

5-Year Continuing Certification Cycle and Annual Fee

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

- 1. How long is the current certification period?** Your current certification will remain valid until the expiration date on your certificate. Certificates expiring in 2021 or later will be issued a 5-year certificate when your certificate renews. Starting in 2021, physicians who receive initial certification will also receive a certificate that is valid for a 5-year period.
- 2. My board certification expires after 2021, and I already took ConCert; will my certification be renewed for 10 years?** No. If you have completed all of your continuing certification requirements, your board certification will remain unchanged from when it was originally issued (i.e., 10 years ago) and in effect until the expiration date. Your board certification will then be renewed for 5 years. Please use the [✓ ABEM Reqs](#) tool on the ABEM website to see what your requirements are.
- 3. Why did ABEM change the certification cycle from a 10-year to a 5-year certification cycle?** A number of factors contributed to the decision to change the certification cycle.
 - Instituting the 5-year cycle with the launch of MyEMCert and the annual fee will minimize the number of disruptions and help to simplify the continuing certification process. Five-year certification cycles foster a more continuing approach to keeping up with medical knowledge and key advances in the specialty and demonstrating ability to meet certification standards.
 - Public and patient groups do not view the 10-year certification process as sufficient for certification. They assume certification programs are much shorter.
 - The ABMS Vision Commission report recommends moving to a continuing certification process. A 5-year cycle, while not continuous, moves in the direction of continuing certification.
 - Changing to a 5-year cycle now allows physicians with certifications expiring in 2021 to recertify using MyEMCert. Previously, this group was not allowed because they would have had to complete more MyEMCert modules than would be available.
- 4. Will the date my current certification expires change now that there is a 5-year certification cycle?** No. All current board certification expiration dates remain the same. Beginning in 2021, when you next renew your certification, you will be issued a 5-year certification. This takes place after your current certification expiration date.
- 5. I am confused about what my options are for renewing certification. What should I do?** To check what activities you need to complete to renew your certification, please use the [✓ ABEM Reqs](#) tool on the ABEM website. Enter your certification end date to view your requirements. If you still have questions, please contact ABEM at staycertified@abem.org or call 517.332.4800.

✓ ABEM Reqs



6. Did certification requirements increase with the change to a 5-year certification cycle? No. To obtain a 10-year certificate, physicians were required to:

- Complete 8 LLSAs
- Pass ConCert
- 2 IMP attestations
- Maintain all medical licenses in compliance with ABEM policy

With the new 5-year certification cycle, physicians must:

- Complete 4 MyEMCert modules
- Attest to 1 IMP activity
- Pay the Annual Fee
- Maintain all medical licenses in compliance with ABEM’s [Policy on Medical Licensure](#) and adhere to ABEM’s [Code of Professionalism](#)

The MyEMCert, 5-year certification cycle eliminates the high-stakes, secure ConCert Exam from total requirements. Please refer to the table below.

Comparison Between 10-Year and New 5-Year Certification Cycles

	10-Year Certification 	5-Year Certification
Annual Costs	\$280/annualized	\$280/year
LLSA Fee	\$105	Free
ConCert Fee*	\$1,950	\$0
Total Fees	\$2,790	\$1,400
Requirements	Four activities every five years	Four activities every five years
Licensure and Improvement in Medical Practice	Yes	Yes
Consistent Year-to-Year Physician Fees	No	Yes
Periodic High-Stakes Examination (ConCert)	Yes	No
Travel to a Testing Site	Yes	No

NOTE: 5-year certification does not start until current certification expires.

* ConCert will be available in 2021 and 2022 for \$1,400 for those who delay enrolling in MyEMCert.



5-year recertification does not start until your current certification expires.

7. If my current ABEM certification expires in 2021 or after, and I choose to take ConCert a year early, in 2020, will my board certification be renewed for 10 years? No. Taking ConCert does not by itself renew certification. Certification renewal is based on the expiration date of your current certificate, not when you choose to take ConCert. If your current certification expires in 2021 or after, if you have met all of your requirements, your certification will be renewed for 5 years.

