

NeuroTrace Study Guide

Domain: Domain IV – Professional Practice, Documentation & Ethics

Section: EEG Documentation & Reporting Standards

Style: Structured, policy-based, exam-oriented

1. Core Principles (Must Know)

EEG Reports Are Legal Medical Documents

- **EEG reports are legal medical documents**
- Reports are part of the medical record
- Subject to legal review
- Must be accurate and complete

Documentation Must Be

Accurate

- **Accurate:** Report findings correctly
- No exaggeration or minimization
- Factual and truthful
- Based on actual observations

Objective

- **Objective:** Neutral, unbiased language
- Avoid subjective interpretations
- Use standardized terminology
- Describe, don't interpret

Complete

- **Complete:** Include all required elements
- Document all relevant findings
- Note technical parameters
- Record events and responses

Technologists Document Observations, Not Diagnoses

- **Technologists document observations, not diagnoses**
- Describe what is seen
- Do not diagnose conditions
- Do not provide medical interpretations

Key Principle

- **If it isn't documented, it didn't happen**
- Documentation is essential
- Undocumented findings don't exist
- Complete documentation protects all parties

Practical Application

- Document all findings accurately
- Use objective, standardized language
- Stay within scope of practice

- Complete all required report elements
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2. Required EEG Report Components

Patient Demographics (As Permitted)

- **Patient demographics (as permitted)**
- Patient identifiers (as allowed by policy)
- Age, sex (if relevant to interpretation)
- Date of birth (if permitted)
- Medical record number (if applicable)

Date and Duration of Study

- **Date and duration of study**
- Date and time of recording
- Duration of recording
- Time of day (if relevant)

States Recorded (Wake, Sleep)

- **States recorded (wake, sleep)**
- Wakefulness
- Drowsiness
- Sleep stages (if applicable)
- State transitions

Activation Procedures Used

- **Activation procedures used**
- Hyperventilation (if performed)
- Photic stimulation (if performed)
- Sleep deprivation (if applicable)
- Other activation procedures

Technical Parameters

Montage

- **Montage:** Document montages used
- Bipolar, referential, or both
- Specific montage names (if applicable)
- Montage changes during recording

Filters

- **Filters:** Document filter settings
- Low-frequency filter (LFF)
- High-frequency filter (HFF)
- Notch filter (if used)

Sensitivity

- **Sensitivity:** Document sensitivity settings
- Sensitivity in $\mu\text{V}/\text{mm}$
- Sensitivity changes (if any)

Observed EEG Findings

- **Observed EEG findings**
- Background activity
- Normal patterns
- Abnormal patterns
- Artifacts (if significant)

Technical Difficulties or Artifacts

- **Technical difficulties or artifacts**
 - Equipment problems
 - Significant artifacts
 - Interruptions in recording
 - Technical limitations
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3. Objective Descriptive Language

Use

"The EEG demonstrates..."

- **"The EEG demonstrates..."** (Objective description)
- Example: "The EEG demonstrates a well-organized 9 Hz posterior dominant rhythm."
- Neutral, factual language
- Describes what is present

"There is evidence of..."

- **"There is evidence of..."** (Objective description)
- Example: "There is evidence of focal slowing over the left temporal region."
- Neutral, factual language
- Describes findings without interpretation

Avoid

"This indicates epilepsy"

- **"This indicates epilepsy"** (Diagnostic statement - AVOID)
- This is a diagnosis, not a description
- Technologists do not diagnose
- Stay within scope of practice

"The patient has..."

- **"The patient has..."** (Diagnostic statement - AVOID)
- This implies diagnosis
- Technologists describe EEG, not patient conditions
- Use "The EEG shows..." instead

ABRET Emphasis

- **Descriptive, neutral language is required**
- Use objective terminology
- Avoid diagnostic language
- Describe findings, not conditions

Best Practice

- Use standardized terminology

- Describe what is seen
 - Avoid interpretive language
 - Stay within scope of practice
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4. Scope of Practice

Technologists

Describe EEG Findings

- **Describe EEG findings**
- Document what is observed
- Use objective language
- Report technical observations

Report Events

- **Report events**
- Document clinical events (seizures, behaviors)
- Document technical events (equipment issues)
- Document safety events

Physicians

Interpret and Diagnose

- **Interpret and diagnose**
- Physicians interpret EEG findings
- Physicians make diagnoses
- Physicians correlate with clinical presentation

ABRET Trap

- **Making diagnostic statements exceeds scope**
- Technologists do not diagnose
- Avoid diagnostic language
- Stay within scope of practice

Best Practice

- Know your role and limitations
 - Describe findings objectively
 - Do not diagnose or interpret
 - Refer diagnostic questions to physician
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5. Documentation of Events

Seizures

- **Seizures:** Document seizure events
- Time of onset
- Duration
- Description of activity
- Response taken

Documentation Must Include

- **Time:** Exact time of event

- **Description:** Detailed description of activity
- **Response:** Actions taken
- **Outcome:** Patient status after event

Patient Behavior

- **Patient behavior:** Document significant behaviors
- Movements, responses
- State changes
- Clinical observations
- Relevant patient interactions

