

Question Author Application Checklist & Question Development Tips

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Please collect these items ahead of time and review the question development tips below to complete your online application. All items must be submitted during the same application session; you cannot return to finish the application later.

Demographics

- Contact information
- Race/Ethnicity
- Current institution/practice group
- Practice setting and practice focus
- Medical school and graduation dates (month, date and year)
- Training program and program dates (month and year)

Be prepared to tell us about yourself

- Why are you interested in serving as a question author?
- What skills would you bring to the role?
- What current or recent activities and experiences do you feel are relevant to the position?
- List 2-3 recent publications.

For each of your original questions (two for each exam you select)

- Assessment that correlates to question
- Topic description (e.g., substance use disorder, pediatric pain, etc.)
- Question stem
- Three answer options (one must be the correct option)
- Correct option from the three options listed
- Keyword phrase (Exams) or key point (MOCA Minute)
- Rationale (Exams) or critique (MOCA Minute)
- Two references

QUESTION DEVELOPMENT TIPS

All questions should be multiple choice and consist of a question stem followed by three options. There should be one unambiguous, correct answer that is easily validated.

- Certification exam questions should have a keyword phrase of 37 characters or fewer, a one- to two-sentence rationale that describes the essential concept being tested and two references.

- MOCA Minute questions should include a key point, two references and a one-to two-paragraph critique that explains why the correct answer is correct and why the distractors are not appropriate choices. The key point should be only one (preferably) or two sentences, specific and should tell the diplomate what they should have learned from answering the question and reading the critique.

A good question stem should:

- Require examinees to apply knowledge as opposed to simply recalling it.
- Be concise, clear, grammatically correct, meaningful and pose a definite problem.
- Present a clinically relevant scenario and associated question that require reasonable knowledge to answer and is a good discriminator.
- Be specific enough that it could reasonably be answered without having to look at the options.
- Be written in the third person and not directly address the examinee.

Example of a Good Stem

The set of options for an item should generally be similar in length, comprise one category (drugs, procedures, diagnoses, etc.), have the same grammatical construction and be grammatically consistent with the stem. All incorrect options, or distractors, should be plausible and indicative of typical errors. If options are numbers, they should be presented in ascending or descending order. See the sample question below.

Stem → Following coronary artery bypass surgery, a 60-year-old man is receiving an epinephrine infusion. His vital signs are: BP 110/60 mmHg, HR 95 bpm (regular sinus rhythm), PAP 45/25 mmHg, CVP 20 mmHg, SvO₂ 50%, and cardiac index 1.7 L/min/m². Which of the following drugs is **MOST** appropriate to administer?

Options → A. Milrinone
B. Vasopressin
C. Dopamine

Correct Option → A. Milrinone

References(two references are required for all questions)

- Exam questions should include references from accepted reference sources, such as standard texts (e.g., Miller's Anesthesia, Clinical Anesthesia [Barash], etc.) or peer-reviewed journal articles that present empirical evidence.
- For MOCA Minute questions, review articles, especially those published within the past five years in peer-reviewed journals, are excellent reference sources. Standard text references are not preferred but may be included if a recent review or other evidence is not available. The ideal review article (or book chapter, if used) would contain references that justify the statement(s) upon which the question is based.

Please avoid poorly referenced review books, pocket references, or study guides (no matter how good or widely used) for all questions. We also discourage citing URLs from websites.

If you have any questions, please contact us at nominations@theaba.org or (866) 999-7501.

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