

Association of Surgical Technologists

AST Program Assessment Examination (PAE) FAQ's

The PAE has been developed for use by programs as one component of the Outcomes Based Accreditation system as established by the Accreditation Review Committee on Education in Surgical Technology (ARC-ST). Many questions have arisen since the programs received the PAE application and the following are the most frequently asked.

How did AST develop the PAE?

The PAE exam was developed by AST at the request of the ARC-ST. An item review committee (called the Program Assessment Exam Review Committee) met in Denver to review the questions. The LXR exam software used to create the PAE can develop several exam versions so that each exam will be different.

Is my school or program eligible to give the PAE?

If a program is in initial accreditation or accredited with either ABHES or CAAHEP then your program/school is eligible to give the exam.

What is the fee for the PAE?

The exam cost is \$30.00 per student.

Can I submit a Purchase Order to AST?

Purchase order will **NOT** be accepted. The PAE must be paid for by credit card or institutional check. If the program is requiring a invoice or receipt, please contact AST for the request.

I thought there was a written version of the PAE?

No longer will AST offer the written version, **no** exceptions can be made. The written version of the exam is available until August 1, 2009

How many questions are there on the exam?

150 multiple choice questions

How long does the student have to take the exam?

There is no time limit in which the student must complete the exam. Most students can complete the exam in 1 ½ hours to 2 hours.

The information I just received stated that the application must be received 42 days prior to the scheduled exam administration date. The students test in May and I won't be able to meet the 42-day policy. What Should I do?

It is suggested to return the application as soon as possible with payment. You may fax the PAE application with "payment to follow" wrote on it to 3303-804-2290. However, now that the

policies and procedures of the PAE have been established and given to the programs, the 42-day policy will be in effect when the program tests students beginning with the second time.

When should I establish the test date?

We suggest that the test be scheduled as close to the day of graduation as possible. A suggestion would be to test the students 2 to 4 weeks prior to the graduation date. This will help in obtaining good exam results since the students should have the knowledge to pass the exam. The exam **CANNOT** be administered the week of the AST National Conference or the following week after conference. The National Conference is the last week of May.

How is the PAE Scored?

The following table refers to the ranges used to evaluate the student's PAE results:

Percentage	Symbol	Meaning	Description
0-59%	I	Insufficient	Significant development necessary
60-69%	M	Minimal	Additional development warranted
70-85%	S	Sufficient	Satisfactory development demonstrated
86-100%	E	Exceptional	Significant development demonstrated

The PAE does **NOT** have a pass/fail rate.

My student didn't do well on the exam may he/she take the exam over?

Due to the security of the exam, the student may **only** take it once. The PAE does not have a pass/fail rate associated with it.

What reports will I receive from AST?

Your program will receive the following reports:

- Test Statistics Report
- Group Detail Report
- Mastery Directory Report
- Mastery Summary Report
- Group Mastery Report
- Individual Mastery Report

When will I receive the reports?

Due to the number of programs using the PAE, the reports will be generated and sent out 4-6 weeks after receiving the student's test scores. Every effort will be made to send out the reports sooner. If the program is testing by web, the student will receive their Individual Mastery Report a few minutes after completing the exam if the instructions are followed as stated in the Student Instruction Sheet.

Students will have the option at the end of web based testing to see their Individual Mastery Report. You may have your student print the report so that they can see their score.

The PAE application states that the program has a program identification number (PIN). Where do I find the school code?

The program may call AST or leave that space blank and AST will fill it in for the program. **The school code is assigned by ARC-ST.**

What is the purpose of the school code?

The school code is used by the student when entering the identification information for the Web based testing (WBT). If the school is administering a written exam, the school code is placed on the Scantron answer sheet so the Scantron scanning machine will read it. The school code must be a four digit number.

Web based testing: How is this set up and how do I access the exam?

When the PAE application has been received, AST assigns a password to the program. Two days before the program gives the PAE, the exam proctor will receive the password via E-mail. The proctor then gives the password to the students on test day in order to access the PAE on-line.

What should I do if the exam cannot be accessed due to the Internet being down at the last minute at our institution?

The institution has 12 hours in which they can access the exam. If the Internet is not up and going in that time frame, you will need to e-mail AST and reschedule a testing date (the program has up to 7 days to give the exam).

Will AST experience problems with the Internet?

AST can experience unanticipated down time with the Internet. If this happens, the program needs to contact AST to get information on how long the Internet is expected to be down. AST will make every effort to get the problem corrected on the same day as the programs schedule test date so the exam can be completed on that date.

We have limited access to computers. How can I test all the students?

The students can be divided into groups and tested at different times on the same day. But the students must be tested all on the same day to prevent confusion when the information is submitted to the AST server.

How will the students receive PAE scoring information?

The primary purpose of the PAE is to provide information pertaining to how well students are learning the core curriculum in order to report good program results on the Annual Report. The secondary purpose is providing information to the student. Since the program directors/instructors have the student's most recent contact information, they will be able to forward the information to the students. AST does not send information out to the students, this is the responsibility of the program instructor/director. If the program utilizes the web based testing, the student will be able to get their results within minutes of taking the exam.

I lost/misplaced my reports, how do I order another set?

It is the responsibility of the program/school to keep reports on file for 5 years. When a report is lost or misplaced, AST charges \$50.00 per report to replace it. You must send in writing (either by mail (AST, 6 W Dry Creek Circle, Suite 200, Littleton, CO 80120) or e-mail (mfrey@ast.org)) the date in which the exam was given, the students name and last four digits of their social security number, email address of where to send the reports along with payment to AST.