Dear Diplomates:

The American Board of Medical Genetics and Genomics (ABMGG) is conducting an MOC longitudinal assessment pilot delivered through the CertLink® Assessment Platform powered by the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS).

The longitudinal assessment model is being considered for its applicability to continuous professional development through the ABMS Program for Maintenance of Certification (ABMS MOC). Supported by adult learning theory, longitudinal assessment involves repeated exposure to relevant information as a way for individuals to learn and retain information. The process helps individuals evaluate their knowledge, fill knowledge gaps, and demonstrate proficiency.

If the ABMGG CertLink® pilot is successful, this method of assessment may replace the 10-year MOC Part III high-stakes exam. Please review this document to learn more about the ABMGG CertLink® pilot plan and how you can participate.
PILOT PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Pilot Duration and Schedule
The ABMGG CertLink® pilot launched February 1, 2018 and is expected to run for three to five years.

Technical Platform
Where do I answer questions, track my progress and receive feedback?
The program is housed on CertLink®, an online platform created by ABMS for the development and delivery of longitudinal assessments. CertLink® allows:

- Flexible administration via computer, tablet, or smart phone
- Display of response and rationale for answer
- Dashboard creation to show areas of strength and weakness
- Results accumulation over time

Does the system allow for special accommodations?
The CertLink® platform can accommodate all needs currently allotted for in the secure exam (i.e. extra time). Diplomates must submit the same documentation as required for the secure exam in order to receive special accommodations.

Answering Questions
How many questions do I have to answer and when?
Diplomates receive 24 questions at the beginning of every six-month assessment period that must be completed by the end of the six months when the next batch is released.
The CertLink® platform allows users to choose when they want to answer the assessment questions and how they wish to pace themselves throughout the six-month period. Questions must be answered within five minutes once the question has been opened.
When a new set of questions is released, some of the new questions will be iterations of previously answered questions (“clones”). This approach will allow diplomates an opportunity to revisit and reinforce concepts from previous questions.

What if I have more than one specialty?
All Diplomates will answer the same number of questions, regardless of number of specialties. Successful participation in CertLink® will cover the Part III requirement for all specialties held by a single diplomate.
Do I have to answer the questions right away when they are released?
Questions can be answered at the diplomate’s own pace during the six-month cycle. Reminders are sent at set intervals as needed.

How much time do I have to answer each question?
Each question must be answered within 5 minutes. Unanswered questions are scored as incorrect.

Can I use resources to answer the questions?
Yes, diplomates may use references as needed.

Can I consult with my colleagues or peers when answering questions?
No. Although diplomates may use references to aid in answering questions, the assessments are considered an individual activity. Diplomates participating in the pilot will be required to digitally sign a legally binding statement of integrity.

Can I “pass” on a question and return to it later once I’ve opened it?
Once a diplomate opens a question, it must be answered within the allotted time.

Tracking Progress and Receiving Feedback
Will I know if I answered a question correctly or incorrectly?
Yes, diplomates receive immediate performance feedback for each question. The CertLink® platform also displays a diplomate’s overall performance in real time.

What type of feedback will I receive regarding my performance?
After each question, a diplomat receives a “critique”, which reviews each answer option and explains why the option was correct or incorrect. A list of references are also provided.

Assessing Performance
What happens if I answer a question incorrectly?
If an item is answered incorrectly, the diplomat can review the critique and reattempt the question to reinforce learning of the content. The item is still scored as incorrect (first response) even if the second answer is correct. A clone of the question may appear later; eight clones are distributed in the next question period.
Both new questions and clones are scored overall. Correctly answering a clone does not replace the incorrect score of the initial question.
What if I don’t answer all the questions?

During the pilot period, all questions must be answered in order to fulfill the requirements of meaningful participation.

What is Meaningful Participation?

At the time of registration diplomates agree to actively participate throughout the entire length of the pilot. Meaningful participation is defined as answering distributed questions within the specified timeframes for each year of the pilot program. While participating in the pilot program, diplomates will not be required to take the current Part III exam.

