

American Board of Emergency Medicine

**Information for 2011 ConCert
Examination Candidates**

ConCert Examination
Monday, October 3, 2011 through
Saturday, October 8, 2011



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Please review carefully all information contained in this book

Introduction

You have received this book because you registered to take the American Board of Emergency Medicine (ABEM) Continuous Certification (ConCert) examination during the week of October 3 - 8, 2011. The ConCert examination is a secure, proctored examination administered on computers in testing centers. Each diplomate is required to pass the ConCert examination once in his or her ten-year certification period. Some former diplomates attempting to regain certification must also pass the ConCert examination.

The purpose of this book is to provide you with the information you need to logistically prepare for, attend, and take the ConCert examination. This book also contains information to help you schedule, reschedule, or cancel your individual examination appointment. It includes the ABEM policies that apply to the ConCert examination.

SECTION 1: ConCert Examination Logistics

Examination Scheduling

The 2011 ConCert examination administration is from October 3 - 8, 2011. Each candidate who has registered for the examination with ABEM must schedule a specific five-hour and fifteen-minute appointment with ABEM's testing vendor, Pearson VUE, to take the ConCert examination during that six-day period. The examination will be held in over 200 Pearson VUE professional testing centers across the United States and Canada. Testing center locations can be found on Pearson VUE's web page, www.pearsonvue.com/abem/locate. The hours of operation and available appointment times vary from one testing center to another.

If you have not already scheduled your appointment, ABEM urges you to schedule as soon as possible to increase your chance of receiving the appointment of your choice. You must schedule at least 24 hours prior to the day on which you want to take the examination. You should schedule your appointment by calling Pearson VUE at 877.378.8378, Monday through Friday, between 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. Central Time. Call center staff will ask you for your address for identification purposes. You must provide the address currently on file with ABEM.

Scheduling with ADA Accommodations

If you have requested accommodations under the [Policy on Americans with Disabilities Act](#), ABEM must schedule your examination appointment for you. Pearson VUE cannot work directly with the candidate to schedule or change appointments for candidates testing under special circumstances.

If you need an accommodation for the 2011 ConCert examination, please submit your written request immediately. There is limited seating for candidates testing under special circumstances and submitting your request as early as possible will help to assure a seat close to your work or home.

Examination Rescheduling

If you have scheduled your appointment to take the ConCert examination and wish to reschedule it, you may do so by calling Pearson VUE at 877.378.8378. You should reschedule as early as possible to increase your chance of receiving the appointment of your choice. For each time you successfully reschedule less than 24 hours before your original appointment, ABEM will charge you a rescheduling fee of \$145.00. See the ABEM [Policy on Fees](#).

Rescheduling Due to ABEM or Pearson VUE Cancellation

In the unlikely event that ABEM or Pearson VUE must cancel your appointment due to an emergency, ABEM will provide you with an opportunity to reschedule within the same examination administration. If you choose not to reschedule, ABEM cannot guarantee a refund of your examination fee. See the ABEM [Policy on Examination Administration in Testing Centers](#) and the [Policy on Fees](#).

Rescheduling Due to Late Arrival for the Examination Appointment

If you arrive for your ConCert examination appointment more than 30 minutes after your scheduled appointment time, the testing center may not be able to seat you at that time. You may reschedule your appointment within the October 3 - 8, 2011, examination administration if appointments are available. ABEM will charge you a \$145.00 rescheduling fee if you reschedule successfully.

Examination Appointment Cancellation

If you need to cancel your appointment to take the ConCert examination, call Pearson VUE at 877.378.8378. If you do not intend to take the 2011 ConCert examination, you may obtain a refund of your examination fee, less a 10% administrative fee, by first cancelling your examination appointment with Pearson VUE, then notifying ABEM in writing and requesting the fee refund. Your letter must be postmarked at least one day prior to the day on which you were originally scheduled to take the examination. See the ABEM [Policy on Fees](#).

