

THE AMERICAN BOARD OF ANESTHESIOLOGY (ABA) AND THE AMERICAN BOARD OF EMERGENCY MEDICINE (ABEM)

ANESTHESIOLOGY CRITICAL CARE MEDICINE (ACCM)

Eligibility Criteria for ABEM Diplomates

On June 26, 2013, the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) approved the co-sponsorship by the ABA and ABEM for certification in ACCM. Under this arrangement, there is an opportunity for Emergency Medicine residency graduates to pursue fellowship training in ACCM and for ABEM-certified physicians (diplomates) to be eligible to take the ACCM certification examination.

ABEM diplomates who have previously completed an ACGME-accredited fellowship program might be eligible for certification under a select set of circumstances. See the [ACCM Eligibility Criteria for ABEM Diplomates](#) and the FAQs below.

The ABA develops and oversees the administration of the ACCM subspecialty examination; however, ABEM will report the results of the examination to its candidates. ABEM diplomates will apply to ABEM to establish their eligibility for certification. Interested individuals are encouraged to review the ACCM Eligibility Criteria for ABEM Diplomates and the FAQs below for more details about the application process and eligibility criteria.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

1. What are the eligibility criteria that ABEM diplomates must meet to apply for ACCM subspecialty certification?

GENERAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

The general criteria for emergency physicians seeking certification in ACCM are as follows:

- The physician must have successfully completed an ACGME-accredited EM residency program (36 or 48 months in length).
- The physician must be an ABEM diplomate.
- The physician must be meeting the requirements of the ABEM MOC program at the time of application and throughout the certification process.

Additionally, the physician must fulfill the eligibility criteria of either the **Fellowship Training Pathway** or the **Fellowship Training-plus-Practice Pathway**. The specific requirements of these pathways of application are described in the [ACCM Eligibility Criteria for ABEM Diplomates](#).

2. Is there a “grandfathering” pathway for ABEM-certified physicians and what are the eligibility criteria for that pathway? Yes, there is a pathway for some ABEM-certified physicians who have previously completed an ACGME-accredited ACCM fellowship program. This pathway is the **Fellowship Training-Plus Practice Pathway**. In addition to completing an ACGME-accredited ACCM fellowship training program, physicians must also have practiced critical care medicine for a specific period of time and intensity in a critical care unit. The specific eligibility criteria of this pathway are described in the [ACCM Eligibility Criteria for ABEM Diplomates](#).

Please note that physicians who start ACCM fellowship training on or after July 1, 2014 are not eligible for the grandfathering pathway and must complete 24 months of ACCM fellowship for eligibility.

3. **Regarding the practice requirement of the “grandfathering” pathway, what constitutes the “practice of critical care medicine”?** The “practice of CCM,” is strictly defined for the purpose of meeting this requirement. An acceptable practice of CCM must occur in a designated critical care unit such as a surgical critical care unit, medical intensive care unit or combined med-surg unit. For purposes of ACCM eligibility, practices that occur in critical care areas in the emergency department do not count. The CCM practice must involve scheduled time in the critical care unit when the physician has no other clinical responsibility (e.g., seeing patients in the emergency department or elsewhere). Any other venue that is not specifically designated as a critical care or intensive care venue that is also not under the purview of a department of critical care medicine or similar authority, does not count as a critical care unit for the purpose of meeting this practice requirement.

In addition, providing medical care to critically ill and injured patients in the emergency department does not, by itself, constitute practicing CCM. Emergency physicians care for critical patients daily, but this does not constitute the practice of CCM.

4. **How long will the “grandfathering” pathway be available?** This pathway of application is time limited. The training and practice requirements must be completed by June 30, 2018, and the physician must submit an application to ABEM no later than the final day of the application period that ends in calendar year 2018. Physicians seeking certification through the “grandfathering” pathway must have completed both the training *and* the CCM practice requirement before they submit their application to be considered for certification.

Please note that physicians who start ACCM fellowship training on or after July 1, 2014 are not eligible for the grandfathering pathway and must complete 24 months of ACCM fellowship for eligibility.

5. **Will ABEM verify the information I provide on my application for ACCM certification?** Yes, ABEM will seek independent verification of ACCM training, CCM practices, and clinical competence. ABEM will obtain verification of ACCM training from the ACCM fellowship program director.

If you apply through the Fellowship Training-Plus-Practice Pathway, ABEM will also obtain verification of practice and clinical competence from the program director of the ACGME-accredited CCM fellowship program affiliated with the hospital where you spend the majority of your CCM clinical time. If an ACGME-accredited CCM fellowship is not present at this hospital, ABEM will seek verification by the Chief of Critical Care Medicine in the hospital where you spend the majority of CCM clinical time. If you are the Chief of Critical Care, verification will be accepted from the Chief of Staff, Vice-President of Medical Affairs, or someone in a similar position.

6. **Will ACCM Fellowship Program Requirements allow EM residency graduates to enter ACGME-accredited ACCM fellowship training programs?** Yes. However, the entry of emergency physicians into an ACGME-accredited ACCM fellowship program is ultimately the decision of the fellowship program director. The Residency Review Committee for Anesthesiology has proposed changes to the ACCM Program Requirements to allow ACGME-accredited ACCM programs to accept EM residency graduates.
7. **I completed fellowship training in another CCM subspecialty program (Internal Medicine or Surgery). Am I able to submit this training to fulfill the training requirement of the ACCM eligibility criteria and then take the ACCM certification examination to achieve ACCM subspecialty certification?** No. Only emergency physicians who are graduates of ACGME-accredited ACCM fellowship programs may apply for certification in ACCM through this ABEM co-sponsorship arrangement.

