

The American Board of Plastic Surgery, Inc.®



**2017 HAND SUBSPECIALTY CERTIFICATION
AND RECERTIFICATION (HSC)**

**BOOKLET OF INFORMATION
FOR THE HAND SURGERY EXAMINATION
(HSE)**

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IMPORTANT DATES AND DEADLINES

HAND EXAM – COMPUTER BASED TEST (CBT)	SEPT. 12, 2017
HAND RECERTIFICATION EXAM - CBT	SEPT. 12-25, 2017
HSE Online Application available	December 1, 2016
Last Date to Request HSE Application Material	January 4, 2017
Deadline - HSE Applications Finalized	February 3, 2017
Applications Finalized with Late Fee	February 4-10, 2017
Application Approval Letters and online Reply Forms available	March 1, 2017
Deadline - HSE Online Reply Forms Finalized	March 31, 2017
Reply Forms Finalized with Late Fee	April 1-7, 2017
HSE Scheduling Permits available	July 2017
Hand Exam Withdrawal Date with Partial Refund	August 11, 2017
Hand Exam for Initial Subspecialty Certification	September 12, 2017
Hand Exam for Recertification	September 12-25, 2017
Hand Exam Results mailed and available on the Board's website after secure log in.	November 2017
Hand Subspecialty Certificates mailed from the Board Office	December 2017
Deadline - 2017 AOC-PS® Primary Certification Exam Reply Form*	January 16, 2017
Deadline - 2018 AOC-PS® Exam Application	September 1, 2017

Board Office Policies and Reminders

- The Board Office is unable to verify receipt or completeness of materials by telephone.
- Diplomates with incomplete materials will be notified via email.
- Incorrect or incomplete submissions (document uploads) may result in a Missing Items Fee.
- The Board Office is unable to accept faxed or emailed documents in lieu of required uploads to the Application or Reply Form. Contact the Board Office for assistance.
- Payment of Examination Fees is accepted only by credit card – VISA, MasterCard or American Express.
- Notification of change in address, telephone number, email, etc. must be updated on the Board’s website under “My Profile” after secure log in.
- Note all Board deadline dates carefully to avoid penalties or exclusion from the examination.
- Stay current on all Board requirements via the Board’s website.
- If you need assistance, please contact the Board Office at hand@abplasticsurgery.org.

Hand Surgery Examination for MOC Examination Credit

The Hand Surgery Recertification Examination may be used in lieu of the MOC Hand Modular Examination to satisfy the examination requirement of the ABPS MOC program and to renew Hand Surgery Subspecialty Certification.

- ❖ The Hand Surgery Recertification Examination must be completed within the current 10 year MOC Cycle.**
- ❖ Applications are required for both the primary MOC and Hand Surgery Examination processes.**
- ❖ Expiration of the diplomate's primary plastic surgery certificate automatically causes expiration of the Hand Subspecialty Certificate.**
- ❖ If primary certification is lost, admissibility to the HSE process can be reinstated with the renewal of the primary certification by completing the Maintenance of Certification Examination and all other requirements.**

***Diplomates with primary certificates expiring on 12/31/2017 (and who have an approved MOC Application) may prefer to take both the April 2017 MOC Examination and the September 2017 Hand Surgery Examination. Please notify the Board Office by December 15th if the MOC Reply Form is needed.**

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Melissa M. Hill, Oral Examination Coordinator
Melissa A. Karch, Test Development Manager, Exam Editor

Mission Statement

The Mission of The American Board of Plastic Surgery, Inc. is to promote safe, ethical, efficacious plastic surgery to the public by maintaining high standards for the education, examination, certification and Maintenance of Certification of plastic surgeons as specialists and subspecialists.

Purpose

The purpose of this Booklet of Information is to describe the Board's Hand Subspecialty Certification Program and, in particular, to describe the application process, the case collection and the knowledge-based examination. This Booklet of Information supersedes all previously published information of the Board covering requirements, policies and procedures and may be modified at any time.

Change in Mailing Address, Telephone Number, Facsimile and/or Email

Keep your contact information current with the Board through your Physician Profile on the Board's website, www.abplasticsurgery.org. Email is the primary source of communication between you and the Board.

All inquiries regarding Hand Subspecialty Certification or Recertification should be addressed to the Board Office (hand@abplasticsurgery.org or 215-587-9322).

Hand Surgery

Definition

Hand surgery is the special field of medicine that includes the investigation, preservation, and restoration by medical, surgical, and rehabilitative means of all structures of the upper extremity directly affecting the form and function of the hand and wrist.

