
AMERICAN BOARD OF SLEEP MEDICINE

CANDIDATE HANDBOOK FOR THE SLEEP TECHNOLOGIST REGISTRY EXAMINATION



**EXAMINATION WINDOW:
AUGUST 11–17, 2012**

revised May 3, 2012

CANDIDATE HANDBOOK

CONTENTS

Introduction	3
I. History	3
II. Vision.....	4
III. Mission	4
IV. Statement of Non-Discrimination and Compliance with All Laws.....	5
V. Confidentiality	5
Examination Requirements.....	5
I. Eligibility Requirements	5
A. Graduates of CAAHEP or CoARC Programs	6
B. A-STEP Introductory Program and Modules with On-the-Job Training	6
C. Health Professionals.....	6
D. Registered Polysomnographic Technologists.....	7
II. Application	7
A. Application Procedure	8
B. Incomplete Applications	9
C. Registry Eligible.....	9
D. Refunds and Withdrawals	9
E. Applicants with Disabilities	10
Details of the Examination.....	10
A. Examination Process	10
B. Examination Composition	10
C. Electronic Devices	10
D. Scoring.....	11
E. Examination Results	11
F. Appeal Procedure	11
G. Content Areas.....	11
Sleep Technologist Registration	12
Sample Questions.....	13

Sleep Technologist Registry Examination

The knowledge needed to be a competent Sleep Technologist is considerable and typically requires a year for comprehensive training. Some may elect to pursue full time training at a community college or other educational institution. Others may elect to enroll in the Accredited Sleep Technology Education Program (A-STEP), which includes an introductory training course followed by a combination of standardized modular training and on-the-job experience. The Sleep Technologist Registry Examination is intended to certify that successful candidates are competent to meet all of the requirements of the position of sleep technologist (see the American Academy of Sleep Medicine, American Association of Sleep Technologists and American Society of Electroencephalographic Technologists joint publication at <http://www.aasmnet.org/technologistdescription.aspx> for details). Successful candidates will have demonstrated knowledge in the areas listed in the examination blueprint and will be prepared for a career in Sleep Technology.

INTRODUCTION

I. HISTORY

In 1978, the Association of Sleep Disorders Centers developed an examination for the purpose of establishing and maintaining standards of individual proficiency in clinical polysomnography. By the close of 1990, this initiative of the American Sleep Disorders Association (now the American Academy of Sleep Medicine – AASM), directed by Helmut S. Schmidt, MD, certified 432 physicians and PhDs as accredited clinical polysomnographers.

The American Board of Sleep Medicine (ABSM) was incorporated as an independent, nonprofit, self-designated board on January 28, 1991. The ABSM administered an examination for physicians and PhDs in sleep medicine from 1989 until 2007.

The role of sleep technologists is important to the diagnostic and therapeutic services provided to sleep disorders patients. The AASM has always supported sleep technology as an independent allied health profession, and is committed to ensuring its vitality as the practice of sleep medicine evolves with new policy and technology. To this end, the AASM has offered standardized educational programs for technologists and aided in efforts to enact legislation that safeguards the profession. These efforts have helped raise the profile of sleep technology within allied health care and with governing boards at the state level. After extensive discussion and serious consideration over several meetings, the Board of Directors voted to develop sleep technologist examinations that will be administered by the ABSM. Comprehensive, high quality and standardized education leading to certification for the sleep technology profession remains an important goal for the AASM, AAST and the ABSM.

In 2011 the ABSM convened the Sleep Technologist Examination Committee to develop examinations that certify (1) that successful candidates are prepared to begin training for a career in Sleep Technology and (2) at the conclusion of the training are qualified to serve as Sleep Technologists. These examinations are the Certified Sleep Technologist Trainee Examination and the Sleep Technologist Registry Examination.

