



## Continuous Certification in Plastic Surgery Physicians with Special Circumstances Policy

Updated May 2023

This policy is applicable to the following diplomates who are participating in the Continuous Certification Program:

- **Clinically Inactive:** Diplomates who do not practice plastic surgery by providing direct or supervised patient care. Diplomates who hold an administrative role or who are retired/on sabbatical may request to maintain their plastic surgery certification status on a continuous basis by engaging in the Continuous Certification program activities. This request will be considered by the Executive Director and/or Continuous Certification Committee.
- **Clinically Active, Non-Surgical:** Diplomates who do not perform surgical operations, but still provide direct or supervised patient care. Diplomates who may limit their practice to minor procedures performed in the office under local anesthesia may request to maintain their plastic surgery certification status on a continuous basis by engaging in the Continuous Certification program activities. This request will be considered by the Executive Director and/or Continuous Certification Committee.
- **Clinically Active, Hospital Privilege Waiver:** Diplomates certified for >10 years, requesting a waiver of the hospital privilege requirement. This request will be considered by the Continuous Certification Committee.
- **Certificates on Probation:** Diplomates who have had their certificate placed on Probation by the Board requesting to continue participating in the Continuous Certification program under this policy. This request will be considered by the Executive Director and/or Continuous Certification Committee.

**Approval Process:** Diplomates must submit a formal request addressed to the Executive Director for consideration of participation in Continuous Certification under the policy for Physicians with Special Circumstances. The diplomate will then receive notification from the Board confirming their status in the Continuous Certification program.

**Certification must be active upon initial request for all categories.** If the Diplomate has an expired certificate, or if the certificate is suspended or revoked, they will not be eligible for any special circumstances category until certification is regained with full requirements. A Diplomate cannot participate under Special Circumstances at the same time as reported with a "Retired" status.



## Physicians with Special Circumstances (Clinically Inactive)

“Clinically inactive” and “surgically inactive” plastic surgeons are defined as those who are currently retired, disabled, on sabbatical, working in administrative positions or research. Surgically inactive physicians are not seeing patients on a regular basis, nor are they regularly performing any of the common plastic surgery operations (tracer procedures). The non-practicing physician, who participates in Continuous Certification, will still be reported to ABMS and to the public as “certified, participating in Continuous Certification” and “current” or “not current” on Continuous Certification requirements.

This category applies to those diplomates who are **clinically inactive**. If approved, this diplomate must complete an ABPS-approved patient safety activity in lieu of a Practice Improvement activity in years 3 and 6 of the 10-year cycle and is also exempt from certain professionalism requirements. Diplomates must complete the Professional Standing Update; however, hospital privileges, peer reviews, and outpatient accreditation are not required.

- Must have a valid and unrestricted license to practice medicine
- Must complete a patient safety activity in lieu of a Practice Improvement activity
- Exempt from certain Professional Standing requirements (hospital privileges, outpatient accreditation, and peer review)

At the time of request, Diplomates must be actively participating in Continuous Certification with a valid and unrestricted medical license.

Change in practice status must be reported to the Board immediately. For those diplomates who reenter practice after a leave of absence of two or more years, a reentry pathway is required. The guidelines for surgeons seeking to re-enter surgical practice are detailed in the [ABPS Re-Entry policy](#).

### Physicians with Special Circumstances (Clinically Inactive) Continuous Certification Requirements

PROFESSIONAL STANDING UPDATE	
Hospital Privileges in Plastic Surgery	EXEMPT
Accreditation Certificate for Surgical Facility	EXEMPT
Peer Review Evaluation	EXEMPT
State Medical License	REQUIRED
Advertising Materials	
CME – at least 125 hours in five years	
PRACTICE IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITY	
Tracer Procedure – enter data from 10 consecutive cases of 1 procedure	EXEMPT – Must complete a Patient Safety Activity in lieu
Benchmarking report review	
ABPS-approved CME activity aligned with tracer	
Self-Evaluation for Improvement (Action Plan)	
or Alternatives: QI Publication, QI Project, Registry	
SELF-ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY*	
Required in eight of ten years	REQUIRED



