



American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology, Inc.

A Member Board of the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS)

Article-Based Continuing Certification (ABCC) Pathway

Frequently Asked Questions

Overview and Design

What is the Article-Based Pathway?

The Article-Based Continuing Certification Pathway (ABCC) is an online alternative option to the traditional ten-year CC/recertification exam. Diplomates will complete a set of article exams every 3-year block for each ABPN certification enrolled in the ABCC Pathway. Successful completion of the exams for every 3-year block will satisfy the assessment requirement in lieu of taking the traditional 10-year CC/recertification exam. Diplomates will still need to complete all other Continuing Certification (CC) Program requirements (CME, Self-Assessment (SA), and PIP) to remain certified. Maintaining certification requires staying current with all CC Program requirements, including successful completion of the article exams during ongoing 3-year blocks.

The article-based pathway is available for all ABPN-administered specialties and subspecialties excluding Brain Injury Medicine, Pain Medicine, Sleep Medicine (*see Multi-Disciplinary Specialties (MDS) section*), and Neurocritical Care. Neurocritical Care ABCC pathway will begin in 2025. The ABCC Pathway is the default option for all diplomates with active certification(s) with the option to instead choose the Exam Pathway. Diplomates can choose either the ABCC or Exam Pathway for each of their certifications.

Diplomates should use their Physician Portal as their primary resource for personalized certification status and requirements, including their ABCC Pathway timeline and progress.

Will ABPN continue to offer the traditional ten-year recertification exam?

Diplomates will still have the option to take the traditional ten-year recertification exam instead of participating in the article-based pathway. The ABCC Pathway will be the default assessment option for current and new diplomates unless the exam option is chosen. Diplomates will be able to select their assessment pathway in their Physician Portal. While diplomates can revert to the traditional CC/recertification exam, diplomates who prefer the article-based pathway will need to complete the first set of ABCC articles by the end of their current 3-year CC block, otherwise they will be moved to the traditional ten-year recertification exam.

How often do diplomates need to complete the article exams?

Diplomates need to successfully complete a set of article exams every 3-year block for each certification. If a diplomate does not complete the required number of article exams by the end of any of their respective 3-year blocks, then they will need to take the traditional recertification exam.

How many article exams do diplomates need to complete?

The Physician Portal will indicate how many article exams a diplomate needs to complete per certification, and the deadline to complete article exams. Diplomates participating in the ABCC Pathway for one active certification need to pass 30 out of 40 article exams every 3-year block.

ABPN diplomates will be required to read a minimum of 30 articles but no more than 40 articles and answer 4 out of 5 questions correctly on the first attempt for 30 journal article exams.

Diplomates with multiple certifications complete a combined total number of exams (*see info in Multiple Certifications section*).

Number of Certification(s)	Total Article Exams to Pass every 3-year block	Number of attempted article exams allowed
1	30	40
2	50	67
3	70	93
4	90	120

Does ABPN provide access to the journal articles?

While the ABPN will provide links on its website to the journal articles, diplomates are responsible for accessing the articles. Diplomates may choose to contact their professional associations, medical schools, or local libraries to determine if the articles are available at low or reduced cost as part of their affiliation or appointment.

How do I access the article exam questions?

The article exams are accessed online through your ABPN Physician Portal in the *Assessments* section during your 3-year CC block. The article exam platform can be accessed online anywhere and at any time.

How much time do I have to complete the questions?

Diplomates have until the end of their 3-year block to complete the required number of article exams indicated in their Physician Portal. The questions are not timed after an article is opened. Diplomates can log in and out of the questions as much as needed prior to submitting the answers for scoring of an article exam.

Once an article exam is open, a diplomate is committed to completing that exam before another article exam is opened. Therefore, ABPN strongly recommends diplomates access and read an article *prior* to opening the exam related to that article. ABPN will not close out an article exam, even if a diplomate did not intend to access it.

Can I refer back to the article? Is it open book?

Yes. Diplomates can refer to an article as many times as needed, as the questions are derived directly from the information presented in the article. The questions/answers do not reference any external information or sources.

Can diplomates share or discuss the questions and answers?

While diplomates are welcome to discuss the articles, sharing of article exam questions and answers is strictly prohibited by the ABPN and would be considered **irregular behavior** and subject to possible disciplinary action according to [ABPN's policies](#).

Are there samples or tutorials I can view prior to opting into the Article-Based Pathway?

