

## 5-Year Continuing Certification and Annual Fee

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)



Learn more about ABEM's Continuing Certification process in this [video](#) from ABEM Immediate-Past-President Samuel M. Keim, M.D., M.S.

- 1. 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, MyEMCert, 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 years to 5 years. ABEM is permitted to move physicians to the 5-year certificates as current certificates expire.
  - Five-year certification cycles create a more continuous approach to keeping up with medical knowledge and key advances in the specialty.
  - This change allowed physicians recertifying in 2021 to use MyEMCert to recertify.
  - The public and patient groups view the 10-year certification process as too long for keeping 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 or issued in 2021 or later 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. Beginning in 2021, when you next renew your certification, you will move to a 5 year cycle. This 5-year period starts after your current certification expiration date.
- 4. I already took ConCert; will my certification be renewed for 10 years?** If you have completed all of your continuing certification requirements, your board certification will remain in effect until the expiration date. Your board certification will then renew for 5 years. Please use the [✓ ABEM Reqs](#) tool to view your requirements.
- 5. What are my options and requirements for renewing certification?** To check what activities you need to complete and when, please use the [✓ ABEM Reqs](#) tool on the ABEM website. If you still have questions, please contact ABEM at [staycertified@abem.org](mailto:staycertified@abem.org) or call 517.332.4800.
- 6. Did certification requirements increase with the change to a 5-year certification cycle?** No—they decreased and the high-stakes, 10-year examination was eliminated. With the new 5-year certification cycle, physicians must:
  - Pay an annual fee
  - Complete 4 MyEMCert modules
  - Complete 1 IMP attestation

✓ ABEM Reqs



- Maintain all medical licenses in compliance with ABEM's [Policy on Medical Licensure](#) and adhere to ABEM's [Code of Professionalism](#)

**7. I thought that if I took ConCert, my new certificate would be 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. Passing ConCert does not renew your certification; meeting all requirements by the end of your certification period renews your certification.

**8. 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 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.

Rather than having to pay individually for MyEMCert modules, physicians will pay an annual fee of \$300, 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.

**9. 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 in 2023, the annual fee for continuing certification is \$300 for your primary certification and \$215 for any other (subspecialty) certifications. This means that any third certification is free.

**10. 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.

**11. 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.  
*(Note, the option to bundle is only available in the first year of a 5-year continuing certification cycle.)*

**12. 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 for becoming decertified if they do not pay the annual fee by the end of the calendar year. ABEM also provides a grace period of one year to pay the fee.

**13. 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.

- 14. 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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