

ABPS 112

Information and Requirements Diplomate Recertification and Foot and Ankle Diplomate Status Conversion for 2010



This document contains information specific to the 2010 examinations only.

AMERICAN BOARD OF PODIATRIC SURGERY

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Nondiscrimination Policy. In accordance with applicable federal laws, the American Board of Podiatric Surgery does not discriminate in any of its policies, procedures, or practices on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, or disability.

Americans With Disabilities Act. In compliance with the *Americans With Disabilities Act*, the American Board of Podiatric Surgery will make reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities if written request is made no later than thirty (30) days prior to the date(s) of the examination for which appropriate application has been made, fees paid, and credentialing completed. Candidates seeking an accommodation should request the ABPS “Policies and Procedures for Examination Candidates Requesting Accommodation for Disabilities” at least ninety (90) days prior to the examination dates.

Introduction

Maintenance of competence has become a major element of the current healthcare environment as prepaid health plans and health maintenance organizations require ongoing evaluation of their providers. In 1995, the American Board of Podiatric Surgery (ABPS) embarked on a process that culminated in 1999 with the first non-voluntary recertification examination.

The ABPS has always included a process of ongoing diplomate evaluation in its policies and procedures. Through 1990, ABPS diplomates were required to take a self-assessment examination every 10 years that would provide them with data to use in choosing continuing education endeavors. In 1991 the ongoing evaluation process was changed to require passing of a written examination demonstrating a level of cognitive knowledge in the diplomate's category(ies) of certification. Under current bylaws, podiatric surgeons certified by the ABPS are required to participate in the ongoing evaluation process that was in effect when they became certified. [Note that diplomates of the American Board of Ambulatory Foot Surgery (a section of the American Board of Podiatric Surgery) do not have an ongoing evaluation requirement.]

Overview of Recertification

Recertification is on a 10-year timetable. Diplomates must be evaluated in the eighth, ninth, or tenth year following the last certification or recertification achieved. (Please note: The recertification dates for Foot Surgery and Reconstructive Rearfoot/Ankle Surgery will be different if the original certification date in the respective area of certification was not in the same year.) A written examination is the method used to assess the ongoing abilities of ABPS diplomates. Additionally, recertification candidates must demonstrate current active surgical practice in the category(ies) of recertification sought by submitting proof from a hospital or surgery center of active surgical privileges commensurate with the level of recertification.

Overview of Status Conversion

Until 1991, the American Board of Podiatric Surgery (the ABPS) had only one certification category. Commencing in 1991, the ABPS established two certification processes, one in "Foot Surgery" and the other in "Reconstructive Rearfoot/Ankle Surgery" (RRA). Candidates for Diplomate status could then 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). When the two categories were established in 1991, Diplomates certified under the previous requirements retained the designation of "Foot and Ankle Surgery" Diplomates.

Certificates issued after 1990 have expiration dates ten (10) years from the date of issuance. Certificates issued prior to 1991 do not have an expiration date. Diplomates certified prior to 1991 are required to complete self-assessment requirements every ten (10) years (see ABPS 111). Diplomates certified prior to 1991 may also 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 credentialing requirements. Diplomates must surrender their Foot and Ankle certificate and the new certificates have an expiration date.

Table 1
RECERTIFICATION TIMELINE

<p>Application and fees must be received by Friday, February 5</p>	<p>Foot Surgery Examination is held on Friday, March 12 through Saturday, March 27</p> <p>RRA Examination is held on Friday and Saturday, March 12 and 13 ONLY</p>	<p>Results are sent to registrants by Friday, April 23</p>
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1	<p>Recertification of Diplomates Certified in Foot Surgery or Foot Surgery and Reconstructive Rearfoot/Ankle Surgery</p>
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1. **Requirement.** Under provisions of the bylaws in effect at the time of their certification, ABPS diplomates certified after 1990 are required to pass a recertification process determined by the Board of Directors. Diplomates may only recertify in the category(ies) of certification achieved.
2. **Method.** The recertification process includes the following:
 - a. **Examination.** Diplomates must pass the written examination(s) as determined by the Board of Directors in the category(ies) of original certification. The recertification examination(s) will be administered as a computer adaptive test(s) at selected locations within the United States.
 - b. **Proof of Current Active Surgical Practice.** Diplomates must demonstrate current active surgical practice in the category(ies) of recertification sought by submitting proof of active surgical privileges in Foot or Foot and RRA surgery from a hospital or surgery center.

ABPS reserves the right to request additional information to clarify or expand upon the information submitted as part of the application process.

3. **Three-year Window of Opportunity.** The recertification examination(s) must be taken in the eighth, ninth, or tenth year following initial certification and similarly every ten years.

4. Effects of Passing or Failing.

- a. Diplomates who pass the Foot Surgery Recertification Examination will be recertified in Foot Surgery. Diplomates who pass the Reconstructive Rearfoot/Ankle Surgery Recertification Examination will be recertified in Reconstructive Rearfoot/Ankle Surgery [except as defined in paragraph (2) below]. Diplomates will receive a time-dated recertification label(s) that expire(s) in a 10-year increment from the date of initial certification (e.g., initial certification in 2000, passed recertification in 2010, recertification expires in 2020).

