

# An ABFM Update

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## The Now and Future of ABFM Board Certification

— SPEAKER

**Gary LeRoy**

Senior Vice President of Diplomate Experience



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## Objectives For This Session

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- Why ABFM Board Certification?
- Describe what's new in ABFM's current certification program.
- Share recent enhancements to improve your experience.
- Introduce "Certification 2025" - and how the 5-Year Cycle will work.



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## ABFM Vision

We are all working for the same purpose:  
Optimal health and health care for all people  
and communities that family physicians  
serve.

# ABFM Board of Directors 2024-2025

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 Term: 2018-2025



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## A Higher Standard

Established by physicians, board certification is the marker of excellence that demonstrates a commitment to professionalism and the highest standard of care.



"ABFM board certification is an essential recognition that as a family physician I am committed to the highest educational and patient care standards. My patients, residents and students deserve this commitment. The ABFM helps me achieve and maintain those goals."

**Reid Blackwelder, MD**  
Board Certified since 1987

## Why ABFM Board Certification?

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Patients expect the best medical care for themselves and their families. They want to feel confident and trust that their physician is qualified and is committed to providing safe and high-quality care.



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# The Pittsburgh Study:

Conceptual Foundations  
for Designing Continuing Certification  
Assessments for Physicians



## *What's The Evidence Behind Continuing Certification Exams?*

1

Cognitive  
Skills Need  
to be Kept  
Current

2

Individual  
Self-  
Assessment is  
Not Enough

3

Testing  
Enhances  
Learning &  
Motivation

4

Goals and  
Consequences  
are Important  
Motivators

<https://www.theabfm.org/research/evidence-behind-continuing-certification-conceptual-foundations>

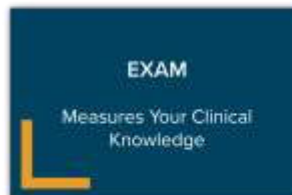


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## The Components of ABFM Board Certification

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Each component signifies an important aspect of the commitment you make toward demonstrating the higher standard of board certification.



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# Continuous Certification Process - Now

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## Three 3-Year Stages

- Follow ABFM's Professionalism and Licensure Guidelines
- Certification Activities
  - Self-Assessment and Lifelong Learning (CME)
  - Performance Improvement
- Exam Requirement (Every 10 Years)
- Annual Certification Fee



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# Exam Requirement

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## Purpose

- Objective assessment of knowledge and practice across wide spectrum of conditions treated by family physicians.

## Exam Options

- Longitudinal Assessment
- One-Day Exam



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## How Does Longitudinal Assessment Work?

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Begin in  
January of next  
exam year

Answer 25  
questions  
online per  
quarter

Complete 300  
questions over  
3-4 years

Immediate  
feedback and  
critiques

5 minutes  
allowed per  
question

Estimated  
scaled score  
after initial 100  
questions

Earn 10 points  
and 30 CME at  
completion

If needed, take  
the one-day  
exam in year 5



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## Diplomate Feedback Last 5 Years

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**33,587** - Participated  
**82%** - Chose FMCLA  
**98%+** - Retention Rate




**92%** - Report Less  
Test Anxiety



**99%** - Relevant to Family Medicine  
**94%** - Relevant to Current  
Practice



**96%** - Use References & Critiques  
**85%** - Sought More Information  
After Exam



**85%** - Complete  
FMCLA in 3 Years



**83%** - Report Making  
Changes in Their Practice



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## What are Diplomates Saying about the Longitudinal Assessment?

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“

*I feel more competent and know what to tune up and how to do that. I am a better physician for doing this assessment.*

”

“

*I didn't see this as an exam, but more of a learning opportunity.*

”

“

*This is a huge step forward. It mimics my real-world workflow very well. If I know the answer, I can click immediately. And if I need a quick double-check, I can do that.*

”

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"There's an incredible trust between a patient and their physician. Board certification demonstrates their physician is committed to a higher standard of care."

**Andrea Anderson, MD, M.Ed., FAAFP**  
*Board Certified since 2003*

# Certification Activities

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## Purpose

- Provide a wide variety of self-assessment and performance improvement activities that help Diplomates continuously self-assess and improve care in practice.

## Options

- Self-Assessment and Lifelong Learning (CME)
- Performance Improvement



# Self-Assessment Activities

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## Purpose

- Designed to help identify knowledge gaps by reviewing updated clinical content.

## Options

- Knowledge Self-Assessment
- Continuous Knowledge Self-Assessment
- National Journal Club
- Alternative Activities





## ABFM National Journal Club

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- Convenient access to peer-reviewed articles at no additional charge.
- Articles selected by a national committee of family medicine experts based on
  - Relevancy
  - Methodological rigor
  - Impact on practice
- 80-100 articles available per year. Read as many as you want.
- Answer four questions per article to receive CME and certification points.
- Growing rapidly with 27,000 Diplomates participating.



**ABFM**  
**NATIONAL**  
**JOURNAL CLUB**



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## NJC Feedback

- >95% satisfaction
- User friendly
- Highly relevant
- Indicated intention to change practice

The screenshot shows the 'My Articles' page on the ABFM National Journal website. The page header includes the ABFM logo and the text 'ABFM NATIONAL JOURNAL.COM'. Below the header, the user's name 'NJC Haber' and 'My Articles' are displayed. The main content area is titled 'My Articles' and contains the following text:

You currently have 3 journal article assessments in progress.

