

## Frequently Asked Questions About Maintenance of Certification (MOC)

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### 1. What is the Maintenance of Certification Program?

The Maintenance of Certification (MOC) Program is an initiative of the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) aimed at insuring that physician specialists, certified by one of the 24 member boards of the ABMS, offer quality patient care through an ongoing process of self-improvement.

### 2. Why should I participate?

It is likely that the public and political emphasis on the continuous documentation of clinical competence and quality improvement by physicians will only increase over the years ahead, making a program like MOC essential.

### 3. What is the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology trying to accomplish with MOC?

The American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology (ABPN) has striven to develop a credible MOC Program for our diplomates that strikes a balance between what will most likely be required by organizations that license, credential, and pay physicians and what is reasonable and straightforward enough to be accomplished by busy physicians. Many of our diplomates are already participating in various components of MOC through institutional or practice group quality improvement programs, and the MOC Program will try to recognize those efforts. The ABPN has tried to develop a clear MOC Program that will enable a diplomate to demonstrate his or her competence throughout a 10-year certificate cycle.

### 4. What is the MOC Program timetable?

The MOC Program is being phased in incrementally, and diplomates should become familiar with the current requirements and phase-in schedule for the 4-part ABPN

MOC Program that are contained on the ABPN Web site ([www.abpn.com](http://www.abpn.com)) and in Tables 1 and 2.

### 5. Is participation in the MOC Program mandatory?

While participation in the MOC Program is voluntary, it is a requirement in order to maintain certification for diplomates with time-limited certificates. Holders of time-limited certificates must complete all components of the MOC Program in order to maintain their board certification.

### 6. Should I participate in the MOC Program if I have a "lifetime" certificate?

Participation in the MOC Program is not required for diplomates with "lifetime" certificates; however, credentialing requirements for hospitals, practice groups, and third-party payers may require evidence of continuous certification efforts. In addition, some states are considering the implementation of Maintenance of Licensure Programs, similar to the MOC Program. If a lifetime certificate holder voluntarily participates in the MOC Program and does not pass the cognitive examination, that individual will not lose his or her lifetime certificate.

### 7. How do I keep track of completed MOC components during the MOC cycle?

Maintain a file that documents the completion of all self-assessment, continuing medical education (CME), and Performance in Practice (PIP) activities in the event one is audited by the ABPN. The ABPN is developing a new online MOC Physician Folio Web page for our diplomates. A diplomate will be able to securely log on to the ABPN Web site and keep a record of completed MOC components. The system will also monitor progress of completion according to an individual's MOC cycle. We expect the MOC Physician Folio Web page to be implemented in the summer of 2010.

### 8. When do I begin with the MOC process?

You are automatically enrolled in the MOC Program after achieving board certification. A diplomate should log on to the MOC Physician Folio Web page to activate his or her online account and keep updated on MOC Program requirements.

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**Table 1. Four-Part American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology Maintenance of Certification (MOC) Program<sup>a</sup>**

1. Professional standing (medical license)
2. Self-assessment and lifelong learning (continuing medical education [CME])
3. Cognitive expertise (MOC examination)
4. Performance in Practice (PIP)
  - Clinical modules
  - Feedback modules

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## 9. What should I do now to make sure

### I keep current with the MOC requirements?

- Maintain an unrestricted license to practice medicine.
- Complete a self-assessment activity that provides CME credit, such as those developed by the American College of Psychiatrists (Psychiatrists In-Practice Examination [PIPE] Assessment) and the American Psychiatric Association (FOCUS Self-Assessment Examination).
- Earn at least an average of 8 hours of CME credit per year from self-assessment activities.
- Use the results of completed self-assessment activities to design a plan for subsequent CME.

- Complete at least an average of 30 hours of CME credit per year (this includes the 8 hours of CME credit per year from self-assessment activities).
- Become familiar with practice guidelines relevant to one's area of clinical practice in anticipation of the requirement (in 2013) to compare data from one's own clinical cases to those practice guidelines in the PIP clinical modules.
- Become familiar with the peer and patient feedback forms on the ABPN Web site ([www.abpn.com](http://www.abpn.com)) in anticipation of the requirement (in 2013) to solicit feedback from one's patients and peers about one's clinical practice in the PIP feedback modules.
- Encourage the quality assurance program of one's hospital, clinic, practice plan, etc, to design its programs to provide the type of information that will fulfill the requirements of the PIP clinical and feedback modules.
- Meet the required deadlines on the ABPN Web site ([www.abpn.com](http://www.abpn.com)) to enroll in the ABPN MOC Examination.

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**Table 2. 2009 Phase-In Schedule for the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology Maintenance of Certification (MOC) Component Requirements<sup>a</sup>**

Original or Recertification Year <sup>b</sup>	MOC Application Year	MOC Examination Year <sup>c</sup>	CME Credits Required <sup>d</sup>	First SA Activity Required	Second SA Activity Required	First PIP Unit Required	Second PIP Unit Required	Third PIP Unit Required
2000	2009	2010	120					
2001	2010	2011	150	X				
2002	2011	2012	180	X				
2003	2012	2013	210	X				
2004	2013	2014	240	X	X	X		
2005	2014	2015	270	X	X	X		
2006	2015	2016	300	X	X	X	X	
2007	2016	2017	300	X	X	X	X	X
2008	2017	2018	300	X	X	X	X	X
2009	2018	2019	300	X	X	X	X	X
2010	2019	2020	300	X	X	X	X	X

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<sup>b</sup>Every ABPN diplomate must possess a medical license in the United States or Canada, and all licenses must be unrestricted.

<sup>c</sup>Only after completing licensure, CME, SA, and PIP requirements are diplomates qualified to complete the ABPN MOC Cognitive Examination.

<sup>d</sup>At least an average of 8 of the CME credits per year (averaged over 2–5 years) should involve self-assessment.

Abbreviations: ABPN = American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology, CME = continuing medical education, PIP = Performance in Practice, SA = self-assessment.

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