Diplomates can view question samples and a tutorial overview of the platform on our website. It is recommended that diplomates view the informative tutorial to familiarize themselves on how to navigate the exam platform and complete the exams.

How many article exams can be completed per category?

Each certification includes ten main content categories that are covered on the traditional recertification exam. Diplomates can pass up to 4 articles per category.

How often are new articles added?

New articles are continuously added to the article catalog. Older articles will be phased out over time. A new article list will be presented each 3-year block.

Who chooses the articles and writes the questions?

The ABPN Test Writing Committees include nominated members from the ABPN and from professional societies. The Committees develop a content outline, select journal articles relevant to clinical practice, and write questions related to those articles. All articles are nominated, reviewed, and selected by the committees based solely upon their quality, relevance to a particular area on a content outline, and their relevance to clinical practice. The articles reflect topics on the content outline. Diplomates are welcome to submit recommendations of current articles for the committee's consideration.

Is the article-based pathway available for initial specialty or subspecialty certification examinations?

No, examinees must take the traditional proctored and computerized examination for initial specialty and subspecialty certifications. The article-based pathway is an alternative assessment option to the traditional CC/recertification exam.

Exam Materials

How often are new articles added to the program?

Every three years, test takers will have a refreshed selection of articles and exams to choose from. For each of the specialties and subspecialties in our ABCC program, we provide a minimum of 40 articles for exams. Additional articles may be made available during your three-year block; if so, they will generally be added on or around January 15.

How are the articles chosen and the questions written?

The ABPN's ABCC exam development committees comprise diplomates certified in the corresponding specialty or subspecialty. Each committee develops a content outline, selects journal articles, and writes questions related to those articles. Articles are nominated, reviewed, and selected by the committees based upon their quality and relevance to clinical practice. The committees also consider article accessibility and cost, along with ensuring that there is variety of subject matter (in the context of the specialty or subspecialty content outline) and of article type (e.g., review articles, practice guidelines, original research studies). Diplomates are welcome to submit recommendations of recently published articles for the committee's consideration.

Is there a cost to access the articles?

The ABPN does not publish articles and is therefore dependent on the original publishers. All articles used in the ABCC program include links to the publisher website, where you can get direct access to the article. Depending on the article, some will be open access and others have a paywall, requiring you to buy the article if you do not already have an account with the publisher. The cost of articles is determined by the publisher and may change over time. ABPN does not have any control over the publisher's cost.

Most of the articles chosen are free to everyone. Others are freely available to members of the professional societies in that field. Post-article-exam surveys indicate that the vast majority of ABCC test-takers did not have to pay to access the article. However, some articles will have a cost for some diplomates; in those cases, the committee determined that, despite the paywall, the article is important to include as an option. Remember that you have a choice of articles across the content categories.

For articles with a paywall, you may be able to access it through your institution, a hospital library, or a public library. ABPN often seeks to include articles that are from major publications with good domestic distribution. In some cases, the article or journal may be accessible through membership with a professional society.

You will be able to see whether an article has a paywall prior to committing to an exam. ABPN strongly recommends a diplomate not open a mini-exam until *after* they have accessed the article related to that mini-exam. Once a mini exam is open, it must be completed.

What types of questions are asked on the ABCC exams?

The questions are designed to capture the top points and takeaways from the article. The questions for each article often include some of the following:

- Questions that require one to apply knowledge from the article in a clinical scenario
- Important facts and findings from the article that one should know
- General conclusions from the article
- Limitations of the article
- Significant elements of a study's design and methods

Does the ABPN write questions that are designed to be confusing?

Our committees are directed to write questions that are straightforward. We specifically ask committee members to avoid writing questions that are needlessly confusing or that would mislead the test-taker, and all questions are reviewed, rewritten if necessary, and approved by the entire committee to help live up to these goals.

However, please recognize that the questions do require you to read the article, understand it, and be able to apply its implications to clinical care. Because the ABCC examinations are 'open book' in lieu of secure, proctored 10-year recertification exams, we cannot ask questions that are so simple, or so repetitive of article content, that any literate layperson could answer the question merely by hunting in the article for the answer. Therefore, the ABCC questions are necessarily more challenging than the typical review questions you may be used to answering as part of CME activities.

