

The American Board of Plastic Surgery, Inc.®



Advertising Policy for Candidates during Admissibility to the ABPS Examination and Certification Process

After candidates have an approved ABPS Application for examination and certification, they may use the term **“Board Eligible”** denoting status with the ABPS for only the initial five years after successful completion of plastic surgery residency.

Candidates must successfully complete both the Written and Oral Examinations to achieve certification within eight years **after** completion of plastic surgery residency. Time spent in fellowship training is included in the 8-year limit. The 24 Member Boards of the American Board of Medical Specialties limit the eligibility period to 7 years after completion of residency training. ABPS candidates receive an additional year because of the 9-month Oral Examination case list requirement.

If the candidate has not successfully completed both the Written and Oral Examinations within 5 years of eligibility, an approved Reapplication is required for continued admissibility to the examination process up to the 8-year limit. Candidates may again use the term **“Board Eligible”** once a reapplication is approved.

Advertising & Marketing Requirements

Excerpt from the 2022-23 ABPS Booklet of Information

The Board recognizes the role of legitimate advertising in the changing medical scene but it does not approve of advertising which is false or misleading, leads to unrealistic expectations, minimizes the magnitude and possible risks of surgery, or solicits patients for operations that they might not otherwise consider. Such advertising is improper and inconsistent with the high standards of professional and ethical behavior implied by certification by The American Board of Plastic Surgery, Inc. Misstatements regarding Board status are also inconsistent with the minimum ethical standards of the certified physician. **Candidates may be deferred from the examination process for at least one year if the Board receives documentation of such advertising or other Code of Ethics violations. Refer to the Board’s Code of Ethics available at www.abplasticsurgery.org.**

NOTE TO RESIDENTS: Active practice websites, commercial blogs, and commercial podcasts that allow clinic visits or procedures to be performed prior to July 1 of the resident’s graduating year may not be published before the completion of residency training in plastic surgery. Any advertisement that will be posted prior to the start of clinical practice must clearly document the start date of clinical practice.

Board Eligible Status: After candidates have an approved ABPS Application for examination and certification, they may use the term “Board Eligible” denoting status with the ABPS for only the initial five years after successful completion of plastic surgery residency. If candidates do not complete ABPS certification within 5 years they are required to reapply to confirm continued compliance with

professionalism requirements. If the reapplication is approved, admissibility to the certification process will be extended for three additional years to the maximum limit of 8 years. Candidates may again use the term “Board Eligible” once a reapplication is approved. The 24 Boards of the American Board of Medical Specialties limit the number of years of eligibility to seven years. ABPS candidates, however, receive an additional year because of the 9-month Oral Examination case list requirement.

Board Review of Candidate Advertising: Candidates are required to submit photocopies of all advertising materials to the Board during the Oral Examination process. The Board recommends that candidates perform a web-based search to identify all instances of internet listings that state the candidate’s Board status inappropriately before submission of materials to the Board. **The candidate is responsible for all instances of advertising, including websites of third-party employers or physician rating websites. The Board discourages purchased ratings (e.g. Top Ten) that are not based on meaningful criteria.**

Candidates also may **not** represent themselves as active members of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS) by statements or use of the Society’s Symbol of Excellence or that of The Aesthetic Society (ASAPS). The public may regard this as evidence of certification by the Board. Although the Board may not penalize a candidate for use of the Society Symbol alone, it is recommended that candidates and senior partners contact the marketing department of ASPS or ASAPS to determine adherence to the Society’s policies before placing practice advertisements in print. **Marketing events are prohibited where injectables, procedures or operations are provided in a social or educational setting where alcohol is served.**

Participation in raffles, contests, and promotions is limited to those that do not require an incision. The promotion must stipulate the establishment of an appropriate physician/patient relationship to determine suitability. Refer to the following sections from the ABPS Code of Ethics, 4.I.K and L.:

- I. The actions of any Diplomate or Candidate may be investigated by the Ethics Committee and the Board. Disciplinary action can include suspension, revocation or probation of certification. Just and sufficient reasons for such disciplinary action may include, but are not limited to:
 - K. Failing to establish an appropriate physician/patient relationship during the perioperative period, or failing to obtain an informed consent prior to a surgical procedure;
 - L. Using marketing promotions (contests/raffles, etc.) or charitable donations that include a surgical procedure or an integral component of a surgical procedure (e.g. breast implants):
 1. Marketing promotions or charitable donations may include a free consultation, non-invasive treatment (neuromodulator or filler injection), skin care product, or a gift certificate for non-surgical services;