

Examination Format

The American Society for Clinical Pathology Board of Certification (ASCP BOC) PA certification examination is composed of 100 questions given in a 2-hour 30-minute time frame. All examination questions are multiple-choice with one best answer. The examination is administered using the format of computer adaptive testing (CAT). More information is available on the ASCP BOC website.

The examination questions may be both theoretical and/or procedural. Theoretical questions measure skills necessary to apply knowledge of pathology/histology, identify/evaluate morphologic characteristics of disease, and correlate pathologic findings to physiologic/disease processes. Procedural questions measure skills necessary to select/perform appropriate laboratory techniques and follow quality assurance protocols.

Examination Content Areas

The examination questions encompass the following content areas within pathology. Each of these content areas comprises a specific percentage of the overall 100-question examination.

Content Area	Description	Examination Percentage
Fundamentals of Pathology	General pathology and systemic pathology	40 – 50%
Anatomic Pathology Techniques	Autopsy pathology, surgical pathology, and histologic techniques	10 – 15%
Anatomy	Normal microscopic anatomy and gross anatomy	10 – 15%
Autopsy Pathology	Adult, neonatal/perinatal, pediatric, and medicolegal/forensic	10 – 15%
Laboratory Operations	Regulatory and compliance, management, safety, and infection control	5 – 10%

For a more detailed overview of the examination, refer to the content outline starting on page 2.

Examination Content Outline

- Regulatory questions on the examination are based on U.S. sources (e.g., AABB, FDA, CLIA, etc.).
- The examples provided in this topic outline (as indicated by e.g.,) are not limited to those listed.

I. Fundamentals of Pathology

40 – 50% of total examination

A. General Pathology

1. Cell injury
2. Environmental, toxic, and nutritional
3. Fluid and hemodynamic derangements
4. Genetic and metabolic disorders
5. Immunopathology
6. Infectious diseases
7. Neoplasia

B. Systemic Pathology

1. Blood and lymphoid
2. Bone and soft tissue
3. Breast
4. Cardiovascular
5. Endocrine
6. Gastrointestinal
7. Head and neck
8. Kidney and urinary tract
9. Liver and biliary tract
10. Nervous system
11. Pediatric
12. Perinatal
13. Reproductive - female
14. Reproductive - male
15. Respiratory
16. Skin

II. Anatomic Pathology Techniques

10 – 15% of total examination

- A. Autopsy Pathology Techniques
- B. Histologic Techniques
- C. Surgical Pathology Techniques

III. Anatomy

10 – 15% of total examination

- A. Gross
- B. Normal Microscopic

IV. Autopsy Pathology

10 – 15% of total examination

- A. Adult
- B. Neonatal/perinatal
- C. Pediatric
- D. Medicolegal/forensic

V. Laboratory Operations

5 – 10% of total examination

A. Regulatory and Compliance

1. Governmental agencies (e.g., CLIA, HIPAA)
2. Laboratory accreditation (e.g., CAP, The Joint Commission)
3. Coding (e.g., CPT)

B. Management

1. Personnel
2. Workflow, scheduling and productivity
3. Education/training

C. Safety and Infection Control (e.g., OSHA, SDS, NFPA)

END OF CONTENT GUIDELINE