

Asian Bodywork Therapy (ABT) Certification Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

The NCCAOM and the AOBTA have compiled a list of frequently asked questions and answers to help guide applicants interested in applying for the ABT certification program.

Question #1: *Who is eligible to take the exam?*

Answer: Anyone who can document the required 500 hours of basic Asian Bodywork Therapy education from formal full-time schools, formal programs and short courses. *Correspondence and distance learning programs do not qualify.*

The required 500 hour education must include:

- **350 hours** of practical and theoretical training of which **160 hours** must relate specifically to ABT techniques and be completed at one school.
- **The remaining theoretical hours** that are not ABT-specific must include allopathic anatomy, physiology, Oriental Medicine theory, first-aid, CPR and ethics.
- **70 Hours** of clinical education (observation, internship or treatment hours)
- You can also qualify via the Apprenticeship route (see Question #7).
- *Please see NCCAOM's web site for a more complete description of the eligibility requirements.*

Question #2: *Are NCCAOM's eligibility requirements for ABT the same as those for AOBTA practitioner member?*

Answer: The requirements are similar but not the same:

- If you graduated from a Council of School Programs (COSP) approved school, you are eligible, and you do not need to send school catalogues or brochures.
- All applicants are required to have their schools submit official transcripts directly to the NCCAOM. Some schools request a modest administration fee for this service, and you are advised to follow up with school officials to ensure your transcripts have been sent by certified mail before the deadline.
- Note: You must submit a transcript from every school you attended.

Question #3: *Why should I apply for NCCAOM Certification if I am already certified by the AOBTA?*

Answer: There are many reasons why you should apply for NCCAOM certification. Here are a few:

- National certification by NCCAOM is the only way to be recognized as a Diplomate in Asian Bodywork Therapy.
- The AOBTA is a professional *membership* organization and not a certification agency.
- For you to call yourself ***nationally certified as an NCCAOM Diplomate of Asian Bodywork Therapy***, you need to meet the eligibility requirements and pass the NCCAOM certification examination.

Question #4: *But the exam is so expensive!*

Answer: Consider the value of the NCCAOM certification again and how it conveys your professional status in the wider AOM and medical communities. We advise you to start budgeting early, allocate fees from a certain number of patients per month so you are not hit all at once, and remember you can also pay by credit card (NCCAOM accepts Visa and MasterCard). Also, if you serve in the military or are a veteran, you are entitled to reimbursement. Similarly, if you are physically challenged, or are switching careers, because of an accident, you may also be entitled to reimbursement from the appropriate government agency.

Question #5: *Why does the National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork (NCBTMB) certification cost so much less than the NCCAOM certification?*

Answer: Numbers. There are over 40,000 massage therapists that have taken the NCE and much fewer that have the qualifications to take the ABT exam. The exam development costs are the same and have to be divided between a smaller testing population. Considering that, the ABT exam is a bargain!

Question #6: *What is the difference between the two certifications?*

Answer: The NCBTMB certification is for massage therapists and does not qualify you to call yourself a Diplomate in Asian Bodywork Therapy. Remember, you can fail each of the minimal Asian Bodywork questions in the NCBTMB exam and still pass the exam. That's hardly a credential for you! Remember, although both NCCAOM and NCBTMB are accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA), they serve very different purposes.

Question #7: *I completed my training 20 years ago in assorted ways that don't fit neatly into the required categories. How can I prove my eligibility for NCCAOM ABT Certification?*

Answer: Thoroughly document all your training courses, dates and hours, and document all your clinical experience in ABT. If your name has changed (marriage or by choice) since you completed your training, be sure and provide legal documentation.

- You may also qualify through the Apprenticeship Route.
- Generally your apprenticeship needs to have been directed by a qualified preceptor (an AOBTA CI, or Dipl. ABT (NCCAOM), or a Practitioner who can document 5 years of clinical practice involving 500 ABT sessions per year on a minimum of 75 different patients, prior to training you, and while training you.
- You can find specific information on the Apprenticeship Route on our website or in the NCCAOM Candidate Handbook.

Question #8: *My original school closed years ago. How can I prove my training?*

Answer: Network through your classmates or the AOBTA national office, locate the school owner, or one or other of the instructors. Send them details of the classes you

completed, with dates, and hours and ask them to confirm your education. All former COSP schools are required to retain students' past transcripts and to submit them on request for a small administration fee. Similarly, all schools are required by the Department of Education to store students' transcripts.

