



Preparing for the Vascular Surgery Boards

Preparing for the Vascular Surgery Boards

Prepared by the SVS Young Surgeons Advisory Committee

This practice memo reviews the board certification process for vascular surgery and provides some helpful hints for preparation. Surgeons wishing to become board certified in vascular surgery should visit the Web site of the American Board of Surgery (ABS), www.absurgery.org, for full eligibility and application requirements.

To become certified in vascular surgery, you must first apply for certification, and then pass the Vascular Surgery Qualifying Examination (written boards) and Vascular Surgery Certifying Examination (oral boards). Requirements for vascular surgery certification are established by the Vascular Surgery Board of the ABS (VSB-ABS), whose members represent the leading U.S. vascular surgery societies, including the SVS.

Vascular Surgery Qualifying Examination

Format

The Qualifying Examination is a multiple-choice, computer-based examination offered annually by the VSB-ABS. It is designed to assess an individual's cognitive knowledge of vascular surgery.

Preparation

Suggested textbooks:

- *Clinical Decision Making in Vascular Surgery*, Jack L. Cronenwett, Robert B. Rutherford (very good for algorithmic thought process)
- *Clinical Scenarios in Vascular Surgery*, Gilbert R. Upchurch, Peter K. Henke (case-based review, quick read)
- *Current Therapy in Vascular Surgery*, Calvin B. Ernst, James C. Stanley (a classic, especially on open operative topics)
- *Mastery of Vascular and Endovascular Surgery*, Gerald B. Zelenock, Thomas S. Huber, Louis M. Messina
- *Vascular and Endovascular Surgery*, Wesley S. Moore (provides rapid overview)
- *Vascular Surgery*, Robert B. Rutherford (good for buttressing weak areas)

In addition to standard textbooks, the annual vascular in-service training examination (VSITE) is offered to vascular residents yearly and is in the same format as the Qualifying Examination. Also, the second edition of Vascular Education and Self-Assessment Program® (VESAP) is currently being formulated and is an excellent interactive CD

with questions and explanations. VESAP provides a very realistic simulation of the qualifying exam. Review courses are available for the vascular examination but are not as plentiful as general surgery review courses and can be costly.

Pass Rate

In 2009 there was an 88 percent pass rate for the 143 examinees (www.absurgery.org).

Vascular Surgery Certifying Examination

Format

The Certifying Examination is designed to evaluate the clinical qualifications of an individual. The examination consists of three, 30-minute sessions conducted by teams of two examiners that evaluate the candidate's ability to identify common problems and work through these in cogent and safe manner. Scenarios are chosen to encompass the full spectrum of vascular surgery practice. The examination focuses on the candidate's judgment and evaluation of a particular situation.

Computers are used to showcase details and multiple images are usually available for each scenario. When taking the exam, do not hesitate to ask for additional images. In addition, be sure to remember to talk to the examiners and not just focus on the computer screen.

Video Guide

The ABS has created a video guide for all Certifying Examination applicants. The video outlines the expectations and conduct of the examination and provides tips for good performance. It can viewed at www.absurgery.org.

Preparation

Standard textbooks (as suggested for the vascular surgery qualifying exam) and journals are recommended. In addition, mock oral examinations and having a mentor ask you board scenario questions are a big asset. You can also practice talking and explaining scenarios in front of a mirror. Review courses have the benefit of going through clinical scenarios and critiquing the applicant on their approach.

Pass Rate

In 2009 there was an 83 percent pass rate for the 104 examinees (www.absurgery.org).

Podcast Video: Preparing for the Vascular Boards

Copyright © 2010, Society for Vascular Surgery®. All rights reserved. SVS Practice Memo, Vascular Surgery Boards (January 2010)

Article Date: Friday, January 1, 2010

Author: SVS Young Surgeons Advisory Committee

Tags: Manage My Practice Articles

Article Type: Article