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How to Use the Content Outline to Prepare for the Certified Orthotic Fitter (COF) Multiple Choice Certification Examination

The ***Certified Orthotic Fitter Content Outline*** is a schedule of the tasks involved and the domains of the practice of a COF. The Content Outline is derived from a Job Analysis, a careful description of the tasks performed by practitioners. A randomized national survey of O&P practitioners is conducted by BOC every five years to determine what changes, if any, have occurred in the practice. From this survey the Content Outline is updated and the exam questions revised.

Each question on the exam is based on this outline. In fact, ***none*** of the BOC certification exams can contain any question, case simulation or demonstration that cannot be directly linked to a specific item in the relevant Content Outline. Therefore, to prepare to take the exam, we suggest that you study this Outline and especially consider what the underlying knowledge, skills and abilities you need to be able to serve patients.

The format of the exam is such that it does not follow this outline in order; rather, questions regarding outline sections are placed randomly throughout the exam. In order to understand how to fit a Lumbar Orthoses for example, one has to comprehend the relevant anatomy, the pathophysiology, the material and engineering sciences, etc.

A practitioner must be a complete instrument for patient care, providing maximum benefit, not just fabrication, adjustment or placement. This, then, is the basis for the examinations that test the knowledge, skills and abilities of a competent practitioner. It is not sufficient just to know how to fit a patient with a device – your patient has to be able to benefit from your service. This will not happen until s/he, for example, knows how to don and doff, care for, and in general utilize the orthosis provided. This is why each candidate is required to have a significant period of patient care practice experience to be eligible to take the exam. You won't get all your preparation at one school (e.g. Trulife, SAI, DeRoyal, etc.)--you will learn the fundamentals and then sharpen them during patient care practice. To study, review your original training materials. Bring your patient experience into play; it is indispensable.

To study a good sample of questions on-line please refer to the **Self-Assessment Examination (SAE)** or practice test, developed by experts to help you prepare for certification. All questions come from prior exams; answers are confidential, a computer grades your exam. Several reports help you understand your grade and establish your strengths and weaknesses. You may re-take the exam as often as you like, in the privacy of your home or office. For more information regarding the SAE, go to www.bocusa.org.

Now, to the specifics of the COF Content Outline.

Performance Levels

There are three Performance Levels, or levels of difficulty, for exam questions: Recall (RE), Application (AP), and Analysis/Evaluation (AN).

RECALL (RE) questions require only the recognition of specific factual information, which generally does not vary, relative to the situation. An example is:

Which of the following is **NOT** a type of sander?

- A. belt
- B. palm
- C. band
- D. drum

APPLICATION (AP) questions require the comprehension, interpretation or manipulation of concepts or data, in which the response or outcome is situationally dependent, but not overly complex (i.e., application of knowledge which varies based on patient and environmental characteristics). An example is:

To fit a Jewett hyperextension, the fitter needs all of the following measurements **EXCEPT**

- A. hip circumference.
- B. chest circumference.
- C. mandible to sternal notch.
- D. symphysis pubis to sternal notch.

ANALYSIS/EVALUATION (AN) questions require integration or synthesis of a variety of concepts or elements to solve a specific problem situation (i.e., evaluating and rendering judgments on complex problems with many situational variables). An example is:

After fitting a patient with an LSO with APL, the fitter should remind the patient to return if there is

1. significant weight gain/loss.
2. any skin irritation.
3. an increase in pain.

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 1 and 3 only
- C. 2 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2, and 3

Now, examine the Content Outline. Note the three **bold face numbers on the top right** of the Outline: these indicate the number of questions in each section by performance level. The total number of questions, by performance level is summed at the end of the Content Outline (i.e., 24 RE, 60 AP, 16 AN, total 100 questions). Note the majority of questions (60) are at the Application (AP) level, which is testing your understanding, analysis and management of concepts or data from a patient in a particular situation. Both AP and AN questions require clinical patient care experience.

To understand how to use the Content Outline to anticipate the exam questions, consider the following two examples. Compare Example 1 and 2 below with the Content Outline section 1 and 8. Notice that there is not one reference source encompassing all that is contained in the exam; it is a combination of education, training and experience.