General Information

In 1982, the American Boards of Orthopaedic Surgery, Plastic Surgery, and Surgery were asked by the American Association for Hand Surgery and the American Society for Surgery of the Hand to consider special recognition of those diplomates of these Boards who had demonstrated special qualifications in hand surgery. An Ad Hoc Committee was formed which included representatives from the three Boards and the two Societies. In 1984, the Ad Hoc Committee was reorganized as a Joint Committee and empowered by the Boards to explore further the feasibility of the certification process. The Joint Committee recommended that the three Boards apply to the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) for authorization to offer a Hand Subspecialty Certificate.

The American Board of Plastic Surgery, Inc. is not an educational institution and the certificates it issues are not to be considered degrees. The Hand Subspecialty Certificate does not confer legal privileges or license to practice medicine or the specialty of hand surgery. Standards of certification are clearly distinct from those of licensure. Possession of a Hand Subspecialty Certificate does not indicate total qualifications for practice privileges nor does it imply exclusion of others not so certified. There is no requirement or necessity for a diplomate of The American Board of Plastic Surgery, Inc. to hold a Hand Subspecialty Certificate to be considered qualified to include hand surgery within the practice of plastic surgery. Under no circumstances should a diplomate be considered not qualified to

practice within an area of a subspecialty solely because of lack of subspecialty certification.

The American Board of Plastic Surgery, Inc. has never been concerned with measures that might gain special privileges or recognition for its diplomates in the practice of hand surgery or of the primary specialty of plastic surgery. It is not the intent nor has it been the function of the certificate or of the Board to define requirements for membership on the staffs of hospitals or to determine who shall or shall not perform hand surgery. The Board intends the Hand Subspecialty Certificate to represent those surgeons who, by virtue of additional fellowship training, practice characteristics that reflect a major commitment to hand surgery, and contributions to this field, have demonstrated qualifications in hand surgery that deserve special recognition.

Hand Subspecialty Certification

The Hand Surgery Examination (HSE)

The HSE for Initial Certification is developed and administered by the Joint Committee on Hand Surgery of the American Boards of Orthopaedic Surgery, Plastic Surgery, and Surgery. The examination was first administered in 1989, and subsequent examinations are administered annually. The examination consists of multiple-choice questions designed to evaluate the diplomate's cognitive knowledge of clinical hand surgery and the basic science relevant to hand surgery. Examination questions are prepared by, and are at the direction of, The American Board of Plastic Surgery, Inc., The American Board of Surgery, Inc. and The American Board of Orthopaedic Surgery (hereinafter "Boards"), the sole and exclusive property of the Boards, and said examination questions are protected under the copyright laws of the United States and other countries. The examination items may only be used for such purposes as are designated by the Boards. All other rights are reserved by the Boards.

Hand Surgery Examination Content

Categories

- I. Basic Science**
 - A. Anatomy
 - B. Mechanics
 - C. Biology/Physiology/Healing
 - D. Pathology/Tumors
 - E. Diagnosis
- II. Bone and Joint**
 - A. Fractures/Dislocations (including non-union/malunion)
 - B. Arthritis
 - C. Contractures
 - D. Wrist Instability
 - E. Osteonecrosis
- III. Nerve – Muscle – Tendon**
 - A. Peripheral Nerve
 - B. Central
 - C. Brachial Plexus
 - D. Muscle – Tendon
- IV. Wound Management**
 - A. Physical Agents
 - B. Coverage
 - C. Nailbed/Fingertip
 - D. Amputations
- V. Vascular**
 - A. Injury and Repair
 - B. Reconstruction
 - C. Ischemia
 - D. Malformations
 - E. Replantation
 - F. Lymphedema
- VI. Rehabilitation**
 - A. Prosthetics
 - B. Orthotics
 - C. Physical Modalities/Therapy

VII. Miscellaneous

- A. Congenital Anomalies**
- B. Infection**
- C. Dystrophy/Pain**
- D. Ethics and Professionalism**
- E. Anesthetics**

**The ABPS does not provide a study guide for the
Hand Surgery Examination.**

Requirements for Initial Certification

To meet the requirements for Hand Subspecialty Certification, the following provisos and documentation must be completed by the applicant:

1. Must be a diplomate of The American Board of Plastic Surgery, Inc.
2. Must have been in the active practice of hand surgery for *at least two years* at the time of examination following the completion of all formal training.
3. Must have a current, *valid*, full and unrestricted license to practice medicine in a state, territory, or possession of the United States or by a Canadian province. The applicant must not be the current subject of any disciplinary action or sanction including, but not limited to, license revocation, suspension, qualification or other sanction, and must continue to be licensed throughout the certification process.
 - Must submit a photocopy of this license and all registration certificate(s), bearing an expiration date valid at the time of the examinations, with the Application Material and each Reply Form submitted.

- Restrictions or sanctions to any medical license must be reported to the Board Office within 60 days of the restriction.
- Restrictions will delay the diplomate's progress through the examination process.