On occasion, an inadvertently unclear question does get through our review processes and onto an exam. We ask for feedback after each and every article exam. If a question does seem unfair or poorly written, please tell us so in the feedback section. We read all the feedback and will review the question to see if there is an issue that needs to be

addressed. If it is determined that a question needs to be rewritten or discarded, we will grant you credit for that question on exams already scored. (We will notify you if we have rescored any exams that you have taken previously).

How is the ABCC Pathway incorporated into the ABPN’s Strategic Action Plan regarding Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion?

When choosing articles for the program, our exam development committees specifically [consider articles that highlight health disparities](#) and other challenges faced by different demographics and population groups.

We also strive to develop exam materials that are unbiased and inclusive for all test-takers. Our exam committees review all question materials in detail for wording that might perpetuate stereotypes, be culturally insensitive, or in any way misrepresent a demographic or other groups.

Our internal guidance on developing inclusive examinations was based after careful review of guidance developed by other organizations, including the National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME) and the American Medical Association (AMA), as well as the advice of the content experts on our committees.

Our committee members themselves bring a broad wealth of perspectives and experiences to their work, including representing a wide range of demographic characteristics. The ability of our members to contribute toward our DEI goals is an important factor that we consider when reviewing new potential candidates for committee membership.

Can diplomates share or discuss the questions and answers?

You are required to complete this exam by yourself. It is prohibited to consult other people on the content of exam questions, to share the questions or their answers, or to discuss the questions in a group setting. This prohibition also precludes using ‘answer keys’ prepared by others or artificial intelligence applications to answer the questions. All of these approaches would constitute irregular behavior (i.e. cheating) and would accordingly be subject to action by the ABPN. Before taking each article exam, you will be asked to attest that you have not shared or discussed the questions or answers.

Can diplomates discuss the articles?

The articles that we choose for the program are publicly available and we encourage our diplomates to discuss the articles with their peers, including in group settings or journal clubs. One of the aims of the program is to provide enrichment for clinical practice by presenting diplomates with current research and viewpoints in their specialties. Please note that ABPN does not endorse the content of the articles in the program; they are provided for educational value.

Can I use artificial intelligence (“AI”) assistance in taking the ABCC exams?

It is strictly prohibited to use AI platforms (e.g., ChatGPT) to help you answer exam questions. Uploading exam questions into ChatGPT’s servers is a breach of confidentiality and constitutes irregular exam taking behavior (i.e. cheating). Before taking each article exam, you will be asked to attest that you will not use AI assistance.

What if I disagree with a question or answer?

Diplomates may leave feedback on a specific question. Even after completing an exam, diplomates can return to a question to leave direct feedback. Feedback will be logged and reviewed by the Exam committee. If a committee revises a question, diplomates will be notified by email of the rescoring. Once the Exam Committee has reviewed a disputed question, the determination of the Committee is final and binding.

I left feedback... why haven't I heard back?

All feedback that you leave through the testing platform is read and considered by ABPN staff. Please note that, due to the large volume of feedback that we get, we do not respond individually to test takers regarding their comments or questions related to the material. In some cases, your feedback may lead to a review of the question by the exam committee. If a change is made, all test takers whose score was impacted will be alerted by email.

Can I participate in the process?

There are a couple of different ways to participate in the exam creation process for ABPN.

All diplomates can nominate articles for possible use in the program using [this link](#).

You can also apply for consideration to join a test committee as a member. To do so, see [details on this page](#). Please note that we have a large number of people who apply for a small number of committee openings in any given year.

Eligibility

Who can participate in the Article-Based Pathway?

All ABPN diplomates can participate in the article-based pathway beginning in 2022. **See *Rollout/Transition Schedule* section.**

Which certifications are eligible?

All ABPN certifications are eligible, with the exception of the subspecialty exams administered by other ABMS member boards. Diplomates who hold a Brain Injury Medicine, Pain Medicine and Sleep Medicine certification should contact the respective administering boards to inquire about available longitudinal assessment (Part III) options. Neurocritical Care article exams will be available in 2025.

Is there an application or enrollment?

Beginning 2022, the ABCC Pathway became the default assessment option for all active certifications. Diplomates can change their assessment pathway in the Continuing Certification *Enrollment* section in Physician Portal.

How do new diplomates enroll in the ABCC Pathway?

The ABCC Pathway will be the default assessment option for all diplomates entering the CC Program in 2022 (certified in 2012 and beyond). Diplomates can switch to the Exam Pathway in the Continuing Certification *Enrollment* section in Physician Portal.