Question #9: *I understand the NCCAOM Certification exam includes many questions on the foundations and theory of Chinese Medicine. I trained in Shiatsu – so theory was often integrated with our practical training.*

Answer: The exam has been carefully crafted to cover all the different forms of ABT of China, Japan, Korea and Thailand. However, the solid common denominator is Asian Medicine, so we advise you to complete a documented minimum 100 hours of stand-alone theoretical training in the Foundations of Oriental (Asian) Medicine.

Some of the COSP schools are offering special fill-in courses for folks who need to add to their basic training in anatomy and physiology and/or Foundations of Oriental Medicine.

Contact the AOBTA COSP Director at cosp@aobta.org for details.

Question #10: *How can I prepare myself for the NCCAOM exam?*

Answer: Most of the COSP schools offer all day prep workshops announced in the regular AOBTA emails to members. You may also contact the AOBTA Director of Education at education@aobta.org for details on current DVDs or videos you may purchase on offering exam prep classes. You can also review the new expanded ABT content outline, please refer to the Site Map on the NCCAOM website and enter "Exam Content Outlines" link.

Question #11: *My application was denied last year because of insufficient documentation. If I apply again this year do I have to pay the full fee?*

Answer: No, applications are good for 4 (four) years. If your application is still active, you need only to provide the missing documentation in order to complete the approval process. Your examination fee will not be due until you are approved to test.

Question #12: *I failed last year. Can I take the exam again next year? How much do I have to pay?*

Answer: Yes. The next exam will be offered **October 18 - 30, 2010**. You will be responsible for the examination fee.

Question #13: *Why is the ABT exam offered only once a year?*

Answer: The number of applicants for ABT needs to be at a certain number to be able to validate scores psychometrically. Once the pool of applicants expands, year round testing can begin.

Question #14: *Does NCCAOM offer an online Practice Test for ABT?*

Answer: The NCCAOM needs to have a large enough pool of applicants in order to develop a NCCAOM Practice Test specific to ABT. Also, the NCCAOM needs a pool of an additional 500 questions for practice exams. When more Diplomates in ABT submit items (questions), we'll have a larger item pool to draw from. For information on submitting items, send an email to examcontent@nccaom.org.

Question #15: *Am I able to bring scrap paper into the examination?*

Answer: You **cannot** bring any writing materials in with you when you go in to take the examination. You will be provided with an erasable note board (5 sheets in a binder) and a pen that you can use to take notes (this will be collected upon completion of the examination).

Question #16: *How many questions are there and how much time do I have to finish?*

Answer: The examination consists of 100 multiple-choice questions and you have 2.5 hours to complete it.

Question #17: *What percentage can I get wrong and still pass?*

Answer: The exam is not scored by percentages. It uses Criterion-referenced testing so that candidates are always measured on the same ruler. This method allows for various levels of difficulty between exams and does not adversely affect the candidates.

Question #18: *Is the glossary still available during the exam?*

Answer: The glossary is available at http://www.nccaom.org/exams/exam_content.html. Scroll to the bottom for the Nomenclature Cross Reference List. It **cannot** be used during the time of the examination.

Question #19: *Can I still submit comments on the questions after I finish the exam?*

Answer: Yes. You have a week after you finish the exam to send feedback to examcontent@nccaom.org. Remember to be as specific as you can.

Question #20: *Is it true that the screen turns off after five minutes if you don't answer the first question?*

Answer: Yes. The first question is a legal agreement that says you will treat everything you read on the examination with the utmost and absolute confidentiality. If you agree, just press "I Agree" and start the examination!

Question #21: *Is it true that I will receive a preliminary Pass or Fail status after I complete the examination?*

Answer: No, this only applies for the year round adaptive examinations. You will receive your official scores via mail approximately 20 business days after the close of the examination administration period.

If you have any further questions, please go to the NCCAOM website or please feel free to contact NCCAOM staff at applications@nccaom.org.

If you have questions about the examination format, please send an email to examcontent@nccaom.org

You can also download the NCCAOM Candidate Handbook by going to our website at <http://www.nccaom.org>

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