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
  o Proof of competency in the field
  o Shows initiative especially when not required
  o May open up promotional opportunities
  o Makes you more marketable
• Personal satisfaction
• Licensure
  o California
  o New York
  o Florida
  o Many others...
• Grossing – High complexity testing CAP/CLIA qualifications
How do I get certified?

• Go to: www.ascp.org

• Items you will need:
  o Email address
  o Name as it appears on your picture ID (e.g. driver’s license)
  o Program information if completed a NAACLS program
  o Contact information for 2 alternates (name, phone, email)
  o Major credit card:
    • HT exam - $215
    • HTL exam - $240
Am I eligible to take the exam?

• Route 1 – Successful completion of a NAACLS accredited program within the last five years
  o HTL – Bachelor degree with a combination of 30 semester hours of biology and chemistry

• Route 2 – OJT
  o 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
  o 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?

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
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](https://www.ascp.org/content/docs/pdf/boc-pdfs/guidelines/examinationcontentguidelinehtl.pdf?sfvrsn=4)
Fixation

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

• Tissue morphology and cell preservation

• Procedures
  o Light microscopy
  o Calcified tissue
  o Frozen section
  o Enzyme histochemistry
  o Immunohistochemistry
  o Cytology
  o In-situ hybridization
  o Quality control

• Instrumentation
  o Components
  o Use
  o Maintenance
  o Troubleshooting
  o Quality control

• Reagents
  o Types and components
  o Properties, functions, actions
  o Quality control
  o Chemistry*
Embedding & Microtomy

• Tissue morphology and cell preservation
• Procedures
  o Paraffin
  o Frozen section
  o Gelatin/adhesive
  o Quality control

• Instrumentation
  o Components
  o Use
  o Maintenance
  o Troubleshooting
  o Quality control
Staining

• Tissue morphology and cell preservation

• Procedures
  o Nuclear and cytoplasmic
  o Carbohydrates and amyloid
  o Connective and muscle
  o Microorganisms
  o Nerve
  o Pigments, minerals and cytoplasmic granules
  o Cytology
  o Immunohistochemistry
  o Enzyme histochemistry*
  o In-situ hybridization*

• Instrumentation
  o Components
  o Use
  o Maintenance
  o Troubleshooting
  o Quality control

• Reagents
  o Types and components
  o Properties, functions, actions
  o Quality control
  o Chemistry*

• Mounting Procedures
  o Media
  o Coverslip
  o Refractive index*
Laboratory Operations

• Safety
  o Storage and disposal
  o Hazards and regulations
  o Procedures

• Lab Math
  o Metric system
  o Percent solutions
  o Molar solutions

• Ancillary Lab Equipment (e.g. pH meter)
  o Components
  o Use
  o Maintenance
  o Troubleshooting
  o Quality control

• Management*
• Education*
• Regulations*
What study resources should I use?

- **Histology Textbooks**

- **Microanatomy Textbook**
What study resources should I use?

• Study Guides

• Online Practice Material
  o NSH + LabCE Histology Exam Simulator
    https://www.medialabinc.net/histology_exam_simulator.aspx
  o 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!