



American Board of Surgery Update

Association of Residency Coordinators in Surgery
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For today.....

- New Policies
- QE
- Special Circumstances/Prior ABS Approval
- CE
- ABSITE
- ABS Website/Online Information



Admissibility – Before

- Apply to QE within 3 years following completion of residency
- Admissibility of 5 years began when application was approved
 - One exam opportunity in each of the 5 years
- Once successful on QE, admissible to CE for 5 years
- A possible 13 years to obtain certification



New Admissibility Policy

- As mandated by ABMS: new policy limits the period an individual may be eligible for initial certification to **no more than 7 years following completion of training**
- New policy will apply to all individuals who complete training in 2012-2013 and thereafter
 - Individuals who completed prior to 2012-2013 will proceed under the ABS' previous policies



Admissibility - After

- 7-year period begins **immediately** upon completion of training, not when application is approved
- 4 opportunities in 4 years to pass QE
- 3 opportunities in 3 years to pass CE
 - Year limit is absolute
 - If successful on QE in less than 4 yrs, unused opportunities cannot be applied toward CE



Implications

- Delay in applying or not taking exam in a given year – lost opportunity
- Possession of a full/unrestricted medical license for CE. **Continued misconceptions:**
 - Full/unrestricted license not needed if in fellowship
 - Underestimate time needed in obtaining license
- CE exam may fill prior to obtaining a full/unrestricted license – lost opportunity



Applicant's Best Course of Action

- Apply at conclusion of residency
 - Not too late to apply: late deadline – June 3
- If possible, take exam when offered
- Begin process of obtaining a full and unrestricted medical license **now**
- Be aware of ABS policies/procedures, monitor status online, current contact info
 - Update personal info 24/7 via website
- Respond to ABS correspondence promptly



Re-entry to Residency

- Applies to individuals who have been away from surgical residency for 4 or more years
- Re-entry process:
 - Program would enroll individual for a minimum 5-month trial period at their proposed PGY level
 - Trial will not count towards 60 months of required training
 - Resident must take ABSITE; achieve a score at 30th percentile or higher for their proposed level



Re-entry continued...

- At conclusion of trial period
 - PD sends written report and ABSITE scores
- Report presented to ABS' Credentials Committee for approval
 - Committee meets in January and June
 - Ideally present findings at June meeting so resident may enter program on July 1
- Failure to obtain prior approval may result in a refusal to admit individual to certification





Qualifying Examination (QE)



QE Application – key points

- Must be signed by program director. **No** other signature is acceptable.
 - Signature stamps, copies, faxes - not acceptable
- Include copy of ACGME Op Report
 - 150 chief cases, 750 case in 5 years and 25 surgical critical care patient management cases
- Flexible Rotations
 - Include letter of pre-approval



...key points continued

- ACLS, ATLS® & FLS certification
 - Certification does not need be active/current
 - ATLS® History Report – not acceptable
- Resident Assessments
 - Completion of 2 operative performance and 2 clinical performances assessments
 - Increase to 6 operative/clinical in 2015-2016
 - Assessments forms are not submitted to ABS
 - By signing application, PD & resident attest that these assessments have been completed



ABS Transplant Experience Requirement

- Must have either a transplant rotation or operative cases.
- Require pre-operative and post-operative care of transplant patient if no operations were performed
- Objective: resident has direct care of transplant patients.



Graduate Medical Education Section

- This section must list from the start to the end of residency the following:
 - Each rotation, including research
 - All non-clinical time
 - Medical leave
 - Absences of 48 hours or more (single day entries not permitted)



Non-clinical time

- Is **any** time away from clinical, such as:
 - Vacation
 - Meetings, conferences, presentations
 - Interviews
 - Early departure for fellowship
 - Contract end date is irrelevant in regards to QE – this is between resident and program/hospital
 - What is last day of clinical?
 - None of the above counts towards the 48 weeks of full time clinical training



Training Time

- 48 weeks of full-time clinical activity each year
 - To provide programs with some flexibility, 48 weeks may be averaged:
 - First three years of residency must total 144 weeks
 - Last two years of residency must total 96 weeks
 - Residents with a medical leave may take an additional 2 weeks off during the first three years and an additional 2 weeks off during the last two years



Submission of Application

- Considered complete **only when all hard copy materials are received at ABS** – regardless of online submission
- Checklist of required documents is included when application is printed
- Letter of explanation for any clarification
 - Tell us before we ask



Application Deadlines & Fees

- To meet initial deadline: received in ABS office by May 1 (not postmarked)
 - Application fee is \$300
- Applications received May 2 - June 3 will be charged the late fee (an additional \$200). Total fee: \$500
- Due to volume, cannot confirm receipt
 - Use a carrier with a tracking option



Processing of Applications

- Processed in order of date received in office
- May take 3-4 weeks to process due to volume
- Meeting deadline refers to when application is received in office **not** when application is processed
- Incomplete application
 - Application is held and not approved until required materials are received



After Approval

- Register and pay exam fee
 - For 2013 QE, exam fee - \$1000
 - Exam date - August 8, 2013
- Sooner registration is completed and fee paid, the sooner the Exam Admission Authorization letter is mailed
 - This authorization letter is needed to schedule exam center with Pearson
- Residents must monitor their status online





Special Circumstances Requiring Prior ABS Approval



Credit for Foreign Training

- Written request from program director after a 6-month period of observation
- 1yr of credit: awarded by executive director
- More than 1 year: must go to Credentials Committee which meets in January & June
- Credit awarded to program not individual
- Not transferable should a resident change program



