

# The American Board of Plastic Surgery, Inc.®

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## 2020 Continuous Certification Examination Announcement Letter

### Important Dates and Deadlines for 2020

<b>January 1, 2020</b>	<b>Available on Tracking Page</b> Announcement Information Registration Form
<b>January 31, 2020</b>	<b>Deadline – Registration Form</b> Online Registration Form finalized with required documentation uploaded. All Continuous Certification requirements must be current.
<b>February 1-7, 2020</b>	<b>Late Deadline Period - Reply Form</b> Online Registration Form finalized with required documentation uploaded
<b>March 1, 2020</b>	<b>Available on Tracking Page</b> Continuous Certification Registration Confirmation
<b>April 1 – 30, 2020</b>	<b>Continuous Certification Examination Administration</b> Internet based exam can be taken anywhere with internet connection throughout the month of April. Diplomates may complete the examination during several sessions.
<b>July 2020</b>	<b>Available – Result Letters and Performance Reports:</b> Result letters posted to the Tracking page. Email notification will be sent from the Board Office.
<b>December 1, 2020</b>	<b>Certificates mailed</b> to those with a certificate expiration date on 12/31/2020. All Continuous Certification requirements must be current.

## Submit the online Registration Form

You must submit the online Reply Form in order to register for the 2020 Continuous Certification Examination. The Internet Based Test will be administered April 1, 2020 through April 30, 2020 and can be taken anywhere with an internet connection. Diplomates may complete the examination during several sessions.

The Registration Form must be finalized by the close of the business day on February 7, 2020 (Late deadline) in order to be registered for the April 2020 Continuous Certification Examination.

## Access the Online Reply Form

- Visit [www.abplasticsurgery.org](http://www.abplasticsurgery.org)
- Log in with your username and password
- Unless you customized your login information, your username is your six-digit Board ID number and your password is your last name (first letter is capitalized – e.g. Smith)
- Click “Continuous Certification Reply Form” on your Tracking Page under “Requirements Currently Due”

## Registration Form Requirements

- Questions 1 – 10 are included on Professional Standing Updates. If response is YES, please include a detailed explanation. Documentation can be uploaded to accompany any explanation, but is not a requirement unless explicitly stated.
- Failure to correctly submit required materials online in their entirety may result in a Missing Items Fee.

## Technical Support

For any technical issue with the website and Registration form, please contact Web Data Solutions at 312-944-0642 or [support@dataharborsolutions.com](mailto:support@dataharborsolutions.com) (M-F 9:00am – 5:00pm CST)

Diplomates may also contact the Board Office at 215-587-9322 or [staff@abplasticsurgery.org](mailto:staff@abplasticsurgery.org) (M-F 8:30am – 5:00pm EST).

## Examination Fee

Starting with the previous examination in 2019, *no Examination Fee is required.*

## Diplomates who are NOT taking the 2020 Examination

To postpone taking the Continuous Certification Examination, please select “I will not take the 2020 Continuous Certification Examination” and finalize the Registration Form. Documentation is not required.

Diplomates are only registered for the examination once the online Registration Form and all required documents are submitted and finalized by the deadline date and approved for examination. If you cannot meet these requirements, please indicate that you will not take the 2020 Continuous Certification Examination.

Please note that if your certificate is due to expire December 31, 2020, this is your final opportunity to complete the exam without a break in your certification. The next opportunity to register for the Exam will be January of 2021 for the April 2021 Exam.

## **Content of the Examination**

The Continuous Certification Examination will consist of one of the following formats:

- Comprehensive Plastic Surgery Examination Module - Consists of 150 comprehensive plastic surgery questions and 50 core questions
- A Subspecialty Examination Module focused on Cosmetic, Craniomaxillofacial or Hand Surgery - Consists of 50 core (general plastic surgery) questions and 150 specialty-specific questions

## **Internet-Based Testing – New Exam Format**

Beginning in April 2019, the Continuous Certification Examination will move to an Internet-Based testing format, rather than a Computer-Based Test which traditionally involved traveling to a testing center. The Exam can be taken on any computer with internet connection and is no longer limited to one day with a four hour window.

The exam will now incorporate relevant content for each question, essentially a built-in study guide. After answering a question, the diplomate will be directed to the supporting rationale. After reading the rationale, the diplomate will be offered an additional opportunity to answer the question if incorrectly answered on the first attempt.

## **Accessing the Exam**

The exam can be accessed at any point throughout the administration period April 1-30, 2020 and diplomates can exit and re-enter as many times as necessary to complete the Exam. The questions must be completed by April 30, 2020. No extensions or exceptions will be granted.

The Continuous Certification Exam will be accessed through a link on the diplomate's tracking page. Clicking this link will direct the diplomate to the testing website.

Email notifications and reminders will be sent in the weeks and days leading up to the examination window. The Board recommends diplomates sign in and complete the tutorial exam on any device they plan to use to complete the questions. This should be done well in advance of the testing window.

