



# THE AMERICAN BOARD OF ORAL AND MAXILLOFACIAL PATHOLOGY

INCORPORATED IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA — 1948

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## Certification Maintenance (CM)

It is the position of the ABOMP that oral pathology-related continuing education and practice experience are required to maintain knowledge after successful completion of the certification process.

The Certification Maintenance (CM) program is directed primarily toward those oral and maxillofacial pathologists with time-limited certificates (certificate received in 2004 or after). The process will be open, however, to all certified Diplomates. A Diplomate who holds a non-time-limited/lifetime certificate will not put that certificate in jeopardy by participating in the CM program.

Certification Maintenance will be based on three components:

**1. Evidence of professional standing.** Diplomates of the ABOMP must maintain a current license or a teaching license to practice dentistry in at least one jurisdiction of the United States, its territories, or Canada. Diplomates who do not have a current license or teaching license but have a faculty appointment, or are enrolled full-time in a post-graduate educational program at an accredited dental or medical school may substitute evidence of academic appointment or standing. Diplomates practicing outside the United States or Canada must maintain an equivalent license to practice dentistry issued by their respective jurisdictions.

**2. Evidence of commitment to lifelong learning and involvement in periodic self-assessment** (organized continuing education [CE] and self-learning).

Each Diplomate must maintain a minimum of 40 hours every 2 years of pathology-related continuing education sponsored by the AAOMP, or by an ADA/CERP-approved provider, or AGD/PACE accredited courses that are pathology related, or by an organization or institution accredited by the AMA Council on Medical Education. Diplomates practicing outside the United States must maintain 40 hours of equivalent continuing education every two years. As many as 5 hours per year may be earned as faculty participating in these CE programs.

As part of those 40 hours, each Diplomate must participate each year in at least one diagnostic oral and maxillofacial pathology self-assessment program acceptable to the ABOMP, as defined by the Board of Directors. Acceptable programs are:

1. ABOMP Head and Neck Case Review Program
2. AAOMP Continuing Competency Assurance Program

No more than 2 (ABOMP and AAOMP) slide programs will be accepted as CE in any given year. Virtual slide programs related to Head and Neck Pathology may be available from the College of

American Pathologists (CAP) and the United States and Canadian Academy of Pathology (USCAP). To make up additional missing CM hours, Diplomates may log onto the USCAP eLearning site and see the list of CE programs available. After paying for the course, they will take it and once completed, be issued a certificate. Courses that are suitable for ABOMP CE credit will be determined by a simple majority vote of the Board of Directors. If there are any questions regarding the eligibility of the course please contact the Board prior to registering for the course.

**3. Evidence of cognitive expertise** (certification maintenance examination). The CM examination is mandatory, will be given annually at the AAOMP meeting, as well as remotely via computer testing hardware, and must be taken no later than ten years after initial (or most recent) certification. The examination may be taken as soon as seven years after the most recent certification, giving the Diplomate the opportunity to take the CM examination up to four times. The exact nature of the CM examination will retain the ability to evolve. However, the exam will contain questions related to:

- Fundamental knowledge
- Current and clinically valid practice-related knowledge, including information new to the field designed to evaluate the Diplomate's lifelong learning and self-assessment experience.

The CM examination will be a closed-book assessment based on knowledge that a competent oral pathologist would be expected to possess without access to reference material. It will consist of 50 multiple choice questions with illustration when appropriate.

The certification maintenance program is a continuous process and consists of a microscopic slide component, which is a yearly requirement, 40 hours of pathology-related continuing education, which is a two-year continuing requirement, as well as a successful challenge of the CM exam within a 10-year cycle. A Diplomate will be allowed to sit for the certification maintenance examination in years 7 - 10 of his/her 10-year CM examination cycle. Regardless of the date at which the CM process is completed, the anniversary dates for CM examination cycle will be derived from the initial certification date. For example, a Diplomate who is initially certified in 2004 and completes all CM requirements in 2011-2014 will start their 10-year CM examination cycle again in 2014.

