



# ABP Corporate Policy

## Continuing Certification

### INTRODUCTION

At the time pediatric board certification was established in 1933, a single certificate was awarded after written and oral examinations were successfully completed, and no further contact with the ABP was expected. These certificates were referred to as “Permanent,” or non-time-limited, certificates. In the mid-1980s, increasingly rapid changes in medical knowledge resulted in certifying boards moving to time-limited certification. By May of 1988, all certificates awarded by the ABP were time limited. A process called Maintenance of Certification (MOC), also referred to as continuing certification, allowed board-certified pediatricians (hereafter diplomates) of the ABP to maintain certification in general pediatrics and the pediatric subspecialties by completing specific activities. Permanent certificate holders are not required to enroll in or complete continuing certification activities but are encouraged to do so. For permanent certificate holders, participation in the continuing certification process does not affect the status of the original certificate. Continuing certification requirements have evolved, and will continue to evolve, as the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) model has evolved over time.

### CONTINUING CERTIFICATION CYCLE

The ABP continuing certification cycle is five years in duration, during which completion of all required activities must be documented.

ABP continuing certification consists of four primary parts, each with specific required activities:

- Part 1: Evidence of Professionalism
  - Diplomates must possess an unrestricted medical license in at least one U.S. state or Canadian province and must NOT have any restricted or revoked medical licenses. <https://www.abp.org/content/policies#Licensure>
  - Diplomates must not engage in unethical, unprofessional, or dishonorable behavior.
- Part 2: Evidence of Lifelong Learning and Self-Assessment.
  - Diplomates must engage in ABP-approved activities demonstrating lifelong learning and self-assessment, earning 50 Part 2 points during the five-year cycle. Activities may relate to any aspect of health or pediatric care that the diplomate feels is relevant to their professional practice.
- Part 3: Evidence of Cognitive Expertise
  - Diplomates must demonstrate ongoing cognitive expertise during each five-year cycle in each area in which they wish to remain certified. This may be accomplished by passing MOCA-Peds (<https://www.abp.org/mocapeds>), or by passing the secure examination in that area during the five-year cycle.
- Part 4: Evidence of Improving Health and Healthcare
  - Diplomates must demonstrate engagement in efforts to improve the health and healthcare of the population they serve, earning 50 Part 4 points during the five-year cycle. These activities can relate to any aspect of the diplomate’s professional practice that is intended to improve the health of children. Diplomates who exceed their Part 4 requirements may be able to roll over points to their next cycle. Please see ROLLOVER POINTS below for details.



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Diplomates can enroll at any time during their final year of the current cycle as long as their requirements are complete; the new continuing certification cycle officially begins at the time of enrollment and continues through the end of the fifth calendar year following enrollment. The five-year fee may be paid in full at the time of enrollment, or may be paid on an annual basis, due before the deadline each year. Lack of payment results in loss of the certificate. See Enrollment and Fees (<https://www.abp.org/content/enrollment-and-fees>) for more details.

Pediatric subspecialists are not required to maintain their general pediatrics certification. Subspecialists desiring to maintain general pediatric certification may do so by passing MOCA-Peds for general pediatrics or by passing the secure examination in general pediatrics during the five-year cycle. Diplomates certified in Pediatric Transplant Hepatology must maintain certification in Pediatric Gastroenterology. Regardless of how many ABP general and specialty certificates an individual diplomate holds, they still have the same licensure requirement and 100-point continuing certification requirement for Part 2 and Part 4. However, a diplomate must meet the Part 3 requirement for each certification they wish to maintain.

#### ROLLOVER POINTS

Excess Part 2 points earned do not roll over to the next cycle. Thus, diplomates begin a new cycle with a zero-point Part 2 balance. Diplomates who earn 75 or more Part 4 points in their cycle can roll over a maximum of 25 points into their next cycle. Thus, a diplomate that has 75 Part 4 points in their current cycle will begin the next cycle with 25 Part 4 points.