All Medical Licenses You Hold Must Comply with ABEM Policy

Throughout the time you are certified or are attempting to regain certification, you must continuously hold at least one current, active, valid, full, unrestricted, and unqualified license to practice medicine in at least one jurisdiction in the United States, its territories, or Canada, and in each jurisdiction in which you practice. You may hold one or more additional licenses, each of which must be valid, unrestricted, and unqualified. If any of your licensure information changes prior to your appointment to take the ConCert examination, please update the information through www.abem.org. The ABEM [Policy on Medical Licensure](#) can be found on the ABEM public website under "Policy Index" on the left side of the screen.

Maintaining Address and Other Contact Information

In order to ensure timely communication from ABEM, you must maintain a current email address, telephone number, and mailing address with ABEM. You may update your contact information through www.abem.org, by emailing the information to AddressUpdate@abem.org, or by calling the ABEM office and selecting Option 1, EMCC, from the telephone menu.

What to Take to the Examination

In order to take the ConCert examination, you must present one valid, current piece of government-issued, pictured, signed identification at the Pearson VUE testing center at the time of your examination. Any of the following would be acceptable:

- Driver's license
- State identification card
- Passport
- Military identification

The following types of ID are not acceptable:

- Employee identification badges
- Hospital identification
- School IDs
- Alien registration cards
- Credit cards

Candidates may take health-related items they will need, such as eyeglasses and hearing aids, into the testing room. The test administrator reserves the right to inspect these and any other health-related items such as facial tissues and cough drops, before allowing you to enter the testing room.

You may not take paper, pens, or pencils into the examination room. You will be provided with a laminated dry-erase board and marker to use during the examination. Your examination answers will be recorded using a computer.

Prohibited Items

No items or materials will be allowed in the testing room other than the health-related items described above. Prohibited items include, but are not limited to:

- cell phones, Smartphones, beepers, or pagers
- PDAs such as Palm, Blackberry, or any personal information device
- computers and electronic information storage system devices of any kind
- cameras or recording devices of any type
- MP3 players, iPods, or CD players
- calculators and timepieces with calculators
- coats, backpacks, briefcases, purses, wallets, and “fanny” packs
- luggage
- notepaper, pens and pencils, books, study materials, and this *Examination Information for Candidates* book

Prohibited electronic items are not permitted in the testing room even if turned off.

If a candidate is found to be in possession of any prohibited items in the testing room, or at any time during the examination appointment (with the exception of food and beverages), the test administrator is obligated to report the incident to ABEM. ABEM may choose to disallow or discontinue that candidate’s examination and charge the candidate with irregular behavior under the terms of the ABEM [Policy on Examination Irregularities](#).

Any personal items candidates take to the testing center may be stored outside the testing room for the duration of the examination appointment in small, secure lockers provided by the testing center. Candidates are permitted to take storage locker keys into the testing room.

Guests

Guests are not permitted in the testing center.

Check-in at the Examination

Candidates are expected to arrive at the testing center 30 minutes prior to their examination appointment. You must check in when you arrive. ABEM does not issue candidates an “entrance

ticket” or identification number to take the examination; however, you may present your appointment confirmation notice to the test administrator to expedite the check-in process.

The test administrator will review your government-issued, pictured identification and will take your digital photograph, signature, and an infrared palm vein image. You should allow time to store personal items and items prohibited from the testing room in a secure locker provided within the testing center. After reviewing the testing center’s rules of agreement, you will be provided with a laminated dry-erase board and marker for taking notes during the examination.

If you have received ABEM approval for testing accommodations, notify the test administrator at check-in. It may be helpful to present the letter from ABEM confirming the nature of the accommodations granted.

Security at the Testing Center

To protect examination validity and ensure a consistent, fair examination administration across all its testing centers, Pearson VUE maintains strict security measures, including tight restrictions on what personal items may be taken into the testing room. These security procedures also include multiple checks to confirm each examinee’s identity, such as taking a digital signature, photograph, and an infrared palm vein image. Note this information is used solely for the purpose of confirming identity, is held in the strictest confidence by Pearson VUE, and is not released to any third parties. These security procedures are standard and routine for all candidates at Pearson VUE testing centers and are in no way tailored to individual candidates.

