

CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS A Comparison between ABMS†, ABPS, AOABOS†

MATRIX TO

Certification and Recertification Requirements of the Three Nationally Recognized Multi-Specialty Physician Certifying Organizations



Essential Details for Evaluating Eligibility Requirements and Standards of:

ABMS

American Board of Medical Specialties

ABPS

American Board of Physician Specialties

AOABOS

American Osteopathic Association Bureau of Osteopathic Specialists



	Advanced Specialty Training/Residency (Number of Years Required)			Documentation of Clinical Experience & Case Reports Required			Years to Complete Certification After Initial Application			Oral Exam			Clinical Exam			Life Certification Offered			Membership Prerequisite Required			Require Public Members			Limited Exam Attempts Per Applicant Cycle			Annual Attestation of Full Unrestricted Medical License				
	ABMS	ABPS ¹	AOABOS	ABMS	ABPS ²	AOABOS	ABMS	ABPS	AOABOS	ABMS	ABPS	AOABOS	ABMS	ABPS	AOABOS	ABMS	ABPS	AOABOS	ABMS	ABPS	AOABOS	ABMS	ABPS	AOABOS	ABMS	ABPS	AOABOS	ABMS	ABPS	AOABOS		
ANESTHESIOLOGY	3*	4*	3	No	Yes	No	6	6	6	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
DERMATOLOGY	3*	3*	3	No	No	No	2	3	6	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	
DIAGNOSTIC RADIOLOGY	4*	4*	4*	No	No	No	NL	6	6	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
DISASTER MEDICINE	N/A	3	N/A	N/A	No	N/A	N/A	6	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A	N/A	No	N/A	N/A	No	N/A	N/A	No	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A		
EMERGENCY MEDICINE	3*	3	3*	No	Yes	No	NL	6	6	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
FAMILY MEDICINE OBSTETRICS	N/A	3*	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A	N/A	6	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A	N/A	No	N/A	N/A	No	N/A	N/A	No	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A	N/A	
FAMILY PRACTICE	3*	3*	2*	No	Yes	No	NL	3	6	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	
GERIATRIC MEDICINE	3 ²	3 ¹	2 ³	No	Yes	No	NL	3	6	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	
HOSPITAL MEDICINE	N/A	3 ¹	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A	N/A	3	N/A	N/A	No	N/A	N/A	No	N/A	N/A	No	N/A	N/A	No	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A	N/A	
INTERNAL MEDICINE	3	3*	2	No	No	No	NL	3	6	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	
OBSTETRICS/GYNECOLOGY	4*	4*	4*	Yes	Yes	No	6	6	6	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
OPHTHALMOLOGY	3-4*	3*	3*	No	Yes	No	NL	6	6	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	
ORTHOPEDIC SURGERY	5*	5*	4*	Yes	Yes	Yes	5	6	6	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
PLASTIC AND RECONSTRUCTIVE SURGERY	2*	2*	5	Yes	Yes	No	NL	6	6	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
RADIATION ONCOLOGY	4*	4*	4	No	No	No	NL	6	6	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	
SURGERY	5*	5*	4*	No	Yes	No	5	6	6	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No

RECERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS A Comparison between ABMS†, ABPS, AOABOS†

