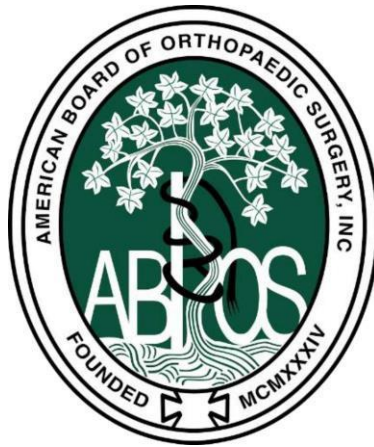


**AMERICAN BOARD
OF
ORTHOPAEDIC SURGERY, INC.**



**Rules and Procedures for the
Surgery of the Hand
Subspecialty Certification and Recertification
Examinations**

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IMPORTANT: The enclosed Rules and Procedures are specific to initial Subspecialty Certification in Surgery of the Hand, and Subspecialty Recertification in Surgery of the Hand for Diplomates who only need to recertify their Surgery of the Hand Subspecialty Certification

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I.

INTRODUCTION

Rules and Procedures

These Rules and Procedures set out the terms and conditions of The American Board of Orthopaedic Surgery's (ABOS) process for subspecialty certification and recertification in Surgery of the Hand. The ABOS reserves the right to make changes in its rules and procedures at any time and without prior notice.

Definition

Surgery of the Hand is the special field of medicine that includes the investigation, preservation, and restoration by medical, surgical, and rehabilitative means of all structures of the upper extremity directly affecting the form and function of the hand and wrist.

General Information

The ABOS is not an educational institution, and subspecialty certification in Surgery of the Hand is not to be considered a medical degree. Nor does it confer legal privileges or license to practice the subspecialty of Surgery of the Hand. Standards of certification are clearly distinct from those of licensure. The possession of a Subspecialty Certificate in Surgery of the Hand from the ABOS does not indicate total qualifications for practice privileges, nor does it imply exclusion of others not so certified. There is no requirement or necessity for a Diplomate of the ABOS to hold a Subspecialty Certificate in Surgery of the Hand to be considered qualified to include aspects of surgery of the hand within the practice of orthopaedic surgery. A Diplomate of the ABOS should be considered qualified to practice in all areas of Orthopaedic Surgery and should not be excluded from subspecialty practice because he or she has chosen not to seek subspecialty certification. The ABOS has never been concerned with measures that might gain privileges or recognition for its Diplomates in the practice of surgery of the hand or in the practice of orthopaedic surgery. It is neither the intent nor the purpose of the ABOS to define requirements for membership in any organization, staff of any hospital, or who shall or shall not perform Surgery of the Hand procedures.

The ABOS intends the Subspecialty Certificate in Surgery of the Hand only for those surgeons who have demonstrated qualifications beyond those expected of other orthopaedic surgeons by virtue of additional education, a practice characterized by a significant experience and activity involving the care of patients with problems involving the hand and upper extremity and performing surgery in surgery of the hand, and contributions to this field of medicine.

PLEASE NOTE: A Subspecialty Certificate in Surgery of the Hand is valid only when held in conjunction with a current General Orthopaedic Board Certification issued by the American Board of Orthopaedic Surgery.

II.

REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTIFICATION

An applicant for initial subspecialty certification in Surgery of the Hand:

