

ABNM: Nuclear Medicine In-Training Examination Goes Virtual

Leonie Gordon, MD, Associate Executive Director, American Board of Nuclear Medicine

In 2022, in keeping with the commitment to serve well our trainees and their valued residency programs, the American Board of Nuclear Medicine (ABNM) offered residents remote virtual in-training testing. In order to achieve this and update our virtual presence in testing, ABNM chose a vendor that offers a complete online solution for the management, delivery, and reporting of assessment programs. The vendor has led the industry with innovations in secure internet testing. ABNM migrated all its secure testing databases to the new vendor over several months, and this created a state-of-the-art online item-banking system. It runs on major browsers both for Windows and Mac and offers extensive configuration options.

The ABNM successfully delivered its in-training examination (ITE) as a remote computer-based exam during January 2022. Resident participation in the ITE fulfills Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education nuclear medicine training program requirements for summative assessment. The ITE also benchmarks individual resident scores for all residency levels. It offers residents an opportunity to evaluate their knowledge and to improve identified weaknesses prior to taking the ABNM certifying examination.

ABNM recognized that the logistics for programs and residents would be different for a virtual examination. New graphics were created (<https://www.abnm.org/2022-ite-announcement>). The board expected the examination to be proctored at local sites and held a proctor/virtual examination training webinar prior to administration of the examination. For those unable to attend the session or who wanted a refresh, the webinar was recorded and is available on YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kd3aa8JDnNg>). As expected with any remotely delivered exam, a few candidates experienced connectivity and software issues. ABNM staff members were available to troubleshoot and help trainees with these issues. Test results are being validated through third-party psychometric analysis, and the data will be used for optimally accurate benchmarking.

Candidates expressed appreciation for the ability to take the exam at their local sites, which eliminated the need for exposure to groups of people during the COVID-19 pandemic. The length of time the examination was available online to programs and residents was also increased to overcome pandemic-related challenges. Although the ABNM prepared candidates well for the computer-based examination, concern was expressed about access to the exam and unfamiliarity with the exam screens. A help button was available during the exam on all computer screens to answer many questions, but some candidates did not avail themselves of this feature and did not realize that methods were available to zoom, adjust contrast, and scroll through images.

The ABNM hopes to have the ITE results available within 2 months and will include teaching key points for questions residents did not answer correctly. These will be included in the results correspondence, and the hope is that it will offer an opportunity to evaluate their knowledge and identify areas of deficiency relative to peers at the same level of training. In addition, ABNM has developed Certlink-in-Training, which provides residents the opportunity to participate in continuous online learning, as well as an opportunity for maximizing test preparation. Certlink questions have key points, critiques, and annotated references. ABNM hopes the ITE and participation in Certlink-in-Training will maximize opportunities for future testing preparation, including secure examinations. Certlink-related tutorials are available at: <https://www.abnm.org/certlink-training-tutorial-video-series/>.

ABNM will continue to offer the ITE virtually, with enrollment in September through October 2022 with the same device preparation. The ITE for U.S. and Canadian programs will be given in January 2023.



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