



Update on Maintenance of Certification (MOC) at the American Board of Radiology: Continuous Certification, Public Reporting, and Self-Assessment CME

Over the past year, the American Board of Radiology (ABR) has implemented new policies related to Continuous Certification, Public Reporting, and Self-Assessment CME (SA-CME). The basic features of these three interrelated MOC policies are described below.

Continuous Certification

Continuous Certification, implemented in 2012, links the ongoing validity of certificates to meeting the requirements of Maintenance of Certification (MOC). Under the new process, ABR certificates no longer have “valid-through” dates. Instead, on each new and renewed certificate, the effective date is noted, accompanied by the statement that “ongoing validity of this certificate is contingent upon meeting the requirements of Maintenance of Certification.”

In March of each year, the ABR will look back at the previous 3 calendar years to determine if each diplomate is meeting the requirements of MOC for CME, Self-Assessment, and PQI activities. Because this is a new process, the ABR is providing its diplomates with the time needed to complete these. Therefore, for current MOC participants, the first “full” annual look-back will occur in March 2016 and will continue on an annual basis thereafter. New diplomates will have their first full annual look-back in March of their 4th year of MOC participation. Professional standing (licensure) is still evaluated annually, and the MOC exam must be passed every ten years.

Tables outlining the Continuous Certification look-back process and requirements can be found on the ABR public website: [Diagnostic Radiology](#), [Radiation Oncology](#), and [Medical Physics](#).

Advantages of Continuous Certification

- For diagnostic radiology and its subspecialties, two or more time-limited certificates are automatically synchronized into one MOC cycle, based on the date of the most recent certificate. (Please note that two primary certificates, including the three primary specialties of medical physics, may not be synchronized into one MOC cycle.)
- The number of CME and Self-Assessment CME credits diplomates may obtain and count per year is unlimited. So, if a diplomate has a year—or even two—in which it is difficult to meet requirements, he or she may obtain and report as many credits as needed in the third year.
- With the new system, it is more difficult to fall behind. The ABR sends automatic reminders to help diplomates avoid delay and the stress of trying to meet all their requirements in a very short period of time.

- A diplomate may take the MOC exam at any time, as long as the MOC (or certifying) exam was passed no more than 10 years ago.

Frequently Asked Questions about Continuous Certification

- ***I completed CME, self-assessment, and PQI activities in 2012. Will these credits be counted?*** Yes. MOC Part 2 activities completed in 2012 will count toward your first look-back in 2016. Therefore, this one-time exception will include credits completed during 4 calendar years (2012-2015). Even though 4 years will be counted instead of three, you will need to complete only 3 years' worth of requirements.
- ***I took my MOC exam early. Will my 10-year exam requirement be reset?*** No. If your certificate expires in 2012, 2013, or 2014, and you have already passed the MOC exam, the date of your exam passage will be attributed to the valid-through date of your 10-year certificate. The new certificate that is issued will not have a valid-through date.
- ***I have a 10-year certificate with a "valid-through" date. What happens if I don't meet the new Continuous Certification requirements?*** If you were previously in a 10-year cycle, the ABR will honor your certificate through the "valid-through" date listed, irrespective of your MOC activity. (For more information concerning the implications on publicly reported MOC status, see the frequently-asked questions below.)

Public Reporting of Diplomate Status

In addition to the compelling professional reasons, keeping current with MOC requirements is important because in March 2013, the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) began reporting on its public website (www.certificationmatters.org) whether or not each ABR diplomate is meeting MOC requirements for each certificate held. The three public reporting categories that may be attributed to each diplomate listed on the ABMS website are:

- *Meeting the requirements of Maintenance of Certification*
- *Not meeting the requirements of Maintenance of Certification*
- *Not required to participate in Maintenance of Certification* (for lifetime-certified diplomates.)

The ABMS website also refers users to the ABR website (www.theabr.org), where further information regarding certification status can be found. The ABR's website has been enhanced to include its own online verification database of ABR diplomates.

Frequently-Asked Questions about Public Reporting

- ***What if I don't meet my MOC requirements at the Continuous Certification look-back?*** A built-in "catch-up" period of one year allows time to make up missing requirements while being classified as "certified, not meeting the requirements of Maintenance of Certification." If you make up your requirements, you will again be reported as "meeting the requirements of Maintenance of Certification." If you have not met MOC requirements after the catch-up year, you will be reported as "certificate lapsed."
- ***What if I have an older 10-year certificate with a "valid-through" date, but I don't meet requirements under Continuous Certification?*** If you continue not meeting MOC requirements at the annual Continuous Certification look-backs, you will be reported as "certified, not meeting

requirements of Maintenance of Certification” until your certificate expires. No diplomate with a valid certificate will be reported as “certificate lapsed.”

- **What if I have a lifetime certificate, but I’m not enrolled in MOC?** You will be reported as “not required to participate in Maintenance of Certification.” If you decide to enroll, you will receive a “letter of MOC enrollment” as soon as you complete the application process, and you will then be reported on the ABMS and ABR websites as “meeting the requirements of Maintenance of Certification.” When you meet the first three-year look-back requirements in March of your 4th year of MOC participation, you will be issued an MOC certificate. Your first look-back for the MOC exam will be in year 10 following enrollment. If at any look-back you fail to meet MOC requirements, your public reporting status will revert to “not required to participate in Maintenance of Certification.”

Broader acceptance of activities for MOC Part 2 (Self-Assessment CME)

Beginning January 1, 2013, separate requirements for CME credits and self-assessment modules (SAMs) were merged into a single requirement: 75 CME credits every three years, at least 25 of which must be self-assessment CME (SA-CME) credits. At the same time, the definition of SA-CME was expanded to include more than just ABR-qualified SAMs. Now, the ABR also counts credits for completion of all AMA Category 1 CME activities in “enduring materials” (including web-based and print) and “journal-based CME” formats toward the MOC SA-CME requirement.

AMA Category 1 CME activities performed in person or remotely, as in the case of teleconferences or “live” Internet activities, do NOT automatically count as self-assessment CME. For these types of CME activities to count as self-assessment CME credit, the organizations that create them must submit them for review and approval through the ABR qualification process. If accepted, these activities will be qualified by the ABR as SAMs and will count as self-assessment CME.

More detailed information about SA-CME can be found on the ABR public website: [Diagnostic Radiology](#), [Radiation Oncology](#), and [Medical Physics](#).

Frequently-Asked Questions about Self-Assessment CME (SA-CME)

- **Does this mean I have to complete 25 SAMs every three years?** No. You are required to complete at least 25 SA-CME **credits** every three years as part of your total requirement of 75 Category 1 CME credits.
- **What counts toward the 25 SA-CME credits?** SA-CME credits include 1) credits from completing ABR-qualified SAMs and/or 2) credits for completing AMA Category 1 CME activities in “enduring materials.”
- **Why doesn’t the ABR count credits from teleconferences or “live” Internet activities as SA-CME credits?** According to AMA policy for CME, these activities may not include certain features that would qualify them for use as self-assessment tools. For more information on AMA CME policies, please click [here](#).

Any questions related to Continuous Certification, public reporting, or SA-CME requirements may be directed to the MOC Services Division at moc@theabr.org, or (520) 519-2152.