
ABFAS 111-2020

Maintenance of Certification (SAE) for Diplomates with Lifetime Certificates



This document contains information specific to the 2020 examinations only.

American Board of Foot and Ankle Surgery®

445 Fillmore Street
San Francisco, CA 94117-3404

415-553-7800
www.abfas.org
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Introduction

The Board of Directors of the American Board of Foot and Ankle Surgery (ABFAS) has approved a Maintenance of Certification Program (MOC). This MOC Program has replaced the ABFAS Recertification and Self-assessment process. ABFAS believes this change to MOC, which at this time differs from the American Board of Medical Specialties' MOC programs, will allow us to stay current with other certification boards and ensure continued competency among our Diplomates. ABFAS is preparing to change the process to one of Continuous Certification in the near future.

Note: Diplomates of the American Board of Ambulatory Foot Surgery (a section of the American Board of Foot and Ankle Surgery) do not have an ongoing evaluation.

ABFAS MOC PROGRAM

Diplomates issued a lifetime certificate (1975-1990) must meet all components of MOC, except their examination will be administered as a self-assessment (SAE) examination. These Diplomates may voluntarily convert to certifications in Foot Surgery and Reconstructive Rearfoot/Ankle Surgery. See page 10 for details on how to convert.

All Diplomates issued a time-limited certificate are required to participate in the MOC program to maintain certification. See Document 112 for more details if you fall into this category.

MOC replaced ABFAS Recertification as of 2016. The process will be implemented according to each Diplomate's 10-year recertification cycle.

In summary, the ABFAS MOC program consists of the following requirements.

1. Maintain a valid, unrestricted podiatric license in the United States or Canada.
2. Maintain active surgical privileges at either a hospital or surgical center.
3. Obtain 200 continuing education credits per 10-year cycle.
4. Complete a formalized, secure examination consisting of the fundamental diagnostic skills, medical knowledge, and clinical judgment to provide quality care during every 10-year cycle.

Calendar of Important Dates

November 4, 2019	Registration opens
January 17, 2020	Registration closes
January 24, 2020	Last day to withdraw
January 31 – February 15, 2020	Self-Assessment Exam

Requirements

I. Maintain a valid, unrestricted podiatric license in the United States or Canada.

All Diplomates must maintain a valid and unrestricted license within the United States or Canada. ABFAS will collect license validation information for each Diplomate for the state(s) in which he/she practices. Currently, ABFAS updates this information in conjunction with each state's licensing cycle. Diplomates are required to report to ABFAS any change in their licensing status.

II. Maintain active surgical privileges at a hospital or surgical center.

Diplomates must request their 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 if possible, or said signature with the seal of the hospital or surgery center. Diplomates should scan and email the proof of active surgical privileges to privileges@abfas.org, or fax to 415.553.7801. Appendix A contains a template that you can provide to your hospital or surgical center

Note: If you are no longer actively doing foot and/or ankle surgery, but still practicing podiatry, you may be eligible for "Certified: Surgically Inactive" status. You still need to meet other MOC requirements except your hospital privileges do not need to be surgical privileges. Please contact info@abfas.org, or call our office at 415.553.7800 for more information.

III. Obtain 200 hours of Category 1 CME credits.

Diplomates must participate in 200 hours of Category 1 or CPME-approved continuing education (CE) credits per 10-year cycle. All continuing education must be pertinent to the practice of podiatric medicine and/or surgery and cannot include practice management. Risk management credits are allowed. It is the Diplomate's responsibility to obtain documentation of continuing education credits, not the organization that offers the program. Diplomates may submit continuing education credits only for programs in which they actively participated.

Diplomates must attest to their continuing education credits, there is no need to send in documentation. ABFAS may perform audits to ensure the accuracy of the submitted data.

Continuing education credit requirements will be prorated per year as follows:

2016 – 20 credits	2021 – 120 credits
2017 – 40 credits	2022 – 140 credits
2018 – 60 credits	2023 – 160 credits
2019 – 80 credits	2024 – 180 credits
2020 – 100 credits	All years after 2024 – 200 credits

Category 1 activities are those that have been approved by an accredited sponsor. Accredited Sponsors may include, but are not limited to CPME, AMA, and AOA.

Your CME certificate should also state that the activity has been approved for Category 1 credit and name the institution or organization that is awarding the credit. If you have participated in Category 1 activities, the provider should provide you with a certificate of completion.

