Frequently Asked Questions about
ABMGG Certification
Updated November 2016

**Topic Areas:**
- Degree/Training Requirements to be considered for the certification exams
- Logbook Issues
- Board Eligibility and Active Candidate Status
- Questions about the Certification Examination
Q. What degree qualifications do I need to be considered for the ABMGG certification exams?
A. Applicants for medical/clinical genetics and genomics residency must have a medical degree (MD, DO, or the equivalent). Applicants for the laboratory specialties need either a medical degree or a PhD degree in genetics or a closely related field. If you are unsure if your PhD is in a closely related field, email ABMGG@ABMGG.org and include a PDF of your transcript.

Q. I earned my medical (or doctoral) degree in another country. What is required to be considered for eligibility to take the ABMGG certification exams?
A. If your medical or doctoral degree was earned outside the US or Canada, you must submit a Credentials Review Request form. For more information, click here: http://www.abmgg.org/pages/cert_forcredential.shtml

Q. I completed a residency outside of an ACGME-accredited program; will it qualify?
A. ABMGG requires satisfactory completion of a minimum of one year, full-time training in an ACGME-accredited residency (e.g., pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology, internal medicine, etc.) that includes at least 12 months of direct patient care experience. The ABMGG Credentials Committee, after review of all documentation, may grant graduate medical training equivalency for, one year or no years. You must submit a Credentials Review Request form to have your training considered. For more information, click here: http://www.abmgg.org/pages/cert_forcredential.shtml

Q. My doctoral or medical education was from a country where English is not the primary language. What do I need to do?
A. Applicants for the certification examinations for the laboratory specialties who have an earned Ph.D. or M.D. degree from a country other than the U.S. Canada, Great Britain or Australia, must take the TOEFL-iBT examination. You must have the official TOEFL-iBT examination scores sent directly to the ABMGG Administrative Office by the Educational Testing Service (www.ets.org). Individuals who received their undergraduate or Master’s degree in the U.S., Canada, Great Britain or Australia but obtained their PhD or MD degrees elsewhere are not required to take the TOEFL-iBT exam. MDs with an ECFMG certificate are exempt from this requirement.

Q. What is TOEFL-iBT?
A. TOEFL-iBT is a four part exam. Each section of the exam is scored separately. The total minimum passing scores for the four part exam is 85. You must also achieve a minimum score of 23 on the speaking portion of the exam. Applicants must have the official TOEFL-iBT examination scores sent directly to the ABMGG Administrative Office by the Educational Testing Service (www.ets.org) no later than the ABMGG certification examination deadline.

Q. How long does it take to receive a response to my Credentials Review Request?
A. It typically takes 6-8 weeks before you receive a response, which will be sent via email. The decision of the credentials review is valid for a period of 5 years from the date of the response letter. If your decision expires, you will be required to reapply with all new documentation.

Q. Is there a fee for the Credentials Review Request form?
A. Yes, there is a $100 fee that must accompany your request. If you complete an accredited training program and make an application for ABMGG certification, your $100 fee will be applied towards the application review fee.
Logbook Issues

Q. How do I get access to the logbook site?
A. Logbook access is granted upon receipt of a completed Trainee Information Form submitted by your program director.

Q. I am a medical genetics and genomics resident in an ACGME program. Do I have to use the ACGME caselog site?
A. Yes. The ACGME requires that all residents upload cases to their caselog. As a convenience, ACGME will transfer your cases to the ABMGG logbook site in September after your program ends. However, be advised that they do not transfer all information. You must still enter the date the case was seen and the diagnosis. After the transfer you are required to review the data and select the 150 cases to be submitted. If you want to maintain both the ACGME and ABMGG logbook at the same time, you may do so. You will be granted access to the ABMGG logbook site upon receipt of the Trainee Information Form from your program director.

Q. I can't send my logbook to my training and program director for review. What do I need to do?
A. In order to be able to submit your logbook for review, you need to submit a completed credentials application to the ABMGG.

