



ABP Corporate Policy

Guidelines for Exceptional Circumstances

These guidelines have been developed to address requests for modifications of certification requirements due to exceptional circumstances that affect many people over an extended period. Depending upon the exceptional circumstance, and with the exception of cases involving time-limited eligibility (see below), the American Board of Pediatrics (ABP), at its discretion, will apply these guidelines at the group level and not the individual diplomate level to respond in a thoughtful, transparent, and consistent manner.

QUALIFYING EVENTS

Qualifying events to modify certification requirements due to exceptional circumstances include natural disasters, pandemics, and other catastrophic events that affect a sizable portion of the population and have an Emergency Declaration by the federal government. A list of disasters that have been authorized under the Emergency Declaration guidelines appears on the Federal Emergency Management Agency's website at <https://www.fema.gov/disasters/>. The ABP reserves the right to make the sole decision on which Emergency Declarations by the federal government become qualifying events for purposes of this policy.

POTENTIAL ABP RESPONSES DURING A QUALIFYING EVENT

1. For exceptional circumstances that affect either the ABP initial certification or continuing certification examinations, the ABP's response may be to:
 - Waive all or part of the fees.
 - Extend the testing window up to two (2) months or for a period determined by the ABP.
 - Refund all or a portion of the fees if the physician defers the examination until the next examination cycle.
 - Waive the requirement for documentation of the exceptional circumstances by the individual trainee or diplomate; however, for learning purposes, the ABP will note the reasons.
 - Extend the registration deadlines for the ABP initial certification examinations.
 - Extend the deadlines for the ABP continuing certification examinations past the calendar year in which they are due.
2. For other situations related to initial certification examinations, please refer to the "[Applicants for the Initial Certification who are unable to appear for a Scheduled Examination](#)" policy.
3. For exceptional circumstances that affect time-limited eligibility, extension requests will be handled on a case-by-case basis.
4. For exceptional circumstances that affect the continuing certification program, the ABP may adjust its continuing certification program. The ABP may choose to:
 - Waive all or part of the fees.
 - Adapt continuing certification requirements. Options may include extending continuing certification cycles, adjusting requirements, and/or giving credit to diplomates for work related to the exceptional circumstance.
 - Adapt the MOCA-Peds platform and/or requirements.



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- Offer a diplomate experiencing a gap in certification a letter from the ABP to explain the gap.
- Waive the requirement for documentation of the exceptional circumstance by the individual diplomate; however, for learning purposes, the ABP will note the reasons.

POTENTIAL ABP RESPONSES BEYOND A QUALIFYING EVENT

In the rare case when an exceptional circumstance results in an extended recovery and creates a situation that:

- impacts the care provided to children,
 - results in a prolonged economic crisis for pediatricians, and
 - results in other pediatric organizations providing relief to trainees and pediatricians,
- the ABP may waive all or part of the initial certification and/or continuing certification fees for one (1) year for qualified individuals residing within the affected area(s).