



AMERICAN BOARD  
OF OPTICIANRY



NATIONAL CONTACT  
LENS EXAMINERS

# ABO-NCLE Candidate Handbook

## WHAT ARE ABO AND NCLE

The American Board of Opticianry and the National Contact Lens Examiners, Inc. (ABO-NCLE) is a national, not-for-profit organization which administers voluntary competency certification examinations for dispensing opticians and contact lens technicians.

## NAMES OF EXAMS

The American Board of Opticianry exam is called the National Opticianry Competency Exam (NOCE) and it is for opticians. The National Contact Lens Examiners exam is called the Contact Lens Registry Exam (CLRE), which is for contact lens technicians. When registering for an exam, candidates need to use care in making sure that they register for the correct exam.

## MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of the American Board of Opticianry and the National Contact Lens examinations is to identify qualified ophthalmic dispensers at various levels of proficiency for the consumer and for the ophthalmic community by (1) certifying those who pass the professionally developed examination(s) as "certified opticians" and/or "certified contact lens technicians" and (2) requiring approved continuing education for recertification.

## NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

ABO-NCLE endorses and adheres to the principles of equal opportunity. ABO-NCLE does not discriminate against any individual because of age, disability, gender, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation or veteran status.

## ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible to take the NOCE and/or CLRE, a candidate must (1) be at least 18 years old, and (2) have a high school diploma or GED. If the state licensing board where the candidate works has regulations that are different than ABO-NCLE's, the state requirement supersedes those of ABO-NCLE.

Certification, through administration of the NOCE and/or CLRE is an assessment of each candidate's knowledge base relative to the job functions and responsibilities of a typical optician and/or contact lens fitter/technician. Please note that considerations related to each candidate's background including but not limited to criminal history, are deferred to prospective employers and, where applicable, state licensing boards for individual determination.



## OVERVIEW OF THE NOCE AND CLRE

### General Information

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Eligibility                                   | Candidates must be 18 years of age or older and high school degree or GED                |
| Target group                                  | Opticians and Contact Lens Technicians who work in any type of practice site in the U.S. |
| Test sites                                    | More than 300 PSI Test Centers   |
| Number of times per year that exam is offered | Twice a year, in May and November  |
| Deadline to change exam time or location      | 24 business hours  |
| Exam Format                                   | Secure computer-based exam   |
| Number of questions                           | Up to 125 multiple-choice questions. 15 are pretested for use on future exams.           |
| Length of exam                                | 2 hours  |

### Quality Assurance

|   |                      |
|---|----------------------|
| Exam based on practice analysis   | YES – conducted 2013 |
| Advice/oversight by panel of experts  | YES                  |
| Committed to following Standards of Education and Psychological Testing published by the American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association and the National Council on Measurement in Education | YES                  |
| Exam items approved by panel with wide range of experience in the field   | YES                  |
| All exam items pretested  | YES                  |
| Complete item analysis conducted for all exams  | YES                  |

### Exam Security

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Eligibility verified at time of exam   | Pre-registration required; approved government issues photo identification must be shown at test center.   |
| Procedure for rotating and retiring items  | YES  |
| Procedure for equating multiple versions of the exam to assure that they present equal challenge to candidates | YES  |
| Proctors trained to follow procedures and to handle emergency situations                                       | YES  |
| Stringent computer encryption programming  | YES  |
| Exams sent to site before the day of the exam  | No; the exam, sent in a secure, encrypted format is downloaded at the center only after the candidate checks in and the identification is verified |
| Extra printed exams must be accounted for and destroyed if not used.   | No, this is not necessary because the exam is computer-generated only.   |



Services for Candidates and Others

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|--|--|
| Candidates with disabilities accommodated in compliance with ADA | YES  |
| Website for exam information                                     | www.abo-ncle.org                                   |
| Exam results reported to candidates                              | 4-6 weeks via email                                |
| Exam registration/cancellation                                   | Only the candidate can register and/or cancel exam |

THE EXAMINATIONS

The two-hour multiple-choice examinations are written by groups of certified opticians and contact lens fitters/technicians with assistance from the testing service, Alpine. The purposes of the NOCE and CLRE are to evaluate the knowledge and skills associated with the performance of tasks required for the professional practice of opticianry and/or contact lens fitting.

