



The American Board of Pathology

Practice Areas Topics

ABPath CertLink® has 31 Practice Areas. A percentage of questions from some Practice Areas are automatically assigned to a diplomate based on their primary and subspecialty certifications. Other Practice Areas are elective, allowing a diplomate to design their own practice relevant assessment (syllabus).

To assist in selection of elective Practice Areas, the topics included in each are listed below. This list is not intended to be all inclusive.

Blood Bank/Transfusion Medicine (BBTM)

- BBTM NOS, Other
- Clinical Practice
- Autoimmune Hemolytic Anemia
- Paroxysmal Nocturnal Hemoglobinuria
- Bleeding from Congenital and Acquired Coagulation Defects; Antithrombotic Therapy
- Cell and Tissue Therapy
- HLA Antigens and Alleles
- Tissue Banking and Engineering
- Gene Therapy in BBTM
- RBCs and RBC Components
- Red Cell Production, Metabolism, and Preservation
- Red Cell Immunology and Compatibility Testing
- Anemia and Red Blood Cell Transfusion
- Apheresis
- Therapeutic Plasma Exchange
- Therapeutic Hemapheresis and Phlebotomy
- Hazards of Transfusion; Adverse Events
- Plasma Components and Derivatives
- Blood Donors and Blood Collection
- Quality, Legal and Regulatory Issues
- Surgery, Trauma, Transplant Patients
- Biovigilance & Immunomodulation
- Platelets
- Neutrophils
- Obstetric and Pediatric Patients
- Hematopoietic Progenitor Cell (HPC) Transplantation

Breast (BR)

- Breast NOS, Other
- Breast and Nipple Cytology
- Benign Breast Disease and Inflammatory
- Papillary Lesions
- Ductal and Lobular Carcinoma in Situ
- Malignant Breast Disease
- Mixed Epithelial and Stromal Tumors

Cardiovascular (CV)

- Cardiovascular NOS, Other
- Ischemic and Hypertensive Heart Disease
- Congenital Heart Disease
- Cardiomyopathies
- Cardiac Tumors
- Cardiac Valvular Lesions
- Pericardial Diseases
- Diseases of Blood Vessels

Chemical Pathology (CH)

- Analytical Techniques
- Evaluation of Organ Function
- Muscle and Cardiac
- Liver
- GI and Pancreas
- Bone
- Tumor Markers
- Carbohydrates, Lipids, Proteins
- Electrolytes and Blood Gases
- Therapeutic Drugs and Toxicology
- Toxic Metals
- Kidney
- Disorders of Water, Electrolyte, and Acid-Base Metabolism
- Endocrine
- Inborn Errors of Metabolism
- Hematopoietic and Immunologic Disorders
- Lab Management

Clinical Informatics (CI)

- Informatics NOS, Other
- Nature of Information
- Data Architectures and Management (databases)
- Coding and Tracking (barcode, SNOMED, etc.)
- Electronic Information Systems
- Qualities of Information Systems
- System Regulations (HIPAA)
- Computer Basics (hardware, software)
- Digital Imaging
- Project Management
- Laboratory Policies, Procedures, and Directives (“Document Control”)
- Inferences from Information

Clinical Pathology, General (CP)

- Clinical Pathology NOS, Other
- Transfusion Medicine, Clinical Practice
- RBCs and RBC Components
- Apheresis
- Hazards of Transfusion
- Plasma Components and Derivatives
- Blood Donors and Blood Collection
- Platelets
- Transplantation
- Hematology Testing & Instrumentation
- RBC Disorders
- WBC Disorders, Non-neoplastic
- Infectious Disorders
- Benign Disorders of Lymphoid Tissues
- Hemostasis and Thrombosis
- Myeloid Neoplasms
- Lymphoid and Plasma Cell Neoplasms
- Histiocytic/Dendritic Cell Neoplasms
- Informatics
- Coding (e.g., SNOMED, etc.)
- Electronic Information Systems
- Digital Imaging
- Statistics
- Lab Quality Management
- Analytic Risks and Mitigation
- Patient Safety
- Employee and Environmental Safety
- Human Resources
- Lab Financial Management
- Laws and Regulations for Laboratories
- CLIA
- Proficiency Testing
- Professionalism and Ethics
- Microbiology Management
- Bacteria