- A. Must be a Diplomate of the ABOS and have been in the active practice of Surgery of the Hand for at least two years following the completion of orthopaedic education.
- B. Must have a current, full, and unrestricted license to practice medicine in the United States, a United States jurisdiction, or a Canadian province, or be engaged in full-time practice in the United States Federal Government, for which state licensure is not required.
- C. Must demonstrate professional competence and adherence to acceptable ethical and professional standards. The applicant should not publicize him or herself through any medium or form of public communication in an untruthful misleading or deceptive manner. It is the responsibility of the applicant to provide documentation that he/she is an ethical and competent practitioner.
- D. May not have had a reduction, restriction, suspension, termination, or resignation at the request of a hospital of all or any portion of an applicant's surgical staff privileges, or pending action to do so, will normally result in a deferral until such action is finally resolved and the applicant's practice has stabilized sufficiently for it to be evaluated.
- E. Will be rendered ineligible for the examination for the Subspecialty Certificate in Surgery of the Hand by limitation, suspension, or termination of any right associated with the practice of medicine in any state, province, or country due to violation of a medical practice act or other statute or governmental regulation; by disciplinary action by any medical licensing authority by entering into a consent order; by voluntary surrender while under investigation; or by suspension of licensure.
- F. Must be actively engaged in the practice of Surgery of the Hand as indicated by holding full operating privileges in a hospital or surgery center.
- G. **Initial Certification** applicants must have completed one full year of education in an ACGME accredited position Surgery of the Hand fellowship program or a Canadian Orthopaedic Association Accredited Surgery of the Hand fellowship program.
- H. **Initial Certification** applicants must submit a patient list of surgery of the hand managed during a consecutive 12-month period that falls within the 24 months preceding the application deadline. Surgery of the Hand includes only those procedures performed on the upper extremity distal to the elbow. The case list must include at least 125 cases fulfilling at least five of the following categories. If the applicant cannot reach the 125- case minimum within the 12-month period, the applicant can extend that collection period up to 15 months to reach 125 cases.

The number in the right-hand column indicates the minimum number of cases to qualify a Candidate as one of the required five categories.

Bone and joint	20
Nerve	20
Tendon and muscle	20
Skin and wound problems	14
Contracture and joint stiffness	10
Tumor	10
Congenital	3
Microvascular	3
Non-operative	4

* Non-operative cases are those that require significant evaluation, such as pain problems. No more than six non-operative cases will be accepted.

There is a list of acceptable CPT codes for the Surgery of the Hand Subspecialty Case List available on the ABOS website at

www.abos.org/subspecialties/surgery-of-the-hand/cpt-codes/

- I. Applicants must submit the prescribed application form and all the specified supporting documentation and pay the established fees.
- J. Applicants must pass the ABOS's Subspecialty Certificate in Surgery of the Hand Examination.
- K. Candidates who cannot fulfill the practice requirements may petition the Credentials Committee of the ABOS for individual consideration. This consideration will take into account contributions and dedication to the discipline of Surgery of the Hand such as teaching, publication, administration, Surgery of the Hand public service (e.g., team physician), and research. This petition must be submitted in the form of a letter with the application materials.

III.

PROCEDURE FOR APPLICATION

The date for the Surgery of the Hand Subspecialty Certification Examination and the deadlines for submission of the application and fee are posted on the American Board of Orthopaedic Surgery website (www.abos.org). Examinations dates and schedules may be changed at the discretion of the Board. The Initial Examination is only offered on one day each year.

A. Application

1. The Surgery of the Hand Subspecialty Certification and Scribe case list collection program are available online beginning mid-September in the year prior to the year of taking the examination. The deadline to apply is February 1st of the examination year.
2. To apply for this examination, go to the ABOS's website at www.abos.org and follow the Registration and Application Instructions under the Subspecialty Certification, Surgery of the Hand option.
3. No Diplomate will be admitted to the examination until the ABOS has determined that the specified requirements have been met, reviewed all supporting credentials, and been approved.
4. An approved Application and Case List will be valid for two consecutive years.

B. Notifying the ABOS of Application Changes

1. It is the responsibility of all applicants to notify the ABOS office of any change of address, email address, practice association, or hospital/surgery center affiliation.
2. If an applicant changes practice location or practice association or acquires new hospital/surgery affiliations, new references will be requested of the applicant by the ABOS.
3. An applicant is also required to notify the ABOS of the denial of any request for hospital and/or surgery center 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 that would result in the restriction, suspension, or probation of the applicant's license or any right associated with the practice of medicine.

C. Requests for Examination Accommodations

When applying for the certifying examination, a Candidate requesting an accommodation in the administration of a certifying examination must submit his or her request on the request form available at www.abos.org along with the required documentation of the disability and need for the accommodation, by the deadline stated on the request form. Documentation of prior accommodations for high-stakes examinations should be included.

D. Examination

Eligibility

Any Candidate who has passed Part I can apply to take an ABOS Subspecialty Certification Examination as long as they have completed or will complete in the same year as the Examination, an ACGME Accredited Fellowship in an Accredited position. Sign off from the Candidate's Fellowship Director attesting to this must be provided before the Examination.

