

ABPI Examination Regulations 2020



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The Exam Regulations are reviewed annually.

Approved/reviewed by	
ABPI Director of Examinations September 2020	
Date of next review	September 2021

Introduction:

The examination (the “ABPI Exam”) is administered by the ABPI Director of Examinations. Contact details are given at the end of this document.

The ABPI Exam is conducted in line with the requirements of the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ). The accredited examination is awarded by, and quality assured by, SFJ Awards.

ABPI runs all exam sittings to the SFJ standard Quality Management System. The ABPI Exam is governed by the **ABPI Exam Governance Committee** which is an independent committee.

Exam Regulations

General:

1. All Candidates, at all times, must comply with the examination regulations and guidelines below (and where referred to, specific separate policies). Any Candidate found to be in breach of any of these regulations or failing to adhere to the guidelines below, may become liable to disciplinary action.
2. All Candidates are required to comply in all respects with any instructions issued by the exam proctor before, during and at the conclusion of an exam. Failure to comply with these instructions may result in the termination of the examination and forfeit of examination fees.
3. Examination sittings can be booked by completing the details requested in the secure online application form and will be valid as soon as payment of fees has been processed and a confirmation of registration is emailed to the Candidate.
4. There is a time limit in the ABPI Code of Practice for successfully completing this qualification. Representatives must take an appropriate examination within the first year of employment as a representative and must pass the ABPI Exam within 2 years of starting such employment. Applications for extensions to these periods of time should be made to the **PMCPA** on the following webpage: <https://www.pmcpa.org.uk/training/application-for-an-extension-of-time-to-take-the-representative-examinations/> .
5. Candidates **MUST** set the local time zone in the Questionmark portal before scheduling an appointment. Candidates are responsible for checking that they have booked the correct examination units at the time of booking.
6. If a Candidate cannot make a scheduled exam sitting, it is the responsibility of the Candidate to cancel and reschedule the exam appointment – this can be done from the 'My Assessments' page in the Questionmark portal. A cancelled exam appointment does not count as an attempt. There is no penalty for rescheduling, and a rescheduled appointment

does not count as an attempt. The ABPI Examinations Team cannot reschedule an exam sitting on behalf of the Candidate. Examination fees are forfeited if the Candidate fails to reschedule **more than 30 minutes** in advance of the exam sitting, irrespective of the reason for cancelling and rescheduling.

7. It is the responsibility of the Candidate to ensure in advance of the sitting that QuestionMark Secure has been installed on the computer intended for use in the exam, and that the computer intended for use in the exam will run the QuestionMark secure software. Examinations cannot be taken on tablets, e.g., iPads and Google Chromebooks, and other operating systems, e.g., Linux.
8. Candidates can take an exam wherever it is convenient, however, the exam will be proctored and must be kept secure. It is the responsibility of the Candidate to ensure the testing environment is suitable, this includes ensuring:
 - A well-lit, quiet, private room.
 - All doors to the room are closed.
 - No one else is in the room unless this forms part of a specific Exam Access Arrangement agreed by the Director of the Examination on application, and in advance of the exam appointment – **see ABPI Exam Access Arrangements Policy.**
 - The table or desk is clear of any material, with the exception of one piece of plain A4 paper (blank on both sides) and a pencil.
 - Mobile phones are turned off and stored away out of sight. Possession of any other electronic device that allows information to be stored or internet access at an examination desk is also strictly prohibited – this includes Smart watches.
 - Additional monitors are turned off and turned away from sight of the Candidate.
 - Any desk phone is disconnected or blocked from incoming calls.
 - There is no access to any unauthorised materials such as books.
 - No posters, or information leaflets on the walls of the exam room, particularly where a Candidate chooses to sit the exam in their place of employment.
9. To ensure all requirements listed in regulation 8 above are met, proctors will take the following actions before unlocking the exam:
 - Conduct a 360-degree room scan using the Candidate's webcam
 - Remind Candidates permitted resources and behaviours and prohibited behaviours.

The proctor will also require the Candidate to hold up a reflective surface such as a mirror, to show the edges of the monitor, so Candidates must have one available before the exam.

Having logged onto the QuestionMark exam portal, it is possible to use text chat to communicate with the proctor before the exam is 'opened' by the proctor. Once the exam begins and Questionmark Secure is running, text chat is unavailable, but the Candidate may speak with the proctor. Exam proctors only speak English.

10. A Candidate can log onto the QuestionMark secure portal to open up the exam sitting up to 15 minutes prior to the scheduled start time. Punctuality is the responsibility of the
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Candidate as lateness cannot guarantee admittance to the exam sitting, and time will not be added to the exam sitting window.