- Mycobacteria, Nocardia, Other Aerobic Actinomycetes
- Fungi
- Viruses & Prions
- Parasites
- Microbiology Methods
- Molecular Pathology
- Molecular Genetic Principles
- Molecular Techniques, Methods, Assays
- Ethical, Legal, and Regulatory Issues
- MGP Inherited Diseases
- MGP Solid Tumors
- MGP Hematopathology
- Pharmacogenetics and Genomics
- MGP Infectious Disease

Cytopathology – nonGYN (CY-nonGYN)

- Cyto-nonGYN NOS, Other
- Body Fluids
- CNS and Eye
- Urinary Tract
- Lung, Respiratory
- GI Tract
- Liver, Biliary
- Pancreas
- Salivary Gland
- Thyroid and Parathyroid
- Lymph Node
- Head and Neck, Oral
- Breast and Nipple
- Mediastinum and Retroperitoneum
- Kidneys and Adrenal
- Soft Tissue, Skin, Bone, Superficial Lumps
- Lab Administration, Management, Techniques and Procedures

Cytopathology – GYN (CY-GYN)

- Cyto-GYN NOS, Other
- Cervical/Vaginal/Anogenital Cytology
- Screening, Indications, Techniques, Adequacy
- Normal, NILM
- Infections
- Reactive/Reparative
- HPV
- Atypical Squamous Cells
- SIL and Squamous Cell Carcinoma
- Atypical Glandular Cells; Adenocarcinoma: Endometrial and Endocervical
- Management and Reporting Guidelines
- Lower Anogenital Tract (anal, vulvar)
- Female Genital (endometrium)

Dermatopathology (DP)

- Dermatopathology NOS, Other
- Inflammatory Reaction Patterns
- The Epidermis
- The Dermis
- Normal Skin
- Artifacts
- Diseases of Cutaneous Appendages
- Cysts, Sinuses, and Pits
- Panniculitis
- Metabolic and Storage Diseases
- Infections and Infestations
- Benign Tumors
- Malignant Tumors
- Laboratory Techniques

Endocrine (ENDO)

- Endocrine NOS, Other
- Multiple Endocrine Neoplasia
- Pituitary, Sella, Pineal
- Thyroid
- Non-neoplastic
- Neoplastic
- Parathyroid
- Reproductive; Ovary, Testis

- Adrenal
- Pancreas
- Paraganglioma

Female Reproductive (FEM)

- Female Reproductive NOS, Other
- Cervical/Vaginal Cytology
- Female Genital, NOS, Other
- Gestational Trophoblastic Disease
- Placenta
- Vulva
- Vagina
- Cervix
- Uterine Corpus
- Ovaries
- Fallopian Tube and Broad Ligament
- Peritoneum

Forensic Pathology (FP)

- Forensic Pathology NOS, Other
- Natural Deaths
- Pediatric Deaths
- Cardiovascular System
- Chronic Alcoholism
- Central Nervous System
- Respiratory System
- Hepatic, GI, Pancreatic System
- Other Organ Systems
- Infectious Disease/Microbiology
- Trauma, Mechanical & Physical Injury
- Asphyxia
- Firearms; Ballistics
- Sharp Injuries (Cutting & Stabbing)
- Fire/Thermal Deaths
- Chemical Injury: Toxicology and Postmortem Chemistry
- Water-Related Deaths
- All other causes of death

GI - incl. liver, pancreas, biliary (GI)

- GI NOS, Other
- GI Cytology
- Esophagus
- Stomach
- Small Intestine
- Appendix
- Colorectal
- Anal Canal
- Liver, NOS
- Liver Metabolic Diseases
- Viral Hepatitis (Hepatitis A, B, C)
- Alcoholic Liver Disease
- Liver Infectious Diseases
- Liver Neoplasms
- Pancreas, NOS, Other
- Pancreas Non-neoplastic
- Pancreas Neoplastic
- Gallbladder, Extrahepatic Biliary Tree

Head & Neck/Oral (HN)

- Head and Neck NOS, Other
- Head & Neck; Salivary Gland FNA
- Jaws and Oral Cavity, NOS
- Oral cavity, Non-neoplastic
- Oral cavity, Neoplastic
- Salivary Glands; Nonneoplastic
- Salivary Glands; Neoplastic
- Nose, Paranasal Sinuses, and Nasopharynx
- Larynx; Non-neoplastic
- Larynx; Neoplastic
- Ear and Temporal Bone
- Eye and Ocular Adnexa