Example 1: *Reprinted from COF Content Outline*

	<u>RE</u> 1	<u>AP</u> 5	<u>AN</u> 2
I. Facilities Management			
A. Determine elements of the fitting room (e.g., adjustable stool, exam/fitting table, mirror, hard back chair, and parallel bars, or other appropriate ambulating device)			
B. Determine required equipment, tools, and materials			
1. manufacturing/alteration equipment (e.g., heat gun, oven, bending irons, sewing machine, alignment device, anvil, grinding and carving tools, vise)			
2. measuring devices (e.g., tape measures, goniometer, calipers, VAPC caliper, ML gauge, measuring chart, plumb bob, yard/meter stick)			
3. casting equipment and materials (e.g., saws, spreaders, stockinette, indelible pencil, plaster of Paris, fiberglass, surgical gloves, water, bowls)			
C. Comply with environmental safety regulations in all practice settings (e.g., pathogens, cross-infection, work place hazards)			
D. Assure quality care by development and maintenance of policies and procedures regarding patients, prescribers, personnel, maintenance of records, etc.			
E. Comply with HIPAA regulations			

Section 1. There will be 8 questions on the exam devoted to **Facilities Management**, 1 RE, 5 AP, and 2 AN. To understand this section it may be helpful to download the BOC Facility Accreditation materials, www.bocusa.org for review of important aspects of facility management.

- You may be asked how to use equipment (1.B.), measuring devices (1.B.2.), or casting equipment (1.B.3.).
- Knowledge about the fitting room (1.A.) and tools required for proper patient care (1.B.) may be asked.
- Questions are asked regarding technical and clinical elements of the fitting room (1.A.) and safety (1.C.).
- For C, think “OSHA,” work safety, and make sure you are current on those regulations.
- There are also questions throughout the exam relevant to your office professional policies and procedures (1.D.), so review your manuals and records system.
- Questions concerning exposure to pathogens and cross-infection (1.C.) are asked.

Example 2: *Reprinted from COF Content Outline*

	<u>RE</u> 3	<u>AP</u> 8	<u>AN</u> 3
8.Evaluation/Selection of Product/Model/Type of Orthoses			
A. Cervical/Cervical Thoracic Orthoses (CO, CTO)			
1. soft foam collars			

2. semi-rigid (e.g., Philadelphia)
3. rigid (e.g., multiple post)
B. Thoraco-Lumbo-Sacral Orthoses (TLSO)
1. rigid (e.g., Taylor, Knight-Taylor, plastic, hyperextension)
2. flexible (e.g., with steel stays, thermal molded insert)
C. Lumbo-Sacral Orthoses (LSO)
1. rigid (e.g., chairback, Knight, Harris, Williams flexion, plastic)
2. flexible (e.g., with steel stays, thermal molded insert)
D. Knee Orthoses (KO)
1. rigid types (e.g., ACL, PCL, MCL, OA, multi-ligamentous, genu recurvatum, dynamic and adjustable R.O.M.)
2. flexible (e.g., patella-stabilizer, elastic type knee supports with or without inserts/hinges/pads)
E. Knee Ankle Foot Orthoses (KAFO) (e.g., double or single upright, leather or plastic, dynamic and adjustable R.O.M., ischial weight bearing)
F. Ankle Foot Orthoses (AFO) (e.g., double or single upright, leather or plastic, dynamic and adjustable R.O.M., posterior leaf spring (metal or plastic))
G. Foot Orthoses (FO) (e.g., arch support, UCBL, straight/ reverse last shoes, shoe modifications, foot plate)
H. Wrist/Hand/Finger Orthoses (WHFO, WHO (e.g., dynamic and adjustable R.O.M., resting, and functional orthoses)
I. Elbow Orthoses (EO) (e.g., dynamic and adjustable R.O.M., resting, and functional orthoses)
J. Shoulder Orthoses (SO) (e.g., dynamic and adjustable R.O.M., resting, and functional orthoses)
K. Functional Fracture Orthoses (e.g., upper extremity and lower extremity)
L. Abdominal and Pelvic
1. trusses (e.g., flexible and rigid)
2. flexible supports
3. maternity supports
M. Compression Devices
1. lymphedema garments
2. compression garments
3. burn garments
N. Breast Prosthesis and Ancillary Supplies

Section 8. Evaluation/Selection of Product/Model/Type has 14 total questions, 3 RE, 8 AP, and 3 AN questions, regarding products, models, and types of orthoses, which may be placed at random anyplace throughout the exam.

- Questions may be asked regarding any of these orthoses (8. A through L) relative to the patient and clinical situation, and may be asked in any section of the exam, relative to any professional activity, i.e., ethics, patient communication.
- You need to know the underlying pathology (3.A. 2-3), the anatomy (7.A.1-2), to explain the objective of each device (4.A.),
 - measuring for each device (1.B.2., 7.A.),

- fitting and customizing these devices (5.A.),
- You may be asked for information (4.), on how to:
 - don and doff the device (4.B.),
 - communicate logically (4.)
 - observe patient confidentiality (2.A.).