

# BOARD CERTIFICATION PROGRAM OVERVIEW



## American Board of Optometry Board Certification and Maintenance of Certification

American Board of Optometry Board Certification allows doctors of optometry to demonstrate that they exceed entry-level requirements and maintain appropriate knowledge, skills and experience to deliver quality eye care. The program was developed in 2009 to offer optometrists a voluntary pathway to a meaningful Board Certification credential. The Board Certification exam is offered each February/March and July/August; upon passing, Diplomates are enrolled in the Maintenance of Certification (MOC) program known as CAP.

### Earning Board Certification

Optometrists earn Board Certification through a multi-step process beginning with an initial application. Below is a detailed overview of the certification process.

#### • Step 1: Initial Application

- a. OD completes online application and submits nonrefundable \$300 application fee.
- b. OD submits the following documentation:
  - Graduation from school or college of optometry accredited by the Accreditation Council on Optometric Education (ACOE).
  - Active license to practice therapeutic optometry in a state, District of Columbia, U.S. commonwealth or territory.
  - Authorization to search the National Practitioner Data Bank.
- c. OD acknowledges that once Board Certification is earned, it must be kept current through enrollment in the Maintenance of Certification program known as CAP.
- d. OD affirms all supplied information is true and correct, and grants the American Board of Optometry permission to verify credentials.



#### • Step 2: Verification and Candidate Status

- a. American Board of Optometry verifies all supplied information. This process generally is completed within 30 days after application date.
- b. Once information is verified, applicant is granted Candidate status.
- c. Initial Candidate status is granted for one year, and may be renewed for up to three years by submitting proof of 50 points toward Post-Graduate Requirements for each year of eligibility.
- d. If any supplied information cannot be verified, candidate is contacted to resolve the issue.

#### • Step 3: Meeting Post-Graduate Requirements

- a. To be eligible for the exam, Candidate must attain 150 points under the “residency or equivalent” rule. If points are not attained through an ACOE-accredited residency, Candidate must submit proof of three years of active licensure and clinical practice.

**Points are attained through the following activities:**

##### **ACOE-accredited residency:**

- 150 points if completed in the past three years
- 100 points if completed in the past three to 10 years
- 50 points if completed more than 10 years ago

##### **Active Clinical Practice:**

- 5 points for each year of practice in the previous 10 years, up to 50 points

**Fellowship in FAAO, COVD, NORA, CLSA, SLS or other as approved by ABO:**

- 50 points if completed in the past 10 years
- Status must be active and current

**Diplomate of a section of the American Academy of Optometry (AAO):**

- 50 points if completed within the past 10 years
- Status must be active and current

**Graduate Degree:**

- 50 points if completed within the past 10 years

**Continuing and Other Education:**

- Up to 150 points
- Education expires three years from date of completion. Once education has been submitted for verification, it is locked in through the next testing period.
- Education is separated into two categories:
  1. At least 50 percent of education points (up to 150) must come from Category 1, as outlined in the point system overview.
  2. A maximum of 50 percent of education points (up to 75) may come from Category 2, as outlined in the point system overview.

• **Step 4: Taking the Examination**

- Upon meeting Post-Graduate Requirements, Candidate pays the \$950 exam fee and schedules an exam date at a Scantron Testing Center.
- The Board Certification exam is a computer-based patient assessment and management test emphasizing clinical knowledge and skills, not didactic details.
- Exam is held in February/March and July/August at Scantron Testing Centers worldwide.
- Candidates must take the examination within 12 months following exam registration. A Candidate who does not take the exam within those 12 months must resubmit Post-Graduate Requirements. Candidate status applies for a maximum of four years.
- Candidates will receive a preliminary pass/fail status immediately after completion of the exam. A final, official score will be provided by mail and posted to Learning Builder within 30 days of the close of the exam window.

## Maintenance of Certification (MOC)



Upon the Candidate's successful completion of the Board Certification Examination, the American Board of Optometry confers **Board Certified Diplomate** status.

Board Certification **must** be kept current through the American Board of Optometry Maintenance of Certification program known as CAP. For 2021, the annual maintenance fee is \$225.

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Questions about American Board of Optometry Board Certification or Maintenance of Certification? Visit [www.americanboardofoptometry.org](http://www.americanboardofoptometry.org), call (314) 983-4226 or send an e-mail to [info@abopt.org](mailto:info@abopt.org).

*The American Board of Optometry's mission is to continually improve patient care by helping optometrists demonstrate ongoing commitment to professional enrichment. This is done through the organization's voluntary, NCCA-certified Board Certification program and CMS-approved Maintenance of Certification process. The American Board of Optometry was founded in 2009 by the American Academy of Optometry, American Optometric Association, American Optometric Student Association and the Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry.*