Designation: "A diplomate of the American Board of Podiatric Surgery certified in Foot Surgery (and Reconstructive Rearfoot/Ankle Surgery) in 19XX. Recertified in Foot Surgery (and Reconstructive Rearfoot/Ankle Surgery) in 20XX."

If a diplomate is unsuccessful in passing the Foot Surgery Recertification Examination within the three-year window, such status expires, and he/she must apply under the policy established by the Board of Directors.

- (1) **A Reconstructive Rearfoot/Ankle Surgery diplomate who passes only the Foot Surgery recertification examination will be recertified in Foot Surgery only.** In such cases, a diplomate may continue to retake the Reconstructive Rearfoot/Ankle Surgery Recertification Examination until the three-year window of opportunity closes.

Designation: "A diplomate of the American Board of Podiatric Surgery certified in Foot Surgery and Reconstructive Rearfoot/Ankle Surgery in 19XX. Recertified in Foot Surgery in 20XX."

- (2) **A diplomate certified in both Foot Surgery and Reconstructive Rearfoot/Ankle Surgery who fails the Foot Surgery recertification examination but passes the Reconstructive Rearfoot/Ankle Surgery recertification examination will not be recertified in either category.** Foot Surgery recertification is a prerequisite to Reconstructive Rearfoot/Ankle Surgery recertification. However, the diplomate does not have to retake the Reconstructive Rearfoot/Ankle Recertification Examination. In such cases, the diplomate may continue to take the Foot Surgery Recertification Examination until the three-year window of opportunity closes. If a diplomate is unsuccessful in passing the Foot Surgery Recertification Examination within the three-year window, all status expires, and he/she must apply under the policy established by the Board of Directors.

- b. A diplomate who achieved certification in Reconstructive Rearfoot/Ankle Surgery in a year subsequent to Foot Surgery certification must maintain certification in Foot Surgery to remain certified in Reconstructive Rearfoot/Ankle Surgery. Should a diplomate be unsuccessful in passing the Foot Surgery recertification examination, such diplomate's certified status in Reconstructive Rearfoot/Ankle Surgery will be suspended until Foot Surgery is reestablished, unless status in RRA expires before reestablishment in Foot Surgery.

2	<h2 style="margin: 0;">Recertification for Conversion to Certification in Foot Surgery and Reconstructive Rearfoot/Ankle Surgery</h2>
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1. **Active Diplomate Status.** Diplomates in Foot and Ankle Surgery seeking to convert their certification must be in Active Diplomate Status.

2. **Current Hospital Surgical Privileges.** Current hospital surgical privileges in foot surgery and in reconstructive rearfoot/ankle surgery are required.

3. **Examinations.** A diplomate 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 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 this will fulfill their self-assessment requirement. A diplomate seeking conversion will have three (3) 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.

4. **Relinquish Foot and Ankle Certificate.** Upon successful completion of requirements 1-3 above, a diplomate must relinquish his/her lifetime Foot and Ankle Diplomate status and certificate. The diplomate will be required to submit a signed and notarized letter stating that the lifetime Foot and Ankle certification is being relinquished. New certification status will not be granted unless the old certification status is relinquished. The Foot and Reconstructive Rearfoot/Ankle Surgery certificates will reflect the previous Foot and Ankle certification date and have a ten-year time limit.

3	<h2 style="margin: 0;">Recertification Examination Information</h2>
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Examination	Date
Foot Surgery	Friday, March 12 through Saturday, March 27
Reconstructive Rearfoot/Ankle Surgery	Friday and Saturday, March 12 and 13

1. **Location.** The ABPS offers the Foot Surgery Recertification Examination on Friday, March 12 through Saturday, March 27, 2010 as a computer-adaptive examination at selected locations within the United States. The Reconstructive Rearfoot/Ankle Surgery Recertification Examination will be offered only on Friday and Saturday, March 12 and 13, 2010 as a computer-administered test at selected locations within the United States. Form “A” of the RRA examination will be administered on Friday and Form “B” of the RRA examination will be administered on Saturday. Diplomates may take either form for recertification in RRA. If you apply to take both the Foot and RRA surgery examinations, you may take both on March 12 and/or 13 or you may choose to take the RRA examination on March 12 or 13 and the Foot Surgery examination on any day, March 12

through March 27, 2010. *Examination site selection will open approximately 145 days prior to the start of the first day of the examination(s).* **All fees must be paid before site selection access is permitted.** *Candidates will be notified via e-mail when the site selection process is available as well as the web site address for making a site selection.* **Seats at the sites are limited, so please make your selection early!**

