



The American Board of Certification in Medical Optometry Requirements for Board Certification

General:

Certification by the American Board of Certification in Medical Optometry (ABCMO) offers patients seeking medical eye care, credentialing bodies of health care organizations and referring health care practitioners and insurers, a national credential that identifies and recognizes licensed optometrists who have acquired advanced competence in the specialty of medical optometry. Certification by ABCMO is only available to licensed optometrists who have satisfactorily completed an ACOE accredited one-year postgraduate residency program in medical optometry, successfully completed the written national examination ACMO (Advanced Competence in Medical Optometry) administered by the National Board of Examiners in Optometry to quantitatively document their advanced competence in medical optometry and who are in the active practice of medical optometry.

Medical optometry is the specialty of optometry defined as:

The medical diagnosis, treatment and management of primary and secondary diseases and dysfunctions of the human eye, adnexa and visual tracts.

To become eligible for certification, candidates must fully meet all ABCMO criteria listed within this document.

Candidates who achieve and maintain ABCMO certification become eligible to be named a Diplomat of the College of Medical Optometry (CMO). Before the seventh anniversary date of issuance of ABCMO certification, re-documentation of current advanced competence in medical optometry will be required for renewal of ABCMO certificate.

The manner by which one may denote ABCMO certification and Diplomat status in the College of Medical Optometry (DCMO) shall be as specified by the ABCMO Board and by the state licensing board of optometry of record. Failure to observe ABCO or state licensing requirements in this regard shall result in revocation of certification.

To become eligible for ABCMO certification, candidates must meet all criteria of career path 1, 2 or 3 by supplying the documents specified below for each career path. On January 1, 2012 only Career Path 1 will be accepted as qualifying one to become eligible for ABCMO certification.

Career Path 1: Residency Completed After August 1, 2006

The following documentation (with CV) is required of each applicant:

1. Completion of an ACOE accredited residency after August 1, 2006 with emphasis on medical optometry.
2. Official transcript showing passage of the ACMO examination offered by the NBEO.

3. Notarized, valid and current state license to practice optometry with highest therapeutic endorsements in the state of practice of the applicant or state of record referenced by the employing facility credentialing committee or body.
4. Letter of recommendation from immediate training supervisor attesting to clinical competence and ethical standing during residency or from the current director of the applicant's residency program or residency director of affiliate in this order.
5. Notarized certificate of residency completion issued by accredited residency training facility or its academic affiliate.
6. Notarized self-search results by the candidate of the National Practitioner Data Bank within 3 months of application date. (www.npdb-hipdb.hrsa.gov/).
7. Documented significant practice of medical optometry for the two years immediately prior to application for certification.
8. Appear for an interview (as requested)
9. Notarized copy of OD degree from an ACOE (or equivalent) accredited North American school or college of optometry.
10. Signed waiver authorizing ABCMO to make appropriate inquiries as needed to verify the validity of documents furnished by applicant.

* The Board believes successful residency training and passage of ACMO are valid indicators of initial, advanced competence in medical optometry, but failure to devote a significant amount of time to the practice of a specialty or a significant time lapse between completion of residency and practice of the specialty can lead to erosion of this advanced competence and skills. The two-year requirement of significant practice of medical optometry ensures advanced competence and skill retention at time of application and precludes certification of those not in a practice with emphasis in medical optometry or in full-time general practice or non-clinical administrative positions.

Career Path Two: Residency Completed Before August 1, 2006.

Because the ACMO written examination was first offered in 2005, those completing residency before August 1, 2006, entered their training before ACMO was available or its availability became generally known.

The Board believes those who completed their residency training before August 1, 2006 who have practiced in settings emphasizing medical optometry thereafter, as documented by their clinical privileges and patient population demographics are eligible for certification. Results represented by ACMO testing outcomes have shown those with medical optometry practice following residency test higher, on average, than those taking ACMO immediately after residency which underscores the validity of the ACMO examination in assessing clinically relevant advanced knowledge in medical optometry. While the Board strongly urges all former residents take ACMO, until 2012, it will permit those completing their residency training prior to August 1, 2006 to become eligible for certification via Career Path Two. After that date, passage of ACMO becomes mandatory for all former residents seeking ABCMO certification.

Prior to Jan. 1, 2012, those who completed residency training before August 1, 2006 are eligible for certification if they meet all requirements of Career Path One save for passage of ACMO, and adequately document the significant practice of medical optometry during the four years immediately preceding their date of application.

Career Path Three: Residency Not Served

The Board recognizes there are optometrists who have not served residencies but possess advanced competence in the specialty of medical optometry that would otherwise make them eligible for certification.

When medical specialty boards were established they addressed this situation by providing a time window for practitioners to seek certification based upon experience practicing that specialty without serving a residency. These limited-time windows for certification were created because medical specialty residencies were initially few in number and some specialists could only gain their expertise by practicing in a setting emphasizing that specialty or by limiting their practice to that specialty. After these initial time windows all recognized specialty boards made residency training mandatory.

Similarly, some optometrists entering practice before residencies in medical optometry became widely available and before ACMO was established, have acquired, through experience and self study, advanced competence in medical optometry. One method has been to practice within a medical, academic or group practice concentrated on treating patients with ocular diseases and/or teaching and supervising optometry externs and residents at accredited residency programs in medical optometry.

With adequate documented evidence of such prior experience, the Board may, at its discretion, until 2012, permit such applicants to become eligible for certification if they satisfy the following criteria:

Meet requirements 3, 6, 8, 9 and 10 of Career Path 1 and successfully document achievement in several of the following nine areas and the significant practice of medical optometry for the immediate past 6 years at time of application.

1. National recognition of possessing advanced competence in medical optometry. Examples include frequently presenting lectures and/or laboratory work shops at AOA, AAO or other national and regional educational meetings approved for COPE credit.
2. Significant publications (articles, textbooks, chapters) in medical optometry in peer reviewed journals, textbooks or national popular journals.
3. Supervision and training of residents in medical optometry while holding a faculty appointment at a medical or optometry school and written clinical TPA privileges.
4. Passage of ACMO.
5. Diplomate status in the Ocular Disease Section of the American Academy of Optometry.
6. ABO certification in ophthalmology.
7. Fellow of the American Academy of Optometry
8. Fellow of the Optometric Glaucoma Society
9. Fellow of the Optometric Retina Society

The degree by which a candidate must meet the above 9 criteria is at the discretion of the Board based upon the strength and breadth of the candidate's credentials in each category. Candidates seeking certification via Career Path 3 may be required to interview with the board or be visited by a member of Board. After January 1, 2012 all candidates will be required to meet Career Path 1 criteria.

Note:

Candidates practicing within a Joint Commission accredited health care organization who hold written clinical privileges authorized by its credentialing/privileging committee shall submit a notarized copy of their current clinical privileges as issued by their privileging committee. While clear photo copies of license, diploma and residency certificate are still required, they need not be notarized if applicant's credentialing committee has inspected and affirmed their existence and

currency and applicant provides a notarized copy of such statement by their credentialing committee or body.

References:

Additional background and information may be found at www.abcmo.org with questions directed to myers.kenj@gmail.com or to info@abcmo.org.

Candidates shall include a list of contact points (e-mail and postal) by which the applicant wishes to communicate with ABCMO. Transmission of credentials by e-mail is not permitted however and all applicants privacy will be maintained.

Applications for ABCMO certification in medical optometry are to be posted to:

Kenneth J Myers, Ph.D., O.D.
ABCMO President
18683 Milton Ave
Big Rapids, MI 49307

Revised July 4, 2010-29-2010