Hematology – Blood, BM (HE)

- Hematology NOS, Other
- Methodology, Instrumentation and Tests
- Hemoglobinopathies
- Morphology
- Flow Cytometry
- Molecular and Cytogenetic Testing
- Normal Hematopoiesis
- RBC Disorders
- WBC Disorders, Non-neoplastic
- Infectious Disorders
- Fluid Specimens
- Hemostasis and Thrombosis
- Myeloid Neoplasms
- Lymphoid Neoplasms
- Admin & Lab Management

Hematopathology – LN, Spleen (HP)

- Hemepath NOS, Other
- Lymph Node, Non-neoplastic
- Spleen
- Thymus
- B & T-lymphoblastic Leukemia/Lymphoma
- Mature B-cell Neoplasms
- Mature T- and NK-cell Neoplasms
- Hodgkin Lymphoma
- Plasma Cell Neoplasms, Paraprotein Disorders & Amyloidosis
- Histiocytic/Dendritic Cell Neoplasms
- Metastatic Neoplasms
- Lymph Node FNA

Hemostasis & Thrombosis/Coagulation (COAG)

- H&T/Coagulation NOS, Other
- Methods, Instrumentation
- Coagulation and Fibrinolysis Testing
- Platelet Testing
- Thrombophilia Testing
- Coagulation and Fibrinolytic Disorders
- Platelet Disorders and von Willebrand Disease
- Thrombophilic Disorders
- Antiplatelet and Anticoagulant Drugs and Monitoring

Infectious Diseases (ID)

- Infectious Diseases NOS, Other
- Management and Informatics
- Safety (Bio Safety)
- Compliance and Regulations
- Bacteria
- Stains and Direct Examination
- Aerobic Bacteria
- Anaerobic Bacteria
- Mycoplasmas and Ureaplasma
- Spirochetes
- Intracellular Bacteria
- Mycobacteria
- Nocardia and Other Aerobic Actinomycetes
- Fungi, NOS
- Fungi-Stains and Direct Examination
- Yeasts and Yeast-Like Fungi
- Hyaline Septate Molds
- Dimorphic Fungi
- Zygomycetes
- Dematiaceous Fungi
- Microsporidia
- Viruses & Prions, NOS, Other
- Herpesviridae (HSV, VZV, EBV, CMV, HHV6, 7, and 8)
- Hepadnaviridae (HBV and HDV)
- Papillomaviruses
- Retroviruses (HIV, HTLV)
- Prions
- Parasites, NOS, Other

- Protozoa
- Nematodes (Round Worms)
- Trematodes (Flukes)
- Cestodes (Tapeworms)
- Insects, Arthropods, and Arachnids
- General Methods
- Molecular Methods

Lab Management/Medical Director/Patient Safety (LM MD)

- Lab Management NOS, Other
- Informatics
- Coding and Tracking (e.g., SNOMED, barcodes, etc.)
- Electronic Information Systems, LIS, EMR
- Statistics, Decision Models, Big Data
- Quality Management
- Quality
- Patient Safety
- Employee and Environmental Safety; OSHA
- Risk Monitoring and Mitigation
- Human Resources
- Employees
- Customers
- Suppliers and Supplies
- Finance, NOS
- Management of Expenses, Revenue, and Capital
- Major Payors
- Business Strategy
- Laws and Regulations
- CLIA
- CAP
- Proficiency Testing
- Joint Commission
- Physician Relations (specific laws e.g., Stark and anti-kickback)
- Regulation of Information and Information Management (HIPPA)
- Professionalism and Ethics

Male Genital (MG)

- Male Genital NOS, Other
- Prostate Nonneoplastic & Inflammatory Disorders
- Adenocarcinoma of Prostate, Acinar (usual) Type; PIN
- Gleason Grading
- Mimickers of Prostate Cancer
- Therapy Effects
- Prostate Carcinoma Variants
- Seminal Vesicles
- Testis, NOS, Other
- Testicular and Paratesticular Tumors
- Germ Cell Tumors
- Sex Cord-stromal Tumors
- Hematopoietic Tumors
- Penis, NOS, Other
- Penis Neoplasms

