



## ABPTS Specialist Certification Examination Day Guidelines

Take a few moments to review the following information and guidelines in preparation for your upcoming specialist certification examination.

If you have any questions or concerns, contact the specialist certification staff at 1-800-999-2782, ext. 8520 or by email at [spec-cert@apta.org](mailto:spec-cert@apta.org).

We wish you best of luck on the exam!

**IMPORTANT NOTICE:** If you experience an illness, emergency situation, or other extreme circumstance on the day of your examination or days leading up to your examination, which you feel may jeopardize your ability to perform effectively on the examination, you may be eligible to postpone sitting for the examination until the following year. **Contact the specialist certification office immediately if one of these situations arises.** However, if you opt to still sit for the examination and are not successful, this is not a basis for appealing the examination results and your ability to sit again the following year at no additional cost may be in jeopardy.

### **Scheduling the Exam**

#### **Test Dates**

The examinations will be administered at domestic and international testing centers between the dates of **February 27 – March 13, 2021.**

#### **How to Schedule an Appointment at a Testing Center**

The Postprofessional Credentialing Division will notify approved candidates when they may begin to schedule a date to sit for the examination. Candidates are not eligible to schedule a session until they have paid their exam fee and have printed their Scheduling Permit.

**You must either print and take your Scheduling Permit, or present it electronically (e.g., via Smartphone).** You must have your Scheduling Permit before you contact Prometric to schedule a testing appointment. Appointments are assigned on a first-come, first-served basis; therefore, you should contact the testing center to schedule as soon as possible after you have accessed your Scheduling Permit. If you delay scheduling you may not be able to make an appointment at your preferred test site or for your preferred test date. You should report any problems in scheduling a testing appointment to the Postprofessional Credentialing Division at least four weeks before the first day of the testing window to give ABPTS an opportunity to resolve the problem. Be sure to record the test date/time; center address/phone number; and exam confirmation number provided by Prometric after scheduling your appointment.

Prior to your testing appointment, you can log into the URL provided to access and reprint your permit if necessary.

**NOTE:** you will not be able to take the test if you are unable to present your Scheduling Permit at the test center.

## **Rescheduling an Exam**

If you are unable to keep a testing appointment and would like to reschedule, you must contact Prometric by 12:00 p.m. local time of the second business day prior to your appointment. The rescheduled test date must fall within the testing window. Fees from your previously scheduled test will be transferred to the rescheduled exam as follows:

- a. If you contact Prometric by 12:00 p.m. local time of the second business day prior to your test date, you will be permitted to reschedule without penalty.
- b. If you provide less than two business days' notice, Prometric will charge you a \$101 fee to reschedule your examination.

If you cancel your appointment within 2 business days or do not appear on your test date, you must contact Prometric Candidate Cares at the phone number listed in the permit and pay a fee to reinstate your eligibility record in order to reschedule your appointment within the testing window.

## **Sitting for the Exam**

### **Computerized Testing**

The specialist certification examinations are administered by computerized testing. The examination questions are presented on computers and candidates provide their responses using a mouse or keyboard. NBME works with Prometric to deliver these examinations domestically and internationally. Approved candidates should contact Prometric as soon as possible once they have their scheduling permit to schedule a testing appointment. Candidates may take the test on any day that it is offered during the testing window, provided that there is space at the Prometric Test Center of choice. To view available testing centers go to [www.prometric.com/ABPTS](http://www.prometric.com/ABPTS).

### **Test Centers and Testing Conditions**

Prometric provides computer-based testing services for academic assessment, professional licensure, and certification. There may be test takers from other professions taking examinations during your test administration. Their exam schedule may differ from your schedule, and they may arrive and depart at different times.

These 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 candidates.

Please note the following process upon arrival at the test center:

- You will be asked to empty and turn your pockets inside out; you will be asked to repeat this process prior to every entry into the testing room after a break.
- You will be required to remove eyeglasses for visual inspection by the test center administrators. These inspections will take a few seconds and will be done at check-in and upon return from breaks.
- Jewelry, except for wedding and engagement rings, is prohibited
- Hair accessories are subject to inspection. You should not wear ornate clips, combs, barrettes, headbands, and other hair accessories. Any examinee wearing any of these items may be prohibited from wearing them in the testing room, and asked to store such items in their locker.

ABPTS candidates can reference their appointment confirmation email for a link to the Prometric FAQs including test center regulations found at <https://www.prometric.com/en-us/for-test-takers/prepare-for-test-day/documents/TestCenterRegulations.pdf>

### **Exam Time**

You should arrive at the Prometric Test Center 30 minutes before your scheduled testing appointment on your testing day(s). If you arrive after your appointment time, you **may not** be admitted. If you arrive more than 30

minutes after your scheduled testing appointment, you **will not** be admitted. Upon arrival at the test center, you must present the required identification, sign a test center log, be photographed, and store your personal belongings in your assigned locker.

