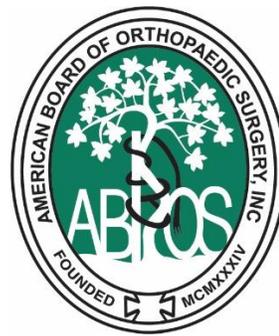


**AMERICAN BOARD  
OF  
ORTHOPAEDIC SURGERY, INC.**



**Rules and Procedures for  
Continuing Certification**

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# ABOS CONTINUING CERTIFICATION RULES AND PROCEDURES

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## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. Rules and Procedures

These Rules and Procedures set out the terms and conditions of The American Board of Orthopaedic Surgery's process of voluntary Continuing Certification Program in orthopaedic surgery. The American Board of Orthopaedic Surgery reserves the right to make changes in its rules and procedures at any time and without prior notice.

### B. Purpose

The American Board of Orthopaedic Surgery, Inc. (ABOS) was founded in 1934 as a private, voluntary, nonprofit, autonomous organization. It exists to serve the best interests of the public and of the medical profession by establishing educational standards for orthopaedic residents and by evaluating the initial and continuing qualifications and competence of orthopaedic surgeons. For this purpose, the ABOS reviews the credentials and practices of voluntary candidates and issues certificates of ABOS Board Certification as appropriate. The ABOS defines minimum educational requirements in the specialty, stimulates graduate medical education, continuing medical education, and aids in the evaluation of educational facilities and programs.

The ABOS confers no rights on its Diplomates for licensure or for staff privileges at any hospital. It is neither the intent nor the purpose of the ABOS to define requirements for membership in any organization.

1. Mission: To ensure safe, ethical, and effective practice of orthopaedic surgery the American Board of Orthopaedic Surgery maintains the highest standards for education, practice, and conduct through examination, certification, and Continuing Certification for the benefit of the public.
2. Vision: To improve the quality of care and outcomes for patients the American Board of Orthopaedic Surgery will establish and maintain high standards for competence and lifelong education of ABOS Board Certified orthopaedic surgeons.

## II. CERTIFICATES AND CONTINUING CERTIFICATION

### A. Awarding Certificates

The ABOS will award a Certificate to a candidate who specializes in orthopaedic surgery, has met the educational requirements of the ABOS, has demonstrated, at the time of certification, competence in orthopaedic surgery and adherence to ethical and professional standards, has been declared eligible to sit for the examination by the ABOS Credentials Committee, has passed both parts of the certifying examination and has agreed to participate in and comply with the terms and conditions of the ABOS's Continuing Certification Program.

Diplomates with time-limited Certificates who meet the ABOS Continuing Certification Program requirements will be issued 10-year certificates dated from the expiration date of their current certificates provided they have not expired.

For example: A Diplomat who has a time-limited certificate expiring in 2027 will receive a ten-year, time-limited certificate dated January 1, 2028, through December 31, 2037, even if they have met all the ABOS Continuing Certification Program requirements early.

Diplomates who have time-unlimited (prior to 1986) certificates and who complete Continuing Certification requirements in the ABOS Continuing Certification Program will be issued 10-year, time-limited certificates from the date successful completion of the Knowledge Assessment. Subsequent recertifications will be dated from the expiration date of their most recent recertification (provided it has not expired). These certificates do not replace the original unlimited certificates, which remain valid. Those with time-unlimited certificates who meet some but not all the ABOS Continuing Certification Program, are still certified.

## **B. Certification Expiration**

A Diplomat's certification (awarded after 1985) shall expire after the designated ten (10) year certification period in the event the Diplomat has not timely fulfilled all the applicable requirements of the ABOS Continuing Certification Program.

