

## Richard Paul

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**To:** Zuziak, Pamela  
**Subject:** RE: ABD MOC Self-Assessment Questions from the Chicago Dermatological Society

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**From:** Zuziak, Pamela [mailto:PZUZIAK1@hfhs.org]  
**Sent:** Friday, March 06, 2015 1:06 PM  
**To:** Richard Paul (richardpaul@dls.net) <richardpaul@dls.net>  
**Cc:** Zuziak, Pamela <PZUZIAK1@hfhs.org>  
**Subject:** ABD MOC Self-Assessment Questions from the Chicago Dermatological Society  
**Importance:** High

Dear Richard Paul,

Many thanks to you for developing self-assessment activities for ABD Maintenance of Certification credit. The feedback we have received is positive. To try to ensure a consistent quality of the activities, experienced item writers from ABD read through the submitted questions before approval. Reviewers may simply suggest ways that items may be written more clearly, but there are certain problems that invariably result in an item's being returned for rewriting.

Many of the problems could be averted if item writers would review this very brief list before they start to write their questions.

Dear self-assessment item writers:

Thank you in advance for preparing self-assessment questions. To be approved, questions should, at a minimum, adhere to the instructions below.

Items for self-assessment SHOULD

- be of relevance to and tailored to the needs of the practicing dermatologist
- be focused around a concept / teaching point
- contain a discussion of why the correct answer is correct and the incorrect answer is incorrect (either narrative or short bulleted list)
- have associated references

Items SHOULD NOT

- test trivia
- have a "Which of the following is a true statement?" format
- contain "all of the above" or "none of the above" as an option
- have fewer than 5 options (When 5 plausible options do not exist, it may be acceptable to have 4.)
- be "hinged" to the answer of a related item (In hinged items, information in a preceding item clues the answer, or answering the item correctly requires answering a preceding item correctly.)

More information about item writing is available on the ABD website.

While the above list is not comprehensive, it covers the most common problems. The standards for item writing that ABD uses are essentially the standards developed by the National Board of Medical Examiners and serve to ensure a uniform and fair experience for the participants.

We ask that you distribute this information to all question writers in advance of their starting to work on their questions.

Thank you.

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*The ABD is on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/ABDermatology](http://www.facebook.com/ABDermatology)*

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