ABFAS 112-2015

Information and Requirements
Diplomate Recertification
Foot and Ankle Diplomate Status Conversion

This document contains information specific to the 2015 examinations only.

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Americans With Disabilities Act. In compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act, the ABFAS will make reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities if written request is made no later than 30 days prior to the date(s) of the examination for which appropriate application has been made, fees paid, and credentialing completed. Candidates seeking an accommodation should request the ABFAS “Policies and Procedures for Examination Candidates Requesting Accommodation for Disabilities” at least 90 days prior to the examination dates.
Introduction

Maintenance of certification is a major element of the current healthcare environment as prepaid health plans and health maintenance organizations require ongoing evaluation of their providers. The ABFAS has always included a process of ongoing Diplomate evaluation in its policies and procedures. Through 1990, the ABFAS Diplomates participated in a Self-assessment Examination (SAE) every 10 years that provided data to assist a Diplomate in choosing continuing education endeavors. In 1991, the ABFAS revised the evaluation process requiring passage of a written examination demonstrating a level of knowledge in the Diplomate’s category(ies) of certification. Under current bylaws, the ABFAS requires Diplomates to participate in the evaluation process in effect when certified.

Overview of Recertification

Recertification is on a 10-year timetable. Diplomates must complete the recertification process in the eighth, ninth, or 10th year following the last certification or recertification achieved. (Please note: The recertification dates for Foot Surgery and Reconstructive Rearfoot/Ankle Surgery are different if the original certification date in the respective area of certification was not in the same year.) The ABFAS administers a written examination to assess the ongoing abilities of ABFAS Diplomates. Additionally, recertification candidates must demonstrate current active surgical practice in the category(ies) of recertification sought by submitting proof from a hospital or surgery center of active surgical privileges commensurate with the level of recertification.

Overview of Status Conversion

Until 1991, the ABFAS had one certification category. Commencing in 1991, the ABFAS established two certification processes, one in “Foot Surgery” and the other in “Reconstructive Rearfoot/Ankle Surgery” (RRA). Candidates for Diplomate status could elect to certify in Foot Surgery alone, or both Foot Surgery and RRA Surgery (Foot Surgery certification is a prerequisite for RRA certification—a Diplomate may not hold RRA certification alone). With the two categories established in 1991, Diplomates certified under the previous requirements retained the designation of “Foot and Ankle Surgery” Diplomates.

Certificates issued after 1990 expire on August 31, 10 years from the date of issuance. Certificates issued prior to 1991 do not have an expiration date. The ABFAS requires Diplomates certified prior to 1991 to complete self-assessment requirements every 10 years (see ABFAS 111). Diplomates certified prior to 1991 may convert their “Foot and Ankle Surgery” status to “Foot Surgery” and “Reconstructive Rearfoot/Ankle Surgery” status by passing the recertification examinations in each category and meeting the credentialing requirements. Diplomates must surrender their Foot and Ankle certificate, and the new certificates have an expiration date.
Calendar of Important Dates

December 9    Application opens
January 30    Application closes
January 30    Last day to withdraw
February 6-7  Reconstructive Rearfoot/Ankle Surgery Recertification Surgery Examination administered
February 6-21 Foot Surgery Recertification Examination administered

Recertification of Diplomates Certified in Foot Surgery or Foot Surgery and Reconstructive Rearfoot/Ankle Surgery

Requirement
   Under provisions of the bylaws in effect at the time of certification, ABFAS Diplomates certified after 1990 must pass a recertification process determined by the Board of Directors. Diplomates may recertify only in the category(ies) of certification achieved.

Method
   The recertification process includes the following requirements:

   Examination
   Diplomates must pass the written examination(s) as determined by the Board of Directors in the category(ies) of original certification. The Foot Surgery recertification examination is a computer-adaptive test. The Reconstructive Rearfoot/Ankle Surgery recertification examination is a 100-question, fixed-form examination.

   Active surgical practice
   Diplomates must demonstrate current active surgical practice in the category(ies) of recertification sought by submitting proof of active surgical privileges in Foot or Foot and RRA surgery from a hospital or surgery center.

The ABFAS reserves the right to request additional information to clarify or expand on the information submitted as part of the application process.

Three-year Window of Opportunity
   The recertification examination(s) must be taken in the eighth, ninth, or 10th year following initial certification and similarly every 10 years.
Effects of Passing or Failing

a. Diplomates passing the Foot Surgery Recertification Examination are recertified in Foot Surgery. Diplomates passing the Reconstructive Rearfoot/Ankle Surgery Recertification Examination are recertified in Reconstructive Rearfoot/Ankle Surgery (except as defined in paragraph [2] below). Diplomates receive a time-dated recertification label that expires in a 10-year increment from the date of initial certification (e.g., initial certification in 2000, passed recertification in 2010, recertification expires in 2020).

