



# Professionalism & Licensure FAQ

The purpose of the Professionalism and Licensure component of Family Medicine Certification is to assess professional standing which should be demonstrated continuously as a board-certified family physician. ABFM has published the [Guidelines for Professionalism, Licensure, and Personal Conduct](#) which describe the requirements for all certified Diplomates and physicians seeking certification to adhere to the high standards of personal conduct and professionalism expected of family physicians.

In order to obtain and maintain certification, a family physician must maintain a current and valid medical license, that is free of license limitations, on file with ABFM through the Physician Portfolio. ABFM receives most medical license details from the Federation of State Medical Boards (FSMB) for the physician to simply “Confirm.” In cases where medical license details have not been provided, the physician must “Update” the medical license record or select “Add New License” to provide details of a state license not already on file.

## 1. Do I have to confirm all of my medical license records?

Yes, all medical licenses that you hold are required to be on file with the American Board of Family Medicine. Once you have done this, you will not have to confirm again until the medical license renews.

## 2. How do I confirm my medical license details?

From the Manage Medical License(s) page in the [Physician Portfolio](#), click “Confirm” next to the medical license record you want to review. Verify all details, including license number and expiration date, select the medical license type (if not previously selected), and attest to compliance. Click “Save” to save the data to your record.

## 3. How will I know when ABFM receives new medical license details for me to confirm?

For currently certified physicians, an email notification will be sent monthly until the license record is confirmed or no longer active. In your [Physician Portfolio](#) you will see these features:

- A pop-up upon entry into the [Physician Portfolio](#)
- A number indicator showing how many license records need reviewing
- Manage medical license page
- Track your progress page.

## 4. How do I change my license number on file with ABFM?

If a change in your medical license type is the reason for needing to make a change in your license number, you will be able to do this once you have indicated the new license type. If you need to change your medical license number for any other reason, you will need to contact the Professionalism Department at [license@theabfm.org](mailto:license@theabfm.org) to update the detail.

## 5. What if I do not currently hold a license?

In order to obtain and maintain certification, you must continuously hold a medical license that meets ABFM certification requirements. If you do not currently hold a medical license, even if you have designated as clinically inactive or retired, you will not be able to be certified.

## 6. What happens if my medical license record has not been updated?

The Federation of State Medical Boards (FSMB) provides the ABFM with details received from the individual state medical boards. If your medical license record has not been updated following its expiration, and no valid medical license is on file, it will result in loss of certification status.

Not all states provide the necessary details for ABFM to update a license record. If your state does not provide the needed details, you will have to manually update your medical license record. FSMB does not report on Canadian medical licenses. All Canadian medical licenses will have to be updated manually through the [Physician Portfolio](#).

## 7. How do I manually add my medical license record?

You may add a new medical license record by selecting “Add New License” on the Medical License page in the [Physician Portfolio](#). If you choose to manually add a new medical license, only medical license types for that state will be available for selection. You will be redirected to the FSMB record if you try to manually add a medical license for a state where an FSMB record already exists.

## 8. What if I want to update my own medical license record?

If your medical license has been renewed and you want to update the license record prior to waiting for the ABFM to receive notification from the state medical boards, you can manually update the record through the Manage Medical License(s) page in the [Physician Portfolio](#).

## 9. What if the type of medical license I hold is not in the drop-down list?

The ABFM has collected medical license types from each of the state medical boards. It is possible that some medical license types have not been identified in this process. If you have a license that meets ABFM certification requirements and do not see this in the drop down list, please contact [license@theabfm.org](mailto:license@theabfm.org) to resolve the issue.

## 10. How do I report a discrepancy in the medical license record on file?

Click the link to “Report Incorrect Data” and fill in the discrepancy details with a description required. You may also contact the Professionalism Department at [license@theabfm.org](mailto:license@theabfm.org).

## 11. I no longer hold a medical license in a particular state. Why does it still list it in my [Physician Portfolio](#)?

The ABFM keeps all historical medical licenses on file for record keeping purposes. When a medical license has expired, you are able to inactivate that medical license record. The record will continue to display, but it will be recorded as expired and inactivated. You do not need to review this medical license record any further unless you renew the license, in which case ABFM can re-activate the license record. Contact [license@theabfm.org](mailto:license@theabfm.org) to inform us of the renewal and report the date that the license was reissued.

## 12. Why does my [Physician Portfolio](#) say I’m not meeting license requirements?

If your medical license types do not match your clinical status, your [Physician Portfolio](#) will not reflect that you are meeting licensure requirements. For example, a physician who only holds a retired medical license may have to first change their clinical status from Active to Inactive before their [Physician Portfolio](#) will report that they are meeting license requirements. If you have changed your clinical status and the [Physician Portfolio](#) still reports the license requirement as not being met, contact the Professionalism Department at [license@theabfm.org](mailto:license@theabfm.org) for review.

### For Additional Help, contact our Support Center

- Phone: 877-223-7437
- Email: [help@theabfm.org](mailto:help@theabfm.org)
- Live Chat
- Fax: 859-335-7516