American Board of Emergency Medicine

ABEM In-training Examination (ITE)  
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

2018 ITE Administration and the Multiday Testing Window

1. **When will the 2018 ITE be administered?** The 2018 ITE will be administered in an online format over a five-day testing window, beginning on Tuesday, February 27, continuing through Saturday, March 3, 2018.

2. **Why has ABEM changed from a single day of testing to a five-day test administration?** When ABEM initially surveyed program directors about migrating the ITE to computer delivery, respondents indicated they would need increased scheduling flexibility with an online format. Some institutions have limited capacity for online testing, such as an inadequate number of computer labs or limitations in wireless bandwidth capacity. Allowing for testing across multiple days allows programs with smaller testing centers or limited equipment to split their residents into smaller groups for testing. A multiday testing window also reduces the risk both for programs and ABEM in administering the exam should technical issues occur that disrupt the exam administration. To help maintain examination security, multiple versions of the ITE will be administered.

3. **Can my program continue to administer the ITE to all residents on a single day, or do we have to administer the ITE across multiple days?** Programs that can handle online testing all their residents on a single day of testing may choose to continue to administer the examination on any day within the five-day testing window. However, programs now also have the option to administer the ITE on more than one day, i.e., across any or all of the five designated testing days.

4. **When did ABEM decide to transition the ITE to online delivery?** ABEM began exploring a computer-delivered ITE back in 2012 and 2013 by conducting two surveys of residency program directors. Based on that feedback, ABEM decided on an online delivery method in 2013. The Board successfully conducted an online pilot ITE administration in 2016 at about a third of participating residency programs. Earlier this year, the 2017 ITE administration was administered successfully online at about 80 percent of participating programs, while 20 percent of participating programs decided to continue to administer the paper ITE in 2017 with the understanding that all programs need to transition to an online delivery format beginning in 2018.

5. **Why has ABEM changed the ITE to online computer delivery?** The purpose of the ITE is to prepare residents to take the ABEM Qualifying Examination, which is delivered on computers at Pearson VUE testing centers. ABEM did explore administering the ITE in Pearson centers, but it was not feasible for most programs due to cost and logistical considerations. Based on feedback from program directors, ABEM decided that computer delivery of the ITE in an online format was the most feasible option. Furthermore, computer delivery also enables ABEM to include digital
test item stimuli, such as moving ultrasound images, on the ITE that are already included on the Qualifying Examination.

6. Now that ABEM has switched the ITE to online delivery only, is there any way to take a paper exam? No. For both operational and psychometric reasons, it is not feasible for the Board to continue administering both a paper and an online ITE. The concurrent administration of a paper examination and online delivery was a temporary transitional measure that was only offered during the 2016 and 2017 exam administrations.

7. Will ABEM send paper books as a backup option in case of technical failure? No. The paper backup books were available as a temporary transitional measure in 2016 and 2017 and will not be available in 2018.

8. The ABEM irregularity policy currently allows residents to discuss the content of the ITE with each other and with faculty immediately following the testing day. Will that still be the case for a five-day testing window? No. Because residents both within a program and across programs will be taking the examination across all five days of testing, residents will be required to refrain from discussing exam content with each other or with faculty until the close of the five-day testing window. After the testing window is closed, residents will be free to discuss test content. As now, however, writing down test questions or documenting/recording test questions in any durable form is considered a violation of ABEM’s copyright and of the ABEM irregularity policy.

### Logistical Planning and Exam Day Logistics

9. What will be different for the online ITE vs. the old paper examination format? There will be some additional upfront work, but not a lot. Initially, programs will consult with the technical administrator at their institution to verify that the Internet connection at the testing location will support the online test and the projected number of test takers. If using a wireless network (Wi-Fi), it will be very important for them to know the number of residents taking the examination at the same time so they can compare the number of Wi-Fi users to the network capacity. Closer to the examination, a technical system check at the examination site using the equipment that will be used on the examination day will verify that your system is ready to go. These checks need to be completed a few weeks prior to the ITE administration, and a link to the portal will be sent to program leadership via email long before the exam date.

10. What staffing will be necessary to administer the online ITE? ABEM has always recommended approximately one proctor for every 20 residents being tested and, in general, these proctoring arrangements will work for the online ITE. However, because the online administration is new, it will be optimal to staff the online administration slightly heavier than the traditional paper administration, and to allow a little extra preparation time before the test administration. The actual testing time will remain the same, four and one-half hours, but it may take a little longer to get everyone started and logged in.

11. If technical issues occur during the online ITE administration, what do we do? Internet Testing Systems (ITS), ABEM’s contracted online testing vendor, will be available by phone to assist programs in troubleshooting technical issues.
immediately before, during, and after the test administration. Please contact ITS at 800.514.8494.

12. **What happens if our examination room loses the Internet connection during the examination administration?** Follow your institutional procedures to report an Internet connection issue and refer to the online proctor manual for further instructions.

13. **If there is a technical disruption in the middle of the examination, can a resident resume the examination where they left off or do they have to start over?** If a resident experiences a technical disruption in the middle of his or her online examination, his or her responses will be saved and the resident can resume testing where he or she left off. If a resident is not able to resume from where he or she left off, please contact ITS at 800.514.8494.