Will diplomates be able to switch between assessment pathway options?

Diplomates must complete their first set of article exams by the end of their first current 3-year block if they wish to remain in the ABCC Pathway. Diplomates will be moved to the traditional recertification exam pathway if they do not complete the required amount of article exams. In this case, the traditional exam must be passed in the tenth year from last passing the exam. Diplomates have the option to switch assessment pathway per certification in the Continuing Certification *Enrollment* section in Physician Portal. **Diplomates with a 2012-2014 awarded certificate have until 12/15/2024 to successfully complete the article-based pathway or pass the traditional recertification to remain certified.**

If I have an ADA qualifying disability, may I apply for accommodations for the Article-Based Pathway?

Yes, in accordance with the ADA, where feasible the ABPN's public services are administered in a manner that best ensures equal access to individuals with documented qualifying disabilities who demonstrate and request a need for accommodation(s) or auxiliary aides, provided that the requested accommodation is reasonable, not unduly burdensome and does not fundamentally alter the measurement of the skills or knowledge being assessed.

As such, requests for changes in the duration of a 3-year block, extensions to a 3-year block, the number of article exams needing to be successfully completed or any other alteration in the grading or assessment will be deemed to fundamentally alter the measurement of the skills or knowledge being assessed and **will not be granted** by the ABPN.

The ABPN's [ADA policy](#) may be found on the ABPN Policy page. Individuals seeking appropriate ADA accommodations should complete and submit the ABPN's [Application for Testing Accommodations](#) **in advance of any applicable 3-year block**.

As a one-time exception, those participating in ABCC during the 2022-2024 and 2023-2025 3-year blocks will be allowed to submit their applications for Testing Accommodations through April 1, 2024.

For those beginning ongoing participation in ABCC in 2024 and later, completed applications for testing accommodations must be received by February 1, of the year they enter the ABCC pathway.

Rollout/Transition Schedule

When do I begin the article exams?

The article-based pathway option begins in 2022 for all diplomates.

- Diplomates already in the CC program will automatically transition to a 2022-2024 block of requirements and have until the end of 2024 to complete the first set of article exams.



- Diplomates must complete the article exams every 3-year block to remain in the ABCC Pathway, or they will be required to pass the traditional recertification exam. There is no working ahead to complete future block article exams. Diplomates must be current with all CC Program requirements, as well pass article exams, to proceed to next 3-year CC block.
- Diplomates with lapsed/expired, invalidated, or Lifetime certificate(s) should refer to the ***lapsed/expired re-entry section***.

Diplomates should refer to their **Physician Portal** for their ABCC Pathway timeline and progress.

I am due for my recertification exam in 2022, 2023, 2024 and participated in the Part III Pilot Project. Will the exams I completed during the Pilot count?

Yes. For diplomates due for a recertification exam in 2022-2024, any passed Pilot exams will count towards the 2022-2024 block of articles. Article exam results are saved in the Physician Portal. **Diplomates should refer to their**

Physician Portal Assessments section as the primary source of information regarding the number of article exams needed to complete the 2022-2024 block requirements. Diplomates due for a recertification exam in 2022-2024 have until 12/15/2024 to successfully complete the article-based pathway or pass the traditional recertification to remain certified.

If I just became Board certified, can I wait until my 10-year recertification exam due date to opt in the Article-Based Pathway?

No. Diplomates must complete the article exams per 3-year block, beginning in 2022. Diplomates who do not complete their article exams by the end of a 3-year block will revert to the Exam Pathway. Diplomates must complete article exams every 3-year block.

If a diplomate passes an initial subspecialty exam(s), those subspecialty article exam calculations/assignments begin the next full 3-year block.

I am behind on my CC Program requirements; can I begin participating in the article-based pathway?

Diplomates in the CC program in 2022 will retain their CC status (Meeting CC Requirements or Not Meeting CC Requirements) during the 2022-2024 block transition into the ABCC Pathway. Diplomates need to be up to date with the certification requirements to continue to be listed as certified but can participate in the article-based pathway by the end of the 2022-2024 CC block.

Successful completion of both the current block of requirements and ABCC Pathway are required to maintain certification. Diplomates who do not complete the CC requirements after two 3-year blocks (6 years) will no longer be certified. Such diplomates will be required to complete one block of requirements, and pass the assessment for each certificate they wish to recertify in.

See *Physician Portal* to review your status and any pending requirements.