- 8. I completed an ACCM fellowship program that became ACGME-accredited after I completed the program. Does this training meet the eligibility criteria?** No. The ACCM fellowship must have been ACGME-accredited at the time you completed the program.
- 9. If I am an ABEM-certified physician, how will I apply for ACCM certification?** ABEM diplomates will submit applications to ABEM during the annual application period. The first application period will be for the 2014 examination. The application period dates have not yet been determined, but will be announced on the ABEM website when they are available. ABEM will determine if an ABEM applicant fulfills the eligibility criteria.
- 10. When will the first ACCM subspecialty certification examination be available to ABEM diplomates?** The earliest opportunity for ABEM diplomates who meet eligibility criteria to take the ACCM subspecialty certification examination will be in August 9, 2014. The ABA administers the ACCM subspecialty certification examination on an annual basis.
- 11. What is the format and content of the examination?** The ACCM certification examination is a one-day examination consisting of approximately 200 multiple choice questions. It is administered using a secure, computerized examination platform. The ABA administers this examination in Pearson VUE testing centers. An examination content outline is available at http://www.theaba.org/pdf/ContentOutline_CCM_January-2004.pdf.
- 12. Who will issue the certificate to ABEM diplomates who pass the ACCM subspecialty certification examination?** ABEM will issue ACCM certificates to its diplomates.
- 13. What are the requirements to maintain certification in ACCM?** Physicians certified in ACCM must meet the requirements of the ABEM MOC program or the ABA MOCA program.
- 14. I completed a one-year ACGME-accredited ACCM fellowship on June 30, 2013. Does this training fulfill the eligibility criteria? Do I also have a practice requirement?** Completion of this fellowship training fulfills the training requirement of the Fellowship Training-Plus-Practice Pathway. This pathway also requires completion of two years of critical care medicine practice as described in FAQ #3. When both the training and practice requirements are completed, you can apply to ABEM for certification in ACCM.
- 15. I completed a two-year ACCM fellowship on June 30, 2013. Does this training fulfill the eligibility criteria? Do I also have a practice requirement?** Yes, completion of this fellowship training fulfills the training requirement of the Fellowship Training-Plus-Practice Pathway. This pathway also requires completion of two years of critical care medicine as described in an earlier FAQ. When both the training and practice requirements are completed, you can apply to ABEM for certification in ACCM.
- 16. I started a one-year ACGME-accredited ACCM fellowship on July 1, 2013. Will this satisfy the training criteria? Do I also have a practice requirement?** Completion of this training will satisfy the training criteria of the Fellowship Training-plus-Practice Pathway of application but you must also complete the two-year practice requirement as outlined in FAQ #3 to fulfill the eligibility criteria. This is the last year that an emergency physician can enter a one-year ACCM fellowship without the additional 12 months of ABA-approved ACCM training. Beginning July 1, 2014, completing only 12 months of training in ACCM will be insufficient to qualify for ACCM certification eligibility.
- 17. I started a two-year ACCM fellowship on July 1, 2013. Will this satisfy the training criteria? Do I also have a practice requirement?** ABEM diplomates who started ACCM fellowship training in July

2013, seeking to fulfill the training criteria, must complete an ACCM fellowship program that includes the ACGME-accredited ACCM fellowship program and an additional 12 months of ACCM training. Fellowship program directors who wish to offer a two-year ACCM fellowship are encouraged to submit an application to the ABA **by December 31, 2013**. If a program's application is subsequently approved, fellows who began training as of July 2013 and who successfully complete that training and meet the general eligibility criteria may apply to take the 2015 Critical Care Medicine Certification Examination without having to meet the practice pathway criteria.

If the second year of your training program was not approved by the ABA, as outlined in the paragraph above, this training will satisfy the training criteria of the Fellowship Training-plus-Practice Pathway of application, but you must also complete the two-year practice requirement as outlined in FAQ #3 to fulfill the eligibility criteria.

After July 1, 2013, the 24-month ACCM fellowship training curriculum for emergency physicians must be prospectively approved by the ABA **prior** to the emergency physician entering the fellowship training program for that training to fulfill the Fellowship Training Pathway eligibility criteria.

- 18. When does the fellowship training-only pathway go into effect?** The fellowship training-only pathway goes into effect July 1, 2014. ABEM diplomates starting ACCM fellowship training on or after July 1, 2014, for the purpose of seeking subspecialty certification in ACCM, must enter an ACCM fellowship program that includes the ACGME-accredited ACCM fellowship program and an additional 12 months of ACCM training. The program and its training design must have the prospective approval of the ABA prior to the entry of the emergency physician into that program. No emergency physician entering a fellowship after July 1, 2014, is eligible to take the examination under the grandfathering provisions. There are no exceptions to this requirement.
- 19. What is the process for obtaining ABA approval for the 24 months of ACCM fellowship training that an emergency physician must complete to fulfill the eligibility criteria?** It is the ACCM fellowship program director's responsibility to submit the program curriculum to the ABA for review and approval. Training completed in any program that does not have the prior approval of the ABA will not fulfill the training requirement. ([ACCM Two-Year Critical Care Medicine Fellowship Program Application Form](#))
- 20. When an ABEM diplomate has fulfilled the ACCM eligibility criteria and has taken and passed the ACCM certification examination, how is that accomplishment recognized?** The ABEM diplomate who has met the ACCM eligibility criteria and who passes the ACCM subspecialty examination is recognized as being certified in the subspecialty of Anesthesiology Critical Care Medicine. Certification is for a period of ten years.

ABEM issues the certificates to its diplomates. The certificates are dated from the date of the examination results letter and expire December 31 ten years thereafter. The diplomate's Emergency Medicine certification must be valid in order for the subspecialty certification to remain valid.