Examination Registration

For all Candidates, Board Certified or not yet, they must complete a Registration for the Examination. Registration will open in mid-September for the year prior to the exam and close on February 1 of the exam year.

Pre-Board Certification Candidates

Qualification is to have passed Part I. Registration will require an attestation from the Fellowship Director.

Application

An Application is not required to take the examination, but in order to be awarded the certificate, an Application must be submitted. The Application process will be the same as diplomates, including letters of recommendation and hospital privileges. This Application cannot be submitted before passing Part II and must be submitted by February 1st of the 6th calendar year along with the Case List after passing the Initial Surgery of the Hand Examination.

Case List

A Case List is not required to take the examination, but in order to be awarded the certificate, a Case List must be submitted. The Case List cannot be submitted before passing Part II and must be submitted in the same year as the Application by February 1st of the 6th calendar year after passing the Initial Surgery of the Hand Examination. The Candidate's Part II Examination Case List can be used and added onto with the additional 6 months of cases.

Fees

\$925 Application Fee
\$925 Examination Fee

Results

Results will be shared with the Candidate and at the same time all Subspecialty Certification Examination results are shared.

Award of Subspecialty Certification

Must have passed Part II Examination within 5 calendar years of passing the Subspecialty Examination, complete an Application and a 1-year Case List meeting the requirements. The Application and 1-year Case List must be submitted by February 1st of the 6th calendar year after passing the examination and is approved by the ABOS Credentials Committee. (Example: 2025 pass Examination, Application and Case List submitted by February 2031.)

Board Certified Diplomates

Registration will be accessed on the Diplomate Dashboard by choosing *Subspecialty*. This will be very simple and will proceed the Application process.

Applicants who are approved to take the examination will receive an admission letter, which will be posted in their portal on the ABOS website. Instructions and deadlines for paying the Examination Fee and scheduling the Examination at the testing center will be included. The Examination Fee must be paid before scheduling an Examination.

E. Examination Content

The examination for the Subspecialty Certificate in Surgery of the Hand is developed and administered by the American Board of Orthopaedic Surgery, the American Board of Surgery, and the American Board of Plastic Surgery. This is a multiple-choice, computer-administered examination. The examination contains 175 questions. There are 175 questions for the initial Subspecialty Certification in Surgery of the Hand Examination and 150 questions for the Subspecialty Recertification in Surgery of the Hand Examination.

F. Rules Governing Admissibility to the Examination

The ABOS, based on its sole judgment, may grant or deny a Candidate the privilege of examination whenever the facts are deemed by the ABOS to so warrant.

G. Taking the Surgery of the Hand Subspecialty Certification and Recertification Examinations in the Same Examination Administration

If a Diplomate qualifies for the initial Surgery of the Hand certification examination and is eligible to renew a General Orthopaedic Board Certification, the examination may qualify that individual for both an initial subspecialty certificate and general certificate renewal provided certain qualifications are met. These Diplomates should contact the ABOS offices and speak to their Certification Specialist for further information.

A Candidate who wishes to withdraw must notify the ABOS office more than ten (10) business days before the scheduled examination to receive a partial refund of \$450. A Candidate who fails to appear for an examination or who withdraws without giving more than ten (10) business days' notice as defined above will forfeit the entire fee for examination.

IV.