A major goal of the ABSM is to make the examinations relevant for all stakeholders, and a broad representation of stakeholders is included in the examination process. The Sleep Technologist Examination Committee is composed of senior members in the fields of Sleep Technology and Sleep Medicine. An Advisory Committee reviews the content of the examination and the statistical analyses used to determine cut points and retention of questions. The Advisory Committee includes trainees, active Sleep Technologists, Sleep Technology educators, employers of Sleep Technologists, Sleep Medicine specialists and patient representation. The examination process is constantly under review in order to insure a fair and balanced outcome.

Stakeholders are surveyed on a regular basis to determine the content of the examination. This insures that the tests cover content necessary for the appropriate performance of Sleep Technology. The unique perspectives of Sleep Technologists, employers, Sleep Medicine specialists and patients are included in the process.

The ABSM seeks to foster standardized education in Sleep Technology. Although no specific pathway is endorsed, training should be rigorous and comprehensive. Learning domains should include knowledge, competence, analysis and communication. A list of content areas for the examination is provided in this handbook, and should be used as a guide in preparation for the examination. Sample questions are also included.

Procedures have been developed to insure the fairness of requirements for eligibility and the conduct of the examination. An appeals process is in place for candidates who feel that they have not been treated appropriately. The ABSM publishes the names of successful candidates. All other information is kept in strict confidentiality.

Requests for information about the examination, the application process and the activities of the ABSM should be directed to the national office:

American Board of Sleep Medicine
Sleep Technologist Examination Committee
2510 N. Frontage Road
Darien, IL 60561
E-mail: absm@absm.org
PH: 630.737.9701 | FAX: 630.737.9790
WEB SITE: www.absm.org

II. VISION

The ABSM was established to encourage the study, improve the practice, elevate the standards of Sleep Medicine, and establish a registry of practitioners of Sleep Technology.

III. MISSION

The mission of the Sleep Technologist Examination Committee is to recognize individuals qualified in the practice of sleep technology. The modalities of interest include thinking, doing, analyzing and communicating. In support of this mission the Committee adopts and upholds standards for education in sleep technology; adopts and upholds standards of practice; and develops and administers examinations that assess the knowledge and skills underlying sleep technology. The Committee provides an entry level examination to recognize trainees in the

field, a registry examination that recognizes qualification to practice Sleep Technology and maintenance of registration status based on continuing education requirements.

IV. STATEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATION AND COMPLIANCE WITH ALL LAWS

The ABSM prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program.

V. CONFIDENTIALITY

All of the information you send to the ABSM is strictly confidential. This includes candidate contact and financial information. Candidate information is maintained in an electronic data base and only ABSM staff will have access to the information. Information about your training and accomplishments will be used by a Task Force of the Sleep Technologist Examination Committee to determine your eligibility to take the examination. Contact information will be used to inform you of the outcome of the examination. If you are successful in obtaining certification as a Registered Sleep Technologist, you will be asked to inform the ABSM of any changes to your information as they occur. This will allow us to contact you with information about maintenance of registry status, requirements for continuing education and updates to any of the ABSM policies and procedures that may be relevant to you.

The ABSM will maintain a list of successful candidates and will provide this information to potential employers and state licensing boards to verify your status. The ABSM will publish information about pass rates and number of active successful candidates that will be available to the public. Upon request, the ABSM will provide training institutions and credentialing associations with information about the number of students who have taken and who successfully complete the examination. This will be summary data and will not include the names of specific candidates.

If you have questions about the confidentiality policies or procedures of the ABSM please contact us using the information provided above.

EXAMINATION REQUIREMENTS

I. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Irrespective of pathway, all candidates for the Sleep Technologist Registry Examination must have completed a program of secondary education (you must have a high school diploma) and must have current Adult and Pediatric Basic Life Support (cardio-pulmonary resuscitation) certification.

A. GRADUATES OF CAAHEP OR COARC PROGRAMS

Candidates who have successfully completed training in polysomnography in a program accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP; these programs include CoA PSG and CoA END with PSG add-on) or a Commission on Accreditation for Respiratory Care (CoARC) program with the polysomnography specialty option are eligible to sit for the Sleep Technologist Registry Examination.