## Physicians with Special Circumstances (Clinically Active, Non-Surgical)

“Clinically Active, Non-surgical” plastic surgeons are defined as those who are currently in clinical and patient-facing positions, but not regularly performing any of the common plastic surgery operations (tracer procedures). Procedures should be done exclusively in office-based settings under local anesthesia only. These physicians who participate in Continuous Certification will still be reported to ABMS and to the public as “certified, participating in Continuous Certification” and “current” or “not current” on Continuous Certification requirements.

This category applies to those diplomates who are **clinically active, non-surgical**. If approved, this diplomate must complete a Quality Improvement Project as the Practice Improvement activity in years 3 and 6 of the 10-year cycle and is also exempt from certain professionalism requirements. Diplomates must complete the Professional Standing Update; however, hospital privileges and outpatient accreditation are not required.

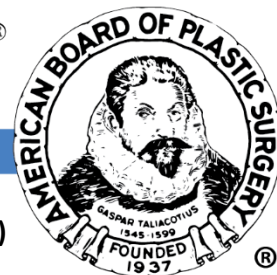
- Must have a valid and unrestricted license to practice medicine
- Must complete a Quality Improvement Project for Practice Improvement activity
- Exempt from certain Professional Standing requirements (hospital privileges, outpatient accreditation).

At the time of request, Diplomates must be actively participating in Continuous Certification with a valid and unrestricted medical license.

Change in practice status must be reported to the Board immediately. For those diplomates who reenter surgical practice in a hospital or surgery center setting after a leave of absence of two or more years, a reentry pathway is required. The guidelines for surgeons seeking to re-enter surgical practice are detailed in the [ABPS Re-Entry policy](#).

### Physicians with Special Circumstances (Clinically Active, non-surgical) Continuous Certification Requirements

PROFESSIONAL STANDING UPDATE	
Hospital Privileges in Plastic Surgery	EXEMPT
Accreditation Certificate for Surgical Facility	EXEMPT
State Medical License	REQUIRED
Peer Review Evaluation	
Advertising Materials	
CME – at least 125 hours in five years	
PRACTICE IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITY	
Tracer Procedure – enter data from 10 consecutive cases of 1 procedure	EXEMPT – Must complete an approved QI Project in lieu
Benchmarking report review	
ABPS-approved CME activity aligned with tracer	
Self-Evaluation for Improvement (Action Plan)	
or Alternatives: QI Publication, QI Project, Registry	
SELF-ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY*	
Required in eight of ten years	REQUIRED



## Physicians with Special Circumstances (Surgically Active, waiver request for hospital privileges)

All Candidates must have full admitting hospital privileges to be eligible for the certification process. Diplomates must maintain full admitting hospital privileges through at least 10 years of Continuous Certification. **The Board strongly encourages all Diplomates to maintain hospital privileges throughout their career.** After the first 10 years, in certain Hardship cases, a Diplomate may petition the Continuous Certification Committee to allow a Licensed or Accredited Operating Facility to substitute for Hospital Privileges. At the time of request, Diplomates must be actively participating in Continuous Certification with a valid and unrestricted medical license. **If a Diplomate petitions that a Licensed/Accredited Operating Facility substitute for Hospital privileges the following requirements must be met:**