	Number of Years Before Recertification Required			Documentation of Clinical Experience & Case Reports Required			Year Voluntary Recertification Ended			Number of CME Hours Required Per Year			Completion of Non-Remedial Medical Ethics Course			Recertification Reciprocity Offered			Life Certification Offered		
	ABMS	ABPS ¹	AOABOS	ABMS	ABPS	AOABOS	ABMS	ABPS ²	AOABOS	ABMS	ABPS	AOABOS	ABMS	ABPS	AOABOS	ABMS	ABPS	AOABOS	ABMS	ABPS	AOABOS
ANESTHESIOLOGY	10	8	10	Yes	No	Yes	2000	RAR	2000	35	50	50 !	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	NLO	No	NLO
DERMATOLOGY	10	8	10	No	No	No	1991	RAR	2004	40*	50	50 !	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	NLO	No	NLO
DIAGNOSTIC RADIOLOGY	10	8	10	No	No	No	2002	RAR	2001	25	20	50 !	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	NLO	No	NLO
DISASTER MEDICINE	N/A	8	N/A	N/A	No	N/A	N/A	RAR	N/A	N/A	50	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A	N/A	No	N/A
EMERGENCY MEDICINE	10	8	10	No	No	Yes	1980	RAR	1994	50	50	50 !	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	NLO	No	NLO
FAMILY MEDICINE OBSTETRICS	N/A	8	N/A	N/A	No	N/A	N/A	RAR	N/A	N/A	50	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A	N/A	No	N/A
FAMILY PRACTICE	7	8	8	No	No	No	1970	RAR	1997	50	50	50 !	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	NLO	No	NLO
GERIATRIC MEDICINE	10	8	8	No	No	No	1990	RAR	1997	50	50	50 !	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	NLO	No	NLO
HOSPITAL MEDICINE	N/A	8	N/A	N/A	No	N/A	N/A	RAR	N/A	N/A	50	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A	N/A	No	N/A
INTERNAL MEDICINE	10	8	10	No	No	Yes	1990	RAR	1993	100pts	50	50 !	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	NLO	No	NLO
OBSTETRICS/GYNECOLOGY	NR	8	6	NR	No	No	2000	RAR	2002	NR	50	50 !	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	NLO	No	NLO
OPHTHALMOLOGY	10	8	10	Yes	No	No	2000	RAR	2000	30	50	50 !	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	NLO	No	NLO
ORTHOPEDIC SURGERY	10	8	10	Yes	No	No	1986	RAR	2003	40*	50	50 !	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	NLO	No	NLO
PLASTIC AND RECONSTRUCTIVE SURGERY	10	8	8	Yes	No	Yes	1996	RAR	1997	50*	50	50 !	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	NLO	No	NLO
RADIATION ONCOLOGY	10	8	10	Yes	No	No	1990	RAR	2001	20	20	50 !	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	NLO	No	NLO
SURGERY	10	8	10	Yes	No	No	1976	RAR	1997	50^	50	50 !	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	NLO	No	NLO

Certification Key:
 * - Residency must be in specialty in which certification is sought
 NL - No Limit
 N/A - Certification Not Offered
¹ - Applicants for ABPS certification in Geriatric Medicine must have completed a residency with substantial and identifiable training in Geriatric Medicine. Applicants for ABPS certification in Hospital Medicine must have completed a residency in Internal Medicine, Family Practice or Emergency Medicine.
² - Applicants for ABMS certification in Geriatric Medicine must first be certified in Family Practice or Internal Medicine with ABMS.
³ - Applicants for AOABOS certification in Geriatric Medicine must first be certified in Family Practice or Internal Medicine with AOA.
Note: All three specialty boards require a passing grade on a written or computer-based exam. ABPS exams are developed by Diplomates, many of whom are dual-boarded; boarded by the ABPS and also boarded by, for example, the American Board of Internal Medicine (ABIM), the American Board of Osteopathic Family Physicians (ABOFP) and the American Board of Osteopathic Emergency Medicine (ABOEM), and various others. In addition, ABPS requires all unsuccessful candidates to wait for one (1) year and provide 50 hours of Category 1 CME in their specialty prior to board eligibility to sit for their fourth examination. ABMS and AOABOS does not have this as a requirement.

Recertification Key:
 * - CME hours must be earned within the three (3) years prior to applying for recertification.
 ^ - CME hours must be earned within the two (2) years prior to applying for recertification.
 ! - 120 CME hours over 3 years, and 50 of those 120 must in that specialty.
 NR - Recertification NOT required
 pts 100 points must be earned over a ten year period
 N/A - Certification Not Offered
 RAR - Recertification Always Required
 NLO - No Longer Offered
¹ - If certified prior to 2002, all ABPS physicians are required to recertify every 10 years. If certified after 2002, recertification is required every eight (8) years.
² - ABPS has never offered voluntary recertification; it has always been mandatory to remain certified.
Note: ABPS, ABMS, and AOABOS all require written recertification exams with the following exceptions: ABMS applicants for recertification in Obstetrics/Gynecology and Diagnostic Radiology may choose between a written and an oral exam. In addition, the ABMS recertification exam in Ophthalmology is a take-home, open-book exam.

