



American Osteopathic Boards of Ophthalmology and Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery

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PROTOCOL FOR RECERTIFICATION

The objectives and purposes of the American Osteopathic Boards of Ophthalmology and Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery (AOBOO-HNS) are to:

1. Define and determine the qualifications required of osteopathic physicians for certification in the specialty(s) of ophthalmology, otolaryngology and otolaryngology/facial plastic surgery and any other specialty, subspecialty and/or certification of added qualifications which may be assigned to the jurisdiction of this Board.
2. Determine the standards of education, formal training and practice required for certification in the specialty(s) of ophthalmology, otolaryngology and otolaryngology/facial plastic surgery and any other specialty, subspecialty and/or certification of added qualifications which may be assigned to the jurisdiction of this Board, subject to the recommendation of the Bureau of Osteopathic Specialists and the approval of the Board of Trustees of the American Osteopathic Association.
3. Establish procedures for the conduct of examination at least once a year for general certification areas. Certification of special qualifications and certification of added qualification examinations must be made available at least once every two years.
4. Provide and issue certificates in all specialty(s) assigned to this Board, subject to the recommendation of the Bureau of Osteopathic Specialists of the American Osteopathic Association, to those osteopathic physicians who are found qualified.
5. Recommend to the Bureau of Osteopathic Specialists the revocation of certificates for cause.
6. Use every means possible to maintain a high standard of practice within the osteopathic profession.
7. Offer a recertification process, as approved by the Bureau and the AOA Board of Trustees, and to issue certificates of recertification, subject to the approval of the Bureau, to diplomates who successfully complete the recertification process.

SPECIALTY DEFINED

For the purpose of the operation of this Board, the following divisions of practice are defined:

1. The practice of ophthalmology shall consist of the diagnosis and treatment of the disorders and diseases of the eye and its adnexa, including refraction.
2. The practice of otolaryngology shall include the diagnosis and treatment of disorders and diseases of the ear, nose and throat, and may include such other subspecialties as have a definite relationship to otolaryngology.
3. The practice of otolaryngology/facial plastic surgery shall include the diagnosis and treatment of disorders and diseases of the ear, nose and throat, as well as the medical and surgical fields of facial plastic surgery.

RECERTIFICATION

Voluntary Recertification: Lifetime holders of certification by this Board may voluntarily seek recertification. Voluntary recertification in no way affects the lifetime certificate, pass or fail. A diplomate who successfully completes a recertification examination will be issued a ten (10) year time-dated recertification certificate. The diplomate may recertify every ten (10) years. Failure in the recertifying process will in no way result in the loss of certification for physicians holding lifetime certification.

Guidelines for Recertification: A diplomate certified by this Board in one of the specialties under the jurisdiction of this Board with an AOA time-dated certificate may enter the recertification process within three years prior to the expiration date of the certificate.

The Board will offer recertification written examinations twice a year. Diplomates may begin taking the recertification examination two years prior to the expiration date of their current certificates, allowing six (6) opportunities to pass the examination. A diplomate may take the recertification examination as many times as it is given prior to the expiration of his/her certification.

If the diplomate passes the recertification examination prior to the 10th year, the passing grade will be held and reported to the AOA on the 10th year, thus maintaining the 10-year time period of certification. The new certificate will be valid for ten (10) years from the date of expiration of the original certificate.

Any diplomate whose time-dated certificate has expired may enter the recertification examination process at any time, provided the diplomate meets the "Recertification Requirements" listed below. Upon successfully completing the recertification examination, the diplomate will be issued a time-dated certificate for ten (10) years, dated from the date of expiration of the most recent certificate.

Following an initial or second failure, the diplomate may reenter the examination process the following year prior to the expiration of his/her certificate upon paying the appropriate fees. Upon failure of the recertification examination on the third attempt, or upon expiration of certification, the AOA will be notified, and the certification will cease. The examinee's deficiencies will be referred to the Specialty College for remediation recommendations. Once this remediation is completed, the examinee may reenter the recertification process.

