

Guidance on the Swiss Board Examination in General Internal Medicine

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Introduction

The Swiss Society for General Internal Medicine (SSGIM) is responsible for organising the Board Examination in General Internal Medicine (GIM). The regulations of the Swiss Institute for Post-graduate and Further Education in Medicine (SIWF/ISFM) of the Swiss Medical Association (FMH) apply to all Board Examinations: www.siwf.ch. Furthermore, the General Terms and Conditions and the Privacy Policy of SSGIM apply (see Appendix 1, further documents).

1. The Board Examination in General Internal Medicine

The Board Examination in General Internal Medicine will be held twice in 2026: on **Saturday, May 9, 2026**, and on **Saturday, November 21, 2026**.

The examination will be conducted electronically for the first time in 2026. In the very unlikely event of a technical malfunction or another form of “force majeure” that causes an irreparable interruption of the examination, the examination will be rescheduled to the following alternative date: Saturday, May 30, 2026, and Saturday, November 28, 2026, respectively.

Registration

The dates of the examination and the registration period will be published at least six months in advance on the SIWF/ISFM (www.siwf.ch) and SSGIM (www.sgaim.ch) websites. Registrations must be submitted within the official registration period on the website of the Swiss Board Examination in General Internal Medicine: <http://www.sgaim.ch/egim/>. Any registrations sent by ordinary mail, e-mail, phone or fax will not be accepted. If there are any problems with registration, please contact the SGAIM in writing before the registration deadline (egim@sgaim.ch). The SSGIM treats all candidates according to the same principles. Therefore, the SSGIM makes no exceptions for missed registrations for the examination. This means that registrations after the published deadline for examinations will not be accepted.

Official registration periods:

Examination on May 9, 2026: from December 10 until February 26, 2026

Examination on November 21, 2026: from July 6 until September 10, 2026

Admission

Only candidates with a Swiss or an officially recognized foreign medical diploma (please see continuing education requirements, *Weiterbildungsordnung/Réglementation pour la formation postgraduée*, article 23) are eligible for admission to the examination. The SSGIM will consult the MedReg register of medical professions (www.medregom.admin.ch) to ensure that the above-

mentioned criteria have been met. If a candidate has not yet been registered in MedReg, a copy of the candidate's recognized foreign medical diploma must be presented.

A maximum of 580 candidates can take each examination (a number that has never been reached in the past). In the unlikely event that the number of regular registrations for a given examination exceeds this limit, the SSGIM will create a waiting list. Candidates who are denied admission solely due to capacity constraints, despite having correctly registered within the official registration period, may register early for the next examination (before the official registration period opens) and will receive priority to ensure their admission to the following examination.

For legal reasons, it is mandatory to indicate a correspondence address in Switzerland in the registration for the examination. Registration of a candidate is **only complete after** the examination fee has been paid within ten days of receipt of the invoice. It is recommended that a **minimum of three years** of clinical training in general internal medicine are completed before attempting the examination, given that clinical experience will contribute greatly to the preparation for the examination.

Content and form of the examination

The examination is in written format and tests the knowledge and clinical reasoning skills of the candidate in the entire field of GIM by means of multiple-choice questions (MCQs).

2. 2026 Examination

Format

The Board Examination in General Internal Medicine is conducted in written format and lasts five hours. The examination comprises 120 MCQs, all of which are single-choice questions and are administered in English.

Content

The MCQs are selected from questions developed by Swiss specialists in general internal medicine as well as from the Medical Knowledge Self-Assessment Programs (MKSAP) of the American College of Physicians (ACP). Each MCQ presents a clinical problem, and the candidate must select the most appropriate answer from 4 or 5 options. The content of the examination is structured as follows (the listed percentages are only approximations and may vary as many questions fall under multiple topics):

120 MCQ

1. General considerations incl. prevention, palliative medicine, rehabilitation, health insurance and economics, ethics, statistics and questions not allocated to a subspecialty	14 %
2. Rheumatology, allergology and immunology	9 %
3. Neurology and psychiatry	7 %
4. Cardiovascular medicine	11 %
5. Endocrinology and metabolism	8 %
6. Nephrology	8 %
7. Gastroenterology and hepatology	9 %
8. Haematology and oncology	9 %
9. Infectious diseases	9 %
10. Pneumology	8 %
11. Intensive care	4 %
12. Dermatology	4 %
Total examination questions	120 questions = 100 %

After the examination, all questions are reviewed for potential flaws through statistical analysis and consideration of qualified candidate comments. The Examination Board then decides whether a question will be excluded from the final scoring.