## **C. Continuing Certification**

1. Continuing Certification is the program through which Diplomates maintain their primary ABOS Board Certification certificate in orthopaedic surgery and are assessed for their continuing competencies in orthopaedic surgery. As used throughout these Rules and Procedures, "Diplomat" means an individual currently certified by the ABOS.
2. The ABOS assesses Diplomat competencies by using four specified components:
  - Evidence of Professional Standing,
  - Evidence of Life-long Learning and Self-Assessment,
  - Evidence of Cognitive Expertise, and
  - Evidence of Performance in Practice.
3. The ABOS evaluates a Diplomat's participation in the Continuing Certification Program using the four components as follows:
  - a. Evidence of Professional Standing requires that the Diplomat maintain a full and unrestricted license to practice medicine, and full and unrestricted staff and surgical privileges at a hospital or ambulatory surgery center (ASC), in the United States or Canada, accredited by an ABOS-recognized accrediting body. Diplomates who are not currently performing surgeries do not need maintain privileges but still must hold a full and unrestricted medical license. To apply for non-operative or non-practicing status, see the Non-Operative/Non-Practicing Status information in the Profile on your Dashboard. If you qualify, please contact the ABOS office.

- b. Evidence of Life-Long Learning and Self-Assessment requires the following:
- i. Diplomates are required to submit and have approved by the ABOS a minimum of 240 orthopaedic-related Category 1 Continuing Medical Education (CME) credits, of which at least 40 credits are from scored and recorded Self-Assessment Examinations (SAE) or ABOS-approved practice improvement activities, by the end of their 10-year Continuing Certification cycle. A list of acceptable CMEs and SAEs can be found at [www.abos.org](http://www.abos.org).
  - ii. Diplomates whose ABOS Board Certification expire in 2031 or later are required to submit and have approved an additional 120 orthopaedic-related Category 1 Continuing Medical Education (CME) credits, of which at least 20 credits are from scored and recorded Self-Assessment Examinations (SAE) or ABOS-approved practice improvement activities by the end of year 5 of their 10-year Continuing Certification cycle. They are required to submit and have approved an additional 120 orthopaedic-related Category 1 Continuing Medical Education (CME) credits, of which at least 20 credits are from scored and recorded Self-Assessment Examinations (SAE) or ABOS-approved practice improvement activities earned in years 6-10. Extra CME or SAE earned in years 1-5 does not count towards the years 6-10 requirement.
  - iii. Failure to meet the CME and SAE requirements in years 1-5 will result in the revocation of ABOS Board Certification. Failure to meet the CME and SAE requirements in years 6-10 will result in the expiration of ABOS Board Certification.
- c. Evidence of Cognitive Expertise is confirmed through a Knowledge Assessment Pathway.
- d. Evaluation of Performance in Practice is performed through the following which are to be submitted together in years 7, 8, or 9:
1. Submission of Diplomate's Case List.
  11. Submission of a Professional Standing Update, which includes participation in the ABOS Peer Review process.

To maintain ABOS Board Certification, a Diplomate must:

1. Execute the Attestation to Participate in Continuing Certification.
2. Complete and submit online all the requirements (CMEs and SAEs, Case List, Professional Standing Update, and Fees, Knowledge Assessment) for his/her certificate expiration year. A Diplomate, whose certificate has expired or will expire before they meet all of the ABOS Continuing Certification Requirements, will be required to take an Oral Recertification Examination to regain ABOS Board Certification. Diplomates whose ABOS Board Certification have expired and are not in the operative practice of orthopaedic surgery, and have submitted appropriate documentation to verify that status, may regain ABOS Board Certification through a Computer-Based Recertification Examination.
3. Case List collection begins on January 1st of the calendar year that a Diplomate plans to submit a Professional Standing Update, which is due by December 1. Diplomates are able to

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submit their Professional Standing Update and Case List as early as year seven in their 10-year ABOS CC cycle but must submit no later than year nine. ABOS Diplomates begin collecting with the first surgical case of the calendar year and collect all consecutive surgical cases in that year up to the point where the Case List reaches 75 cases. The Diplomate stops collecting cases either after collecting 75 surgical cases or has collected all cases from January 1<sup>st</sup> -September 30<sup>th</sup> in that calendar year.

Those who have fewer than 35 surgical cases must submit surgical cases from the case collection year and retroactively add surgical cases from previous calendar year(s). Surgical cases must be collected consecutively backwards until the Diplomate reaches 35 surgical cases.

For purposes of these requirements, the primary operating surgeon is the responsible orthopaedic surgeon for the key and critical portions of the procedure. It is recognized that certain complex, multidisciplinary procedures lend themselves to multiple different procedures on different regions of the body. Under these circumstances, there may be more than one primary surgeon participating in the operation.

