

NCLE CLRE Cheat Sheet 2026

The night-before summary, built like the exam.

100 Questions	2h Time limit	Criterion-referenced exam Passing score
\$225 Exam fee	American Board of Optic... Governing body	

The numbers to remember

- Fee: \$225, paid by credit card at registration
- Time limit: 2 hours
- Outlined questions: 100 across 8 domains
- Delivered questions: 125 multiple-choice, with 85-100 scored (the rest are unscored pilot items)
- Eligibility: high school diploma, GED, or equivalent
- Test centers: 300+ nationwide, quarterly windows (Jan-Mar, Apr-Jun, Jul-Sep, Oct-Dec)
- Arrive: 30 minutes early; 15+ minutes late is tardy
- Retake wait: 14 days after a failed attempt
- Max attempts: 3, then a 90-day wait before trying again
- Reschedule/transfer fee: \$75
- Appeal verification fee: \$75
- Certificate delivery: ~6-8 weeks after the window closes
- Renewal: every 3 years, with only a 90-day grace period after expiration

Subtests and scores

The CLRE is a single 100-question (outline) / 125-question (delivered) exam, not split into separately scored subtests. It's criterion-referenced: ABO-NCLE sets the passing standard using the Modified Angoff Method, where a subject-matter expert panel rates item difficulty to derive the cut score. There is no published fixed scaled passing score — ignore any source that quotes one as official. Prepare to perform consistently across all domains rather than chase a specific target number.

High-yield review areas

- Dispensing (20 q): insertion/removal instruction, lens care systems, initial-fit troubleshooting
- Follow-Up (20 q): performance evaluation at follow-up visits, complication signs, referral triggers
- Prefitting (15 q): history-taking, contraindications, baseline measurements
- Ocular Anatomy/Physiology/Pathology (12 q) and Instrumentation (12 q): corneal anatomy paired with keratometry and slit lamp use
- Diagnostic Fitting (11 q), Refractive Errors (5 q), Regulatory/Administrative (5 q): smaller domains — don't skip them, they still add up

Top traps

- Assuming there's a published percentage cut score — there isn't; the standard is item-based via Modified Angoff.
- Confusing the 100-question outline with the 125 questions actually delivered on test day (only 85-100 of those are scored).
- Under-preparing Dispensing and Follow-Up, which together are nearly half the outlined exam.

- Arriving less than 30 minutes early — 15+ minutes late is treated as tardy.
- Forgetting the 90-day certification renewal grace period and lapsing past it.
- Not budgeting for the \$75 reschedule/transfer or \$75 appeal-verification fees if you need either.

Official sources

- American Board of Opticianry & National Contact Lens Examiners, Inc. (ABO-NCLE) — ABO-NCLE Basic Exam Handbook, February 2025:
<https://www.abo-ncle.org/common/Uploaded%20files/Documents/Exam%20Handbooks%20Feb%2025/ABO-NCLE%20Basic%20Exam%20Handbook%20February%202025.pdf>
- American Board of Opticianry & National Contact Lens Examiners, Inc. (ABO-NCLE) — ABO-NCLE official homepage:
<https://abo-ncle.org>
- American Board of Opticianry & National Contact Lens Examiners, Inc. (ABO-NCLE) — ABO-NCLE Exam Handbooks (official listing page): <https://www.abo-ncle.org/ABONCLE/ABONCLE/Exams/ABO-NCLE-Exam-Handbooks.aspx>

Free practice questions for this exam: www.everyexamprep.com/exams/ncle-clre/practice-test