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# International Foundations of Medicine (IFOM<sup>®</sup>)

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## 2017 CANDIDATE BROCHURE

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### Clinical and Basic Science Examinations

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*NOTE:* This brochure is intended for individuals who plan to order an IFOM exam independently of a medical school or other institution. Information about *institutional* administrations of IFOM is available at [www.nbme.org/ifom](http://www.nbme.org/ifom)

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## OVERVIEW

### General Information and 2017 Test Schedule

This brochure contains procedural and policy information about the International Foundations of Medicine (IFOM<sup>®</sup>) Clinical Science Examination (CSE) and Basic Science Examination (BSE) for individuals planning to take the exam independently (i.e., not under the auspices of a medical school or other institution). You should become familiar with all aspects of this brochure. Please note that while every attempt has been made to provide accurate and definite information, the IFOM examination program (IFOM exam program) may change or revise policies and procedures after release of this brochure. Notice of such changes will be posted on the website (<http://www.nbme.org/ifom>). You should check this website for the most current information about the IFOM exam program policies and procedures.

The materials used in the IFOM exams are owned and copyrighted by the National Board of Medical Examiners<sup>®</sup> (NBME<sup>®</sup>). Any reproduction by any means or distribution of exam materials without the express written authorization of the NBME is prohibited and NBME reserves its right to take every action necessary to enforce its legal rights.

Both the IFOM CSE and BSE will be available for individual administration as a computer-based test (CBT) on the following dates:

2017 Test Window	2017 Registration Period
March 27 - May 5	January 1 - February 10
October 2 - November 10	July 10 - August 18

### Computer-based Testing (CBT)

CBT offers enhanced security measures for the examination process. Audio and video monitoring in the test centers also enhance the proctoring of the examination, and digital cameras are used to identify IFOM candidates.

### Description of the Examination

The CBT version of the exam is administered in one 4½-hour testing session and consists of a 15-minute tutorial, 160 multiple-choice test items divided into two 2-hour blocks with one 15-minute break between sections, and an optional post-test survey.

During the defined time to complete the items in each block, you may answer the items in any order, review your responses, and change answers. After you exit the block, or when time expires, you can no longer review test items or change answers.

## PRACTICING FOR IFOM

The **IFOM Practice Tests** for both the Basic Science Exam (BSE) and the Clinical Science Exam (CSE) are available on the IFOM homepage (<http://www.nbme.org/ifom/>). These free tests will help familiarize you with the testing software and the formats of IFOM test questions. The practice tests are not intended to assist you in studying for the content of the exams. There is also an **IFOM CSE Self-Assessment Exam** available at <http://www.nbme.org/Students/sas/ifom.html>. This exam costs \$35.00 USD and enables you to assess your knowledge prior to taking the test. A performance report and score interpretation guide are provided upon completion of the self-assessment.

## ECFMG ELIGIBILITY STATUS VERIFICATION

Only currently enrolled medical students or medical school graduates are eligible to take the IFOM CSE or BSE. All applicants must have their credentials verified by the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG) using the process described below. Currently enrolled medical students must have their credentials verified each time an IFOM order is placed. Medical school graduates will only need to be verified once (the first time they apply after graduation). To be eligible for the IFOM CSE or BSE, your credentials must be verified by the ECFMG at the time of your application for the IFOM exam, regardless of whether ECFMG has previously verified your credentials in connection with your application for its certificate and/or USMLE Step 1 or Step 2.

**You will be unable to sit for the exam if your medical school fails to submit the required paperwork in time.** In this situation, you will be alerted within 2 weeks of the test date that you are unable to test because your status has not been verified, and you will be issued a refund.

### Status Verification Form

To verify your status as a medical school student or graduate for the purpose of taking the IFOM CSE or BSE, a completed *IFOM Status Verification Form* must be sent to the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG) by the medical school in which you are enrolled or from which you graduated. The *IFOM Status Verification Form* is available on the order confirmation page after you complete your IFOM order.