14. **If it takes an hour for a resident to resume the examination following a technical disruption, does the exam clock keep running or does it stop during the repair time?** No testing time should have elapsed during any repair time and the clock should resume at the same point in time that the interruption occurred. In the unlikely event that the examination timer continued to run in such a situation, please contact ITS at 800.514.8494.

**Systems Requirements**

15. **What are the technical systems requirements to participate in the online ITE?** The minimum systems requirements can be found [here](#).

16. **How will our program know if we meet the minimum systems requirements?** A technical resource from your institution should review the systems requirements document and let you know if it will be feasible to administer the online ITE at your scheduled testing location. If the testing location uses a Wi-Fi connection, be sure to let the technical resource know the number of residents that will be accessing the ITE simultaneously on the examination day so that they can tell you if the wireless network has the capacity to handle the necessary number of Wi-Fi connections. Closer to the examination administration, programs will have access to a testing portal and will run a formal system check to avoid issues the day of the test administration; see the [minimum system requirements](#) for more information.

17. **Our testing location does not have wireless access. Can we participate?** The best option for any institution is to use devices with a wired (Ethernet) connection to the network. Your location could work if it has a computer lab with sufficient capacity to test all of your residents at once, or, by splitting up your residents into two or three groups and testing them in contiguous testing sessions.

18. **Our testing location has wireless access, but the connection is slow and/or unreliable when large groups of people are online at the same time. Can we participate in the online ITE administration?** ABEM will email a technical resource link to participating programs well ahead of the examination date to determine the capacity of the wireless network. If the capacity of your Wi-Fi network is limited, one option is to split up your residents into two or more groups to take the online ITE, so long as all testing occurs within the designated five-day testing window.
19. **Our institution has a computer lab with computers using a wired (Ethernet) connection, but there are not enough computers to accommodate all our residents. Can we participate in the online ITE?** The most reliable option for any institution is to use devices with a wired (Ethernet) Internet connection. If you test your residents in two or more separate groups, you could administer the examination online if the testing sessions occur within the designated five-day testing window. Also, residents can use their own devices in a room that has access to Wi-Fi if each device meets the minimum system requirements.

20. **Does our program need to have access to a computer lab with dedicated computers to participate in the online ITE?** No, any location with reliable Internet access can work. While computers with a wired (Ethernet) Internet connection are likely to be the most reliable and predictable, if your testing location has a reliable wireless network (Wi-Fi) available it could work for the online ITE. Please see the minimum system requirements for more information.

21. **Our program administers the ITE off-campus. How will we be able to verify connectivity and that the online ITE will work there?** A technical resource at the off-campus location can review the minimum system requirements and complete the systems checks.

22. **Does our program need to provide computers to all our residents for the online ITE?** No, residents can use their own computers, so long as 1) their equipment meets the minimum system requirements, and 2) they run a system test on their computer well in advance of the examination. The testing software is compatible with both Windows PC and iOS Macs. Residents should be given the systems requirements well before the examination to verify that their equipment can be used. In addition, approximately one month prior to the ITE administration, ABEM asks that all test takers download a secure browser and complete the systems check from their home before coming to the testing site.

23. **Many of our residents do not own a laptop computer but only a tablet computer. Can they use a tablet to take the online ITE?** Residents may use an iPad that meets the minimum system requirements to take the online ITE. Other tablet computers are NOT compatible with the testing software and cannot be used.

24. **Can residents use their smartphones to take the online ITE?** No. Only Windows PCs, Mac laptops, and iPads that meet the minimum system requirements can be used to access the online ITE.

25. **Can residents use any model iPad to take the online ITE?** The online ITE can be administered on an iPad 2 or newer, so long as the iPad’s operating system is iOS 7 or later. As is the case for any equipment used to administer the online ITE, however, a system check will need to run on the iPad in early February, preceding the ITE administration.

26. **For residents who are unfamiliar with Apple devices, will ABEM provide information to assist them in downloading the ITE online application?** ABEM will include an iPad Quick Start Guide as part of the online ITE proctor manual. This guide summarizes the preparatory steps of installing the ABEM Online application on an iPad.
Registration

27. When is the deadline for our program to register our residents for the 2018 ITE? ABEM must know of all participating programs and all residents anticipated to take the ITE six weeks prior to the administration. By early December, ABEM will contact programs regarding ITE resident registration. For more information regarding the ITE requirements and process, click here.

28. How will our program register our residents for the online ITE? ITE registration will be available through the ABEM website, much like the online annual survey of residents. All eligible programs will receive ITE registration information by email in early December.

29. Our program has a resident who will take the ITE at another ACGME-accredited EM residency program; how would that affect his/her score? There will be no difference in scoring and all of your program’s resident feedback will be included in the post-examination feedback reports. Please contact the ABEM office with questions regarding ITE resident site changes at 517.332.4800 ext. 388 or at training@abem.org.

30. Our program sometimes takes residents from other programs on the day of the examination; we have our residents use their own devices. How can we ensure that other programs’ residents’ equipment meets the minimum requirements? Residents who site change into your program that are expected to use their own equipment should be given the minimum system requirements document and, in mid-February, should download the secure browser and complete the systems check from their home before coming to your testing site.

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