



# Certification Maintenance Handbook

**April 2010**

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## Overview

The American Board of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery (ABOMS) certification process assures the public that certified oral and maxillofacial surgeons have successfully completed a rigorous peer evaluation process by requiring that surgeons present and maintain appropriate professional credentials, and demonstrate the requisite training, experience and knowledge by passing both a thorough qualifying examination and a comprehensive oral certifying examination. Certified oral and maxillofacial surgeons are expected to maintain current competence through ongoing professional education provided through national meetings, seminars, lectures, special courses, panels, symposia, and self-assessment tools.

Many attributes are necessary to be a competent oral and maxillofacial surgeon, and a number of these factors cannot be quantified. Therefore, it is important to state that ABOMS board certification does not necessarily guarantee that an oral and maxillofacial surgeon is “competent.” Recognizing this fact, and that certification is merely a “point in time” when the qualifications of an oral and maxillofacial surgeon are examined, in 1990 the ABOMS instituted a recertification process. Diplomates certified after this time were issued a “time-limited” certificate in effect for a ten-year period. A computer-administered Recertification Examination has required every ten years to maintain certification, along with Annual Registration and verification of practice status.

Since then, it has become even more critical that oral and maxillofacial surgeons maintain the requisite skills and knowledge to provide state-of-the-art patient care. To that end, in 2005, the ABOMS instituted a comprehensive program to provide verification that board-certified oral and maxillofacial surgeons are engaged in a continuous process to maintain their skill, knowledge, and competence. This process moves the concept of recertification from an examination conducted every 8-10 years to an ongoing process of learning and assessment, known as Certification Maintenance (CM). The changes made by the ABOMS Board of Directors represent a response to the quality-of-care movement and the related concerns of the public. Additionally, the ABOMS acted to restructure OMS board certification in response to activities of other groups that set practice standards – American Board of Medical Specialties, Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Hospital Organizations, and the National Committee for Quality Assurance. The Board acknowledges that this is a dynamic process and anticipates modifications over time. The information included in this handbook represents the ABOMS’ current plan for the CM process. Only Diplomates with time-limited certificates that expire in the year 2011 and after have to be integrated into this process, although voluntary participation for all Diplomates is encouraged.

For further information regarding the Certification Maintenance process please contact the ABOMS administrative office by email at [cm@aboms.org](mailto:cm@aboms.org)  or by telephone at (312) 642-0070.

## Certification Maintenance Process

In order to maintain certification, Diplomates who hold time-limited certificates are required to participate in the ABOMS Certification Maintenance process beginning with certificates that expire in 2011. Certification Maintenance (CM) runs in 10-year cycles. CM is an evolving process and the requirements outlined below may be modified as the needs of the specialty and the public change. If Diplomates do not meet the CM requirements by the end of their 10-year cycle they will no longer be recognized as Board Certified.

The table below describes the components and requirements of Certification Maintenance.

This table is available for download at the ABOMS website, [www.aboms.org](http://www.aboms.org). 

COMPONENT	REQUIREMENT
Professional Standing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Possession of a current unrestricted medical or dental license, i.e. a license that has no limitations on the practice of oral and maxillofacial surgery in that jurisdiction.</li> <li>2. Current hospital privileges allowing patient admission and performance of core procedures in oral and maxillofacial surgery.</li> </ol>
Lifelong Learning and Self-Assessment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 90 hours ADA CERP continuing education credits. For those involved in the CME process 30 of the 90 hours may be Category 2 as recognized by the AMA ACCME. All CE hours must be earned within the 3 years prior to applying for the Recertification Examination.</li> <li>2. Successful completion of the web-based ABOMS self-assessment tool, COMSSAT (<b>C</b>ertification in <b>O</b>ral and <b>M</b>axillofacial <b>S</b>urgery <b>S</b>elf-assessment <b>T</b>ool) <i>prior</i> to taking the Recertification Examination. Diplomates will receive immediate feedback on their performance on the COMSSAT, along with item references for to assist in the production of a study guide. Since the COMSSAT is a self-assessment tool, there is no pass/fail point, nor is the score recorded by the ABOMS office.</li> </ol>
Cognitive Expertise	Successful completion of a secure examination which is the ABOMS Recertification Examination
Evaluation of Performance in Practice	<p>Office Anesthesia Evaluation</p> <p>Alternative pathways are available for OMS' who are not clinically active or do not participate in the Office Anesthesia Evaluation program set forth by the AAOMS or jurisdictional licensing body.</p>

TABLE: COMPONENT AND REQUIREMENTS

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The table below describes when to complete the requirements within the 10 year cycle of Certification Maintenance.

