

## ■ ABR Maintenance of Certification (MOC)

### Grace Period Policy

As stated in the Policy for MOC Participation, diplomate progress ratings are as follows:

- Fully Compliant - making continuous progress toward meeting all cycle requirements at an approximate rate of 10% of the requirement each year.
- Noncompliant - too far behind to catch up within current cycle (based on continuous progress operational definition)
- Partially Compliant - progress between "fully compliant" and "noncompliant"

Under certain conditions and circumstances, an **uncertified grace period of up to three years** is available to the MOC participant who fails to complete all requirements during his or her MOC cycle, causing the certificate to lapse. During this time, the participant is not considered certified in the specialty or subspecialty area of the certificate that has lapsed. (And during this time any verifications performed through the ABR or the American Board of Medical Specialties will show uncertified status for the certificate that has lapsed.)

#### Eligibility:

1. A standard uncertified grace period is automatically granted for up to three years if the remaining requirements can be completed in three years or less without exceeding the double-credit-per-year maximum ([see Participation Policy - B1](#)).
2. Diplomates who do not qualify for (or are not willing to accept) an automatic uncertified grace period may submit a proposal, including a corrective action plan, for special consideration. Such proposals will be considered on a case-by-case basis, and the board in its discretion will grant: 1) a standard grace period, 2) a special-conditions grace period, or 3) no grace period.
3. Any diplomate entering a grace period will sign a letter of agreement with the ABR, acknowledging that only if he/she completes all remaining requirements within the three-year period will certification be reinstated; otherwise, he/she will be able to regain certification only by going through the initial certification process again.

*\*During this time any verifications performed through the ABR or the American Board of Medical Specialties will show uncertified status for the certificate that has lapsed.*

#### Conditions for standard grace period:

1. For Components 2 (Lifelong Learning and Self-Assessment) and 4 (Practice Quality Improvement), the double-credit-per-year maximum may not be exceeded ([see Participation Policy - B1](#)); a mid-grace-period monitoring check-up will be performed (mandatory)
2. For Component 3 (Cognitive Expertise), the diplomate may attempt the examination up to two times per year.
3. For Component 1 (Professional Standing), state medical licenses must be returned to current and unrestricted status.

**Certificate status during standard grace period:**

1. Time-limited certificates - uncertified in that field for duration of grace period.
2. Lifetime certificates - still in effect, but MOC certificate not issued unless requirements are completed within grace period.

**Fees during standard grace period:**

1. For each full calendar year of the grace period, the diplomate will be required to pay the annual fee charged to diplomates beginning new cycles that year.
2. In the year that the diplomate completes all requirements of the prior cycle, he/she will also begin a new ten-year cycle, and will pay the annual fee for the cohort of diplomates also beginning a ten-year cycle in the same year.

**Conclusion of grace period:**

1. Successful completion of all requirements
  - requirements are verified by ABR as completed
  - new certificate is issued and ABMS notified
  - diplomate begins next ten-year cycle
2. Unsuccessful
  - Certification lapses permanently
  - [Refer to Policy for Regaining Certification After Lapse](#)