NOTE: If practicing in a country other than the United States or Canada, a valid unrestricted license, translated into English, from that country is required and must be uploaded online. Foreign licenses will be accepted if the physician's license to practice medicine in a state or territory of the United States or Canada has not been suspended or revoked and has not lapsed or been surrendered in one or more jurisdictions to avoid sanctions by the jurisdiction's licensing authority.

4. Must limit major professional activity to the field of plastic surgery and/or hand surgery.
5. Must maintain an ethical standing in the profession and moral status in the community acceptable to The American Board of Plastic Surgery, Inc. (ABPS) and in conformity with the Code of Ethics of the Board. Moral and ethical practices that do not conform to the Board's Code of Ethics may result in rejection of an application or in deferral of examination until such matters have been satisfactorily resolved.
6. Must be actively engaged in the practice of hand surgery as indicated by holding full operating privileges in an accredited hospital throughout the examination process.
 - Letters of verification of current hospital medical staff privileges in hand surgery and/or plastic surgery must be provided to the Board from all medical staff office(s) of each institution. Start and end dates of privileges must be listed.

- **Accreditation Certificates from Outpatient Surgical Facilities:** Certificates or currently-dated documentation verifying the accreditation or the accreditation in process of all non-hospital surgical facilities, where the diplomate operates, must be provided. **It is expected that all surgery performed under conscious sedation is performed in an accredited center.**

7. Must complete a hand surgery fellowship of 12 consecutive months. Diplomates who entered a fellowship in Hand Surgery July 1, 1999 and thereafter must satisfactorily complete a 12 month fellowship which is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME). The fellowship may be taken either before or after plastic surgery residency, as long as all of the requirements of both the residency and fellowship have been fulfilled.
8. Must submit a 15 consecutive month case list within the two years preceding submission of the Application Material. Hand surgery includes only those procedures performed on the upper extremity distal to the elbow joint. The case list must include a minimum of **125** cases fulfilling **at least five of the following nine categories:**

<u>CATEGORY</u>	<u># OF CASES</u>
Bone and Joint (distal to the elbow joint) . . .	20
Nerve	20
Tendon and Muscle	20
Skin and Wound Problems	14
Contracture and Joint Stiffness	10

Tumor	10
Congenital	3
Microsurgery Vascular	3
Non-operative	6
(a limit of 6 non-operative cases can be listed)	

The numbers indicate the minimum number of cases to qualify as one of the required five categories. If conducting more than one procedure during an operation, only the primary procedure should be counted. Non-operative cases are those which require significant evaluation, such as pain problems. Only six non-operative cases can be listed as noted above.

Complex cases can satisfy up to three categories:

Complex operative management represents a more substantial surgical operative experience than a less complex single task surgery. A complex injury is defined as those cases which involve several of the nine categories in addition to the skin/wound category. Therefore, in an injury involving the volar wrist, multiple tendons and the median nerve would ‘count’ as two categories, tendon and nerve – but not additionally for the skin closure. Further, no single operative case would be allowed to count for more than three categories towards the requirement of 125 cases.

For example, the management of a complex mutilating injury involving repair of muscle, tendon, nerve, vascular injury, and skin would count for tendon and muscle, nerve, and microsurgery vascular, but not for the skin. This example clearly indicates a more complex operative experience than a simple, single task surgery. Those cases

in which the involvement of two categories is part of a single focus surgery, such as the use of a tendon in ligament reconstruction and tendon interposition of the basal joint, would continue to count as only one case.

Applicants who do not fulfill the practice requirements may petition the Credentials Committee of the Board for individual consideration. This consideration will take into account other contributions and dedication to the discipline of hand surgery such as teaching, publication, administration, and research.

9. It is expected that ABPS hand surgeons demonstrate contributions and dedication to the discipline of hand surgery through teaching, publications, administration, and research.
10. Must submit an online Application, upload all other required documents and pay the established fees by credit card.
11. Must receive a satisfactory Peer Review evaluation as to surgical qualifications by the current **Chief of Staff or Chief of Surgery** in the primary hospital and by **two hand surgeons**, local or regional, who are familiar with the diplomate's current work in hand surgery.
12. Must successfully pass any and all examinations prescribed by the Joint Committee on Hand Surgery of the American Boards of Orthopaedic Surgery, Plastic Surgery, and Surgery.

Restrictions to Medical Licensure

It is the diplomate's responsibility to report, within 60 days, all disciplinary actions to medical licenses from any and all State Medical Licensing Boards. The following sanctions by any and all State Medical Licensing Boards where the diplomate holds

a license are considered a restricted license and will delay a diplomate's admissibility to the examination process:

1. Limitation on practice or parts of practice
2. Probation
3. Probation with monitoring
4. Probation with supervision
5. Suspension

Other sanctions to a diplomate's medical license such as reprimands, fines, citations, community service or a stayed suspension must also be reported to the Board and will be considered by the Ethics Committee before a diplomate is admissible to the Hand Surgery Examination.

