SAGES TEST CENTER CRITERIA

SAGES' Fundamentals Test Centers are responsible for administering FLS and FES exams to all eligible test takers.

The SAGES' Fundamentals exams are high stakes and given under strict parameters to preserve the integrity and validity of the exam. Institutions wishing to become test centers must submit an application along with any applicable fees to the SAGES' Fundamentals Program office. Approved test centers are held to the criteria set forth below and in the *SAGES Test Centers Rules and Regulations*.

Submission of an application and/or meeting all listed criteria does not guarantee test center status.

The test center applications are available at www.flsprogram.org (FLS) and www.surgicalfundamentals.org (FES and FUSE). Notices regarding application approval, denial, or pending status will be sent out within four weeks of the application review date. Applications are reviewed by the SAGES' Test Center Review Committee(s) on the following schedule:

- ○ Applications submitted September 1-February 28 will be reviewed in the spring, concurrent with the SAGES Annual Meeting.
- ○ Applications submitted March 1-August 31 will be reviewed in the fall, concurrent with the ACS Clinical Congress.

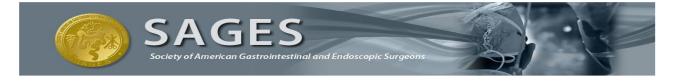Test center approval is contingent on successful completion of criteria outlined in this document.

All SAGES test centers staff and proctors will be bound by confidentiality and test administration restrictions set forth in the *SAGES Test Center Rules and Regulations* and the *SAGES Proctor Agreements*. These policies apply to all exam administration procedures and test-related materials to ensure secure and standardized exam administration. SAGES reserves the right to deny applications, rescind prior approval, and revoke a test center's designation at any time. All test center fees are non-refundable.

Applicants must meet the following criteria:
Criterion 1: Staff (champion, proctors and support staff)
Criterion 2: Equipment and Resources
Criterion 3: Institutional Support
Criterion 4: Guidelines for Maintaining Test Center Status
Criterion 5: Test Center Volume/Capacity and Geographical Demographics (FLS and FES only)
Criterion 6: Site Visit

Criterion 1: STAFF

Criterion 1.1: All test centers must designate a champion.
The Champion:
- Must be a surgeon (attending/faculty) who has already passed the corresponding exam.
- Must be willing to serve as the main point of contact for test center communications.
- Must be an active SAGES member.
- Must be able to support proctors in terms of securing necessary space, equipment, and supplies.

Criterion 1.2: All test centers must identify at least one, but no more than three, proctor candidates.
- Proctor candidates are required to participate in the corresponding program's proctor training event and pass the Proctor Certification Exam
  - FLS: Proctor workshops
    - Workshops will be offered three to four times annually based on demand
    - Once an application is approved, proctor candidates must attend, and successfully complete, proctor training within six months.
  - FES: Online training and live proctor webinar
    - Online training is offered as self-study, followed by an online webinar. Webinars will be offered quarterly. Once an application is approved, proctor candidates must participate in, and successfully complete, proctor training within six months.

- Only the successful completion of the corresponding proctor exam and participation in the proctor training can designate a candidate as an official exam proctor.
- Proctors are only authorized to administer exams for which they have been trained and approved.
- Proctors are only authorized to administer exams at their home institution's test center location unless approved by the SAGES office.
- Proctor candidates must be familiar with relevant testing equipment and/or instruments, including basic computer skills.
- Proctor candidates must have control/access to all the necessary equipment, technology, and space necessary for conducting testing.
- Proctor candidates must be skills lab technicians, simulation center staff, medical education coordinators/staff, and the like. SAGES does not permit active clinicians/surgeons to serve as proctors.
- Proctor candidates must hold full-time positions with the applicant institution or organization.
- Proctor candidates must be fluent in English.
- Proctor candidates must be able to communicate effectively with the test center champion at their institution.

- Proctor candidates must have a minimum of 5% FTE available to administer exams and complete related tasks.

Criterion 2: EQUIPMENT AND RESOURCES

Criterion 2.1 Test centers must designate an appropriate testing area.
- Appropriateness of testing area will be confirmed via a site visit, virtual or in person.
- The testing area(s) must be large enough to accommodate the written and/or skills testing station(s) (if applicable), and all required materials and supplies adequately, such that the test takers and proctors can easily move and be seated comfortably.
- If more than one written exam is being administered at the same time, each computer testing station must be separated by a partition or enough space to prevent a test taker from viewing another computer screen.
- Testing location must be *exclusively* reserved for testing whenever an exam is scheduled to take place.
- The testing area must be separate from common areas so test takers are not disturbed by foot traffic, conversations, or outside noise.
- There must be adequate lighting and ventilation in the testing area.