### Instructions

- Print a copy of the *IFOM Status Verification Form* from the IFOM order confirmation page. If a portion of the form is cut off on the copy that you print, you will need to adjust the margins under "Page Setup" in your browser.
- Sign and date the form and have it certified by an authorized official of your medical school. The medical school official must sign and date the form and provide his/her name, official title, and the institution name. The official must affix the institution's seal in the designated section of the form.
  - Each medical school has been requested to provide ECFMG with a list of the officials authorized by the school to certify ECFMG verification forms. Your form must be certified by an official on this list; contact your medical school to determine the officials authorized by your medical school for this purpose. **If your form is not signed by an authorized official, it will not be accepted.**
- The form must be sent to ECFMG directly from the office of the medical school official who certified the form. ECFMG must be able to determine that the form was sent directly from the office of this official. **If ECFMG, in its judgment, determines that the form may not have been sent directly from the office of the medical school official who certified it, the form will not be accepted.**
- The *IFOM Status Verification Form* must be received by ECFMG by the deadline printed on the form.

Your medical school must send the original, completed *IFOM Status Verification Form* to:

ECFMG Attn: IFOM  
3624 Market Street, 4th Floor  
Philadelphia, PA 19104-2685  
USA

or by email (as a scanned attachment) to [ifom@ecfm.org](mailto:ifom@ecfm.org).

## APPLYING FOR THE EXAM AND SCHEDULING AN APPOINTMENT

### Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible, you must be a currently enrolled medical student or medical school graduate (see “ECFMG Eligibility Status Verification,” above).

### Applying for IFOM CSE or BSE

Students and graduates of medical schools should apply for the IFOM CSE or BSE by following the instructions at the IFOM ordering website (<https://wbt.nbme.org/order>).

The IFOM CSE fee is \$300 and the IFOM BSE fee is \$200 for CBT exams taken at Prometric centers, payable in U.S. funds. This fee is nonrefundable, except in situations where your eligibility status has not been verified in time. If you do not take the examination during the testing window for which you were approved, you must submit a new application and **pay the full fee again** to take the IFOM CSE or BSE during a subsequent window. If there are extenuating circumstances that make it impossible for you to take the exam once you have submitted your order and paid your fee, contact the IFOM exam program at [IFOMtestadmin@nbme.org](mailto:IFOMtestadmin@nbme.org).

Applications and other requests for services will not be processed if it is determined that doing so would violate any applicable laws or regulations.

### Prometric Test Centers

The IFOM exams are administered in Prometric test centers (PTCs). All PTCs are set up similarly. This not only helps enhance security, but also provides the same standards of comfort and uniformity for all candidates.

Locations of PTCs available for the IFOM exams can be found at the Prometric website (<http://www.prometric.com/FOM>).

### Your Scheduling Permit

Your Scheduling Permit will be issued to you after you submit your application online at <https://wbt.nbme.org/order>, your application fee has been received, and you have been deemed eligible. You should verify the information on your Scheduling Permit before scheduling your appointment. Your Scheduling Permit includes the following:

- your name,
- the examination for which you registered,
- your Scheduling Number,
- your Candidate Identification Number (CIN).

**You must either print and take your Scheduling Permit, or present it electronically (e.g., via Smartphone).** You are strongly encouraged to print your Scheduling Permit at least several days in advance of your scheduled testing appointment to avoid any problems accessing or printing your permit on your scheduled test date.

## Important Notes Regarding the Scheduling Permit:

- Your name as it appears on your Scheduling Permit must match the name on your form of identification (ID) exactly (see also the “Admission to the Exam” section below). The Prometric Test Center Administrator must be able to determine that your name as it appears on both the Scheduling Permit and the ID match. Therefore, though it is not required, it is recommended that the name on your ID appear in the Latin alphabet, i.e., “English language letters.” **NBME is not responsible for an examinee’s inability to be admitted to the Test Center if the Test Center Administrator cannot confirm that your names on the two documents match.**
- If the name listed on your Scheduling Permit is not correct, contact [IFOMtestadmin@nbme.org](mailto:IFOMtestadmin@nbme.org) immediately. You will not be able to take the test if you are unable to present your Scheduling Permit at the test center.
- Your **Scheduling Number is needed** when you contact Prometric to schedule a test appointment. **It differs from your Candidate Identification Number (CIN)**, which is your private key, and is needed to test. Prometric does not have access to your CIN.