Preliminary Activities Related to the Examination Administration

Once the check-in process is complete, the test administrator will seat you in the testing room. Each ConCert examination appointment is five hours and fifteen minutes in length. Only four hours and fifteen minutes of this time is actual testing time. Approximately one hour of the appointment time is devoted to a scheduled candidate break and the following accessory activities related to the examination administration:

Policy on Examination Irregularities

Candidates must read and agree to abide by the terms of the ABEM [Policy on Examination Irregularities](#) before being allowed to take the ConCert examination. The policy will be shown on your computer screen with instructions to indicate your agreement to abide by the policy. If you do not agree to abide by this policy, your examination appointment will be terminated, and you will not be allowed to take the ConCert examination. ABEM strongly recommends you familiarize yourself with this important policy before going to your examination appointment.

Test Tutorial

A test tutorial is provided at the start of the examination appointment to help candidates become familiar with the computer format of the ConCert examination. Although the tutorial is optional, ABEM strongly recommends each candidate take it, since the tutorial will help candidates take the examination in an efficient manner. If you choose not to take the tutorial, no additional testing time beyond the standard four hours and fifteen minutes will be allowed for taking the ConCert examination itself.

Examination Instructions

There is a brief summary of important facts immediately preceding the start of the examination and the second section of the examination after the scheduled break. This summary includes the number

of examination questions, procedures for leaving the testing room, and other information related to taking the ConCert examination.

Candidate Questionnaire

A brief, optional survey is available after taking the ConCert examination. Although this questionnaire is optional, ABEM encourages you to complete it so the Board can benefit from your experience in registering for, scheduling, and taking the ConCert examination. As with the tutorial, if you choose not to complete this questionnaire, no additional testing time beyond the standard four hours and fifteen minutes will be allowed for taking the ConCert examination itself.

Examination Time

Once a candidate agrees to the ABEM [Policy on Examination Irregularities](#), takes the tutorial, and reads the examination instructions, he or she will begin the ConCert examination. The ConCert examination has a total of four hours and fifteen minutes of testing time divided into two separately timed sections, or books, of two hours and five minutes and two hours and ten minutes, respectively.

You can track your remaining testing time by referring to the examination timer in the upper-right corner of the computer screen. You are responsible for keeping track of your remaining testing time. One notification will appear on-screen when twenty minutes of testing time remains in each book of the examination. These will be the only notifications you will receive of testing time remaining.

Once you complete and exit the first examination book, you cannot go back to it later to change or review your answers.

Leaving the Testing Room

Candidates may leave the testing room during the examination appointment after notifying the test administrator. However, the examination timer will remain running while the candidate is out of the testing room, except when they are on the scheduled 20-minute break.

Candidates are required to provide an infrared palm vein image when they re-enter the testing room.

Candidates who finish the examination early may leave the testing room. Once you check out of the testing center and receive an examination confirmation receipt, you may not re-enter the testing room.

Scheduled Candidate Breaks

A 20-minute break is scheduled between the two sections of the examination, midway through the four-hour and fifteen-minute testing session. Candidates are free to leave the testing center during this scheduled 20-minute break but must be sure to return in a timely manner or risk losing testing time on the remainder of the examination. The timer for the second, book two, section of the examination will begin immediately following the 20-minute break, regardless of whether or not the candidate has returned to his or her seat.

If you choose not to take a break after completing the first examination section, you may continue on to the second section of the examination.

Unscheduled Candidate Breaks

While on an unscheduled break, candidates may not leave the building. If you wish to gain access to stored personal items, you may obtain permission from the test administrator. Accessing [prohibited](#)

[items](#) such as cell phones, PDAs, exam notes or study guides during an unscheduled break is a violation of the ABEM [Policy on Examination Irregularities](#).

