

# **TSDA In-Training Exam Item Development Guidelines**

## Goals

- Determine whether resident possess the knowledge and cognitive skills necessary for safe and effective performance in the profession
- Knowledge being assessed is the content contained in the Thoracic Surgical Curriculum

## Format

- Type A multiple choice item structure
  - **Stem** followed by a series of possible responses
    - **Key:** one best answer
    - **Distractors:** incorrect or non-best answers

# Guidelines

- Best questions require application of knowledge not just recall of facts
  - Clinical scenario or vignette
- Questions should be clearly written
- Inclusion of pictures, graphs, diagrams, and video clips is encouraged
- Must include references
  - Section of Thoracic Surgery Curriculum content
- Include a brief comment section indicating the significance of the item, what is being tested, how the candidate should reason

## Flawed Questions

- Vague terms: usually or rarely
- Negative stems: all of the following except, least likely, etc.
- Multiple true/false
  - Question should be able to be answered without reading responses
- Too easy or difficult
  - Ideal range 40-75% correct
- Which of the following statements is true

## Stem

- Brief clinical scenario or vignette with relevant information
  - Avoid unnecessary information
  - Elicit a diagnosis, choose management, order or interpret a test, or select an operative procedure
    - The most likely diagnosis is...
    - The best next step in management is...
    - The treatment with the highest rate of success is...
    - The most appropriate management is...
- Able to be answered without looking at responses

# Responses

- Include 4 options (3 distractors and 1 correct answer)
- Distractors should be plausible
  - Reflect common misconceptions or faulty logic
  - Avoid absurd distractors that no one will choose
- One clearly correct answer
- Distractors should be of similar length
- Imprecise terms (e.g., commonly, usually) suggest a correct response
- Absolutes (e.g., always, never) suggest an incorrect response
- Do not use “none or all of the above”

# Question Template

- **Question #**
- **Question Author:** (Your Name)
- **Topic:** (The assigned topic of the question, e.g., Cardiac/Coronary Artery Disease )
- **Stem**
- **Options/Responses/Distractors:** (3 distractors and 1 correct answer)
- **Key:** (The correct answer)
- **Illustration/Visual:** (Must clearly and obviously show the lesion or pathology on which the examinee is being tested)
- **Reference(s):** (Include 1-3 current, peer-reviewed references for every item. Write out the full citation information. Remember to add where in the Thoracic Surgery Curriculum the reference was found)
- **Author's Comments:** (Brief descriptive information about the item, such as the concept being tested, or the relevance of the item)