## Scheduling

You must have your Scheduling Permit before you contact Prometric to schedule a testing appointment. Appointments are assigned on a "first-come, first-served" basis; therefore, you should contact Prometric to schedule as soon as possible after you access your Scheduling Permit. You will be required to provide information found only on your Scheduling Permit. When you schedule your appointment, you will receive the following specific information:

- the confirmed test date and time,
- the address and telephone number of the Prometric Testing Center (PTC) where you will test, and
- your Prometric Confirmation Number(s).

After you schedule your testing appointment, print a confirmation of your appointment from the Prometric website (<http://www.prometric.com>). Scheduling a testing appointment for a specific date at a PTC is no guarantee that the scheduled test time or location will be available. The PTC at which you are scheduled may become unavailable after you have scheduled your appointment. In that event, Prometric will attempt to notify you in advance of your scheduled testing appointment and to schedule you for a different time and/or center. However, on rare occasions, rescheduling your appointment for a different time or center may occur at the last minute. To avoid losses you would incur as a result, you should try to maintain flexibility in exam scheduling and in your travel arrangements. **It is strongly recommended that you confirm your testing appointment one week before your test date.**

## Rescheduling Your Test Location

If you are unable to keep your testing appointment at the scheduled location, you may change your center by following the instructions for contacting Prometric on your Scheduling Permit. You will need to enter your Prometric Confirmation Number when you cancel and reschedule. A fee may be charged if you change your appointment, depending upon how much notice you provide when making the change. If you reschedule, your rescheduled test date must fall within the assigned testing window.

The fee, if applicable, is due at the time you change your appointment. However, the date that you change your appointment, using Eastern Time in the United States, will determine whether you pay a fee and the amount of this fee.

- If you change your appointment 31 or more calendar days before (but not including) the first day of your scheduled test date, there is no fee.
- If you change your appointment fewer than 31 calendar days but more than 5 calendar days before (but not including) the first day of your scheduled test date, the fee is \$30 USD.

- If you change your appointment 5 or fewer calendar days before (but not including) the first day of your scheduled test date, the fee is \$47.00 USD.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** If you cancel without rescheduling, there is no guarantee that testing appointments during your assigned testing window will be available at a given test center, or at any test center, when you attempt to reschedule. **If you do not reschedule within your assigned testing window, you must submit a new application and payment in order to take the exam.**

## TESTING

### Testing Regulations and Rules of Conduct

Test center staff monitor all testing sessions. You must follow instructions of test center staff throughout the examination. Violation of the rules of conduct may result in non-reporting or revoking scores and a bar from future exams administered by NBME.

Test center staff are not authorized to answer questions from examinees regarding examination content, testing software, or scoring. Test center staff are also not authorized to answer inquiries with regard to registration or retesting.

If staff observe you violating test administration rules during an examination, the center staff will not necessarily tell you of the observation at the time of the examination. Test center staff are required to report such incidents to the IFOM exam program; each report is fully investigated.

### Personal Items

Unauthorized possession of personal items while in the secure areas of the testing center violates the rules of conduct. **It is important that you read and understand the rules regarding personal possessions.** You may bring soft-foam, cordless earplugs into the testing room. However, they must be out of the packaging and ready for inspection by test center staff during check-in. Earplugs must be left at the workstation during all breaks.

Unauthorized items include, but are not limited to:

- mechanical or electronic devices, such as cellular telephones, personal digital assistants (PDAs), calculators, watches of any type, electronic paging devices, recording or filming devices, radios;
- outerwear, such as coats, jackets, head wear, gloves;
- book bags, backpacks, handbags, briefcases, wallets;
- books, notes, written materials, or scratch paper;
- food, candy, gum, or beverages.