2. **Study Guide (ABPS 420).** A Study Guide is available online. The study guide contains sample multiple-choice questions with answers, subject areas covered, and other information about the examination. Please visit our website at www.abps.org. A practice examination based on the ABPS 420 will be available beginning January 1, 2010. The examination can be accessed from a link on the home page of the ABPS web site at www.abps.org.
3. **Format.** The recertification examinations consist of multiple-choice questions, including those based on visual presentations. Each question is followed by at least four possible answers. **Each question has only ONE best answer.**
4. **Content.** A full discussion of specific subject areas tested may be found in ABPS 420 (Study Guide).
 - a. The **Foot Surgery** Recertification Examination will involve diagnostic and perioperative care of the podiatric surgical patient encompassing the foot and ankle. Intraoperative areas will include surgical procedures of the entire foot with the exception of reconstructive rearfoot and ankle procedures.
 - b. The **Reconstructive Rearfoot/Ankle Surgery** Recertification Examination involves diagnostic, intra-operative, and perioperative care of the podiatric surgical patient pertaining to reconstructive rearfoot and ankle procedures.
5. **Scoring.** The examination(s) is (are) graded and results provided as a scale score. They are not graded on a curve. The Board of Directors sets passing scores based on psychometric evaluation of the examination. Only examination scores or results will be provided; copies of the test items are not revealed 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.
6. **Review of Scores.** Each examination is scored by computer, and failed examinations are automatically re-scored. Therefore, once examination results are mailed to candidates, there is no further review of scores.
7. **Examination Site Selection and Admission.** Candidates taking a recertification examination schedule their date, time and location through the web site of the test administrator, Pearson Vue, at www.pearsonvue.com/signin. On the site you will see two panels; in the panel on the right, scroll down and click on American Board of Podiatric Surgery. This will take you to a logon screen. Use the ID and password sent to you from the ABPS for site selection. After you have selected a date, time, and location, **be sure to print a copy of the confirmation.** The confirmation includes your schedule and the location of the testing center, including directions to the center. When you arrive at the test center you will be required to present **two forms of current identification, both with signature.** Please note that one of the pieces of identification must be your non-expired government issued photo identification with signature. Your name as it appears on the two forms of ID you bring to the test center must match your name exactly as it appears on your Examination Confirmation letter. If, for example, you maintain your maiden name for your

ABPS records and your married name on your driver’s license or passport, you must contact the ABPS at 415-553-7800, extension 122 at least 72 hours before your scheduled examination to secure a revised Examination Confirmation letter that contains the same information as the two pieces of identification you will provide to the testing center.

Failure to present acceptable identification as noted above will prevent you from being allowed entry into the test center to examine. If this occurs, you will be marked 'Absent' and will forfeit the entire examination fee and seat."

8. **Notification.** Examination results will be mailed in an envelope marked "Personal and Confidential" no later than Friday, April 23, 2010. If you have not received the results by Friday, May 7, 2010, you may request them by telephone.

4	Notification and Fees
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1. **Eligibility Notification.** Diplomates whose certification dates are within the three-year window of opportunity for the 2009 recertification examinations will be notified of their eligibility by letter.
2. **Fees.**¹

Examination	Application fee (non-refundable)	Examination fee	Total fee
Foot Surgery	\$200	\$600	\$800
Foot Surgery and Reconstructive Rearfoot/Ankle Surgery	\$200	\$1,200	\$1,400
Reconstructive Rearfoot/Ankle Surgery (RRA)	\$200	\$600	\$800

3. **Applying and Payment of Fees.** Applying is completed online. Go to www.abps.org and login using your ABPS username and password (provided in your notification letter); click “My Tasks” on the left navigation bar; then click “Apply for an Exam” in the dropdown and follow the instructions on the application screen. Online applications will be considered as signed when submitted. You must pay by debit or credit card (American Express, VISA, or MasterCard). Follow the online instructions when completing the application.
4. **Late Withdrawal Penalty.** A late withdrawal penalty of \$100 will be assessed for any withdrawal made after Friday, February 19, 2010. Registrants withdrawing after February 19 will receive a withdrawal number, which must be presented if questions concerning withdrawal arise.
5. **Absence without Withdrawing.** Any registrant who does not appear for the examination and who does not withdraw before the day of the examination will forfeit all fees.

¹ Effective with the 2009 examination cycle, Diplomates completing recertification are not required to pay the annual re-registration fee for the year following completion of recertification.

5**Documenting Active Surgical Privileges**

To qualify to take a recertification examination, diplomates must demonstrate that they have current active surgical privileges commensurate with the applicable certification category.

1. **Documentation of Active Surgical Privileges.** Diplomates must request the 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, or said signature with the embossed seal of the hospital/surgery center.
2. **Request for Additional Documentation.** ABPS reserves the right to request additional documentation to clarify or expand upon the information submitted as part of the application process.

DEADLINE

Your application, privilege documentation, and payment must be received by **5:00 p.m. Pacific time on Friday, February 5, 2010.**

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If after reading these instructions you need assistance,
please call the ABPS Applications Manager at

Voice: 415/553-7804 FAX: 415/553-7801
M-F 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. (Pacific time)

Or you may e-mail us at **info@abps.org**.