The examinations are developed for opticians and contact lens technicians from all practice settings in the United States. They are based on hands-on knowledge from many different optical situations.

There is nothing tricky about the examination. Questions are created to test the ability of a candidate to recall knowledge and to apply that knowledge to specific dispensing functions. Exam questions fall into three general types: 1) those that require immediate recognition of the correct response from the four choices; 2) those that require understanding and application of the information presented to answer the question; and 3) those that require candidates to understand and reorganize material presented to make the correct choice.

EXAM REGISTRATION

- A. **Completion of the registration form.** The NOCE and CLRE are offered at over 300 testing centers twice a year – in May and in November. Candidates must register on the ABO-NCLE website (<http://abo-ncle.org>.) The locations of the centers can be found on <http://candidate.psiexams.com>. It is best to make appointments for the day and time promptly as test centers fill quickly and seating is on a first-come, first-served basis.
- B. **Information Required.** Candidates must give their full legal name, address, telephone numbers, email address and demographic information. Candidates should also indicate whether they qualify for special accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act. **Giving an email address and phone number are mandatory.**
- C. **Payment.** The exams cost \$225 each and are payable by credit card at the time the candidate registers online. There is also a late fee of \$75 per exam that must be paid if the registration is not completed by the registration deadline, but is completed by the late deadline date.
- D. **Cancellation of Scheduled Exams. Notification by Candidate.** Candidates who are unable to take the exams after registration must notify PSI and ABO-NCLE about transferring the exam. If the exam has been scheduled you must call PSI and ABO-NCLE at least 24 business hours in advance of that appointment. There are NO refunds, candidates can pay a \$50 transfer fee by the end of the testing window, and the registration will be moved to the next testing session. If an exam and/or appointment is NOT cancelled, the exam registration fee will be forfeited. Cancellation notices will only be accepted from the candidate. Employers, family members or other individuals may not request a cancellation on behalf of candidates.



E. **Cancellation by PSI.** Testing centers may close without notice in the case of inclement weather, a state of emergency or other unforeseen events. In this case, the candidate will be allowed to reschedule at a convenient time and location with the exam fee credited to the future exam appointment. Candidates should verify that the center is open by calling directly before the appointment time.

F. **F. Compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.**

(1) General policy. Candidates with documented disabilities, reading disabilities, visual and/or hearing impairment, or other physical or mental disabilities, will be given special accommodations upon request, in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

(2) Procedures for Requesting Special Accommodations. Candidates who have a documented disability may submit a Special Arrangements form along with the necessary supporting documentation. Accommodations will be granted in accordance with ADA. Reasonable accommodations will be provided to qualified candidates who have a documented disability to the extent that such accommodations do not fundamentally alter the exam or create an unfair advantage. Examinations will NOT be translated into languages other than English, and interpreters or language dictionaries will not be permitted to assist with translation. English as a second language is not considered a disability under ADA and therefore does not qualify a candidate for special accommodation.

## NOCE CONTENT OUTLINE AND TEST SPECIFICATIONS

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| <b>I. Ophthalmic Optics</b>   | <b>34%</b> |
| Terminology   |            |
| Prescriptions   |            |
| Lens Characteristics  |            |
| Lens Powers and Formulas  |            |
| Multifocals   |            |
| Lens Materials  |            |
| Prism   |            |
| <b>II. Ocular Anatomy, Physiology and Pathology</b>                                 | <b>7%</b>  |
| Structure of the Eye and Function   |            |
| Refractive Errors   |            |
| <b>III. Ophthalmic Products</b>   | <b>23%</b> |
| Frames  |            |
| Lenses  |            |
| Applying Product Knowledge  |            |
| Recognizing Specific Product Applicability with Regard to Patients' Needs and Wants |            |
| Verifying Frame and Lens Parameters and Other Physical Characteristics              |            |
| <b>IV. Instrumentation</b>  | <b>16%</b> |
| Use of Lens Power Measuring Devices   |            |
| Select Ophthalmic Tools, Instruments and Equipment                                  |            |
| Use and Maintain Ophthalmic Tools, Instruments and Equipment                        |            |
| <b>V. Dispensing Procedures</b>   | <b>15%</b> |
| Visual Needs for Lifestyle and Occupational Activities                              |            |
| Fitting, Adjusting, Measuring and Verification                                      |            |
| Patient Interaction   |            |