Recertification Requirements

1. The diplomate should be in an active practice, have maintained an unrestricted state licensure, and be in good standing with the AOA (membership and CME credits).
2. Application for recertification may be made by March 31st for the spring examination or by July 15th for the fall examination. All materials supplied shall remain the property of the Board.
3. The letter of intent to take a recertification examination must be sent to the administrative secretary of the Board and be accompanied by:
 - a. The examination fee determined by the Board.
 - b. A letter from the AOA attesting to membership in good standing.
 - c. A copy of the diplomate's AOA record of continuing medical education for the three (3) year period preceding application.
 - d. A copy of the diplomate's current and unrestricted state license.
4. The diplomate must also demonstrate eligibility for the recertification examinations in the individual manner prescribed by the Board.
5. The diplomate shall be required to take a written examination of the multiple choice type. This examination shall be constructed to assure that the diplomate continues to demonstrate current medical and surgical knowledge.

APPEAL MECHANISM

If the diplomate believes that the action of the Board constitutes unequal application of regulations and requirements or standards, unwarranted discrimination, prejudice, unfairness or improper conduct of all or any part of an examination conducted by the Board, the diplomate has the right to appeal to the Appeal Committee of the Board.

Appeal policy for examinations in ophthalmology, otolaryngology, otolaryngology/facial plastic surgery and otolaryngic allergy are:

1. Scope of Appeal
 - a. Appealable Issues: Diplomates may appeal to the AOBOO-HNS to raise concerns relative to the examination's administration (i.e., alleged bias/prejudice of a member of an examination team or failure to follow established examination procedures).
 - b. Non-Appealable Issues: The AOBOO-HNS will not consider appeals based on examination content, sufficiency or accuracy of answers given to examination questions, scoring of the examination, scoring of answers to individual questions, and/or the determination of the minimum passing score.
2. Procedure for Appeal
 - a. Appeal Request Form: In order to appeal concerning the examination, a diplomate must set forth the basis for the appeal on an Appeal request form and submit the form to a member of the examination team. Appeal request forms will be provided to all certification diplomates prior to the commencement of the examination. Additional copies of the appeal request form will be available upon request to the examination team. The appellant must submit the completed Appeal request form to the examination team within **two (2) hours** after the completion of the examination.
 - b. Late Appeals: All appeals submitted after the two-hour deadline for submission of the Appeal request form will be denied.
 - c. Evaluation of Appeal: Each appeal submitted on an Appeal request form within two hours of completion of the examination will be considered by the AOBOO-HNS Appeal Committee. A majority vote of the committee will determine whether the AOBOO-HNS accepts or denies the appeal.
 - d. Notification of Diplomates: Diplomates will be advised by the AOBOO-HNS of the Appeal Committee's decision by certified mail.
3. Effect of Decision
 - a. Decision to Accept Appeal
 - i. No scoring or recording of examination: If the Appeal Committee accepts an appeal, then the diplomate's examination will not be scored or recorded.
 - ii. Right to retake examination: A diplomate whose appeal is accepted shall have the right to a new examination at the next scheduled examination date with no additional application or examination fee. All other fees incurred are the responsibility of the diplomate. At that time, the examination will be conducted by a different examination team or in a manner that is determined by the Board to address the issues raised in the appeal request. The diplomate's original log may be utilized to retake the clinical examination. Retake examinations will be conducted in accordance with the format for the current examination.
 - iii. Failure to retake the examination: If, for any reason, the diplomate elects NOT to retake the examination at the next scheduled date, the appeal shall be considered null and void, and the diplomate will be required to reapply for the certification examination. The application shall be considered in accordance with the criteria in effect at the time of the new application. Exceptions (for good cause) to this stipulation will be considered on an individual basis by the Executive Committee.
 - iv. Further Appeals: (a) Current examination: The diplomate whose appeal is accepted shall NOT have the right to alter the original appeal of the current examination results, either within the AOBOO-HNS or to the AOA, and (b) Subsequent examination: The diplomate whose appeal is accepted shall NOT have the right to appeal the next scheduled examination to the AOBOO-HNS under this policy. However, the diplomate shall have the right to appeal to the AOA.
 - b. Decision to Deny Appeal: If an appeal is denied by the AOBOO-HNS Appeals Committee, the diplomate shall have the right to appeal to the AOA.

Diplomates interested in appealing to the AOA should contact the American Osteopathic Association, Department of Education, Division of Certification, 142 East Ontario Street, Chicago, IL 60611.