Medical Microbiology (MMB)

- Med Microbiology NOS, Other
- Management and Informatics
- Quality Control
- Safety (Bio Safety), Risk Management
- Supplies, Reagents, Stains
- Compliance and Regulations
- Collection, Handling, & Processing of Specimens
- Media
- Stains and Direct Examination
- Identification Methods and Instrumentation
- Antibacterial, Antifungal, Antimycobacterial Agents and Susceptibility Testing
- Mechanisms of Resistance
- Aerobic Bacteria
- Gram-Positive Aerobic Bacteria

- Gram-Negative Aerobic Bacteria
- Anaerobic Bacteria
- Mycoplasmas and Ureaplasma
- Spirochetes
- Intracellular Bacteria
- Mycobacteria
- Nocardia and Other Aerobic Actinomycetes
- Fungi, NOS, Other
- Fungal Stains and Direct Examination
- Yeasts and Yeast-Like Fungi
- Hyaline Septate Molds
- Dimorphic Fungi
- Zygomycetes
- Dematiaceous Fungi
- Microsporidia
- Virus Identification, Resistance, Susceptibility, Antiviral Agents
- Viruses, NOS, Other
- Herpesviridae (HSV, VZV, EBV, CMV, HHV6, 7, and 8)
- Hepadnaviridae (HBV and HDV)
- Prions
- Parasites, NOS, Other
- Protozoa
- Nematodes (Round Worms)
- Trematodes (Flukes)
- Cestodes (Tapeworms)
- Insects, Arthropods, and Arachnids
- Molecular Methods

Medical Renal (MR) (PENDING UPDATES**)**

- Medical Renal NOS, Other
- Developmental/Congenital Lesions
- Proliferative Glomerulonephritides
- Non-glomerulonephritic Glomerulonephropathies (glomerular capillary wall lesions leading to nephrotic syndrome)
- Glomerular Diseases Associated with Isolated Hematuria
- Diseases Associated with Acellular Closure of Glomerular Capillaries
- Lupus Nephropathies
- Monoclonal Gammopathy Associated Renal Disease
- Tubulointerstitial Disease
- Vascular Lesions
- End Stage Renal Disease
- Renal Transplantation

Molecular Genetic Pathology – AP emphasis (MGP AP)

- MGP NOS, Other
- Normal Structure and Function
- Mechanisms of Alteration/Types of Defect
- Inherited and Somatic Defects
- Techniques and Methods
- Assay Performance, Validation, QC, QA
- Ethical, Legal, and Regulatory Issues
- Inherited Diseases
- Inherited Cancer Syndromes
- Solid Tumors
- Hematopathology
- Pharmacogenetics
- Infectious Diseases
- Identity Testing
- Histocompatibility
- Informatics

Molecular Genetic Pathology – CP emphasis (MGP CP)

- MGP-CP NOS, Other
- Normal Structure and Function
- Mechanisms of Alteration/Types of Defect
- Inherited and Somatic Defects

- Techniques and Methods
- Assay Performance, Validation, QC, QA, PT
- Ethical, Legal, and Regulatory Issues
- Indications for Testing
- Inherited Diseases
- Inherited Cancer Syndromes
- Hematopathology
- Pharmacogenetics
- Infectious Disease
- Viruses
- Bacteria
- Fungi/Yeast and Parasites
- Prion Disorders
- Identity Testing
- Histocompatibility
- Informatics

Neuropathology - incl. Neuromuscular (NP)