Notification of Admissibility

Once the requirements have been met and an Application for Hand Subspecialty Certification has been approved, diplomates will be sent an email notification that the Approval Letter is available for download from the Board's website at www.abplasticsurgery.org.

Policy for Admissibility

The American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) approved an eligibility policy which sets limits for attaining board subspecialty certification after post-residency fellowship training effective March 1, 2017. Member boards must limit the period of time that may lapse between the completion of an ACGME accredited residency training or subspecialty fellowship program and attainment of board subspecialty certification. The ABPS has set this limit to no more than 11 years to include time in practice and case list requirements for admission to the certifying examination.

Certificates

A diplomate who has met all the requirements and has successfully completed the examination will receive a Hand Subspecialty Certificate (HSC) issued by the Board. **Certificates**

issued by the Board are valid for 10 years from the date of issuance.

- Participation in the **ABOC-PS[®]** Program is required to support the validity of the subspecialty certificate.
- The HSC will not be issued unless all requirements are current for participation in the Board's **ABOC-PS[®]** Program.
- Expiration of the primary plastic surgery certificate automatically causes expiration of the HSC.
- Diplomates with an expired primary certificate will not be listed as holding the HSC until all **ABOC-PS[®]** requirements are met.

Hand Subspecialty Recertification

Purpose

The purpose of Hand Subspecialty Recertification is to demonstrate to the profession and the public, through periodic evaluation, that a specialist has maintained continuing qualifications at a currently acceptable level in hand surgery.

The Hand Surgery Examination for Recertification

The Hand Surgery Examination for Recertification is developed and administered by the Joint Committee on Hand Surgery of the American Boards of Orthopaedic Surgery, Plastic Surgery and Surgery. The first recertification examination was administered in 1996 and subsequent examinations are administered annually. The Hand Surgery Examination for Recertification consists of multiple-choice questions designed to evaluate the diplomate's cognitive knowledge of basic science and clinical hand surgery.

Requirements for Recertification

1. Must have been certified in hand surgery by the American Board of Plastic Surgery, American Board of Orthopaedic Surgery or American Board of Surgery for seven or more years at the time of submission of the Application for Recertification and such certification must not have been revoked.
2. Must have a **valid** Primary Plastic Surgery Certificate and be current on all MOC requirements for those diplomates participating in the **MOC-PS**[®] program of the Board.
3. Must have a current, **valid**, full and unrestricted license to practice medicine in a state, territory, or possession of the United States or by a Canadian province which is not the current subject of any disciplinary action or sanction including, but not limited to, revocation, suspension, qualification or other sanction, and must continue to be licensed throughout the certification process.
 - Must submit a photocopy of this and all registration certificate(s), bearing an expiration date valid at the time of the examination with application material and each Reply Form submitted.
 - Restrictions or sanctions to any medical license must be reported to the Board Office within 60 days of the restriction.
 - Restrictions will delay the diplomate's progress through the examination process.

NOTE: If practicing in a country other than the United States or Canada, a valid unrestricted license, translated into English, from that country is required and must be uploaded online. Foreign licenses will be accepted if the physician's license to practice medicine in a state or territory of the United States or Canada has not been

suspended or revoked and has not lapsed or been surrendered in one or more jurisdictions to avoid sanctions by the jurisdiction's licensing authority.

4. Must be actively engaged in the practice of hand surgery as indicated by holding full operating privileges in a hospital or be involved in the teaching of hand surgery and/or relevant research activities.
 - Letters of verification of current hospital medical staff privileges in hand surgery and/or plastic surgery must be provided to the Board from all medical staff office(s) of each institution. Start and end dates of privileges must be listed.
 - **Accreditation Certificate(s) from Outpatient Surgical Facilities:** Certificates or currently-dated documentation verifying the accreditation or accreditation in process of all non-hospital surgical facilities where the diplomate operates must be provided. **It is expected that all procedures under IV sedation or general anesthetic are performed in accredited centers.**
5. Must receive a satisfactory Peer Review Evaluation regarding surgical qualifications by the current **Chief of Staff or Chief of Surgery** in the primary hospital and by **two hand surgeons**, local or regional, who are familiar with the diplomate's current work in hand surgery. **Peer evaluations submitted within one year with the AOC-PS® Application may be acceptable to satisfy this requirement.**
6. Must maintain an ethical standing in the profession and moral status in the community acceptable to The American Board of Plastic Surgery and in conformity with the Code of Ethics of the Board. Moral and ethical practices that do not conform to the Board's Code of Ethics may result in

rejection of an application or in deferral of examination until such matters have been resolved satisfactorily. Any sanctions or restrictions to any state medical license must be reported at the time of application and throughout the process.

7. Must submit the prescribed Application Material and all other required documents and pay the established fees.
8. Must successfully pass any and all examinations prescribed by the Joint Committee on Hand Surgery of the American Boards of Orthopaedic Surgery, Plastic Surgery, and Surgery.