Designation: “A Diplomate of the American Board of Foot and Ankle Surgery certified in Foot Surgery (and Reconstructive Rearfoot/Ankle Surgery) in 19XX. Recertified in Foot Surgery (and Reconstructive Rearfoot/Ankle Surgery) in 20XX.”

Failure to pass the Foot Surgery Recertification Examination within the three-year window results in status expiring, and the Diplomate must apply under the policy established by the Board of Directors.

(1) A Reconstructive Rearfoot/Ankle Surgery Diplomate who passes only the Foot Surgery recertification examination is recertified in Foot Surgery only. In such cases, a Diplomate may continue taking the Reconstructive Rearfoot/Ankle Surgery Recertification Examination until the three-year window of opportunity closes.

Designation: “A Diplomate of the American Board of Foot and Ankle Surgery® certified in Foot Surgery and Reconstructive Rearfoot/Ankle Surgery in 19XX. Recertified in Foot Surgery in 20XX.”

(2) A Diplomate certified in both Foot Surgery and Reconstructive Rearfoot/Ankle Surgery who fails the Foot Surgery recertification examination, but passes the Reconstructive Rearfoot/Ankle Surgery recertification examination, is not recertified in either category. Foot Surgery recertification is a prerequisite to Reconstructive Rearfoot/Ankle Surgery recertification. However, the Diplomate does not retake the Reconstructive Rearfoot/Ankle Recertification Examination. The Diplomate may continue taking the Foot Surgery Recertification Examination until the three-year window of opportunity closes. If a Diplomate is unsuccessful in passing the Foot Surgery Recertification Examination within the three-year window, all status expires, and Diplomate must apply under the policy established by the Board of Directors.

b. A Diplomate achieving certification in Reconstructive Rearfoot/Ankle Surgery in a year subsequent to Foot Surgery certification must maintain certification in Foot Surgery to remain certified in Reconstructive Rearfoot/Ankle Surgery. Should a Diplomate be unsuccessful in passing the Foot Surgery recertification examination, such Diplomate’s certified status in Reconstructive Rearfoot/Ankle Surgery is suspended until reestablishing Foot Surgery certification, unless status in RRA expires before reestablishment in Foot Surgery.
Conversion to Certification in Foot Surgery and Reconstructive Rearfoot/Ankle Surgery

Active Diplomate Status
Diplomates in Foot and Ankle Surgery seeking to convert their certification must be in Active Diplomate Status.

Current Hospital Surgical Privileges
Current hospital surgical privileges in foot surgery and in reconstructive rearfoot/ankle surgery are required.

Examinations
A Diplomate certified in Foot and Ankle Surgery must pass both the Recertification Examination in Foot Surgery and the Recertification Examination in Reconstructive Rearfoot/Ankle Surgery to become recertified in Foot Surgery and in Reconstructive Rearfoot/Ankle Surgery. Foot Surgery certification is a prerequisite to Reconstructive Rearfoot/Ankle Surgery certification. If the recertification examinations are taken in the candidate’s self-assessment window and the candidate fails either examination, then the candidate fulfills the self-assessment requirement. A Diplomate seeking conversion has three consecutive opportunities to pass both examinations. Failure to pass both examinations during this three-year period precludes the Diplomate applying for conversion in future years.

Relinquish Foot and Ankle Certificate
On successful completion of the above requirements, a Diplomate must relinquish the lifetime Foot and Ankle Diplomate status and certificate. The Diplomate is required to submit a signed and notarized letter stating Diplomate relinquishes the lifetime Foot and Ankle certification. New certification status is not granted unless the Diplomate relinquishes the old certification status. The Foot Surgery and the Reconstructive Rearfoot/Ankle Surgery certificates reflect the previous Foot and Ankle certification dates and have a 10-year limit.

Recertification Examination Information

Location
The ABFAS offers the Foot Surgery Recertification Examination from February 6 through 21, 2015 as a computer-adaptive examination at selected locations within the United States. The Reconstructive Rearfoot/Ankle Surgery Recertification Examination is offered only on February 6 and 7, 2015 as a computer-administered test at selected locations within the United States. Form “A” of the RRA examination is administered on February 6 and Form “B” of the RRA examination is administered on February 7. Diplomates may take either form for recertification in RRA. If applying to take both the Foot and RRA surgery examinations, a candidate may take both on February 6 and/or 7 or may choose to take the RRA examination on February 6 or 7 and the Foot Surgery examination on any day, February 6 through February 21, 2015. Examination site selection opens December 9, 2014. Candidates must pay all fees before site selection access is permitted. The ABFAS notifies candidates via e-mail when the site selection process opens as well as the website.
address for making a site selection. Seats at the sites are limited, so please make seat selection early!

