



## Question Author Application Checklist & Question Development Tips

### Application Checklist

Please collect these items ahead of time and use our question development tips below so you can complete your online application. All items must be submitted during the same application session; you cannot go back to finish the application later.

#### Demographics

- Contact information
- Current institution/practice group
- Practice setting and practice focus
- Medical school and graduation dates (month, date, and year)
- Training program and program dates (month and year)

#### Be prepared to tell us about yourself

- Why are you interested in serving as a question author?
- What skills would you bring to the role?
- What current or recent activities and experiences do you feel are relevant to the position?
- List 2-3 recent publications.

#### For each of your two original questions

- Assessment that correlates to question
- Topic description (e.g., substance abuse disorder, pediatric pain, etc.)
- Question stem
- Three answer options (one must be the correct option)
- Correct option from three options listed
- Keyword phrase (Exams) OR Key point (MOCA Minute)
- Rationale (Exams) OR critique (MOCA Minute)
- Two references

### Question Development Tips

All questions should be multiple choice, consisting of a question stem followed by three options. There should be one unambiguous, correct answer that is easily validated.

- Certification exam questions should have a keyword phrase of 37 characters or fewer; a one- to two-sentence rationale that describes the essential concept being tested; and two references.
- MOCA Minute® questions should include a key point, two references, and a one- to two-paragraph critique that explains why the correct answer is correct and why the distractors are not appropriate choices.

A good question stem should:

- Require examinees to apply knowledge, as opposed to simply recalling it.
- Be concise, clear, grammatically correct and meaningful, and pose a definite problem.

- Present a clinically relevant scenario and associated question that requires reasonable knowledge to answer, and is a good discriminator.
- Be specific enough that it could reasonably be answered without having to look at the options.
- Be written in the third person and not directly address the examinee.

### Example of a Good Stem

The set of options for an item should generally all be similar in length, comprise one category (drugs, procedures, diagnoses, etc.), have the same grammatical construction, and be grammatically consistent with the stem. All incorrect options, or distractors, should be plausible and indicative of typical errors. If options are numbers, they should be presented in ascending or descending order. See the sample question below.

- Stem** → Following coronary artery bypass surgery, a 60-year-old man is receiving an epinephrine infusion. His vital signs are: BP 110/60 mmHg, HR 95 bpm (regular sinus rhythm), PAP 45/25 mmHg, CVP 20 mmHg, SvO<sub>2</sub> 50%, and cardiac index 1.7 L/min/m<sup>2</sup>. Which of the following drugs is **MOST** appropriate to administer?
- Options** →
- A. Milrinone
  - B. Vasopressin
  - C. Dopamine
- Correct Option** → A. Milrinone

### References (Two references are required for all questions)

- Exam questions should include references from accepted reference sources, such as standard texts (e.g., Miller's Anesthesia, Clinical Anesthesia [Barash], etc.) or peer-reviewed journal articles that present empirical evidence.
- For MOCA Minute questions, review articles, especially those published within the past 5 years in peer-reviewed journals, are excellent reference sources. Standard text references are not preferred, but may be included if a recent review or other evidence is not available. The ideal review article (or book chapter, if used) would contain references that justify the statement(s) upon which the question is based.

Please avoid poorly referenced review books, pocket references, or study guides (no matter how good or widely used) for all questions. We also discourage citing URLs from websites.

If you have any questions, please contact Director of Assessment Development & Delivery Anna Menzies at [anna.menzies@theABA.org](mailto:anna.menzies@theABA.org) or (919) 745-2243.

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