Case Collection:

- I. Cases are collected via the ABOS Dashboard
- II. All cases must be collected from each hospital, surgery center, and office at which the applicant has operated during the collection period.
- III. Once all surgical cases have been entered and finalized, the Diplomate must print the case lists by location. No changes can be made to the case lists after they have been finalized. Each complete case list must then be signed by the individual who oversees case records. This signed page must be uploaded into the Scribe system with each corresponding case list for your Scribe case list to be complete.

Note: Before you begin, you may view a layout of the case list data collection sheet by clicking on the Continuing Certification link found on [www.abos.org](http://www.abos.org) and then clicking on Case Lists.

4. Possess a current, full, and unrestricted license to practice medicine in accordance with Section B. below.
5. Successfully complete the ABOS Peer Review Process and be declared eligible by the ABOS Credentials Committee. More information on the ABOS Peer Review Process can be found at [www.abos.org](http://www.abos.org)
6. Successfully complete one of ABOS's CC Knowledge Assessment Pathways.
7. It is the responsibility of all Diplomates to notify the ABOS office of any change of name, mailing and email address, practice association, or hospital affiliation when they change.

8. If a Diplomate changes practice location or practice association or acquires new hospital staff affiliations, new references may be required by the ABOS.
9. A Diplomate is also required to notify the ABOS of the denial of any request for hospital privileges; of any action to restrict, suspend, or terminate all or any portion of surgical staff privileges; of any request by a hospital to resign all or any portion of surgical staff privileges; and of any action by a governmental agency which would result in the restriction, suspension, or probation of the Diplomate's license or any right associated with the practice of medicine (including the entry into a non-disciplinary rehabilitation or diversionary program for chemical dependency whether by order or consent decree by the applicable medical licensing authority or on a voluntary basis).
10. The decision of the ABOS Credentials Committee will be posted online to the Diplomate's Dashboard

#### **D. License Requirement**

A Diplomate must possess a current, full, and unrestricted license to practice medicine. A Diplomate's Board Certification may be revoked due to limitation, suspension, or termination of any right associated with the practice of medicine in any state, province, or country ("jurisdiction") due to violation of a medical practice act or other statute or governmental regulation; to disciplinary action by any medical licensing authority; by entry into a consent order; by voluntary surrender, in lieu of disciplinary action, while under investigation for same; or suspension of license; provided that a Diplomate shall not be disqualified solely on the basis of a limitation, suspension, termination, or voluntary surrender of a license in any jurisdiction where the Diplomate does not practice, and where the action of such jurisdiction is based upon and derivative of a prior disciplinary action of/taken by another jurisdiction and the Diplomate has cleared any such prior disciplinary action and/or has had full and unrestricted license to practice restored in all jurisdictions in which the Diplomate is practicing and provided further that any jurisdiction granting the Diplomate a full and unrestricted license was made aware of and took into account any outstanding disciplinary restrictions and/or license restrictions in other jurisdictions in granting such full and unrestricted license. Entry into successful participation in a non-disciplinary rehabilitation or diversionary program for chemical dependency authorized by the applicable medical licensing authority shall not, by itself, disqualify a Diplomate from taking an CC Knowledge Assessment.

#### **E. Computer-Based Recertification Examination**

All examination questions are written by practicing orthopaedic surgeons based on current orthopaedic knowledge for each content area. All ABOS computer-based examinations are administered at Pearson VUE Testing Centers. Diplomates must schedule their examination from available dates and times at these sites once they pay the Examination Fee. Practice-Profiled Examinations are offered in alternating years. Diplomates may take a Computer-Based Examination as early as year 5 of the 10-year cycle.

#### **F. Oral Recertification Examination**

For the purposes of the ABOS Oral Examination, the ABOS will choose 12 Selected Cases from a Diplomate's submitted Case List for the Diplomate to present at the examination. All pertinent materials for those cases must be uploaded and presented. The examination is approximately two hours, divided into four sessions with two examiners in each session. Examiners present questions

on the 12 Selected Cases. Specific skills that are evaluated are Data Gathering, Diagnosis and Interpretive Skills, Treatment Plan, Surgical Indications, Technical Skill, Surgical Complications, Outcomes, and Ethics and Professionalism. The Scoring Rubric can be found on the ABOS Website.

