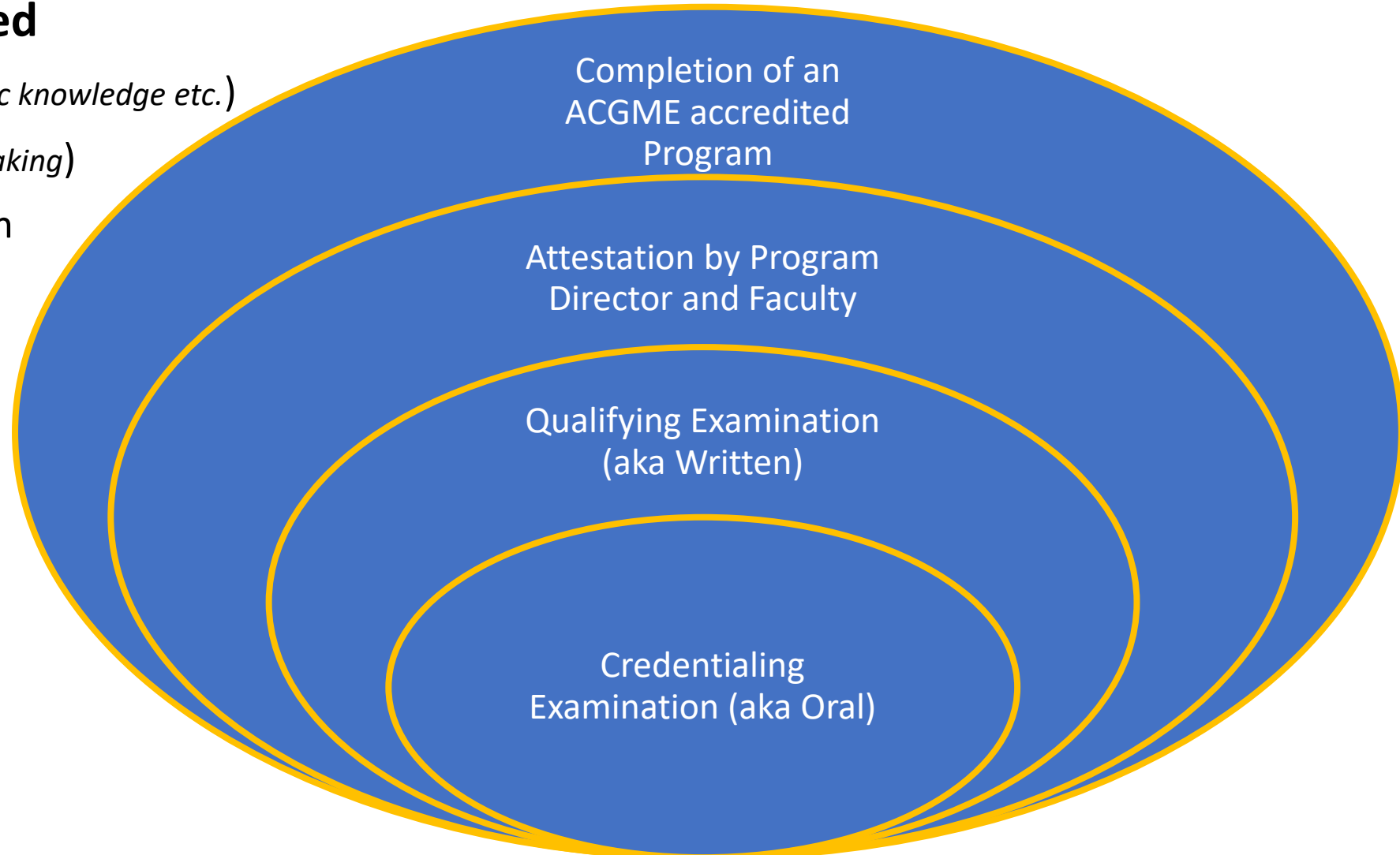# Key Features Exam

Ara Vaporciyan

on behalf of the American Board of Thoracic Surgery

ABTS Credentialing Process

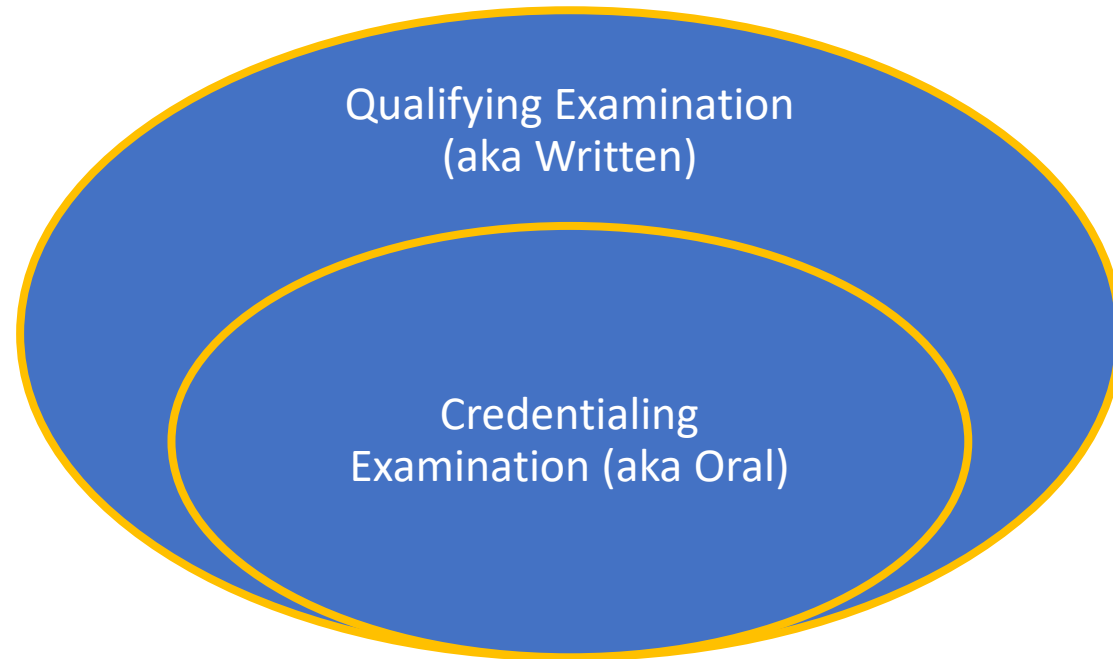**Dimensions being Assessed**

- Medical Knowledge (*facts, basic knowledge etc.*)

- Patient Care (*Clinical Decision Making*)

- Interpersonal Communication

- System Based Practice