Examination Closing Activities

When a candidate completes the ConCert examination, whether at the end of the fully scheduled testing time or earlier, he or she will leave the testing room. Before leaving the testing center, the candidate must return the dry-erase board he or she received upon entering the testing room. The test administrator gives each candidate an examination confirmation receipt. Locker keys must be returned to the locker.

No Smoking

Smoking is not allowed in the testing center.

Refreshments

Refreshments are not provided. No food or drink is permitted in the testing room. Snacks may be stored in the small lockers provided by the testing center and may be accessed as needed by taking breaks during the examination.

Telephone and Emergency Contact During the Examination

Candidates are forbidden to make or receive telephone calls during their examination appointments except during the scheduled twenty-minute break.

Messages will not be given to candidates during their examination appointments unless it is an emergency. If the testing center receives a message for a candidate, the test administrator will give the candidate the message when the candidate has completed the examination and has checked out.

Section 2: Examination Information

ConCert Examination Content and Format

The ConCert examination is administered via computer at Pearson VUE professional testing centers across the United States and Canada. The examination administration takes approximately five hours and fifteen minutes, of which four hours and fifteen minutes is actual testing time. The ConCert examination is a comprehensive examination developed specifically for diplomates practicing Emergency Medicine. All questions are positively worded and clinically focused. This examination is very similar to its predecessor, the written recertification examination. The ConCert examination has a passing standard equivalent to the 75% passing standard of the former written recertification examination.

The ConCert examination contains approximately 205 single-best-answer, standard multiple-choice questions. Each question is in paragraph form with an answer set containing one correct answer and three or four incorrect answers. The ConCert examination questions have a similar look and feel as the questions on the former recertification examination.

The examination itself is divided into two sections or books, each separately timed. The first book is two hours and five minutes, and the second book is two hours and ten minutes. Once a candidate completes one timed book of the examination, they cannot return to it to review answers. Each book of the examination consists of both pictorial and non-pictorial multiple-choice questions. Pictorial questions refer to stimulus images, such as photos of x-rays, EKGs, rhythm strips, pictures, etc. These images will be presented along with the relevant test question on the computer screen.

Candidates will be provided with a laminated dry-erase board and marker for notes during the check-in process. Two reference documents are also available to candidates during the examination and can be accessed by clicking on a button on the computer screen: a list of common abbreviations used in the examination, and a list of normal laboratory values.

Answering Examination Questions

All information necessary to answer each question will be provided as a part of the computer-delivered ConCert examination. Each question has only one correct answer. Only one answer may be selected for each question in the examination, and candidates should answer as many questions as possible. Each question answered correctly is counted in the total correct score. Unanswered questions are treated as incorrect. Incorrect answers do not count in the total correct score, nor is there a subtraction from the total correct score for incorrect answers.

Preparation for Taking an Examination in a Testing Center

Pearson VUE Online Test Tutorial

ABEM suggests, prior to the ConCert examination appointment, candidates go to the Pearson VUE website, <http://www.pearsonvue.com/sponsors/tutorial>, and take the standard tutorial. While this tutorial is not identical in format to the ABEM ConCert examination, it provides an example of how a computer-delivered examination appears.

ABEM Test Tutorial During the Examination Appointment

ABEM also recommends each candidate take the optional test tutorial that appears on-screen immediately prior to beginning the ConCert examination in the testing center. There is no penalty for taking the tutorial, since all candidates receive the same amount of testing time regardless of whether they take the tutorial or not.

ABEM Optional Computer-Delivered Testing Experience

ABEM also offers an optional, short, computer-delivered testing experience in Pearson VUE testing centers. This offering is designed for candidates who have not previously taken an examination on a computer in a testing center. The demonstration test is *not* designed to assist candidates in preparing for the content of an actual ABEM examination. Physicians will have an opportunity to see how an ABEM examination is formatted on the computer, practice navigating a computer-delivered demonstration examination, and experience the same security procedures and opening and closing activities of an actual ABEM examination.