11. Punctuality is also what the Candidate should expect of the proctors however, in exceptional circumstances, there may be an instance where a proctor is unable to open the exam session immediately. In such situations, the Candidate should continue to wait. ABPI request metrics on 'Candidate Wait Time for Proctor' to ensure ABPI and Candidate expectations are met as fully as possible.
 12. All Candidates must have the required photo identification ready when logging onto the exam session to go through the authentication process with the one to one online proctor. The name on the exam appointment must match the name on the photo identification. Acceptable photo ID for authentication is: a valid Government-issued Passport, Driver's Licence or National ID card. Any examination Candidate found to have either provided false ID or arranged for someone else to sit the exam on their behalf will be subject to disciplinary procedures. Any person who attempts to sit an exam on behalf of another person will be subject to disciplinary procedures. Such behaviour constitutes the crime of attempting to obtain a pecuniary advantage by deception and may be reported to your employer or to appropriate national authorities.
 13. Any Candidate who is unable to meet the requirements of the photo ID authentication will **NOT** be permitted to take the examination. ABPI will **NOT** refund the examination fees for Candidates who do not meet the ABPI Exam identity authentication requirement.
 14. The webcam and screen of the Candidate's computer for all proctored exams are recorded, with the recording kept for 30 days. The authentication process including the ID checks are stored as part of the proctoring videos. Only a limited number of ABPI Examinations Team staff will have access to recorded exams, unless there are suspicions of malpractice in which case, additional personnel could be asked to review the recording in line with the **ABPI Malpractice and Maladministration Policy**, or in the case of a Candidate appeal.
 15. All Candidates are presented with Candidate agreements by the live online proctor which must be accepted, prior to the proctor releasing the exam.
 16. Failure to comply with Exam Regulations or guidance may be considered malpractice. Incidents of suspected malpractice will be investigated in line with the **ABPI Malpractice and Maladministration Policy**.
 17. No materials are required to complete the exam as an on-screen calculator is provided - **no other calculator is allowed for use**. One sheet of A4 plain paper (blank on both sides) and a pencil only is permissible on the examination desk.
 18. When instructed to do so by the proctor, Candidates must destroy any working paper used during the remote-proctored exam, by tearing the paper into several pieces, all of which should be binned immediately following the exam session.
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19. Candidates must not copy, photograph or reproduce in any manner, exam questions. Candidates are also strictly prohibited from distributing or seeking to exploit for any reason, unauthorised copies of exam questions.
20. The online proctor is responsible for starting the online exam once authentication has been completed.
21. The Rules of Conduct during the online proctored Examination are as follows:
- The Candidate **MUST** be alone in the room (unless an additional person forms part of a specific Exam Access Arrangement agreed by the Director of the Examination on application in advance of the exam appointment – **see ABPI Exam Access Arrangements Policy**).
 - The Candidate **MUST NOT** leave their seat
 - The Candidate **MUST NOT** repeatedly look off screen.
 - No talking is permitted, except to communicate with the proctor if necessary.
 - Webcam, speakers, and microphone must remain on throughout the test.
 - The proctor must be able to see the Candidate for the duration of the test.
- Proctors will immediately react to unacceptable exam behaviors which could lead to termination of the exam, loss of exam fees and the terminated session being counted as an exam attempt.
22. Any Candidate who finds he/she needs to defer the taking of the exam for medical reasons or other extenuating circumstances should reschedule the exam appointment as outlined above. Failure to reschedule an exam more than 30 minutes before the start time, **for any reason** will result in loss of exam fees.
23. It is forbidden to make any attempt to capture examination questions and answers to share with others directly or by posting online following the exam.
24. Unless by prior arrangement with the Director of Examinations as per the Exam Access Arrangements Policy, Candidates are not allowed to leave the examination room or go 'off screen' during the examination as per the Rules of Conduct outlined above.
25. In the event of a Candidate needing to leave the online exam due to a genuine emergency evacuation, the Candidate **MUST** take all necessary measures to protect their own safety and the safety of others. Once safe to do so, the Candidate should use email or telephone to get advice on possible next steps from the ABPI Examinations Team during office hours.
26. A Candidate may find he/she does not need to use the full allotted time for an exam – whilst this is perfectly acceptable, Candidates must be aware that once the Candidate has clicked on screen to confirm they wish to submit their final exam answers, there is no opportunity to revisit flagged or unanswered questions.
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Exam results:

