



**THE AMERICAN
BOARD OF SURGERY**

American Board of Surgery Update

Barbara Jalbert-Gerkens | Senior Examination Manager
AMERICAN BOARD OF SURGERY

Association of Residency Administrators in Surgery | May 1 – Atlanta

2026 Qualifying Exam (QE)

PGY-4 Applicants

Certifying Exam (CE)

Leave Policy / Required Weeks of Training

ABS Approval Letters

ABSITE

Program Portal

Topics

2026 Qualifying Exam



Dashboard

Hello, Barbara Jalbert Gerkens

Current Status: **Candidate**

Qualifying Examinations

Welcome to the American Board of Surgery certification process. To begin the application for the General Surgery Qualifying Examination (GSQE), click "*Complete your Exam Application*" below.

Applicants to the 2026 GSQE must submit all application materials by either the initial deadline (Apr. 13) or the late deadline (May 11). Due to the high volume of applications, **ABS verification will take a minimum of 7 to 10 business days and may be extend beyond these deadlines.**

Registration and payment of the separate \$1,525 exam fee may be completed after the application deadlines. Delays in completing the application and registration processes may result in the need for you to travel to a more distant center.

All tiles, except for the *Program Director Attestation** tile must have a *Completed* status to register for the exam and schedule your exam center.

The following application documents must be **verified** by the ABS to register for the GSQE:

1. AGCME General Surgery Defined Category and Minimum Report meeting ABS case number requirements;
2. ACLS or ALS, ATLS, FES, FLS, and ECFMG/LMCC (if applicable);
3. Documentation of satisfactory completion if training was completed in more than one program (if applicable);

Candidate Dashboard



The American Board
of Surgery

Dashboard

Personal Profile

Medical Training

Professional Standing

Apply & Register

Examination History

Payment History

Documents



Dashboard

Hello, Barbara Jalbert Gerkens

Current Status: **Candidate**



Action Required

Your application is incomplete.

Qualifying Examinations

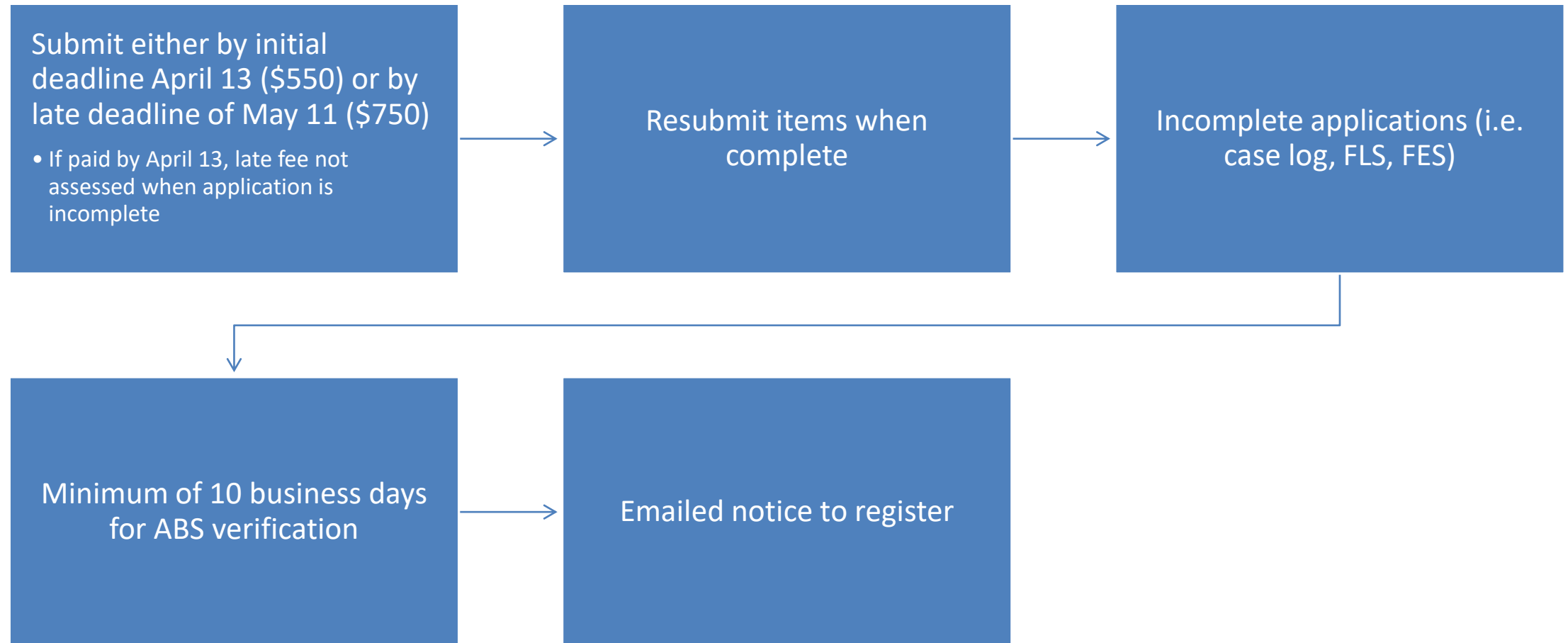
Welcome to the American Board of Surgery certification process. To begin the application for the General Surgery Qualifying Examination (GSQE), click *"Complete your Exam Application"* below.

