Members of the American Board of Health Physics (ABHP) Part II Panel of Examiners met on 12-13 February 2005 at the New Orleans Marriott to prepare the 2005 exam. This is a very hard-working weekend for these busy people and their willingness to put in this level of labor just after and just before working a full week at home is testimony to their commitment to this important process.

The entire examination preparation process started in late fall—very soon after grading last year’s exams, the members began to exchange new candidate questions for this year’s exam by email. After a few rounds of checking and corrections, the panel meeting in February serves as the time to intensively critique all of the submitted questions and choose the best candidate questions for the upcoming year’s test. By the end of the two days, three or four questions in each of 11 question categories have been extensively studied, corrected, and reworked by the members (working in small groups of three to six people). Final selection of the actual questions for the exam continues through the spring, with the best questions selected. The panel also tries to strike a balance among the various important “domains of practice” that the exam should always cover. In the late summer, after the exam, the grading process proceeds until all of the applicants’ tests have been graded by several graders, then the question selection process (for next year) begins again!

As you can see, this is a group that works very hard all year long and makes considerable sacrifices to produce a high-quality and balanced examination for the applicants. It is not without its rewards, of course—it is an excellent learning process for the panel members; numerous questions both within and outside of each person’s areas of specialization must be studied and worked out through the process. Any and all certified health physicists are heavily encouraged to volunteer to be part of this panel.

If you are interested in volunteering, send a note to Nancy Johnson (njohnson@burkinc.com) indicating your interest and availability, and mention your areas of specialty as well.