Diplomates with Multiple Certifications

If I participate in the Article-Based Pathway for multiple certifications, is there a reduced number of article exams per certification?

Yes, diplomates who participate in the article-based pathway for multiple certifications will complete a reduced number of exams per certification. Diplomates must complete a minimum of 20 article exams per certification area. The additional 10 article exams may be selected and completed in any of their certification area (flexible based on diplomate’s choice).

Number of Certification(s)	Total Article Exams to Pass every 3-year block	Articles per Certification	Additional articles in any certification	Number of attempted article exams allowed
1	30	30	N/A	40
2	50	20 per certification	10 flexible	67
3	70	20 per certification	10 flexible	93
4	90	20 per certification	10 flexible	120

If I participate in the Article-Based Pathway for multiple certifications, do I qualify for a discounted annual fee per certificate?

The CC Program annual fee is determined by the number of certificates a diplomate holds. Payment of the annual fee covers annual reporting and verification of board certification, and participation in the article-based or exam pathway. Diplomates who hold multiple certifications will pay a **discounted fee**.

Can I opt to do the Article-Based Pathway for one certification, and the traditional exam for another certification?

Yes. Diplomates have the option to do either the Exam Pathway or the Article-Based Pathway for each of their certifications. Diplomates can choose their assessment pathway for each certificate in their Physician Portal Continuing Certification *Enrollment* section.

When do I complete the article exams for each certification?

Article exams are assigned, completed, and evaluated in ongoing three-year blocks, just as with the CME, Self-Assessment, and PIP requirements. All CC Program requirements must be completed by the end of each current 3-year block.

How do I recertify a lapsed subspecialty certification(s)?

If a diplomate is currently in the CC Program with an active initial certification or has an active Lifetime Certification but has a lapsed subspecialty certificate, they may regain certification for the lapsed certificate by submitting an article assessment application and recertification fee, and successful completion of 30 article exams by December 15th of the year of applying for the lapsed certification.

- Example: Psychiatry - active (30 article exams) plus Forensic Psychiatry - lapsed (30 article exams)

Scores for lapsed subspecialty certifications will be finalized within the first 10 days of the month after the nearest quarter. Article assessment deadlines for each quarter grade finalization is as follows:

- On or before March 30, to receive final grade before April 10
- On or before June 30, to receive final grade before July 10
- On or before September 30, to receive final grade before October 10
- On or before December 15, to receive final grade before December 31

Non-Active or Non-Time Limited (Lifetime) Certificate Holders

Can I participate if my certification expired/lapsed?

Diplomates with lapsed certificate(s) can participate in the ABCC Pathway in lieu of taking the traditional recertification exam.

If a diplomate is no longer certified, they must complete 90 CME, 24 Self-Assessment (SA), 1 PIP activity, and 1 Patient Safety activity within the past three years; submit an article assessment application and recertification fee, and documentation of completed requirements for audit. They will then need to pass **90** article exams *within* three years to be reported as Certified. Otherwise, the diplomate can complete the requirements, apply for, and pass the traditional recertification exam. **Due to the phase-in of articles to choose from, diplomates with lapsed certificates might have to wait a few years for a full catalog of exams to complete for a subspecialty(ies).**

Inactive diplomates recertifying for multiple certificates need to pass a combined total of 90 article exams.

Scores for Inactive diplomates will be finalized on a quarterly basis in ABCC. Recertification letters will be generated after the end of the quarter during which the diplomate successfully passed the final article exam.

Number of Lapsed/Expired Certification(s)	Total article exams to pass before reported as Certified	Number of article exams PER certificate	Additional article exams in any certificate	Number of attempted article exams allowed
1	90	90	N/A	120
2	90	40	10 flexible	120
3	90	25	15 flexible	120

How do I recertify a lapsed subspecialty certification(s)?

If a diplomate is currently in the CC Program with an active initial certification or has an active Lifetime Certification but has a lapsed subspecialty certificate, they may regain certification for the lapsed certificate by submitting an article assessment application and recertification fee, and successful completion of 30 article exams by December 15th of the year of applying for the lapsed certification.

- Example: Psychiatry - active (30 article exams) plus Forensic Psychiatry - lapsed (30 article exams)

Scores for lapsed subspecialty certifications will be finalized within the first 10 days of the month after the nearest quarter. Article assessment deadlines for each quarter grade finalization is as follows:

- On or before March 30, to receive final grade before April 10
- On or before June 30, to receive final grade before July 10
- On or before September 30, to receive final grade before October 10
- On or before December 15, to receive final grade before December 31

Can I participate if I am a Non-Time Limited (Lifetime) certificate holder?

