

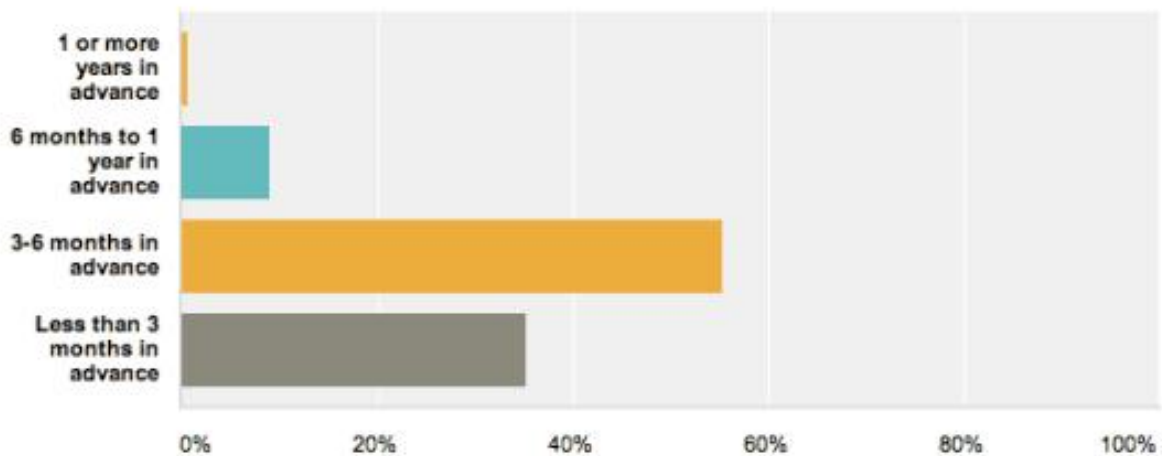
Real-life experiences with NBEO Part 1

by aosahq • Nov. 16, 2013

In every optometry school there are whispers of fear that echo through the halls. They start few and far between in the first year, but by the time third year comes around if you dare to utter the words “Part I” you might as well be Harry Potter screaming out Lord Voldemort’s name. The NBEO committee of the AOSA is made up of students from several different optometry schools who have the same doubts and hesitation as you do about taking Part I. We decided to put together a survey for those in the class of 2014 who recently took Part I of NBEO and see how they prepared and what they would do differently. We have the results for you below along with a comprehensive review of each Part I prep guide out there and some extra study tips to boot!

When did you start preparing for NBEO Part 1?

Answered: 494 Skipped: 1



[KMK](#)

Over 90% of the students surveyed used KMK and found it helpful. We understand that most people know about KMK, so we asked Kyle Cheatham, O.D., and president of KMK what they have to offer:

“At KMK, we understand that preparing for board examinations can be a daunting and anxiety-riddled task, and we’re here to help. Our board review courses offer a clear plan for exam success, with goals and deadlines to keep you motivated. And we understand that everyone learns differently. Our program incorporates a strategic timeline, 800-page textbook, flashcards,

quizzes, and innovative technology (including applications and a new mobile-friendly website). We are passionate about teaching scientifically sound, clinically relevant review courses. Even more importantly, we are committed to the success of each student and we strive to cultivate in each a lifelong passion for learning and clinical education.”

Berkeley Study Guide

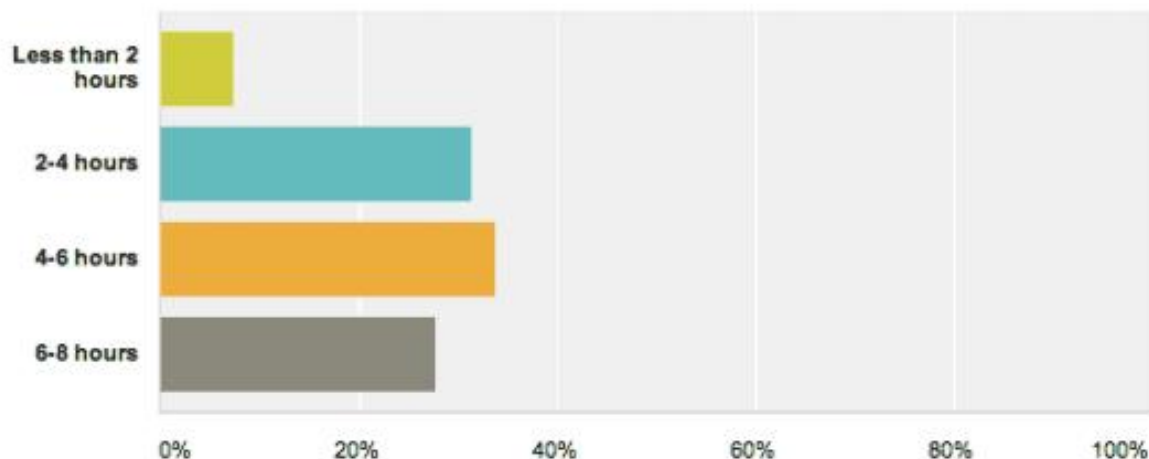
This study guide is a great option to consider, although it seems to be a little under the radar. According to a survey conducted by the AOSA NBEO committee only 2.63% of students used the Berkeley prep material to study. The Berkeley Study Guide consists of two parts. Part I consists of two separate booklets that cover applied clinical sciences. Part II covers patient assessment and management and includes sample cases and questions. Part I, booklet 1 is priced at \$60, and booklet 2 is \$45. Part II costs \$95. The Berkeley Study Guide is available to order online at www.lulu.com.

Butterworth Heinemann’s Review Questions

The subject areas are clearly defined, corresponding to the NBEO syllabus, and the number of questions in each section are in proportion to the number of corresponding questions on the examination. There are books for both Part I and II, and each contains 1,000 multiple-choice questions with explanatory answers. Accompanied with each book is a CD-ROM that provides 500 additional questions and a quizzing function that allows readers to see their scores at the end of the tests. You can purchase Part I on Amazon for \$81.99 and/or Part II book for \$42.67. Based on reviews, most people suggested that Butterworth was more helpful for Part II of the examination.

How many hours a day did you study during the 3 months prior to the exam?

Answered: 495 Skipped: 0



OptoPrep

OptoPrep is an internet-based, interactive study resource for the NBEO Part I & II exams. It allows students to study with exam-style practice questions accompanied by detailed answer explanations, mimicking the format of the actual exams. Subscription lengths are available in 30, 60, or 90- day increments for \$99, \$139, and \$178, respectively. OptoPrep is a great resource to get in last-minute review and helps to get you accustomed to the timed test! Study on the go with OptoPrep access through their smartphone mobile app. Another perk to this program is the OptoPrep Guarantee: OptoPrep is confident that anyone who completes the OptoPrep course will pass the NBEO exam on their first attempt. Therefore, OptoPrep will pay for your OptoPrep re-subscription if you do not pass the NBEO exam.

ODQuestions

A brand new NBEO prep website has arrived! ODquestions was launched in 2013 and it is a branch of Ophthoquestions which is an ophthalmology board review website developed in 2010. ODquestions is a comprehensive question bank and testing engine. The questions are written by recent board certified optometrists and current students. The site currently has 2,000 questions to help you prepare for Part I. The questions are broken down into 17 categories. You can create tests for yourself by selecting categories and how many questions you would like in the test. Multiple categories can be combined into a personal test. The tests can be timed, or taken in a “tutor mode” where the correct answer will be explained after you answer the question. Each test can be paused so that you can answer questions at your convenience. You can review questions that you have answered previously, however you cannot “retake” questions after you have answered them. Materials for Part II and ABO are currently being developed. The current rates available for the site are 6 months for \$69.99 and 12 months for \$99.99.

Now that you have a handle on all of the resources available, here are some study tips!

Get a Review Book – It is critical to make sure your studying is directed towards the information you will be tested on. The exam prep books are focused on the major topics covered by the NBEO Part I exam content matrix. Using these books as a road map will help you streamline your studying and keep you from wasting your valuable time. Besides focusing your studies, these review books offer great mnemonics, practice questions, and memorization tips.

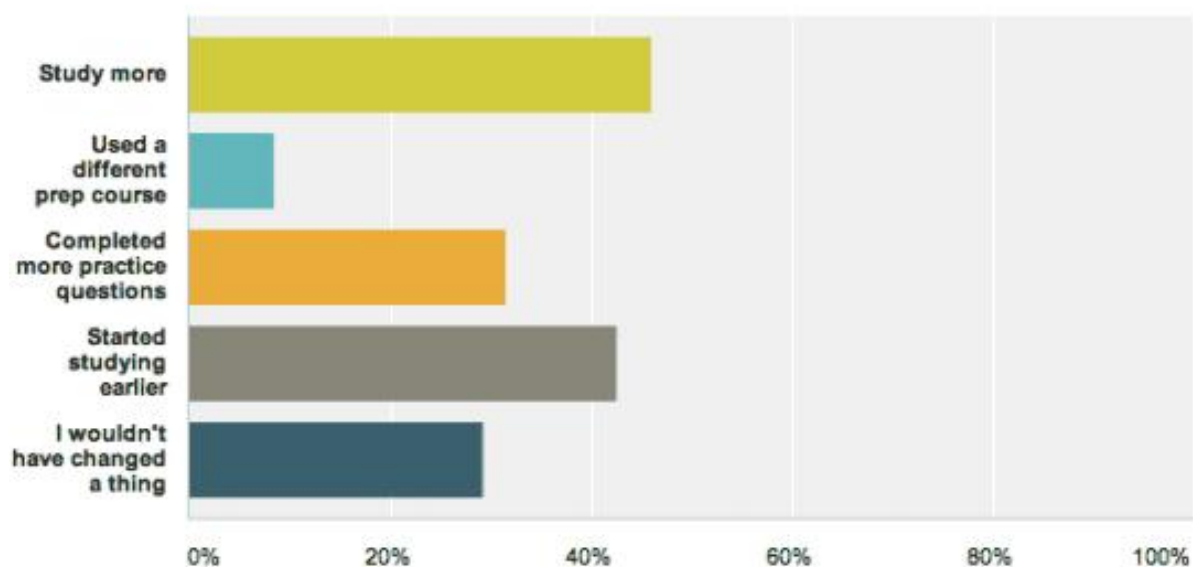
Divide and Conquer – The amount of material that is covered on Part I seems overwhelming at first, but it becomes manageable when broken down into several smaller parts. Rather than focusing on every section at once, study one section at a time. From the very beginning, set realistic, achievable goals. One suggestion is to hide material that you are not currently studying, literally put that information “out of sight, out of mind”. By narrowing your focus to a particular topic, you can give that information your undivided attention. With each topic you “conquer” you will feel a sense of accomplishment and this will help you maintain a positive attitude and avoid feelings of frustration. Remember the old adage, “How do you eat an elephant? One bite at

a time”.

Do NOT disregard the lower yield sections! – There are topics that have traditionally been “less emphasized” on the Boards, such as Ocular Embryology, Ocular Motility and Low Vision. Many students skip these sections to focus on higher yield sections like Anatomy. Their reasoning is well-grounded: Why study a smaller section that has 5-10 questions when I could be studying a larger section that has 40-60 questions? But that may prove to be a mistake. Although a small section like Ocular Motility will have only a few questions, there are many of these small sections on NBEO Part I. And all of these questions add up! Furthermore, by the very fact that they are small in size, you can easily study everything you need to know rather quickly. So don’t completely ignore these “low yield” topics. That’s giving away a lot of manageable questions!

If you could do it over again, what changes in preparation would you make? (Check all that apply)

Answered: 489 Skipped: 6



Save optics and other math questions – When it comes to optics and other problem-solving questions, you’re better off saving it for last. Problem solving is different than memorizing – you actually need to work through these problems and understand how to solve them. You are not likely to remember problems that you solved months before the test date. So, if you want optics to be fresh in your mind, then save it for last.

It’s a marathon, not a sprint – As difficult as it will be, try to maintain good balance in your life. Eat nutritious food, schedule time to exercise, and spend quality time with friends outside of

school. Avoiding burn out will help you stay focused all the way until the test date.

Good luck to all preparing for Part I!

The NBEO Committee of the AOSA

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