27. Candidates will receive a provisional examination result on screen immediately following the exam. The result which appears on the secure QuestionMark browser immediately following the exam remains provisional until such time as it is transferred to the Candidate's Exams profile and can be accessed through the online profile page – this allows for result verification and viewing of the exam recording should this be considered necessary. No communication of results will be made directly to the Candidate's listed employer, it is up to the Candidate to decide whether to reveal the exam result to his/her employer at any time.
28. Candidates who do not attain the set pass mark for any unit being attempted will be deemed to have failed that unit component of the overall qualification and will need to book a resit exam.
29. All successful Candidates who have passed the required units will receive a certificate indicating the qualification awarded. This will be one of the following:
- Level 3 Certificate in the promotion of prescription medicines
 - Level 3 Diploma in the promotion of prescription medicines
30. Candidates registered on the Diploma exam who have met the distinction criteria will be awarded a certificate of distinction from the ABPI. To achieve distinction a Candidate must meet studying for the Diploma and must meet all the following criteria:
- An average of 80% or more for Units 1 – 4 inclusive, and an average of 80% or more for those units from Units 5 – 16 which are taken. Unit 6 is split between 6a and 6b and as such, a & b count as 2 units.
 - The minimum mark for each individual unit must be at least 70%, apart from Unit 1: Code of Practice and NHS, for which the minimum mark must be at least 80%
 - These marks must be achieved on the first attempt.
31. Where a Candidate feels he/she has grounds for applying for Special Consideration in relation to a specific exam sitting, the Candidate should, in the first instance, consult the **Special Consideration Policy**. Any application for Special Consideration should be made as soon as possible following the exam sitting. The independent **Chair of the ABPI Exam Governance Committee** rules on appeals for post exam adjustments in line with the **Special Consideration Policy**.

Appeal regarding clarity or correctness of questions in the exam:

32. The ABPI will not normally enter into communication regarding individual Candidate performance other than by the methods set out in these regulations.
33. A Candidate who suspects there is an error in an examination question should report this post exam as soon as possible to the ABPI Director of Examinations for consideration (see Exam Regulations 33-39). Even if a Candidate thinks there is an error in a question, the answer should not be left blank, but instead the Candidate should still make their best attempt to select the single best answer in case the Candidate is mistaken about there being an error.
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34. The ABPI Director of Examinations will carry out an initial assessment of the reported alleged error and will communicate with the Candidate as to how ABPI proposes to deal with the matter. The Candidate making the enquiry may be required to provide additional information.
35. Following the initial assessment of the error by the ABPI Director of Examinations, if the error is not straightforward or blatant, the ABPI Director of Examinations will put the matter before the ABPI Chief Examiner to assess, who as a result might decide to undertake:
- No further action
 - Exclusion of the question
36. In the rare case of an error being accepted as appearing in an exam question, and therefore exclusion of the question being deemed necessary, the question would be removed from the examination and not considered for inclusion in the Candidate's final unit result. The same amendment to an examination score would be applied to any other Candidate in the same cohort that had been affected by the same error.
37. The ABPI Chief Examiner is an independent appointment and will consider appeals in relation to questions on which the answer is not correct or clear, or there is something wrong with a live exam question, or facts recorded in the learning manuals.
38. It is important that Candidates contact the ABPI Director of Examinations as soon as possible after the exam sitting to raise concerns about exam questions. ABPI encourages openness and will support anyone who raises genuine concerns in good faith under this policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken. The ABPI will treat all disclosures seriously and will investigate as appropriate, where possible with confidentiality respected. Even if a Candidate suspects there is an error with a question, the Candidate should still answer the question at the time of the live online exam in case it is proven the Candidate is mistaken.
39. Appeals from this decision by the ABPI Chief Examiner to the ABPI Exam Appeal Board will only be considered on the basis set out below under the sub-heading "Second-line Appeal".

Disciplinary action for poor conduct during exams:

40. In line with the Rules of Conduct during online proctored Examinations noted above, any Candidate who does not heed a warning from the proctor, can expect the examination to be terminated by the proctor. The termination shall be reported to the ABPI Director of Examinations.
41. Candidates will be liable to disciplinary hearings as laid down in these regulations for irregular conduct relating to an exam including but not limited to:
- attempts to cheat at the ABPI examination
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- cheating by reviewing an unauthorised copy of an exam or exam answers before taking the online exam
 - cheating by attempting to copy or otherwise view or steal someone else's exam responses
 - accepting or receiving a bribe related to taking the examination
 - being asked to give a bribe related to taking the examination
 - misrepresenting Candidate identity when taking the ABPI examination
 - taking the examination on behalf of another person
 - attempting to conceal a mobile handheld device or unauthorised document to look up answers during the examination
 - criminal activity such as fraud, dishonesty or deception in relation to the ABPI Examination
 - failure to follow the directions of the exam proctor
 - behaviour which assists another Candidate in an unauthorised manner
 - serious incapacity whilst taking exams caused by alcohol or illegal drugs
 - use of words or behaviour which is threatening, abusive or insulting to the online proctor or any staff member of ABPI
42. Anyone wishing to report a Candidate to the ABPI Director of Examinations for suspected irregular conduct, even if there is uncertainty whether a particular act constitutes something to be reported to the ABPI, should report as soon as possible. Candidates should also refer to the **Exam Whistleblowing policy** for guidance on making concerns known to the ABPI.
43. Once a concern has been raised, the ABPI Director of Examinations will carry out an initial assessment to determine the scope of any investigation, consult with the relevant ABPI Executive Director and will communicate with all affected parties to give an indication of next steps. The person raising the concern may be required to attend additional meetings to provide further information about the complaint circumstances.
44. Any ensuing investigation will be reported on and then be put by the ABPI Director of Examinations to the ABPI Chief Executive who will decide the outcome of the assessment. This result will be sent where appropriate to: (a) the Candidate in question; and (b) all other affected individual(s).
45. Failure to comply with these regulations may lead to disqualification or other sanctions. Having received an investigating officer's report, the ABPI Chief Executive might decide to prescribe any or all the following sanctions:
- No further action
 - No case to answer
 - Award a mark of zero for the exam paper/unit concerned
 - Ask a Candidate to retake or undertake further examination papers/units under conditions approved by the ABPI Director of Examinations
 - Refer the matter to the employer of the relevant person(s) or to the appropriate national authorities
46. The **Director of the Prescription Medicines Code of Practice Authority** is the **only person** who can consider appeals for a Candidate to be given extra calendar time beyond the one year allowed by the Code of Practice to take the exam and the two years given to
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Candidates to pass the exam. The ABPI Director of Examinations, ABPI Chief Executive, the ABPI Chief Examiner and ABPI Exam Appeal Board have no role in this process.

