



American Board of Oral Implantology/Implant Dentistry

## **Preparing for the ABOI Oral Exams**

### **The American Board of Oral Implantology/Implant Dentistry**

The American Board of Oral Implantology/Implant Dentistry is an independent organization that is sponsored by the American Academy of Implant Dentistry. Its mission is to elevate the standards and to advance the science and art of oral implantology/implant dentistry by encouraging its study and improving its practice.

The certificate of the Board is valid for a ten-year period.

The Board does not confer any rights upon its diplomats and does not direct licensed dentists in the conduct of their professional duties.

The cases that you submit to the ABOI for the oral examination will be screened to make sure the criteria for each case is met in accordance with ABOI guidelines. Examiners will then select four (4) of your cases on which you will be questioned. You will not be notified in advance as to which cases are chosen. Fifty (50) percent of your total points are earned during the defense of your cases so take the time to select and document your very best cases.

### **Tips and Guidelines**

#### **Preparing for your Oral Examination:**

Know your personal strengths and weaknesses. Your weaknesses should be the area of your concentration. If oral communication is a problem for you, attack it directly by taking a speech and communication class at a local college.

If you wish to improve yourself, find an established dental implantologist or Diplomate in your area and ask him or her to critically evaluate your presence, appearance and demeanor as well as potentially review the cases you plan on submitting for the ABOI examination.

#### **Implantology Knowledge:**

You must clearly understand your strengths and weakness in advance of your examination. Above all, be well grounded in fundamentals; have a good knowledge of the publications and other educational resources available and allow sufficient study time to prepare for the exam.

#### **The Board Examiner:**

Your Board Examiner is a person much like yourself --- a dentist interested in implantology, which gives you much in common. Your goal is Board certification and you should posture yourself to succeed by attention to detail. Your appearance, behavior and manners should all create a positive impression on your examiner to lead you to your goal.

Understand that your examiner wants you to do well too. It is as unpleasant for an examiner to give a candidate low scores. Seize this initial attitude of goodwill; be sure your first impression does not offend or cause concern on the part of the examiner. Be sure your personal appearance, grooming, language and demeanor don't invoke unspoken prejudices.

### **The Night Before:**

Know what you are going to wear ahead of time. Don't forget to pack an umbrella or rain gear if you will not be staying in the hotel where the exam will be given. Leave a wake-up message, but have your own alarm clock as well.... Remember Murphy's Law! You have probably spent the last few months in intensive study. Leave the evening before your examination open to relax and mentally prepare yourself. Be certain that your material is well organized so you will not be fumbling around for X-rays or notes when presenting your cases.

### **Appropriate Dress:**

Be conservative. In these days of "business casual", it is not always easy to determine the appropriate mode of dress for every occasion. Your Board exam however, is quite simple: It is not a casual occasion. It calls for your best business attire.

### **Getting to the exam site:**

If you are not staying at the location where the exam will be held, plan to go to the site the day before you are scheduled. Time your trip and find the correct meeting room so you don't waste time upon your arrival. If you will have luggage or other items you want to check, identify where you will be able to leave them.

### **Meeting Your Examiner:**

#### **Say Hello!**

Smile! You are not there to be executed. You are in the process of achieving a lifelong ambition. Do not initiate a handshake-if the examiner extends his or her hand, use a firm grip, but don't be a "bone crusher" or a "dead fish." Be polite and respectful at all times.

#### **Body Language**

Be relaxed, don't twiddle your fingers or constantly adjust your clothing. Look directly at the examiner. Remember that it's not the wall that asked you a question. Maintain eye contact. An occasional slow nod indicates that you are listening and attentive. If you need glasses, wear them. If you need reading glasses, put them on only when needed; don't peer out over the glasses at the examiner.

#### **Preparation of Cases**

Have a solid knowledge base of all the cases you have submitted. Develop an in-depth knowledge of each of your cases. Know the natural history of the case well, and know all of the available treatment options. Be prepared to justify your answers.

Do not select a case that is outside of your area of knowledge and interest. Remember that anything you say must be defensible; if you make a remark in passing, you might be asked to back up your comments.

### **The Stress Factor**

Some examiners may create a stressful situation during the exam and follow your reaction. This does not mean they are hostile. Silence is the most common method of increasing your stress and causing you to ramble and enter unsafe areas. Once you've answered the question to the best of your ability, remain silent. If the interviewer fails to respond and time drags on, you might ask if there is any element you should elaborate on further.

### **Answer the question**

If you don't understand the question that's asked, restate it as you understand it and ask if it reflects the examiner's intent. Don't attempt to answer the question until the examiner has finished speaking. Be direct and to the point. State what you know and then stop. If you need a moment to reflect, take it. Maintain eye contact with the examiner while answering. Many people have to practice this, especially in tense situations. Work on this beforehand. Practice speaking into a video camera and see how often your eyes wander while answering imaginary questions.

### **Say Good-bye**

When leaving, rise and shake your examiner's hand. Be sure to maintain good eye contact and smile as you depart.

Do not ask for an evaluation of your performance!

### **Summary:**

While many of the items covered in this paper would seem to be obvious to any educated person, taking your Board exam is a stressful situation, preceded by an intense preoccupation with remembering facts and accumulating knowledge. In this state of anxiety many routine activities are put on the back burner. This short review of general items may help put your mind at ease.