



AMERICAN BOARD
OF RADIOLOGY

**Initial Certification Alternate Pathways (International Medical Graduates)
Diagnostic Radiology, Interventional Radiology, Radiation Oncology, Medical Physics**

APPROVED BY BOARD OF GOVERNORS ON: May 24, 2023

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Policy:

An international medical graduate (IMG) or international medical physics graduate (IMPG) who does not plan to enter an initial certification standard ACGME, RCPSC, or CAMPEP residency pathway may apply to an alternate pathway to be considered for certification by the American Board of Radiology (ABR). The prerequisites and requirements for each discipline are detailed in the appendices to this policy: diagnostic radiology (Appendix A), interventional radiology (Appendix B), radiation oncology (Appendix C), and medical physics (Appendix D).

Procedure:

The Board will assess an applicant's eligibility in accordance with ABR policies and alternate pathways toward Board Certification (see [Board Eligibility Policy](#)) at the time of application. Once accepted into a pathway, candidates must complete and pass the qualifying and certifying exams within their Board Eligibility window to achieve certification.

This policy is subject to change at any time. Changes will not affect previously approved applications unless specified by the Board. All revisions require approval by the ABR Board of Governors.

APPENDIX A: ALTERNATE PATHWAY FOR DIAGNOSTIC RADIOLOGY (DR)

1. Prerequisites – to apply to the pathway, applicants must demonstrate they meet the following prerequisites:

- a. Satisfy the specialty training requirements for certification and/or practice in a non-U.S., non-Canadian country.
 - i. Complete one year of clinical training.
 - ii. Complete diagnostic radiology training in a residency program outside the U.S. or Canada. A minimum of three years of DR training is required.
- b. Meet the requirements to practice diagnostic radiology independently in the country of training or hold board certification (if applicable). If trained in India, the applicant must have the following degrees to be eligible for the Alternate Pathway: MBBS + DNB and/or MD.
 - i. Note: The DNB and MD degrees are specified because India does not issue “certification” from a national organization. Applications from countries other than India are expected to provide evidence of certification along with confirmation of time completed in the residency.

2. Requirements – to gain certification, alternate pathway candidates must complete the following requirements.

- a. Complete four years of radiology training within eight years of training start date. Training may be completed as a residency (three years maximum — four years is the standard residency pathway), fellowship, and/or faculty appointment in an institution with a DR training program accredited by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) or Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC). Up to 12 months of research may count toward certification if it is completed at the approved training institution.
 - i. It is preferred that all four years of training take place at one institution. If this is not possible, candidates can apply for a transfer to another program.
 - a. The maximum retrospective credit that can be granted is 24 months.
 - b. A maximum of two institutions can be used for the required four years of total training.
 - c. If a candidate with a previously approved application wishes to take the Qualifying (Core) Exam at the earliest opportunity (after 36 months of training completion), the transfer documentation and new Sponsoring

Department Agreement must be submitted to the ABR no later than six months into the third year of training.

- d. If a candidate does not submit their initial application until they are at the second program, a maximum of 24 months of retrospective credit from the time of application can be awarded for the previously completed training.
 - e. If a candidate transfers during their training, they must spend at least 24 months at the institution in which they complete their training; this time need not be consecutive but may extend the total training beyond four years.
- ii. Part-time appointments working ≥ 0.5 FTE are allowable if the equivalent of four years of training as a 1.0 FTE is completed within eight years from the training start date. For example, a candidate could train years one through three as a 1.0 FTE and years four and five as a 0.5 FTE to meet the requirement of four years as a 1.0 FTE.
 - iii. Remote work (teleradiology) is allowable provided the candidate meets the training requirements to complete the pathway.
- b. Pass the Qualifying (Core) Exam. Candidates become eligible for the Qualifying (Core) Exam after completing 36 months of approved training.
 - c. Pass the Certifying or Oral Exam. Candidates become eligible for the Certifying or Oral Exam after passing the Qualifying (Core) Exam, completing the four-year training plan, and submitting their final training verification.
 - d. Provide proof of a current, unrestricted state or provincial medical license in the U.S. or Canada. A valid training license is acceptable for candidates in training.
 - e. Demonstrate high moral and ethical principles.

APPENDIX B: ALTERNATE PATHWAY FOR INTERVENTIONAL RADIOLOGY (IR)

[Coming Soon]

APPENDIX C: ALTERNATE PATHWAY FOR RADIATION ONCOLOGY (RO)

1. Prerequisites – to apply to the pathway, applicants must demonstrate they meet the following prerequisites.

- a. Satisfy the specialty training requirements for certification and/or practice in a non-U.S., non-Canadian country.
 - i. Complete one year of clinical training in a non-radiation oncology training program such as general medicine, surgery, transitional internship, or its equivalent in a non-U.S., non-Canadian country.
 - ii. Complete at least three years of radiation oncology training in a residency program outside the U.S. or Canada.
- b. Meet the requirements to practice radiation oncology independently in the country of training or hold board certification (if applicable). If trained in India, the applicant must have the following degrees to be eligible for the Alternate Pathway: MBBS + DNB and/or MD.
 - i. Note: The DNB and MD degrees are specified because India does not issue “certification” from a national organization. Applications from countries other than India are expected to provide evidence of certification along with confirmation of time served in the residency.