#### Selected Cases and Document/Image Upload

- i. The ABOS selects 12 s Cases from the Diplomate's Case List for presentation at the examination. The 12 Selected Cases will be posted online in April of the examination year.
- ii. The Diplomate must then upload to the ABOS online platform the pertinent images, including arthroscopic prints, and records to display for each case. After posted deadline has passed, no additions, deletions, or changes can be made. No images or arthroscopic prints or records may be brought to the examination.
- iii. Detailed information on the materials that Diplomates are required to upload will be available with the 12 selected cases.

#### Case List Records Requirements

- i. All relevant images, arthroscopic pictures, and records for the Diplomate's 12 Selected Cases must be uploaded into the Scribe program. Diplomates are required to execute a HIPAA Privacy Rule Business Associate Agreement to upload all the records. Once all records have been entered, Diplomate must finalize (after which no changes can be made) and pay the examination fee. This process must be completed by the deadline to sit for the Oral Recertification Examination. Diplomates will receive more information on the upload requirements when they receive the list of 12 Selected Cases.
- ii. Failure to have sufficient uploaded materials for presentation of the 12 Selected Cases to enable examiners to evaluate the cases may result in the disqualification of the Diplomate, termination of the Diplomate's participation in the examination, or the withholding and cancellation of results.

HIPAA Compliance information is contained in the Oral Examination Information Packet and should be carefully reviewed.

The ABOS will provide, upon approved request, an alternate date for the Recertification Oral Examinations for certain circumstances beyond the control of the Examinee. This alternate date is available only for those Examinees who are unable to participate in the regularly scheduled Oral Examinations due to a life event including, but not limited to, death in the immediate family, serious injury or illness, military deployment or recent or impending childbirth. **NO ALTERNATE DATE WILL BE OFFERED TO ACCOMMODATE UNAVAILABILITY DUE TO VACATION OR TRAVEL.** There will only be one alternate date each year. If an Examinee cannot participate in either the regularly scheduled Oral Examination or the alternate date, the Examinee will be required to take the Oral Examination the next year, assuming that the Examinee remains eligible to take the Oral Examination that year.

To request an alternate date, Examinees should complete the appropriate form found on ABOS's

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website, [www.abos.org](http://www.abos.org), under the sections "Accommodations" under the Diplomates section. The request for the alternate date, along with the required supporting documentation, must be submitted by the deadline stated on the request form. The ABOS reserves the right to request additional documentation. ABOS has the sole discretion to determine whether an Examinee qualifies for the alternative date.

The Alternate Date is only available for the ABOS Oral Recertification Examination. As both the ABOS Computer-Based Recertification Examinations and ABOS WLA are available over an Assessment Window, no alternate dates for those examinations are available.

## **G. Web-Based Longitudinal Assessment (ABOS WLA)**

For the Diplomates who are eligible and are interested in participating in the ABOS WLA, they must choose 14 Knowledge Sources for which they will be assessed that year. The ABOS will pick one required Knowledge Source. Those Diplomates who hold a Subspecialty Certification must choose at least five Knowledge Sources each year in that Subspecialty. Diplomates will choose new Knowledge Sources for each year they participate in the ABOS WLA. All Knowledge Sources will be posted to [www.abos.org](http://www.abos.org) by January 15. The 30 questions that the Diplomate will have to answer will come from these 15 Knowledge Sources (two per Knowledge Source). Diplomates can answer these questions only during the assessment window. The exact dates of this window are posted on [www.abos.org](http://www.abos.org). Diplomates use their own laptop or desktop computer to answer these questions any time during the assessment window. They can answer as many or as few questions at a time, if all questions are answered by the end of the assessment window.

To successfully complete the ABOS WLA Pathway, Diplomates must earn five consecutive Quality Years by correctly answering at least 24 out of 30 questions a year by the end of the 8th year of their 10-year cycle. Diplomates who do not meet these requirements are given at least two chances to successfully complete a Computer-Based or Oral Recertification Knowledge Assessment Pathway.