Maintenance of Certification (MOC) in Plastic Surgery via the Hand Surgery Examination (HSE):

Diplomates completing the HSE for Recertification may use that examination in lieu of taking the MOC Cognitive Examination if completed within the current MOC cycle.

The MOC online Application, Registration Fee and all other required documents must be submitted and approved.

- Hand Subspecialty Recertification can be obtained through the ABPS, ABS or ABOS.
- ABPS diplomates certified in Hand Surgery by the American Board of Surgery are able to obtain recertification in hand surgery without maintaining primary certification in general surgery.
- All Recertification Examinations can be taken up to three years prior to the expiration date on the certificate.

**EXAMPLE TIMELINE– HAND SURGERY EXAM
IN LIEU OF MOC EXAM**

PRIMARY CERT DATE	PRIMARY EXP DATE	HSC DATE	HSC EXP DATE	HAND RECERT EXAM	NEW PRIMARY CERT. EXP DATE	NEW HSC EXP DATE
2008	2018	2009	2019	2016, 2017 or 2018	2028	2029

Restrictions to Medical Licensure

It is the diplomate’s responsibility to report, within 60 days, all disciplinary actions to medical licenses from any and all state medical licensing boards. The following sanctions by any state medical licensing board where the diplomate holds a license are considered a restricted license and will delay a diplomate’s admissibility to the examination process:

1. Limitation on practice or parts of practice
2. Probation
3. Probation with monitoring
4. Probation with supervision
5. Suspension

Other sanctions to a diplomate’s medical license such as reprimands, fines, citations, community service or a stayed suspension must also be reported to the Board and will be considered by the Ethics Committee before a diplomate is admissible to the HSE for Recertification.

Notification of Admissibility to the Recertification Examination

Once the requirements have been met and an Application for Recertification has been approved, diplomates will be sent an

email notification that the Approval Letter is available for download from the Board's website.

Certificate of Recertification

The Board will issue a Hand Subspecialty Certificate (HSC) for Recertification to diplomates who successfully complete the recertification process. **Certificates are valid for a 10 year period.** The recertification expiration date will be ten years from the date of the successful completion of the Recertification Examination unless the examination was taken before the previous certificate expired. In the latter instance, the recertification expiration date will be ten years from the expiration date of the previous certificate.

- **Participation in the ABPS MOC Program is required to support the validity of the HSC for those diplomates certified 1995 and after.**

- ❖ **The HSC for Recertification will not be issued unless all requirements are current for those diplomates participating in the Board's MOC Program.**

- ❖ **Expiration of the primary plastic surgery certificate automatically causes expiration of the HSC.**

- ❖ **Diplomates with an expired primary certificate will not be listed as holding the HSC until all MOC requirements are met.**

Taking the Hand Surgery Examination (HSE)

Rules Governing Admissibility and Readmissibility to the Examination

Diplomates are admissible to the examination **only** when they have satisfactorily fulfilled the requirements in place at the time

the Board receives the formal Application Materials. No diplomate will be admitted to the examination until the Board has determined that the specified requirements have been met, reviewed all supporting credentials and approved the application.

Each diplomate will be admissible to the Examination during five calendar years. Diplomates may take the Examination three times during this five-year period, after approval of the Application Materials. The American Board of Plastic Surgery, Inc. expects that most diplomates who apply for certification/recertification will be successful. Those who are unsuccessful on the first experience with the process are encouraged to continue to seek certification/recertification.

Diplomates who do not successfully complete the examination during the five year period, will no longer be admissible to the HSE process. Diplomates must then reapply for admission to the examination with payment of established fees. If the Application Material for readmission is approved, the diplomate will then be offered three additional examination opportunities in the following five consecutive years. Those with an expired Hand Subspecialty Certificate must not list certification on their Curriculum Vitae or advertising materials unless the specific dates that the subspecialty certificate was held are noted.

Both the number of examinations and the period of admissibility are reciprocal between the American Boards of Orthopaedic Surgery, Plastic Surgery and Surgery. If a diplomate fails the examination three times or the period of admissibility expires while registered with one Board, a diplomate cannot re-enter the examination process through another Board.

The American Board of Plastic Surgery, Inc., may deny a diplomate the privilege of taking an examination, or may refuse issuance of a certificate, if it is found by additional disclosures or a recent change in status that the diplomate no longer meets the general or professional requirements.

Announcement Information

Diplomates who are admissible to the Hand Surgery Certification or Recertification Examination will be sent an email notification annually, throughout their period of admissibility, once the Reply Form process is available for on-line submission.

Diplomates must signify their intent to take the examination by completing the entire Reply Form and finalizing the form, submitting the Examination Fee (credit card payment) and all other required materials by the deadline date.