APPENDIX A

Americans with Disabilities Act and Special Testing Accommodations

The American Osteopathic Boards of Ophthalmology and Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery is committed to a policy of compliance with federal, state and local laws and regulations. The AOBOO-HNS, in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Acts (ADA), has adopted the following policy. Physicians who are eligible for examination may submit an application for accommodation of a disability by using an application form approved by the Board.

Definition of Disability

Under the ADA, a disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of the individual. An individual is not substantially limited in a major life activity if the limitation does not amount to a significant restriction when compared with the abilities of the average person.

Policy Statement

All qualified candidates for board certification who suffer from a disability as defined in the ADA may apply to a certifying board for accommodation of that disability. The AOBOO-HNS shall have the discretionary authority, subject to review by the BOS Appeals Committee and the AOA Board of Trustees, to determine if an accommodation is appropriate.

Procedure for Applying for Accommodation of Disability

1. Requests for accommodation of a disability must be submitted in writing to the AOBOO-HNS at least ninety (90) days prior to the examination date. The request must be supported by appropriate documentation of the diagnosis of disability and the need for accommodation, including the evaluation of the candidate by a qualified professional (see documentation requirements below).
2. Requests for accommodation must be complete and submitted on time. The AOBOO-HNS will not delay scheduled administrations of examinations due to a candidate's failure to submit a complete application.
3. The AOBOO-HNS must complete its review of requests for accommodation in a timely fashion and advise the candidate within thirty (30) days of its receipt of a request for accommodation: (a) the requested accommodation will be granted, (b) the requested accommodation will be granted in part; (c) additional information is required; or (d) the requested accommodation will be denied.
4. The AOBOO-HNS may request additional information, including requiring an applicant to secure a second opinion from an outside expert or submitting the applicant's documentation to an outside expert. The cost of review by an outside expert will be paid by the AOBOO-HNS.
5. In general, reapplication for special accommodation is not required for each examination administration. However, applicants seeking accommodation of a new disability or a different accommodation of the same disability must submit new applications.

Documentation Requirements

Requirements for accommodation must be supported by appropriate documentation of the disability and the need for the requested accommodation. At a minimum, the application should provide the certifying board with the following information and documentation, which is to be prepared and furnished at the applicant's expense:

- **Identification of the disability**
- **Identification of the requested accommodation(s)** for each identified disability
- **The name and current contact information** (address, telephone number, email address) of each professional providing a report(s) in support of the disability and/or requested accommodation
- **A verification and authorization form** signed by the certification candidate
- **An education and examination history**, including the following information: (a) the name, location and dates of attendance for all schools the candidate attended from elementary school to the present, (b) identify the schools which provided accommodations for the disability in examination settings and the nature of accommodations made for the disability, (c) identify standardized tests completed in the course of the candidate's education (e.g., ACT, SAT, MCAT, COMLEX/NBOME); (d) for each test identified, candidate to indicate whether he/she received an accommodation for the stated disability and identify the nature of the accommodation; (e) if the candidate sought an accommodation that has been denied, please explain the circumstances involved. If the candidate has never received an accommodation, please provide a detailed explanation as part of the neuropsychological evaluation discussed below concerning the reasons no accommodation was given in the past and the reason one is needed now.
- **For candidates seeking accommodation of a learning disability, a comprehensive neuropsychological evaluation report.** The report should be issued by a qualified professional (psychiatrist or licensed psychologist) who regularly practices neuropsychology. The report must be based upon examination of the applicant within the last five years. The report must be written on, or accompanied by a letter written on, the evaluating professional's letterhead. The requisite elements of a comprehensive evaluation are an intelligence test, an assessment of neuropsychological functions, an academic achievement test and psychiatric/psychological history. For candidates seeking accommodations on the basis of attention deficit disorder or hyperactivity disorder, the evaluation must include a behavioral index. The requirements for the neuropsychosocial report are identified and described in greater detail in Appendix B.

Evaluation of Accommodation Requests

The AOBOO-HNS will review requests for accommodation upon receipt of the information identified above. The review process will attempt to determine: (a) if a candidate is

disabled and the nature of a disability, (b) whether the disability interferes with the candidate's ability to take the certifying examinations, (c) whether the requested accommodation is necessary to allow the candidate to take the examinations, (d) whether a different accommodation would better serve the purpose of the certifying exam while still allowing the candidate to take the examination.