#### MOCA-PEDS ELIGIBILITY

General Pediatrics (GP): Diplomates will gain access to GP MOCA-Peds in January after passing the initial certification exam. During their initial five-year cycle, a diplomate does not have an exam requirement due, and thus MOCA-Peds is only eligible for Part 2 MOC points. In each subsequent five-year MOC cycle, diplomates can meet their exam requirement by passing either MOCA-Peds or the proctored exam.

Subspecialty: Diplomates will gain access to MOCA-Peds for their subspecialty in January after passing their initial subspecialty exam. Initially MOCA-Peds will only be available for learning purposes and to earn Part 2 MOC points.

The subspecialty exam requirement for newly certified subspecialty diplomates is time-variable and related to where a given diplomate is in their General Pediatric MOC cycle when passing the initial certification exam. This is done to ensure GP and subspecialty cycles are aligned throughout a diplomate's career. The exam requirement and their ability to start MOCA-Peds to meet their exam requirement time ranges from 1 year – 5 years after passing their initial subspecialty exam. Subspecialty diplomates can meet their exam requirement by passing either MOCA-Peds or the proctored exam. **All diplomates should refer to their ABP Portfolio for details about their exam requirement.**



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#### MOCA-PEDS RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

Below is a brief summary of the most important MOCA-Peds rules of engagement. Please refer to the MOCA-Peds Participant Agreement (<https://www.abp.org/mocapeds/participant-agreement>) for full details.

- MOCA-Peds is a longitudinal assessment of an individual's knowledge and can be used to meet the exam requirement. Thus, diplomates must not seek or accept assistance from other individuals or provide assistance to other individuals in answering MOCA-Peds questions.
- MOCA-Peds final score is based on a diplomate's top 12 performing quarters out of the 16 quarters of questions a diplomate receives. The ABP will automatically drop a diplomate's lowest 4 performing quarters. Once a quarter is complete, any unanswered questions will be scored as 'incorrect'. The ABP will not accept requests to re-open quarters.
- If a diplomate does not participate in MOCA-Peds or fails MOCA-Peds, they will have the 5<sup>th</sup> year of their MOC cycle to pass the traditional proctored exam at a secure testing facility.

#### CONTINUING CERTIFICATION: PROCTORED EXAM

Diplomates who do not pass MOCA-Peds or prefer a proctored exam can still choose to take the proctored exam at a secure testing facility. Those who choose the proctored exam will incur an additional fee that covers the costs charged by the testing center and associated expenses (see Enrollment and Fees). Diplomates have the option to take proctored exams in the final year of their five-year cycle, or they can choose to test early by contacting the ABP.

#### CONTINUING CERTIFICATION: CO-SPONSORED CERTIFICATES

In general, the individual diplomate is responsible for meeting the Part 3 requirements of the board hosting the exam. As other ABMS Boards move to longitudinal assessments (i.e., MOCA-Peds), we are working towards new agreements with other ABMS Boards related to joint board exams. Diplomates interested in or already participating in one of the below co-sponsored subspecialty fields are encouraged to contact the ABP for additional information as changes may occur in between policy updates.

##### Co-sponsored Examinations:

Other diplomates take the ABP Examination

- American Board of Internal Medicine take our Adolescent Medicine Exam
- American Board of Family Medicine take our Adolescent Medicine Exam
- American Board of Emergency Medicine take our Pediatric Emergency Medicine Exam

ABP diplomates take the examination of another certifying board

- American Board of Internal Medicine provides the Hospice and Palliative Medicine, Sleep Medicine, and Pediatric Transplant Hepatology Exams
- American Board of Family Medicine provides the Sports Medicine Exam
- American Board of Emergency Medicine provides the Medical Toxicology Exam



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#### RECIPROCAL CREDIT

Reciprocal credit is available for ABP diplomates certified by another American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) member board. Diplomates of ABMS boards other than Internal Medicine (ABIM) will receive 50 points in Part 2 and 50 points in Part 4 upon providing evidence that the continuing certification requirements of that board have been completed. Diplomates of the ABIM who wish to receive reciprocal credit must also complete at least one ABP Part 4 or ABIM Practice Assessment activity within the previous 60 months.