Certification Maintenance is a continuous and ongoing process. Diplomates who do not remain current with CM requirements will lose their Board certification based on the following criteria:

Failure to participate in an approved annual slide program. If the deficiency is not made up within a 12-month grace period, Diplomates will lose their Board certification.

Failure to complete 40 hours of CE every 2 years. If the deficiency is not made up within a 12-month grace period, Diplomates will lose their Board certification.

Failure to successfully pass the certification maintenance examination within years 7 - 10 of the 10-year CM examination cycle. There is no grace period.

Individuals dropped from the Diplomate roll may continue to participate in CM activities and may request to be recertified when all CM requirements have been satisfied. Such a request must occur within five years of loss of certification. If such an individual wishes to regain certification after five years, he/she must retake the initial certification examination. There will be no time-limit to become compliant with CM and no requirement to take additional training.

Diplomates with time-limited certificates who are granted Emeritus status will not be required to participate in CM activities, but Emeritus Diplomates who wish to return to active Diplomate status, will

be required to participate in all parts of the CM process and complete the certification maintenance examination within one year of returning to active status.

**Application and Fee:** The fee for the certification maintenance examination is \$500. The application form can be completed [here](#).

Applicants must have fulfilled and properly documented all CE/slide course requirements at the time of applying for certification maintenance. No exceptions. A \$250 fee for insufficient application documentation will be assessed for all applications that require updating and additional review by the credentials committee.

**Application Deadline:** The exam is given annually. The application and examination fee must be received by February 1 of the year a Diplomate wishes to take the certification maintenance exam. CM applications received after February 1 will incur an additional \$100 late fee.

**Appeals Procedure:** A candidate who fails a certification maintenance examination may request that the examination score be recalculated to determine whether clerical errors were made at the time of grading. Such requests must be made in writing within thirty (30) days of the date of mailing of the results of the examination to the candidate. Members of the Test Construction Committee will recalculate the candidate's score and report the results to the Board for its action. The report of the Test Construction Committee will be considered final and a second recalculation will not be considered. An appropriate administrative fee will be charged for the review.

## **Frequently Asked Questions for Certification Maintenance (CM)**

### **Q: What is CM?**

A: Certification Maintenance (CM) is the Board certification program that involves continuous professional development and assures that an ABOMP Board certified oral pathologist is committed to lifelong learning and competency in oral and maxillofacial pathology.

### **Q: What are the benefits of CM?**

A: CM is recognized as an important quality marker by insurers, hospitals, quality and credentialing organizations as well as the federal government. Through the CM program, Board certified physicians and dentists advance the standard of specialty medical and dental care nationwide.

### **Q: What does the CM program consist of?**

A: In brief, the CM process, and the CM Examination application, requires Diplomates to submit documentation in the following areas: Part I - Professional Standing Part II - Lifelong Learning and Self-Assessment Part III - Cognitive Expertise (assessed through the certification maintenance examination itself) Part II consists of the following requirements:

Each Diplomate **must** maintain a minimum of 40 hours every 2 years of pathology-related continuing education sponsored by the AAOMP, or by an ADA/CERP-approved provider, or by an organization or institution accredited by the AMA Council on Medical Education. Diplomates practicing outside the United States must maintain 40 hours of equivalent continuing education every two years. As many as 5 hours per year may be earned as faculty participating in these CE programs.

Each two-year cycle, beginning the year after certification, must add up to 40 hours. Of these, 80% (32 hours) must be pathology-related continuing education courses with an additional 20% (8 hours) that are

relevant to your scope of practice. Copies of completion certifications/CE letters documenting your attendance and the number of hours earned must be uploaded for each course listed. List CE courses individually by title, not generically such as "oral pathology CE seminars at University XYZ".

