

CYTOLOGIST AND INTERNATIONAL CYTOLOGIST, CT(ASCP) AND CT(ASCPⁱ) SPECIALIST AND INTERNATIONAL SPECIALIST IN CYTOLOGY, SCT(ASCP) AND SCT(ASCPⁱ) EXAMINATION CONTENT GUIDELINE

EXAMINATION MODEL

The CT(ASCP), CT(ASCPⁱ), SCT(ASCP), and SCT(ASCPⁱ) certification examinations are composed of 100 questions given in a 2 hour 30 minute time frame. All exam questions are multiple-choice with one best answer. The certification exams are administered using the format of computer adaptive testing (CAT).

With CAT, when a person answers a question correctly, the next test question has a slightly higher level of difficulty. The difficulty level of the questions presented to the examinee continues to increase until a question is answered incorrectly. Then a slightly easier question is presented. In this way, the test is tailored to the individual's ability level.

Each question in the test bank is calibrated for level of difficulty and is classified by content area. The content area aligns with the examination specific content outline. The examinee must answer enough questions correctly to achieve a measure above the pass point in order to successfully pass the certification examination. There is no set number of questions one must answer to pass, nor is there a set percentage one must achieve to pass. If at the end of the exam the examinee's score is above the pass point, then he or she passes the exam.

EXAMINATION CONTENT AREAS

The CT and SCT exam questions encompass the following content areas within Cytology: Gynecological Cytology, Non-Gynecological Cytology (subdivided into Respiratory System, Genitourinary System, and Body Cavity Fluids), Fine Needle Aspiration and Other, and Laboratory Operations. Each of these content areas comprises a specific percentage of the overall 100-question exam. The content areas and percentages are described below:

CONTENT AREA	EXAM PERCENTAGE	
	CT	SCT
GYNECOLOGICAL CYTOLOGY	40 – 45%	20 – 25%
NON-GYNECOLOGICAL CYTOLOGY:	25 – 35%	15 – 25%
• RESPIRATORY SYSTEM	8 – 12%	5 – 10%
• GENITOURINARY SYSTEM	8 – 12%	5 – 10%
• BODY CAVITY FLUIDS	8 – 12%	5 – 10%
FINE NEEDLE ASPIRATION AND OTHER	10 – 15%	15 – 25%
LABORATORY OPERATIONS	15 – 20%	35 – 40%

For a more specific overview of the CT and SCT exams, please refer to the [CONTENT OUTLINE](#) starting on page 2.

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EXAMINATION CONTENT OUTLINE

Examination questions, which are related to the subtest areas outlined below, will be both theoretical and procedural. Theoretical questions measure skills necessary to apply knowledge of cytologic criteria, identify/evaluate microscopic findings, and correlate microscopic findings to disease states. Procedural questions measure skills necessary to select appropriate laboratory techniques and follow quality assurance protocols. Additionally, regulatory questions are based on U.S. sources (e.g., AABB, FDA, CLIA, etc.).

I. GYNECOLOGICAL CYTOLOGY (CT: 40 – 45% ; SCT: 20 – 25%)

Body sites to include:

- Cervix
- Endocervix
- Endometrium/uterus
- Fallopian tube
- Ovary
- Vagina
- Vulva

A. Anatomy, Physiology, and Embryologic Origins B. Histology and Normal Cellular Morphology C. Pathology, Cytopathology, and Biologic Behavior

1. Congenital anomalies
2. Benign lesions/reactions
 - a. Inflammation
 - b. Organisms and contaminants
 - c. Benign tumors, hyperplasias, and cysts
 - d. Effects of therapeutic regimens
3. Functional disorders/endocrinology
4. ASCUS/Atypical glandular cells/premalignant epithelial/indeterminate lesions
5. Malignant tumors, epithelial and nonepithelial

NON-GYNECOLOGICAL CYTOLOGY: (TOTAL CT: 25 – 35% ; TOTAL SCT: 15 – 25%)