You will have the ability to continue your work in these journal article assessments until their posted expiration date. Upon successful completion of a journal article assessment you will earn one (1) certification point and one (1) CME credit.

Review your completed journal article assessments on the Article History tab. All articles that you have bookmarked can be viewed on the Bookmarks tab.

Below this text are three tabs: 'IN-PROGRESS' (selected), 'ARTICLE HISTORY', and 'BOOKMARKS'. A 'FILTER BY' dropdown menu is set to 'Select one'. The page indicates 'Showing results 1-3 of 3'. The list of articles includes:

- American College of Gastroenterology Guidelines Update: Diagnosis and Management of Celiac Disease** by Rubio-Tapia A, Hill D, Semrad C, et al. *American College of Gastroenterology guidelines update: diagnosis and management of celiac disease.* *Am J Gastroenterol.* 2023;118(11):97-76.
- Cardiovascular Safety of Testosterone Replacement Therapy** by Liu W, AM, Ribasi S, Flevors R, et al. *Cardiovascular safety of testosterone replacement therapy.* *N Engl J Med.* 2023;389(2):1107-1117.
- Evaluation of Waning of SARS-CoV-2 Vaccine-Induced Immunity: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis**

## Lifelong Learning - CME

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- CME earned for your state medical license board or AAFP applies to ABFM certification.
- Total hours and overall distribution parallels AAFP requirements.
- AAFP members report in your AAFP CME record.
- Non-AAFP members have manual entry option.
- To view your specific CME requirements, please visit your MyABFM Portfolio.



# Performance Improvement

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## Purpose

- Identify an improvement opportunity or a performance gap, implement a change in care delivery, and measure the impact of that change.
  - Credit for quality improvement work you are already doing or have completed
  - Exemption for those who are clinically inactive

## Activity Options

- |                  |                        |                                     |
|------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| → ABFM-Directed  | → COVID-19             | → <b>New</b> Augmented Intelligence |
| → Self-Directed  | → Health Equity        |                                     |
| → Organizational | → Recognition Programs |                                     |

# Performance Improvement

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## Self-Directed Activity: Report Work You're Already Doing

- Complete your application in 20 minutes or less.
- Up to 10 physicians can participate.
- Demonstrate attempted improvement:
  - Initial data measurement.
  - Intervention.
  - Secondary data measurement.
- Attest to your participation in the effort.





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**Gerardo Moreno, MD, MSHS, DABFM**  
*Board Certified since 2007*

# Professionalism - 3-Part Framework

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Use 3-Part Framework  
and ABFM Guidelines  
for Professionalism,  
Licensure and  
Personal Conduct.



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## Losing Certification is Uncommon

- **0.9%** of Diplomates reviewed by Professionalism Committee annually
- Only **0.09%** lose certification  
**50%** of these are restored
- **Most common issues:**
  - Prescribing controlled substance
  - Sexual misconduct
  - Personal substance use



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## 2024 ABMS Standards for Continuing Certification

How is ABFM Meeting ABMS Standards?



- Longitudinal assessment as exam option
- Incorporated feedback into self-assessment and exam for learning opportunities
- Integration of activities to reduce burden
- Engage Diplomates in ongoing process improvement

**New - Assess Diplomates at an interval no longer than five years to retain each certificate.**



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# Continuous Certification 5-Year Cycle

*Beginning in 2025*



Flexible.  
Convenient.  
Certification Your Way.

## Why Change?

- To meet the American Board of Medical Specialties' Standards for Continuing Certification of assessing physicians in more frequent intervals
- To help maintain awareness of increasingly rapid medical advances and changes in practice guidelines.
- Simplify the continuous certification process so that is more flexible and convenient for you.


