

# APPLICANT HANDBOOK 2018

## AMERICAN OSTEOPATHIC SUBSPECIALTY PAIN MEDICINE EXAMINATION COMMITTEE

American Osteopathic Board of Family Physicians  
American Osteopathic Board of Internal Medicine  
American Osteopathic Board of Neurology & Psychiatry  
American Osteopathic Board of Neuromusculoskeletal Medicine  
American Osteopathic Board of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation

Established 2012

### **Affiliated Organizations**

American Osteopathic Association (AOA)

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### **What is the Pain Medicine Subspecialty Examination for Certification?**

The Pain Medicine Examination process for a Subspecialty Certification is conjointly developed by five participating osteopathic specialty boards. The Pain Medicine Subspecialty Examination Committee has representation from each participating specialty board.

The purpose of the AOA Pain Medicine Subspecialty Examination is to protect the public by identifying board certified osteopathic physicians who have advanced knowledge, skills and abilities in pain medicine.

### **Who sits on the Conjoint Pain Medicine Examination Committee (AOCPMEC)?**

The AOCPMEC is composed of five distinguished osteopathic specialty board members elected by the AOA Board of Trustees from nominees submitted by the specialty boards. The current members of the Board jointly represent over one hundred years of dedication and practice in the osteopathic profession.

### **What are the eligibility guidelines for Pain Medicine Subspecialty Certification?**

#### **A. Prerequisites:**

The requirements include approved training. Applicants must meet the following minimum requirements:

- The applicant must hold primary certification awarded by the AOA upon the recommendation of a participating specialty board.
- The applicant must hold an active license to practice medicine in a state of the United States; applicants without an active license in any jurisdiction at the time of application will not be admitted to the examination.
- The applicant must be a current member in good standing in the American Osteopathic Association or the Canadian Osteopathic Association.
- The applicant must conform to the ethical and moral standards as set forth in the [Code of Ethics of the AOA](#).
- The applicant must satisfactorily complete a one (1) year AOA or ACGME-approved fellowship training in pain medicine evidenced by a copy of a pain medicine certificate and letter of recommendation from the program director. Eligibility for examination will have duration of six years from the date of completion of the fellowship training.
- CME guidelines if applicable.

#### **B. Clinical Practice Pathway (Expires with the 2018 examination)**

**Anyone applying through the clinical pathway must sit for the examination no later than the last offering for 2018. There will be no more clinical pathway applications accepted after the 2018 examination deadline.**

If applying via the clinical practice pathway, the following criteria must be met:

- The applicant must hold primary certification awarded by the AOA upon the recommendation of a participating specialty board.
- The applicant must hold an active license to practice medicine in a state of the United States; applicants without an active license in any jurisdiction at the time of application will not be admitted to the examination.

- The applicant must be a current member in good standing in the American Osteopathic Association or the Canadian Osteopathic Association.
- The applicant must conform to the ethical and moral standards as set forth in the [Code of Ethics of the AOA](#).
- Verification of a minimum of 40 hours of approved (category 1A or its allopathic equivalent – live/face-to-face hours; no home study/webinars will be accepted) AOA continuing medical education (CME) credits in the diagnosis and/or treatment of pain within the 24-months immediately preceding the application deadline date for that examination year. **The Board or committee has discretionary authority to evaluate CME on a case by case basis and is sole and final judge of whether and to what extent the CME satisfies the requirements of the clinical pathway.**
  - a. The applicant shall be responsible for submitting confirmation of the topics covered in the lectures used for CME credits at the time the application is submitted (e.g. syllabus, course outlines, brochures, etc.)
  - b. “Complementary and Alternative Medicine” CME credits will comprise no more than 2 hours of the 40 total and may include training in acupuncture, nutraceuticals and prolotherapy. Any CME credits for other forms of complementary or alternative medicine must be submitted to the Conjoint Examination Committee for approval.
  - c. Up to 5 hours of the 40 total may be in the field of addiction medicine.
  - d. The following is a guideline to assist the applicant in determining if and how many hours are appropriate:
    - i. Any seminar or symposium that specifically addresses pain (the medical or interventional aspects) or osteopathic diagnosis and/or treatment in the title of the seminar should be appropriate in their entirety. This excludes non-accredited lectures that are industry funded and not part of the approved CME’s for that activity.
    - ii. Any seminar that does not specifically address the aforementioned in the title may have applicable hours if the lecture title itself does specify the diagnosis and/or treatment of pain (medical or interventional) or painful conditions, this includes osteopathic somatic dysfunction.
    - iii. If a seminar or lecture does not directly specify the aforementioned in the title it may be applicable, however the total applicable hours will be limited to 10 of the total 40 hours at the discretion of the participating board or committee (this does not include and is in addition to the 5 hours allowed for addiction medicine).
- A minimum of three years of clinical practice prior to the date of application with a minimum of 30% of the practice in the direct care of pain medicine patients.
- A minimum of three physicians certified by the AOA or ABMS in their own specialty, who can complete a Pain Medicine Clinical Practice Attestation form which attests to the candidates’ knowledge, professionalism and practice of pain medicine. One of the attestations must come from the department chair, medical director or other such supervisory physician if applicable.

