



American Board of Emergency Medicine

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. Starting in 2021, after your current certification expires, when you renew your certification, you will be issued a certificate that will be valid for 5 years. This takes place after your current certification expiration date, not necessarily in 2021. Starting in 2021 physicians who receive initial certification will also receive a certificate that is valid for a 5-year period.
- 2. 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 continuous 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.
- 3. 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 certificate. This takes place after your current certification expiration date.
- 4. 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 Regs](#) tool in the Stay Certified section of 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.  
- 5. 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 in itself renew certification. Certification renewal is based on the expiration date of your current certificate. If your current certification expires after 2020, if you have met all of your requirements, your certification will be renewed for 5 years.

- 6. 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 in the Stay Certified section of the ABEM website.
- 7. 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 and in effect until the expiration date. Your board certification will then be renewed for 5 years. Please use the [✓ ABEM Regs](#) tool in the Stay Certified section of the ABEM website to see what your requirements are.
- 8. My board certification expires at the end of 2020. If I take ConCert and complete all of my other requirements, will my board certification be renewed for 10 years?** Yes. The move to a 5-year certification cycle goes into effect for physicians whose board certification expires in 2021 and after. If you pass ConCert and complete all of your requirements by your requirement date (June 30, 2021), you will be issued a 10-year certificate. You will move to the 5-year certification cycle the next time you renew your certification.
- 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 does not issue you a new certificate. ABEM offered the option to take ConCert early to reduce test anxiety and decertification risk caused by having to take the exam in the last year of certification. 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
 - Passed 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 in the Stay Certified section of 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 because you are allowed to take ConCert anytime during the last 5 years of your certification cycle. Also, when your current certification expires, you will be issued a certificate that will be valid for 5 years. Please use the [✓ ABEM Regs](#) tool in the Stay Certified section of 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 2027-2029 can take MyEMCert modules in place of LLSAs to meet their first 5-year requirements.

13. 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
- ConCert
- 2 IMP attestations
- Maintain all medical licenses in compliance with ABEM policy

With the new 5-year certification cycle, physicians complete one less requirement. They must:

- Complete 4 MyEMCert modules
- 1 IMP attestation
- Maintain all medical licenses in compliance with ABEM policy

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.

- 14. Will the way I pay for continuing certification change?** Yes. For physicians who renew certification or achieve initial certification in 2021, 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 the ConCert fee up front plus costs for LLSA tests, 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.
- 15. 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. Those who took ConCert early and paid the \$1,950 fee will be receiving a refund check for the difference between the old fees and the new fees during this transition. Refer to the table in FAQ 13 for details. Please note: Refunds apply only to fees paid for successful completion of the ConCert Exam and LLSA tests; they will not apply to fees paid for retaking exams or for late fees.
- 16. I took ConCert early and the fees I paid are more than the fees for MyEMCert modules. This looks like a way for ABEM to make more money.** If you paid the ConCert fee under the old fee structure, ABEM will be sending you a check reimbursing you for the difference in payments. Please note: Refunds apply only to fees paid for successful completion of the ConCert Exam and LLSA tests; they will not apply to fees paid for retaking exams or for any late fees.

September 2020