To allow candidates to practice navigating a computer-delivered examination, ABEM provides a 20 - 25 question demonstration test candidates can take during the optional computer-delivered testing experience. Although the correct answers to the demonstration test questions are provided within the test, the demonstration test will not be scored and the questions do not represent the examination content, subject matter, or level of difficulty of an actual ABEM examination.

Candidates may register for the Optional Computer-Delivered Testing Experience through EMCC Online at www.abem.org. The 2011 registration fee for this practice exam administration is \$125. After registering for the Optional Computer-Delivered Testing Experience, you should wait one business day and then call Pearson VUE to schedule an appointment for your practice exam administration.

Appointments are available on a first-come, first-served basis through October 12, 2011, but must be registered for by October 10, 2011, and scheduled by October 11, 2011, to occur. Rescheduling or withdrawing from the Optional Computer-Delivered Testing Experience follows the same processes as for the ConCert examination.

LLSA Tests

The computerized format of the ConCert examination is similar to the format of the Lifelong Learning Self Assessment (LLSA) tests. Taking LLSA tests can help candidates gain experience taking computerized examinations but is not meant to prepare candidates for the content of the ConCert examination.

Test-Taking Strategies

As you take the ConCert examination, remember each question is worth one point. Your best strategy for completing the examination is to first complete the initial book of the examination, answering all questions with your initial best answer. You may flag questions you would like to return to for later review. The computer system on which the examination is administered facilitates such a test-taking strategy by requiring one initial pass through an examination book before allowing you to select and go to a specific question in that examination book, in any desired order. Once an initial pass-through is completed, you may review all of the questions in that book in any order you choose before selecting the "End Review" button to finish the examination book. You can follow this same strategy to complete the second book of the examination. Note once you exit an examination book by clicking on the "End Review" button, that section of the examination is completed and you may not re-enter it.

LLSA Content on ConCert Examinations

There is no longer a link between identified LLSA readings and the content of the ConCert examination. In developing the EMCC program, ABEM originally created a strong link between the LLSA component and the ConCert examination, basing up to 40% of the examination content on

prior years' LLSA readings. ABEM's intent was to increase the value of EMCC to ABEM diplomates. However, some diplomates expressed concern they would be responsible for knowing the content of up to 200 specific articles when taking the ConCert examination. The Board considered diplomates' concerns and reassessed the relationship between LLSA and the ConCert examination, exploring whether appropriate changes could be made to better meet the Board's goals and the needs of its diplomates. As a result, the earlier link between LLSA readings and the development of ConCert examinations has been removed.

The 2011 ConCert examination, therefore, has been developed without a necessary reliance on identified LLSA readings. Although LLSA questions will no longer appear on the ConCert examination, similar concepts may still be represented as they become the standards for practice in Emergency Medicine.

ConCert Examination Content Specifications

[The Model of the Clinical Practice of Emergency Medicine \(EM Model\)](#) forms the basis of each of ABEM's multiple-choice question examinations. The lists below describe the relative weight given to different elements of the EM Model in constructing the examinations. The complete EM Model is published in *Annals of Emergency Medicine* [Ann Emerg Med. 2011; 57:e1-e15]. It is also available on the ABEM website, www.abem.org, under 'Publications' on the left side of the screen.

Listing of Conditions and Components		
1.0	Signs, Symptoms and Presentations	9%
2.0	Abdominal and Gastrointestinal Disorders	9%
3.0	Cardiovascular Disorders	10%
4.0	Cutaneous Disorders	2%
5.0	Endocrine, Metabolic and Nutritional Disorders	3%
6.0	Environmental Disorders	3%
7.0	Head, Ear, Eye, Nose and Throat Disorders	5%
8.0	Hematologic Disorders	2%
9.0	Immune System Disorders	2%
10.0	Systemic Infectious Disorders	5%
11.0	Musculoskeletal Disorders (Non-traumatic)	3%
12.0	Nervous System Disorders	5%
13.0	Obstetrics and Gynecology	4%
14.0	Psychobehavioral Disorders	3%
15.0	Renal and Urogenital Disorders	3%
16.0	Thoracic-Respiratory Disorders	8%
17.0	Toxicologic Disorders	4%
18.0	Traumatic Disorders	11%
	Appendix I: Procedures and Skills	6%
	Appendix II: Other Components	3%
	Total	100%

