

Global Spine Diploma Exam Terms and conditions

By registering for the Global Spine Diploma Exam, you fully accept all Terms and Conditions of Registration as detailed:

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Definitions

Candidate: refers to the person(s) taking the exam. Eligibility is described for each examination on the AO Spine website.

AO Spine: AO Foundation, AO Spine, headquartered at Clavadelerstrasse 8, Davos, Switzerland.

Exam: refers to the exercise designed to test knowledge required to earn the Global Spine Diploma Exam.

Fee: refers only to the rates (consisting of an administration fee and examination fee) covering the registration for the Global Spine Diploma Exam.

The exam fee does not cover any travel and accommodation costs or any other expenses to the Part I and Part II exam location. The fee covers the Part I exam and Part II exam. If you fail the written exam (Part I), no refund will be provided.

Retake: refers to the opportunity to take the exam again as per respective conditions according to the AO Spine website.

Registration and preparation for the exam

AO Foundation, AO Spine offers the Global Spine Diploma Exam to certify knowledge in spine surgery.

The exam is based on the AO Spine Curriculum. The examiners are experts in their respective fields of spine surgery.

The exam is not a compulsory or regulatory certificate of competence or excellence. It does not certify technical skills or ability to perform surgical procedures.

The format of the exam depends on the exam type.

Part I exam:

The Part I exam contains multiple-choice questions to be answered in a given period of time in a proctored environment through globally located test centers, or online at home depending on potential travel restrictions and local law regulations or circumstances.

Part II exam:

The Part II exam consists of 6 oral case discussions. The cases are standardized clinical case scenarios in trauma, deformity, tumor, infection, and degeneration, and are based on the AO Spine Curriculum. Candidates will be evaluated on six topics within each case: Clinical evaluation, Imaging, Diagnosis, Classification, Treatment, and Outcome & complications.

The exam schedule for the Part I and Part II exams is provided during the registration process. The AO Foundation and AO Spine reserves the right to modify the schedule as necessary. If candidates intend to take Part I of the Exam in one of the test centers, it is highly recommended that candidates plan their travel accordingly. In no event will AO Foundation, AO Spine pay for any travel fees due to changes in the exam schedule.

Registration

For details about the registration process and conditions, please check the Global Spine Diploma Exam website at:

<https://www.aofoundation.org/spine/education/global-spine-diploma/global-spine-diploma-exam>

How to prepare for the examination

The exam is based on the AO Spine Curriculum, therefore AO Spine suggests candidates review the curriculum content and prepare to answer questions based on the learning outcomes for each pathology. In no event will AO Foundation, AO Spine be liable for the conduct of any examiner, or if any candidate fails to pass the exam. AO Spine will not refund any fees or payments made, and will in no case be liable for candidates' expenses.

For information on the Global Spine Diploma Exam, and if you have any questions, please contact globalspinediploma@aospine.org.

On the day of the Part I exam

The Part I exam will take place in test centers around the world or online.

For both exam parts, participants are required to sign in at least 30 minutes before the start of the exam and be prepared to present two forms of identification (ID):

- A valid photo ID card
- An ID card displaying the Candidate's signature.

At the end of the written exam, the candidate must hand in all exam materials and sign out. Failing to do so will constitute a breach of confidentiality and will result in the candidate's exam participation being voided; AO Spine will not refund any fees or payments made and will in no case be liable for the candidate's expenses. Results will not be processed or communicated.

You can also choose to take the Part I exam online.

What is needed for the Part II exam

The Part II exam is scheduled to take place online via proctored Zoom, which requires an app to be downloaded to your device.

AO Foundation, AO Spine under no circumstances will provide a refund if the candidate fails to set up and test the technical requirements in time.

During the exams

By registering for a test center to take Part I of the exam, candidates agree to respect the instructions given at the exam site.

Bringing materials to the Part I and Part II exam tables is strictly forbidden.

Exam results

Results of the Part I exam will be sent by e-mail within two weeks of taking the exam. Candidates who do not pass the Part I exam can retake the exam at the next possible opportunity for a reduced fee of CHF 250.

Exam results for the Part II exam will be communicated by e-mail within four weeks after the exam has been taken. Candidates who do not successfully complete the Part II exam may retake it at the next opportunity by paying a reduced examination fee and without having to retake the Part I MCQ exam.

For detailed information about retaking the exam, please check the relevant section on the AO Spine website: <https://www.aofoundation.org/spine/education/global-spine-diploma/global-spine-diploma-exam>.

Disclaimer of liability

Technical issues

In the event that a technical issue disrupts the exam, AO Spine will allocate each impacted candidate(s) an appropriate additional delay to resume the exam. Only AO Spine is entitled to decide the length of the appropriate delay.

Other issues

AO Foundation, AO Spine endeavors to offer candidates the proper examination conditions. AO Foundation, AO Spine makes no guarantees and will not be liable for any disruptive sounds or other disturbances during exam administration, nor will AO Foundation, AO Spine offer reimbursement or opportunities to retake the exam in the event of such disruptions. If necessary, the exam centers provide noise cancelling ear plugs to all candidates.

Please keep in mind that during the exam, AO Foundation, AO Spine will not be liable for any theft or damage to candidates' personal property, regardless of the cause other than fault or deliberate recklessness on the part of the AO Foundation, AO Spine.

Appeal

No post examination appeal process is available. This is expressly agreed upon by candidates upon acceptance of these terms and conditions.

In no event will AO Spine be held liable for the results of the exam. Each candidate shall be exclusively liable for his/her exam results.