- Professionalism

- Lifelong Learning

Completion of an ACGME accredited Program

Attestation by Program Director and Faculty

Qualifying Examination (aka Written)

Credentialing Examination (aka Oral)

ABTS Credentialing Process
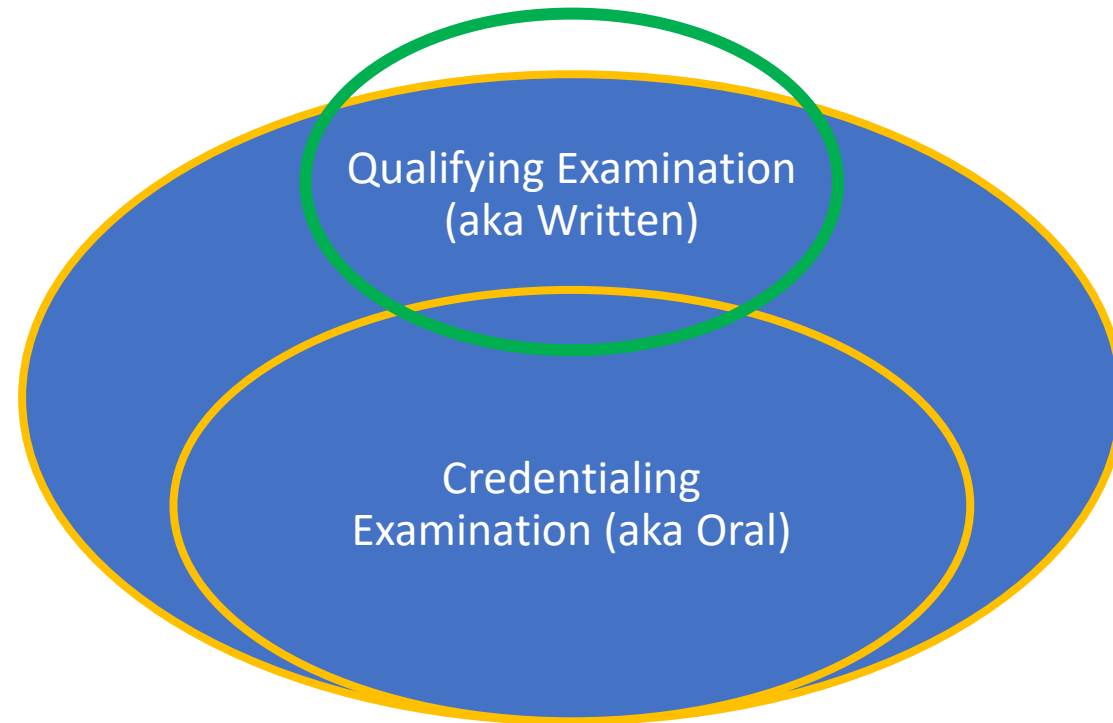
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Qualifying Examination
(aka Written)

