

December 2004

Dear Colleague,

The ASCP Board of Registry (BOR) Joint Generalist Examination Committee extends its greetings to you and wishes you the best for the 2004-2005 academic year.

Committee members met in Chicago July 12-16, 2004 for our yearly meeting. It was a productive week, and committee members worked diligently to complete their assignments. Our activities are summarized in this letter.

Examination Item Pool Review and Referencing

Committee members reviewed existing and new Medical Technologist (MT) and Medical Laboratory Technician (MLT) examination item pools and made appropriate revisions and corrections. Committee members also reviewed all test item images for clarity and accuracy.

In preparation for upcoming accreditation review by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), committee members referenced every question in the test item banks for both the MT and MLT exams – more than 3000 questions. Each committee member was responsible for referencing assigned test items using major current resources.

Implementation of the Practice Analysis Survey Data

In January 2002, the ASCP BOR sent out over 17,000 surveys to MTs, MLTs, and PBTs all newly certified within the last two years and random samples of practitioners in the field for five years, fifteen years, and twenty-five years, asking them how frequently they performed predetermined tasks and specific competencies. The purpose of this study is to revalidate the content of the examinations and to make sure that the certification examinations are reflective of what is going on in practice.

A total of 7,011 surveys were sent to MTs and 5,794 to MLTs. The response rate for MTs was 21.5% (1511 surveys returned) and for MLTs was 16.8% (969 surveys returned). In addition, a total of approximately 6,355 surveys were mailed to MT/MLT educational program directors and laboratory managers asking them to rate how critical or essential it is for an entry level (new hire with no experience) to be able to perform the same predetermined tasks. A total of 995 responses were received from this group of individuals (15.6%). The BOR staff, with assistance from their psychometric consultant, combined the frequency and criticality numbers to obtain a statistically valid measure of the task or competency.

The committee members then examined the combined number using the following criteria determined by the Council of Committee Chairs (CCC) and made exam content decisions based on this data:

- Tasks that had a frequency/criticality combined number of above 50% at entry-level, were kept on the exams.
- Tasks that were more than one standard deviation (SD) below the 50% measure were excluded from the exams.
- Tasks that were within 1 SD of the 50% measure were considered to be in the gray zone and were further examined based on the number of different facility types at which the task was being performed. Tasks not performed by 50% of facility types were excluded from the exam; those performed by 50% of the facility types were reviewed by the committee for final decision on inclusion or exclusion.

Once this process was completed, the content was adjusted accordingly. An updated Content Guideline for the MT and MLT exams is enclosed with this letter. It is important to note that the work the committee performed at its annual meeting will take effect July, 2005. This will allow additional time to ensure that everyone is aware of the pending changes. In addition, all new questions are field-tested for one year and do not count in the final exam score until the field-test is successfully completed on each question.

A summary of the practice analysis results, with the additions and deletions of items will be provided in a separate letter in January – February 2005.

Record Release Report Reminder

If you have students applying for an examination, you will receive notification by email after the 15th of each month to verify your students' examination eligibility. It will be necessary for you to verify the students' eligibility online before the students will receive an examination admission letter. Your review and signature will ensure that all information is accurate and that any errors will be corrected and will not affect your Program Performance Report.

Comprehensive Examinations

The ASCP Board of Registry will be offering an exciting new product in 2005 – Comprehensive Examinations for Medical Laboratory Technicians and Medical Technologists. These examinations will be 200 questions in length and will include the same topics that are included in the certification examination. The examinations will be offered year round over the internet. Results will include individual, program, and national scores plus all relevant statistics. The data will include a break down of the scores into year of training, type of program, and region. More details to follow in January 2005.

One Final Note

Please remember that it is important for all educators to take current local practices into consideration when deciding on the content to include in their programs. ***Content taught should not be solely based on the MT/MLT exam content.*** Content found to be important in local practice as well as that deemed appropriate by the academic department members providing the training should also be included. The examination content guidelines do not reflect the content required for NAACLS accreditation. It is also important for the students to understand this.

The certification examination is testing for entry-level abilities and some of what they learn will not be utilized until they have been in practice for 2, 5, or even 10 years.

As always, if you have any questions, please feel free to contact the current committee chairperson, Elizabeth A. Zeibig, MA, MT(ASCP) at 314-977-8691 or zeibigea@slu.edu or the staff at the Board of Registry. If you are interested in volunteering for any of the BOR committees, please complete an abbreviated CV that can be found on the web at: <http://www.ascp.org/Certification/ForProgramDirectors/related/volunteers.aspx> or by contacting the Board of Registry.

We thank you for your continued support of ASCP Board of Registry and the certification process.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth A. Zeibig, MA, MT(ASCP)
Chair
Joint Generalist Examination Committee



Susan S. Graham, MS, MT(ASCP)SH
Vice-Chair
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