- The Diplomate must have previously held full unrestricted admitting hospital privileges.
- The Diplomate must not have lost hospital privileges as part of an adverse action or patient care issues.
- The Diplomate must provide the Board with a copy of each Operating Facility accreditation at each renewal and at a minimum of every three years.
- Within the Licensed/Accredited Operating Facility the Diplomate should limit their practice to procedures for which he/she previously held hospital privileges. If performing other procedures, the Diplomate must have received appropriate training and demonstrate competence. Proof of such training/competence must be submitted to the Board upon request.
- The Diplomate must provide the Board with a written transfer agreement for patients requiring hospital admission. The transfer agreement must be with a hospital that has ABPS certified plastic surgeons on staff.
- Upon request, the Diplomate must provide the Board with a written agreement with another ABPS Board-certified plastic surgeon to provide care for any patient requiring hospital admission.
- Any major untoward patient event reported to the Licensing or Accrediting Agency must also be reported to the Board.
- The Diplomate will solicit FOUR peer reviews to be sent to the ABPS at requested times during the Continuing Certification cycle. Reviews will be solicited from: 1. An ABPS-certified colleague familiar with the Diplomate's work, 2. The physician performing the Diplomate's peer review as required by the licensing/accrediting agency, 3. An Anesthesia Provider who works with the Diplomate, and 4. The Nursing Supervisor of the Licensed/Accredited Operating Facility.
- If and when the Licensed/Accredited Operating Facility is subjected to a random or for-cause re-survey outside of the three-year cycle, the results of that re-survey must be submitted to the Board.
- The Diplomate must fulfill the above requirements within one year of notification of this policy to be considered by the Continuous Certification Committee for approval.

## Physicians with Special Circumstances (Surgically Active, waiver of hospital privileges) Continuous Certification Requirements

PROFESSIONAL STANDING UPDATE	
Hospital Privileges in Plastic Surgery	EXEMPT
State Medical License	REQUIRED
Peer Review Evaluation	
Accredited Surgical Facilities	
Advertising Materials	
CME – at least 125 hours in five years	
PRACTICE IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITY	
Tracer Procedure – enter data from 10 consecutive cases of 1 procedure	REQUIRED
Benchmarking report review	
ABPS-approved CME activity aligned with tracer	
Self-Evaluation for Improvement (Action Plan)	
or Alternatives: QI Publication, QI Project, Registry	
SELF-ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY*	
Required in eight of ten years	REQUIRED



## Physicians with Special Circumstances (Certificates on Probation)

This category applies to physicians who have a license placed on Probation by a state medical board. This may include non-clinical or non-surgical practice. As detailed in the Discipline Policy, the ABPS requires that the diplomate maintain Continuous Certification participation through the Physicians with Special Circumstances Policy. For those who are clinically inactive under this category, the diplomate must complete an ABPS-approved patient safety activity in lieu of the Practice Improvement activity in years 3 and 6. Diplomates must complete the Professional Standing Update; however, hospital privileges, peer reviews, and outpatient accreditation are not required.

- Must complete a patient safety activity in lieu of a Practice Improvement activity
- Are exempt from certain Professional Standing requirements
- Must update the Board on an annual basis regarding the status of all medical licenses

At the time of request, Diplomates must be actively participating in Continuous Certification. Exact requirements may be altered depending on the specific conditions by the ABPS or the State Medical Board(s).

Changes in practice status must be reported to the Board immediately. For those diplomates who re-enter clinical practice after a leave of absence of two or more years, a re-entry process is required. The guidelines for surgeons seeking to re-enter surgical practice are detailed in the [ABPS Re-Entry policy](#).

### Physicians with Special Circumstances (Certificate on Probation) Continuous Certification Requirements

PROFESSIONAL STANDING UPDATE	
Hospital Privileges in Plastic Surgery	EXEMPT
Accreditation Certificate for Surgical Facility	EXEMPT
Peer Review Evaluation	EXEMPT
State Medical License	MUST UPDATE ANNUALLY
Advertising Materials	REQUIRED
CME – at least 125 hours in five years	REQUIRED
PRACTICE IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITY	
Tracer Procedure – enter data from 10 consecutive cases of 1 procedure	EXEMPT – Must complete a Patient Safety Activity in lieu
Benchmarking report review	
ABPS-approved CME activity aligned with tracer	
Self-Evaluation for Improvement (Action Plan)	
or Alternatives: QI Publication, QI Project, Registry	
SELF-ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY*	
Required in eight of ten years	REQUIRED