Credentialing
Examination (aka Oral)

Qualifying Exam (written)

- 250 Item Exam
  - Administered in two sections of 125 items each

  - Total time for exam is 7 hours

  - Item Format is entirely MCQ
    - 1 correct response
    - 3 plausible distractors

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- Easy to construct when assessing Medical Knowledge
- Rapid Response Time
- Efficient broad sampling of the construct being assessed

- Plausible distractors can be difficult to create
- Plausible distractors can provide clues
- **Very difficult to construct when assessing Clinical Decision Making**

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There are better options for a written assessment of Clinical Decision Making!

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- Rapid Response Time
- Efficient broad sampling of the construct being assessed

- Plausible distractors can be difficult to create
- Plausible distractors can provide clues
- **Very difficult to construct when assessing Clinical Decision Making**

Key Features Approach

- Validated psychometrically and implemented specifically to assess Clinical Decision Making
  - Medical licensure Exam in Canada
  - MOC for Colorectal Surgeons
  - Numerous final clerkship assessments in Medical Schools in North America

- Leverages items formats that allow multiple answers and minimizes clueing

- Focuses on the "Key Features" of specific clinical problems
  - A KF is
    - A critical decision for the successful resolution of a problem
    - Concurrently a step that is challenging for a borderline candidate

Key Features Approach

- Items are organized around a specific clinical problem or "case"

- 2 to 3 Key Features specific to that case are identified by Subject Matter Experts

- Each "case" will have from 1 to 3 questions assessing the candidates knowledge of those 2-3 Key Features

- Question format can include either:
  - Short Menu multiple choice (15 to 25 items)
  - Write in

Key Features Approach (example)

A 63 yo man developed a chronic cough 3 months ago after what he thought was a cold. A month ago he saw a trace of blood prompting a visit to his PCP. A CXR demonstrated a right lower lobe infiltrate, hilar fullness and blunting of the costophrenic angle. A two week course of abx diminished the cough. No further bleeding episodes. A repeat CXR still shows some hilar fullness and the blunting but a reduction in the infiltrate.

He has a 16 pack year smoking history, quit 12 years ago. Drinks 2-3 beers daily. Works on a farm in Arizona. No other medical problems.

#1. List your 2 most likely diagnoses.

1. _____

2. _____

#2. What tests would you order or perform? Select up to 3.

1.	CBC	10.	MRI Brain
2.	Lytes	11.	Bronchcoscopy
3.	Coags	12.	Endoscopic Bronchial Ultrasound
4.	Cf DNA	13.	Thoracentesis
5.	Sputum culture	14.	Thoracoscopy
6.	Sputum cytology	15.	Mediastinoscopy
7.	CT chest	16.	Consult Medical Oncology
8.	PET/CT	17.	Consult Radiation Oncology
9.	CT Brain	18.	Consult Infectious Disease

Upcoming Qualifying Exam (Dec 2023)

- Key Features cases to be implemented in the Dec 2023 Qualifying Examination (written)
    - Impacts all trainees graduating July 2023 and those who must retake the QE

- Total of ~~8~~ 6 Key Feature cases will be added as a third section
    - Published mean response time of 3-4 min/case, we are allowing for up to 9 min/case
    - Will undergo the same psychometric item evaluation all MCQ items receive

- **<u>Will NOT be included in the final grading</u>**

- Efforts to minimize anxiety to candidates
    - This presentation
    - Future direct Communications with PD's and PC's
    - Communication with candidates during application for the QE
    - Examples of KF cases displayed on the ABTS website

Questions...