YEAR	REQUIREMENT	CLARIFICATION
1	Current unrestricted medical or dental license	Reported through Annual Registration
2	Current unrestricted medical or dental license	Reported through Annual Registration
3	Current unrestricted medical or dental license	Reported through Annual Registration
4	Current unrestricted medical or dental license	Reported through Annual Registration
5	Current unrestricted medical or dental license Continuing Education (CE)	Reported through Annual Registration May begin acquiring CE credits if taking the Recertification Examination in first year of eligibility in Year 8
6	Current unrestricted medical or dental license Continuing Education (CE)	Reported through Annual Registration May begin acquiring CE credits if taking the Recertification Examination in first year of eligibility in Year 8
7	Current unrestricted medical or dental license Continuing Education (CE)	Reported through Annual Registration May begin acquiring CE credits if taking the Recertification Examination in first year of eligibility in Year 8
8, 9, 10	Current unrestricted medical or dental license Continuing Education (CE) Self Assessment <b>Certification in Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery</b> <b>Self-assessment Tool</b> Office Anesthesia Evaluation Recertification Examination	Reported through Annual Registration Must be completed within the three (3) years <i>prior</i> to submitting the initial application for the Recertification Examination Must precede applying for and taking the Recertification Examination Must have a current Office Anesthesia Evaluation prior to expiration of board certificate September each year

TABLE: TIMELINES

## Components of Certification Maintenance

### Professional Standing

The Diplomate provides evidence of professional standing on an annual basis when the Diplomate submits his/her annual registration. Credentialing information provided indicates whether a Diplomate has an unrestricted medical and/or dental license and current hospital privileges allowing patient admission and performance of core procedures in oral and maxillofacial surgery.

### Lifelong Learning and Self Assessment

The Diplomate must show evidence that 90 hours of continuing education have been completed within three years of applying for the Recertification Examination.

The Diplomate must show evidence of completion of the ABOMS self-assessment tool (COMSSAT) that will be web based and delivered in a specified period of time. This is a self assessment. No scores are required nor reported. The COMSSAT must be completed before the Diplomate can apply for the Recertification Examination.

The blueprint for COMSSAT is available for download at the ABOMS website, [www.aboms.org](http://www.aboms.org). 

### Cognitive Expertise

The Diplomate must successfully complete the Recertification Examination (RE). The RE must be successfully completed by the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the original certificate date, but no earlier than the 8<sup>th</sup> anniversary of that date. Diplomates will have three (3) consecutive opportunities to take and pass the Recertification Examination. Upon successful completion of the RE and the Certification Maintenance process, a new certificate will be issued that will certify the Diplomate for ten (10) years following the expiration of their current certificate.

The blueprint for the RE is available for download at the ABOMS website, [www.aboms.org](http://www.aboms.org). 

### Evaluation of Performance in Practice

A Diplomate must show evidence of practice performance by completing an Office Anesthesia Evaluation (OAE) program within the timeframe set by the AAOMS or jurisdictional licensing body. Alternative pathways are available for Diplomates unable to participate in the specified OAE.

## **Continuing Dental Education (CDE) and Continuing Medical Education (CME) Definitions**

### **American Dental Association Continuing Education Recognition Program (ADA CERP)**

Continuing dental education consists of educational activities designed to review existing concepts and techniques, to convey information beyond the basic dental education and to update knowledge on advances in scientific, clinical, and non-clinical practice related subject matter, including evidence-based dentistry. The objective is to improve the knowledge, skills and ability of the individual to provide the highest quality of service to the public and the profession. All continuing dental education should strengthen the habits of critical inquiry and balanced judgment that denote the truly professional and scientific person and should make it possible for new knowledge to be incorporated into the practice of dentistry as it becomes available.

Continuing education programs are designed for part-time enrollment and are usually of short duration, although longer programs with structured, sequential curricula may also be included within this definition. In contrast to accredited advanced dental education programs, continuing dental education programs do not lead to eligibility for ethical announcements or certification in a specialty recognized by the American Dental Association. Continuing dental education should be a part of a lifelong continuum of learning.

*As adopted by the ADA House of Delegates, October 2006*

### **Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME)**

Continuing medical education (CME) consists of educational activities which serve to maintain, develop, or increase the knowledge, skills, and professional performance and relationships that a physician uses to provide services for patients, the public, or the profession. The content of CME is that body of knowledge and skills generally recognized and accepted by the profession as within the basic medical sciences, the discipline of clinical medicine, and the provision of health care to the public.

A broad definition of CME, such as the one found above, recognizes that all continuing educational activities which assist physicians in carrying out their professional responsibilities more effectively and efficiently are CME. A course in management would be appropriate CME for physicians responsible for managing a health care facility; a course in educational methodology would be appropriate CME for physicians teaching in a medical school; a course in practice management would be appropriate CME for practitioners interested in providing better service to patients.