**When and where are the Pain Medicine Subspecialty Examinations offered?**

Both certification and osteopathic continuous certification (OCC) examinations will be offered in the spring and fall of 2018. The spring administration will occur on Saturday, May 19, 2018 at the AOA Office in Chicago, IL.

**How much does it cost to sit for the Pain Medicine Subspecialty Examinations and withdrawal fees?**

The initial examination fee of \$1300 is required at the time of application. The OCC examination fee of \$400 is required at the time of application. The initial application deadline is February 9, 2018. A late fee of \$100 will be required for all applications submitted between February 10, 2018 and March 9, 2018.

All cancellations must be made in writing. Exam fees will be refunded if cancellation is received by April 19, 2018 less a \$300 administrative fee (for initial examination) or a \$150 administrative fee (for OCC examination).

Fees may be paid online at [www.aoepm.org](http://www.aoepm.org) or to American Osteopathic Association, AOA Certifying Board Services, 142 E. Ontario St., Chicago, IL 60611-2864.

**How do I register for the Pain Medicine Subspecialty Examinations?**

To register for the Pain Medicine Subspecialty Certification or Osteopathic Continuous Certification (OCC) Examination, visit the Pain Medicine website here: <http://www.aoepm.org/>. Be sure to include all requisite accompanying documentation as listed on the online website.

**When must I register for the Pain Medicine Subspecialty Examinations?**

The deadline to register for the 2018 Pain Medicine Subspecialty Certification or Osteopathic Continuous Certification (OCC) Examinations is Friday, March 9, 2018 for the spring administration.

**What is the format of the Pain Medicine Subspecialty Examinations?**

The Pain Medicine Subspecialty Certification Examination is composed entirely of multiple-choice type questions. There will be a total of 225 questions on the examination including 25 pre-test questions. The 25 pre-test questions are “tryout” questions and are not intended to count as “scoreable”. These pre-test questions will be randomly dispersed throughout the exam in no particular order. The examination will cover the broad aspects of pain medicine that specialists practicing in the field are expected to know. The examination will assess the candidate’s knowledge and clinical judgment in aspects of pain medicine required to perform at a high level of competence.

The content areas covered and their relative proportions on the exam are as follows:

#### TABLE OF SPECIFICATION (TOS):

I.	Comprehensive Osteopathic Assessment of Pain	23-27%
II.	Osteopathic Manipulation	3-7%
III.	Therapeutic Measures/Modalities	28-32%
IV.	Regional Pain	20-24%
V.	Diffuse Pain Syndromes	5-9%
VI.	Special Populations	9-13%

A more detailed exam table of specification is available at the following link:

<http://www.aoepm.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/TOS-PAIN-MEDICINE-EXAMINATION-QUESTION-CATEGORIES-1.pdf>

The Pain Medicine Subspecialty Osteopathic Continuous Certification (OCC) Examination will also be composed entirely of 100 multiple-choice type questions.

#### **Does the AOA offer or endorse any study materials to prepare for its board examinations?**

Candidates should prepare for the examination using means they are comfortable and familiar with.

#### **What happens after I pass the Pain Medicine Subspecialty examination?**

Those who pass the examination will receive a Certificate in Pain Medicine by their primary specialty board. All certificates will be time-limited and will be valid for ten (10) years from the date of certification. The diplomate must maintain a valid certification certificate in their primary specialty in order for the certificate in Pain Medicine to remain valid. The Pain Medicine Subspecialty Certificate will become invalid the date that the diplomate's primary certificate becomes invalid. The Subspecialty Pain Medicine will be awarded after the AOA Bureau of Osteopathic Specialists gives final approval of the examination process for each candidate.

