

American Board of Emergency Medicine  
**Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Initial Certification**  
**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)**

**QUESTIONS ABOUT THE [EMS ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA](#)**

- 1. How long will the EMS practice pathways be in effect?** The EMS practice pathways closed at the end of the 2019 application cycle, on July 1, 2019.
- 2. Is it true that physicians certified by another board are eligible to apply for certification in EMS?** Yes. Physicians with current primary certification issued by any of the 24 American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) Member Boards, you may apply for certification in EMS. ABEM is the sponsor of the EMS subspecialty, so you will apply to ABEM for certification, ABEM will verify your credentials, administer the certification exam, and issue your EMS certificate, and ABEM will administer your EMS continuing certification program.
- 3. I am board eligible in my specialty, but not actually certified. Do I need to become certified in my specialty to be eligible for certification in EMS?** Yes. You must be certified in your specialty by an ABMS Member Board to meet the eligibility criteria of the EMS subspecialty.

**QUESTIONS ABOUT EMS FELLOWSHIP TRAINING**

- 4. What is the best way for me to train in EMS?** As of November 2019, there were 69 EMS fellowship programs accredited by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME). Alternatively, you may complete an "acceptable" unaccredited EMS fellowship program to be eligible for certification in EMS. This means that the program is at least 12 months in length and the curriculum covers the [The Core Content of EMS Medicine](#). Go to the National Association of EMS Physicians website, <http://www.naemsp.org>, to see the accepted EMS Fellowship Curriculum and a list of current EMS fellowship programs.
- 5. How do I find out which EMS fellowship programs are ACGME accredited?** To find out which EMS programs have been approved by the ACGME, follow the link below, select Emergency Medical Services from the "Search by Specialty" drop-down menu, and click "Search." You can start the process by [clicking here](#).

**QUESTIONS ABOUT THE EMS CERTIFICATION APPLICATION PROCESS**

- 6. Is applying for certification and registering for the exam the same thing?** No. You must apply for certification and receive approval before registering for the exam. After you apply, ABEM will review your credentials and independently verify that you have met the eligibility criteria. This process may include review by the ABEM Credentials Committee. After your application has been approved as meeting the eligibility criteria, starting on March 1 of the exam year you will be able to register for the EMS Certification Exam.

- 7. When is the application period for EMS certification?** Please follow [this link](#) to see the application dates for EMS certification.
- 8. How do I apply for certification in EMS?** You can apply for EMS certification online through the ABEM secure portal.
- 9. Do the or training requirements have to be met as of the date of the exam, or as of the date when I submit my application?** You can finish EMS fellowship training after you submit your EMS certification application, provided that you graduate at least two weeks prior to the exam.
- 10. What credentials will ABEM review?** ABEM will verify that you hold primary certification by an American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) Member Board, and that your medical licensure status fulfills the ABEM Policy on [Medical Licensure](#).

If your primary certification is not in Emergency Medicine, ABEM will submit your name to the ABMS to verify your primary certification. ABEM will verify your certification again prior to issuing you a certificate in EMS.

ABEM will also submit your name to the ABMS to verify the status of your medical licensure through the Federation of State Medical Boards (FSMB).

- 11. If my application is found not to meet the eligibility criteria and is therefore not approved, will I be able to receive a refund of my application fee?** No. Application fees are not refundable.

## QUESTIONS ABOUT THE EMS CERTIFICATION EXAMINATION

- 12. What resources will be used to create the EMS Certification Exam?** The EMS Certification Examination is based on the [The Core Content of EMS Medicine](#). In addition, the knowledge, training, and practice experience of the [minimally qualified EMS subspecialty candidate](#) has been defined, and also serves as a foundation for the EMS certification exam.
- 13. What topics will be covered on the EMS Certification Examination?** The EMS certification examination is a comprehensive exam covering the breadth of the field of Emergency Medical Services. The [Core Content of EMS Medicine](#) forms the basis of the exam. The list below describes the relative weight given to different elements of *The Core Content of EMS Medicine* in constructing the EMS multiple choice certification exam.

Clinical Aspects of EMS Medicine	40%
Medical Oversight of EMS	30%
Quality Management and Research	10%
Special Operations	20%

- 14. Are there sample questions, textbooks, prep courses, or other materials ABEM recommends to help physicians prepare for the EMS certification exam?** ABEM does not provide sample questions or recommend textbooks or materials other than the [The Core Content of EMS Medicine](#) and a description of the [minimally qualified EMS subspecialty candidate](#), to assist physicians in preparing for the EMS exam. ABEM also does not track or endorse prep courses for its exams. However, such courses may be available, and you may participate in any of them as you wish.

- 15. When will the EMS Certification Exam be administered?** Please [follow this link](#) to see the date(s) for the next EMS certification exam.
- 16. When will I be able to register for the EMS Certification Examination?** Registration for the exam typically begins March 1 of the year in which the exam will be offered for physicians who have an open, approved application on file with ABEM.
- 17. How will I sign up for the EMS Certification Examination?** If you have an open, approved EMS certification application on file with ABEM, you will be able to register for the exam using the ABEM website, [www.abem.org](http://www.abem.org). When your application is approved, ABEM will send you instructions for obtaining your ABEM user ID and password and accessing registration. Within 24 hours after you register and submit your exam fee, you will be able to call the ABEM testing vendor, Pearson VUE Professional Testing Centers, to schedule your appointment to take the exam.
- 18. What type of exam is the initial certification examination?** The exam contains approximately 300 single-best answer multiple choice questions. Up to 15 percent of the questions have a pictorial stimulus. The EMS certification examination is administered at Pearson VUE professional computer-based testing centers throughout the United States. Each exam appointment is approximately 8 hours in length, with approximately 6.5 hours devoted to actual testing time.
- 19. After I schedule an appointment to take the exam, may I change the appointment?** Yes. You may change your exam appointment up to 24 hours before the exam begins.
- 20. If I register for the EMS Certification Examination and later discover that I cannot take the exam, will I receive a refund of my exam fee?** Yes. You must cancel your exam appointment and submit a request in writing to ABEM to withdraw from the exam no later than the day before your exam appointment or the day before the last day of exam administration if you do not have an exam appointment. You will then receive a 90% refund of your exam fee. ABEM will retain 10% of your exam fee to cover administrative expenses. See the ABEM [Policy on Fees](#) for more information.
- 21. If I do not take the EMS Certification Examination the same year I apply, must I reapply?** If your application is approved before the exam begins, but you do not take it, you do not need to reapply if you take the exam the next time it is offered. Instead, you would need to reactivate your status and pay a reactivation fee to be able to register for the next offered exam. If you do not reactivate and take the next offered exam, you would have to reapply for certification, meeting the eligibility criteria in place at the time and paying the full application fee. See the ABEM Policy on [Maintaining Open and Active Subspecialty Certification Applications](#) for more detail.