Answers to these questions may not be clear from the documentation presented. Therefore, the certifying boards may request an opinion from an outside expert and either send the documentation submitted by the candidate to the expert for review or ask the candidate to be examined by an outside expert. Cost of consultation with an outside expert will be paid by the AOBOO-HNS.

Based on the review of all documentation, the AOBOO-HNS may decide to: (a) grant a request for accommodation, (b) grant a request for accommodation that is different than the requested accommodation, (c) deny the request for accommodation. The AOBOO-HNS will notify the candidate in writing of its decision. If the AOBOO-HNS decides not to grant a requested accommodation because a requested accommodation is a fundamental alteration or an undue burden, the Board shall notify the candidate of any alternative methods of accommodation suggested by the expert which are acceptable to it or, if no such alternatives have been suggested, the AOBOO-HNS shall inform the candidate and invite the candidate to suggest alternative accommodations.

Appeals

If a request for accommodation has not been granted, a candidate may request that the Board reconsider its decision or appeal the Board's decision to the Appeal Committee of the Bureau of Osteopathic Specialists. Any appeal must be submitted to the secretary of the BOS president within sixty (60) days of the date of the AOBOO-HNS written decision concerning the request for accommodation.

Procedures for Examination Administration

Where possible, examinations for disabled persons will be proctored and will be given on the same day as other examinations. The location of the examination administration will be determined by the Board on the basis of feasibility of providing necessary services and convenience to the candidate. Where appropriate, to reduce the effect of the candidate's disability on his or her performance on the examination, the following accommodations may be provided: (a) disabled persons may be tested separately, (b) disabled persons may be given assistance in reading or recording answers, (c) auxiliary aids and services can be offered, but only if they do not fundamentally alter the measurement of skills or knowledge the examination is intended to test and they would not result in an undue burden to the Board; and/or (d) time extensions may be granted to accommodate disabled candidates. Other accommodations will be made upon presentation of appropriate information and documentation supporting the requested documentation.

APPENDIX B

Required Elements of the Neuropsychosocial Report

1. Intelligence Tests. The Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale-Revised is mandatory. The report may include other estimates of verbal and nonverbal intelligence deemed appropriate by the professional preparing the report, such as Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, Raven's Progressive Matrices or Leiter International.
2. Assessment of Neuropsychological Functions, including: (a) a complete, integrated neuropsychological battery, such as the Halstead-Reitan Neuropsychological Battery or the Luria Nebraska Neuropsychological Battery; (b) memory assessments that utilize an age-normed, standardized instrument assessing both verbal and nonverbal memory such as the Wechsler Memory Scale-Revised; and (c) assessments of the specific cognitive and perceptual processes affected by the disability. Examples: in cases of auditory-verbal learning disabilities, include specific tests of phonemic processing. In cases of attention deficit disorder, include specific tests of sustained attentional resources, such as the Continuous Performance Test.
3. Academic Achievement Test Results. Standardized, comprehensive academic achievement test, appropriately normed for the candidate's age group, including assessment of spelling, arithmetic and reading comprehension.
4. Psychological/Psychiatric History, including (a) standardized psychometric assessment of personality and emotional functioning (MMPI-2 or MCMI-II); (b) standard diagnostic interview for presence of current psychiatric disorders; and (c) if the candidate has undergone treatment for a psychological or psychiatric condition within the past three years, provide a report, including diagnosis, from the treating mental health professional.
5. Behavioral Indices (**required only for candidates seeking accommodations on the basis of attention deficit disorder or hyperactivity disorder**) using standardized psychometric assessments of behavioral indices of attention deficit disorder, such as the Wender Scales or the Achenbach Scale.

The professional's report should address all appropriate elements relevant to the request for accommodation of disability. With respect to each element, the report should include the name of each test administered, its date, a description of the candidate's performance in each of the areas of the test battery, a summary of test scores, and a complete diagnostic formulation in standard DSM-IV terminology utilizing all diagnostic axes. Diagnostic formulations should integrate current testing findings with academic and psychiatric histories. Raw test data should be available upon request.