

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING RESTRUCTURED NATIONAL BOARD EXAMINATIONS

(Updated: December 16, 2008)

New, restructured National Board examinations will be implemented during 2009-10. Although the restructured exams will have the greatest impact on the Class of 2010, all current and future candidates need to be aware of how they will be affected by the new examinations.

### *Why the examinations are being restructured*

Throughout its history, the National Board has strived to contemporize its exams. Based on recommendations of periodic external and internal assessments, the exams have undergone several major restructurings. The upcoming exam restructuring follows the recommendations of major task force reports for enhancing the clinical relatedness of the exams, and the integration of exam content. The attainment of these objectives is based on changing the current three exam content outlines, which for Parts I and II are discipline- and topic-oriented, to a single 3-Part conditions-based, integrated exam content matrix.

### *How the examinations are being restructured*

**Part I**, renamed “Applied Basic Science” (ABS), will consist of a blend of Basic Science test items (i.e., items of the type used on the 2008 and earlier Basic Science exams), and items used on the current Clinical Science exam. The Clinical Science items shifting to ABS are related to epidemiology/history/symptoms/signs, clinical testing, and diagnosis/pathophysiology. Most ABS items will have the requirement of referencing a clinical condition, either explicitly or implicitly. The ABS examination will be four sessions in length, each session 3½ hours long containing 125 items, for a total of 500 items.

Student candidates must be in the spring of their third academic year to take the new Part I exam. There will be three opportunities to sit for Part I prior to graduation.

**Part II**, renamed “Patient Assessment and Management” (PAM), will be a lengthened version of the PAM section of current Part III. PAM will be shifted and redesigned to comprise all of new Part II, and will no longer be a component of Part III. As the new Part II exam, PAM will be lengthened to two sessions. This represents an increase from the current single session section within current Part III, but a decrease from the 3-session format of the current Part II exam. Each PAM session will be 3½ hours in length, and will consist of 30 cases. The cases will be of variable length and unlike the current version of PAM, some cases will include items relating to the correlation of basic science principles, Public Health, Legal and Ethical issues, and/or Treatment and Management of Ocular Disease (TMOD). A TMOD breakout score and pass-fail decision will be reported for state boards requirements. Beginning in 2010, the stand-alone version of TMOD will no longer be administered; any candidate who needs a TMOD score will be required to sit for the PAM exam.

The existing student eligibility requirements will remain the same for new Part II; that is, being midway through the fourth academic year. Therefore, the targeted administration (i.e., the administration that most students take when they become eligible) will remain in December. There will continue to be two opportunities to take Part II prior to graduation.

**Part III**, renamed “Clinical Skills,” will be a lengthened version of the current Clinical Skills section of current Part III. This performance test will comprise Part III in its entirety. The new Part III Clinical Skills will remain a single session exam; however, it will be lengthened in assessment time and in the number of skills assessed. The existing student eligibility requirements for new Part III will remain the same; that is, being near the end of the fourth academic year, with the targeted administration remaining in the spring. This will continue to be the only opportunity to take Part III prior to graduation.

### *Other Issues*

The new, restructured exams are being implemented during a 2-year period (2009-10) to facilitate the transition. The Class of 2009 will have the opportunity to take and pass all components of National Board exams in their current format prior to graduation. The Class of 2010 will take all components of the “Boards” in their new format. The current and restructured forms of the tests will not be administered concurrently. Current Part I will no longer be administered after 2008. Similarly, current Parts II and III will no longer be administered after 2009 and 2010, respectively. Candidates who have not passed any current exam Part after these respective dates will be required to pass the restructured version of the same Part in order to successfully complete the Boards. For these purposes, the current and restructured version of each respective Part will be considered to be equivalent.

### *Examination Administration Timeline*

The exam administrations for Parts I, II, and III are listed below for 2009-2011, with comments indicating their significance relative to the transition. Questions or concerns regarding the restructured exams or the program transition should be directed to the National Board by phone (1.800.969.EXAM) or email (nbeo@optometry.org).

#### **Part I**

Applied Basic Science: 03/2009  
Applied Basic Science: 08/2009  
Applied Basic Science: 03/2010  
Applied Basic Science: 08/2010  
Applied Basic Science: 03/2011  
Applied Basic Science: 08/2011

#### **Comments**

first targeted administration of new Part I (Class of 2010)  
targeted administration for Class of 2011  
targeted administration for Class of 2012

#### **Part II**

Clinical Science: 04/2009  
Patient Assessment & Management: 12/2009  
Patient Assessment & Management: 04/2010  
Patient Assessment & Management: 12/2010  
Patient Assessment & Management: 04/2011  
Patient Assessment & Management: 12/2011

#### **Comments**

last administration of current Part II  
first targeted administration of new Part II (Class of 2010)  
targeted administration for Class of 2011  
targeted administration for Class of 2012

#### **Part III**

Patient Care: 04/2009  
Patient Care: 08/2009  
Clinical Skills: 04/2010  
Clinical Skills: 08/2010  
Clinical Skills: 04/2011  
Clinical Skills: 08/2011

#### **Comments**

targeted administration for Class of 2009  
last administration of current Part III  
first targeted administration of new Part III (Class of 2010)  
targeted administration for Class of 2011