



Policy on Medical Licensure

BACKGROUND

The American Board of Emergency Medicine (ABEM) wishes to state its policy regarding its medical licensure requirement.

POLICY

Each physician applying for certification or registering for the qualifying examination more than one year after graduating from an Emergency Medicine residency program, registering for the oral certification examination, applying for subspecialty certification, holding diplomate status with the Board, and/or participating in the Emergency Medicine Continuous Certification (EMCC) process or an ABEM subspecialty recertification or Maintenance of Certification (MOC) process must continuously hold a current, active, valid, full, unrestricted, and unqualified license to practice medicine in at least one jurisdiction in the United States, its territories, or Canada, and in each jurisdiction in which he or she practices. A physician may hold one or more additional licenses, each of which must be valid, unrestricted, and unqualified.

Exception for New EM Residency Graduates

Physicians who submit an application and take the qualifying examination the same year they graduate from their residency program are not required to hold a medical license to take the qualifying examination. If an EM residency graduate, however, holds any licenses, they must be reported to the Board on the application and when registering for the qualifying examination. These licenses must be valid, full, unrestricted, and unqualified, except that they may be educational or temporary licenses.

Exceptions for Fellows

This exception only applies to physicians applying for initial Emergency Medicine certification or taking the Emergency Medicine qualifying examination. Physicians registering for the oral certification examination must hold a current, active, valid, full, unrestricted, and unqualified license to practice medicine in at least one jurisdiction in the United States, its territories, or Canada, and in each jurisdiction in which he or she practices.

The licensure exceptions for fellows or physicians who have graduated from a fellowship are available only to those who entered a fellowship within six months of completing their EM residency program.

Fellows who are enrolled in a fellowship program when they apply for certification and when they take the qualifying examination are not required to hold a medical license.

Physicians who submit an application and take the qualifying examination the same year they graduate from their fellowship program are not required to hold a medical license to take the qualifying examination.

If a fellow holds any license, however, it must be reported to the Board on the application and when registering for the qualifying examination. These licenses must be valid, full, unrestricted, and unqualified, except that they may be educational or temporary licenses.

Clarification of Licenses That Are Not “Current, Active, Valid, Full, Unrestricted, and Unqualified”

A license to practice medicine is not “current, active, valid, full, unrestricted, and unqualified” if, in any manner or to any extent whatsoever, one or more of the following applies. The license is

- under probation
- conditioned; e.g., the physician is required to practice under supervision or with modification, or to obtain continuing education
- limited; e.g., to specific practice settings
- inactive as a result of an action taken by or a request made by a medical licensing board
- institutional, educational, or temporary.

Previous Licenses

A physician may have expired licenses.

Licenses that were invalid, restricted, or qualified when they expired and that expired on or after January 1, 2004, do not meet the ABEM Policy on Medical Licensure.

Licenses that were revoked or suspended on or after January 1, 2004, or that the physician surrendered or did not renew on or after January 1, 2004, as a result of or in order to terminate or settle disciplinary proceedings, do not qualify as meeting the ABEM Policy on Medical Licensure.

Reporting Medical Licensure Information to the Board

Each physician applying for Emergency Medicine or subspecialty certification, participating in a certification process, holding current diplomate status with the Board, and/or participating in the EMCC or a subspecialty MOC process must report to the Board all licenses he or she currently holds, including all inactive, temporary, and educational licenses, and all licenses previously held that do not meet the ABEM Policy on Medical Licensure.

Physicians reporting licenses that have the following conditions must include an explanation of the status of the license:

- the license is inactive, whether voluntarily or involuntarily
- the license is invalid, restricted, or qualified
- the license was encumbered when it expired and it expired on or after January 1, 2004
- the license was revoked or suspended on or after January 1, 2004
- the physician surrendered or did not renew the license on or after January 1, 2004 as a result of or in order to terminate or settle disciplinary proceedings.

The Board may, at its sole discretion, determine whether to investigate a license and the information provided. The Board reserves the right to determine if a license fulfills its policy. The Board will determine if the situation is cause to deny a physician’s application, deny a physician access to an examination, or revoke a diplomate’s certificate.

If the physician does not report the required information to ABEM, upon investigation, the Board may impose sanctions it determines appropriate, including but not limited to, barring the physician from taking ABEM examinations, invalidating examinations the physician took, and revoking the physician’s certification.

EXCEPTION

Medical licenses in countries and locations other than the United States, its territories, or Canada, will not be counted for or against an ABEM applicant, candidate, or diplomate in determining if the physician has fulfilled the requirements for medical licensure when the physician has a license in the United States, its territories, or Canada that meets the licensure requirements.

ABEM will review on a case by case basis, the medical license(s) of diplomates who are practicing medicine outside the United States and Canada who only have a medical license from the country in which they are practicing.

Additionally, see “Exception for New EM Residency Graduates” and “Exception for Fellows” above.

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