

ASCP Board of Certification Exam

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My Start as a Histotech



Why become certified?

- Recognized nationally and internationally
- Demonstrates commitment to the highest quality standards and quality patient care
- Separates you from your peers
 - Proof of competency in the field
 - Shows initiative especially when not required
 - May open up promotional opportunities
 - Makes you more marketable
- Personal satisfaction
- Licensure
 - California
 - New York
 - Florida
 - Many others...
- Grossing – High complexity testing CAP/CLIA qualifications

How do I get certified?

- Go to: www.ascp.org
- Items you will need:
 - Email address
 - Name as it appears on your picture ID (e.g. driver's license)
 - Program information if completed a NAACLS program
 - Contact information for 2 alternates (name, phone, email)
 - Major credit card:
 - HT exam - \$215
 - HTL exam - \$240



STRONGERTOGETHER

Am I eligible to take the exam?

- Route 1 – Successful completion of a NAACLS accredited program within the last five years
 - HTL – Bachelor degree with a combination of 30 semester hours of biology and chemistry
- Route 2 – OJT
 - Academic requirements
 - HT – At least 60 semester credits or an associate degree with a combination of 12 semester hours of biology and chemistry
 - HTL – Bachelor degree with a combination of 30 semester hours of biology and chemistry
 - One year full time histology experience within the last five years to include:
 - Fixation
 - Embedding/Microtomy
 - Processing
 - Staining

Are there accredited programs in my area?

NAACLS

<https://www.naacls.org/>

Should I take the HT or HTL exam?

- Here are some questions you may want to consider:
 - Am I eligible?
 - How much experience do you have?
 - HTL exam includes management, education, higher level troubleshooting, IHC, ISH, enzyme histochemistry
 - Am I a good test taker?
 - Will my career path require HT or HTL certification?
 - Will I make more money as a HTL?
 - Do I want to take the HT now and the HTL later?

How does the exam work?

- Computer adaptive testing (CAT)
- 100 questions
- 2 ½ hours to finish examination
- Questions are weighted by level of difficulty
 - By answering a question correctly, the next questions will be slightly more difficult
 - When a question is answered incorrectly, a slightly easier question is presented
- Examination is tailored to the individual's ability level
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What is on the exam?

- Content areas:
 - Fixation 15-25 %
 - Processing 10-20%
 - Embedding and Microtomy 15-25%
 - Staining 30-40%
 - Laboratory Operations 10-15%
- Content Guidelines:
<https://www.ascp.org/content/docs/pdf/boc-pdfs/guidelines/examinationcontentguidelinehtl.pdf?sfvrsn=4>

Fixation

- Tissue morphology and cell preservation
- Procedures
 - Light microscopy
 - EM
 - Specials stains
 - Frozen section
 - Enzyme histochemistry
 - Immunohistochemistry
 - Cytology
 - In-situ hybridization
 - Quality control
- Factors of influence
 - Tissue size
 - Volume of fixative
 - Time
 - Temperature
 - pH
 - Osmolality
- Reagents
 - Types and components
 - Properties, functions, actions
 - Chemistry*
- Instrumentation

Processing

- Tissue morphology and cell preservation
- Procedures
 - Light microscopy
 - Calcified tissue
 - Frozen section
 - Enzyme histochemistry
 - Immunohistochemistry
 - Cytology
 - In-situ hybridization
 - Quality control
- Instrumentation
 - Components
 - Use
 - Maintenance
 - Troubleshooting
 - Quality control
- Reagents
 - Types and components
 - Properties, functions, actions
 - Quality control
 - Chemistry*

Embedding & Microtomy

- Tissue morphology and cell preservation
- Procedures
 - Paraffin
 - Frozen section
 - Gelatin/adhesive
 - Quality control
- Instrumentation
 - Components
 - Use
 - Maintenance
 - Troubleshooting
 - Quality control

Staining

- Tissue morphology and cell preservation
- Procedures
 - Nuclear and cytoplasmic
 - Carbohydrates and amyloid
 - Connective and muscle
 - Microorganisms
 - Nerve
 - Pigments, minerals and cytoplasmic granules
 - Cytology
 - Immunohistochemistry
 - Enzyme histochemistry*
 - In-situ hybridization*
- Instrumentation
 - Components
 - Use
 - Maintenance
 - Troubleshooting
 - Quality control
- Reagents
 - Types and components
 - Properties, functions, actions
 - Quality control
 - Chemistry*
- Mounting Procedures
 - Media
 - Coverslip
 - Refractive index*

Laboratory Operations

- Safety

- Storage and disposal
- Hazards and regulations
- Procedures

- Lab Math

- Metric system
- Percent solutions
- Molar solutions



- Ancillary Lab Equipment (e.g. pH meter)

- Components
- Use
- Maintenance
- Troubleshooting
- Quality control

- Management*

- Education*

- Regulations*

What study resources should I use?

- Histology Textbooks

- Carson, F. & Hladik, C. (2014). *Histotechnology: A Self-Instructional Text* (4th ed.). Chicago: ASCP Press.
- Brown, R.W. (Ed.). (2009). *Histologic Preparations: Common Problems and Their Solutions*. Northfield, IL: College of American Pathologists
- K. Suvarna, C. Layton & Bancroft, J.D. (2014). *Bancroft's Theory and Practice of Histological Techniques* (7th ed.). Philadelphia: Churchill-Livingstone.

- Microanatomy Textbook

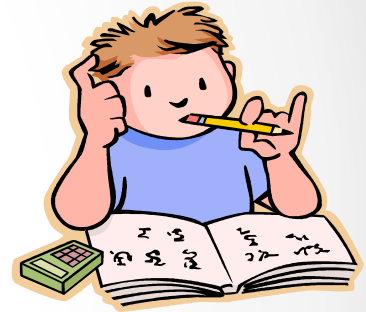
- Eroschenko, V.P. (2017). *Atlas of Histology with Functional Correlations* (13th ed.). Wolters Kluwer.

What study resources should I use?

- Study Guides
 - Carson, F. & Hood, G. (2013). BOC Study Guide – Histotechnology Certification Examinations (2nd ed.) Chicago: ASCP Press.
 - Carson, F. (2015). Histotechnology: A Self-Assessment Workbook (3rd ed.). Chicago: ASCP Press.
- Online Practice Material
 - NSH + LabCE Histology Exam Simulator
https://www.medialabinc.net/histology_exam_simulator.aspx
 - ASCP Practice Tests
<http://www.starttest.com/7.2.0.0/cart.aspx?program=ASCPPractice>

How should I study?

- Begin early
- Break it down into manageable chunks
- Identify your strengths and weaknesses
- Spend time studying every day
- Review ASCP materials thoroughly to include examination content guidelines



What can I expect during the exam?

- Verify correct name and certification – HT or HTL
- Read all directions carefully
- Multiple choice questions
 - Questions presented one at a time
 - 4 answers – review all answer choices before selecting your answer
 - Answer all questions to the best of your ability before proceeding to the next question
 - Remember – your first answer is usually the correct answer!
 - Don't choose "C" when not sure
- Review questions and change answers (if necessary) at end of exam
- Don't panic if it seems tough!!

What happens after the exam?

- Watch for your results
 - Pass/Fail
- Exams scores and certificate by mail
- 2004 and beyond require certification maintenance
 - 3 year cycle
 - 36 credits
 - Demonstrates continued competence in the field and dedication to excellence

Questions?

Thank You!