

Critical Care Medicine Exam Blueprint

Purpose of the Critical Care Medicine Examination

The critical care medicine physician is a specialist whose knowledge is of necessity broad, involving all aspects of management of the critically ill patient, and whose primary base of operation is the intensive care unit (ICU). This physician has completed training in a primary specialty and has received additional training in critical care medicine aspects of many disciplines. This background enables the physician to work in concert with the various specialists on the patient care team in the ICU; to utilize recognized techniques for vital support; to teach other physicians, nurses, and health professionals the practice of intensive care; and to foster research.

The Critical Care Medicine Examination (CCM) is a summative examination designed to assess the knowledge, skills and abilities that are considered essential for the ABA diplomate to function as a practitioner of the subspecialty of critical care medicine. The examination assesses cognitive and deductive skills as well as the clinical judgment of the candidates.

Exam Content

The CCM Exam covers topics in the following three content categories:

- Basic Pathophysiology
- Critical Illness Diagnosis & Management
- Specialized Areas

Each CCM Exam form is built to the same content specifications, known as an exam blueprint. The examination blueprint is used to ensure that every form of the CCM Exam measures the same depth and breadth of content knowledge. The table below shows the number and relative percentage of questions from each of the three content categories shown above that will appear on each form of the CCM Exam.

Content Category (Relative Percentage)	Number of Questions
Basic Pathophysiology (25%)	48 – 52
Critical Illness Diagnosis & Management (62.5%)	123 – 127
Specialized Areas (12.5%)	23 – 27

Exam Specifications

The CCM Exam consists of 200 questions, and candidates have up to four hours to complete the examination. The CCM Exam includes only A-type questions. A-type questions are single-best answer multiple-choice questions that require the application of knowledge rather than simple recall of factual information. These questions often include a brief clinical vignette followed by a lead-in question and three response options. The CCM Exam includes questions that reference static images. Short video clips may also be included.

Exam Administration

The CCM Exam is administered annually to physicians that have successfully completed an ACGME- accredited anesthesiology critical care medicine fellowship training program. The CCM Exam is a computer-based examination that is administered annually through Pearson VUE centers nationwide. The CCM Exam is administered on a single day.

Content Category (Relative Percentage)	Number of Questions
BASIC PATHOPHYSIOLOGY (25%)	48 – 52
Central Nervous System	4 – 8
Cardiovascular	4 – 8
Pulmonary	4 – 8
Renal	4 – 8
Hematologic/Oncologic	3 – 6
Obstetric	3 – 6
Endocrine	3 – 6
Gastrointestinal	3 – 6
Dermatologic	1 – 2
Immunologic/Infectious Disease	1 – 2
Acid-Base & Electrolyte Abnormalities	3 – 6
CRITICAL ILLNESS DIAGNOSIS & MANAGEMENT (62.5%)	123 – 127
Central Nervous System	11 – 16
Cardiovascular	11 – 16
Pulmonary	11 – 16
Renal	11 – 16
Hematologic/Oncologic	9 – 15
Obstetric	9 – 15
Endocrine	9 – 15
Gastrointestinal	9 – 15

Dermatologic	4 – 6
Immunologic/Infectious Disease	4 – 6
Acid-Base & Electrolyte Abnormalities	9 – 15
SPECIALIZED AREAS (12.5%)	23 – 27
Biostatistics	1 – 2
Disaster Management	1 – 2
Drowning	1 – 2
ICU Ethics	1 – 2
ICU Management & Organization	1 – 2
Infection Control	1 – 2
Life Support & Resuscitation	1 – 2
Nutrition Management	1 – 2
Pain Management	1 – 2
Pharmacology: Indications, Contraindications & Complications	7 – 9
Poisonings, Toxic Ingestion, Overdoses	1 – 2
Procedures	1 – 2
Thermoregulation	1 – 2
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) in healthcare	1 – 2
Healthcare Disparities	1 – 2
Ethics and Medico-Legal Issues	1 – 2
Practice Management	1 – 2
Quality Improvement and Patient Safety	1 – 2