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Application Deficiency



Deadlines

First Step/Submission of Application

Case log meeting ABS requirements (*850 total, 200 chief, 25 TA, & 40 surgical critical care patient management*)

- Defined Category Numbers - not relevant as part of QE application

ACLS/ALS, ATLS, FLS, and FES

If applicable

- ECFMG
- Documentation of satisfactory completion when training occurred in more than one program

All of the above must **verified** by the ABS before applicant can *register* for exam

*PGY-4 applicants must submit all of the above, except case log due in chief year



Not required by application (first step) deadlines



Complete registration form and pay \$1,525 exam fee



In 2 to 3 business days, Admission Card is posted to portal



Information on how to schedule center with Pearson



Registration/payment accepted
until one week prior to exam
date

Center availability very limited with
travel to a more distant center likely

Second Step/ Exam Registration

GME Section



Documentation when trained in more than one program



Upload ABS approval letters for:

Extension beyond June 30
Credit for foreign medical training
(1 to 3 years of credit)
International rotation
Flexible rotation
Six-year option (5 years of residency
completed over 6 years)



Upload AGCME letter approving PGY-4 chief rotations

2026 QE Wednesday, July 29, 2026

Encourage your residents: Apply and Register early!

Exam centers have limited capacity; will likely fill up well before exam, particularly in urban areas

Not able to intervene when delays results in inconvenient test centers

- Delays = may result in travel to a more distant center

Exam Structure



4 exam sessions of 115 minutes

Unable to review or change answers once a session has ended



A scheduled break may be taken after each session



A break “bank” of 70 minutes

Manage how to use break

Unused exam time from previous exam session added to the break bank

Pearson VUE does not monitor break time

ADA accommodation: learning differences and ADHD

- Formal request with comprehensive report from qualified professional
- Double exam time; exam administered over 2 days; in separate room



Lactation Accommodation:
increase in the break bank to
130 minutes



Pregnancy Accommodation:
frequent breaks with an
additional 15 minutes of exam
time for each of the 4 exam
sessions



