

Board Eligibility and Transition Dates

Updated January 2021

The ABMS Board Eligibility Policy for Specialty Certification and the ABMS Eligibility Policy for Subspecialty Certification enable Member Boards to set parameters for how candidates can use the term "board eligible" as a way to signal their preparations for certification while at the same time closing off the potential for abuse through using the term indefinitely. The ability of a candidate to become board certified by an ABMS Member Board is directly related to when he or she completed an ACGME-accredited residency program (or its equivalent). Board eligible applies only to the period of time prior to initial certification in a specialty or subspecialty. ABMS Member Boards with existing board eligibility policies aligned their board eligible periods with the principles of the established ABMS policies. Member Boards that did not have an existing policy in place established transition dates for their candidates.

BOARD ELIGIBLE PERIODS AND TRANSITION DATES				
American Board of	SPECIALTIES		SUBSPECIALTIES	
	Board Eligible Period (+practice requirement)	Transition Date	Board Eligible Period (+practice requirement)	Transition Date
Allergy and Immunology	7 years	*	No subspecialties	
Anesthesiology	7 years	*	7 years	*
Colon and Rectal Surgery	7 years ¹	12/31/2023	No subspecialties	
Dermatology	5 years	*	5 years	*
Emergency Medicine	5 years	*	7 years	*
Family Medicine	7 years	*	7 years	*
Internal Medicine	7 years	*	7 years	*
Medical Genetics and Genomics	7 years	*	7 years	*
Neurological Surgery	6-7 years	*		1/1/2025
Nuclear Medicine	7 years	*	No subspecialties	
Obstetrics and Gynecology	7 (+1) years	*	7 (+1)	*
Ophthalmology	7 years	*	No subspecialties	
Orthopaedic Surgery	5 years ²	*	7 (+2) years	*
Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery	5 years	*		1/1/2025
Pathology	5 years	*	7 years ³	*
Pediatrics	7 years	*	7 years	*
Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation	7 years	*	7 years	*
Plastic Surgery	7 (+1) years	*	7 (+2) years ⁴	*
Preventive Medicine	7 years	*	7 years	*
Psychiatry and Neurology	7 years	*	7 years	*
Radiology	6 years	*	10 years	1/1/2025
Surgery	7 years	7/1/2022		1/1/2025
Thoracic Surgery	7 years ⁵	*	7 years ⁶	*
Urology	6 years	*	6 years ⁷	*

*The Member Board either had a policy in place prior to the effective date of the ABMS policy, or the transition date has passed.

¹ Colon and Rectal Surgery requires candidates to pass the traditional examination given by the American Board of Surgery. Candidates have 7 years to complete both the traditional and oral examinations after application approval.

² Orthopaedic Surgery candidates have 5 years to achieve certification after passing the traditional examination.

³ Pathology eligibility period starts from the completion of subspecialty training or primary certification, whichever is later.

⁴ Plastic Surgery allows a maximum of seven years to complete certification after application, except for Surgery of the Hand which is nine years.

⁵ Thoracic Surgery will accept a Vascular Surgery residency in lieu of a General Surgery residency as long as the Vascular Surgery training leads to primary certification by the American Board of Surgery.

⁶ Thoracic Surgery requires diplomates to apply within one year of completing training.

⁷ Urology requires applicants to complete the examination process within six years with up to three attempts to take the examination.

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