B. A-STEP INTRODUCTORY PROGRAM AND MODULES WITH ON-THE-JOB TRAINING

Candidates who have completed the 80 hour Accredited Sleep Technology Education Program (A-STEP) Introductory Program, the full series of A-STEP training modules and have exceeded a minimum experience in an AASM-accredited sleep center are eligible to take the examination.

Minimum experience in an AASM-accredited sleep center includes:

1. Independent performance of 50 overnight sleep studies
2. Of the 50 overnight sleep studies, a minimum of 20 must include CPAP titration
3. Performance of one Multiple Sleep Latency Test

The experience must be obtained over a minimum of 6 months and a maximum of 3 years.

Candidates must also attain a score of 85% or higher on the ABSM Sleep Scoring Proficiency Examination or reach the minimum standard for 2 months of the inter-scorer reliability program of an AASM-accredited sleep disorders center.

A Board-certified Sleep Specialist or the Medical Director of an AASM-accredited sleep center must certify completion of the required experience in writing using the form provided in the application. The ABSM recommends that candidates maintain a log to monitor their progress in attaining the necessary experience.

The Certified Polysomnographic Technician (CPSGT) certificate awarded by the Board of Registered Polysomnographic Technologists (BRPT) is an acceptable alternative to the Accredited Sleep Technologist Education Program (A-STEP) Introductory Course.

The ABSM recognizes that some states have regulations prohibiting sleep technicians and technologists from performing continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) titration. Therefore, the eligibility criterion requiring the independent performance of a minimum of 20 CPAP titrations during overnight sleep studies will be waived for candidates in those states.

C. HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

Candidates who currently hold one of the following health professional credentials and exceed a minimum experience in an AASM-accredited sleep center are eligible to take the examination:

1. Medical degree (MD or DO) valid in the United States
2. Doctoral level degree (PhD or PsyD) in a health-related discipline
3. Physician Assistants (PAs)
4. Nursing degree (RN or LPN)

5. Allied health credential including Respiratory Care (RRT, CRT), Electroneurodiagnostics (R.EEG.T., R. E.P.T, CNIM); Paramedic (EMT-P); or Radiology (RT, RT(R), RT(CT), RT(BD))

Minimum experience in an AASM-accredited sleep center includes:

1. Independent performance of 25 overnight sleep studies
2. Of the 25 overnight sleep studies, a minimum of 10 must include CPAP titration
3. Performance of one Multiple Sleep Latency Test
4. Participation in one quarter (3 months) of the center's inter-scorer reliability meeting the center's minimal standards for concordance with the gold standard scorer

The experience must be obtained over a minimum of 3 months and a maximum of 2 years. Candidates must also attain a score of 85% or higher on the AASM Sleep Scoring Proficiency Examination or reach the minimum standard for 2 months of the inter-scorer reliability program of an AASM-accredited sleep disorders center.

A Board-certified Sleep Specialist or the Medical Director of the AASM-accredited sleep center must certify completion of the required experience in writing using the form provided in the application. A candidate may not certify their own experience. The AASM recommends that candidates maintain a log to monitor their progress in attaining the necessary experience.

D. REGISTERED POLYSOMNOGRAPHIC TECHNOLOGISTS

Candidates who are currently Registered Polysomnographic Technologists™ (RPSGTs) and are a high school graduate are eligible to take the examination.

The AASM reminds all practicing sleep technologists who have passed the BRPT examination prior to Dec. 31, 2011 – and are a Registered Polysomnographic Technologist (RPSGT) in good standing – that you are eligible to apply for equivalency status and receive the Registered Sleep Technologist (RST) certification without taking the AASM Sleep Technologist Registry Examination. Join hundreds of other RPSGTs who have already applied to receive the RST certificate and submit your application to the AASM before March 31, 2012.

II. APPLICATION

Candidates for the Sleep Technologist Registry Examination must meet the eligibility requirements at the time that they submit their application. The application consists of an attestation statement, contact information and demonstration of meeting the eligibility requirements. Supporting material must include copies of a high school diploma or equivalent and a current BLS certification card.