While a non-time limited certificate holder is not required to participate in the Continuing Certification Program, diplomates with non-time limited certificate(s) have the option to participate in the article-based pathway in lieu of taking the traditional recertification exam. Non-time limited certificate holders will always keep their Lifetime certificate even if they opt to participate in the Continuing Certification program, provided they maintain an active, full, unrestricted medical license. Diplomates will need to enroll in the ABCC Pathway in their Physician Portal. Upon enrolling they will be reported as ‘Certified- Meeting CC Requirements’. They then have 3 years to pass **30** article exams and complete 90 CME, 24 Self-Assessment (SA) credits, 1 PIP activity, and 1 Patient Safety activity, as well as pay the annual fees to continue to be listed as ‘Certified- Meeting CC Requirements’. Such diplomates can opt to take the traditional recertification exam in lieu of the article-based pathway.

Can I participate if I have an invalidated certificate?

Diplomates with an invalidated certificate(s) can participate in the article-based pathway in lieu of taking the traditional recertification exam. First, they must be cleared and credentialed for reinstatement. They will then need to complete 90 CME, 24 Self-Assessment (SA), 1 PIP activity, and 1 Patient Safety activity within the past three years; submit a CC application and fee, and documentation of completed requirements for audit. They will then need to pass **90** article exams *within* three years to recertify. **Due to the phase-in of articles to choose from, diplomates with lapsed certificates might have to wait a few years for a full catalog of exams to complete for a subspecialty**

(ies). Alternatively, they can complete the requirements and pass the traditional recertification exam. **See table for lapsed/expired certificates.**

What if I have multiple certifications?

Diplomates with multiple certifications can participate in the ABCC Pathway. **See Multiple Certifications section.**

Multi-Disciplinary Specialties (MDS)

Diplomates who hold an active ABPN certification and a MDS certificate (Brain Injury Medicine, Pain Medicine, and Sleep Medicine) must check with the administering board for possible longitudinal assessment options for their MDS certificate(s). MDS certification exams are developed and administered by the other ABMS boards; therefore, those certifications are not eligible for the ABPN Article-Based Pathway.

The article-based pathway for ABPN diplomates issued certification in Neurocritical Care from ABPN will begin in 2025.

Continuing Certification Requirements

Are diplomates who participate in the Article-Based Pathway still required to complete the CC Requirements (CME, SA, PIP, etc.)?

Yes. Diplomates are required to complete all Continuing Certification Program requirements as outlined in their Physician Portal every 3-year CC block.

Does completion of the article exams count for any CME and/or Self-Assessment (SA) CME credit?

Yes, successful completion of the article exams automatically counts for a waiver of 16 out of the 24 Self-Assessment (SA) credits needed per 3-year block. The waiver applies to the current block at the time of completion the article exams. A minimum of 8 out of 24 SA CME credits must derive from SA activities listed on the Approved CC Activities List.

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Note: ABPN is not a CME provider. While non-CME Self-Assessment waiver options contribute to the Self-Assessment requirement of the ABPN CC Program, they are NOT recognized by state medical licensing boards as Category 1 CME credits.

How do I obtain CME credits for successful completion of the article exams?

Diplomates may be able to obtain Category 1 CME credits from the American Medical Association (AMA) upon successful completion of one block of article exams. If the articles are accessed through a professional organization, that organization might award CME credits. At this time, the American Psychiatric Association (APA) offers CME credits for articles accessed through their website.

What if I do not keep up to date with the certification requirements in a 3-year block?

Diplomates need to satisfy all CC requirements every three-year block in order to maintain their certification status. A diplomate will be reported as “Certified- Not Meeting CC Requirements” if they do not sign on to their ABPN Physician Portal account, pay the annual fee and attest to completed activity requirements by the end of a 3-year block. A diplomate may change their status to “Meeting CC Requirements” by completing insufficient block activities, current block activities, and payment of all required fees.

A diplomate will be reported as “Not Certified” if they do not complete 6 years (two consecutive 3-year blocks) of CC requirements. A diplomate may change their status back to “Certified–Meeting CC requirements” upon successful

completion of a block of CC requirements, as well as passing a CC examination or successful completion of the ABCC Pathway.