Diplomates who fail to meet the standards of meaningful participation at any point in the pilot period must pass the secure Part III exam.

If a diplomate meets the meaningful participation requirements throughout the entirety of the pilot period, he or she will not be required to take the secure Part III exam during that time. If, for any reason, the ABMGG CertLink® program does not continue beyond the pilot phase, successful diplomates will have satisfied their Part III activity through their pilot participation and will not be required to take the secure exam until the final three years of the new ten-year MOC cycle.

What if I have a life emergency or need a break?

The CertLink® program is being conceptually designed to incorporate flexibility and avoid test taking burn out. However, during the pilot period, diplomates must answer all questions during the specified timeframes in order to meet standards of meaningful participation.

How will my performance be assessed?

Psychometric scoring will be used to evaluate performance in the pilot program at the end of the pilot phase. Diplomates whose performance does not meet the standards of the evaluation must register and pass the secure Part III exam within three years. The CertLink® pilot program is anticipated to have a similar or higher pass rate as the current secure Part III exam for diplomates who meaningfully participate.

Eligibility

My MOC cycle ends in 2019 or 2021, how should I proceed?

Diplomates whose ten-year MOC cycle ends in either 2019 or 2021 can choose between the following options:

a) Participate in the ABMGG CertLink® pilot

Diplomates are highly encouraged to register and participate in the pilot. They must enroll in the pilot program from the beginning and meet requirements of meaningful participation or else be required to pass the Part III secure exam.
b) Take the Part III MOC exam and DO NOT participate in the ABMGG CertLink® pilot

Diplomates can choose to take the Part III exam without penalty; however all diplomates will be enrolled in the ABMGG CertLink® program if and when the pilot is deemed successful.

c) Take the Part III MOC exam AND participate in the ABMGG CertLink® pilot

Diplomates who both pass the exam and participate in the pilot will be considered active participants in the pilot program. If at some point a diplomate declines to participate in the pilot program, successful completion of the MOC exam will satisfy their MOC Part III activity.

If a 2019 or 2021 diplomate does not meaningfully participate in the pilot program, he or she will be required to pass the secure Part III exam in the final three years of the current ten-year cycle in order to satisfy the Part III requirement of their MOC program.

My ten-year cycle ends in 2023 or later, how should I proceed?

Diplomates whose ten-year cycles end in 2023 or later are encouraged to participate in the pilot. Note that if the pilot program is deemed successful within 3-5 years, all diplomates will be required to participate. If, for any, the pilot does not continue beyond the pilot phase, successful diplomates will have satisfied the Part III activity through participation in the pilot and will not be required to take the secure exam until the final three years of the new ten-year MOC cycle.

Registration

How do I register?

Please keep an eye out for communication from ABMGG and regularly check the ABMGG MOC website for updates. Any diplomates who miss the pilot program’s registration cutoff date will need to take their Part III MOC exam as scheduled.

Fees

Is there an extra fee to participate in the ABMGG CertLink® pilot?

Diplomates will not be charged a separate fee to participate in year one of the pilot program. In the future, a nominal fee may be charged.
Determining if the pilot is successful

If the ABMGG CertLink® pilot is determined a success, it will effectively replace the current Part III MOC exam. All diplomates, regardless of year of MOC cycle will be automatically entered in the longitudinal assessment program.

Although the pilot requires a more frequent level of participation than the secure exam, it is specifically designed to encourage learning, avoid test taking burn out, reduce exam-related stress, accommodate unexpected circumstances, and provide a platform that both supports and reflects the fast-paced nature of the medical genetics and genomics field.

How can I give feedback?

ABMGG welcomes your feedback on this innovative assessment approach. If you are interested in participating in a future focus group, please email abmgg@mycertlink.org.

Learn More!

Diplomates are encouraged to contact ABMGG via email at abmgg@mycertlink.org with any questions related to the pilot project.