If you bring personal items to the test center, you must store them in a designated locker outside the secure testing area. You should keep in mind that the storage facilities are small and that all stored mechanical or electronic devices must be turned off. Personal items and their contents may be subject to inspection. Any materials that reasonably appear to be reproductions of any examination materials will be confiscated. Making notes of any kind during an examination, except on the laminated writing surfaces provided by the test center for this purpose, is not permitted. Removal of those materials from the secure testing area is prohibited.

## Rules of Conduct

When you apply to take the IFOM CSE or BSE, you agree to the following Rules of Conduct:

1. You are the person named on the Scheduling Permit for the examination.
2. You will not give, receive, or obtain any form of unauthorized assistance during the examination or during breaks.
3. You will not have any formulas, study materials, notes, papers, or electronic devices of any kind in your possession while you are in the secure areas of the center.
4. You will place in a locker all personal belongings, including cellular telephones, watches, pagers, personal digital assistants (PDAs), formulas, study materials, notes, papers, pens/pencils, and your purse or wallet, before you enter the testing room.
5. During the examination, you will not leave your testing station for breaks unless the break screen is visible on your monitor. It will be considered a violation of the Rules of Conduct if you indicate on the center log that your break screen is visible when it is not.
6. During testing, you may use a telephone or other communication device while outside the secure testing area and only during an authorized break. You may not use it for any purpose related to test content.
7. You will not remove materials in any form (written, printed, recorded, or any other type) from the test center.
8. All examination materials remain the property of the National Board of Medical Examiners® (NBME®), and you will maintain the confidentiality of the materials. You will not reproduce or attempt to reproduce examination materials through memorization or any other means. Also, you will not provide information relating to examination content that may give or attempt to give unfair advantage to individuals who may be taking the examination. This includes Internet postings regarding examination content and/or answers.

**If you violate these Rules of Conduct, you may be directed to leave the test center before you complete the examination. If there is any reasonable basis to conclude that you have violated any test administration rule, including these Rules of Conduct, actions may be taken against you, including but not limited to barring you from taking NBME examinations in the future.**

## Admission to the Exam

When you arrive at the test center, you must present your Scheduling Permit and the required identification described on your Scheduling Permit. Acceptable forms of identification include the following forms of **unexpired** identification:

- passport,
- driver's license with photograph,
- national identity card,
- other form of unexpired, government-issued identification.

**Your identification must contain both your signature and photograph.** If it contains your photograph but not your signature, you can use another form of unexpired identification that contains your signature, such as an employee identification card or a credit card, to supplement your photo-bearing, government-issued identification.



Your name as it appears on your Scheduling Permit must match the name on your form of identification (ID) exactly. The Prometric Test Center Administrator must be able to determine that your name as it appears on both the Scheduling Permit and the ID match. Therefore, though it is not required, it is recommended that the name on your ID appear in the Latin alphabet, i.e., "English language letters." **NBME is not responsible for an examinee's inability to be admitted to the Test Center if the Test Center Administrator cannot confirm that your names on the two documents match.**

If the name listed on your Scheduling Permit is misspelled or differs from your name as it appears on your identification, immediately go to <https://wbt.nbme.org/order>, login, and select Manage Your Account in order to submit the correction and receive a revised Scheduling Permit. **Name changes or corrections cannot be made within 7 business days of your scheduled testing appointment.**

**Note:** You will not be admitted to the testing room without presenting either a printed or electronic copy of your permit.

## Test Centers and Testing Conditions

Locations of Prometric Testing Centers (PTCs) at which the IFOM exams are delivered can be found at the Prometric website (<http://www.prometric.com/FOM>). These centers provide the resources necessary for secure administration, including video and audio monitoring and recording, and use of digital cameras to record the identity of examinees.