What happens if I successfully complete the 30 articles, but not the other requirements (CME, Self-Assessment, PIP, medical licensure, and fees) by the end of the 3-year block?

Diplomates will remain in the block until they complete all CC block requirements. Their certification status will change to ‘Certified- Not Meeting CC Requirements’ until all elements have been satisfied for that 3-year block. Once they complete all requirements, then they will advance to the next 3-year block and can begin another set of article exams and requirements.

Do I need to be up to date on my current 3-year block in order to opt in the Article-Based Pathway?

Diplomates will be able to begin the article exams if the CC requirements are not up-to-date; however, the requirements and article exams will need to be completed by the end of the current 3-year block to be listed as ‘Certified-Meeting CC Requirements’ and to proceed to the next block.

- If a diplomate is currently “Meeting CC Requirements”, the diplomate will have until 12/31/2024 to complete the requirements listed in their Physician Portal account and article exams to proceed to next 3-year block.
- If a diplomate is currently “Not Meeting CC Requirements”, both the previous uncompleted block and the 2022-2024 block will need to be completed by 12/31/2024 otherwise all certifications **will expire**. Provided all CC requirements have been met by 12/31/2024, the diplomate will proceed to the 2025-2027 block as “Meeting CC Requirements”.

What if I complete all the requirements (CME, SA, PIP, fees, etc.), but do not successfully complete the first 3-year block articles? Will I still be considered Certified?

A diplomate’s status will remain ‘Certified- Meeting CC Requirements’ even if 30 article credits are not successfully completed in the first 3-year block, but only if they are meeting all other CC block requirements for CME, SA, PIP, fees, etc. If article exams are not completed by the end of the current first 3-year block, then diplomates will default to the traditional CC/recertification exam due the tenth year from the award date.

When will a diplomate become Not Certified?

A diplomate will become ‘Not Certified’ if they:

- Fail the CC recertification examination two consecutive times in the tenth year
- Have not fulfilled other CC program requirements (CME, SA, PIP, etc.) for six years, even if they have passed the CC exam or completed all required article exams
- Do not maintain an active, full, unrestricted medical license.

Fees

How much does it cost to participate in the Article-Based Pathway?

Beginning in 2022, diplomates will pay an annual fee based on the number of active certifications in the CC program. Diplomates with multiple active certifications in the CC program will pay a reduced combined annual fee. Payment of the annual fees will cover the participation in the article-based pathway. Diplomates must remain current with the annual fees, as well as the requirements (CME, SA, PIP). Diplomates may need to pay to access specific articles based on what the publisher charges for access to their articles. The article listing indicates whether an article is available at no cost or may need to be purchased.

Do I qualify for a discount with the annual fee if I have multiple certifications?

Diplomates who hold multiple active CC certifications will qualify for a combined discount on their annual fees. The fees will cover participation in the ABCC Pathway or the Exam Pathway. Diplomates will no longer be required to submit recertification applications for active certifications. A diplomate will only be required to apply and pay the recertification fee if certification lapses, and they wish to regain certification.

Annual Fee per certification(s)	Annual Fee
1	\$175
2	\$240
3+	\$310

When do I pay for the ABCC Pathway?

Payment of the annual fees cover the cost of the participation in the ABCC Pathway.

If a diplomate has an expired/lapsed certificate, they will need to pay in full for recertification at the time they submit the article assessment application.

How many of the articles will be free?

Most of the articles are free to everyone and/or to members of the professional associations collaborating with the ABPN on the article-based pathway (e.g., AACAP, AAN, APA, CNS, etc.). The cost of articles is determined by the publisher. Other articles will be charged per purchase based off the cost determined by the publisher. ABPN does not have any control over the publisher's cost. Based on survey data during the Part III Pilot Project (2019-2022), 96% of diplomates were able to access all the articles at no additional out of pocket expenses.

ABPN strongly recommends a diplomate not open an article exam until *after* they have accessed the article related to that exam. Once an article exam is open, it must be completed before another article exam can be opened. ABPN will not close out an article exam, even if a diplomate did not intend to access it.

If a colleague has purchased the pdf of an article, can I borrow it from them?

Diplomates can share articles, provided sharing is permissible by the publisher of the article. Articles may be under copyright permissions.

Will I have to pay again if I fail the article-based pathway the first time and then want to take it again?