If the Reply Form, Examination Fee and other required materials are not received by the deadline date, the diplomate will not be accepted for admission to that year's Hand Surgery Certification and Recertification Examination.

Scheduling Permit

Upon receipt and approval of all required Reply Form materials, diplomates will be scheduled for the examination. Diplomates will receive a Scheduling Permit approximately eight weeks before the examination.

The Scheduling Permit will include the dates of the examination, instructions, a scheduling number, Candidate ID number (CIN), toll free number and website www.prometric.com for making an appointment at a Prometric® Test Center.

Contact the Board Office immediately if the name on the Scheduling Permit is not an EXACT match to that listed on the photographic identification. The only acceptable difference would be the presence of a middle name, middle initial or suffix on one document and its absence on the other.

The permit and photographic identification are both required for admittance to the test center.







Scheduling a Test Center Appointment

Diplomates should contact Prometric® immediately once the Scheduling Permit is available in order to schedule an appointment. The Scheduling Permit is required to schedule the appointment. Delay in scheduling an appointment may result in the inability to schedule at the diplomate's preferred location. Registration online is recommended and preferred. Confirmation will be sent by email. When calling, a Prometric® representative will ask for information from the Scheduling Permit and provide details regarding the test centers and location specified by the diplomate. Prometric® does not make appointments prior to the provision of the permit to diplomates. Diplomates who require special accommodations, and have received Board approval, must make a test appointment by calling the telephone number on the Scheduling Permit.

Prometric® Test Centers

The Hand Surgery Examination will be administered at Prometric® Test Centers within the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico. All test centers are set up similarly. This not only helps enhance security, but also provides the same standards of uniformity for all diplomates.

Visit the Prometric® website for test center locations and test day regulations at www.prometric.com. Follow the instructions below to schedule the examination:







-  Locate the Directory of Test Sponsors
-  Select your Testing Sponsor – **“HSE - Hand Surgery Certification/Recertification Examination” (Do NOT select American Board of Plastic Surgery)**
-  Select “Schedule my test”
-  Select “country” and “state” and click “next”
-  Review important testing information
-  Enter Scheduling # and first four letters of last name

Examination Tutorial

An online tutorial is available for diplomates to review each exam screen. This is provided to relieve anxiety about the mechanics of computer based testing. The tutorial also reviews the process of marking items for review at the completion of each section or block of the examination. The HSE Tutorial is available for downloading to personal computers from the Board's website at www.abplasticsurgery.org in the Hand Examination section. The Board strongly recommends that diplomates preview the tutorial a number of times to become familiar with the Computer Based Test format.

Examination Schedule

The Computer Based Test will consist of the following format:

-  **Total testing time is approximately 4 hours**
-  15 minute optional tutorial
-  175 multiple-choice questions formatted in four blocks of approximately 44 questions
-  Blocks of 60 minute time intervals
-  15 minute optional break
-  Registration time will vary

Examination Day Requirements

Diplomates must have the Scheduling Permit and the unexpired government issued photographic identification, driver's license or passport, in order to be admitted into the test center.

Diplomates must notify the Board Office immediately if arrival to the test center will be delayed and the Board Office will contact Prometric[®]. Diplomates who are more than 30 minutes late may not be admitted to the examination.

Diplomates are not permitted to bring any notes, textbooks, clipboards, pocketbooks, electronic devices or other reference

materials into the test center. Cell phones must be turned off and stored in your car or locker. Scratch paper is not permitted. Copying, by any means, of all or any part of such examination items or the unauthorized use in any way whatsoever of said examination items is strictly prohibited.

Withdrawal from Examination

If a diplomate wishes to withdraw from the examination, written notification must be received in the Board Office at least 30 calendar days before the first date of the examination (**August 11, 2017**). The examination fee will be refunded less a processing charge of \$520.00. Diplomates who withdraw from the examination after this date or who fail to appear for the examination will **forfeit** the entire fee.

Results

The results of the examination will be mailed and posted to the Physician Profiles in November. The time period between administration of the examination and notification is necessary to allow for extensive analysis and to assure that individual results are reliable and accurate. Diplomates will receive a Result Letter and Performance Report.

Results of the examination will not be reported until a week **after** the results mailing date. A week after this date, diplomates who still have not received their result letter from the Board, may then call the Board Office for their examination results. Information will be provided **only to the diplomate**. Please note that results are available to the diplomate online with secure log in to the Board's website. The Board Staff will verify a diplomate's identity prior to releasing results to them.

Diplomates will pass or fail on the strength of their performance on the examination. The score on the examination will be determined by the total number of alternatives answered correctly. Therefore, diplomates are encouraged to answer all items.

PASS

If a diplomate passes the Hand Surgery Certification or Recertification Examination, he/she will be informed in writing. An email notification will also be sent once the Result Letters and Performance Reports are posted to the individual Physician Profiles on the Board's website accessible with secure log in.