Online Study Guide
The ABFAS provides an Online Study Guide containing sample multiple-choice questions with answers, subject areas covered, and other information about the examination. Please visit our website at www.abfas.org. (NOTE: The Online Study Guide includes practice cases for the Computer-based Patient Simulation (CBPS) examinations. CBPS cases are not applicable to the recertification examinations.)

Format
The recertification examinations consist of multiple-choice questions, including those based on visual presentations. Following each question are at least four possible answers. Each question has only ONE best answer.

Content
The Foot Surgery Recertification Examination involves diagnostic and perioperative care of the podiatric surgical patient encompassing the foot and ankle. Intraoperative areas include surgical procedures of the entire foot with the exception of reconstructive rearfoot and ankle procedures.

The Reconstructive Rearfoot/Ankle Surgery Recertification Examination involves diagnostic, intraoperative, and perioperative care of the podiatric surgical patient pertaining to reconstructive rearfoot and ankle procedures.

Scoring
The ABFAS provides scores and results for failed examinations as scale scores. Examinations are not graded on a curve. The Board of Directors sets passing scores based on psychometric evaluation of the examination. The ABFAS does not provide copies of the test items since all questions remain in the active examination item pool for future use, unless removed by authority of the psychometric consultant or the examinations committee.

Review of Scores
While each examination is scored by computer, there is a recheck and review of failed examinations. Therefore, once ABFAS mails or posts examination results, there is no further review of scores.

Examination Site Selection and Admission
Candidates taking a recertification examination schedule their date, time, and location through the website of the test administrator, Pearson Vue, at www.pearsonvue.com/signin. Follow the instructions on the website to access the logon page. Use the username and password sent from the ABFAS for site selection. After selecting a date, time, and location, print a copy of the confirmation. The confirmation includes the schedule, location of the testing center, and directions to the center.
Candidates must present two forms of current identification at the testing center. Please note that one of the pieces of identification must be an unexpired government-issued photo identification with signature. The name as it appears on the two forms of ID must match the name as it appears on the Application Summary. If, for example, a maiden name is used for the ABFAS records and a married name appears on the driver’s license or passport, the candidate must contact the ABFAS at 415-553-7800, extension 122, at least 72 hours before the scheduled examination to secure a revised Application Summary that contains the same information as the two pieces of identification provided to the testing center.

Failure to present acceptable identification as noted above prevents entry into the test center to examine. If this occurs, a candidate is marked “Absent” and forfeits the entire examination fee.

Notification
Examination results are mailed in an envelope marked "Personal and Confidential." In addition, they are posted to the candidate’s personal page on the ABFAS website.

Notification and Fees

Eligibility Notification
Diplomates with certification dates within the three-year window of opportunity for the 2015 recertification examinations are notified of their eligibility by letter in the fall of the year preceding the examination.

Fees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examination</th>
<th>Application fee (non-refundable)</th>
<th>Examination fee</th>
<th>Total fee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foot Surgery</td>
<td>$225</td>
<td>$675</td>
<td>$900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foot Surgery and Reconstructive Rearfoot/Ankle</td>
<td>$225</td>
<td>$1,350</td>
<td>$1,575</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surgery (RRA)</td>
<td></td>
<td>$675</td>
<td>$900</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Applying and Payment of Fees
The application is online. Beginning December 9, go to www.abfas.org and login using an ABFAS username and password; click “My Tasks” on the left navigation bar; then click “Apply for an Exam” in the dropdown menu and follow the instructions on the application screen. Online applications are considered signed when submitted. Candidates must pay by debit or credit card (American Express, VISA, or MasterCard). Follow the online instructions when completing the application.

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1 Diplomates completing recertification do not pay the annual reregistration fee for the year following completion of recertification.
Late Withdrawal Penalty
There is a late withdrawal penalty of $150 for any withdrawal made after January 30, 2015. Candidates withdrawing after January 30 receive a withdrawal number that must be presented if questions concerning withdrawal arise.

Absence without Withdrawing
Any candidate not taking the examination or withdrawing before the day of the examination forfeits all fees.

Documenting Active Surgical Privileges
To qualify to take a recertification examination, Diplomates must demonstrate current active surgical privileges commensurate with the applicable certification category.

Documentation of Active Surgical Privileges
Diplomates must request the hospital/surgery center to submit proof of active surgical privileges in each category. The documentation must contain a notarized signature of a hospital/surgery center official, or said signature with the embossed seal of the hospital/surgery center.

Request for Additional Documentation
The ABFAS reserves the right to request additional documentation to clarify or expand on the information submitted as part of the application process.

DEADLINE
The application, privilege documentation, and payment must be received by 5 pm Pacific time on January 30, 2015.

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445 Fillmore Street
San Francisco, CA  94117-3404

If more information is required after reading these instructions, please contact the ABFAS Applications Manager at

Voice: 415/553-7804   FAX: 415/553-7801
M-F 7 am to 3 pm (Pacific time)

Or e-mail questions to info@abfas.org.