Candidates applying through the CAAHEP pathway (A) must provide evidence of graduation from a polysomnographic training program accredited by CAAHEP or CoARC. Official transcripts are required to meet this requirement.

Candidates applying through the A-STEP pathway (B) must provide either an official transcript or letter from the program director of the introductory course. The AASM will verify completion of the A-STEP training modules. Candidates must provide evidence of completing the minimum

experience requirements in the form of a letter signed by the director of the AASM-accredited sleep center in which they obtained the experience. The letter must include the number of studies performed, the results of the inter-scorer reliability process and the dates during which the candidate gained the required experience.

Health professional candidates (pathway C) must provide evidence of their degree and/or licensure and evidence of completing the minimum experience requirements in the form of a letter signed by the Board Certified Sleep Specialist or Medical Director of the AASM-accredited sleep center in which they obtained the experience. The letter must include the number of studies performed, the results of the inter-scorer reliability process and the dates during which the candidate gained the required experience. A Board Certified Sleep Specialist or Director of an AASM-accredited sleep center may not certify his or her own experience.

Candidates with the RPSGT credential (pathway D) must provide copies of the RPSGT™ certificate.

Candidates applying through pathway B or C must provide evidence of clinical experience.

The attestation statement must be signed by the candidate at the time of the application. The statement will provide assurance that the information provided in the application is true and that the successful candidate will abide by the ABSM Standards of Conduct.

The application will be reviewed by the Sleep Technologist Examination Committee to determine if the candidate meets the eligibility requirements. Candidates will be informed of the determination of the Committee by e-mail and by regular mail. Candidates are able to appeal a negative determination in writing to the Board of Directors of the ABSM within 30 days of receipt of the determination. The decision of the Board of Directors will be final.

A. APPLICATION PROCEDURE

The fee for the ABSM Registry Examination is \$250.00

Applications may be obtained using one of the following methods:

By Mail:

American Board of Sleep Medicine
Sleep Technologist Examination Committee
2510 N. Frontage Road
Darien, IL 60561

By Telephone: 630.737.9700

From Our Web Site: www.absm.org

By E-mail: absm@absm.org

Applications must be received in the ABSM National Office by midnight Monday, July 2, 2012. **Applications received later than July 2, 2012 will not be accepted.** No exceptions will be made to this requirement.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the ABSM receives all application and supporting materials, including the applicant evaluation form, postmarked on or before July 2,

2012. All licensing and certification requirements must be satisfied and training must be completed by July 2, 2012.

B. INCOMPLETE APPLICATIONS

A complete application is defined as a fully-completed application form, all supporting documentation as requested on the application and the examination fee of \$250.00. An application postmarked on or before July 2, 2012 that is missing any component is considered an incomplete application, and a nonrefundable late fee of \$50.00 must be paid if the application is to remain active. Applicants will be notified if their applications are not complete. **Completeness of an application cannot be verified by telephone; please do not call the national office for this information.**

The applicant whose application is incomplete must ensure all parts of the application have been submitted and are postmarked on or before July 23, 2012. **ANY APPLICATION THAT REMAINS INCOMPLETE AS OF JULY 27, 2012 WILL NOT BE INCLUDED IN THE CREDENTIALING PROCESS AND WILL BE REJECTED.**

C. REGISTRY ELIGIBLE

The ABSM does not recognize or use the term “registry eligible” and does not issue statements concerning registration eligibility. The ABSM informs an applicant of admissibility to the examination in writing only when the applicant has an active, approved application on file with the ABSM. The letter informing the candidate of admissibility to the examination may be used to document “acceptance to sit for the examination” in compliance with Standard B-8 of the AASM Standards for Accreditation.