What qualifies:

- Pathology-related courses - both anatomic and clinical pathology
- Laboratory management courses (not to exceed 5 hrs/year)
- Presenter at a CE course - 1 to 1 CE hours as presenter, 5 hrs/year maximum (In most cases the course sponsor will provide a CE certificate for the speaker. If not, Diplomates should upload a copy of the program, which should list the speaker(s) and the CE hours.)

What doesn't qualify:

- CE for writing and/or publishing a manuscript
- Shifting "extra: presenter CE from one year to the next (example: candidate earned 10 CEs as a presenter in year 4 and none in year 3. Only 5 total CE hrs may be claimed.)
- CE for lectures given as a faculty at your institution (example: Systemic pathology lectures given to dental students as an expected part of your employment.)

As part of those 40 hours, each Diplomate must participate each year in at least one diagnostic oral and maxillofacial pathology self-assessment program acceptable to the ABOMP. Acceptable programs are defined by the Board of Directors.

1. ABOMP Head and Neck Case Review Program
2. AAOMP Continuing Competency Assurance Program

Virtual slide programs related to Head and Neck Pathology may be available from the College of American Pathologists (CAP) and the United States and Canadian Academy of Pathology (USCAP). Courses that are suitable for ABOMP CE credit will be determined by a simple majority vote of the Board of Directors. If there are any questions regarding the eligibility of the course, please contact the Board prior to registering for the course.

If you do not participate in an annual slide program, you are in jeopardy of early expiration of your certification status. You will not get your annual registration card, and verification requests will state that you are not fully compliant with Certification Maintenance. If you miss a year of participation in a slide program, you may make up that year, as well as participate in the current year's program. If you are not fully compliant by December 31 of that make-up year, you will be dropped as an active Diplomate of the Board.

**Q: Were there any other acceptable programs for diagnostic oral and maxillofacial pathology self-assessment in the past?**

A: Yes, there were other programs which would be accepted for credit. Below is a table of both past and presently approved ABOMP oral and maxillofacial pathology self-assessment programs.

<i>Year</i>	AAOMP CCAP	ABOMP Head and Neck Case Review Program	Temple CCAP	AFIP Case of the Month
2002	X	X	X	X
2003	X	X	X	X
2004	X	X	X	N/A
2005	X	X	X	N/A
2006	X	X	X	N/A
2007	X	X	X	N/A
2008	X	X	X	N/A
2009	X	X	X	N/A
2010	X	X	X	N/A
2011	X	X	X	N/A
2012+	X	X	N/A	N/A

*CCAP (Continuing Competency Assurance Program)*

**Q: When do Diplomates with time-limited/continuous certification certificates need to submit their CM requirements?**

A: While the application is only required at the time of application to take the CM examination, all time-limited Diplomates must stay current in documenting their CM participation. Documentation consists of listing all CE and slide study courses participated in as well as uploading the earned certificates. At total of 40 CE credits must be documented per two-year cycle. This documentation will be reviewed annually by the ABOMP Directors and deficiencies may be made up in the following year. If the Diplomate is not fully compliant by December 31 of that make-up year, they will be dropped as an active Diplomate of the Board.

**Q: If a Diplomate has obtained more than the required minimum CE credits, does the Diplomate need to enter and track all of the credits?**

A: Diplomates only need to enter and track the minimum required amount of CE credits in order to complete the form. Diplomates wanting to enter and track all obtained credits above and beyond the minimum CM requirements may do so without it affecting approval of the form.

**Q: When does a Diplomate have to take the CM examination?**

A: Your opportunity to recertify begins seven years from the date on your certificate and continues until the 10th year. The Board will send you a notice of the need to recertify beginning one year before your first date of eligibility for recertification and will continue to send reminders on a yearly basis until the 10th year.

Regardless of the date at which the CM process is completed, the anniversary date for CM will be derived from the initial certification date. For example, a Diplomate who is initially certified in 2004 and completes all CM requirements in 2011 will start their 10-year cycle again in 2014.