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Practice Pathways Open/Active

Internet Sources for Comparative Information on Certification and Recertification Requirements for ABPS, ABMS, & AOABOS

	ABMS	ABPS	AOABOS
ANESTHESIOLOGY	No	No	No
DERMATOLOGY	No	No	No
DIAGNOSTIC RADIOLOGY	No	No	No
DISASTER MEDICINE	N/A	No	N/A
EMERGENCY MEDICINE	No	No	Yes ¹
FAMILY MEDICINE OBSTETRICS	N/A	No	N/A
FAMILY PRACTICE/MEDICINE	No	No	No
GERIATRIC MEDICINE	No	No	No
HOSPITAL MEDICINE	N/A	No	N/A
INTERNAL MEDICINE	No	No	No
OBSTETRICS/GYNECOLOGY	No	No	No
OPHTHALMOLOGY	No	No	No
ORTHOPEDIC SURGERY	No	No	No
PLASTIC AND RECONSTRUCTIVE SURGERY	No	No	No
RADIATION ONCOLOGY	No	No	No
SURGERY	No	No	No
PREVENTATIVE MEDICINE	Yes*	N/A	Yes [^]

	ABMS	ABPS	AOABOS
ANESTHESIOLOGY	http://www.theaba.org/anesthesiology_initial_certification.shtml http://www.theaba.org/anesthesiology-recertification.shtml http://www.theaba.org/anesthesiology-maintenance.shtml	http://www.abpsus.org/certification/anesthesiology/eligibility.html http://www.abpsus.org/certification/anesthesiology/recertification.html	http://www.osteopathic.org/index.cfm?PageID=crt_anesthio
DERMATOLOGY	http://www.abderm.org/residency.html http://www.abderm.org/recert.html	http://www.abpsus.org/certification/dermatology/eligibility.html http://www.abpsus.org/certification/dermatology/recertification.html	http://www.osteopathic.org/index.cfm?PageID=crt_anesthio
DIAGNOSTIC RADIOLOGY	http://www.theabr.org/DR_Pri_Req.htm http://www.theabr.org/DR_MOC_Req.htm	http://www.abpsus.org/certification/diagnostic_radiology/eligibility.html http://www.abpsus.org/certification/diagnostic_radiology/recertification.html	http://www.aocr.org/certification/diagnostic_radiology.asp http://www.aocr.org/certification/recertification.asp
DISASTER MEDICINE	N/A	http://www.abpsus.org/certification/disaster_medicine/eligibility.html http://www.abpsus.org/certification/disaster_medicine/recertification.html	N/A
EMERGENCY MEDICINE	http://www.abem.org/PUBLIC/_Rainbow/Documents/2008%20Policies%20&%20Procedures%20Book%20Final.pdf http://www.abem.org/PUBLIC/_Rainbow/Documents/Policies%20and%20Procedures%20EMCC%202008.pdf	http://www.abpsus.org/certification/emergency/eligibility.html http://www.abpsus.org/certification/emergency/recertification.html	http://www.aobem.org/certification.htm http://www.aobem.org/applications/CEEM_06.doc
FAMILY MEDICINE OBSTETRICS	N/A	http://www.abpsus.org/certification/family_medicine_obstetric/eligibility.html http://www.abpsus.org/certification/family_medicine_obstetric/abps_recert_brochure.html	N/A
FAMILY PRACTICE/MEDICINE	https://www.theabfm.org/cert/cert.aspx https://www.theabfm.org/cert/recert.aspx https://www.theabfm.org/MOC/index.aspx	http://www.abpsus.org/certification/family_practice/eligibility.html http://www.abpsus.org/certification/family_practice/recertification.html	http://www.aobfp.org/cert-req/cert-app.html http://www.aobfp.org/cert-req/recert-app.html
GERIATRIC MEDICINE	http://www.abim.org/certification/policies/imss/geri.aspx http://www.abim.org/moc/requirements-for-MOC.aspx	http://www.abpsus.org/certification/geriatric/eligibility.html http://www.abpsus.org/certification/geriatric/recertification.html	http://www.acoi.org/CertGen.html#V http://www.acoi.org/CertRecert.html
HOSPITAL MEDICINE	N/A	http://www.abpsus.org/certification/hospital_medicine/eligibility.html http://www.abpsus.org/certification/hospital_medicine/abps_recert_brochure.html	N/A