II. RESPIRATORY SYSTEM

(CT: 8 – 12% ; SCT: 5 – 10%)

Body sites to include:

- Upper respiratory system
- Lower respiratory system

A. Anatomy, Physiology, and Embryologic Origins B. Histology and Normal Cellular Morphology C. Pathology, Cytopathology, and Biologic Behavior

1. Congenital anomalies
2. Benign lesions/reactions
 - a. Inflammation
 - b. Organisms and contaminants
 - c. Benign tumors, hyperplasias, and cysts
 - d. Effects of therapeutic regimens
3. Functional disorders/endocrinology
4. Premalignant epithelial/indeterminate lesions
5. Malignant tumors, epithelial and nonepithelial

III. GENITOURINARY SYSTEM (CT: 8 – 12% ; SCT: 5 – 10%)

Body sites to include:

- Bladder
- Kidney
- Ureters
- Urethra

A. (SEE II.A) B. (SEE II.B) C. (SEE II.C.1 – 5)

IV. BODY CAVITY FLUIDS

(CT: 8 – 12% ; SCT: 5 – 10%)

Body sites to include:

- Central nervous system
- Pericardial, peritoneal, and pleural cavities
- Other (e.g., synovial)

A. (SEE II.A)

B. (SEE II.B)

C. (SEE II.C.1 – 5)

V. FINE NEEDLE ASPIRATIONS AND OTHER

(CT: 10 – 15% ; SCT: 15 – 25%)

Body Sites

- Adrenal glands
- Bone
- Breast
- Kidney
- Liver
- Lung
- Lymph nodes
- Pancreas
- Salivary glands
- Soft tissues
- Thyroid gland
- Other rare exfoliative/FNA types (e.g., GI tract, biliary tract, anal PAP, eye, ovary, skin)

A. (SEE II.A)

B. (SEE II.B)

C. (SEE II.C.1 – 5)

D. Rapid Onsite Evaluation and Triage of FNA

E. FNA, EBUS/EUS

VI. LABORATORY OPERATIONS

(CT: 15 – 20% ; SCT: 35 – 40%)

A. Quality Management

1. Quality control
2. Quality assessment methodology and tools
3. Risk management

B. Cytopreparation Techniques/Instrumentation (to include collection, processing, and special techniques)

1. Principles
2. Procedures
3. Troubleshooting
4. Fixatives and routine stains
5. Validation

C. Safety and Infection Control (e.g., OSHA, SDS, NFPA, NIOSH)

D. Compliance

1. Federal requirements (e.g., CLIA, HIPAA)
2. Laboratory accreditation (e.g., CAP, The Joint Commission)

E. Companion Diagnostics

1. Molecular (including HPV)
2. FISH/CISH
3. Immunohistochemistry
4. Special stains (e.g., AFB, PAS, GMS)

F. Management (SCT EXAM ONLY)

1. Work flow, scheduling, and productivity
2. Laboratory information systems/information technology
3. Policies and procedures
 - a. Accreditation
 - b. Operations manuals
 - c. Quality assurance plan
 - d. Clinical and Laboratory Standards Institute Guidelines
4. Financial management
 - a. Operating budget
 - b. Capital budget
 - c. Accounting principles (e.g., balance sheets, income statements, cash flow, depreciation)
5. Personnel management
 - a. Principles of supervision
 - b. Hiring/interviewing/selection
 - c. Motivation/discipline/counseling
 - d. Job descriptions
 - e. Performance standards, evaluation, and competency assessment
6. Communication

G. Education and Training (SCT EXAM ONLY)

1. New employee orientation
2. In-service training
3. Principles of education
4. Standards and guidelines for accreditation of CT programs

Examples provided (as indicated by e.g.) are not limited to those listed.

All Board of Certification examinations use conventional and SI units for results and reference ranges.

END OF CONTENT GUIDELINE