The fee

Non-refundable administration fee: CHF 100

The administration fee of CHF 100 is required to verify eligibility. This must be paid during the application process together with the submission of your application documents.

Exam fee (Part I and Part II): CHF 1,000

The exam fee is required upon registration for the Part I exam through AO Spine and must be received by AO Spine within 14 days after confirmation of eligibility at latest.

Exam retakers* (Part I or II): CHF 250 processing fee

Payment of fees must be made in Swiss francs (CHF). Payment by credit card is recommended in order to avoid delays in registration and to guarantee availability.

If you have any questions about refunds and cancellation fees (e.g. in case of failure in the exam), please read the Terms and Conditions for more details.

The fee does not include transport and accommodation for the exam test center venues.

(*first time retakers only)

Cancellation policy

To cancel an exam registration, the candidate must submit a written request by sending an e-mail to: globalspinediploma@aospine.org.

Cancellation by phone or any other form of communication will not be considered.

A maximum 85 percent refund is possible in the event of any of the following circumstances:

- Medical (hospital admission or serious injury)
- Loss or bereavement (death of parents, guardian, sibling, or child)
- Hardship/trauma (victim of crime, traffic accident, etc)

Proof of circumstances is required and must be provided in writing to:

globalspinediploma@aospine.org.

By providing proof of the above-mentioned circumstances, a diploma exam registration fee refund of up to 85 percent will be granted (valid for 2023 and subsequent years).

The refund will be processed after the exam, or if reasonably possible, prior to the exam date.

No refund(s) will be processed if the exam is cancelled due to circumstances beyond the control of the AO Foundation and/or AO Spine.

Moreover, in no event will AO Foundation, AO Spine be liable for costs (e.g. visa application costs, accommodation and travel arrangements, travel expenses) incurred due to cancellation of the exam. All exam candidates are urged to apply for visas early, and to purchase personal travel insurance.

Candidates must ensure they are on time and in the right place for their Part I and Part II exams.

Misconduct

By registering, candidates agree to respect the following instructions for the exam site:

- Smoking is not permitted in the exam room and its surroundings. Any fines for violation of this ban shall be borne by the responsible candidate. Candidates will comply with safety and security measures put in place for the exam.
- Candidates agree not to cause any nuisance or inconvenience during the exam.
- Proctors are present during the exam to avoid any risk of cheating and to prevent any misconduct. Please be aware cheating and misconduct are forbidden and candidates failing to respect these conditions will be automatically disqualified from the exam and will receive no certificate.
- Candidates can only use the AO branding in reference to the diploma if both exams have been passed.

Misconduct includes, but is not restricted to:

- a. Introduction into any exam of any materials other than those specifically permitted for said exam
- b. Any attempt to remove materials or content (including the use of recording devices) from an exam
- c. Any attempt to release content from any exam to a third party/commercial organization
- d. Any attempt to communicate with another candidate during the exam
- e. Any attempt to gain access to or read the work of another candidate
- f. Any attempt to gain or pass on information about the contents of the exam in advance of the date of the exam (Terms and Conditions for Exam Registration at AO Spine)
- g. Impersonation or attempted impersonation of a candidate
- h. Bribery (of another candidate, exam official, actual or simulated patient)
- i. Unacceptable or disruptive behavior during an exam
- j. Failure to abide by the reasonable instructions of a proctor or other exam official, or breach of exam regulations
- k. Falsification or alteration of any results document or qualification
- l. Any other form of cheating or conduct likely to give an unfair advantage to the candidate or others
- m. Failure to abide by the rules and regulations of the exam center
- n. Aiding or abetting any of the above

Personal data

Candidates' personal data is registered with AO Foundation, AO Spine in line with the European Union General Data Protect Regulation (GDPR) and may also be transferred and shared with third-party suppliers working on the organization of the exam (namely Pearson VUE and its subcontracted partners and staff). The information provided during the application and registration process is used for the exam registration, grading of the exam and delivery of the certificate, and statistical purposes. Personal data will be held temporarily in the customer data files of AO Foundation, AO Spine. It may be used for the administration of the results and statistical purposes only by AO Foundation, AO Spine or any AO Foundation, AO Spine partner involved in the exam certification process. Furthermore, we remind the candidates that they expressly accepted the general terms and conditions of the AO Foundation and especially the data privacy policy including all applicable legislation when signing in at the AO website.

The candidate has the absolute right to access, amend, and oppose any use of his/her personal data but in such cases, AO Foundation, AO Spine will not be able to assess the candidate's exam and/or provide the candidate with any results or certificate.

The AO Foundation and AO Spine comply with the European Union General Data Protect Regulation (GDPR), and all personal data will be treated accordingly. The candidate may request to have his/her personal data destroyed by sending an e-mail to: globalspinediploma@aospine.org.

Applicable law and jurisdiction

Relationship, complaints, claims, and settlements shall be governed by the laws of Switzerland. Place of jurisdiction is Zurich, Switzerland.

This applies for both rules of substance and rules of form, notwithstanding the place of performance of the substantial or accessory obligations.

Furthermore, candidates are reminded that they expressly accepted the general terms and conditions of the AO and especially the data privacy policy, including all applicable legislation, when signing in at the AO website. In the event of a dispute arising out of the interpretation or performance of the applicable law shall be Swiss law and the jurisdiction shall be that of the court of Zurich, notwithstanding a plurality of respondents or third-party claims, including for urgent or protecting proceedings, whether urgent or on demand.



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