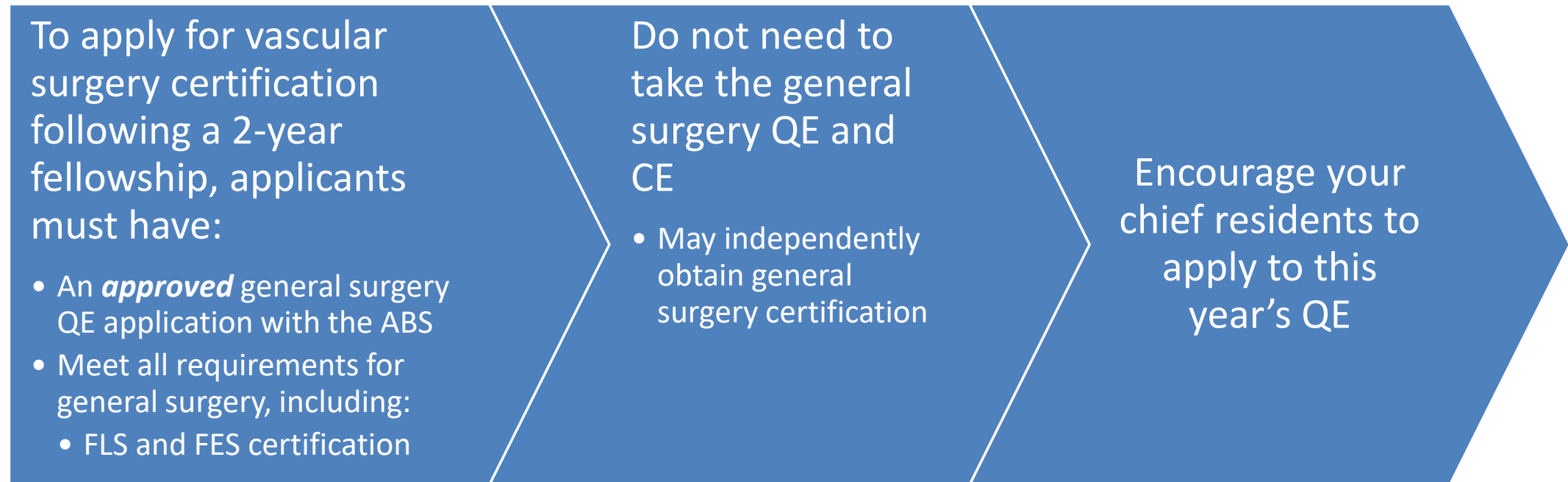
Other Medical Conditions such as, but not limited to:

- Glucose monitoring supplies, water, snacks, and/or medication



Early scheduling is essential

Testing Accommodations



Post-Residency – Vascular Surgery Fellowship

PGY-4 Applicants

QE After PGY-4

Must have program director endorsement for application access – due March 1



Counts as one of the four exam opportunities for the QE



QE results included in program's 3-year summary reports / first time pass rate

PGY-4 Applicants



QE application is ***contingently*** approved

ACLS, ATLS, FLS, and FES, required at time of application



Requirements for certification have not been met

5-years of progressive training

Case log meeting ABS case number requirements

A second program director attestation for chief year



Formal approval of QE application to enter into certification process



Receive CE registration access

Certifying Exam

Registering for Certifying Exam

Select/register for CE at the time QE results are posted

- Must pass QE to register for CE

Results of July 29, 2026 QE: available in apx. 4 to 6 weeks

- About mid- to late August 2026

A full & unrestricted medical license is required to ***register*** for the CE

- Not to *sit/take* for the CE
- CE offered either in November 2026 or March 2027

CE – Format

Exam will be virtual via Zoom

- Three sessions of 30 min.
- Must report 30 min. prior to first session for check-in with proctor

Prior to the exam

- Mandatory Attendance at a Candidate Technology Briefing
- Must be completed in the **same** physical location and with **same** equipment as on exam day

Most common cause of technical failure: internet connection on the candidates' end

- Less than 1%
- internet connection on the candidates' end

Leave Policy & Required Weeks of Training

An additional ***four weeks*** off is permitted twice in training:

Once in the first three years

Once in the last two years

Without family leave, training must total

144 weeks in first three years / 96 weeks in last two years

With family leave, training must total

140 weeks in first three years / 92 weeks in last two years

ABS Family Leave Policy

4 weeks of regular non-clinical time used for vacations, conferences, interviews, early departure for fellowship, etc.

4 weeks of leave time

Total of 8 weeks of non-clinical time

Preserving some non-clinical time for other uses, such as vacation time

Non-Clinical Time

ABS Approval Letters

Program's Responsibility

Must be requested by the program director on resident's behalf

- Allow a minimum of 3 to 4 weeks for processing
- Include Summative EPA Worksheet

Extensions of Training Beyond June 30

- Either for a medical leave or other off-cycle training

Training Waiver

International Rotations

Flexible Rotations

Six-Year Option

Credit for Foreign Training

ABS approval letter added to applicant/resident record



48 weeks of chief experience required



Chief rotations may be completed in PGY-4 with prior ACGME approval



ACGME Approval of PGY-4 chief

QE application

ABS approval for:

