ABS Continuous Certification Program
Grace Year

The ABS understands that sometimes there are factors that prevent diplomates from completing their assessment during the designated window and is pleased to offer the grace year opportunity to diplomates in an effort to provide more flexibility for diplomates who wish to continue their certification.

What is a grace year?
A grace year is provided to a diplomate enrolled in the ABS Continuous Certification Program who does not complete an assessment when it is due or is unsuccessful in their assessment attempt in a given year.

How do I secure a grace year?
Grace years are available to everyone in good standing and participating in the Continuous Certification Program. In order to secure a grace year, diplomates must be up to date on their annual fee payment. Diplomates who do not remit payment for their annual fee in the year that they are due to complete an assessment will not automatically receive a grace year in the following year and will lose their certification on Dec. 31 of that year. These diplomates will be listed as "Not Certified" until their outstanding balance has been paid. Following payment of an outstanding balance, the grace year will be reinstated along with a "Certified" certification status.

Diplomates with expiring 10-year certificates

Diplomates with expiring 10-year certificates who are enrolling in the Continuous Certification Program for the first time must be up to date on all ongoing certification requirements, including payment of the annual fee and completion of the program attestation, in order to receive a grace year in the following year.

How do I know that I have been extended a grace year?
The ABS portal will not explicitly state that a diplomate has been extended a grace year. Following the reverification date in Jan. 2026, all ABS diplomate statuses will be updated to reflect current standing. Those who have been extended a grace year will have a “Next Assessment Due” date of Fall 2026.

How do I get out of the grace year?
Diplomates entering a grace year (in 2026) must pass their assessment during the 2026 assessment window in order to remain certified. If you do not pass or do not complete the 2026 assessment, you will lose your certification on Dec. 31, 2026.
Following completion of the assessment in your grace year in 2026, your next regularly scheduled assessment will be due in 2027.

Next steps
In order to register for and complete your assessment in the grace year, you must be up to date on all ongoing program requirements. We encourage you to log in to your ABS portal periodically throughout the year to check that your requirements are up to date.
We will contact you by Aug. 2026 with information about the 2026 Continuous Certification Assessments.