Second-Line Appeal from decisions of the Chief Examiner or Chief Executive:

47. Only the following grounds of appeal are applicable for the second line appeal process:
- New evidence which could not reasonably have been made available at the original hearing or
 - A procedural irregularity occurred which had a detrimental impact on the outcome of any hearing, or
 - The penalty imposed was disproportionate given the nature of the alleged offence.
48. A Candidate may appeal on these grounds against any decision made by the ABPI Chief Executive or the ABPI Chief Examiner by writing within 14 days of notification of the result to the ABPI Director of Examinations who will refer the matter to the independent **ABPI Exam Appeal Board** to make a final decision. The Appeal must set out the relevant grounds and further information on which the appeal is being made.
49. The appeal may uphold, remove or amend any terms of the Candidate under investigation's outcome. The ABPI Exam Appeal Board's decision is final. Having received the investigating officer's report, and notice of the decision by the ABPI Chief Executive or Chief Examiner the ABPI Exam Appeal Board might decide to prescribe any or all the following sanctions:
- No further action
 - No case to answer
 - Award a mark of zero for the exam paper/unit concerned
 - Ask a Candidate to retake or undertake further examination papers/units under conditions approved by the ABPI Director of Examinations
 - Refer the matter to the employer of the relevant person(s) or to the appropriate national authorities

Summary of responsibilities:

- The **ABPI Director of Examinations** has investigatory powers under these regulations and will present his/her written report to relevant decision makers. The **ABPI Director of Examinations** also makes decisions as to the nature of reasonable adjustments for Candidates with special needs as per the Exam Access Arrangements Policy.
- The **ABPI Chief Examiner** (an independent role) shall undertake first line hearings against examination questions and results based on the clarity or correctness of exam content.
- The **ABPI Chief Executive** will rule on investigations by the **ABPI Director of Examinations** as to misconduct by Candidates and any whistleblowing complaints.
- The independent **ABPI Exam Appeal Board** shall undertake appeals against decisions by the **ABPI Chief Examiner and Chief Executive**, and will be the final body ruling on investigations by the ABPI Director of Examinations in relation to suspected misconduct by

Candidates, whistleblowing complaints and any decisions as to appropriate reasonable adjustments for Candidates with special needs.

- The independent **Chair of the ABPI Exam Governance Committee** shall rule on appeals for post exam adjustments in line with the **Special Consideration Policy**.

Privacy of data:

50. In general, ABPI will not pass on to any third party (including the Candidate's employer or a potential employer) details regarding a Candidates exam taking schedule or results without first obtaining the consent of the Candidate indicated during the online registration process or separately in writing. Only in cases of findings by the **ABPI Chief Executive** or the **ABPI Exam Appeal Board** of misconduct will ABPI seek to contact a Candidate's employer or the police to pass on the details under investigation.
51. For more information about how the ABPI processes personal information, please see the Exams Privacy Notice.

CONTACTS:

ABPI Head of Education & Exam

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ABPI Chief Examiner

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ABPI Chief Executive

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ABPI Exam Appeal Board

Independent lawyer chair
Chair of ABPI Exam Governance
Committee
Representative of the Appropriate
Prescribing, Ethics & the Code Strategic
Leadership Group

Independent Chair
Contact in writing via ABPI exams@abpi.org.uk
Southside 7th Floor, 105 Victoria Street London SW1E
6QT

Candidates with special needs should read the **Exam Access Arrangements (including Special Educational Needs) Policy**.