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**VI. Laws, Regulations and Standards** **5%**

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**CLRE CONTENT OUTLINE AND TEST SPECIFICATIONS**

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**I. Ocular, Anatomy, Physiology and Pathology** **10%**

Adnexa, Anterior, Posterior Segments  
Drugs and Diseases/Viruses Affecting Contact Lens Wear  
Contact Lens Related Conditions and Pathology

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**II. Refractive Errors** **8%**

Ametropias and Optical Conditions Related to Contact Lenses  
Terminology and Principles of Optics Related to Contact Lenses

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**III. Instrumentation for Measurement and Observation** **16%**

Selecting and Using Appropriate Instruments and Tests for Evaluation and Modification Procedures  
Interpreting Data Collected Through Use of Instruments, Tests, and Evaluation Procedures

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**IV. Prefitting** **14%**

Collecting and Analyzing the Data Obtained by Using Instrumentation and Diagnostic Aids  
Converting Spectacle Data into Contact Lens Data including Vertex Compensation and Spherical Equivalent  
Evaluating the Relationship Between the Corneal Readings and the Refractive Error to Identify the Possible Need to Specialty Materials/Designs

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**V. Diagnostic Fitting** **18%**

Identifying Defects of Contact Lens Material or Design  
Inserting, Removing, Manipulating and Caring for Diagnostic Contact Lens  
Identifying the Fitting Characteristics and Visual Performance of the Contact Lens and Refining Lens Parameters to Obtain an Optimal Fit  
Selecting Initial Diagnostic Lenses

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**VI. Dispensing** **10%**

Wearing Schedules  
Care Systems  
Patient Handling

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**VII. Follow-Up** **19%**

Subjective Findings  
Objective Findings  
Assessment: Assessing or Verifying Patients' Subjective Responses and Objective Findings to Determine if Desired Results Have Been Attained  
Plan: Establishing Follow-Up Protocol  
Identifying Normal and Abnormal Symptoms  
Maintaining Patient Records

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**VIII. Regulatory** **5%**

Administrative  
Standards  
Legal



## COMPUTER-BASED EXAMINATION DETAILS

**The exams are offered in computer-based format. Key points concerning computer-based examinations are as follows:**

Extensive familiarity with computers is not required, but use of a computer keyboard and mouse should be within the experience of all candidates.

On the exam day there will be a brief orientation/tutorial prior to starting the exam, allowing candidates to familiarize themselves with the exam process.

The proctors at the exam sites are not expected to provide detailed assistance to candidates. It is not their responsibility to provide assistance on things such as navigating through the exam or resolving any misjudgments made by the candidate.

Candidates need to carefully read the on-screen messages in order to respond correctly.

Computer-based testing options include the ability to navigate forward and backward through the exam, mark items for further review and then review answered, unanswered and marked items.

Items must be reviewed or changed prior to the expiration time. Once an exam is ended, candidates cannot return to the questions. The examination screen contains a timer showing the time remaining for the current exam.

A listing of completed questions, incomplete questions, and marked items can be accessed by clicking the "Review" button.

From the Review screen, candidates are able to:

Click the button "Review All" which returns to question one, click the button "Review Incomplete" which returns to the first incomplete (unanswered) question, click the button "Review Marked" which returns to the first questions you marked for review, or double-click on any of the numbered questions listed which returns you to that specific question.