FALSIFIED INFORMATION AND IRREGULAR BEHAVIOR

- A. If it is determined that an applicant has falsified information on the application form, case list, or the materials submitted or has failed to provide material information, the applicant's patient list or the materials submitted may be declared ineligible for the examination and the Candidate may be required to wait up to three years before being allowed to file a new application.
- B. Examination applicants should understand that the following may be sufficient cause to bar them from future examinations, to terminate participation in the examination, to invalidate the results of an examination, to withhold or revoke scores or certificates, or to take other appropriate action:
 - 1. The giving or receiving of aid in the examination as evidenced either by observation or by statistical analysis of answers of one or more participants in the examination.
 - 2. The unauthorized possession, reproduction, or disclosure of any materials including but not limited to, examination questions or answers before, during, or after the examination.
 - 3. The offering of any benefit to any agent of the ABOS in return for any right, privilege, or benefit that is not usually granted by the ABOS to other similarly situated Candidates or persons.
 - 4. The engaging in irregular behavior in connection with the administration of the examination.
- C. The following are examples of behavior considered to be irregular and may be cause for invalidation of the examination or imposition of a penalty:
 - 1. Referring to books, notes, or other devices at any time during the examination. This prohibited material includes written information or information transferred by electronic, acoustical, or other means.
 - 2. Any transfer of information or signals between Candidates during the test. This prohibition includes any transfer of information between the Candidate and any other person at any time during the testing period including bathroom breaks.
 - 3. Any appearance of looking at the computer screen of another Candidate during the examination.
 - 4. Allowing another Candidate to view one's answer during an examination or otherwise assisting another Candidate in the examination.
 - 5. Taking any examination material outside of the examination room. All examination materials are the property of the ABOS and must be left in the room at the end of the examination.
 - 6. Candidates should also understand that the ABOS may or may not require a Candidate to retake one or more portions of the examination if presented with sufficient evidence that

the security of the examination has been compromised, notwithstanding the absence of any evidence of a Candidate's personal involvement in such activities.

V.

CREDENTIALS DECISIONS

A. Determining Admission to Examinations

The Credentials Committee meets at least once each year to consider applications for the examination. At this meeting, a decision about each applicant will be made either to approve admission to the next examination, to deny admission, to defer decision pending further evaluation, or take other appropriate action.

B. Deferral of Admission Decision

A decision about an applicant's admission to the examination may be deferred if information received by the 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 information is still insufficient, the decision will be deferred for a second year to enable representatives of the ABOS to conduct a Site Visit. A deferral of not more than two consecutive years is not viewed by the ABOS as an adverse action; thus, no appeal of a decision of the Credentials Committee is permitted unless an applicant has been denied admission or has been deferred for more than two consecutive years.

C. Appeal of Admission Decision

An applicant denied admission to the examination, deferred more than two years, or denied a request for an accommodation in the administration of the examination 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 Appeals Procedure at www.abos.org.

VI.

CERTIFICATES

A Candidate who has met all the requirements and has passed the examination will receive a Subspecialty Certificate in Surgery of the Hand issued by the American Board of Orthopaedic Surgery. This certificate will be valid through the expiration date of the Candidate's ABOS General Orthopaedic Certificate. Those who hold a time-unlimited General Certificate will have their Subspecialty Certificate valid for 10 years. A Subspecialty Certificate in Surgery of the Hand is valid only when held in conjunction with a current general certificate issued by the American Board of Orthopaedic Surgery.

A. Certificate Revocation

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

1. The Diplomate did not possess the required qualifications and/or meet the requirements for examination, whether or not such deficiency was known to the ABOS or any committee

The ABOS reserves the right to make changes in its rules and procedures for its examination and certification at any time and without prior notice. These rules and procedures supersede all rules and procedures prior to July 1, 2024.

thereof prior to examination or at the time of issuance of the certificate, as the case may be.

2. The Diplomate made an intentional and material misrepresentation or withheld information in the application to the examination or in any other representation to the ABOS or any Committee thereof.
3. The Diplomate made a misrepresentation to the ABOS 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 an examination of the ABOS as described under Section IV. Falsified Information and Irregular Behavior), whether or not such practice had an effect on the performance of the Candidate on an examination.
5. The Diplomate was convicted by a court of competent jurisdiction of a felony or misdemeanor involving moral turpitude and, in the opinion of the ABOS, having a material relationship to the practice of medicine.
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. A Diplomate may appeal the revocation of his or her certificate pursuant to the procedures set forth in the Appeals Procedures at www.abos.org.

B. Certificate Re-Entry

Should the circumstances that resulted in the revocation, surrender, or expiration of the Diplomate's certificate be corrected, the former Diplomate may petition the Credentials Committee to allow him or her to complete the steps necessary to become certified or recertified. A Diplomate whose certification has expired or been revoked must sit for and pass the Oral Examination unless the Diplomate is not in active surgical practice. If a Diplomate is not in active surgical practice, he or she should contact the ABOS Office.