INTERNAL MEDICINE	http://www.abim.org/certification/policies/imss/im.aspx http://www.abim.org/moc/requirements-for-MOC.aspx	http://www.abpsus.org/certification/internal/eligibility.html http://www.abpsus.org/certification/internal/recertification.html	http://www.acoi.org/CertGen.html#V http://www.acoi.org/CertRecert.html
OBSTETRICS/GYNECOLOGY	http://www.abog.org/pdf/BAS2008.pdf	http://www.abpsus.org/certification/obstetrics_and_gynecology/eligibility.html http://www.abpsus.org/certification/obstetrics_and_gynecology/recertification.html	http://www.aobog.org/
OPHTHALMOLOGY	http://www.abop.org/become/req/index.asp http://www.abop.org/maintain/req.asp	http://www.abpsus.org/certification/ophthalmology/eligibility.html http://www.abpsus.org/certification/ophthalmology/recertification.html	http://www.aoboo.org/aoboohns_protocol.htm
ORTHOPEDIC SURGERY	https://www.abos.org/ModDefault.aspx?module=Candidates&section=BoardCertOver https://www.abos.org/ModDefault.aspx?module=Diplomates&section=RecertMOC	http://www.abpsus.org/certification/orthopedic/eligibility.html http://www.abpsus.org/certification/orthopedic/recertification.html	http://www.aobos.org/forms/Candidate%20Handbook%20Master.pdf http://www.aobos.org/forms/Recertification%20Handbook%20Master.pdf
PLASTIC AND RECONSTRUCTIVE SURGERY	https://www.abplsurg.org/ModDefault.aspx?section=FAQ https://www.abplsurg.org/documents/MOC-PS%20Booklet%20of%20Information.pdf	http://www.abpsus.org/certification/plastic_surgery/eligibility.html http://www.abpsus.org/certification/plastic_surgery/recertification.html	http://www.aobs.org/aobs-protocol.htm
RADIATION ONCOLOGY	http://www.theabr.org/RO_Pri_Req.htm http://www.theabr.org/RO_MOC_Req.htm	http://www.abpsus.org/certification/radiation_oncology/eligibility.html http://www.abpsus.org/certification/radiation_oncology/recertification.html	http://www.aocr.org/certification/radiation_oncology.asp http://www.aocr.org/certification/recertification.asp
SURGERY	http://home.absurgery.org/default.jsp?certgsqe http://home.absurgery.org/default.jsp?certcehome https://home.absurgery.org/default.jsp?exam-mocreqs	http://www.abpsus.org/certification/surgery/eligibility.html http://www.abpsus.org/certification/surgery/recertification.html	http://www.aobs.org/aobs-protocol.htm
PREVENTATIVE MEDICINE	http://www.theabpm.org/requirements.cfm#Residency	N/A	http://www.aobpm.org/AOBPM_Board%20Eligibility%20Requirements.pdf

Key:
 N/A - Certification Not Offered
¹ - AOABOS offers a practice pathway in lieu of residency training in Emergency Medicine.
^{*} - ABMS allows partial credit for experience in lieu of residency training for certification in Preventative Medicine.
[^] - AOABOS offers a practice pathway in lieu of residency training in Preventative Medicine.

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† Source: Internet web sites November 2008; see Internet Sources table

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This publication provides pertinent information that contrasts the certification and recertification requirements and standards of the three nationally recognized physician multi-specialty board certifying organizations: the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS), the American Board of Physician Specialties (ABPS), and the American Osteopathic Association Bureau of Osteopathic Specialists (AOABOS).