FAIL

If a diplomate fails the Hand Certification or Recertification Examination, he/she will be informed in writing. A diplomate who has received a failing grade result must repeat the entire Hand Surgery Certification or Recertification Examination.

Reporting to ABMS and Specialty Societies

The Board supplies basic identifying data on diplomates who are successful in obtaining Hand Subspecialty Certification and Recertification to the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) for its Directory. The individual's biographic entry in the *Official ABMS Directory of Board Certified Medical Specialists* will show Hand Surgery Certification and Recertification as well as Plastic Surgery Certification.

The Board also notifies the success of diplomates on the Hand Surgery Examinations to the American Society of Plastic Surgeons, the American Association for Hand Surgery (AAHS) and the American Society for Surgery of the Hand (ASSH). Diplomates should notify the Board Office in advance if they do not wish to be included on the notification lists. Diplomates will have their biographic listings retained in the directory for Hand Surgery only if they have acquired Hand Surgery Recertification prior to the expiration of the Hand Surgery Certificate.

Cancellation of Examination

Should The American Board of Orthopaedic Surgery, Inc., The American Board of Plastic Surgery, Inc. and The American Board of Surgery, Inc., in their sole discretion, cancel the Hand Surgery Certification and Recertification Examination, or as a

result of events beyond its control be unable to administer the Hand Surgery Certification and Recertification Examination at the appointed date, time and location; or should the Boards fail to conclude a diplomate's Hand Surgery Certification or Recertification Examination, the Board is not responsible for any expense the diplomate may have incurred in connection with the canceled Hand Surgery Certification or Recertification Examination, nor for any expense the diplomate may incur for any substitute Hand Surgery Certification or Recertification Examination.

Examination Scoring

The Examination is scored and analyzed by the National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME), which is a data processing and testing organization. NBME has extensive experience in the scoring and analysis of medical examinations. The Board is confident that the scoring is done with absolute accuracy.

Special Situations - Appeals Policy

The Board has established a policy relative to resolution of questions or disagreements regarding its decisions on admissibility, the form, content, administration or results of the examination and the revocation of certificates. If a diplomate has a concern in any of these areas, it should be expressed in writing to the Board Office. A copy of the Appeals Policy, which is available on the Board's website, will be sent to that individual.

Diplomates with Disabilities

The American Board of Plastic Surgery, Inc. has established a policy regarding examination of diplomates with disabilities. If a diplomate is requesting an accommodation based on a disability, the request should be expressed in writing to the Board Office at the time they submit the Application Material. A copy of the Policy for Examination of Diplomates with Disabilities is available on the Board's website. The American Board of Plastic Surgery, Inc. complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act

(ADA) and will provide reasonable accommodations to diplomates with proven disabilities. It is expected that pre-existing disabilities were identified by the candidate for previous Board examinations. Required documentation previously approved by the Board for an identified disability accommodation will usually be sufficient for the Hand Surgery Examination.

Irregularities

The validity of scores on the examination is protected by every means available. The Board will not report a score which it has determined to be invalid, i.e., which does not represent a reasonable assessment of the diplomate's knowledge or competence sampled by the examination. The performance of all diplomates is monitored and may be analyzed for the purpose of detecting invalid scores.

Prometric[®] test center proctors supervise the examination to ensure that the examination is properly conducted. If evidence by observation or analysis suggests that a diplomate's scores may be invalid because of irregular behavior, the Board will withhold those scores pending further investigation and the affected diplomate will be notified. Examples of irregularities affecting the validity of scores would include (but not limited to) the following: 1) using notes; 2) sharing information or discussing the examination in progress; 3) copying answers from another diplomate; 4) permitting one's answers to be copied; 5) or unauthorized possession, reproduction, or disclosure of examination questions or answers or other specific information regarding the content of the examination before, during, or after the examination. In such circumstances, upon analysis of all available information, the Board will make a determination as to the validity of the scores in question. If the Board determines that the scores are invalid, it will not release them, and notification of that determination may be made to legitimately interested third parties.

Diplomates or other persons who are directly implicated in an irregularity are subject to additional sanctions. For example, the Board may bar the persons permanently from all future examinations, terminate a diplomate's participation in an ongoing examination, invalidate the results of the diplomate's examination, withhold or revoke a certificate or take other appropriate action. Diplomates or other persons subject to additional sanctions will be provided with a written notice of the charges and an opportunity to respond to such charges in accordance with the reconsideration and appeal procedures established by the Board.

Substance Abuse or Chemical Dependency

Diplomates with a history of abuse of a controlled substance or chemical dependency will not be admitted to any examination unless they present evidence satisfactory to the State Medical Board that they have successfully completed the program of treatment prescribed for their condition. All restrictions on the state medical license must be lifted prior to the deadline for the Reply Form.

