



Policy on Maintaining Open and Active Certification Applications

BACKGROUND

In order to track ABEM certification applications for candidates who do not complete the initial certification examinations within 18 months of applying for certification, ABEM has designated applications as open or closed, and, if the application is open, as active or inactive. The Board has defined the examination activity candidates must maintain to keep their applications open and active. This policy was created in 1984.

POLICY

Initially approved applications for certification are considered open and active. Candidates with open and active applications may register for an initial certification examination. Applications of candidates who pass the qualifying examination remain open and active and those candidates will be assigned to an oral certification examination. Candidates who pass the oral certification examination become diplomates.

Applications of candidates failing an examination will be changed to a status of open and inactive. Candidates with inactive certification applications must request in writing that ABEM reactivate their applications and must pay applicable reactivation fees by the reactivation deadline of the examination they wish to take.

Applications will also be designated open and inactive if the candidate does any one of the following:

- Declines an assignment to an examination administration,
- Does not respond to an assignment,
- Withdraws from an examination,
- Does not appear at an examination for which they are registered, or
- Completes less than the required number of test questions or oral cases.

Candidates must take an examination at least once every three years for their applications to remain open. Taking an examination is defined as completing 80% of the questions on the qualifying examination, or five of the six cases used for scoring the oral certification examination.

Failure to take an examination at least once every three years will result in permanent closure of the certification application. If the application is closed, the candidate cannot take any examination. To regain access to the certification examinations, the physician must reapply for certification fulfilling the ABEM credentialing requirements current at the time of application. Prior examination attempts cannot be transferred from a closed application to a new application.

PROCEDURES

Qualifying Examination

The qualifying examination is administered once in the fall of each year. All candidates whose certification applications are approved by the examination assignment deadline each year may register for the qualifying examination administration that year. Candidates whose applications are approved after the examination assignment deadline may register for the qualifying examination in the year following the year in which they submitted their applications.

Oral Certification Examination

Candidates must take an oral certification examination within three years after the end of the year in which they passed the qualifying examination, or their certification application will be closed.

Candidates who take but do not pass the oral certification examination must retake the examination within three years after the end of the year in which they failed the examination, or their certification application will be closed.

The oral certification examination is administered twice each year. Once each year, ABEM randomly assigns a maximum number of candidates whose certification applications are open and active to the administrations for that calendar year. The number of available examination assignments is limited, and some candidates may not be offered an assignment in a given year. Candidates who passed the most recent qualifying examination are assigned first. Candidates who reactivated their applications are assigned thereafter in the order in which their reactivation requests were postmarked.

Because ABEM assigns candidates to specific examination administrations and examination assignments are limited, it is possible that a candidate who reactivates by the deadline for the third year's administrations will not receive an assignment for that year. In that case, the candidate's application will remain open and active, and the candidate must accept the first examination assignment ABEM offers or the application will be closed.

(42105-082009)