## **H. Credentials Committee Directed Pathway**

1. A Diplomate may be restricted as to the available assessment options by determination of the ABOS Credentials Committee. In particular, the ABOS Credentials Committee may direct a Diplomate, as a condition of approval to recertify, to take a specific ABOS CC Assessment Pathway to achieve an adequate evaluation of the Diplomate, including where:
  - a. There has been a limitation, suspension, termination, or voluntary surrender while under investigation of the Diplomate's medical license or any right associated with the practice of medicine in any state, province, or country during the Diplomate's most recent period of certification.
  - b. There has been a denial, limitation, suspension, termination, or resignation, at the request of a hospital, of all or any portion of a Diplomate's surgical staff privileges based on patient care issues during the Diplomate's most recent period of certification.
  - c. A case list review, peer review, or practice site visit report has identified significant questions as to whether a Diplomate's practice demonstrates professional competence and adherence to acceptable professional standards such that the ABOS Credentials Committee determines that an Oral examination is necessary for an adequate

evaluation of the Diplomate's practice.

- d. The Diplomate's certificate has expired.
2. The direction by the ABOS Credentials Committee that a Diplomate take a specific ABOS Knowledge Assessment Pathway as a condition of approval may be subject to appeal pursuant to the separate ABOS Appeals document, which can be found on [www.abos.org](http://www.abos.org).
3. The ABOS Credentials Committee may require a Diplomate to take an ABOS Oral Examination even if the Diplomate has successfully completed the ABOS WLA or the ABOS Computer Recertification Examination, due to issues that have arisen from peer review, the case list, or other approved means.

A Diplomate who has recertified or regained their ABOS Board Certification through a Non-Operative Pathway and subsequently returns to active surgical practice must notify the ABOS within 18 months of resuming active operative practice.

## **I. Certificate Revocation**

At its discretion, the ABOS may revoke a Certificate for due cause, including, but not limited to:

1. The Diplomate did not complete all parts of the ABOS Continuing Certification Program as indicated in C.
2. The Diplomate made an intentional and material misrepresentation or withheld information in the Professional Standing Update or in any other representation to the ABOS or any Committee thereof or engaged in the unauthorized or misleading use of the ABOS's name or logo implying Board endorsement of the Diplomate and his/her practice.
3. The Diplomate made a misrepresentation to the board or any third party as to his or her status as a Diplomate of the ABOS.
4. The Diplomate engaged in irregular behavior in connection with a Knowledge Assessment of the ABOS (as described under Irregular Behavior), whether such behavior influenced the performance of the Diplomate on a Knowledge Assessment.
5. The Diplomate has been convicted, enters a plea of guilty or nolo contendere or is found guilty by a judge or jury by a court of competent jurisdiction of any felony, or a misdemeanor involving moral turpitude and, in the opinion of the Board, having a material relationship to the practice of medicine, or any crime or conduct involving unethical behavior.
6. There has been a limitation, suspension or termination of any right of the Diplomate associated with the practice of medicine in any state, province, or country, including the imposition of any requirement of surveillance, supervision, or review due to a violation of a medical practice act or other statute or governmental regulation, disciplinary action by any medical licensing authority, entry into a consent order, or voluntary surrender of license.

7. The Diplomate has failed to comply with the terms and conditions of the ABOS's Continuing Certification program and the Continuing Certification Agreement.
8. The Board obtains evidence from which it concludes that the Diplomate's practice has failed to adhere to the accepted professional standards applicable to orthopaedic surgery or the practice of medicine or that the Diplomate has engaged in unprofessional conduct, including but not limited to any conduct that may pose a danger to patients or which violates the standards of honesty, prudence, or ethical integrity of a physician or would otherwise bring discredit to the practice of medicine or the specialty of orthopaedic surgery.

Certification may be subject to an ABOS Credentials Committee review prior to the expiration of the Diplomate's ten-year period of certification where the ABOS Credentials Committee concludes that such review is necessary for an adequate evaluation of whether a Diplomate's practice adheres to the accepted professional standards and has satisfactorily adhered to the ABOS Professional Standing requirements. The ABOS Credentials Committee may take action against Certification up to and including termination of the Certification, prior to the expiration of the ten year term based on the results of its review.