## Certification 2025 - The 5-Year Cycle

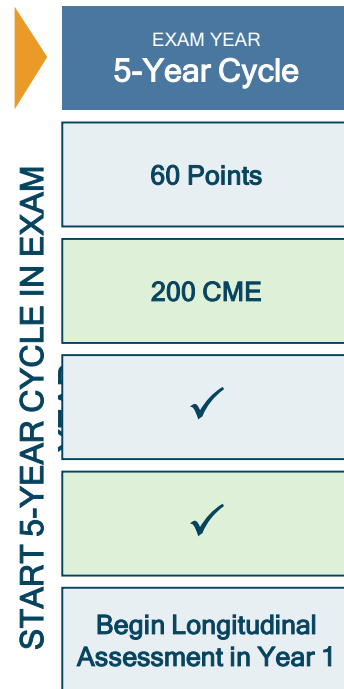
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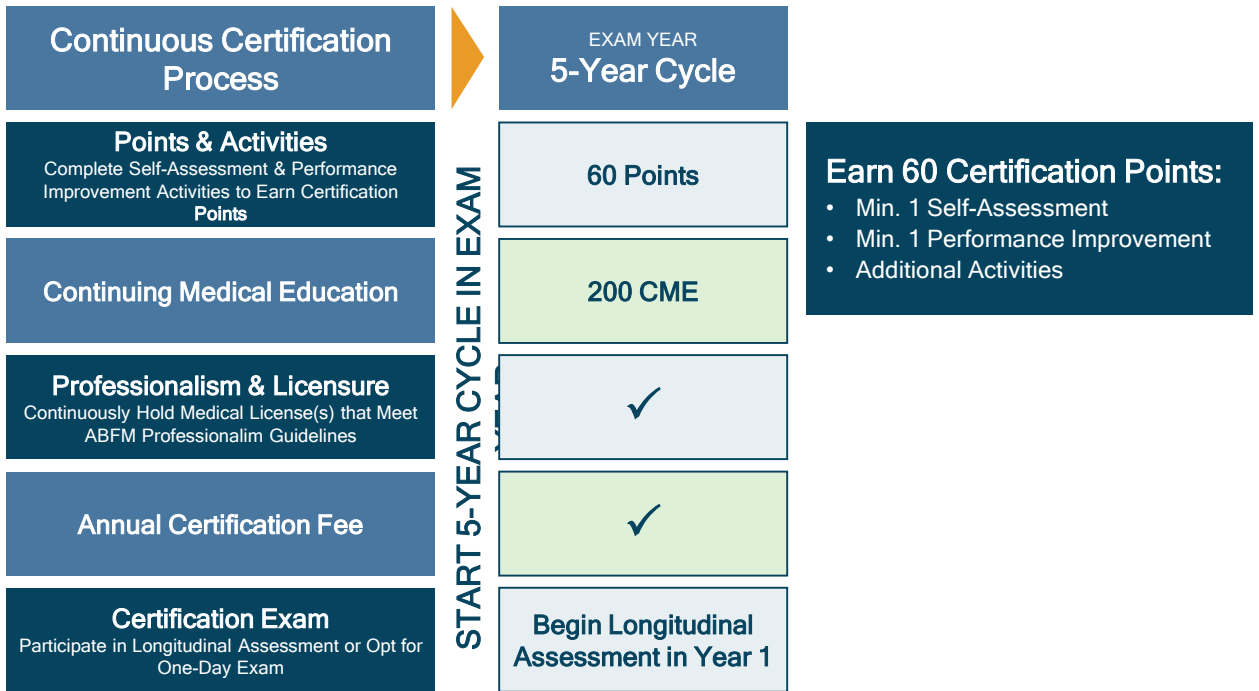
Beginning in 2025, longitudinal assessment will be at the core: you will never need to take the one-day exam again, unless you want to!

- Existing 10-year commitments will be honored
- Other activities will continue, but with more time to complete (5 years). Choose the activities most relevant to your practice.
- Check your ABFM portfolio to see your schedule is or if you have questions.
- Fees will remain the same in 2025 (and for as long as we can!)

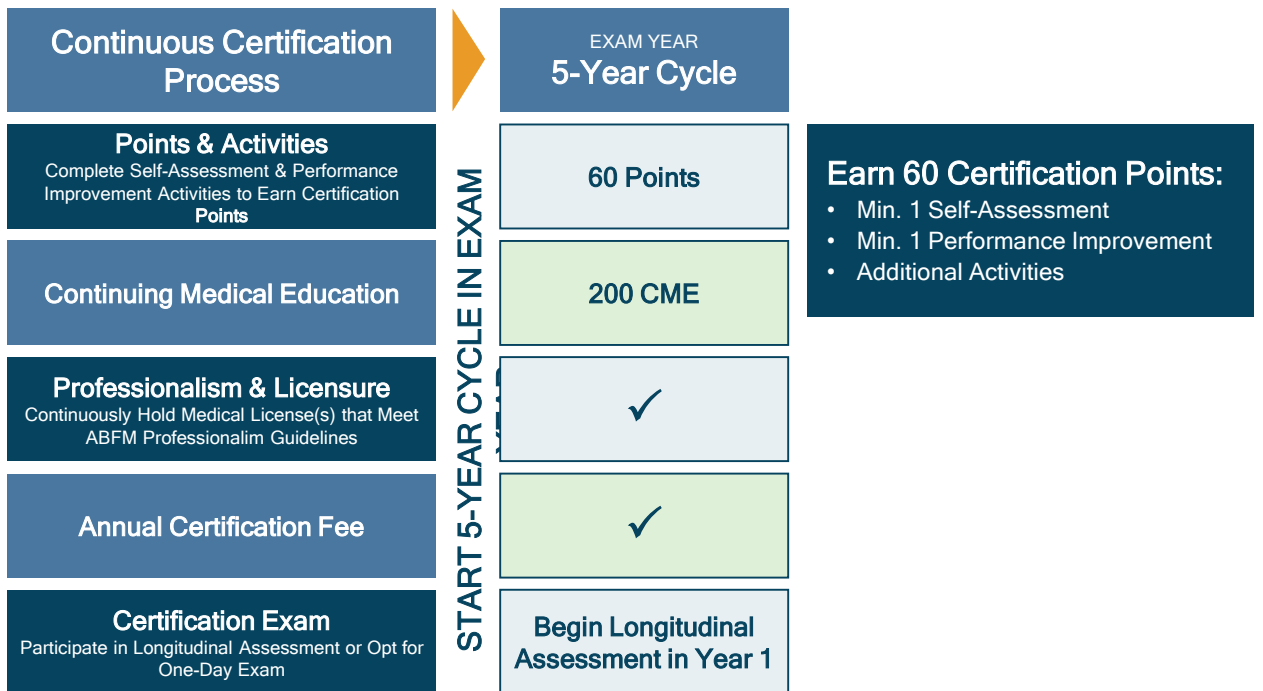
Continuous Certification Process	CURRENT 3-Year Stages
<b>Points &amp; Activities</b> Complete Self-Assessment & Performance Improvement Activities to Earn Certification Points	50 Points
Continuing Medical Education	150 CME
<b>Professionalism &amp; Licensure</b> Continuously Hold Medical License(s) that Meet ABFM Professionalism Guidelines	✓
Annual Certification Fee	✓
<b>Certification Exam</b> Participate in Longitudinal Assessment or Opt for One-Day Exam	—

