Thesis Preparation Guide for all Subspecialties

A thesis is required by all subspecialities and must be submitted by the date listed in the bulletin and according to the guidelines for preparation listed below. The Division will review the thesis and make a decision concerning acceptability. Prior publication of a thesis by a refereed journal does not guarantee acceptance of the thesis for the Certifying Examination. It is not necessary for the thesis to have been published.

Once copy of the completed 2021 Thesis Affidavit Form in PDF format must be uploaded on the candidate’s ABOG Portal.

Preparation Instructions

1. Format: The format of the thesis must comply by the instructions for authors for a major peer-reviewed journal in a field related to the subspecialty except as noted below. The name of the journal must be identified clearly on the cover page of the manuscript. Theses that are not in the proper journal format will be rejected.

   The cover page of the thesis should only show the thesis title, the name of the candidate, the hypothesis and the name of the journal.

   The thesis must be type-written in single-spaced 12-point type.

   Electronic copies or reprints of published manuscripts are not acceptable.

   Some journals require a “Summary” in addition to the “Discussion” section.

2. Hypothesis: The thesis must clearly state the hypothesis to be tested and must be in the form of a simple declarative sentence. The hypothesis must be included in the body of the paper, not just in the Abstract. Whenever possible, the hypothesis should include a statement such as, “Our hypothesis is that XXX is statistically significantly different from YYY.” Conversely, the null hypothesis may be stated. The hypothesis must appear in the body of the thesis and on the cover page.

3. De-Identification and Authorship: The candidate must remove all working in all areas of the thesis that would allow an examiner to be able to identify the institution where the study was performed and any co-authors.

   The cover page should only list the title of the thesis, the candidate’s name (do not list any co-authors), the hypothesis, and the name of the journal.

   Acknowledgements are not allowed.

4. Subject matter: The subject matter must clearly relate to the area of the subspecialty and be of significant importance to the field.
5. Research: The thesis must be based on clinical or laboratory research performed during the fellowship period. A review of work performed by others is not acceptable.

6. IRB Approval: All research involving humans and animals must be reviewed and approved by the human or animal institutional review boards (IRBs) of the sponsoring institution. If the research is considered to be exempt from IRB approval, a statement from the IRB to that effect must be included with the thesis.

7. Unacceptable Papers: The following are not acceptable for a Fellow’s thesis:
   a. Book chapters
   b. Case reports
   c. Case series
   d. Electronic copy of published thesis

8. Potentially Acceptable Papers: Any thesis submitted must be the product of a significantly thoughtful and robust research effort and will be reviewed by the subspecialty division for acceptability. Reports of the results of treatment of patients from a practice or department are not acceptable as these are considered to be a case series. The thesis must have the hypothesis listed on the cover page and in the body of the thesis and be of significant importance to the field of the subspeciality.
   a. Laboratory, Translations, and Animal Studies.
   b. Randomized Controlled Trials: The study must adhere to the CONSORT guidelines.
   d. Cost-Effective Analysis: The study must adhere to the principles set forth in the “WHO Guide to Cost-Effective Analysis.”
   e. Case-Control Study: The study must conform to the STROBE guidelines for observational studies.
   f. Cohort Study: The candidate must have developed the cohort. The submitted thesis must conform to the STROBE guidelines for observational studies.
   g. Survey-Collected Data: The candidate must have developed the questionnaire or used a previously validated questionnaire and there should be a 50% return and completion of the questionnaire. The submitted thesis must conform to the STROBE guidelines for observational studies.
   h. Epidemiologic Studies: The submitted thesis must conform to the STROBE guidelines for Epidemiological Studies.
   i. Mechanistic Trials: Mechanistic studies should meet NIH criteria for a clinical trial.