2. Requirements – to gain certification, alternate pathway candidates must complete the following requirements.

- a. Complete four years of radiation oncology training. Training may be completed as a residency (up to three years maximum – four years is the standard pathway), fellowship, and/or faculty appointment in one institution with a radiation oncology training program approved by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) or Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC). Up to 12 months of research may count toward certification if it is completed at the approved training institution.
 - i. It is preferred that all four years of training take place at one institution. If this is not possible, candidates can apply for a transfer to another program.
 - a. The maximum retrospective credit that can be granted is 24 months.
 - b. A maximum of two institutions can be used for the needed four years of total training.
 - c. If a candidate with a previously approved application wishes to take the RO Qualifying Exam at the earliest opportunity (after 32 months of training

completion), the transfer documentation and new Sponsoring Department Agreement must be submitted to the ABR no later than six months into the third year of training.

- d. If a candidate does not submit their initial application until they are at the second program, a maximum of 24 months of retrospective credit from the time of application can be awarded for the previously completed training.
 - e. If a candidate transfers during their training, they must spend at least 24 months at the institution in which they complete their training; this time need not be consecutive but may extend total training beyond four years.
- ii. Part-time appointments working ≥ 0.5 FTE are allowable as long as the equivalent of four years of training as a 1.0 FTE is completed within eight years from the training start date. For example, a candidate could train years one through three as a 1.0 FTE and years four and five as a 0.5 FTE to meet the requirement of four years as a 1.0 FTE.
- b. Pass the ABR Qualifying Exams. Candidates become eligible for Medical Physics for Radiation Oncology and Biology exams after completing 32 months of approved training. With written approval from their program chair, candidates may take these exams after 24 months of approved training. Candidates become eligible for the Clinical Radiation Oncology exam after completing 44 months of approved training.
 - c. Pass the ABR Oral Exam. Candidates become eligible for the Oral Exam after passing all the Qualifying Exams, completing the four-year training plan, and submitting their final training verification.
 - d. Provide proof of current, unrestricted state or provincial medical license in the U.S. or Canada. A valid training license is acceptable for candidates in training.
 - e. Demonstrate high moral and ethical principles.

APPENDIX D: Alternate Pathway for Medical Physics (MP)

1. Prerequisites – to apply to the pathway, applicants must demonstrate they meet the following prerequisites.

- a. Complete training in a non-U.S., non-Canadian country.
 - i. Complete the equivalent of a master's degree in medical physics from a CAMPEP-accredited program.
- b. Meet the requirements to practice medical physics independently in the country of training or hold board certification, registration, or a similar credential (if applicable).
- c. Complete at least one year of clinical employment as a medical physicist in your country.

2. Requirements – to gain certification, structured mentorship alternate pathway candidates must complete the following requirements.

- a. Secure a clinical training site in the U.S. that has a CAMPEP-accredited residency program, and a supervisor who is an ABR-certified medical physicist.
- b. Be employed in the U.S. as a medical physicist. A junior physicist or medical physics assistant position is acceptable.
- c. Complete two years¹ of clinical training within four years of your training start date (preferably in one institution). If this is not possible, candidates can apply for a transfer to another program.
 - i. It is preferred that both years of training take place at one institution. If this is not possible, candidates can apply for a transfer to another program.
 - a. A maximum of two institutions can be used for the two years of total training required.
 - b. If a candidate transfers during their training, they must spend at least 18 months at the institution in which they complete their training even if that means their total training is longer than two years.
 - ii. Training plans are structured and specialized by discipline. All must address the six ABMS/ABR competencies: medical knowledge, patient care and procedural skills, interpersonal and communication skills, professionalism, practice-based learning and improvement, and systems-based practice.

¹ The requirement was transitioned in November 2026 from three years to two years, as described in a separate document.

- a. Diagnostic Medical Physics complete structured rotations in imaging protocols, quality assurance (QA), patient dosimetry, shielding design, and hands-on work with CT, MRI, ultrasound, mammography, and interventional radiology.
 - b. Nuclear Medical Physics complete structured rotations in imaging techniques, radionuclide therapy, radiopharmaceuticals, radiation safety, and working with PET/CT, SPECT, and nuclear pharmacies.
 - c. Therapeutic Medical Physics complete structured rotations in radiation therapy simulation, treatment planning, machine QA, patient dosimetry, and specialized radiation oncology procedures
- iii. An annual progress statement must be completed by your supervisor, who will attest that the six competencies have been completed.
- iv. A portfolio documenting the training must be retained in the case of audit. The portfolio needs to include rotation plans and education materials, activity summaries and survey reports, practice quality improvement project information, three-page summaries of each rotation, and evaluations by supervisor and supervising physicians.
- d. Pass the ABR MP Part 1 Exam. Candidates are eligible for the Part 1 Exam once their application is approved.
- e. Pass the ABR Part 2 Exam. Candidates become eligible for the Part 2 Exam after passing the Part 1 Exam, completing the two-year training plan, and submitting their final verification form.
- f. Pass the ABR Part 3 Oral Exam. Candidates become eligible for the Part 3 Oral Exam after passing the Part 1 and Part 2 Exams.
- g. Demonstrate high moral and ethical principles.