The official exam time begins the moment that you enter your Candidate Identification Number (CIN) on-line (the CIN number is located on your Scheduling Permit). There are approximately 200 questions on the exam. The 7 hour testing session consists of an online tutorial (up to 10 minutes), four 1 ½ -hour test periods, an optional break after any section (up to 50 minutes), and a post-test survey if time is available within testing sessions.

If you finish a section early you may not use the extra time for a different section of the exam.

After you complete the examination, you will be asked to complete an on-line survey about the test administration. The purpose of the survey is to evaluate the test scheduling and delivery procedures. Your responses will be kept confidential, and the time you take to complete this survey will not detract from your allotted examination time.

### **Cancelled or Delayed Exam Administration or Problems at the Testing Center**

Exam administrations may be delayed or cancelled in emergencies such as severe weather, a natural disaster that renders a Testing Center inaccessible or unsafe, or extreme technical difficulties. If for any reason Prometric closes a testing center where you have scheduled a testing appointment, they will reschedule the examination appointment at no additional charge. **If you experience an emergency situation on the day of your examination** that you feel may jeopardize your ability to perform effectively on the examination, you may be eligible to postpone sitting for the examination until 2022. However, if you opt to still sit for the examination and are not successful, this is not a basis for appealing examination results and your ability to sit again in 2022 at no additional cost may be in jeopardy.

Any candidate once checked in and seated at a test station, who is delayed to take the examination by more than 30 minutes because of technical difficulties, is responsible for reporting the delay to the Postprofessional Credentialing Division at 1-800/999-2782, ext. 8520 as soon as possible. For such cases, the candidate may be eligible to choose to reschedule his or her examination at no additional charge. Before deciding to reschedule, you should be sure that there is another appointment available during the testing period. The test administration will not be considered "irregular" if you choose to remain and test despite the delay. You will receive the maximum number of hours available to candidates to complete the exam even if the test is delayed.

Any candidate, once checked in and seated at a test station, who has a concern or complaint about the test center environment, should immediately report the problem to the Test Center Administrator. If you feel that the problem was not resolved to your satisfaction, you should contact the Postprofessional Credentialing Division at 1-800/999-2782, ext. 8520 as soon as possible.

### **Equipment Malfunction**

Should you experience any difficulty with the computer, notify the Test Center Administrator immediately. Do not wait until you have completed the exam to bring equipment malfunctions to the attention of the Test Center Administrator. Once again, if you feel that the problem was not resolved to your satisfaction, you should contact the Postprofessional Credentialing Division at 1-800/999-2782, ext. 8520 as soon as possible.

Occasionally, a computer at the testing center may need to be restarted. Prometric has appropriate safeguards in place to ensure the integrity of candidate examination data. As soon as a candidate answers a test item, the response is immediately copied, and saved, on the candidate's directory on the server at a center. If there is a computer restart, the driver locates the results from the directory and picks up where the examinee left off. The system does not change or delete any responses. Thus, examination data are captured at the instant a candidate responds to a question; the computer can be restarted, if necessary, without losing or corrupting examination data.

### **Admission to the Test**

In addition to reviewing the information below, we recommend that you review the following video from Prometric to better understand what to expect on your testing day:

<http://vimeo.com/74953443>

Several items included in the video will not apply to ABPTS candidates. Fingertip and ID scans **will not** be required, and ABPTS candidates **will not** receive scratch paper and pencils.

Arrive at the Prometric Test Center at least 30 minutes before your scheduled testing time on your testing day(s). If you arrive after your appointment time, you **may not** be admitted. If you arrive more than 30 minutes after your scheduled testing time, you **will not** be admitted. In that event, you must pay a fee to Prometric to reschedule the testing appointment. The rescheduled appointment must fall within the testing window.

**Upon arrival at the test center, you must present your Scheduling Permit (printed hard copy or electronically via Smartphone)** and an unexpired, government-issued form of identification (such as a current driver's license, valid passport, or military ID) that includes **both** your photograph and signature. You will also sign a test center log, be photographed, and store your personal belongings in your assigned locker. You will be asked to empty and turn your pockets 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. If a printed copy is provided Test center staff will collect your Scheduling Permit. 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. In addition to the laminated writing surfaces, you will be provided with dry-erase markers and an eraser. Test center staff will escort you to your assigned testing station and provide brief instructions on use of the computer equipment. You must enter your CIN to start the examination. You may then take a brief tutorial prior to starting the first test block.

