

5-Year Continuing Certification and Annual Fee

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

1. Why did ABEM change from a 10-year to a 5-year certification cycle?

Several factors contributed to the decision.

- Instituting the 5-year cycle, modules, and the annual fee minimized the number of disruptions and simplified the continuing certification process.
- The ABMS Continuing Certification Standards require ABEM to change their certificates from 10 to 5 years. ABEM is permitted to move physicians to the 5-year certificates as current certificates expire.
- 5-year certification cycles create a more continuous approach to keeping up with medical knowledge and key advances in the specialty.
- The public and patient groups view the 10-year certification process as too long to keep up with changes in the specialty.

2. How long is the current certification period? Your current certification will remain valid until the expiration date on your certificate. Certificates renewed moving forward will be for 5 years.

3. Will the date my current certification expires change now that there is a 5-year certification period? No. All current certification expiration dates remain the same. After your current certification is renewed, you will move to a 5-year cycle. This 5-year period starts after your current certification expiration date.

4. Did certification requirements increase with the change to a 5-year cycle? No—they decreased, and the high-stakes, 10-year examination was eliminated. With the new 5-year certification cycle, physicians with Emergency Medicine certification must:

- Pay an annual fee
- Pass 4 MyEMCert modules
- Attest to 1 IMP activity
- Maintain all medical licenses in compliance with ABEM's [Policy on Medical Licensure](#) and adhere to ABEM's [Code of Professionalism](#)

5. What are my options and requirements for renewing certification? To check what activities you need to complete and when, [sign in to your ABEM portal](#).

6. Will the way I pay for continuing certification change? Yes. Physicians who renew certification or achieve initial certification in 2021 or later will pay an annual fee. All ABEM-certified physicians will move to an annual fee at the same time they move to a 5-year certification cycle.

Rather than paying individually for modules, physicians will pay an annual fee of \$330, which spreads payments evenly over the certification cycle. This is virtually the same amount as physicians are now paying for continuing certification. ABEM fees are subject to change.

7. What is the annual fee? Just as you pay for your medical license and organization memberships, you will pay for your certification. All ABMS specialty boards have a

similar process. Beginning on January 1, 2026, the annual fee for continuing certification is \$330 for your primary certification and \$240 for any second (subspecialty) certification. This means that any third certification is free.

- 8. When do I have to pay the annual fee?** The fee can be paid any time during the year. However, the fee must be paid in order to access continuing certification activities.
- 9. What are my options for paying the annual fee?**
 - You can pay the annual fee each year when you access your continuing certification activities, or before December 31, whichever comes first.
 - You can bundle 5 years of annual fee payments by paying one lump sum during the first year of your 5-year continuing certification.
- 10. What if I don't pay the fee by December 31?** Those who do not pay the fee by December 31 have until April 1 to pay it without incurring a late fee of \$150. If the fee is not paid by April 1, the status of Conditional Certification will be applied to the physician's certificate. Conditional Certification is a status of notice, not discipline nor sanction. The status alerts physicians that they are at risk of becoming decertified if they do not pay the annual fee by the end of the calendar year. ABEM provides a grace period of one year to pay the fee.
- 11. What happens if I don't pay the fee by the end of the grace period?** Just as payment is required to maintain your medical license, payment is required to stay certified. Physicians who do not pay the fee by the end of the grace period will be decertified.
- 12. I didn't pay the annual fee on time and was decertified. How do I obtain a refund for the payments that I made?** There are no refunds issued for failing certification requirements or for any other circumstances.

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