

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE ABIM BOARD EXAM

There are a lot of things on the boards that you don't see every day. The point is that as an internist, you can recognize them and know the next step before referring someone to a specialist. For example, you probably won't see a pregnant woman with multiple sclerosis in clinic, but you need to know what to do with the medications when they are pregnant. **You can't just wing the boards – you have to study.**

The exam is NOT graded on a curve. From the ABIM: "The minimum passing score reflects an absolute standard that is independent of the performance of any group of candidates. This standard has been established by the examination committee and approved by the ABIM Board of Directors."

### During PGY2/3 year - build your knowledge base, don't "study for the test:"

- **GO TO MORNING REPORT.** You won't remember that one MKSAP question 2 years later, but you will be able to spend 1 hour learning a specific topic well. Instead of having to cram hyponatremia the week before the test, you can spend an hour during residency actually learning it. See the [Morning Report Reading List](#) (updated by librarian Laura Abate in real time) for reading to reinforce learning that day. After report, consider making brief cheat sheets for yourself for topics that you have trouble with and it will save you time later.
- **READ** about the problems your patients have, and about problems you haven't seen. Consider using [NEJM Resident 360](#) (topics arranged by specialty rotation), [Hopkins Modules](#), GW IM's [Reading Lists](#), or a general medicine text (e.g. Washington Manual, Cecil's, Mayo Clinic Essentials, Harrison's). The [Intern Survival Guide](#) is a great source for in-the-moment reading. Pick one source and stick with it, reading consistently at least 15 minutes per day.
- **LEARN ACTIVELY.** After reading on a topic, take a sheet of paper and write a fake Assessment/Plan for a hypothetical patient with the problem you just read about. This activates your learning and makes you use the information in exactly the way you'll use it for patient care!

### December 1, 2017 through April 14, 2018

- **REGISTER** & pay ~\$1,400 (not reimbursed by the department). It takes 2 weeks for your registration to be approved. The sooner you register, the more likely you are to get your desired test date, location.
- **SCHEDULE** the exam. After your registration is processed, you will get a confirmation number **by mail**.
- **REVIEW** what is actually on the exam. This is the [Content Blue-Print](#)
- Keep going to morning report and following your reading plan
- Teach a morning report and teach your interns/students

### Resources for 6 months prior

- **MKSAP.** There are about 1200 questions. If you start 10-12 week before your test, you have to do MKSAP 60 questions/day to finish. Take brief notes for what you don't know or seems important. MKSAP will cover all the common and obscure things you may need to know. It's a good place to start.
- **USMLE World.** There are about 1200 questions. UWorld questions are long (longer than the test), but they are written more like the real test question and the interface is close to the real test. If you're nervous about test taking, time, or like to practice what it will really look like, we recommend UWorld.

### 2 Weeks before boards - prep for the test day!

- Learn the [Exam Day Schedule](#)
- Go to the ABIM website and do [The Tutorial](#)
- Review cheat sheets, question notes, and MSKAP flashcards. MKSAP flashcards are the objectives for each MKSAP question.