Criterion 2.2 Test centers must provide at least two computers for written testing.
- Must be PC (not Mac) laptop or desktop computer with mouse.
- Laptops must be connected to an outlet power source and not powered by battery alone.
- Internet Access: DSL, T1, cable or comparable reliable high-speed internet connection.
- Installed applications: Most recent version of Microsoft Edge or Google Chrome.

Criterion 2.3 Test centers must own the appropriate equipment for skills testing

2.3.1 FLS:
- Two FLS trainer boxes with all included components and accessories.
  - Trainer boxes must be in proper working condition.
- Trainer boxes must be placed on height-adjustable tables.
  - If height-adjustable tables are not available, the test center must provide sturdy stepping stools for use with fixed-height tables.

- Each FLS trainer box must be connected to an appropriate color video monitor.
  - Monitors must be at least 15 inches and height adjustable or mounted approximately at eye level.
- Test centers must have at least the following instrumentation:

- o 2 laparoscopic needle drivers (CANNOT be self-righting, CANNOT be disposable)
- o 2 Maryland dissectors (must be non-locking)
- o 1 locking grasper
- o Endoscopic scissors (if non-disposable, then replaceable tips must be provided)
- o 2 low-profile trocars (minimum diameter 10mm)
- o 1 open-ended knot pusher
- o 1 closed-ended knot pusher
- ● Test centers must provide the following consumable materials for each test taker. FLS test centers will need to purchase all consumable materials on a regular basis to ensure there is a constant supply.
  - o Penrose drains*
  - o Single-use pre-tied ligating loops
  - o Single-circle gauze sheets*
  - o Red foam organs*
  - o 2-0 silk (or sofsilk) suture 90cm or longer on an SH or V-20 type needle

All of the aforementioned items must be provided free of charge for each test taker. If your institution is unable to acquire any of these materials on a regular basis, SAGES does NOT recommend submitting a test center application. Items marked with an * must be obtained through the FLS-authorized distributor.

2.3.2 FES
- ● Test Centers must have, or intend to immediately purchase, a GI Mentor II, GI Bronch, GI Express or [Endo Mentor Suite](#) Virtual Reality Trainer.
- ● VR trainer must hardwired via DSL, T1, cable, or comparable reliable high speed internet connection.
- ● VR trainer must be kept in good working order with regular calibrations and evaluations for damaged parts.

Criterion 3: INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

Criterion 3.1 Test centers must have support from institutional administrators.
- ● Applicants are required to provide a letter of support from institutional administration describing their endorsement of the applicant becoming a test center.
- ● Letter must attest to support of staff time, funds, and space necessary to attain and maintain test center status.

Criterion 4: MAINTAINING TEST CENTER STATUS

Criterion 4.1 Test centers are required to maintain a testing schedule online via Webassessor, the SAGES online test administration program

- Each test center is required to provide a minimum of five testing appointments per month per exam they offer.

Criterion 4.2 FLS and FES test centers and proctors must comply with the following volume requirements. Those that do not comply may be placed on probation or terminated at the discretion of the Test Center Committee(s).

- Each proctor must administer a minimum of eight (8) skills exams per year for each exam offered (FLS or FES). This includes both initial exams and skills re-tests.
- Each newly certified proctor must administer a minimum of two (2) exams within six months of their activation.
- Applicants must submit a plan for meeting and sustaining the minimum volume requirement. The plan must include written documentation from any neighboring institutions or other departments/ specialties that are being relied upon to sustain volume requirements.
- The one-year period begins on January 1 following the proctor's activation date.

Criterion 4.3 Proctors must participate in refresher training
- Training sessions may be in the form of online webinars, quizzes, exams, videos, and/or presentations.
- Proctors who do not participate in refresher training sessions will be subject to termination.

Criterion 5: GEOGRAPHICAL AREA DEMOGRAPHICS

Criterion 5.1 New FLS or FES test centers will not be established within a 60-mile radius of an existing test center unless those test centers administer more than 20 exams per year.
- A lists of existing test centers are available on our websites
- To inquire about the volume of exams at an existing test center, please email testcenters@sages.org