



New ABR Board Eligibility Policy

During the past several years, the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) and its Member Boards have engaged in significant dialogue regarding the concept of “board eligibility.” The discussion has concerned what that term precisely means, how Member Boards and candidates should use it, and how it should be reported to the public. In September 2011, the ABMS Board of Directors determined that all Member Boards must develop consistent policies for the length of “board eligibility.” Under the new policy, each ABMS Member Board must determine the “board eligibility” interval, which must begin at the completion of accredited residency training and extend for no less than three years and no more than seven years.

On October 22, 2011, the ABR Board of Trustees adopted a policy for all ABR diagnostic radiology and radiation oncology initial certification candidates that became effective January 1, 2012.* Candidates will have specific, pre-determined time limits for remaining eligible to be initially certified by the ABR and to maintain their status as “board eligible.” Because a number of current candidates have completed training and continue in the examination process, the new policy will have a transitional phase-in period. In all instances, the phase-in timing will begin at the completion of diagnostic radiology or radiation oncology residency training. For international medical graduates, “end of training” is defined as the end of the four-year period outlined in the Sponsoring Department Agreement.

The termination dates for board eligibility status are listed in the table below.

<u>End of Training</u>	<u>Termination of board eligibility</u>
2004 or before	December 31, 2014
2005-2006	10 years (e.g., 2015 or 2016)
2007-2010	January 1, 2017
2011 and afterward	6 years from end of training

After the period of eligibility, candidates failing to successfully complete the initial certification process will no longer be considered by the ABR as “board eligible,” will no longer be permitted to designate themselves as such for communications or credentialing purposes, and will no longer be reported as such on the ABMS website (www.certificationmatters.org/) or in verification letters.

To return to “board eligible” status, candidates must take an additional year of training in a department with an Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)-accredited or Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC)-accredited diagnostic radiology or radiation oncology residency program. At the end of that year, the department chair must attest to satisfactory completion of the experience. After that documentation is provided to the ABR, the candidate may re-register and re-enter the certification process and will again be required to pass both the qualifying and certifying examinations within a six-year interval.

Because this new policy was created so recently, the official ABR website does not yet reflect the changes, but those modifications will be made in the near future. Questions related to these or other

Board certification issues can be addressed to Ms. Christina Slater at cslater@theabr.org, icnotification@theabr.org, or by calling (520) 790-2900.

*Details of the board eligibility policy implementation for medical physics initial certification candidates are currently under consideration and will be announced in the near future.