- Neuropathology NOS, Other
- Neuroanatomy
- Pathologic Responses in Neurons and Axons; Inclusions
- Pathologic Reactions of Astrocytes, Oligodendrocytes, Ependymal Cells, Microglia
- Molecular Techniques, Staining, and Special Microscopy
- Developmental Neuropathology
- Fetal and Neonatal Hypoxic-ischemic Lesions
- Perinatal Hemorrhages
- Malformations
- Neuronal Migration Defects
- Dysgenetic Syndromes
- Hydrocephalus
- Metabolic/Environmental/Iatrogenic
- Spinal Muscular Atrophy
- Epilepsy
- Vascular Disorders
- Trauma
- Infectious/Inflammatory Disease
- Demyelinating Diseases
- Complications of Systemic Disorders
- Aging and Neurodegenerative Diseases
- Alzheimer Disease, NOS
- Tauopathies
- Neoplasms NOS, Other
- Astrocytomas
- Oligodendroglial Tumors
- Ependymal and Choroid Plexus Tumors
- Neuronal and Mixed Neuronal-glia Tumors
- Tumors of the Pineal Region
- Embryonal Tumors
- Tumors of Cranial and Paraspinal Nerves
- Tumors of the Meninges/Meningothelial Cells
- Mesenchymal (Nonmeningothelial) Tumors
- Lymphoma and Hematopoietic tumors
- Tumors of the Sellar Region
- Germ Cell Tumors
- Cysts
- Metastatic Tumors
- Familial Tumor Predisposition Syndromes
- Skeletal Muscle
- Inflammatory Myopathies
- Metabolic Diseases
- Muscular Dystrophies
- Congenital Myopathies
- Peripheral Nerve
- Inflammatory Neuropathies
- Ophthalmic Pathology

Pediatric Pathology (PP)

- Pediatric Pathology NOS, Other
- Perinatal Pathology: Placental-maternal-fetal Relationships
- Fetal/Neonatal Pathophysiology; Fetal Demise
- Genetic, Metabolic, Inherited Disorders
- Cardiovascular System
- Respiratory System and Mediastinum
- Central Nervous System; Eye and Ear
- Skin
- Alimentary Tract
- Hepatobiliary System and Pancreas
- Kidney and Urinary System
- Endocrine System, Excluding Ovary and Testis
- Hematopoietic System (e.g., Bone Marrow, Lymph Nodes, Thymus, Spleen)
- Breast
- Female Reproductive System
- Male Reproductive System
- Soft Tissue, Peripheral Nerve, Muscle, and Bone
- Management and Informatics
- Forensic Pathology

Placenta (PLA)

- Placenta NOS, Other
- Normal Anatomy and Histology
- Membrane Pathology
- Umbilical Cord Pathology
- Fetal Vessel Pathology
- Villous Pathology
- Maternal Intervillous Space Pathology
- Basal Plate Pathology
- Placental Tumors
- Implantation Pathology
- Multifetal Pregnancy
- Gestational Trophoblastic Diseases
- Maternal Disorders Affecting Pregnancy
- Maternal Complications of Pregnancy
- Fetal Loss/Intrauterine Fetal Demise

Pulmonary; Mediastinum (PUL)

- Pulmonary, Mediastinum NOS, Other
- Cytology
- Normal Anatomy
- Non-neoplastic
- Neoplastic Benign
- Neoplastic Malignant
- Metastatic
- Pleura
- Mesothelioma
- Mediastinum
- Thymus
- Germ Cell Tumors
- Lymphoma
- Other Mediastinum

Soft Tissue & Bone (ST)

- Soft Tissue & Bone NOS, Other
- Cytology
- Medical Neuromuscular Diseases
- Fibrous/Myofibroblastic Tumors
- Adipose Tumors
- Smooth Muscle Tumors
- Skeletal Muscle Tumors
- Vascular Tumors
- Perivascular Tumors
- Cartilaginous Soft Tissue Tumors
- Benign Soft Tissue Tumors of Uncertain Type
- Malignant Soft Tissue Tumors of Uncertain Type
- Bone and Joint, NOS, Other
- Non-neoplastic Bone

- Neoplastic Bone
- Osteogenic Tumors
- Chondroid Tumors

- Vascular Tumors
- Miscellaneous
- Joints

Transplant Pathology (TRANS)

- Transplant NOS, Other
- Hematopoietic Progenitor Cells
- HLA Matching
- Tissue Banks
- Cardiac Transplantation
- Cardiac Allograft Rejection
- Liver Transplantation
- Small Intestine Transplantation
- GVHD
- Pancreas Transplantation
- Lung Transplantation
- Renal Transplantation
- Skin, Face Transplantation

Urinary Tract, Kidney (UT)

- UT, Kidney NOS, Other
- Urinary Tract and Kidney Cytology
- Development/Congenital Lesions
- Vascular Lesions
- Adult Renal Tumors
- Pediatric Renal Tumors
- Non-neoplastic
- Neoplastic