



# Continuous Certification Program Summary



The ABS Continuous Certification Program is designed to provide **flexible, high-quality, practice-relevant learning and assessment** to support surgeons in their practice as they maintain their ABS board certification.

## Continuous Certification Assessment

As part of this program, the Continuous Certification Assessment has replaced the traditional recertification exam for all ABS specialties and sub-specialties. The assessments focus on the latest and most important developments in their respective practice areas, to assist ABS diplomates in staying up to date.

## Assessment Structure



40-question, open-book assessment



Must be taken & passed every other year

- General surgery assessment is modular:
  - » 20 questions on core surgical principles
  - » 20 questions on a practice-related area of the diplomate's choosing
- Complex general surgery oncology, pediatric surgery, surgical critical care, and vascular surgery assessments are not modular at this time

## Assessment Details

- Take assessment using your own computer
  - Once assessment is started:
    - » Two weeks to complete
    - » Ability to save and continue later
    - » Individual questions are not timed
  - If taking more than one assessment, you can begin each assessment on a different date within assessment window
  - Immediate feedback provided
- Two attempts to answer correctly

**≥ 80%**

Final score of at least 80% correct needed to pass

**≥ 40%**

Must achieve 40% or higher on 1st attempt to receive a 2nd attempt

- A fail does not necessarily affect certification status — see information about the grace year on the following page.

**Topics and references for all assessments will be published in advance of the assessment window on the ABS website.**

## Enrollment

Diplomates are not required to complete their first assessment until the year in which their current certificate is due to expire.

All diplomates must continue to meet the other ongoing requirements of the ABS Continuous Certification Program.

See the next page for program requirements, registration and grace year information, and additional resources.

## Continuous Certification Program Requirements

Diplomates should keep their information regarding these requirements up to date in their ABS portal:

- A valid, full and unrestricted medical license
- Hospital/surgical center privileges if clinically active
- Adherence with the ABS Ethics & Professionalism policy
- Practice improvement: Ongoing participation in a local, regional or national outcomes registry or quality assessment program
- 150 Category-1 CME credits from the past five years, 50 of which must include self-assessment
  - » Requirement will change to 125 Category-1 CME credits with no self-assessment required after passing first assessment, beginning Jan. 1 of the year following the first successful assessment attempt
- Annual fee once participating in new assessment process

## Grace Year

A grace year will be offered the following year for diplomates who are enrolled in the program and do not complete or do not pass their assessment. These diplomates will not lose certification until the end of the grace year, as long as they are current with their annual fee payment and other program requirements.



Check your status and update your information at any time online in the [ABS Surgeon Portal](#).

## Advantages of the Continuous Certification Program

- Evaluates knowledge and judgment more relevant to a surgeon's daily practice
- Assures patients that ABS-certified surgeons are staying current in their area of practice
- Less need to prepare, less anxiety to take
- No travel or time away from practice

## Registration

Registration for all 2026 Continuous Certification Assessments will open on August 1, 2026. All assessments will be available from August 25 - November 3, 2026.

The last day to begin the assessment to ensure that you have two full weeks for completion is Tuesday, October 20, 2026.



See [www.absurgery.org](http://www.absurgery.org) for more info:

- [Continuous Certification Program Overview](#)
- [Continuous Certification Program Requirements](#)
- [Continuous Certification Assessment](#)
- [Continuing Medical Education \(CME\)](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)

Please make sure to keep your contact information in the [ABS Surgeon Portal](#) up to date for updates regarding Continuous Certification.

For specific questions, send an email to [cc@absurgery.org](mailto:cc@absurgery.org).