Inquiries as to Status

The Board considers a diplomate's record **not** to be in the public domain. When an inquiry is received by the Board regarding a diplomate's status with the Board, a general, but factual, statement is provided which indicates that person's status within the process of certification. The Board provides this information **only** to individuals, organizations, and institutions with a reasonably valid "need to know" for professional reasons.

Certificates

Certificates issued by the Board shall be in such form as the Directors may from time to time determine. Certificates are signed by the Chair, Secretary-Treasurer and Executive Director of the Board and shall have placed upon them the official seal of the Board. Additional certificates are available upon written request. A fee for each certificate ordered must be included with

the request (refer to Fee Schedule on the Board's website). The diplomate's name should be listed, as it should appear on the certificate.

Advertising

A diplomate in the HSE process may not advertise as "Board Admissible," "Board Eligible," or "Board Qualified," etc., for the subspecialty certificate. A candidate for the Hand Surgery Examination will be deferred from the examination process for at least one year if the Board receives written documentation of such advertising. ABPS diplomates who have obtained a Hand Subspecialty Certificate may advertise themselves as follows: "ABPS Certified in the Subspecialty of Hand Surgery." Those with an expired Hand Subspecialty Certificate may only list the certification on their Curriculum Vitae or advertising materials if the dates of certification are specified.

Revocation of Certificates

Any certificate issued by the Board shall be subject to revocation at any time if the Board, in its judgment, determines that a diplomate was not properly qualified to receive it or has become disqualified since its receipt. The diplomate shall be advised if revocation of certification is contemplated and shall be given an opportunity to reply to allegations bringing about such action. The diplomate will be given an opportunity to rebut such allegations according to the directions and operations manual of the Board.

The Board may revoke the Hand Subspecialty Certificate of any diplomate who, after opportunity for full and fair hearing by the medical staff or other appropriate body of a hospital, state or county medical society, government licensing body, professional specialty society or a court of law, has been found guilty of or pleaded guilty to a felony, professional incompetence, professional misconduct, unethical conduct or harmful, deceptive, or fraudulent advertising. Refer to the ABPS Code of Ethics.

The Board shall have the jurisdiction and right to determine whether or not the evidence and information placed before it is sufficient to constitute grounds for the revocation of any certificate issued by the Board. The diplomate will be provided the Appeals Policy of the Board, and the Policy will be observed in pursuing resolution of the issues placed before the Board.

Each Hand Subspecialty Certificate issued by the Board shall be subject to revocation in the event that the physician so certified shall have made any misstatement of material fact, or failed to make any statement of material fact, in the application for Hand Subspecialty Certification or Recertification or in any other statement or representation to the corporation or its representatives or shall have otherwise acquired the certificate by deception. Upon revocation, the Hand Subspecialty Certificate shall be surrendered and returned to the Board Office.

**For questions or concerns, please contact the
Board Office staff at hand@abplasticsurgery.org.
We are here to help!**

NOTES

NOTES

Hand Surgery Examination Fees

Application Registration Fee (Payable with online Application and is non-refundable.)	\$ 405.00
Application Registration Late Fee	\$ 160.00
Hand Surgery Examination Fee (Payable with online Reply Form)	\$1,240.00
Examination Late Fee	\$ 250.00
Exam Withdrawal Fee	\$ 520.00
Missing Items Fee	\$ 120.00
Credentials Review Fee	\$ 280.00
Ethics Review Fee	\$ 280.00
Additional Certificate Fee	\$ 145.00
Verification of Status Fee	\$ 50.00
Checks Returned for Insufficient Funds Charge	\$ 65.00
Photocopying Fee	\$ 30.00

- ❖ Application and Examination Fees must be submitted by credit card only. Certain additional fees may be accepted by check. Foreign currencies, including Canadian, are unacceptable. Fees are non-refundable.
- ❖ Fees are subject to change by the Board. The fee schedule applicable to the current examination will apply regardless of when the diplomate is approved for admission to examination.
- ❖ The Board is a nonprofit organization, and the fees of diplomates are used solely for defraying the actual expenses of the Board. The Directors of the Board serve without remuneration.

THIS BOOKLET OF INFORMATION SUPERSEDES ALL PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED BOOKLETS OF INFORMATION OF THE BOARD CONCERNING REQUIREMENTS, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES AND MAY BE MODIFIED AT ANY TIME.



The Registered Trademark Logo of the American Board of Plastic Surgery depicts Gaspare Tagliacozzi (1545-1599) of Bologna, considered to be the father of modern plastic surgery. His contributions are summarized in the treatise he authored in 1597, "De Curtorum Chirurgia per Insitionem." The founding year of the Board, 1937, is included on the Logo. **The Board's trademarked logo is not permitted for use on diplomate or candidate websites.**

**A Member Board of the
American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS)**