D. REFUNDS AND WITHDRAWALS

If the ABSM does not accept the application for examination, the applicant will be assessed a \$50.00 administrative fee. The remaining \$200.00 from the original examination fee will be refunded to the applicant. If notification of withdrawal from an accepted candidate is received by the ABSM national office at least 4 weeks prior to the examination date, the candidate will be assessed a \$50.00 administrative fee. The remaining \$200.00 from the original examination fee will be refunded to the applicant. A candidate whose notification of withdrawal is received by the ABSM office within 4 weeks of the examination is not entitled to a refund, except when the withdrawal is the result of a documented emergency. The candidate may apply for an emergency late withdrawal by submitting proper documentation of the emergency.

If withdrawal is accepted, the candidate will be assessed a \$50.00 administrative fee. The remaining \$200.00 from the original examination fee will be refunded to the applicant. A withdrawal is defined as not taking an examination during a scheduled administration. If a candidate does not take the examination for 2 scheduled administrations, the candidate’s application will no longer be active. A candidate may only withdraw once from the examination and must take it at the next scheduled administration in order to avoid submitting a new application.

E. APPLICANTS WITH DISABILITIES

The ABSM recognizes that individuals with disabilities may wish to take the examination and will make reasonable accommodations for applicants with verified disabilities. The ABSM supports the intent of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Auxiliary aids (and services) can only be offered if they do not fundamentally alter the measurement of skills or knowledge the examination is intended to test. (Americans with Disabilities Act, Public Law 101-336). Applicants who request accommodations due to a disability must advise the ABSM in writing no later than August 15, 2011. The applicant must submit appropriate documentation of the disability and a description of previous accommodations provided during other examinations. If the ABSM deems it necessary, an independent medical assessment may be requested at the expense of the ABSM.

DETAILS OF THE EXAMINATION

A. EXAMINATION PROCESS

The ABSM Examination is a multiple choice examination. The examination tests the candidate's general body of knowledge in sleep technology. It covers sleep-related domains of practice including:

- Gathering and analyzing patient information
- Testing preparation procedures
- Sleep study procedures
- Sleep study record scoring
- Service management and professional issues

Polysomnograms, MSLTs, MWTs, and other laboratory information may appear on the examination. Successful completion of this examination leads to certification as a Registered Sleep Technologist.

A candidate who fails the examination may retake it within 2 years. After 2 years a candidate must submit a new application, including all required documentation. The individual must meet the eligibility requirements that are in effect at the time of reapplication.

B. EXAMINATION COMPOSITION

Members of the Examination Committee and other individuals certified by the ABSM prepare all examination items. All items undergo extensive review before being included in the examination. References to diagnostic classification refer to the terminology established by the current *International Classification of Sleep Disorders, 2nd Edition*, published by the American Academy of Sleep Medicine in 2005. References to sleep studies refer to the recommendations of the *AASM Manual for the Scoring of Sleep and Associated Events: Rules, Terminology and Technical Specifications*, published by the American Academy of Sleep Medicine in 2007.

C. ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Recording devices, cellular phones, cameras, pagers, personal digital assistants, and other electronic equipment are not permitted in the examination room. Any candidate found in possession of such devices may be disqualified without further consideration or refund.

D. SCORING

All scoring is performed without knowledge of the candidate's identity, and all decisions concerning examination scoring are made before the matching of names and candidate code numbers. Once the code is broken, no decisions or individual scores are changed, with the exception of a granted appeal.

E. EXAMINATION RESULTS

The results of the examination are mailed to candidates 2 to 3 months after the examination. **Exam results cannot be verified by telephone; please do not call the national office for this information.**

F. APPEAL PROCEDURE

Within 30 days of the date of the notification letter informing the candidate of a negative determination (rejection of credentials or failure of the examination), the candidate may appeal by complying with the following procedure: The individual may request a review of the negative determination by submitting a written explanation of the reason for refuting the negative determination and a nonrefundable appeal fee of \$50.00. All materials must be submitted in writing to the American Board of Sleep Medicine, 2510 N. Frontage Road, Darien, IL 60561. All appeals are carefully reviewed with final decisions made by the ABSM Board of Directors.