Diplomates will need to take the traditional recertification exam if they are unsuccessful with the article-based pathway. They will need to submit an application and exam fee, and then pass the CC exam.

Scoring and Performance Feedback

How many questions do I need to pass? How many article exam attempts am I eligible for?

Diplomates need to complete 4 out of 5 questions correct on the first attempt for each open-book article exam. Diplomates may change their responses to individual questions prior to submitting the article exam for final scoring. Diplomates participating in the ABCC Pathway for one certificate need to pass 30 out of 40 article exams for every 3-year block. *For information on number of attempts, see **Multiple Certifications section**.*

What if I am unsuccessful or do not complete the article exams within my 3-year block?

If a diplomate does not complete or successfully complete the article exams by the end of the current 3-year block, they will need to take the traditional recertification/CC exam their tenth year.

How frequently are the article exam scores finalized?

Once the answers are submitted, diplomates receive immediate online results. Diplomates can track their progress in their Physician Portal and in the exam platform. Diplomates must pass the article exams and continue to keep up to date with the CC requirements to proceed to the next 3-year block.

What if I disagree with a question or answer?

Diplomates may leave feedback on a specific question in the article exam platform. Even after completing an exam, diplomates can return to a question to leave direct feedback. Feedback will be logged and reviewed by the Exam committee. If a committee revises a question, diplomates will be notified by email of the rescoring. Once the Exam Committee has reviewed a disputed question, the determination of the Committee is final and binding.

What is the policy on question reviews and revisions?

It is the ABPN's long-standing policy that any comment left by an examinee regarding the questions on our examinations needs to be reviewed individually and carefully. Most often, the review process will decide that the question should remain as is. In these cases, the ABPN does not inform the examinee who commented on that item. However, if after thorough review and rigorous deliberation our committee of content experts for that examination determines that a question is indeed flawed, we will modify the question and rescore the exam that delivered the flawed question.

When rescoring takes place, we can assure you that, if your initial score on the question was incorrect, your score on that question will then be corrected to reflect the modification. Every examinee whose initial score was negatively affected by the flawed item will receive an email from the ABPN that notifies them about the rescoring results.

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If I am an author of one of the articles, can I complete the exam for that article?

Diplomates cannot complete an exam for which they are an author of the article. Diplomates must select another article exam to complete.

Will I receive a new certificate? If so, when?

Since 2012, ABPN certificates are issued with no expiration date. Diplomates in good standing in the ABPN Continuing Certification (CC) program will retain their certificate since certification is ongoing and contingent upon meeting all CC Program requirements. Free, printable, on-demand CC program certificates are available in the Physician Portal. Diplomates can also print off or email verification letters in their Physician Portal's Certifications section. Credentialers can view current certification statuses in our online directory, [VerifyCert](#).

Diplomates who have a lapsed certificate will receive a new certificate upon recertification.

Technical Aspects

What are the computer system or platform requirements for the Article-Based Pathway?

The following browsers are recommended for PC users: Chrome 65+ or Firefox 59+. The following browsers are recommended for Mac users: Chrome 65+ or Safari 11.

What do I do if I proceed to open a set of exam questions, but do not have access to the article?

The board strongly recommends that diplomates have access to the article *prior to* proceeding to open a set of exam questions. Once the exam questions are accessed, diplomates must complete the exam due to the security of the content.

Will I have an opportunity to review my answers prior to submitting?

Prior to final submission of the answers, diplomates are prompted with the option to either review the answers or to proceed with submission. If a diplomate wishes to review and/or change answers, the new answers must be saved, otherwise the original answer will be recorded and scored. Once a diplomate proceeds to submit the answers, the answers will be scored and final.

If my browser times out, can I still return to the exam?

Yes, if the internet browser times out or a diplomate closes out of the exam, diplomates will be able to return to the last unsaved question. The exam will automatically save any saved responses. If a diplomate continues to have connection issues, it is recommended that they switch to a different device and/or internet connection.

I changed an answer to the correct answer, but it recorded the wrong answer. Can it be rescored?

If an answer is changed, it needs to be saved before submitting for the exam results to record the changed response. A test will not be rescored if the changed answer was not saved. The Board will not rescore the exam.

NOTE: All policies, components, and requirements of the ABPN Continuing Certification (CC) Program are subject to change. Each ABPN Diplomate is responsible for remaining informed about the current CC program requirements. Diplomates are encouraged to consult the ABPN website at www.abpn.org for regular updates.