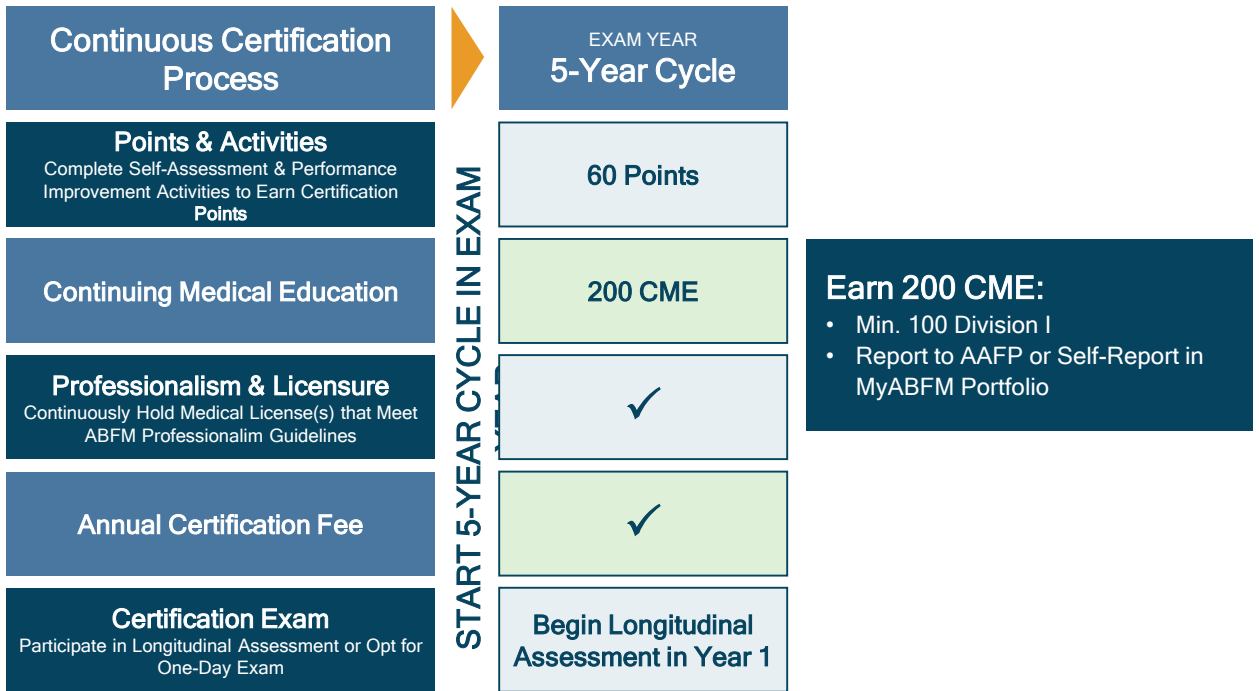
Continuous Certification Process	CURRENT 3-Year Stages		EXAM YEAR 5-Year Cycle
<b>Points &amp; Activities</b> Complete Self-Assessment & Performance Improvement Activities to Earn Certification Points	50 Points	START 5-YEAR CYCLE IN EXAM	60 Points
Continuing Medical Education	150 CME		200 CME
<b>Professionalism &amp; Licensure</b> Continuously Hold Medical License(s) that Meet ABFM Professionalism Guidelines	✓		✓
Annual Certification Fee	✓		✓
<b>Certification Exam</b> Participate in Longitudinal Assessment or Opt for One-Day Exam	—		Begin Longitudinal Assessment in Year 1