G. CONTENT AREAS

A. STUDY PERFORMANCE (45% TOTAL):

1. Electrode application (10%)
2. Interventions (8%)
3. Patient care (5%)
4. Artifact recognition (5%)
5. Diagnostic protocols (5%)
6. Instrumentation and signal processing (5%)
7. Sleep center emergencies (4%)
8. Post-study activities (3%)

B. RECORD SCORING (30%):

1. Sleep staging (8%)
2. Waveform recognition (6%)
3. Respiratory event scoring (6%)
4. Movement scoring (4%)
5. Cardiac event scoring (3%)
6. Pediatric scoring (3%)

C. UNDERSTANDING SLEEP DISORDERS (25%):

1. Sleep related breathing disorders (10%)
2. Sleep related movement disorders (5%)
3. Hypersomnias (3%)
4. Pediatric sleep disorders (3%)
5. Insomnia (2%)
6. Parasomnias (2%)

SLEEP TECHNOLOGIST REGISTRATION

A candidate who successfully completes the Sleep Technologist examination will be designated as a Registered Sleep Technologist (RST) and issued a certificate. The ABSM Registered Sleep Technologist certificate will be valid for 5 years after the date of issue. The ABSM will determine qualifications for maintenance of registry status, which will include evidence of continuing education.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

All questions on the examinations will be multiple choice “Type A” questions. Record fragments will be used.

Sample Question #1: The right electro-oculogram electrode is placed:

- A. At the nasion
- B. 1 cm above the right outer canthus
- C. Immediately to the right of the zygomatic arch
- D. 2 cm below the left outer canthus
- E. On the right mastoid bone

(Answer = B)

Sample Question #2: A flattened nasal pressure signal is thought to indicate:

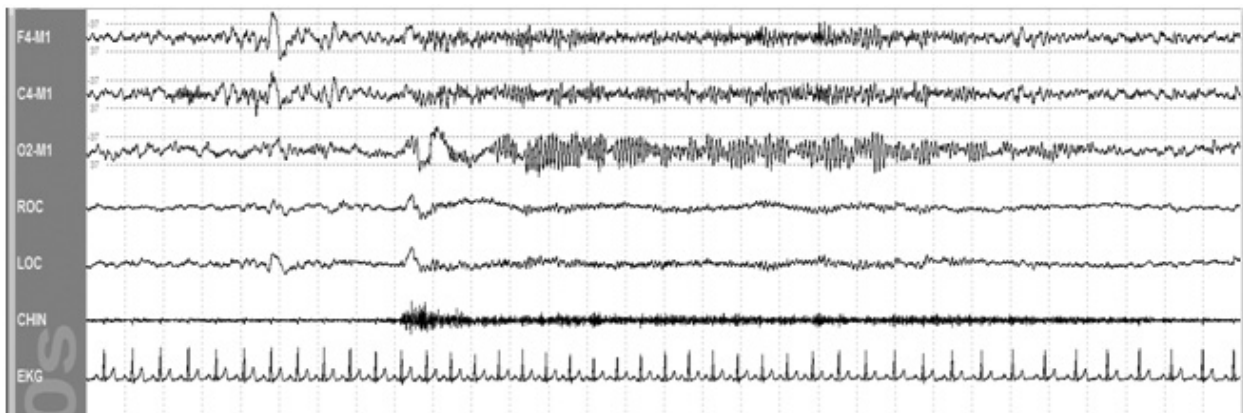
- A. A seizure disorder
- B. A deviated nasal septum
- C. Sensor failure
- D. Air flow limitation
- E. Ideal CPAP titration

(Answer = D)

Sample Question #3: The previous epoch was scored as Stage N2. The 30 second record fragment shown below should be scored as:

- A. W
- B. N1
- C. N2
- D. N3
- E. R

(Answer = A)



Inquiries to:

American Board of Sleep Medicine
Sleep Technologist Examination Committee
2510 N. Frontage Road
Darien, IL 60561
E-mail: absm@absm.org
PH: 630.737.9701 | FAX: 630.737.9790
WEB SITE: www.absm.org