Q. I've entered my logbook cases; now what?
A. After you have selected 150 logbook cases to submit, perform the "preliminary data check." If errors are found, correct them and rerun the report until no errors are found. Then you will be able to submit the logbook electronically to your Training Director. Once you submit the logbook, your access to the logbook is locked. If the Training Director finds errors, they will "decline" the logbook and it will be returned to you for revision. After making the required changes, resubmit the logbook to the Training Director for approval. The Training Director will approve the logbook and electronically forward it to the Program Director for final approval and submission to the ABMGG for review and approval. If there are issues found, you and your training director will receive an email explaining the concerns and necessary revisions.

Q. My training (or program) director wants me to make changes to my logbook, but it won't let me. Why?
A. Your logbook is locked at the time you submit it to the training director for review. If your training (or program director) wants you to make changes to the logbook, they must "reject" the logbook. This will unlock the logbook and allow you to make changes and resubmit for review.

Q. If the logbook is rejected by the Credentials Committee, how many times can it be resubmitted?
A. You have two opportunities to revise your logbook in response to concerns raised by the Credentials Committee. If the logbook is not acceptable after the second revision (third submission), there is a fee of $300 assessed to resubmit the revised logbook. If the logbook is rejected after the third revision (fourth submission), you will not be credentialed for the certification examination.
Board Eligibility and Active Candidate Status

Q. What does "Board Eligible" refer to?
A. A candidate is considered "Board Eligible" after satisfactory completion of an accredited training program and before successful certification by the ABMGG.

Q. For what period of time am I board eligible?
A. A candidate is considered Board Eligible for up to 7 years after satisfactory completion of an accredited training program. For more information, please read the Board-Eligibility and Timeframe to Achieve Certification policy, http://www.abmgg.org/pages/training_policies.shtml.

Q. What if I don’t achieve certification within 7 years post completion of training?
A. You are no longer eligible for certification in that specialty without fulfilling the requirements for re-entry into the certification process. You may not use the term Board Eligible and any violation of this rule will be considered a breach of ethical standards.

Q. What is Active Candidate Status (ACS)?
A. ACS is the term used to recognize applicants who have fulfilled the requirements for ABMGG certification but who have not yet taken the certification examination. ACS is granted after all requirements have been met and formally approved by the ABMGG. The term ACS is valid only for a single designated examination cycle, and terminates when the results of the examination are released.
Questions about the Certification Examination

Q. How often is the ABMGG certification offered?
A. ABMGG Certification exams are offered every other year in the odd years (e.g. 2017, 2019, 2021).

Q. Where are the ABMGG examinations offered?
A. ABMGG certification exams are offered at Prometric Centers worldwide. Exam seats in the U.S. and Canada are included in your examination fee. International exam seats require an additional fee. Check the fees posted on the ABMGG website.

Q. When must training be completed to be eligible to sit for the examinations?
A. Training must be completed by July 31st of the year in which the examination is being offered.

Q. What is the deadline to apply for the certification exam?
A. All deadlines for the application process can be found at: http://www.abmgg.org/2017/cert_deadlines.html

Q. How do I apply and what documents are required to be submitted with the application?
A. The application must include the signed Password Request and Application Statement form, along with an official final transcript of doctoral or medical degree and payment for the examination fees.

Q. As a first time applicant, what is required?
A. Details of required documents for credentialing may be found at:
http://www.abmgg.org/2017/cert_requirements.html#first

Q. As an ABMGG diplomate seeking additional certification, what is required?
A. Details of required documents for credentialing may be found at:
http://www.abmgg.org/2017/cert_requirements.html#addspe

Q. I failed to achieve certification in the last cycle; what is required for me to reapply?
A. Details of the requirements to reapply for the exam may be found at:
http://www.abmgg.org/2017/cert_requirements.html#reex

Q. I am applying for certification in clinical genetics and genomics. Do I need to have a medical license to take the examination?
A. Candidates for the clinical genetics and genomics exam are required to have a valid and unrestricted medical license at the time of the examination. Temporary or training licenses are not acceptable.