Not all continuing educational activities which physicians may engage in however are CME. Physicians may participate in worthwhile continuing educational activities which are not related directly to their professional work and these activities are not CME. Continuing educational activities which respond to a physician's non-professional educational need or interest, such as personal financial planning or appreciation of literature or music, are not CME.

CME that discusses issues related to coding and reimbursement in a medical practice falls within ACCME's definition of CME.

### **American Medical Association Physician's Recognition Award (AMA PRA) Category 1**

AMA PRA Category 1 Credit **is awarded (or issued)** by an accredited provider to physicians who participate in their certified activities and claim credit. The AMA delegates to accredited providers the ability to award AMA PRA Category 1 Credit, in accordance with AMA PRA guidelines.

To **designate (or certify)** an activity for AMA PRA Category 1 Credit is the process by which an accredited provider, through compliance with AMA PRA rules, establishes that an activity meets AMA PRA standards and assigns a maximum number of credits.

An **accredited provider** is a U.S.-based entity accredited by either the ACCME or an ACCME-recognized state medical society.

**Physicians eligible** to receive AMA PRA Category 1 Credit are individuals who have completed an MD, DO or equivalent medical degree from another country, or who have obtained a Fifth Pathway certificate.

### **American Medical Association Physician's Recognition Award (AMA PRA) Category 2**

AMA PRA Category 2 Credit is defined as all educational activities not designated for Category 1 that: comply with the AMA definition of CME; comply with the AMA ethical opinions on Gifts to Physicians from Industry and on Ethical Issues in CME (i.e., are not promotional); and a physician finds to be a worthwhile learning experience related to his/her practice. Accredited providers do not designate activities for AMA PRA Category 2 Credit.

Physicians may claim AMA PRA Category 2 Credit for such learning activities as: teaching residents, medical students or other health professionals; unstructured online searching and learning (i.e., not Internet PoC); reading authoritative medical literature; or participating in live activities not designated for AMA PRA Category 1 Credit. Other examples include:

- Consultation with peers and medical experts
- Small group discussions
- Self assessment activities
- Medical writing
- Preceptorships
- Research

In each case, the physician individually determines the educational value of those AMA PRA Category 2 activities in which he or she participates.

## Documentation Audit Process

In order to ensure the ABOMS Certification Maintenance process is functioning effectively and that Diplomates are in compliance with the requirements, random audits will be conducted. Each year the ABOMS Credentials Committee will conduct an audit of approximately 10% of the Diplomates whose certificates expire that calendar year. Those to be audited will be informed in January of the year of certificate expiration. Those Diplomates who are audited will submit documentation of 90 hours of CE and any other documentation deemed necessary by the Credentials Committee. *Only those audited are required to send this additional documentation to the ABOMS administrative office.*

However, the Board reserves the right to audit the information provided by the Diplomate at any time during the CM process by requiring supporting documentation.

ABOMS staff will confirm that the Diplomate has satisfactorily completed the:

1. Annual Registration (Credentials Form and an unrestricted current medical or dental license to practice the specialty and current hospital privileges allowing patient admission and performance of core procedures in oral and maxillofacial surgery).
2. COMMSAT (Certification in **O**ral and **M**axillofacial **S**urgery **S**elf-assessment **T**ool).
3. Recertification Examination.
4. Office Anesthesia Evaluation.

The audit will be conducted in June and July each year. The Credentials Committee will report all Diplomates who have not met the requirements to the ABOMS Board of Directors. The Board will act on all Diplomates who are in non-compliance of the requirements.

## Policies

### Failure to Adhere to Timeframe

Diplomates who fail to successfully complete CM components within the specified timeframe will no longer be recognized as Board Certified.

### Failure to Pass CM Components

All CM components can be repeated as often as necessary during the designated years until the process is successfully completed. Repeat examinations or reviews are subject to additional fees.

### Applicant Disclosure Obligations

At the time a Diplomate submits an application to the ABOMS and at all times thereafter, the Diplomate shall have a continuing obligation to disclose promptly to the ABOMS the existence or occurrence of any

circumstances causing the Diplomate to fail to satisfy the foregoing condition of eligibility to apply for and take any examination administered by the ABOMS.