**Q: Do Diplomates with lifetime certificates need to participate in the CM program?**

A: Participation in CM by Diplomates with non-time-limited/ongoing certification certificates is voluntary however the ABOMP strongly encourages them to do so.

**Q: When does a Diplomate with a lifetime certificate but participating voluntarily in CM have to take the CM examination?**

A: Diplomates with a lifetime certificate don't ever have to take the CM examination. However, there are reasons to voluntarily take the CM examination. Insurers, hospitals, quality and credentialing organizations as well as the federal government may encourage or require such certification maintenance. In addition, if testifying as an expert witness, a Diplomate could be asked when his or her last certification or CM exam was taken. The general timing required of the time-limited/ongoing certification certificate holders would seem to be the appropriate manner in which a voluntary participant would like to mirror.

**Q: What happens if a Diplomate with a lifetime certificate fails the CM examination?**

A: If a Diplomate with a lifetime certificate does not successfully complete all requirements of the CM process, including passing the CM examination there are no consequences of failure to a Diplomate with a lifetime certificate. The Diplomate can continue to challenge the CM examination in subsequent years. The application process for taking the CM examination is identical for all applicants to the CM examination.

**Q: How will the CM examination be conducted?**

A: In the same general format as the initial ABOMP certification examination. The CM examination will be a closed-book assessment based on knowledge that a competent oral pathologist would be expected to possess without access to reference material. It will consist of 50 multiple choice questions with appropriate illustration.

**Q: What happens if a Diplomate with a time-limited certificate fails the CM examination or is dropped for non-compliance?**

A: If a Diplomate with a time-limited certificate does not successfully complete all requirements of the CM process, including documenting 40 hours of CE every two years, participating annually in at least one approved diagnostic oral and maxillofacial pathology self-assessment program, and passing the CM examination, the Diplomate's Board certification will expire and he/she will no longer be listed as a Diplomate. These individuals may continue to participate in CM activities and may request to be reinstated when the CM requirements have been satisfied. Such a request must occur within five years of loss of certification. If such an individual wishes to regain certification after five years, he/she must retake the initial certification examination.

**Q: Do Diplomates with Emeritus status need to participate in CM activities?**

A: Diplomates with time-limited certificates who are granted Emeritus status will not be required to participate in CM activities, but Emeritus Diplomates who wish to return to active Diplomate status, will be required to participate in all parts of the CM process and complete the CM examination within one year of returning to active status.

**Q: Why does ABOMP deny CE credits that my state board accepts such as basic CPR?**

A: State boards accept all dental-related CE, ABOMP accepts only pathology-related CE and scope-of-practice CE.

**Q: My school requires faculty to take CE in various topics including courses related to teaching improvement. Is this acceptable?**

A: Yes. Up to 20% of courses that are not pathology-related but relevant to your scope of practice and employment requirements will be accepted and will count towards your CE minimum, including educational courses such as education models, effective communication, thinking strategies, team building, etc.

**Q: My state CLIA license requires me to take laboratory management courses. Are they acceptable for ABOMP?**

A: Yes - but total CE credit for laboratory management courses is not to exceed 5 hrs/year.

**Q: Are CE courses taken outside the U.S.A. eligible for CM credit?**

A: Yes. Pathology-related courses offered by the International Association of Oral & Maxillofacial Pathology and affiliated societies, European Society of Pathology, International Society of Pathology (numerous divisions), and the Canadian Dental Association are acceptable. It is up to the Diplomate to submit supporting documentation including detailed course description and objectives along with the certificate of attendance for validation.

**Q: Do Directors have to participate in CM?**

A: After submission of a fully compliant application, Director Designates will be administered the CM examination on the first day of the certification examination. All Directors will remain fully compliant with CM requirements during their directorship. Following completion of their term on the Board, the outgoing Director's certification cycle will begin on January 1 of the year following their last year of service on the Board plus ten years.