This approval process will take approximately three months following the notification of successful completion of the examination. The candidate will be responsible for the fee for printing of a duplicate certificate in which the certificate was mailed to an outdated address and notification of the new address was not supplied to their primary specialty board.

#### **What must I do if I feel that I have been treated unfairly in the examination process?**

The American Osteopathic Conjoint Pain Medicine Examination Committee (AOCPEM) is committed to assuring that aggrieved candidates for certification have access to an appeal process to address concerns regarding all certification and recertification examinations and other decisions of the AOCPEM. In accordance with the policies of the American Osteopathic Association (AOA), candidates for certification may appeal decisions of the AOCPEM to the AOA Bureau of Osteopathic Specialists (BOS). Thereafter, where necessary, candidates may appeal the decision of the BOS to the Board of Trustees. Before pursuing an appeal with the AOA, candidates for certification/ recertification from the AOCPEM, shall first appeal decisions related to any examination to the AOCPEM as set forth in the following policy.

I. Scope of Appeal

A. Appealable Issues. Candidates may appeal to the AOCPMEC to raise concerns relative to the examination's administration (i.e., alleged bias/prejudice/unfairness of the exam or of a member of an examination team or failure to follow established examination procedures).

B. Non-Appealable Issues. The AOCPMEC will not consider appeals based on examination content, sufficiency or accuracy of answers given to examination questions, scoring of the examination, scoring of answers to individual questions, and/or the determination of the minimum passing score.

II. Procedure for Appeal

A. Appeal Request. In order to file an appeal concerning the examination, a candidate must set forth the basis for his/her appeal in writing within two hours after he/she has completed the examination. Appeals must include the following:

- Name, address and email address of examinee
- Date and location of exam
- Details outlining the reason for the appeal
- Examinee signature and date

Submit appeals to the exam proctor or staff member at the exam or to the AOEPM, 142 E. Ontario Street, Chicago, IL 60611. Fax: (312) 202-8448. Email: [painmedicine@osteopathic.org](mailto:painmedicine@osteopathic.org)

B. Late Appeals. All appeals submitted after the two hours following the exam will be denied.

C. Evaluation of Appeal. Each appeal submitted as required will be reviewed by the AOCPMEC. A majority vote of the Committee will determine whether the AOCPMEC accepts or denies the appeal.

A. Notification of Candidates. Candidates will be advised by the AOCPMEC of the decision within 10 working days by certified mail.

III. Effect of Decision.

A. Decision to Accept Appeal.

- i. No Scoring or Recording of Exam. If the Committee accepts an appeal, then the candidate's examination will not be scored and recorded.
- ii. Right to Retake Examination. A candidate whose appeal is accepted shall have the right to a new examination at the next scheduled examination date at no additional application or examination fee. (All other fees incurred are the responsibility of the candidate.) At that time, the examination will be conducted by a different examination team. The candidate's original log may be utilized and the examination will be conducted in accordance with the format for the current examination.
- iii. Failure to Retake Examination. If for any reason the candidate elects NOT to retake the examination at the next scheduled date, his/her appeal shall be considered null

and void and the candidate will be required to reapply for the certification/recertification examination and his/her application shall be considered in accordance with the criteria in effect at the time he/she submits the new application. Exceptions (for good cause) to this stipulation will be considered on an individual basis by the Committee.

iv. Further Appeals.

1. Current Examination. The candidate whose initial appeal is accepted by the committee shall not have the right to further appeal of the current examination results, either within the AOCPMEC or to the AOA.
2. Subsequent Examination. The candidate whose initial appeal is accepted shall not have the right to appeal the next scheduled examination to the AOCPMEC under this Policy. However, the candidate shall have the right to appeal to the AOA.

- B. Decision to Deny Appeal. If the initial appeal is denied by the AOCPMEC, the candidate shall have the right to appeal (within 30 days) to the AOA. Candidates interested in appealing to the AOA should contact the Department of Certification, American Osteopathic Association, at 142 East Ontario St., Chicago, IL 60611.

**Any correspondence directed to members of the AOCPMEC or requests for more information about the material contained in this packet may be directed to:**

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