- Extension of Training
- International or Flexible Rotations

Leave Policy and Chief Experience



With *advance approval*

Extend training through end of August

- Considered as PGY-4 – if chief year is extended beyond August 31



Take that year's QE



Required: Final attestation from PD

When your resident completes training

Before your resident can selection a CE assignment

- If after August 31, dependent upon available spots in the exams

Extending Chief Year

Complete 5 clinical years over 6 academic years

- Not applicable when dedicated year(s) of research or for the completion of a fellowship are completed while in residency
- Include EPA Information with request

Training in a single program

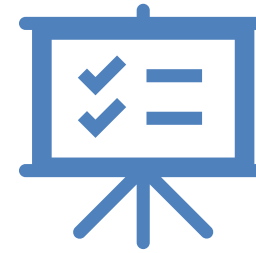
May take up to 12 months off, with prior ABS approval

Used for any purpose

Six-Year Option



Customize rotations



Must meet all application requirements

48 weeks of chief rotations in the content area of surgery

If flex rotation is in chief year and is **not** in content area of surgery:

- **Must** include ACGME approval of PGY-4 chief rotations for the ABS to consider the request

Flexible Rotations

International Rotations

ABS accepts rotations –
minimum 2 weeks in
length

If rotation is completed
during chief year,
request ***must*** include
ACGME approval of a
PGY-4 chief rotation

Training Waiver



Extended leave from residency for any reason



Training extended to meet required weeks



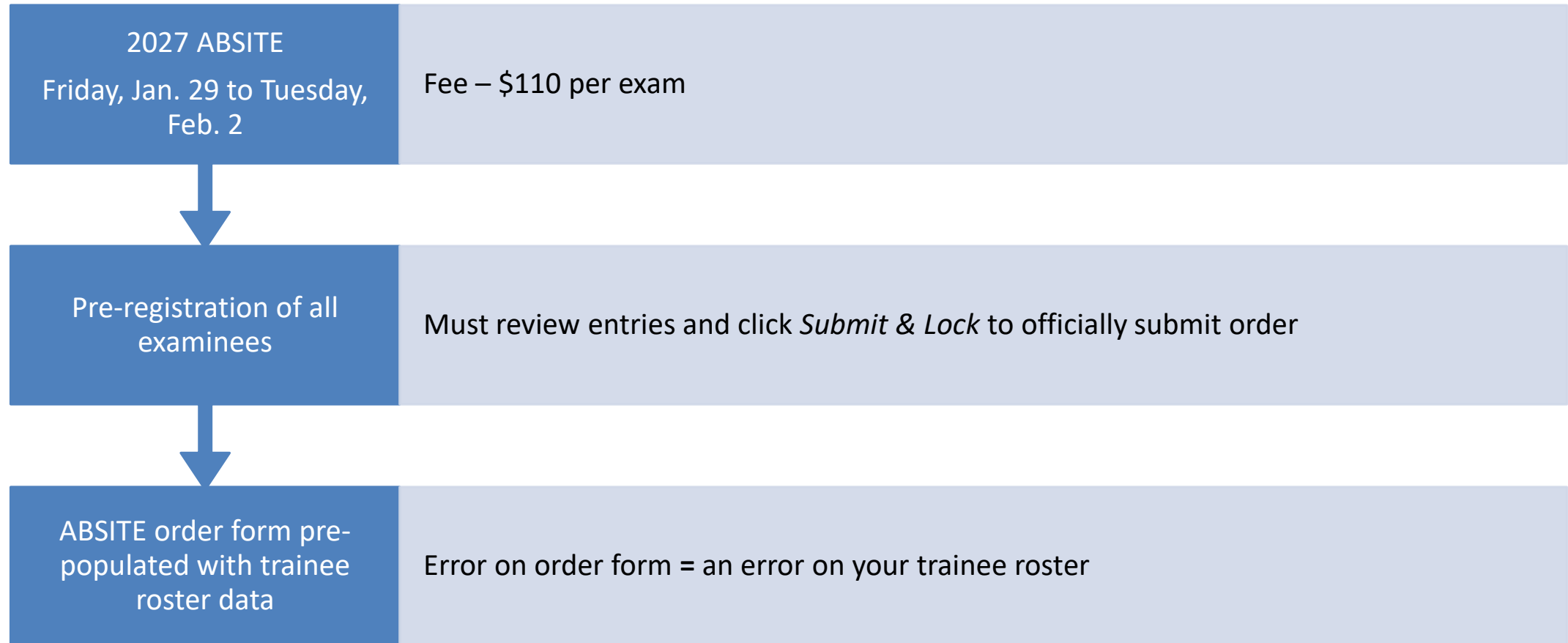
Waiver – anchored in competency-based training with EPAs