International Rotations

- For international rotations to be credited towards ABS requirements:
 - Written request from program director
 - Justify reasons for why credit should be granted
 - Educational rationale, competency-based goals and objectives, specific names of surgeons, evaluation, etc.
 - Training must be completed under direct supervision of an ABS certified surgeon
 - Complete requirements are on our website



Completion of PGY 3

- Three years at PGY 1 and 2 levels do not replace completion of PGY 3 year
- Cannot complete three years at PGY 1 & 2 levels and be promoted to PGY 4
PGY 1 + PGY 2 + PGY 2
does not equal
PGY 1 + PGY 2 + PGY 3
- Caution should be used when promoting residents to advanced levels without prior ABS approval



Medical/Maternity Leave

- 46 weeks in one of the first three years and 46 weeks in one of the last two years
- A resident's personal medical problem; not leave time to care for others
- If medical leave exceeds limit, program must contact ABS with plan for approval
 - Extending residency beyond June
 - Using less vacation time in future years



Leave – Six-Year Option

- Complete 5 clinical years over 6 academic years regardless of reason
 - At program's discretion with advanced ABS approval
 - Training must be completed in a single program
 - May take up to 12 months off



Flexible Rotations

- With advanced ABS approval, programs may:
 - Customize up to 12 months of training in the last three years of training
 - No more than 6 months of flexible rotations in one year
 - Allows residents to focus on specialty area before formal fellowship
 - Specialty-specific guidelines available on our website



Prior ABS Approval

- Requests must be a formal letter from the program director (not via email)
 - Will not accept requests from residents
 - Additional information: from homepage go to General Surgery > Training Requirements or Training Programs > News and Resources
- Failure to obtain prior ABS approval may result in a refusal to admit an individual to the certification process





Certifying Oral Examination (CE)



CE – Certifying Oral Exam

- Fast Track option – applies to **only** the first CE after the QE (early Fall)
- All QE candidates will be emailed regarding Fast Track – in July
- Must reply to email to express interest and provide information on **full and unrestricted medical license**



CE continued....

- After license is verified; access to registration
- Taking CE is contingent upon passing QE; if unsuccessful, CE cancelled and fee refunded
- Tentative assignments for remaining exams are made once QE results are available
 - Registered for CE only w/possession of full and unrestricted medical license & payment of fee
 - Exam may fill before obtaining license or paying the exam fee



Licensure

- License must be current, full and unrestricted
- Temporary, limited or educational licenses are **NOT** acceptable, **even if pursuing advanced training or fellowship**
- License no longer required for QE
- License remains **absolute** requirement for the CE, **regardless of how soon** after completion of residency the exam is taken





ABSITE



ABSITE

- Much better!
- ITS made significant improvements to database servers, network connections, etc. and technical support
 - Notices available on phone system greeting
 - Blog (support.testsys.com) with updates every 15 minutes



ABSITE - 2014

- Will be a single examination
 - No longer a junior and senior version
- Exam content will be aligned with the SCORE Curriculum Outline
 - More details available in late 2013
- Exam window – Friday, January 24 to Tuesday, January 28



ABSITE - 2014

- All residents: New Examinee
 - New Examinee vs. Returning Examinee
- Host program: responsible for order/payment
- Care when completing Examinee Profile
 - Clinical level, name and program where results are sent: determined by what residents enter on examinee profile (not the roster)
 - Corrected reports not prepared for name and clinical level errors
 - Parent program will be charged \$100 when wrong program is listed



ABSITE - Scoring & Results

- Will results be available sooner?
 - Processing of results is the same whether exam is online or paper and pencil
 - Multiple ABS groups/individuals involved
 - Psychometricians; Director of Evaluation; In-Training Exam Committee; IT dept.



ABSITE – Exam Security

- Online administration has helped substantially
- Aware that ABSITE questions are in circulation; materials have been recovered
 - Goal: primarily new exam every year
 - Possible further action against programs where security breaches occur
- Aware there are instances when proctors leave the room



ABSITE – Data Forensics

- Contract with statistical consulting firm that provides sophisticated analysis of exam data
- Responses for each examinee are compared to responses of all other examinees
- Similar answer patterns ($p < 1/\text{million}$)
 - New vs. used questions
 - Response time and performance
 - Other response anomalies
 - Item visits
 - Easy questions: wrong; hard questions: right



ABSITE Results

- On ABS website in Training Programs > 2013 In-Training Exams:
 - Available on website for only a **limited** time
 - Save the reports to your records
 - ABS does not retain individual score reports (Report C) nor provide transcripts – to anyone, including the resident





ABS Website: Training Programs & Online Information



Training Programs

- Do not use My Records/My Account
 - Password help: for individuals only
- For the academic year, the **same** log-in will access all of the following:
 - Trainee Rosters
 - In-Training Examination
 - Store log-in somewhere for safe-keeping!



Online Information

- Program log-in **cannot** access:
 - Information related to program director's personal certification status
 - Individual QE & CE results for former residents
 - This information is emailed in a report and is not available on our website



Reports of Candidate Performance

- Twice per year, reports are **emailed** to PDs & coordinators:
 - 5-Year Program Report – in July/August
 - Annual Report w/ QE results – in September
 - Reports are PDFs that can be saved to your records
 - do not keep the email as links within email become inactive



Questions?