Electronic Examination on Tablet Computers

For the duration of the examination, candidates will receive an electronic tablet with a touchscreen to complete the examination. Candidates may **not** bring their own devices.

For identification purposes, candidates must sign a paper document that links their input on a specific tablet to their personal examination performance.

Further details on the electronic examination on Tablet computers are listed in Appendix 1.

Organizational information

The SSGIM will inform candidates of additional organizational information at least two weeks before the examination.

3. Preparation for the Examination

Expertise in the entire domain of general internal medicine, including primary care, hospital-based internal medicine, and intensive care, is expected from the candidates for the examination. The Examination Board checks relevance, medical correctness, and difficulty of each question. The MKSAP is helpful to candidates as they prepare for the examination and practise MCQs. This program may be ordered for a fee from the SSGIM office. **55-70 % of MCQs are from Swiss medical experts and validated by the Examination Board and the IML of the University of Bern, and the remainder of questions is taken from ACP MKSAP and MKSAP 16 - 19.** It is **recommended** that candidates use **ACP MKSAP or MKSAP 19** for training purposes. The Examination Board recommends that candidates who have not yet purchased MKSAP to buy the ACP MKSAP licence, as it offers learning advantages. Candidates who already have MKSAP 19 are recommended to prepare for the examination with MKSAP 19. To study the entire edition (not only the questions, but also the background, the explanatory evidence and the added literature), **will also help** you to answer questions from earlier MKSAP editions and Swiss questions. It is further **recommended** that you consider for your exam preparation "UpToDate" and/or one of the **standard textbooks**, e.g. "Current Medical Diagnosis and Treatment", "Oxford Textbook of Primary Medical Care", "Harrison's Principles of Internal Medicine", or W. Siegenthaler's "Differential Diagnosis in Internal Medicine".

4. Grading of the Examination

The minimum passing score of the Board Examination in General Internal Medicine is established by the Examination Board as part of a content-based assessment. Consistency of the difficulty level of the examination is assured from year to year by means of recycled anchor questions (repetitively used questions). Based on experience, 84 - 89 % of candidates have passed the examination in the past years.

To attain the Swiss federal title "General Practitioner"¹, the evidence must be provided of a pass in the Board Examination in General Internal Medicine. The pass mark is set at a percentage that

¹ This advanced training title "General Practitioner" should not be confused with the title "Specialist in General Internal Medicine", curriculum „Family Medicine“.

According to Art. 30ff of EU Directive 93/16 (consolidated version of 1.5.2004), each member state is obliged to offer "specific training in general medical practice", which includes at least 3 years of full-time training.

is 10 % lower than that for candidates aiming to become specialists in general internal medicine, for example 63 points instead of 70 points.

Candidates will receive a feedback sheet containing the number of questions that counted for their individual result, and the total score achieved, the score achieved in each subgroup, and the percentile rank. There will be no grading. The examination will only be marked as pass or fail.

The results will be announced within 3 - 8 weeks of the examination.

5. Legal Regulations

All candidates who take part in an examination declare that they are physically and mentally healthy.

Scoring of the examination will be based on the electronic documentation created on the personalized tablet and stored on secured off-site servers. The tablets provided must remain in the examination hall during and after the examination. Personal notes may be taken during the examination; however, these must be left in the examination room and will be collected after the examination and discarded; they are not part of the examination.

Material permitted for use during the examination

The use of private electronic devices, including but not limited to mobile phones, handheld computers, laptops, smartwatches, and headphones, is not allowed during the examination. Only printed translation dictionaries (containing no medical information) are permitted as an aid.