Technical Interruptions

- **Technical interruptions:** Document technical issues
- Equipment problems
- Recording interruptions
- Artifact sources
- Resolution of issues

Safety Events

- **Safety events:** Document safety-related events
- Adverse reactions
- Equipment malfunctions
- Patient distress
- Emergency responses

Documentation Must Include

Time

- **Time:** Exact time of event
- Document when event occurred
- Include duration if applicable
- Note time relative to recording

Description

- **Description:** Detailed description
- What happened
- Where it occurred
- How it appeared
- Relevant details

Response Taken

- **Response taken:** Actions taken
- What was done
- Who was notified
- Outcome of response
- Follow-up actions

6. Confidentiality & Legal Considerations

Follow HIPAA-Equivalent Standards

- **Follow HIPAA-equivalent standards**

- Protect patient privacy
- Secure storage of records
- Proper access controls
- Compliance with regulations

Protect Patient Identifiers

- **Protect patient identifiers**
- Limit access to authorized personnel
- Secure storage of reports
- Proper disposal of records
- Follow facility policies

De-Identify Teaching Materials

- **De-identify teaching materials**
- Remove patient identifiers
- Remove dates and locations
- Remove unique identifiers
- Follow de-identification protocols

Best Practice

- Maintain patient confidentiality
- Follow HIPAA regulations
- Secure storage and disposal
- De-identify teaching materials

7. Common ABRET Exam Traps

Trap 1: Including Diagnostic Impressions

- **Reality:** Technologists do not diagnose
- **Trap:** May include diagnostic statements
- **Solution:** Describe findings, don't diagnose
- **ABRET focus:** Scope of practice boundaries

Trap 2: Omitting Technical Parameters

- **Reality:** Technical parameters are required
- **Trap:** May omit filter, sensitivity, montage settings
- **Solution:** Document all technical parameters
- **ABRET focus:** Required report elements

Trap 3: Vague or Subjective Language

- **Reality:** Objective, standardized language is required
- **Trap:** May use vague or subjective terms
- **Solution:** Use specific, objective terminology
- **ABRET focus:** Proper terminology

Trap 4: Failure to Document Adverse Events

- **Reality:** All events must be documented
- **Trap:** May fail to document seizures, technical issues
- **Solution:** Document all significant events
- **ABRET focus:** Complete documentation

Trap 5: Using Interpretive Language

- **Reality:** Descriptive language is required
 - **Trap:** May use interpretive language
 - **Solution:** Use objective, descriptive language
 - **ABRET focus:** Objective reporting
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8. Case-Based Example

Scenario

Clinical Setting: Routine EEG for seizure evaluation

EEG Finding: Focal sharp waves over left temporal region

Documentation Task: Write appropriate technical description

Correct Documentation

- **"Focal sharp transients were observed over the left temporal region."**
- Objective description
- No diagnostic language
- Specific location
- Appropriate terminology

Teaching Point

- **Description without diagnosis is required**
- Describe what is seen
- Avoid diagnostic statements
- Use objective language
- Stay within scope of practice

ABRET Application

- Given EEG finding → describe objectively
 - Given diagnostic statement → recognize as outside scope
 - Given vague language → use specific terminology
 - Must know required report elements
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9. Exam Readiness Checklist

Use this checklist to verify your understanding:

- Can list required report components (demographics, parameters, findings)
- Can use objective terminology (descriptive, not diagnostic)
- Can stay within scope of practice (describe, don't diagnose)
- Can document events accurately (time, description, response)
- Understand that EEG reports are legal documents
- Know that documentation must be accurate, objective, complete
- Recognize that technologists describe, physicians diagnose
- Understand that if it isn't documented, it didn't happen
- Can identify required technical parameters
- Know how to document seizures and events

- Understand confidentiality requirements
 - Can avoid common ABRET exam traps
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10. Internal Cross-Links

Workflow

- **Recording Procedures:** How to document procedures
- **Technical Parameters:** Documenting filter, sensitivity, montage settings

Patterns

- **Epileptiform Discharges:** How to describe epileptiform activity
- **Artifacts:** How to document artifacts

Standards

- **Patient Safety:** Safety event documentation
- **Confidentiality:** HIPAA and privacy requirements

Cases

- **Report-writing simulations:** Practice writing reports
- **Documentation scenarios:** Cases requiring documentation

Quizzes

- **Documentation standards MCQs:** Questions on documentation
 - **Terminology questions:** Questions on proper language
 - **Scope of practice questions:** Questions on boundaries
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Study Tips

1. **Memorize required components:** Demographics, parameters, findings, events
 2. **Learn objective terminology:** "The EEG demonstrates...", "There is evidence of..."
 3. **Know scope boundaries:** Technologists describe, physicians diagnose
 4. **Understand documentation principles:** Accurate, objective, complete
 5. **Remember the principle:** If it isn't documented, it didn't happen
 6. **Know the traps:** Diagnostic language, omitted parameters, vague terms
 7. **ABRET focus:** Expect questions on required elements, terminology, and scope of practice
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End of Study Guide

For additional practice, complete quiz questions tagged: reporting, documentation, scope-of-practice, ethics