A Diplomate may appeal the revocation of his or her certificate(s) pursuant to the procedures set forth in the ABOS Appeals document which can be found at [www.abos.org](http://www.abos.org).

### III. ABOS KNOWLEDGE ASSESSMENT PATHWAYS

Examination	Item Breakdown	Time	Assessment Fee
Computer-Based General Recertification	150 General items	3 sections 60 minutes each section 15 minutes of break time	\$1,340 (effective 2027)
Computer-Based Spine - Practice Profiled	150 Spine items	3 sections 60 minutes each section 15 minutes of break time	\$1,340 (effective 2028)
Computer-Based Adult Reconstruction - Practice Profiled	150 Adult Recon items	3 sections 60 minutes each section 15 minutes of break time	\$1,340 (effective 2028)
Computer-Based Trauma - Practice Profiled	150 Trauma items	3 sections 60 minutes each section 15 minutes of break time	\$1,340 (effective 2027)

Computer-Based Surgery of the Hand - Practice Profiled	150 Hand items	3 sections 60 minutes each section 15 minutes of break time	\$1,340 (effective 2027)
Computer-Based Orthopaedic Sports Medicine - Practice Profiled	150 Sports items	3 sections 60 minutes each section 15 minutes of break time	\$1,340 (effective 2028)
Computer-Based Shoulder and Elbow - Practice Profiled	150 Shoulder/elbow items	3 sections 60 minutes each section 15 minutes of break time	\$1,340 (effective 2027)
Computer-Based Pediatric - Practice Profiled	150 Pediatric items	3 sections 60 minutes each section 15 minutes of break time	\$1,340 (effective 2027)
Computer-Based Foot/Ankle - Practice Profiled	150 Foot/ankle items	3 sections 60 minutes each section 15 minutes of break time	\$1,340 (effective 2027)
Computer-Based Musculoskeletal Oncology - Practice Profiled	150 Oncology items	3 sections 60 minutes each section 15 minutes of break time	\$1,340 (effective 2028)
Computer-Based Combined Sports	150 Sports Items	3 sections 60 minutes each section 15 minutes of break time	\$1,700 (effective 2028)
Computer-Based Combined Hand	150 Hand Items	3 sections 60 minutes each section 15 minutes of break time	\$1,700 (effective 2027)
Oral Practice-Based	12 selected cases	4 sections 30 minutes each section 5 minutes between each section	\$1,600

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Oral Combined Sports	12 selected cases	4 sections 30 minutes each section 5 minutes between each section	\$1,700
Oral Combined Hand	12 selected cases	4 sections 30 minutes each section 5 minutes between each section	\$1,700
Web-Based Longitudinal Assessment (ABOS WLA)	30 questions per participating year	Five-week assessment window	<p align="center">\$260 each participating year (\$300 if hold a Subspecialty Certification)</p> <p align="center">\$340 each participating year (\$380 if hold a Subspecialty Certification) (effective 2027)</p>

Case List entry is available January 1. Professional Standing Update forms are available by April. With the exception of the Oral Recertification Examination (which does require a Case List and Professional Standing Update to be submitted and evaluated prior to a Diplomate sitting for that examination), a Diplomate does not need to submit a Professional Standing Update or Case List prior to taking an ABOS Knowledge Assessment. Diplomates must submit the Professional Standing Update and Case List no later than December 1 of their 9<sup>th</sup> year but can submit it as early as year 7.

The dates and places for the ABOS Knowledge Assessment Pathways and the deadlines for submission of Professional Standing Updates, Case Lists, and Fees are listed on the American Board of Orthopaedic Surgery website ([www.abos.org](http://www.abos.org)). Dates and fees may be changed at the discretion of the ABOS.

If a Diplomate has a Subspecialty Certification in Surgery of the Hand or Orthopaedic Sports Medicine, then the Diplomate must participate in the corresponding combined Knowledge Assessment to maintain the Diplomate's Subspecialty Certification, as well as the primary certification beyond the current period of certification. If a Diplomate has both Subspecialty Certifications, then the Diplomate must take one Combined Recertification Examination and one Practice-Profiled Recertification or complete the ABOS WLA Pathway that includes the required number of Knowledge Sources and questions in both subspecialty areas.