For unusual English words in the MCQs a translation to Italian, French, and German will be provided, and the supervisors will assist should any translation problems arise. Reference ranges for laboratory parameters may vary across different questions, reflecting the standards of different laboratories. If no reference range is provided, it either does not exist in the context of the particular case or is so common that knowledge of the normal range can be expected. Reference ranges will be provided in SI format only. Whenever brand names ® are used for medications, these are only meant as typical examples.

Any form of recording of the examination is strictly prohibited. Anyone who uses improper means in the written examination will be disqualified from the examination. This includes copying answers from another candidate, using unauthorized documents, and using electronic devices such as smartphones, private tablets and other internet-enabled devices. Failure to comply with this regulation will result in immediate exclusion from the examination and the candidate will be listed in the examination records with the qualification "failed". In the event of late arrival, the President or a member of the Swiss Examination Board in General Internal Medicine decides, whether admission is still possible.

Exclusion from the examination is decided by the president or a member of the Examination Board. An exclusion is announced to the candidate orally by the Chairman or a member of the Examination Board and recorded in the minutes.

Right to consult the dossier in the event of failure to pass

In the event of failure to pass the examination, you have the right to view a limited part of your examination documents. The aim is not, however, to allow candidates to learn from their mistakes. Rather, if you suspect an error on the part of the Examination Board, which may have affected

The Federal continuous medical education title "General Practitioner" was created within the Federal Law on University Medical Professions (Medical Professions Law, MedBG) and the Medical Professions Regulation (MedBV) and corresponds to 3 years of continuous education in accordance with the EU Directive.

your result (pass/fail), consulting the dossier will allow you to verify your suspicions. Please note that there is a fee for the administrative expenses (450.- CHF VAT 8.1 % included).

In accordance with art. 56 of the Swiss Federal Act on University Medical Professions (MedBG/LPMéd)² and given the nature of the examination (MC questions), you may only consult the questions in dispute. The time permitted for this is limited in accordance with the requirements of the Examination Board for Human Medicine. For all other queries, please refer to the “Instruction sheet for appeals against the result of a board certification examination or specialist examination”, which is sent to all candidates who fail the examination and may be viewed on the SIWF/ISFM homepage:

German: https://siwf.ch/files/pdf26/merkblatt_einsprachen_d.pdf.

French: https://siwf.ch/files/pdf26/merkblatt_einsprachen_f.pdf

Furthermore, the documents are made available solely for the purpose of consultation. Making photocopies or copying them in their entirety is prohibited. You may only take notes for the purposes of filing an appeal, and the content of these notes may be checked. Consultation of the disputed questions is carried out under the supervision of a third party responsible for compiling a report on the consultation (date, times, procedure, etc.).

Candidates who have not passed the examination will receive, together with the feedback sheet, an information sheet containing instructions on how to obtain access to the examination documents and how to file an appeal with the Appeals Commission (see below).

Deadline for appeals

Under the terms of articles 27 and 58ss of the continuing education regulation (WBO/RFP)³, you may file an appeal against the decision of the Examining Board with the **Appeals Commission** for Postgraduate Training Titles (AC PTT, c/o FMH Legal Department, Elfenstrasse 18, Postfach 170, 3000 Bern 15) **within 60 days of the announcement of the result**.

The appeal must be sent to the Appeal Commission in duplicate and in written (**in German, French or Italian**), indicating the reasons and conclusions, citing the evidence and bearing the signature of the plaintiff or his/her representative. If you wish to file an appeal, we advise that you follow the instructions on the aforementioned SIWF/ISFM instruction sheet. If no appeal is filed by the stated deadline, the decision of the Examination Board is definitive and may no longer be challenged or reviewed within the scope of the procedure for obtaining the title.

Title

Passing the Board Examination in General Internal Medicine does not give a candidate the right to use the title “Specialist in General Internal Medicine” or “General Practitioner”, as candidates have to fulfill all the conditions of the continuing education regulation. An application for the title must be sent to the SIWF/ISFM (www.siwf.ch/weiterbildung/e-logbuch.cfm).

Cancellation policy and fees

If notification of withdrawal from the examination is received more than 16 days before the written examination, the examination fee will be reimbursed minus an administrative fee. If notification of withdrawal is received within 16 days of the written examination, the full amount remains due, irrespective of the reason for withdrawal. An administrative fee will also be due if the registration could not be validated.