## **Preparation for the Continuous Certification Examination**

Under the new testing format, the Board has incorporated the study material into the examination itself. However, based on diplomate feedback, the following options remain excellent resources to prepare for the exam:

### **1. 2020 Continuous Certification Exam Study Guides from ASPS or ASSH**

The Continuous Certification Study Guide produced by the American Society of Plastic Surgeons and the Plastic Surgery Education Network (PSEN) is an excellent reference for Continuous Certification exam preparation. Single modules corresponding to your examination module are available. Diplomates should focus on their specialty module, as listed on the Application Approval Letter, in addition to the Core Module.

To learn about ASPS Examination preparation resources, contact ASPS Member Services at 1-800-766-4955 or visit the PSEN website, <http://www.psenetwork.org/onlinecourses/selfassessments>. CMEs are available upon completion.

The American Society for Surgery of the Hand has developed a Hand Recertification Study Guide, which will be the most appropriate resource for the 2019 Hand Module of the Continuous Certification Exam. The guide is available through [this link](#).

## 2. CME Articles in the journal, Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery (PRS) and the Aesthetic Surgery Journal (ASJ)

PRS and ASJ work with the Board to review and edit the Continuing Medical Education (CME) questions published in the journals. A selection of CME article questions published in recent years and appropriate for the Continuous Certification Examination are included in the potential item bank for the Continuous Certification Examination and on the Continuous Certification Study Guide from ASPS.

## 3. Educational Programs

Surgical societies offer excellent educational programs of value to plastic surgeons. These include the American Association of Plastic Surgeons, the American College of Surgeons, the American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery, Inc., the American Society of Maxillofacial Surgeons, the Plastic Surgery Research Council, the American Association for Hand Surgery, the American Cleft Palate-Craniofacial Association, the American Burn Association, the American Society for Surgery of the Hand, and the American Head and Neck Society.

## Withdrawal from the Examination

The Board Office must receive a letter or email from the diplomate indicating the intent to withdraw from the examination by March 1st (at least 30 calendar days before the first date of the examination period which is April 1st). Diplomates who fail to complete the examination will not be granted another opportunity to do so until the following April.

## Results of the Examination

Result Letters will be posted on the Board's website (on the tracking page) in July. The time-period between administration of the examination and notification of the results is necessary to allow for psychometric analysis and to assure that individual results are reliable and accurate. Each diplomate will receive a single final grade (pass or fail) for the entire examination. The score (pass or fail) on the examination will be determined by the total number of questions answered correctly. Therefore, diplomates are encouraged to answer all items. A diplomate who has received a failing result must repeat the entire examination.

## The Successful Diplomate

Diplomates who successfully complete all components of the Continuous Certification Program, including successful completion of the Examination, will be **sent a new certificate at the end of the 10-year cycle before expiration of the** existing certificate. The Continuous Certification certificate indicates that the diplomate is maintaining certification in Plastic Surgery during a 10-year period and must continue to maintain certification to keep the certificate valid.

The Board supplies basic identifying data on certified diplomates to the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS). Each biographic entry shows the individual's certification in plastic surgery, and this listing will continue unchanged for those whose certification shows no expiration date. Upon completion of the Continuous Certification requirements, the Board will supply pertinent data to the ABMS so that the individual's biographic entry will also show Continuous Certification participation. Diplomates whose certificates bear an expiration date will have their biographic listings retained in the publications of the ABMS only if they have completed the Continuous Certification program requirements within the prescribed time limit. The Board also informs the major plastic surgery specialty societies of successful completion of the

Continuous Certification examination. The names of the successful individuals are listed in the Board's Annual Newsletter to diplomates.

The American Medical Association (AMA) Physician's Recognition Award offers 60 Category I CME credits for the successful completion of Continuous Certification. Contact the AMA at [www.ama-assn.org/go/cmeforms](http://www.ama-assn.org/go/cmeforms) for details.

### **The Unsuccessful Diplomate**

A passing score on the cognitive component of the Continuous Certification Program will be derived using content-based (criterion-referenced) evaluation methods. It will be possible for all diplomates taking the examination to receive a passing grade. There is no limit to the number of times that a diplomate can take the cognitive component of Continuous Certification. If a Diplomate does not successfully complete the examination before the expiration of the original certificate, the certificate will expire.

### **Cancellation of an Examination**

Should The American Board of Plastic Surgery, Inc., in its sole discretion, cancel the Continuous Certification Examination, or as a result of events beyond its control, be unable to administer the Continuous Certification Examination at the appointed date, time and location, or should the Board fail to conclude a diplomate's Continuous Certification Examination, the Board is not responsible for any expense the diplomate may have incurred in connection with the cancelled Continuous Certification Examination, nor for any expense the diplomate may incur for any subsequent Continuous Certification Examination.

**Please contact the Board Office with any questions or concerns at [staff@abplasticsurgery.org](mailto:staff@abplasticsurgery.org) or 215-587-9322**