

Committee Process Guidelines for Testlet Construction

Guiding Principle:

Testlets must be written so as to require students to demonstrate an ability to understand the patient issues in the scenario and to apply knowledge of basic biomedical sciences to these issues.

Testlet Scenario Development Practices

- Testlet scenarios may be developed initially by the entire Testlet Committee, small teams of two or three Testlet Committee members or independently by individual Testlet Committee members. They may subsequently be submitted to various Part I discipline-based item writers and consultants for item development.
- Development of subsequent scenarios should begin with an evaluation of topic areas in need of testing and testlets developed to address these. The Part I content specifications become the domain from which potential development of testlet scenarios and items are drawn.
- Eventually, a bank of potential scenarios will be available from which additional testlets may be developed by changing key elements of the scenario. Scenario and item cloning methods will be used to create additional scenarios.
- Clinical scenarios should be realistic and representative of patients who would be managed by a general dentist.
- Medications should be listed by general classification accompanied by a brief description of purpose, e.g., “statin” drugs for high cholesterol.

Testlet Item Development Practices

- The majority of testlet items must be answerable by using and interpreting data from the case scenario (i.e., a candidate should not be able to correctly answer these questions without reading and understanding the scenario). A minority of questions that may be answerable independent of the testlet must, at the very least, be intimately related to an element of the scenario.
- Testlet items should be independent of each other. Information in one item must not provide the answer to another item, nor should the ability to answer a subsequent item be dependent on correctly responding to a previous item.
- Scenario development of a specific testlet in an exam may continue in the stems of subsequent items related to that testlet through the disclosure of additional patient information.
- Testlet item sequencing must be appropriate for the continued scenario development.
- Items relative to oral disease may be included if the disease process is a systemic condition that manifests orally.
- Ethics/professionalism items will require a basic understanding of the ADA Principles of Ethics/Code of Professional Conduct and its application to professional ethical patient management.