Candidates may end the exam by clicking "End". Once "End" is clicked, the candidate will not be able to return to any part of the exam. Note: there is a pop-up box to confirm that the candidate truly wishes to end the exam. Clicking "No" will return the candidate to the review screen for further review.

Questions left unanswered will be considered incorrect. When there are unanswered items additional time will not be allowed for completion, nor will there be any refund of fees or credit toward future fees.

## EXAM ADMINISTRATION

Candidates should report promptly to the assigned center at least 30 minutes prior to their appointed time. This allows time for completing the registration process which includes verifying ID. Candidates who arrive 15 minutes or more after their appointment time will be considered tardy and will not be permitted to test and there will be no refund or credit toward future fees.

In the online examination process, the candidate will be asked to attest to having read the Candidate Handbook, including the full Agreement at the end of this booklet, and to agree to be bound by the conditions listed.

During the exam, candidates must comply with directions/instructions of the test proctors. Those who do not follow the instructions may be subjected to dismissal from the center and/or having his/her examination invalidated.



A government-issued valid, non-expired ID containing a photo must be presented at the time of exam check-in. Employee IDs/work badges, school ID and credit cards are NOT acceptable as ID.

Candidates presenting an ID that does not exactly match the name on record or with an expired ID will not be admitted to the exam.

Personal items, such as cell phones, any PDAs, or any other electronic devices, pagers, writing instruments or paper, purses, hats, bags, books are not allowed in the testing room and we strongly encourage candidates to leave them at home or in their cars. Sweaters and jackets must be worn if taken into the exam room.

Candidates are prohibited from communicating with other candidates by any means, verbal or written, for any purpose.

Candidates must conduct themselves in a civil manner at all times when on the premises of the testing center. Exhibiting abusive behavior towards other candidates or staff members may result in criminal prosecution.

Persons not scheduled to take a test are not permitted to wait in the test center.

Candidates will not be permitted to continue testing if they violate any of the provisions or rules established by ABO-NCLE or the test centers.

Occasionally, problems occur during the administration that may impede the examination process. Weather problems, mechanical failures, hardware and software problems, and human errors have the potential of interfering with all or part of the exam process. When such problems occur, ABO-NCLE will review all information at its disposal. An opportunity for re-examination may be offered at the discretion of ABO-NCLE. A re-examination shall be the candidate's sole remedy.

ABO-NCLE shall not be liable for inconvenience, expense or other damage caused by any problems in the administration or scoring of an examination, including the need for retesting or delays in score reporting. In no circumstance will the ABO reduce its standards as a means of correcting a problem in the examination administration.

Candidates who experience incidents or irregularities during the testing must immediately inform the on-site proctors and call PSI directly at 800-367-1565 ext. 6811. If it is determined that an incident or irregularity had the potential of influencing a candidate's performance, the candidate will have two options: (1) to be retested during the next exam administration; or, (2) to have the examination scored.

## EXAMINATION RESULTS

You will get a pass or fail notification. There are no numeric scores given. It takes approximately four to six weeks from the last available test date for candidates to receive their exam results via email. State licensing boards will receive rosters of passing and failing candidates having sat for the exam in their state. If candidates want their results sent to another licensing board, they need to ask ABO-NCLE to do that. A certificate suitable for framing will be mailed to those candidates who pass the exam using the name given when they registered.



## CANDIDATE AGREEMENT

By taking this examination, I hereby acknowledge that I understand the following:

1. That these examinations are the exclusive property of the American Board of Opticianry and National Contact Lens Examiners, Inc.
2. That these examinations and items contained therein are protected by federal copyright law. No part of these examinations may be copied, reproduced in part or whole by any means whatsoever, including memorization.
3. That the theft or attempted theft of any examination material is punishable as a felony.
4. That my participation in any irregularity occurring during this examination, such as giving or obtaining authorized information or aid, as evidenced by observation or subsequent statistical analysis, may be sufficient cause to terminate my participation, invalidate the results of my examination or take other appropriate action.

\_\_\_\_\_ CANDIDATE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE