

# MY CREDENTIAL STORY



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The first professional step for an aspiring laboratory professional is to sit for the ASCP Board of Certification (BOC) exam. I am happy to say that I have done it twice, first gaining my Cytotechnologist, CT(ASCP) credential and later, my Specialist in Cytotechnology, SCT(ASCP) credential. Soon, I hope to add a Technologist in Molecular Biology, MB(ASCP) to my credentials.

My first BOC adventure began 30 years ago, when I took the exam in a large theater. We were a mixture of MLT, MT, CT, and HTs that day. This was also the days of color plates. The exam consisted of 100 color plates, plus 100 written questions. We did not know on the day of the exam if we passed or not. I worked for six weeks before learning that I had passed.

My second adventure was preparing for my SCT(ASCP) exam. The SCT was a professional expectation that I had for myself. My lab did not really know much about CT(ASCP), let alone SCT, until I could equate it with the Specialist in Blood Banking, SBB(ASCP) exam. In this way, passing the SCT was a personal badge of honor. The SCT came in handy years later when I became the education coordinator, and later program director for the Cytotechnology Certificate Program. The SCT exam was electronic, with 100 questions. It was hard, but I loved the challenge.

Taking the BOC exam is like taking other milestone tests in life. We prepare, and we hope we only have to take it once. The key is to prepare, breathe, and analyze objectively. My tips for taking a milestone exam is:

1. Prepare by going back to the basics. Do not forget about the building blocks you used to be successful.
2. The day of the exam, when you sit in front of the computer, breathe deeply. Exhale.
3. Follow the directions, and get to your first questions. Now take another deep breath.
4. Read the question completely, then read through the potential answers. If you have an image, consider it after reading the question with answers. Take another deep breath. Review the image, if available.
5. Go back to read the question, and tease out the key findings (history, criteria, image). Write down the keys, if you can.
6. Select the best answer, and move on. Only 99 more to go.
7. Try to answer questions as they come. Do not defer questions.
8. Note the questions you want to go back to after you have completed all 100 questions.
9. Review all of the questions at the end.
10. Welcome to the professional world of laboratory science! We are glad to have you as our colleague and friend!