Summative Entrustment Worksheet & Program EPA
Participation Program Profile
Rotations schedule/case log



May reduce length of training extension

ABSITE



2027 ABSITE

2027 ABSITE

ABSITE is open to:

- Trainees in a clinical position
- Trainees currently in research/lab year(s)
- Trainees hosted from another ACGME-accredited program
- Former residents (either prelim or categorical) and who left residency no more than 24 months ago

ABSITE is not open to faculty

A scheduled, optional, 45-minute break during the exam

- Available to all residents, including for those who are lactating and may not require an accommodation of extra exam time

ABSITE Order Form Includes:

Name of *all* examinees

Clinical Level or Non-Roster Trainee

Host program – must be an ACGME general surgery program

Testing Accommodations (time and a half 1.5x/double time 2x)

- **Offered by the Program (not ABS) and noted on order form**
 - Not a guarantee of accommodation on QE
 - Additional exam time may not be needed for lactating residents as 45-minute break between exam session is an option



Registration Codes

- Unique to each resident; **Not** transferrable
- Order form = **final exam data** (not trainee roster)
 - *Name/clinical level as listed on order form will appear on results*
- Corrections to name/clinical levels are not accepted:
 - After order change window closes
 - Once exam window has started
 - After exam has concluded
 - Once results are provided to program

Changes to ABSITE Order



Minimum of two business days
to make change

No same day changes

No changes once the window opens

No changes after completion of the
exam

No changes once results are posted



\$350 fee per change

Every resident's answers are compared

- Performance on new vs. used questions
- Response time
- Item visits
- A shared history: even if matches are from different programs

Identifies irregular behavior where likelihood of a match occurring randomly

- less than ~ 1 in 31.5 million

Data Forensics – Caveon Test Security



Exam Irregularities

- When an irregularity or a security violation occurs:
 - PD notified and asked to investigate
 - **All** results withheld pending outcome of investigation
 - Flagged results of ***all parties involved*** withheld permanently
 - Inform your residents of the consequences
 - Subsequent offense: may result with exam held at Pearson VUE and with all add'l expenses paid by the program
 - Any disciplinary actions: at program director's discretion



ABSITE Results

- **Only** parent program will receive the results
 - Once fee is paid in **full** and seating chart is received
 - Will **not** discuss with residents; **referred** to program
 - Results –posted to portal in *Documents*
 - Transcripts *are not available to residents or any third party*
 - Encourage your residents to save their reports to their personal files

Program Portal



Final deadline approaching! 2026 General Surgery QE applications are due by May 11. For a complete list of requirements that are due at the time of application, see [here](#).

[Surgeon Log In](#)[Program Log In](#)

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**PROGRAM
PORTAL**

 Dashboard

 Program Pass Rates

 Program Information

 Letters & Requests

 Trainee Rosters

 Documents

 Payment History

 Contact Us



Program Dashboard

Welcome, Shannon King!

Other-Community Hospital (9999G)

 **Update Program Information**

To review and update the program's mailing address, click ***View /Update Information.***

[View/Update Information](#)

 **Program Letters & Requests**

To submit a *Change Program Director, ITE Order Change, Remove Trainee Record from Roster, or Trainee Name Change* request, please click ***View /Update Information.*** In 2026, program letter requests will also be available for submission via this tile.

Beginning Jan. 31st until Feb. 11th, each 2026 *PSITE and VSITE Order Change* submission will result in a \$350 fee PER change.