²German: SR 811.11 *Bundesgesetz über die universitären Medizinalberufe, MedBG*

French: RS 811.11 *Loi fédérale sur les professions médicales universitaires, LPMéd*

³ Continuing education regulation of January 1, 2023

In German: https://www.siwf.ch/files/pdf7/wbo_d.pdf

In French: https://www.siwf.ch/files/pdf7/wbo_f.pdf

The following fees apply in case of withdrawal from the examination:

Examination on May 9, 2026:

If written cancellation is received before April 2, 2026: CHF 75.–

If written cancellation is received before April 23, 2026: CHF 150.–

No reimbursement will be made for withdrawals after April 23, 2026.

Examination on November 21, 2026:

If written cancellation is received before October 15, 2026: CHF 75.–

If written cancellation is received before November 5, 2026: CHF 150.–

No reimbursement will be made for withdrawals after November 5, 2026.

Office address

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President's address

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Please note that we cannot provide any information by telephone.

Bern, November 5, 2025

Prof. Dr. med. Jürg H. Beer

President of the Swiss Examination Board in General Internal Medicine

Appendix 1: Further Documents

SIWF/ISFM continuing education regulation of January 1, 2023

In German: https://www.siwf.ch/files/pdf7/wbo_d.pdf

In French: https://siwf.ch/files/pdf28/wbo_f.pdf

Continuing education programme of January 1, 2022 to achieve the title of Specialist Physician in General Internal Medicine

In German: www.siwf.ch/weiterbildung/facharzttitel-und-schwerpunkte/allgemeine-innere-medizin.cfm

In French: <https://www.siwf.ch/fr/formation-postgraduee/titres-specialiste-formations/medecine-interne-generale.cfm>

General Terms and Conditions SSGIM

In German: Allgemeine Vertragsbedingungen SGAIM: <https://www.sgaim.ch/de/footer/agb>

In French: Conditions contractuelles générales de la SSMIG <https://www.sgaim.ch/fr/ccg>

Privacy Policy SSGIM

In German: Datenschutzerklärung SGAIM: <https://www.sgaim.ch/de/footer/datenschutz>

In French: Déclaration de protection des données <https://www.sgaim.ch/fr/footer/indications-legales>

Appendix 2: Electronic Examination on Tablet Computers

Optional practice/training prior to the examination (recommended)

In preparation for the examination, candidates can anonymously use the following online practice tool to familiarize themselves with the electronic examination format:

<https://self-assessment.measured.iml.unibe.ch/exam-4029> (Password: SSGIM).

The small sample examination provided via this link is intended solely to give candidates an idea of how the examination questions are formally structured and how they should be handled. It is not designed to provide any assessment of knowledge and does not reflect the content of the actual examination in any way. No data are recorded or saved.

During the Examination

For the duration of the examination, candidates will receive an electronic tablet with a touchscreen to complete the examination (to be operated with fingers; no additional input devices are necessary). Candidates may **not** bring their own devices. Tablets provided must remain in the examination hall during and after the examination.

Candidates will have the opportunity to add comments or objections concerning the medical content of examination questions directly on the tablet. Such objections are important for the evaluation process, as qualified notes on inconsistent guidelines, ambiguous wording, or significant errors may lead to the subsequent cancellation of a question. In contrast, general comments or emotional statements (e.g., “unclear question”) as well as justifications of one’s own answer are not useful and will not be analyzed.

For identification purposes, candidates must sign a paper document that links their input on a specific tablet to their personal examination performance.

Candidates will receive an additional sheet of paper and a pen for taking personal notes during the examination; these notes will be collected after the examination and discarded; they are not part of the examination.

The SSGIM will make every effort to ensure that the examination can be carried out as planned. In the unlikely event of a temporary technical breakdown, the examination will continue in the same session, possibly after a delay. In the very unlikely event of an irreparable interruption outside the control of the SSGIM, the examination will be repeated on a designated alternative date (see above). In this case, all data from the first attempt will be discarded for all candidates (no results will be generated) and candidates will remain automatically registered for the alternative date.