



ASSOCIATION OF RESIDENTS IN RADIATION ONCOLOGY

TO: American Board of Radiology (ABR)
American Society for Radiation Oncology (ASTRO)
Association for Directors of Radiation Oncology Programs (ADROP)

FROM: Association of Residents in Radiation Oncology (ARRO) Executive Committee

DATE: November 14, 2018

We would like to thank Dr. Wallner for meeting with the ARRO Executive Committee as well as Dr. Kachnic for speaking at ARRO Day at the annual conference in San Antonio regarding the 2018 qualifying examinations. We were encouraged by these productive conversations and appreciate Dr. Wallner and Dr. Kachnic's stated commitments on behalf of the ABR to work with ARRO regarding the following:

1. Eligibility for the Examinations

- Dr. Wallner agreed to propose to the board to expand eligibility to sit for the radiation biology and physics qualifying examinations to include PGY-3 and PGY-4 residents. This would allow for program directors and residents to agree upon the best time for a candidate to sit for these examinations. This would be particularly helpful for the programs that alternate didactic courses yearly. In addition, should a candidate fail an examination, it would be possible for the resident to retake the examination a subsequent year without conflicting with the qualifying clinical exam taken after graduation.

2. Providing Feedback to Examinees

- ARRO has heard from numerous residents that they are unclear how to better prepare for the re-examinations. Dr. Wallner and Dr. Kachnic both agreed to provide more granular feedback regarding examination performance in specific topics to examinees and program directors. We believe this information is critical in order for residents and educators to understand the knowledge gaps that may be present regarding what is considered to be "foundational knowledge."¹

3. Transparency and Statistical Validity

- We appreciate the ABR's willingness to provide greater transparency regarding examination development and scoring. Both Dr. Wallner and Dr. Kachnic stated they would release data of examinee performance on both the validated "old" questions and the "new" questions utilized in this year's qualifying examinations subgrouped by residents who passed and failed the overall exam.

ARRO strongly believes that we all share the same goals of training and certifying competent and proficient radiation oncologists. We agree with the ABR that standardized curricula for radiation biology and physics are required. ARRO is pleased to be a part of the task forces convened to create topic lists/syllabi for these subjects that will be available prior to the 2019 examinations. Following this, we call upon ASTRO to engage all stakeholder organizations, including ADROP, SCAROP, ACGME, ABR, and ARRO, in developing standardized curricula for these critical subjects.

We feel strongly that radiation oncology residents should be updated regarding the discussions that took place at ASTRO. We will therefore release this letter to residents later this week. We appreciate the ABR's commitment to work with the ARRO executive committee and we look forward to your response to the above issues.

CC:	Paul Wallner MD	Brent Wagner, MD	Allen Chen MD
	Lisa Kachnic MD	Brian Kavanaugh MD, FASTRO	Kenneth Olivier MD
	Brian Davis MD	Paul Harari, MD, FASTRO	Neha Vapiwala MD.
	Valerie P. Jackson MD	Theodore DeWeese MD, FASTRO	

1. Becker GJ, Bosma JL, Guiberteau MJ, Gerdeman AM, Frush DP, Borgstede JP. ABR examinations: the why, what, and how. *Int J Radiat Oncol Biol Phys*. 2013;87(2):237-245.