### **Accommodation for Special Needs**

1. Diplomates must self identify and present documentation from an appropriate professional (physician and/or psychologist) to the ABOMS. This documentation must accompany each examination application submitted to the ABOMS.
2. The following information must be included in the documentation of a disability in order to be considered for appropriate accommodations for examination. The documentation must:
  - State the specific disability, as diagnosed;
  - Be current (in most cases, the evaluation and diagnostic testing should have taken place within 3 years of the request for accommodations);
  - Provide a description of all accommodations provided to the Diplomate for previous examinations;
  - Describe the comprehensive testing and techniques used to arrive at the diagnosis (including test results with subtest scores [standard or scaled scores] for all tests);
  - Describe the functional limitations (i.e., the limitations to learning impacted due to the diagnosed disability);
  - Describe the specific accommodations being requested; and
  - Establish the professional credentials of the evaluator (e.g., licensure; certification; area of specialization).
3. The Diplomate must respond affirmatively on the examination application when queried about special testing needs, and must submit the application and the required documentation by the application due date.
4. The Credentials Committee will evaluate the documentation and decide which accommodations are reasonable in compliance with the ADA. The Credentials Committee will determine if special testing circumstances will be approved. If the Credentials Committee deems it necessary, it may require an independent evaluation of the candidate's disability at the expense of the ABOMS.
5. Only accommodations approved in advance by ABOMS will be honored at the test site. No accommodation requests will be considered or approved at the test center.

### **Fees**

The fees for examinations shall be established annually by the Board of Directors on the basis of the actual and anticipated costs incurred by the ABOMS in the examination process of candidates and Diplomates and in the administration of its business. The CM fees for 2010 are:

**COMSSAT - \$75.00      Recertification Examination - \$525.00**

## Refunds

When a Diplomate registers for an examination, significant costs are incurred by the ABOMS. Therefore, to keep costs down for all Diplomates, fees for the CM components are non-refundable.

## Results

Diplomates will receive instant feedback once the COMSSAT is completed. Diplomates will receive immediate feedback on their performance on the COMSSAT, along with references for all items to print out a study guide. As the COMSSAT is a self-assessment tool, there is no minimum score needed, nor is the tally reportable to the ABOMS office.

Performance on the Recertification Examination will be provided in writing to the participants within three weeks of closure of the eligible examination window.


## Notifications

The ABOMS will attempt to notify all Diplomates when it is appropriate to begin the CM process. However, it is the responsibility of the Diplomate to seek the information concerning the current requirements for CM. The ABOMS does not assume responsibility for notifying a Diplomate of changing requirements or the impending loss of his/her certification.


## Online Services

In order to receive all necessary communication, please keep the ABOMS administrative office informed of your current email and mailing address.

All Diplomates holding time-limited certificates must meet the current requirements as published by the ABOMS.

It is the responsibility of the Diplomate to seek information concerning the current requirements for Certification Maintenance ([www.aboms.org](http://www.aboms.org)). ABOMS does not assume responsibility for notifying a Diplomate of changing requirements or the impending loss of his/her eligibility to take an examination. The CM process is subject to change, consistent with the principles of continuous improvement to both process and content matters. The ABOMS will publish all changes to the CM process in its annual newsletter and on the website, [www.aboms.org](http://www.aboms.org). 

## Accessing the CM Process

The CM process can be accessed via the ABOMS website: [www.aboms.org](http://www.aboms.org). 

The ABOMS website serves as the main point of contact for all CM activities and permits users to:

- View a profile page that details where the individual Diplomate stands regarding requirements over the 10-year CM cycle.
- Update contact information.
- Complete most CM components online.
- Schedule and pay by credit card for CM components.
- Receive email confirmations of registration and payment as well as important updates.

## Username and Password

To access the Certification Maintenance area of the ABOMS website, users must login to the Diplomates Only area with a username and password. Your user name is your last name and last four digits of your social security number. Your password, by default, is the last four digits of your social security number. You may reset or have your password sent to you via email using Password Maintenance in the Diplomates Only area of the website.

## Email

The ABOMS uses email to communicate in a timely and efficient manner with Diplomates participating in the CM process. However, because email systems are different, communication via email can be interrupted by security settings and spam-blocking features. The cause of blocked mail can be dependent on the organization, Internet Service Provider (ISP), email program, security programs and spam blocking tools.

The ABOMS encourages all users to place the ABOMS on a “safe sender” list in order to enable receipt of ABOMS email correspondence. Due to the vast number of different email programs available, the ABOMS does not have specific instructions for each; however, the ABOMS does suggest the following two methods:

1. Contact the ISP and ask that the email from the ABOMS be accepted.

*OR*

2. View options of the security settings and spam-blocking tools on your email program to determine if you can “white list” the ABOMS yourself. For example, the Microsoft Outlook will allow you to add a specific email address or a specific email domain (@aboms.org) to a Safe Sender’s List. (To do this in Microsoft Outlook: highlight the email; click on Actions on toolbar; click on Junk Email; click on Add Sender to Safe Sender’s List or Add Sender’s Domain (@aboms.org) to Safe Sender’s List).