If your identification contains your photograph but not your signature, you can use another form of unexpired identification that contains your signature, such as student/employee identification card or a credit card, to supplement your photo-bearing, government-issued identification. If you are required to carry a Permanent Residency Card for identification, be sure to bring this card with you to the test center along with the other required unexpired form of identification as noted above,

As a security procedure, you will be photographed before you begin taking examination.

**Important Note:** The name on your Scheduling Permit must exactly match the name on your identification form. The only acceptable difference would be the presence of middle name or middle initial, or suffix on one document and its absence on the other. If you do not present your permit and required identification on the exam day, you will be denied admission to test. In that event, you must pay a fee to Prometric to reschedule your test.

### **Testing Regulations and Rules of Conduct**

Test center staff monitor all testing sessions. Candidates must follow instructions of test center staff throughout the examination. Test center staff are not authorized to answer questions from candidates regarding examination content, testing software, or scoring.

If staff observes a candidate violating test administration rules or engaging in other forms of irregular behavior during an examination, the center staff will not necessarily tell the candidate of the observation at the time of the examination. Test Center Administrators are required to report such incidents to NBME; each is fully investigated.

Candidates may not bring any personal belongings into the testing area including but not limited to the following:

- mechanical or electronic devices, such as cellular telephones, palm pilots, calculators, watches of any type, electronic paging devices, recording or filming devices, radios;
- outerwear such as coats, jackets, head wear, gloves;
- book bags, backpacks, handbags, briefcases, wallets;
- books, notes, study materials, or scratch paper;
- food, candy, gum or beverages.

If you bring any personal belongings to the test center, you must store them in a designated locker outside the testing room. You should keep in mind that the lockers are small and that mechanical or electronic devices stored in lockers must be turned off. Making notes of any kind during an examination, except on the erasable writing surface provided at the test center, is not permitted and removal of those materials from the secure testing area during a testing session or break is prohibited.

\*\*\*The site provides noise reducing headphones, however you are encouraged to bring your own cordless soft-foam earplugs (subject to inspection).

### **Irregular Behavior During the Examination Process**

Irregular behavior includes any action by candidates or others when solicited by a candidate that subverts or attempts to subvert the examination process. Test Center Administrators are required to report any irregular behavior by a candidate during the examination. Irregular behavior may include, but is not limited to the following: seeking and/or obtaining access to examination materials; impersonating a candidate or engaging another individual to take the examination by proxy; giving, receiving, or obtaining unauthorized assistance during the examination or attempting to do so; making notes of any kind during an examination except on the erasable writing surface provided at the test center; memorizing and/or reproducing examination materials; failure to adhere to testing center regulations; possessing unauthorized materials during an examination administration (e.g., recording devices, photographic equipment, electronic paging devices, cellular telephones, reference materials); or any other behavior that threatens the integrity of the specialist certification examinations. Looking in the direction of the computer monitor of another candidate during the examination may be construed as evidence of copying or attempting to copy, and a report of such behavior may result in a determination of irregular behavior. Candidates must not discuss the examination while a session is in process. Test Center Administrators are required to report all suspected incidents of irregular behavior. A candidate who engages in irregular behavior or who violates test administration rules may be subject to invalidation of their examination.

### **Incomplete Examinations**

After you start taking an examination, you cannot cancel or reschedule that examination unless a technical problem prevents you from completing your examination. As noted in section 6.5, if you experience a computer problem during the test, notify test center staff immediately. The testing software is designed to allow the test to restart at the point it was interrupted. In most cases, your test can be restarted at the point of interruption with no loss of testing time. If you do not finish the exam for any reason you are not permitted to resume the incomplete sections of the test. You must reapply for the next regularly scheduled administration (see section on “Reapplication”). The examination fee is non-refundable for incomplete examinations.

### **Exam Results and Notification**

After ABPTS meets in May 2021 to make certification decisions, score reports will be prepared and released in June 2021 by the Postprofessional Credentialing Division. The score report specifies your examination score, the passing score on the examination, and feedback on your performance in the major competency areas tested.

Although there is a time lapse between the close of the examination window and the availability of examination results, much is happening during this period of time. Key validation takes place after the exam window closes in March. Key validation is a process of preliminary scoring and item analysis of the exam data, followed by careful evaluation of the item-level data, to identify potentially flawed or incorrect items prior to final scoring. During April and early May, standard setting committees are convened at the NBME to participate in content-based standard setting studies. The outcome of each committee’s standard setting meeting is the recommendation of a passing standard of each of the specialty examinations during their May meeting. NBME then scores the specialist certification examinations and candidates are notified of their exam results as soon as this information is received by the Postprofessional Credentialing Division.