



**American Board  
of Family Medicine**

**Board Certified.  
Trusted Care.**



**Family Medicine  
Board Certification**

**A Resident's Guide**

Established by family physicians, board certification is a voluntary credential beyond your state medical licensure.

## An Introduction to Board Certification

As the marker of excellence, board certification serves to ensure your patients, your colleagues, and the public that you are highly qualified and effective at improving their health by having met specific requirements beyond residency training and medical licensure. Continued certification shows you are maintaining this high standard throughout your entire medical career.

Continued certification demonstrates your professional and personal commitment to meeting the standards of ethics set by your peers. Additionally, a dedication to lifelong learning and ongoing assessment of your knowledge allows you to stay up to date on the latest medical advances.

### Benefits

The American Board of Family Medicine is home to more than 100,000 board-certified family physicians and has more than 50 years of experience providing certification. When you become a Diplomate of the American Board of Family Medicine (DABFM), you receive the following benefits:

- National recognition by employers, insurers, hospitals, peers, patients, and the public
- Support for the self-regulation within the specialty of family medicine
- Access to a broad range of the most up-to-date self-assessment and improvement activities to support your lifelong learning
- Sets you apart of other non-board-certified physicians and other medical practitioners with less training experience

## Certification Components



### Professionalism

Designed to assess professional standing, family physicians seeking board certification are subject to complying with the ABFM Guidelines for Professionalism, Licensure, and Personal Conduct, and general adherence to professional standards while in residency training.



### Self-Assessment

Designed to help family physicians self-assess and identify gaps in knowledge, regular participation in self-assessment activities will enhance your clinical knowledge and skills by reviewing the most up to date clinical content.



### Cognitive Expertise

Designed to regularly assess and measure clinical knowledge, the family medicine one-day exam serves to assure the public that you are up-to-date and aware of best practices in medical care in the wide spectrum of illnesses treated by family physicians.



### Performance Improvement

Designed to support high quality patient care, this component will help family physicians regularly identify an improvement opportunity or a performance gap, implement a change in care delivery, and measure the impact of that change to their patients or their practice.

# How it Works

The process for becoming a board-certified physician begins when receive a M.D. degree from a US or Canadian medical school that is accredited by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education or the Committee for Accreditation of Canadian Medical Schools, or a D.O. degree from a college of osteopathic medicine accredited by the American Osteopathic Association.

If you are a current resident in an ACGME-accredited family medicine residency program and interested in becoming a board-certified family physician at the end of your training, you are required to complete the Resident Certification Entry Process to obtain initial certification. The Residency Certification Entry Process consists of five requirements that must all be completed before certification is granted.

## Resident Certification Entry Process

### In-Training Examination

If you are a resident in an ACGME-accredited family medicine program, you are eligible to take the annual In-Training Examination (ITE). The purpose of the ITE is to provide an assessment of your progress in acquiring the knowledge you need to be a family physician. Using the Bayesian Score Predictor, you and your program will be provided with an estimate of the probability of passing the initial certification exam. The ITE is administered annually in late October in an online format.

- 1 Certification Activities**  
Earn a total 50 certification points by completing Self-Assessment and Performance Improvement activities before your certification exam.
- 2 Professionalism**  
Continuously comply with the ABFM Guidelines for Professionalism, Licensure, and Personal Conduct during training.
- 3 Pass the Initial Certification Exam**  
Pass the one-day exam.  
*The certification exam usually takes place in the spring of PGY-3 year.*
- 4 Successfully Complete Residency Training**
- 5 Medical License**  
Obtain an active, valid, and full license to practice medicine in the United States or Canada.



## MyABFM PORTFOLIO

To track your progress toward completing certification activities, exam preparation, and more, ABFM provides you access to your personalized dashboard inside your MyABFM Portfolio. After your program administrator has provided us your contact information, we will send you a welcome email to set up your password.

# Certification Activities

The initial certification activity requirement includes earning a total of 50 certification points by completing ABFM Self-Assessment and Performance Improvement activities. Each certification activity is assigned a point value to help you track your progress toward completing your 50-point total requirement.

## Self-Assessment

There are four groups of activities to regularly assess your knowledge gaps and clinical knowledge.

### Knowledge Self-Assessment 10 Points Each

Focused on a specific topic area in family medicine, the KSA activity is a 60-question, single best answer, assessment that offers a critique to for both correct and incorrect answers. You'll earn 10 points for each activity completed. You are required to answer 80% of the questions correctly, and you can retake the assessment as many times until you are successful.

### Continuing Knowledge Self-Assessment 2.5 Points Each

If you prefer to learn incrementally over time, you can participate in the CKSA activity which is a quarterly assessment made up of 25 questions across a broad scope of family medicine topics. For your convenience, the CKSA app makes it easy to complete questions on the go via your smartphone. You'll earn 2.5 certification points for each 25 questions completed. Completion of 4 quarters will meet your Knowledge Self-Assessment minimum requirement.

### ABFM National Journal Club 1 Point Per Article

The National Journal Club is another opportunity for you to earn certification points while keeping up to date with the latest medical advances. You'll have free access to the latest peer-reviewed articles from prominent medical journals. After you read each article, and answer four assessment questions, you'll earn one (1) certification point. The completion of 10 articles will meet your Knowledge Self-Assessment minimum requirement.

### Alternative Self-Assessment

To earn additional certification points or for your continued learning, there are a variety of alternative self-assessment activities to choose from. These activities will help you meet your point requirement, but do not meet the minimum Knowledge Self-Assessment requirement.

## Performance Improvement

To help family physicians regularly identify and implement improvement opportunities that impact change to their patients and practice, we provide a variety of Performance Improvement activities to choose from as a resident.

### ABFM-Developed Activity

Organized by Chronic Care Model categories, this activity is available in 15 topic areas to fit your practice setting and can be completed individually or in a small group of family physicians. It also provides feedback regarding performance compared with your peers.

### Residency Performance Improvement Program

This program allows residents and faculty members to receive Performance Improvement credit for meaningful participation in customized clinical performance improvement projects with family medicine residents or residency faculty in your Residency Teaching Practice.



# Residency Certification Entry Requirements AT A GLANCE

- ✓ **Self-Assessment | 10 Points**  
*1 Knowledge Self-Assessment, or  
4 Continuous Knowledge Self-Assessments,  
or 10 National Journal Club Articles*
- ✓ **Performance Improvement | 20 Points**
- ✓ **Additional Self-Assessment or  
Performance Improvement | 20 Points**
- ✓ **Continually comply with ABFM Guidelines for  
Professionalism, Licensure, and Personal Conduct**
- ✓ **Pass the Family Medicine Certification Exam**
- ✓ **Successfully Complete Residency Training**

## Board Eligibility Status

The seven-year board eligibility period begins the day after the successful completion of an ACGME-accredited family medicine residency training program. Your board eligibility period expires exactly seven years from that date unless you achieve initial certification before that time.

To obtain and maintain board-eligible status, you must be engaged in an initial certification process and continuously adhere to the ABFM Guidelines for Professionalism, Licensure, and Personal Conduct. You can begin the process to obtain your initial certification by logging in to your MyABFM Portfolio.



## **ABFM Promise**

We promise that the credential you earn is a meaningful measure of your professionalism, cognitive expertise, and commitment to improvement.



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1648 McGrathiana Pkwy, Suite 550  
Lexington, KY 40511  
877-223-7437 • [www.theabfm.org](http://www.theabfm.org)