[View/Update Information](#)

Program Dashboard

PROGRAM
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Documents

Interpretation Guides

Search:

Name
2026 Surgery In-Training Results Interpretation Guide.pdf
2025 Surgery In-Training Results Interpretation Guide.pdf
2024 Surgery In-Training Results Interpretation Guide.pdf
2023 Surgery In-Training Results Interpretation Guide.pdf
2022 Surgery In-Training Results Interpretation Guide.pdf

Showing 1 to 5 of 5 entries

All Documents

Search:

Name	Type	Uploaded
SeatingChart-2026-663-20251124.pdf	pdf	11/24/2025
2025-2026 General Surgery Program Director Update Letter.pdf	pdf	10/7/2025
2025 GQE Candidate Letters (9999G).zip	zip	2/10/2025
2025 GQE Candidate Letters (9999G).pdf	pdf	2/10/2025
2024 ABSITE Seating Chart (9999G).pdf	pdf	1/2/2024
General Surgery Qualifying Examination - Planning Ahead.pdf	pdf	12/13/2023
TESTAAAAAAAAAAAAATEST2(9999G).zip	zip	3/15/2023
TESTAAAAAAAAAAAAATEST(9999G).zip	zip	3/14/2023
2023 In-Training Examination Report of Performance - Report C (9999G).pdf	pdf	2/21/2023
2023 In-Training Examination Report of Performance - Report C (9999G).pdf.trashinfo	trashinfo	2/17/2023

Showing 1 to 10 of 16 entries

Program Documents

- Repository/Historical Resource for
- Program update letters
- Reports of candidate performance/3-year summary
- ABSITE results
- QE letters for past residents

Program Director Change

Program Administrators

Update Program Name & Address

Program
Information
Tile

Trainee roster page

- Instructions on how to complete
- View-only mode for submitted roster

2025-2026 Roster (Submitted & Locked)

This roster is in view-only mode because it has either been submitted or the deadline has passed. You can submit a name change request through the Letters & Request page. For additional updates, please contact ABS for support.

Search:

Download

Last Name	First Name	NPI	Type of Position	Previous Clinical Level	Current Clinical Level	Anticipated Completion Year	View
Jalbert Gerkens	Barbara	111111111	Categorical Resident		Clinical Level 1	2030	
Shen2	Jack2	0980809452	Categorical Resident	Clinical Level 1	Clinical Level 2	2026	

Showing 1 to 2 of 2 entries

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Trainee Roster



**Quickest path to the least stressful
ABSITE and QE**

Accurate rosters

***All information is provided and verified by
the program (not the ABS)***

ALL fields are editable - make corrections!



Roster is the *foundation* for

Access to the 2027 QE application

- Each resident must be listed ***as a level 5 and completing in 2027*** to have access to next year's QE

- No QE letter = listed incorrectly on roster

ABSITE

- Not on order form = not listed on trainee roster
- Adding resident to order will **NOT** add resident to trainee roster

New with 2026 Roster Update

Anticipated
graduation date

Indicate completion
of FLS and FES
certification

For all residents in
program, not only
chief residents

Should be
completed earlier in
training, preferably
by the PGY-2

Field/check box
added to trainee
roster

Not as check off at
the end of training

Program Letters & Requests

PROGRAM
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Other-Community Hospital (999990) 

Program Letters & Requests

Submit a Request

Type of Request

--Select Request Type--

--Select Request Type--
Change Program Director
Trainee Name Change
Remove Trainee Record from Roster



 There are currently no pending requests.

Rejected Requests

Search:

Name	Request Type	Note	Submitted Date	Rejected Date
taker, test	Roster Name Change	TEST	1/25/2025	3/3/2026
Taker, Test	ITE Add Examinee	TEST /sk	1/12/2026	1/16/2026

Showing 1 to 2 of 2 entries

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1

>

Verified Requests

Search:

Name	Request Type	Notes	Submitted Date	Accepted Date
Shen2, Jack2	Roster Name Change		3/3/2026	3/3/2026

Showing 1 to 1 of 1 entry

Questions ?????

In-Training Exams:
Shannon King,
sking@absurgery.org

QEs: Barbara Jalbert-
Gerken,
bjgerkens@absurgery.org

CEs: Nicole Gifford,
ngifford@absurgery.org

SCORE: James Giblin,
jgiblin@surgicalcore.org



Thank you!
For your efforts on behalf of
your program and residents