

Content Blueprint for the Cardiovascular & Thoracic Surgery CAQ Examination

The Cardiovascular & Thoracic Surgery CAQ content blueprint provides information on how exam questions are allocated to the different task categories and medical content categories that have been deemed important for PAs working within the specialty area.

The examples provided for each task and medical content category are indicative of the types of information that will be included on the examination. It is not possible to include all topics on a single examination, and it may be possible that some questions on a single examination cover content that is not listed in the examples.

Medical Content Categories

1. Cardiac	38%
2. Thoracic	28%
3. Vascular	10%
4. Critical Care	19%
5. Legal/Ethical Issues and Emerging Topics	5%

Task Categories

A - History and Physical	10%
B - Ordering and Interpreting Diagnostic and Laboratory Studies	20%
C - Formulating a Diagnosis	15%
D1 - Health Maintenance	5%
D2 - Clinical Intervention	20%
D3 - Pharmacotherapy	20%
E - Applying Scientific Concepts	5%
L - Legal/Ethical Issues and Emerging Topics	5%

Medical Content Categories

1. CARDIAC (38%)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Aortic disease <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Aneurysm ○ Connective tissue disorders ○ Dissection ○ Pseudoaneurysm B. Arrhythmias <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Atrial fibrillation/flutter ○ Heart blocks ○ Ventricular tachycardia/fibrillation C. Congenital conditions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Atrial septal defect ○ Patent foramen ovale | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ventricular septal defect D. Coronary artery disease <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Acute coronary syndrome ○ Coronary spasms ○ Postinfarct complications E. Endocarditis F. Heart failure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dilated cardiomyopathy ○ Hypertrophic cardiomyopathy ○ Ischemic cardiomyopathy ○ Restrictive cardiomyopathy |
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- G. Pericardial conditions
 - Effusion/tamponade
 - Pericarditis
 - H. Shock
 - Cardiogenic
 - Distributive
 - Hypovolemic
 - Obstructive
 - I. Trauma
 - Contusion
 - Iatrogenic
 - Penetrating
 - J. Tumors
 - Myxoma
 - Fibroelastoma
 - Sarcoma
 - K. Valvular disease
 - Aortic
 - Mitral
 - Pulmonic
 - Tricuspid
- 2. THORACIC (28%)**
- A. Esophageal disease
 - Achalasia
 - Barrett esophagus
 - Dysmotility
 - Esophageal strictures
 - Gastroesophageal reflux disease
 - Hiatal hernia
 - Tears and perforations
 - Tumors (benign and malignant)
 - Zenker diverticula
 - B. Congenital conditions
 - Bronchogenic cyst
 - Diaphragmatic hernia
 - Esophageal duplication cyst
 - Pectus excavatum/carinatum
 - C. Lung disease
 - Cancer (non–small-cell and small-cell)
 - Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
 - Parenchymal disease
 - Pulmonary nodules
 - Restrictive disease
 - D. Mediastinal masses
 - Germ cell tumor
 - Lymphoma
 - Neurogenic tumors
 - Thymoma/thymic cancer
 - E. Pleural disease
 - Effusions
 - Mesothelioma
 - F. Trauma
 - Diaphragmatic injury
 - Flail chest
 - Hemothorax

- Pneumomediastinum
- Pneumothorax
- Subcutaneous emphysema
- Sternal fractures

3. VASCULAR (10%)

- A. Aortic disease
 - Aneurysm
 - Dissection
- B. Arteriovenous fistulas
- C. Carotid disease
- D. Peripheral artery disease
 - Aneurysms
 - Dissection
 - Occlusive
 - Pseudoaneurysms
- E. Peripheral venous disease
 - Insufficiency
 - Thrombosis
- F. Trauma
 - Aortic transection
 - Penetrating injury
 - Retroperitoneal hemorrhage
 - Thoracic outlet syndrome
 - Compartment syndrome

4. CRITICAL CARE (19%)

- A. Endocrine
 - Adrenal disorders
 - Hyperglycemia/hypoglycemia
 - Thyroid disorders
- B. Gastrointestinal
 - Bowel obstruction
 - Bowel perforation
 - Constipation
 - Diarrhea
 - Gastroenteritis
 - GI bleed
 - Ileus
 - Malnutrition
 - Mesenteric ischemia
 - Postoperative nausea and vomiting
- C. Hematology
 - Anemia
 - Perioperative coagulopathy
 - Postoperative hemorrhage
 - Thrombocytopenia
- D. Infectious disease
 - Device-related infection
 - Pneumonia
 - Sepsis
 - Systemic inflammatory response syndrome
 - Urinary tract infection
 - Wound infection
- E. Neurology

- Cerebrovascular accident/transient ischemic attack
- Encephalopathy
- Nerve injuries
- Seizures
- Substance withdrawal
- F. Pulmonary
 - Acute lung injury/acute respiratory distress syndrome
 - Atelectasis
 - Barotrauma
 - Laryngeal/tracheal edema
 - Pulmonary embolism
 - Respiratory failure
- G. Renal
 - Acid-base disorders
 - Acute kidney injury
 - Electrolyte abnormalities
 - End-stage renal disease
 - Hypotension/hypertension
 - Oliguria

5. LEGAL/ETHICAL ISSUES AND EMERGING TOPICS (5%)