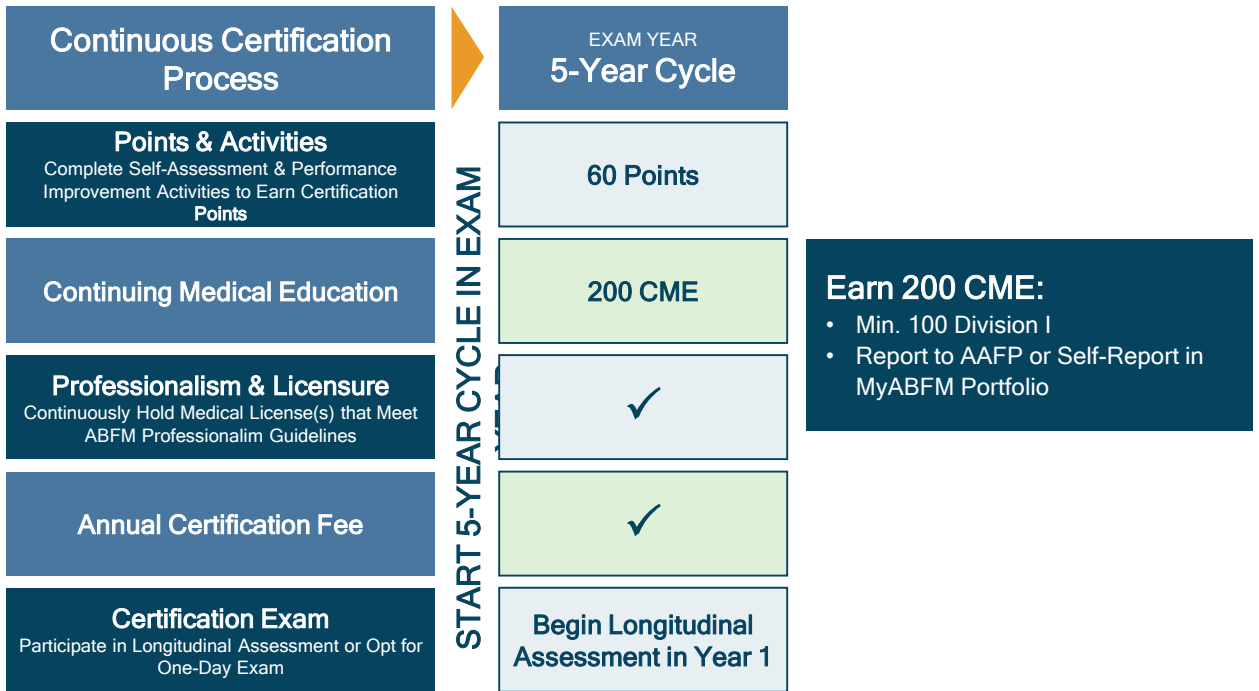


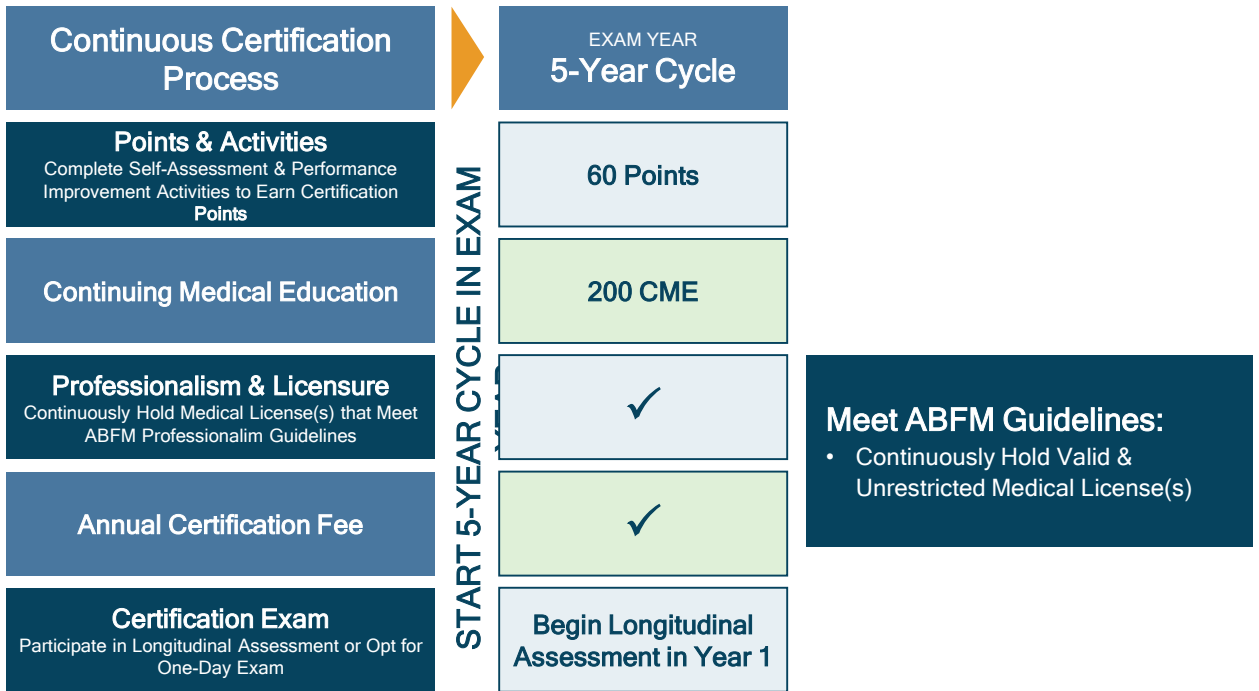


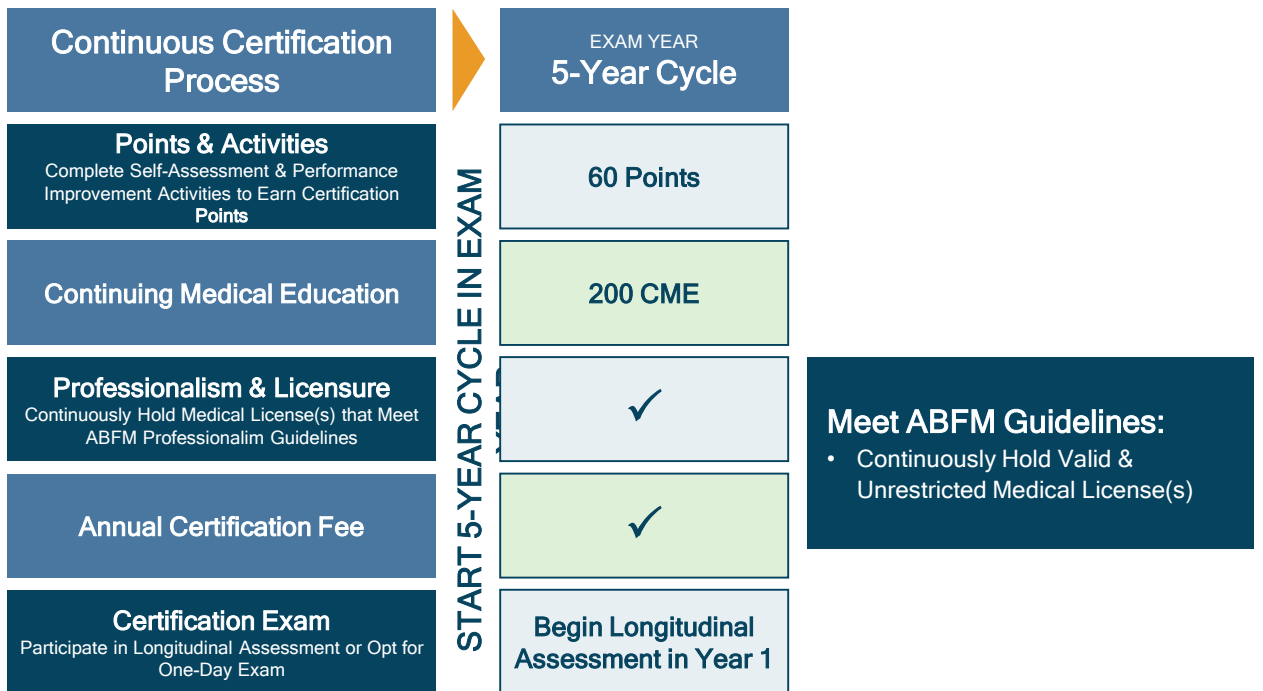


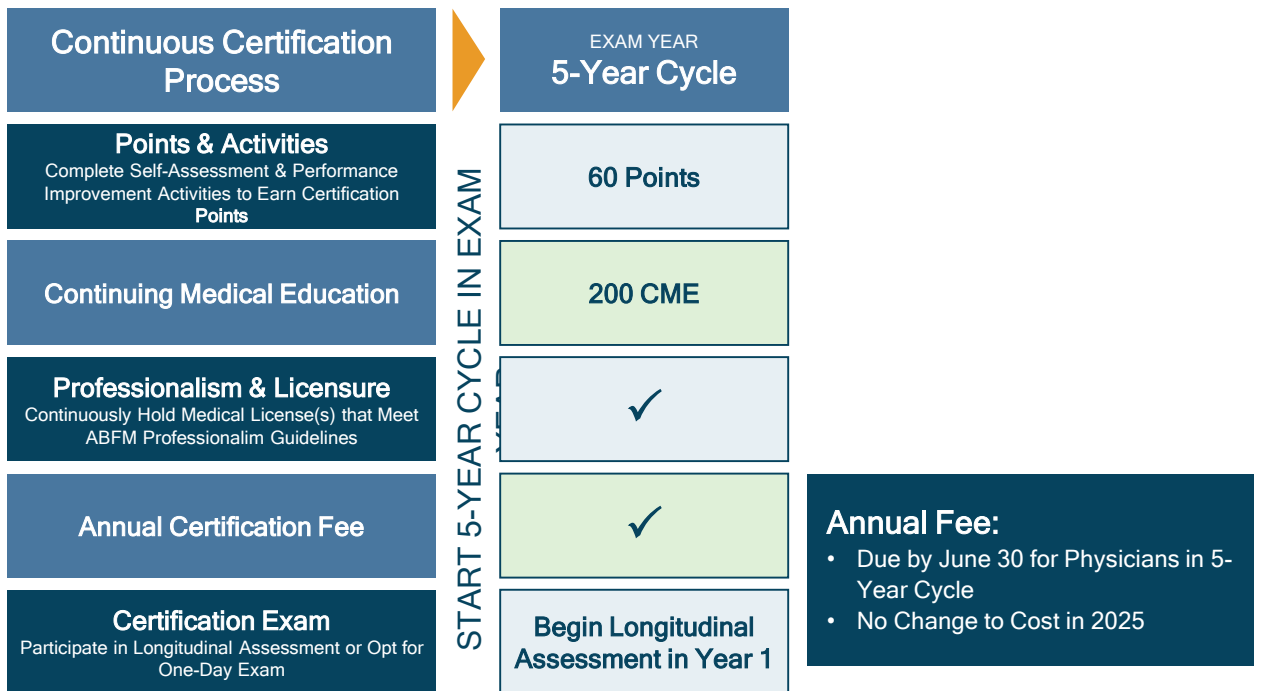


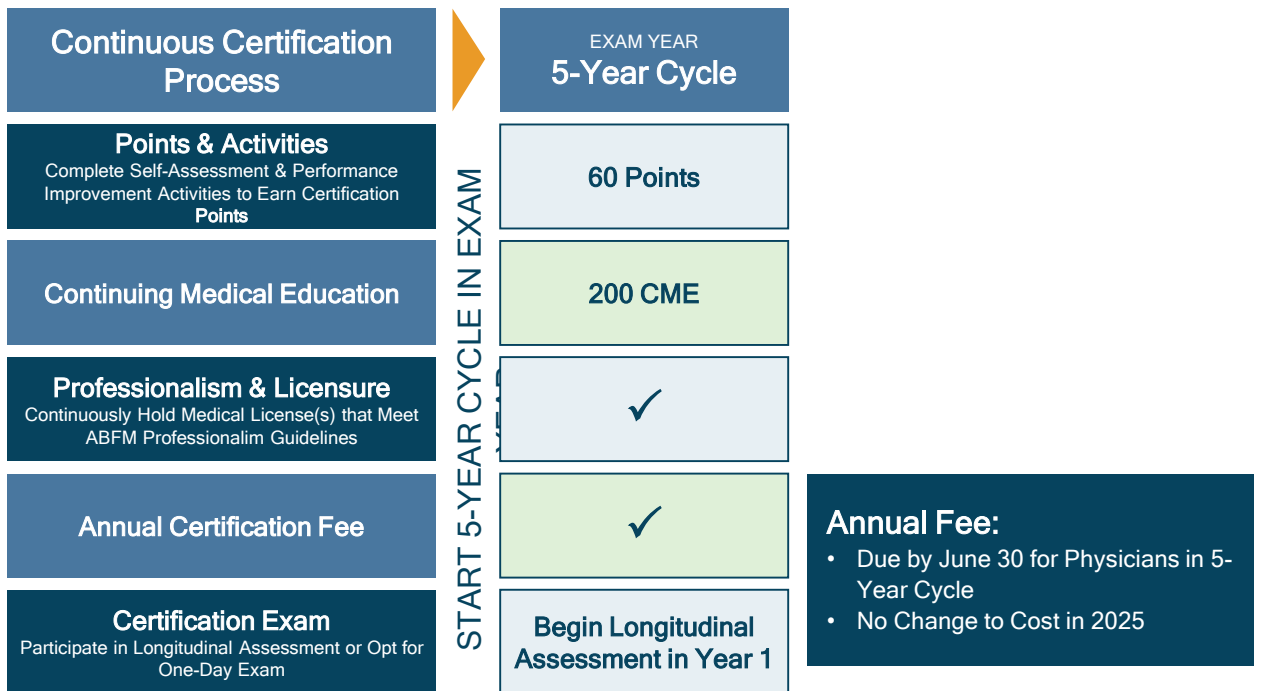


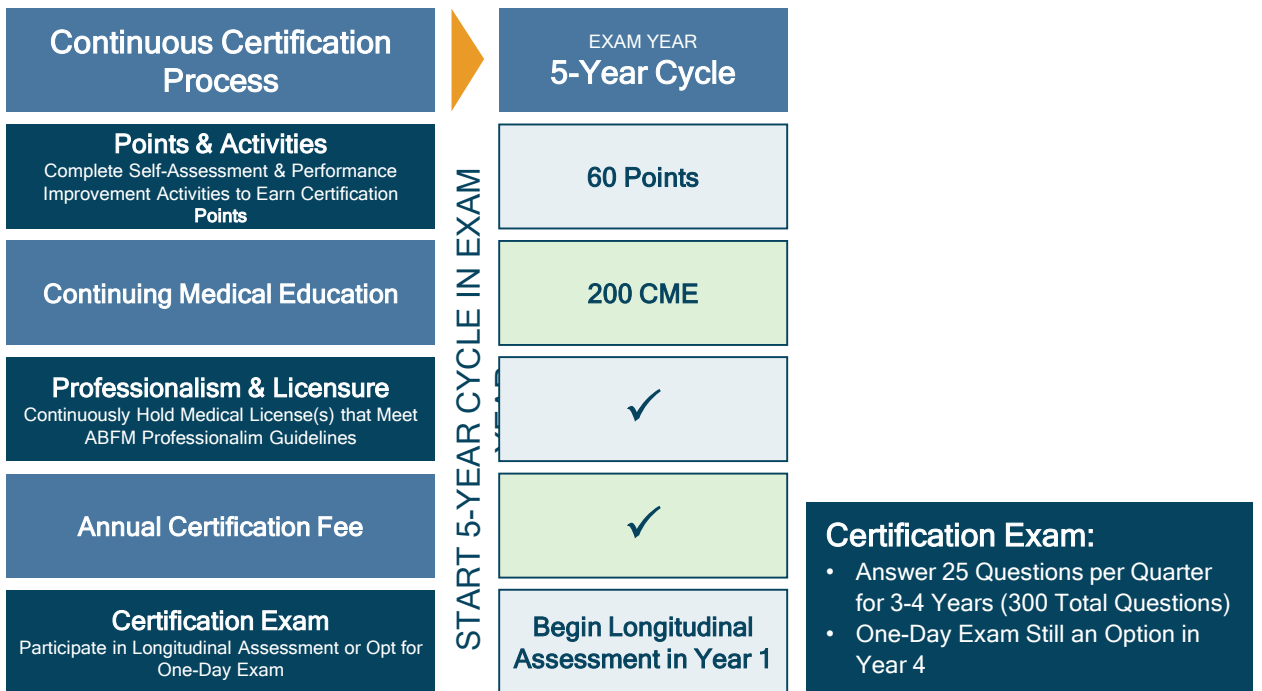




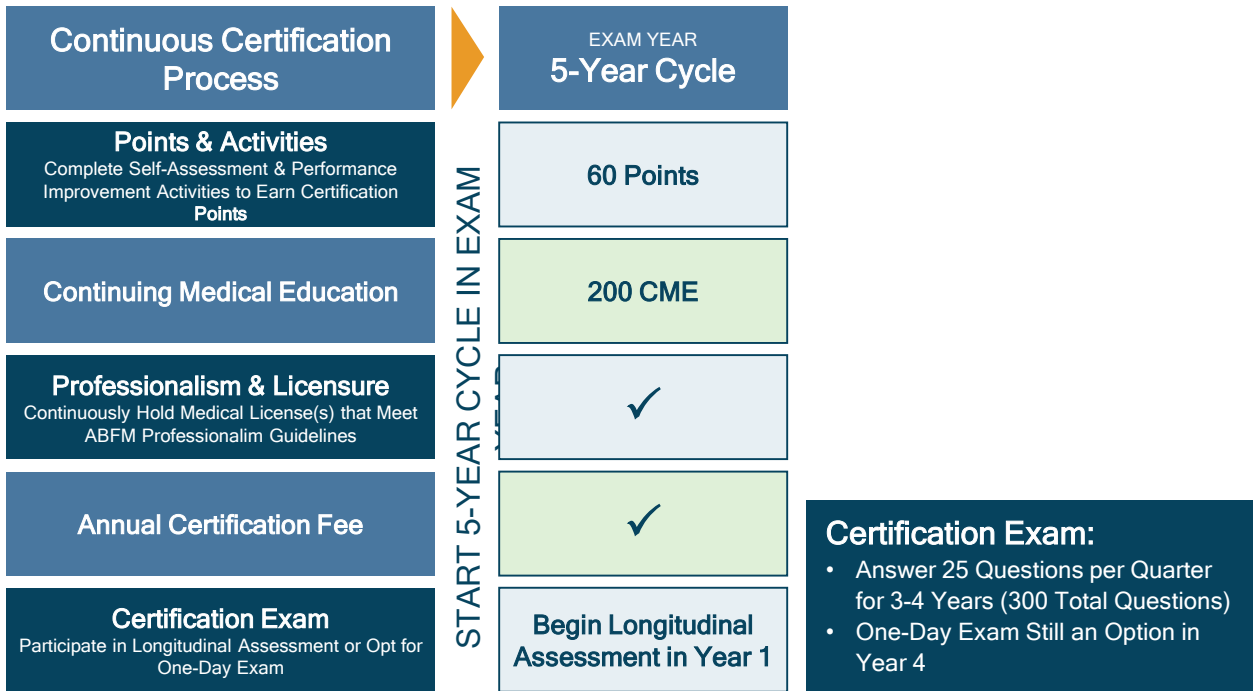












## Benefits of the 5-Year Cycle

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- Never take the one-day exam to maintain your certification (unless you want to).
  - The option to answer quarterly exam questions (or opt for the traditional, one-day exam).
- More time and flexibility to complete certification activity requirements. Five years versus three years.
- Fifth year off for Diplomates who complete all requirements in four years.
- No changes to annual fees or ABFM Professionalism Guidelines in 2025.



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## A Higher Standard

