



Case Study

The **Right** Approach for ABP Computerized Certification

Background

Founded in 1933, the American Board of Pediatrics (ABP) is one of 24 certifying boards that comprise the American Board of Medical Specialties, and is tasked with certifying general pediatricians and pediatric sub-specialists to ensure high-quality care for infants, children and adolescents. The certification of medical providers by the APB, via the careful review of professional credentials and administration of continuous evaluation of practitioners' core competencies, provides a layer of protection for the American public by assuring that ABP board-certified physicians are maintaining their competence in the field.

Challenge

As a way of continuously evaluating the skill sets of physicians, the ABP administers more than 5,000 recertification examinations each year as part of the Maintenance of Certification Process. It needed to move to a secure, proctored examination and be able to offer global delivery of the examination. As a result, the ABP decided that a more widespread and effective form of examination administration was required.

Strategy

With the dual requirements of scalability and international availability in mind, the ABP looked to computer-based testing (CBT) as a viable alternative to standard paper and pencil-based testing (PBT). Switching to computer-based testing would enable the administration of recertification exams from anywhere at any time, and eliminate the need for candidates to travel hundreds or even thousands of miles to reach a centralized, approved testing location. The ubiquity of a CBT would also increase the number of available seats for recertification tests and provide candidates with greater flexibility and control in examination scheduling.

Once the decision to migrate to CBT was made, the ABP identified three possible issues that could potentially impact the new format: test integrity, site security and delivery model. ABP examination content had never been compromised, and the ABP wanted to ensure that the migration to computerization did not change this fact. The Board also needed to monitor candidate identities to ensure adequate security during the examination process.

Lastly, because the examination is complex and scientific in nature, the ABP made the determination to develop its own test delivery driver, allowing it to maintain full control over the examination's content and format. Finding a testing partner that could work with the ABP's internal development team to support, enhance and integrate this approach was critical to the success of the transition.

ABP Fast Facts:

Location: Chapel Hill, NC

Challenge: Needed to move its Maintenance of Certification Exams to a secure, proctored environment on a global basis.

Outcome: The first exam was administered with an overwhelmingly positive candidate response about the convenience of self-scheduling and the ability to take the exam in a local test center.

Solution

The ABP selected Prometric, the world's trusted provider of technology-enabled testing and assessment services, as its partner for both the transition to CBT and the administration of the maintenance of certification examinations. Prometric's global and secure network of testing centers provided the national and international backbone required by the ABP. Instead of having only one or two dates a year to take the PMCP examination at a given location, candidates could easily schedule their tests via the Internet and take it in their hometown, in or outside of the United States, during an open window of availability.

Prometric's test center network also afforded the ABP the site security and content integrity that it required to ensure proper maintenance of certification. Through a combination of live proctors, closed-circuit television systems and biometric security procedures, candidates' identities were confirmed and validated. The computerized nature of the examination and its secure administration meant that the ABP could assure the public that the individual who appeared at the Prometric testing center was the proper individual.

The unique delivery driver created by the ABP was enhanced by Prometric's willingness to work hand-in-hand with the organization's internal team during the development and transition process. Prometric quickly understood the significance of this examination not only to the candidates, but also to the health and well-being of the general public. Its team of technical specialists helped to seamlessly integrate the delivery driver and examination administration methods into a highly functional testing environment.

Outcome

The first computer-based maintenance of certification examination was administered with an overwhelmingly positive candidate response. Effective communication between the ABP and the test-takers regarding the new format and added security measures, including biometric procedures, were announced well in advance of the testing window in order to head off unpleasant surprises. Candidates were also given an online demonstration of the new format, complete with a sign-on procedure and sample questions, to familiarize themselves with the format and software prior to the actual examination.

Additionally, surveys placed at the end of examinations helped the ABP consolidate candidate responses, which showed that any perceived negatives of the examination were offset by the convenience of self-scheduling and the ability to take the examination in a local test center. Prometric's hands-on involvement during the driver creation process greatly assisted the ABP to deal with the challenges inherent in the development and implementation of the new delivery system.

Find Out More

Learn more about our *Test Development and Delivery Solutions* by visiting www.prometric.com or by calling toll-free 1-855-855-2241.