#### **IV. ACCOMODATIONS**

##### **A. Accommodations**

A Diplomate requesting an accommodation in the administration of an CC Knowledge Assessment must submit the completed accommodation request forms found online at [www.abos.org](http://www.abos.org), under the section, "Accommodations" along with the required documentation by the deadline stated on [www.abos.org](http://www.abos.org).

#### **V. IMPAIRED PHYSICIANS AND MENTAL AND PHYSICAL CONDITIONS**

##### **A. Chemical Dependency**

A Diplomate who, within three years of submitting a Professional Standing Update to sit for a CC Knowledge Assessment, has been diagnosed as chemically dependent, has been treated for drug or other substance abuse, and/or has entered a non-disciplinary rehabilitation, or diversionary program for chemical dependency authorized by the applicable medical licensing authority will be required to present evidence to the ABOS Credentials Committee of (1) having successfully completed the authorized rehabilitation or diversionary program or (2) is successfully enrolled in such a program or is successfully enrolled in or completed a private treatment program and presents attestations from the responsible program administrators and physicians demonstrating, to the satisfaction of the ABOS, that the Diplomate has been free of chemical dependency for a period sufficient to establish that the Diplomate is not currently using illegal drugs and/or that the use of illegal drugs or other substance abuse is not an on-going problem. This documentation must accompany the completed Professional Standing Update.

##### **B. Mental and Physical Condition**

Diplomates who have a mental or physical condition that could affect their ability to practice orthopaedic surgery will be required to submit medical evidence from the appropriate physicians, treatment centers, and hospitals demonstrating to the ABOS that the impairment does not compromise their ability to render safe and effective care to their patients.

#### **VI. FALSIFIED INFORMATION AND IRREGULAR BEHAVIOR**

- A.** If it is determined that a Diplomate (i) has falsified information on the Professional Standing Update, case list or the materials submitted in connection with the cases presented for Oral Examination, including patient records or images, (ii) has failed to report complications, (iii) altered surgical practice during the case collection period to manipulate the type of cases presented on the case list in a manner designed to hinder the ABOS's evaluation of the candidate's practice, (iv) has failed to provide material information to the ABOS and/or (v) has

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misrepresented status with the ABOS to any third party, the Diplomate may be declared ineligible to continue in the ABOS Continuing Certification Program. The Diplomate may then be required to wait up to three years before submitting a new Professional Standing Update.

- B.** Diplomates should understand that the following may be sufficient cause to bar them from future Knowledge Assessments, to terminate participation in the Knowledge Assessment, to invalidate the results of a Knowledge Assessment, to withhold or revoke scores or certificates, or to take other appropriate action:
1. The giving or receiving of aid in the Knowledge Assessment, as evidenced either by observation or by statistical analysis of answers of one or more participants in the Knowledge Assessment.
  2. The unauthorized possession, reproduction, or disclosure of any materials, including, but not limited to, examination questions or answers before, during, or after the Knowledge Assessment.
  3. The offering of any benefit to any agent of the ABOS in return for any right, privilege, or benefit which is not usually granted by the ABOS to other similarly situated candidates or persons.
  4. Engaging in irregular behavior in connection with the administration of the Knowledge Assessment.
- C.** Diplomates should also understand that the ABOS may require a Diplomate to retake one or more portions and Knowledge Assessment Pathway if presented with sufficient evidence that the security of the activity has been compromised, notwithstanding the absence of any evidence of a Diplomate's personal involvement in such activities.

## **VII. CREDENTIALS DECISIONS**

### **A. Review of Professional Standing Update and Case List**

1. The ABOS Credentials Committee meets at least once each year to consider Professional Standing Updates and Case Lists for the ABOS Continuing Certification Process. At this meeting, a decision will be made to approve the Professional Standing Update and Case List, to deny the Professional Standing Update and Case List, or to defer the decision for further evaluation and/or to request additional information.
2. The ABOS Credentials Committee may decide to require a new Professional Standing Update, new Peer Review, and a new Case List as a result of the ABOS Credentials Committee's review of the Professional Standing Update and Case List. The ABOS Credentials Committee may further decide to require a particular Knowledge Assessment Pathway, whether or not a different Knowledge Assessment has already been completed.

