

November 16, 2020

Dear Residency Program Directors and Administrators:

The American Urologic Association (AUA) and the American Board of Urology (ABU) want to acknowledge the concerns of the Urology residents, oncology fellows, and Program Directors regarding the risk of COVID-19 exposure during the upcoming 2020 In-Service Examination (ISE) and Oncology Knowledge Assessment Test (OKAT). The AUA Office of Education administers these examinations and has made several accommodations to provide flexibility to programs to administer the exams in a safer environment:

- The exam can be administered in separate rooms to allow for social distancing. This is left up to the Program Directors.
- Programs can choose to administer the exam a number of times throughout the day versus one timeslot.
- Programs are allowing use of personal laptops, so the proctors do not have to touch the users' computers.
- A second exam day December 7th will be made available as a second examination date.

Altering times and adding another day are interventions that will allow the program to better space individuals for the examinations as well as cover the contingency of allowing individuals that may have been quarantined to take the examination if they would so desire.

The ABU has received a question about the possibility of moving the In-Service Examination to March 2021. We would like to provide the following information.

The ISE provides crucial points of information by:

- Providing program directors information regarding the success of their didactic programs and how they may best modify their program's curriculum to remediate resident deficiencies.
- Providing a point in time assessment regarding critical urologic knowledge for chief residents six to seven months before completion of their residency and just prior to taking the qualifying exam (QE)(Boards part 1), allowing an individual to enhance or focus their studying for the QE.

The primary concern regarding a delay in the timing of the ISE to March 2021 focuses on the chief resident cohort that will be taking the QE in July 2021.

Unfortunately, these individuals have had significant disruptions to their educational endeavors during the last 18 months of their training due to the COVID-19 crisis. Specifically, multiple didactic lectures were either canceled or changed to electronic meetings. In addition, a significant impact occurred with

a decrease in urologic cases and outpatient clinic visits. These disruptions may have impacted the normal process of case-based learning.

No information exists regarding if urology residents continued to improve their knowledge during this altered learning time period. Allowing the chief residents to take the examination in late November-early December, enables us to return a measure of the chief residents' baseline knowledge six-seven weeks post-exam. This information allows the resident and their program to fill in knowledge gaps six months prior to the Qualifying Examination. If we delay the ISE exam to March, as the results will not be available for six-seven weeks, results to the individual in May-June will leave little time for the chief resident to fill in knowledge gaps. Filling in gaps in knowledge would be extremely difficult during the last two months of their residency, when the resident is usually involved in geographic relocation efforts, obtaining new medical licenses and acquiring hospital privileges. We, therefore, believe it is vital to assess the chief residents' knowledge six months prior to the Qualifying Examination. This year maybe especially important since there were significant alterations to our normal educational endeavors.

Please remember the ISE is not a mandatory examination. If there is substantial concern regarding spacing for the exam, the program director may consider having only senior or chief residents take the exam, or alternatively if any individual has significant concerns regarding safety to their health they may choose to opt out of the exam.

Regarding the OKAT exam, the Society of Urologic Oncology (SUO) agrees with the policy of the ABU and AUA and this year understands that the test is optional for fellows. At the time of this COVID-19 crisis, we endorse that SUO fellowship programs and fellows can opt out without penalty.

We hope this helps to explain the rationale in continuing with the ISE at this time, and much appreciate the efforts of all residency programs in making this process as safe as possible.

Sincerely,



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