You should arrive at the PTC 30 minutes before your scheduled testing appointment on your testing day. If you arrive after your appointment time, you may not be admitted. **If you arrive more than 30 minutes after your scheduled testing appointment, you will not be admitted.**

Upon arrival at the test center, you must present the required identification, sign a test center log, be photographed, and store your personal belongings in your assigned locker. You will be asked to empty and turn your pockets inside out prior to entry into the testing room to confirm that you have no prohibited items. You will be asked to repeat this process prior to every entry into the testing room after a break. Test center staff will collect your Scheduling Permit. You will be instructed to write your name and Candidate Identification Number (CIN) on one of the laminated writing surfaces provided. Your Scheduling Permit will be retained at the Test Center Administrator's station. You may request access to the permit during the examination if it becomes necessary for you to rewrite the CIN on the laminated writing surface. In addition to the laminated writing surfaces, you will be provided with dry-erase markers and an eraser. Test center staff will escort you to your assigned testing station and provide brief instructions on use of the computer equipment. You must enter your CIN to start the examination, which begins with a brief tutorial prior to the first test block.

## Completing the Exam

Your entire testing session is scheduled for a fixed amount of time. The computer keeps track of your overall time and the time allocated for each block of the test. **There is an optional 15 minutes of break time allotted for this examination.** If you complete the tutorial or other blocks of the test questions early, the remaining time will be available as authorized break time. This time will not be available to complete other blocks of the test. Authorized breaks include any time taken between test blocks, whether you take a brief break at your seat or you leave the testing room.

The time allowance for each block is 120 minutes. While you are testing, the block and daytime clocks continue to run even if you leave the testing room, (e.g., for a personal emergency or restroom break). If you leave during a block, the test center staff will report that fact as an irregular incident. In addition, the "unauthorized break" screen, described in the examination tutorial, may appear on the monitor at your workstation during a testing block. As explained in the tutorial, the unauthorized break screen will appear after a defined period of inactivity (no mouse click or key entry). Thirty seconds before the appearance of the unauthorized break screen, an "inactivity timeout" warning will appear. If you do not click as instructed on the warning screen, the unauthorized break screen will appear after 30 seconds. You will then have to enter your CIN in order to continue with the examination. Each time you leave the testing room, you are required to sign out and sign in when you return. You must present your identification each time you sign in. Each block ends when the block time expires or when you exit from it.

As you progress through the blocks of the test, you should use the features available in the testing software to monitor how many blocks are remaining and how much break time you have accumulated, if any. **If you take too much break time and exceed the accumulated break time, your time to complete the last block in the testing session will be reduced.** You should use the time summary feature (as explained in the tutorial) to keep track of the number of blocks completed and the number remaining.

When block time runs out, you will not be able to move to any new screens within that block. The computer will close the block. After you complete or run out of time for each block during the test, you must respond when the computer asks you to indicate whether you want to take a break or continue. After the test blocks, (if time permits) you may be presented the option to complete an additional block that contains survey questions about your testing experience.

The test session ends when you have started and exited all sections, or the total time for the test expires. You will sign out as you leave the test center and hand in the laminated writing surfaces.

If you experience a computer problem during the test, notify test center staff immediately. The testing software is designed to allow the test to restart at the point it was interrupted. In most cases, your test can be restarted at the point of interruption with no loss of testing time. However, it is possible that a technical problem may occur that does not permit you to complete your examination. In the rare event that this occurs, please send a written description of the incident to [IFOMtestadmin@nbme.org](mailto:IFOMtestadmin@nbme.org).

## **CANCELLING YOUR IFOM EXAM ORDER**

If you need to cancel your order, contact [IFOMtestadmin@nbme.org](mailto:IFOMtestadmin@nbme.org). Your request should include your name, the e-mail address that you used to place your order, and your IFOM Order ID number.

- If you have already scheduled a testing appointment and you need to cancel your order, you must request the cancellation prior to five calendar days before your scheduled appointment.
- Requests for cancellations received fewer than five calendar days prior to your scheduling testing appointment cannot be honored.

## **SCORING AND SCORE REPORTING**

Scores are reported using a three-digit scale score centered on 500. In addition to three-digit scores, students receive a detailed profile comparing individual performance to reference group performance in the disciplines, tasks, and organ systems covered in the examination.

IFOM results are typically reported within three weeks after your test date. However, delays are possible for various reasons.

Once your score report is available, you will receive an e-mail with retrieval instructions. Score reports are available for download for one calendar year after posting. **We strongly recommend downloading and saving your score report during the 12 months when it is available. Once the link to the download expires, you will no longer be able to download your scores from the website.**