8. Is there a difference between renewing my certification by taking ConCert versus completing MyEMCert modules? No. If you complete your requirements by your certification expiration date, your board certification will be renewed for 5 years, regardless of which method you use. Please use the [✓ ABEM Regs](#) tool on the ABEM website.

9. I thought that if I took ConCert, my new certificate would be for valid for 10 years; why not? By taking ConCert—no matter when your certification ends—to renew your certification, you are completing only one of several requirements needed to renew your certification; passing ConCert alone does not renew certification. ABEM offered the option to take ConCert early to reduce test anxiety and decertification risk caused by waiting until the last year of certification to take the exam. To renew your current board certification, over a 10-year period, you must have:

- A medical license in compliance with ABEM policy
- Attested to 2 IMP activities
- Completed 8 LLSAs
- Pass ConCert (or complete 4 MyEMCert modules).

Passing ConCert does not renew your certification; meeting all requirements by the end of your certification period renews your certification.

Beginning with certifications that expire in 2021, board certification will be renewed for 5 years after your current board certification expiration date, even if you passed ConCert early. Please use the [✓ ABEM Regs](#) tool on the ABEM website to see what your requirements are.

10. How long will I have to be able to use ConCert to renew my certification? ConCert will be available through 2022. If your certification expiration date is in 2026 or earlier, you can take ConCert to renew your certification. Also, when your current certification expires, you will be issued certification that will be valid for 5 years. Please use the [✓ ABEM Regs](#) tool on the ABEM website to see your requirement options.

11. Why is ABEM discontinuing ConCert as an option to renew certification? A June 2018 survey of all ABEM-certified physicians showed that over 90 percent of physicians would prefer to recertify using MyEMCert, not ConCert. Maintaining both MyEMCert and ConCert would divert ABEM resources and result in higher certification costs for all physicians. Therefore, ConCert will be discontinued after 2022.

12. My certification expires in 2027; do I have to wait until the second five years of my current certification to take MyEMCert modules? No. Physicians with certificates that expire between 2027-2030 can take MyEMCert modules any time during their certification cycle.

13. Will the way I pay for continuing certification change? Yes. For physicians who renew certification or achieve initial certification in 2021 or later, an annual fee structure will be implemented. All ABEM-certified physicians will move to an annual fee at the same time they move to a 5-year certification cycle (after they next renew their certification). Rather than having to pay individually for MyEMCert modules, physicians will pay an annual fee of \$280, which spreads payments evenly over the certification cycle. This is virtually the same amount as physicians are now paying for continuing certification.

- 14. What is the annual fee?** The annual fee for continuing certification is \$280 for your primary certification and \$195 for any other (subspecialty) certifications. This means that any third certification is free.
- 15. 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.
- 16. Can I pay my annual fee in one payment?** Yes, you can pay the annual fee for all 5 years of certification in one lump sum during the first year of your 5-year certification, or you will need to make annual payments. (For those whose certification renewed in 2022, you now have the option to pay your remaining 4 years in one payment.)
- 17. What if I don't pay the fee by December 31?** ABEM provides a grace period of three months (through March 31) to pay the fee. A late fee of \$140 will be charged for those paying during the grace period.
- 18. What happens if I don't pay the fee by the end of the grace period?** Physicians who do not pay the fee by the end of the grace period will be decertified.
- 19. 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.
- 20. Is the change to MyEMCert and the annual fee going to provide a financial windfall for ABEM?** No. ABEM-certified physicians currently pay an annual average of about \$280 per year for continuing certification requirements (8 x \$105 for LLSAs + \$1,950 for ConCert = \$2,790 ÷ 10 = \$279 per year). The new annual fee will be \$280 per year, which is nearly the same as total current costs for continuing certification.

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