

Gastroenterology

Certification Examination Blueprint

Purpose of the exam

The exam is designed to evaluate the knowledge, diagnostic reasoning, and clinical judgment skills expected of the certified gastroenterologist in the broad domain of the discipline. The ability to make appropriate diagnostic and management decisions that have important consequences for patients will be assessed. The exam may require recognition of common as well as rare clinical problems for which patients may consult a certified gastroenterologist.

Exam content

Exam content is determined by a pre-established blueprint, or table of specifications. The blueprint is developed by ABIM and is reviewed annually and updated as needed for currency. Trainees, training program directors, and certified practitioners in the discipline are surveyed periodically to provide feedback and inform the blueprinting process.

The primary medical content categories of the blueprint are shown below, with the percentage assigned to each for a typical exam:

Medical Content Category	% of Exam
Esophagus	11%
Stomach and Duodenum	15%
Liver	25%
Biliary Tract	10%
Pancreas	11%
Small Intestine	10%
Colon	18%
	100%

Exam questions in the content areas below may also address topics in endoscopy, genetic conditions, medication management and risks, nutritional support, and quality benchmarking.

Exam format

The exam is composed of multiple-choice questions with a single best answer, predominantly describing patient scenarios. Questions ask about the work done (that is, tasks performed) by physicians in the course of practice:

- Making a diagnosis
- Ordering and interpreting results of tests
- Recommending treatment or other patient care
- Assessing risk, determining prognosis, and applying principles from epidemiologic studies
- Understanding the underlying pathophysiology of disease and basic science knowledge applicable to patient care

Clinical information presented may include patient photographs, imaging studies, electrocardiograms, endoscopic video, and other media to illustrate relevant patient findings.

A tutorial including examples of ABIM exam question format can be found at <http://www.abim.org/certification/exam-information/gastroenterology/exam-tutorial.aspx>.

The blueprint can be expanded for additional detail as shown below. Each of the medical content categories is listed there, and below each major category are the content subsections and specific topics that *may* appear in the exam. Please note: actual exam content may vary.

Esophagus	11% of Exam
Anatomy, development, and physiology	<2%
Anatomic abnormalities	
Esophageal physiology	
Symptoms and clinical presentation	<2%
Dysphagia	
Heartburn	
Chest pain	
Globus sensation	
Diseases and disorders	9%
Oropharyngeal disorders	
Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD)	
Esophageal motility and functional disorders	
Barrett's esophagus	
Foreign body and food impaction	

- Esophageal injury
- Esophageal infections
- Neoplasms of the esophagus
 - Benign
 - Malignant
- Esophageal ulcerations
- Eosinophilic esophagitis
- Esophageal varices
- Systemic disorders involving the esophagus

Stomach and Duodenum	15% of Exam
Anatomy, development, and physiology	<2%
Anatomic abnormalities	
Physiology of the stomach and duodenum	
Symptoms and clinical presentation	3%
Upper gastrointestinal bleeding	
Dyspepsia and upper abdominal pain	
Nausea and vomiting	
Diseases and disorders	10.5%
Gastric mucosal disorders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inflammatory Infiltrative 	
Peptic ulcer disease <ul style="list-style-type: none"> H. pylori Medication-induced disease 	
Neoplasms of the stomach and duodenum <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benign Malignant 	
Gastric motility and functional disorders	
Post-surgical conditions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bariatric surgery Surgery for benign disease Surgery for malignant disease 	

Liver	25% of Exam
Anatomy, development, and physiology	2.5%
Anatomic abnormalities	
Hepatic physiology	

Symptoms and clinical presentation	2.5%
Abnormal liver chemistries	
Jaundice	
Portal hypertension	
Varices	
Ascites and hepatic hydrothorax	
Hepatorenal syndrome	
Portosystemic encephalopathy	
Pulmonary complications	
Pruritus	
Diseases and disorders	20%
Inherited disorders	
Iron overload	
Wilson's disease	
Alpha-one antitrypsin deficiency	
Cystic fibrosis	
Sickle cell hepatopathy	
Cholestatic liver diseases	
Primary biliary cirrhosis	
Primary sclerosing cholangitis	
Secondary biliary cirrhosis	
Viral hepatitis	
Hepatitis A	
Hepatitis B	
Acute hepatitis B	
Chronic hepatitis B	
Hepatitis C	
Acute hepatitis C	
Chronic hepatitis C	
Delta hepatitis	
Hepatitis E	
Autoimmune hepatitis	
Vascular liver disease	
Alcoholic liver disease	
Nonalcoholic fatty liver disease	
Drug-induced liver disease	
Pregnancy-related liver disease	
Acute liver failure	
Neoplasms of the liver	
Benign	
Malignant	

- Liver abscess
- Hepatic manifestations of systemic disease
- Liver transplantation
 - Indications and complications
- Surgical considerations for patients who have liver disease
- Extrahepatic manifestations in patients who have liver disease

Biliary Tract	10% of Exam
Anatomy, development, and physiology	<2%
Anatomic abnormalities	
Physiology of the biliary tract	
Symptoms and clinical presentation	<2%
Obstructive jaundice	
Right upper quadrant pain	
Hemobilia	
Diseases and disorders	8%
Gallstone disease	
Gallbladder diseases	
Bile duct diseases	
Biliary infections	
Neoplasms of the biliary tract <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benign Malignant 	
Biliary motility and functional disorders	

Pancreas	11% of Exam
Anatomy, development, and physiology	<2%
Anatomic abnormalities	
Physiology of the pancreas	
Symptoms and clinical presentation	<2%
Malabsorption	
Ascites	
Duct disruptions	
Diseases and disorders	8%
Acute pancreatitis	
Chronic pancreatitis	
Neoplasms of the pancreas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benign Malignant 	

Small Intestine	10% of Exam
Anatomy, development, and physiology	2%
Congenital anomalies	
Acquired structural anomalies	
Digestion, absorption, and malabsorption	
Mechanical obstruction and ileus	
Symptoms and clinical presentation	<2%
Diarrhea	
Acute abdominal pain	
Chronic abdominal pain	
Bleeding from small intestinal source	
Abdominal distention, bloating, and gas	
Diseases and disorders	7%
Small bowel motility and functional disorders	
Small bowel infections	
Small bowel injury	
Immunologic and inflammatory disorders of the gut	
Eosinophilic gastroenteritis	
Crohn's disease of the small bowel	
Complications	
Extra-intestinal manifestations	
Celiac disease	
Neoplasms of the small bowel	
Benign	
Malignant	
Vascular disorders of the small bowel	

Colon	18% of Exam
Anatomy, development, and physiology	<2%
Volvulus and intussusception	
Defecation	
Symptoms and clinical presentation	<2%
Constipation	
Diarrhea	
Fecal incontinence	
Lower gastrointestinal bleeding	
Abdominal pain	

Diseases and disorders

15%

- Colorectal motility and functional disorders
- Colorectal infections
- Colorectal injury
- Inflammatory bowel disease
 - Microscopic colitis
 - Ulcerative colitis
 - Crohn's disease
 - Drug-induced inflammatory bowel disease
- Diverticular disease
 - Hemorrhage
 - Diverticulitis
- Appendicitis
- Neoplasms of the colon and rectum
 - Benign
 - Malignant
- Vascular disorders of the colon and rectum
- Perianal and anorectal disorders
- Post-surgical colorectal conditions

January 2021