Established by physicians, board certification is the marker of excellence that demonstrates a commitment to professionalism and the highest standard of care.



"ABFM Board Certification matters for my professional credibility, ensures highest-quality care for my patients, and elevates the specialty."

**William Thornbury, MD**  
*Board Certified since 2004*

## Cost of Certification

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Your Annual \$200 Certification Fee Covers:

- Your exam (with no exam administration fee).
- All ABFM activities including the National Journal Club.
- **One free retake** if your first exam attempt was unsuccessful.

→ ABFM fees have not increased since 2008.

# Enhancing ABFM Board Certification

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## Longitudinal Assessment (exam)

- Earn additional self-assessment and CME credit for completing

## Knowledge Self-Assessment (KSA)

- Streamlined platform, more efficient
- Single best answer, easier to move through

## Continuous Knowledge Self-Assessment (CKSA)

- Provides short periods of activity on a quarterly basis

## National Journal Club (NJC)

- Credit per article supports incremental time investment

## Performance Improvement (PI)

- Simply report what you are already doing

## MyABFM Portfolio

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- Knowledge Self-Assessment (KSA) Platform - updated & modernized
- Certification Planner Tool - plan your certification activities
- Communication Preferences
  - Select email messages you wish to receive
  - Text messaging option
- **Coming Soon**
  - MyABFM Mobile App

**MyABFM**  
PORTFOLIO



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## Digital Badge - Share Your Certification

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- **Now Available!** Digital resources to share your board certification with peers, patients, and the public.
- Digital badge, digital certificate, and DABFM designation.
- Share on social media (LinkedIn, Facebook, etc.).
- Embed in email signature, website, add to mobile wallet.
- More than **24,000** ABFM Diplomates have claimed their digital badge and certificate.
- Claim yours inside your **MyABFM Portfolio**.



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## ABFM Public Website - Redesigned

- Updated look and color palette.
- Streamlined navigation.
- New resident resources section.
- Features ABFM Diplomates on home page .
- Increase awareness about board certification.
- Reinforces ABFM Board Certification as a Higher Standard.



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## Want To Get Involved? ABFM Volunteer Activities

- Certification Focus Groups
- Item Writers
- Share Your Story/Featured Diplomate on Website

Contact ABFM Support Center at



**Thank You!**