Reciprocal credit is available for diplomates participating in MOC with the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC). Diplomates will receive 50 points in Part 2 and 50 points in Part 4 upon providing evidence that they are meeting MOC requirement with RCPSC, they are listed on the RCPSC's website as a Fellow or Continued Professional Development (CPD) participant, and they have a Canadian mailing address listed in their ABP Portfolio.

For every 12 months of ACGME-accredited fellowship training that a subspecialty fellow completes within their five-year MOC cycle, they will receive 10 MOC points in Part 2. 25 MOC points in Part 4 will be awarded after completion of the first year of fellowship. These points are eligible for ROLLOVER (see above).

#### PEDIATRIC RESIDENTS AND FELLOWS NOT YET CERTIFIED BY THE ABP

To enroll in the ABP continuing certification program, one must first pass the ABP initial certification exam. Therefore, residents and fellows who are not yet certified are not enrolled in continuing certification, however they may earn Part 4 credit that they can “bank” for credit once they become certified. Upon passing the initial certification exam in general pediatrics, they become ABP certified and begin their first five-year continuing certification activities cycle. Any Part 4 credit banked within the last seven years is then added to their ABP Portfolio and counts towards their continuing certification requirements. During a diplomate's first continuing certification cycle they must accumulate 100 points in Part 2 and Part 4, maintain a valid, unrestricted medical license, and may optionally participate in MOCA-Peds for general pediatrics for Part 2 credit.

#### FELLOWS ALREADY CERTIFIED BY THE ABP

Once a subspecialty fellow passes the initial certification exam in General Pediatrics, they become certified by the ABP and begin their initial continuing certification cycle. Being in a fellowship training program does not alter their continuing certification requirements. Fellows certified by the ABP in general pediatrics are required to accumulate 100 points in Part 2 and Part 4 and maintain a valid, unrestricted medical license.

For every 12 months of ACGME-accredited fellowship training that a subspecialty fellow completes within their five-year MOC cycle, they will receive 10 MOC points in Part 2. 25 MOC points in Part 4 will be awarded after completion of the first year of fellowship. These points are eligible for ROLLOVER (see above).

Becoming initially certified in a new subspecialty will extend their current cycle by one year, allowing for additional time to complete requirements and pay the enrollment fees.



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#### REGAINING CERTIFICATION AFTER EXPIRATION OF THE CERTIFICATE

A diplomate's certificate will expire if they do not meet all requirements of continuing certification by the end of their cycle or fail to pay at the time their annual payment is due. Following the loss of certification, the ABP will send written notification to the diplomate's mailing address on file. A diplomate can regain certification by completing the necessary requirement (i.e., obtain valid and unrestricted state license, complete Part 2 points, complete Part 4 points, pass exam, pay fee). Part 2 and Part 4 points expire 60 months after they are earned.

#### DISCIPLINARY ACTION

Diplomates who experience disciplinary actions against a medical license or who engage in unethical, unprofessional, or dishonorable behavior do not meet requirements for licensure and professionalism and may have their certificates revoked by the ABP. Diplomates can apply for re-entry into continuing certification once disciplinary actions against their license have been resolved and/or the terms imposed by the ABP Credentials Committee have been satisfied. Please refer to the Disciplinary Policy (<https://www.abp.org/content/policies#Revocation>) and the Revocation Procedure (<https://www.abp.org/content/policies#Revocation%20Procedure>) for additional information.

#### SPONSOR ORGANIZATIONS

Many Part 2 and Part 4 continuing certification activities are available to physicians through sponsor organizations. Sponsor organizations are permanent, identifiable entities external to the ABP. Activities developed by such organizations are approved through a formal review process.

These organizations include:

- Hospitals
- Healthcare organizations
- State or nationwide networks and collaboratives
- National professional societies
- Corporations

Sponsor organizations may develop Part 2 and 4 activities or a combination of both.

- Part 2 activities must be submitted through the Accreditation Council of Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) Program and Activity Reporting Service (PARS).
- Part 4 activities are either web-based activities or quality improvement (QI) projects that are focused on improving health and healthcare. Physicians must attest to meaningful participation as part of a QI Project. Meaningful participation is defined by the ABP as involving both an active role in the project and participation over an appropriate period of time. The ABP approves QI projects in which pediatricians are active participants in implementing change.