### **B. Deferral of Professional Standing Update and Case List**

1. A decision on a Diplomate's Professional Standing Update and Case List may be deferred if information received by the ABOS Credentials Committee is insufficient for the Committee to make a judgment and/or warrants further investigation. Typically, the Committee will defer such a decision for one year to gain further information. If it still has insufficient information to make a judgment, the decision may be deferred for a second year to enable representatives of the ABOS to conduct a Site Visit, or the Committee may require the

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Diplomate to take a specific ABOS CC Knowledge Assessment Pathway.

2. A denial, reduction, restriction, suspension, termination, or resignation at the request of a hospital of all or any portion of a Diplomate's surgical and/or staff privileges, or pending action to do so, will normally result in a deferral until such action is finally resolved and the Diplomate's practice has stabilized sufficiently for it to be evaluated. A change in location, type of hospital practice, and/or practice association may also result in deferral.
3. A deferral of not more than two consecutive years is not viewed by the ABOS as an adverse action; thus, no appeal from a decision of the ABOS Credentials Committee is permitted unless a Diplomate has been denied admission or has been deferred for more than two consecutive years. A Diplomate's period of certification shall be extended for any deferral period imposed by the ABOS Credentials Committee.

### **C. Site Visit**

Representatives of the ABOS may visit the site of a Diplomate's practice if the ABOS Credentials Committee believes that this is necessary for adequate evaluation of the Diplomate's practice.

### **D. Appeal of Admission Decision**

If a Diplomate's Professional Standing Update and Case List have been denied or deferred for more than two years, they will be informed of the basis for such action and may request a hearing by an Appeals Committee of the American Board of Orthopaedic Surgery. See the separate ABOS Appeals document.

### **E. Mid-Cycle Review**

A Certification may be subject to a Credentials Committee review prior to the expiration of the 10-year period of certification where the Credentials Committee concludes that such review is necessary for an adequate evaluation of whether a Diplomate's practice adheres to acceptable professional standards and of the Diplomate's satisfaction of the ABOS Professional Standing requirements. The Credentials Committee may take action against certification, up to and including termination of the certification, prior to the expiration of the 10-year term based on the results of its review.

### **F. Certificate Re-Entry (for those no longer certified)**

Should the circumstances that resulted in the revocation, surrender, or expiration of the Diplomate's certificate be corrected, the former Diplomate may seek to regain certification by meeting all current ABOS requirements. To regain certification, a Diplomate whose certification has expired or has been revoked must sit for and pass the Oral Re-Entry Examination, unless the Diplomate is not in active surgical practice.

1. A Diplomate who is in active surgical practice and whose certification has expired or been revoked must complete a Professional Standing Update, meet the current CME/SAE requirements (over the last 10-year period), provide a surgical Case List, and must sit for and pass the Oral Re-Entry Examination.
2. If a Diplomate whose certification has expired or been revoked is also not in active surgical practice but is actively seeing patients, then that Diplomate must complete a Professional

*The ABOS reserves the right to make changes in its rules and procedures at any time and without prior notice. These rules and procedures supersede all rules and procedures prior to March 16, 2026.*

Standing Update, meet the current CME/SAE requirements (over the last 10-year period), provide a Non-Operative Case List, and sit for a Computer-Based Examination. After successful completion of this process, the Diplomate will then be listed as "**Certified for Only Non-Operative Orthopaedic Care**" on *www.abos.org*.

3. If a Diplomate whose certification has expired or been revoked is not in active surgical practice and is no longer actively seeing patients, then that Diplomate must complete a Professional Standing Update, meet the current CME/SAE requirements (over the last 10-year period), provide supportive references, and sit for a Computer-Based Examination. After successful completion of this process, the Diplomate would then be listed as "**Certified for Only Non-Operative Orthopaedic Care**" on *www.abos.org*.
4. Any Diplomate who recertifies or regains their certification through the non-operative pathway and subsequently returns to active surgical practice must notify the ABOS within 12 months of resuming active operative practice.