Q. How much does it cost to sit for the ABMGG certification examination?
A. The 2017 ABMGG fees can be found at http://www.abmgg.org/2017/cert_fees.shtml.
All fees for the examination must be submitted with the application. To discuss a payment plan, if needed, contact ABMGG@ABMGG.org.

Q. What do exam fees cover?
A. The fees cover the review of all documents submitted for credentialing and determining eligibility to sit for the examination, costs of developing, administering, evaluating and reporting the results of the examination, as well as other activities essential to the certification process.

Q. How do I update my mailing address?
A. Log in to the ABMGG Portal and update your contact information.
Q. How do I update my email address?
A. Contact the ABMGG Administrative Office either by email (abmgg@abmgg.org) or by phone (301-634-7315)

Q. My name has changed. How can I update my records?
A. If you have changed your name, please provide a copy of your marriage degree or divorce decree and we will update our records. Please remember that the name on your scheduling permit must exactly match the name on your government-issued identification.

Q. Does the ABMGG publish or recommend any preparation materials for the examination?
A. ABMGG neither administers nor endorses review courses for the ABMGG certification examinations. Furthermore, the ABMGG does not provide content or guidance to organizations offering review courses. ABMGG directors and item writers are not allowed to participate in such courses nor are practice questions abstracted from previous Board examinations.

Q. How do I know what will be on the exam and what I should study?
A. The content outlines and blueprints of the ABMGG certification examinations can be found at: http://www.abmgg.org/2017/cert_essentials.shtml

Q. How many questions are on the general exam? How much time do I have to complete the exam?
A. The General Genetics exam consists of 150 multiple-choice questions. The allotted time for the exam is 3-1/2 hours divided into three 1-hour blocks, and a 15-minute break. There is a 15 minute tutorial prior to the formal exam.

Q. How many questions on the specialty exams? How much time do I have to complete the exam?
A. Each specialty exam consists of 126 multiple-choice questions. The allotted time for each exam is 3 hours divided into three 50-minute blocks, and a 10-minute break. There is a 20-minute tutorial prior to the formal exam.

Q. Where can I find more information about the exams?
A. Check out Exam Essentials on our website: http://www.abmgg.org/2017/cert_essentials.shtml#review

Q. If something unexpected comes up, how do I withdraw from the exam?
A. You must submit written notification to the ABMGG (ABMGG@ABMGG.org). Candidates who withdraw from the examination after Active Candidate Status has been granted will receive a refund for the examination fees (minus $100 processing fee) if the request is made by March 31, 2017. After that date, examination fees are not refundable. NOTE: all application fees are non-refundable. Candidates who withdraw after scheduling a testing appointment will forfeit all fees and must cancel their appointments.

Q. When are scores available?
A. Examination results will be released approximately 3 months after the examination is given. Candidates will receive an email with instructions on how to electronically retrieve their scores. Exam results are released by telephone, fax, or email.

Q. I did not pass the exam; now what?
A. You have seven (7) years from the date of completion of your training program to become certified. If you did not take the exam or you failed to achieve a passing score on either the general exam, the specialty exam, or both exams, then you must reapply in order to take the exams in the next cycle. If you do not achieve certification within 7 years, you are no longer eligible for certification in that specialty without fulfilling the requirements for re-entry into the certification process.
Q. Am I allowed to discuss or disclose questions that were on the exam?
A. No, you cannot discuss or disclose items that were on the exam to anyone. At the time of application you signed an agreement stating that you understood that the content of the ABMGG’s examinations are proprietary and strictly confidential, and that the unauthorized retention, possession, copying, distribution, disclosure, discussion, or receipt of any examination question, in whole or in part, by written, electronic, oral or other form of communication, including but not limited to emailing, copying or printing and reconstruction through memorization and/or dictation, before, during, or after an examination, is strictly prohibited. In addition to constituting irregular behavior subject to disciplinary action including but not limited to revocation of certification, revocation of eligibility for future certification, and disciplinary fines, such activities violate the ABMGG’s proprietary rights, including copyrights, and may subject you to legal action resulting in monetary damages. So, to reiterate - no!