Acuity Frames	Target ($\pm 5\%$)
Critical	27%
Emergent	37%
Lower Acuity	27%
None	9%

Physician Tasks

The Board has assigned the following specific percentage weights to the Modifying Factor of age:

- Pediatrics: 8% minimum
- Geriatrics: 4% minimum

The Use of Field Test Questions on the Examination

To ensure the quality of future examinations, some of the questions on the examination will not have been used on previous examinations. These field test questions will not be apparent to the candidate. The field test questions will not be scored. Including them on the examination allows ABEM to conduct research to determine if the questions are appropriate for scoring future examinations.

Examination Criterion and Scoring

The ConCert examination is a criterion-referenced examination. A criterion-referenced examination uses a predetermined *standard*, against which all candidates are judged. All candidates meeting the standard will pass the examination. Quotas or required percentages of candidates passing are not used to determine the passing score.

With a six-day testing window, multiple versions of the ConCert examination are used for security purposes. Any given candidate is unlikely to receive the same version of the examination as another candidate. A statistical process called *equating* will ensure that the standard remains the same for all candidates. Each version of the examination will use a standard passing score equivalent to the standard of 75% correct, which was used for the former written recertification examination.

In addition to the field-testing process, each question receives a thorough review before it is used in scoring the examination. Questions that do not meet ABEM quality standards are not used in determining candidates' final scores.

Your final score on the ConCert examination will be determined by first adding together the number of scored questions you answered correctly. This number-correct score will be used to determine your final score, which will range from 0 to 100. Any candidate receiving a final score of 75 or greater will pass the examination.

Notification of Examination Results

ConCert examination candidates will be notified in writing of examination results within 90 days of the last day of the examination administration. ABEM will post on its website, www.abem.org, the date on which results are mailed.

To ensure the confidentiality of examination results, all information will be sent to candidates in written form. Results will not be provided via telephone, fax, or email. Candidates must maintain up-to-date contact information, using EMCC Online, to ensure they receive their written results in a timely manner.

Hand Scoring Examination Results

It is possible for a candidate to obtain a hand scoring of his or her examination. A hand score consists of calculating a candidate's examination score by hand directly from the file record of responses. Hand scoring an examination does not involve any review of the content of individual candidate responses. This procedure only verifies the accuracy of the computerized process used to calculate the examination score. Candidates are not encouraged to request this service since ABEM's routine error-checking procedures are extensive and very thorough.

Candidates have a period of one year from the date of the letter communicating their examination results to request a hand score of their examination. Each request must be made in writing to the ABEM office and accompanied by a check or money order made payable to the American Board of Emergency Medicine. ABEM will also accept Visa and MasterCard for payment. Authorization from the cardholder is required and must include cardholder name, billing address, and expiration date. Please contact the ABEM office for the current fee. The candidate must provide his or her full name and the date and name of the examination for which the hand score is being requested. Please allow approximately two weeks for the completion of a hand score.

Statement on Research

ABEM reserves the right to conduct and report research studies of its examinations and its examination data to benefit the specialty and for purposes of quality control and examination development. Individual candidate information will never be reported as part of the research. Your right to confidentiality will be strictly upheld.

ABEM also reserves the right to include, in any examination, certain questions or cases for the purposes of research and validation. These items will not be used in scoring for maintaining certification.

Section 3: Examination-Related Policies

[Policy on Medical Licensure](#)

[Policy on Fees](#)

[Policy on Americans with Disabilities Act](#)

[Policy on Examination Administration in Testing Centers](#)

[Policy on Examination Irregularities](#)

[Policy on Candidate Illness](#)

[Policy on Disruptive Behavior](#)

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[Policy on Candidate Requests for Investigation of a Certification or Maintenance of Certification Examination](#)

[ABEM Privacy Statement](#)

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