Overview
2	DOCK Practice Emphasis Areas
2	Exam Content
2	Exam Format
3	DOCK Tutorial
3	ACT Test Centers
3	Exam Registration
3	Taking the DOCK
4	Rescheduling Exam Dates
4	Exam Non-Disclosure and Agreement Policy Reminder
4	Exam Results

## Overview

The Demonstration of Ophthalmic Cognitive Knowledge Examination (DOCK) is required for completion of the Maintenance of Certification program. DOCK is a secure, proctored, 150-item computer-based examination administered at nationally distributed testing centers for a period of one month each year in September. DOCK is comprised of three 50-item modules: one in Core Ophthalmic Knowledge (knowledge considered fundamental to the practice of ophthalmology regardless of the practice emphasis) and two in practice emphasis areas of your choice. You are required to achieve an overall passing grade based on the combined grades of all three modules.

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## DOCK Practice Emphasis Areas

There are two versions of most practice emphasis modules; however, there is only one version of the Refractive Management/Intervention and Uveitis modules. You can opt to select two modules from one practice emphasis area **or** one module from two different practice emphasis areas.

- Cataract/Anterior Segment
  - Comprehensive Ophthalmology
  - Cornea/External Disease
  - Glaucoma
  - Neuro-ophthalmology and Orbit
  - Oculoplastics and Orbit
  - Pediatric Ophthalmology/Strabismus
  - Refractive Management/Intervention
  - Retina/Vitreous Uveitis
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## Exam Content

In the development of the DOCK examination, the American Board of Ophthalmology references an evidence-based curriculum of ophthalmic knowledge known as the Practicing Ophthalmologists Curriculum (POC). This document identifies and defines areas of clinically relevant knowledge considered fundamental to the delivery of quality eye care. The POC is developed by clinical ophthalmologists in comprehensive ophthalmology and nine subspecialty areas, and is maintained by the American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO). The POC topic outline provides a content overview for these exams and is available free on the AAO website. For access to the full POC, please contact the Academy's O.N.E. Network.

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## Exam Format

The DOCK is a computer-based examination. All questions in the DOCK are single best answer questions. This is the traditional, most frequently used multiple-choice format. It consists of a statement or question followed by four options that are in alphabetical or logical order. The response options in this format are lettered (e.g., A, B, C, D). Examinees are required to select the best answer to the question. Other options may be partially correct, but there is only ONE BEST answer.

## Strategies for Answering Single One Best Answer Test Questions

- Read each question carefully. It is important to understand what is being asked.
- Try to generate an answer and then look for it in the option list.
- Alternatively, read each option carefully, eliminating those that are clearly incorrect.
- Of the remaining options, select the one that is most correct.
- If unsure about an answer, it is better to guess since unanswered questions are automatically counted as wrong. Your score on the examination will be based on the number of questions answered correctly. No points will be subtracted for incorrect answers. In other words, there will be no penalty for guessing.

## DOCK Tutorial

A tutorial and practice test will be available on the ABO web site several months prior to the September testing period. The ABO recommends running the DOCK tutorial and taking the sample test questions in order to acquaint yourself with the test software well before your test date. In the actual examination, the questions will be presented one at a time in a format designed for easy on-screen reading, including use of exhibit buttons for some pictorials. The DOCK tutorial will also be available at the testing center at the start of your examination appointment. **Visit the ABO website to review and take the DOCK tutorial.**

## Example Question

1. Which of the following surgical approaches with phacoemulsification results in the highest ultrasound times?

- A. Divide and conquer
- B. Phaco chop
- C. Phaco flip
- D. Pure sculpting

(Answer D)

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## ACT Test Centers

ACT provides computer-based testing services for academic assessment, professional licensure and certification. The DOCK exam is given at ACT Test Centers in the United States, Puerto Rico and some locations in Canada. These test centers provide the resources necessary for secure administration of the DOCK exam, including video and audio recording and the use of cameras to record the identity of the examinees. ACT publishes all of its test center locations at: <http://www.act.org/actcenters/locate>. However, some centers are not viable options for our examinations.

Using ACT's system, eligible diplomates may schedule tests at ACT Centers by internet or phone, a process that typically takes five minutes or less. Internet scheduling provides instant feedback on availability of appointments in the September window. Examinees receive immediate email confirmation of their appointment. You must bring at least one valid photo-bearing, unexpired, government-issued form of identification, such as a driver's license or passport, to be admitted to the examination.

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## Exam Registration

To register for the exam, log in to the ABO website and click the "DOCK" link on your MOC Status Page. Complete the registration form online. In late June, you will receive an email directly from ACT, the ABO's test vendor, on how to schedule your September testing appointment. Because test appointment information will be sent via email, it is important that you add the email domain @ACT.org to your safe senders list. The earlier you schedule your appointment, the more likely you are to receive your preferred test location. You will not be able to schedule or change a site 48 hours prior to the exam. You will receive email confirmation of your appointment.

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## Taking the DOCK

You must bring an unexpired, U.S. or Canadian (in English) government-issued form of identification (such as a drivers license or passport) that includes both your photograph and signature to gain admittance to the test center. This identification must match your first and last name as it appears on your ABO MOC Status Page. The only acceptable difference would be the presence of a middle name, middle initial or suffix. You will not be admitted to the test without this ID. Additionally, all candidates will be photographed at the site.

You should arrive at the test center 30 minutes before your scheduled test time on your test day. Upon arrival, test center staff will escort you to your assigned testing station and provide brief instructions on use of the computer equipment. If you arrive late, you may not be admitted. If you arrive more than 30 minutes after your scheduled test time, you will not be admitted. Please see the section below for information about rescheduling.

Please note that nothing, including textbooks, notes and calculators, is permitted in the examination room. The test center will provide you with scratch paper which must be returned at the end of your examination session. All personal belongings will be placed in a small locker or put in a secure place at the test site. Only non-digital watches may be worn at your workstation.

The total examination appointment time is 3 ½ hours (3 hours of test time, with remaining time allowed for check-in, check-out, and seating procedures). This includes verification of examinee ID, sign-in, launching of the test, review and navigation through untimed tutorial before the test, optional breaks between exam modules, sign-out after the test, and vacation of the testing room. When an exam module closes, you may not return to it. Should you require an unscheduled break during the examination, the exam clock does not stop. Due to security, one candidate will be excused at a time with a sign-in and sign-out time sheet.

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### **Rescheduling Exam Dates**

If you are unable to keep your test appointment on the scheduled date or at the scheduled location, you may change your date or center by contacting ACT (1-800-205-6366). Please note: A \$100 fee assessed if you fail to appear for a scheduled exam or you cancel or reschedule the appointment within two business days of the examination. When calling ACT, you must speak with a representative. Leaving a voicemail message does not satisfy the requirement to provide advance notice. The rescheduled test date must be before October 1.

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### **Exam Non-Disclosure and Agreement Policy Reminder**

You are not permitted to give or receive assistance during the examination. All ABO examinations and examination materials are confidential and are protected by copyright law. You are prohibited from disclosing, publishing, reproducing, or transmitting any ABO examination or examination materials, in whole or in part, in any form or by any means, verbal, written or by memory, electronic or mechanical, for any purpose. Failure to comply with these rules could ultimately prohibit you from maintaining certification.

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### **Exam Results**

Results will be mailed approximately eight weeks after the close of the exam window (late November). The current mailing address on file with the ABO office is the address to which your DOCK examination results will be sent. You may update your address online by going to the ABO website and logging in. All results are mailed from the Board Office on the same day by first class mail. No results will be given by phone, fax or email. Please remember to keep the ABO office current with your mailing address.