



AMERICAN BOARD
OF RADIOLOGY

Candidate Services

Continuous Certification Policy for Special Circumstances Diplomates Maintaining Certification

APPROVED: Board of Governors Meeting – May 24, 2023

APPROVED: Board of Governors Meeting – January 9, 2024 with removal of SA-CME Requirement

Policy:

It is the policy of the American Board of Radiology (ABR) where possible to provide exceptions to Continuing Certification requirements for diplomates with extenuating circumstances. For the purposes of this policy, “exceptions” refer to “substitutions” or “waivers.” Substitutions or waivers will be granted for Part 2, Part 3, and Part 4.

Procedure:

The following special circumstances are recognized by the ABR:

- Military deployment
- Acute illness
- Clinical inactivity, such as:
 - Research position
 - Sabbatical leave
 - Administrative position

Physician diplomates will not be granted exceptions (waivers and substitutions) for Part 1. Because medical licensure is required to maintain a valid certificate, as defined in the ABR Professional Standing policy, exceptions for Parts 2, Parts 3, or Parts 4 do not apply to individuals who do not meet the licensure requirements.

Diplomates with extenuating circumstances related to military deployment may apply for waivers for Part 2, Part 3, and Part 4.

Diplomates with extenuating circumstances due to acute illness may apply for a waiver for Part 2 or Part 4 or both. Special circumstances requests for Part 3 are considered on a case-by-case basis.

Diplomates who are clinically inactive may apply for a substitution activity for Part 4 but must meet the requirements for Part 2 and Part 3. “Clinically inactive” describes a physician or physicist who has provided no direct and/or consultative patient care or practice-related activity in the past 24 months. If

the diplomate is engaged in any clinical activity, no matter how small the amount, they do not qualify for a special circumstance substitution for Part 4.

Note: Locum tenens, teleradiology, part-time practice and medical physics consulting practices are not considered special circumstances. Such diplomates must meet all Continuing Certification requirements.

A special circumstances waiver will not be granted for fees.

Application Process:

Application is made by completing the Special Circumstance online form, which includes:

- The nature of the special circumstance
- The starting date of the special circumstance
- Written attestation from an external party of the above (nature and anticipated duration of the special circumstance), e.g., commanding officer, treating physician, department/practice group chair, etc.
- Proposed plan for completing Continuous Certification requirements in all areas impacted by the special circumstance (for substitutions only).

The Board's response will indicate whether or not the diplomate has been granted or denied a special circumstance substitution or waiver, and the length of the special circumstance.

In general, the typical length granted for a special circumstance exception is 8 months from the date of board approval or until the end of the calendar year, whichever is longer.

In the case of clinical inactivity substitutions, the length granted is typically 24 months from the date of board approval.

Part 4 Substitutions:

Substitution activities for Part 4 include:

- Completion of at least 10 Category 1 CME hours in quality and safety annually during the time of special circumstances, in addition to the routine CME requirements.
- Participation in at least 10 Category 1 CME hours per special circumstances year in approved CME activity involving practical hands-on experiences which maintain specialty-based skills. Examples would include e-Contouring programs/workshops for radiation oncologists, interpretive programs/workshops for diagnostic radiologists or physics workshops for medical physicists.
- Other: the diplomate may propose an alternative activity or process that positively impacts patient safety or quality improvement that is achievable during the period of special circumstance status.

Diplomates who require accommodation for a disability should refer to the ABR Accommodations policy.

This policy is subject to change and modifications at any time. All changes must be approved by the ABR Board of Governors.

