DISTINGUISH YOURSELF & MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Become board certified in addiction medicine and make a difference in the lives of your patients and their families, and in the health of your community. Your colleagues and others in the health care team will also benefit from your expertise.

The American Board of Addiction Medicine (ABAM) certifies physicians across a range of medical specialties, promoting the training and certification of physicians in the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of substance related disorders and related conditions. As an ABAM Diplomate you will be enhancing your career and joining over 3,000 physicians setting the standard for professional excellence.

THE ABAM CERTIFICATION CANDIDATE HANDBOOK

This handbook informs prospective candidates about the policies, procedures, requirements, and rules governing the ABAM Certification Examination. As these may change from time to time and the Board reserves the right to make such change without notice, current information can be found on the ABAM website: www.abam.net.

CERTIFICATION EXAMINATION ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

There are five eligibility criteria to qualify for the ABAM Certification Examination:

1. MEDICAL LICENSE(S)

Physicians must possess a valid medical license, issued by an appropriate and authorized licensing board, to practice medicine in the United States, its territories or Canada. An active and unrestricted medical license must be maintained, even if a physician is out of the country for extended periods of time. Once certified by ABAM, diplomates are required to maintain an unrestricted license. For a detailed outline of licensure requirements for applicants and diplomates, you may request a copy of the ABAM Bylaws.

Physicians who practice exclusively in another country, and who do not have a U.S. or Canadian license must hold a license in that country, must attest and provide documentation from the relevant licensing authority that their license is in good standing without restrictions of any type, as outlined in this handbook.

Exceptions

An exception will be made when a restriction is due to participation in a physician’s health monitoring program or other appropriately monitored treatment program for medical, substance use disorders or behavioral illness. In this instance, documentation of at least 18 months of continuous good health and recovery status from a reliable monitoring source must accompany your application. ABAM protects the confidentiality of a physician’s health information as required by law.

License Verification

The licenses of all applicants are verified and confirmed by the Federation of State Medical Boards (FSMB). ABAM may, at its sole discretion, determine whether to investigate an applicant’s license and the information provided by the applicant. ABAM has the final determination in accepting or denying a physician’s application, or the conferring of diplomate status. It is the sole responsibility of the applicant to provide the information requested, and any omissions or errors are the applicant’s alone. An application that is incomplete or has incorrect or omitted information can invalidate the application or lead to the loss of Diplomate status. It is also the responsibility of the applying physician to immediately inform ABAM of any action taken by a state medical licensing board within sixty (60) days of such action.
2. GRADUATION FROM MEDICAL SCHOOL

If the applicant is a graduate of an allopathic or osteopathic medical school in the United States, its territories or Canada, that school must be approved by:

- The Liaison Committee on Medical Education (U.S. Medical Schools Conferring M.D. Degrees);
- The Committee of Accreditation of Canadian Medical Schools (CACMS); or
- The American Osteopathic Association (AOA).

If the applicant is a graduate of a medical school outside of the United States, its territories or Canada, the applicant must have:

- A current and valid standard certificate from the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG); or
- Passed the Medical Council of Canada Evaluating Examination (MCCEE).

3. ABMS BOARD CERTIFICATION OR COMPLETION OF A RESIDENCY PROGRAM

This requirement may be fulfilled by either:

- Certification by a member board of the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS); or
- Successful completion of a residency program in any ABMS medical specialty.

Residency programs must be accredited by one of the following:

- The Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (U.S. Residency Programs);
- The College of Family Physicians of Canada;
- The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada; or
- The Professional Corporation of Physicians of Quebec.

Physicians who have completed an AOA accredited residency are encouraged to apply to take the ABAM Examination. For specific information about AOA residencies leading to ACGME and ABMS recognition, please contact the AOA.

4. PRACTICE EXPERIENCE /OR COMPLETION OF AN ADDICTION MEDICINE FELLOWSHIP ACCREDITED BY THE ABAM FOUNDATION

Either Pathway A or Pathway B is required.

**PATHWAY A – PRACTICE EXPERIENCE: ONE YEAR FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT (1,920 HOURS) OF WORK AS AN ATTENDING PHYSICIAN IN THE FIELD OF ADDICTION AND SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS**

- One (1) FTE is equal to a minimum of 1,920 hours of practice experience over the last 5 years
- Hours must be focused on the treatment of individuals with an addiction or substance use disorder, or the prevention of addiction or substance use disorders among individuals at risk. At least 400 hours must be clinical in nature. Exceptions to having 400 clinical hours will be considered on a case-by-case basis. For consideration of an exception, contact ABAMcertify@ABAM.net.
- Elective rotations during a residency are generally not permitted for use to fulfill this eligibility requirement. Addiction medicine FTE hours cannot be accrued until a primary residency is complete. Exceptions to this stipulation will be considered on a case-by-case basis. For consideration of an exception, contact ABAMcertify@ABAM.net.
PATHWAY B: COMPLETION OF AN ADDICTION MEDICINE FELLOWSHIP ACCREDITED BY THE ABAM FOUNDATION.

- A list of accredited fellowships can be found at http://abamfoundation.org/
- Candidates who have successfully completed an ABAM Foundation-accredited fellowship and are applying for the examination via this pathway are not required to meet or report the requirement for 50 CME credits in addiction medicine. The fellowship should be completed at least 2 weeks prior to the examination date. Exceptions to this requirement will be considered on a case-by-case basis. For consideration of an exception, contact ABAMcertify@ABAM.net.

5. CME CREDITS IN ADDICTION OR SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS

Applicants must have completed a total fifty (50) hours of CME Category 1 credits (eligible for the AMA Physician Recognition Award) in the 2 years prior to the examination date.

- These 50 CMEs must relate to addiction or substance use disorders.
- Canadian or osteopathic equivalent education in addiction or substance use disorders is acceptable.

ELIGIBILITY REVIEW AND POLICIES

Final eligibility determinations are made by the ABAM Credentialing Committee, pursuant to the procedures outlined in this handbook, and subject to review by the ABAM Board of Directors. ABAM does not provide a definitive opinion, analysis or preliminary review of the medical education or experience of any prospective candidate regarding eligibility.

COMPLETE APPLICATIONS REQUIRED

Please check that you application is complete. The application and payment must be submitted at the same time. Special documentation (change of name, PHP or other monitoring, or request for special accommodations) must be submitted with your application and payment. Partial applications, those without payment or any required special documentation, will not be considered by the ABAM Credentialing Committee.

APPLICATION FEE PAYMENT

Application fees are payable by credit card only, in U.S. funds. ABAM accepts Visa, MasterCard, American Express or Discover Card. Candidates will receive an automatic email reply from ABAM upon receipt of their emailed application. Candidates may then pay their application fee via a link included in an automatic email reply, linking to a secure credit card processing center. This must be done immediately or the link will expire. If payment is made using a credit card in a different name, please note this in the area on the last page of the application. Upon receipt of credit card payment, candidates will receive an immediate receipt to verify payment of their application.

APPLICATION FEES ARE NON-REFUNDABLE

Examination application fees are non-refundable and non-transferable. It is the responsibility of all candidates to review the ABAM Certification Examination Eligibility Criteria to confirm their application eligibility. Application fees are not refunded to candidates whose application is denied by the Credentialing Committee for failure to meet the Eligibility Criteria.