Acceptable certificates/documentation must include:

- Name of the licensee
- Name of the course
- Date of the course
- Number of credit hours earned
- Provider of the course
- Category type

IV. Complete a formalized, secure examination (Self-assessment (SAE)) that demonstrates the physician has the fundamental diagnostic skills, medical knowledge, and clinical judgment to provide quality care.

Diplomates must take a secure examination within 10-year cycles. The computerized examination is administered at regional, secure computer sites. Although this is not a pass/fail examination, diplomates must complete it in good faith. Failure to do so may result in the diplomate being non-compliant with Maintenance of Certification.

Three-year Window of Opportunity

Diplomates may take the examination in the eighth, ninth, or 10th year of their MOC cycle.

Non-compliance

Diplomates failing to take the SAE and attest to the CE requirements within the prescribed period will show “Not Compliant with Maintenance of Certification” in their verification report and may have their Diplomate status revoked.

Confidentiality

ABFAS considers the status of an individual's participation in and the stage of completion of all Certification components, including an individual's certification status and certification history, to be public information. ABFAS reserves the right to publish and share public information in any and all public forums determined by ABFAS to be reasonable, including the posting of public information on the ABFAS website, sharing the public information with medical licensure boards, managed care organizations, third party payers, or others. While ABFAS generally regards all other information about individuals as private and confidential, there are times that ABFAS must release certain information to fulfill its responsibilities as a medical specialty certification board. ABFAS specifically regards the results of an individual's Qualification, Certification, or Recertification examination (score and whether the individual passed or failed) as private and confidential.

Self-assessment Examination Information

Requirement

ABFAS requires Diplomates certified in Foot and Ankle Surgery (1975-1990) to complete the SAE successfully and in good faith every 10 years to maintain certification. Effective in 2017, they must also attest to continuing education.

Format

The SAE consists 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.

Didactic Examination Structure	
Examination Type	Computer Adaptive (CAT)
Time Allotted	180 minutes
Item Type	Didactic/Multiple-Choice
# of Questions	125

Online Study Guide

To access the Didactic Examination online study guide, login to the StepUp eLearning website (<http://www.stepupelearning.org>) using your ABFAS username and password. The guide contains information about subject areas covered in ABFAS examinations and examples of examination questions. The practice examination (please use the one marked Recert) demonstrates the types and formats of questions to expect on the didactic examination. It is not designed to predict performance on the actual examination or identify knowledge gaps. The StepUp website also provides information about the Computer-based Patient Simulation Exam which is not applicable to those already certified so you can ignore.

Location and Dates

ABFAS offers the self-assessment January 31 through February 15, 2020, as a computer-adaptive examination at Pearson VUE centers. *Examination site selection opens November 4, 2019. Seats are limited, so please register early via the ABFAS website.*

Examination Site Selection and Admission

Candidates taking SAE schedule their date, time, and location, after payment of registration fees. Click on “Schedule/View Exam with Pearson Vue” after registering for the exam. 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. You will also receive a confirmation email.

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 registration confirmation. For example, if your maiden name is in your ABFAS records, but your married name appears on the driver’s license or passport, you must contact ABFAS directly to update the name on your record.

If you fail to present acceptable identification as noted above, you will not be able to enter the test center to take the examination. If this occurs, a candidate is marked “Absent” and forfeits the entire examination fee.

Failure to Appear

Candidates who fail to appear for their scheduled examination(s) without completing the formal withdrawal process forfeit all fees.

MOC Foot and Ankle Examination (SAE)

Purpose: The Foot and Ankle MOC Examination assesses current level of knowledge (strengths and weaknesses). For MOC purposes, the examination will have a measurable passing score so that Diplomates may use the results to assist in identifying areas of continuing education efforts.

Test Specifications: The SAE involves diagnostic, intraoperative, and perioperative care of the podiatric surgical patient encompassing the foot and ankle. The exam will emphasize generally accepted procedures and technology related to the practitioner's daily practice. However, because the self-assessment examination also serves as an educational tool, newer or more-focused content areas may be included. The examination contains a maximum of 125 questions.

The didactic examination is an adaptive test where the computer dynamically presents multiple-choice questions that adjust in item difficulty based on the examinee's demonstrated ability level. As each question is answered, the computer assesses the response and selects the next question based on whether the previous answer was answered correctly. The questions become progressively more or less difficult as the software assesses and establishes the ability level of the examinee.

Examination Content Map

Major Subject Area	%
A. Problem-focused History and Physical	10
B. Diagnostic Studies/Medical Imaging	10
C. Differential Diagnosis	10
D. Surgical Principles	15
E. Surgical Procedures/Techniques	15
F. Procedural Perioperative Management	15
G. Complications	15
H. General Medicine	10
TOTAL:	100

The SAE exam contains Reconstructive Rearfoot/Ankle items.

Scoring

ABFAS provides scores and results for 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. 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 low scored examinations. Therefore, once ABFAS posts examination results, there is no further review of scores.

Exam Results

ABFAS will notify candidates, via email, as to when they can find their test results (pass or fail) on their ABFAS personal profile page. Diplomates will be able to download copies of their score report.

Notification and Fees

Eligibility Notification

ABFAS will notify Diplomates whose certification dates fall within the three-year window of opportunity for the 2020 SAE in the fall of the year preceding the examination.

Fees

Examination	Application fee (non-refundable)	Examination Fee	Total fee
Self-assessment (foot and ankle surgery)	\$225	\$675	\$900
Fee for not completing SAE by close of window upon later request to take SAE to remove non-compliant status. (in addition to application fee and self-assessment examination fee)			\$500

Registration and Payment of Fees

Registration is online. Beginning November 4, 2019, go to www.abfas.org and login using your ABFAS username and password; click "Register for an Exam" under "Account Overview" and

follow the instructions on the screen.

Candidates must pay by debit or credit card (American Express, VISA, Discover, or MasterCard). Follow the online instructions when completing the registration.

Late Withdrawal Penalty

There is a late withdrawal penalty of \$100 for any withdrawal made after January 24, 2020. If you withdraw after January 28, 2020, you will not receive a refund.

Absence without Withdrawing

Any candidate who has registered but does not take the examination forfeits all fees.

Request for Additional Documentation

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

DEADLINES

Registration opens – November 4, 2019

Registration closes – January 17, 2020

Last day to withdraw without penalty¹ – January 24, 2020

Examination dates – January 31- February 15, 2020

No refunds for withdrawals after January 28, 2020.

Requests to withdraw must be received and approved by ABFAS no later than 72 hours prior to the scheduled exam start time at the local testing center. No exam fee refunds will be authorized after that time.

1. The application fee is nonrefundable

Overview of Status Conversion

Until 1991, ABFAS had one certification category. Commencing in 1991, 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. (see [ABFAS 112](#)). Certificates issued prior to 1991 do not have an expiration date. ABFAS requires Diplomates certified prior to 1991 to complete MOC self-assessment requirements every 10 years.

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 Maintenance of Certification requirements. Diplomates must surrender their Foot and Ankle certificate, and the new certificates will have an expiration date.

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 or surgical center privileges in foot surgery and in reconstructive rearfoot/ankle surgery are required.

Examinations (see ABFAS 112)

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 will still fulfill 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 from 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.

If you need additional information after reading these instructions,
please contact ABFAS at

Voice: 415.553.7800 FAX: 415.553.7801
M-F 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. (Pacific time)

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

Appendix A

ABFAS SAMPLE HOSPITAL/SURGICAL CENTER PRIVILEGE LETTER

This letter is a **sample only** and may be used as reference when requesting your appointment letter. The items listed are the critical data elements that **MUST** be provided on all privilege letters. Contact ABFAS at info@abfas.org or 415-553-7800 if you have questions.

Please submit before you take your MOC (SAE) examinations. Submit documentation to: privileges@abfas.org

(Official Hospital/Surgical Center Letterhead)

Hospital/Surgical Center Name

Street Address

City, State/Province, Postal Code

_____ (date)
 (must be currently dated, within three months of submission to ABFAS, or include dates of appointment below)

American Board of Foot and Ankle Surgery
 445 Fillmore Street
 San Francisco, CA 94117

To Whom It May Concern:

_____, DPM, was granted the following privileges in podiatric foot and ankle surgery at _____ (hospital/surgical center name) on _____ (appointment date):

<u>Category</u>	<u>Type</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Active	<input type="checkbox"/> Foot Surgery
<input type="checkbox"/> Courtesy	<input type="checkbox"/> Foot and Rearfoot/Ankle Surgery
<input type="checkbox"/> Consulting	
<input type="checkbox"/> Provisional	
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Surgical	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ (describe)	

Dr. _____ is due for reappointment on _____ (reappointment date).

Sincerely,

Medical Staff Director or Credentialing Coordinator
(Signature Required)