

### III.A. Eligibility Requirements – Fellowship Programs

All required clinical education for entry into ACGME-accredited fellowship programs must be completed in an ACGME-accredited residency program, or in an RCPSC-accredited or CFPC-accredited residency program located in Canada. <sup>(Core)</sup>

Prior to appointment in the program, fellows should have completed a three-year ACGME-accredited internal medicine or family medicine residency, or RCPSC-accredited internal medicine residency or CFPC-accredited family medicine residency located in Canada. <sup>(Core)</sup>

III.A.1. Fellowship programs must receive verification of each entering fellow's level of competency in the required field using ACGME or CanMEDS Milestones assessments from the core residency program. <sup>(Core)</sup>

#### III.A.2. Fellow Eligibility Exception

A Review Committee may grant the following exception to the fellowship eligibility requirements:

An ACGME-accredited fellowship program may accept an exceptionally qualified applicant\*\*, who does not satisfy the eligibility requirements listed in Sections III.A. and III.A.1., but who does meet all of the following additional qualifications and conditions: <sup>(Core)</sup>

III.A.2.a) Assessment by the program director and fellowship selection committee of the applicant's suitability to enter the program, based on prior training and review of the summative evaluations of training in the core specialty; and <sup>(Core)</sup>

III.A.2.b) Review and approval of the applicant's exceptional qualifications by the GMEC or a subcommittee of the GMEC; and <sup>(Core)</sup>

III.A.2.c) Satisfactory completion of the United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE) Steps 1, 2, and, if the applicant is eligible, 3, and; <sup>(Core)</sup>

III.A.2.d) For an international graduate, verification of Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG) certification; and, <sup>(Core)</sup>

III.A.2.e) Applicants accepted by this exception must complete fellowship Milestones evaluation (for the purposes of establishment of baseline performance by the Clinical Competency Committee), conducted by the receiving fellowship program within six weeks of matriculation. This evaluation may be waived for an applicant who has completed an ACGME International-accredited residency based on the applicant's Milestones evaluation conducted at the conclusion of the residency program. <sup>(Core)</sup>

III.A.2.e).(1) If the trainee does not meet the expected level of Milestones competency following entry into the fellowship program, the trainee must undergo a period of remediation, overseen by the Clinical Competency Committee and monitored by the GMEC or a subcommittee of the GMEC. This period of remediation must not count toward time in fellowship training. <sup>(Core)</sup>

\*\* An exceptionally qualified applicant has (1) completed a non-ACGME-accredited residency program in the core specialty, and (2) demonstrated clinical excellence, in comparison to peers, throughout training. Additional evidence of exceptional qualifications is required, which may include one of the following: (a) participation in additional clinical or research training in the specialty or subspecialty; (b) demonstrated scholarship in the specialty or subspecialty; (c) demonstrated leadership during or after residency training; (d) completion of an ACGME-International-accredited residency program.

III.A.2.f) Fellows from non-ACGME- or RCPSC-accredited internal medicine or family medicine programs must have at least three years of internal medicine or family medicine graduate medical education prior to starting the fellowship. <sup>(Core)</sup>

III.A.2.f).(1) The program director must inform applicants from non-ACGME- or RCPSC-accredited programs, prior to appointment and in writing, of the ABIM/ABFM policies and procedures that will affect their eligibility for ABIM/ABFM certification. <sup>(Detail)</sup>

III.A.3. The Review Committees for Family Medicine and Internal Medicine allow exceptions to the Eligibility Requirements for Fellowship Programs in Section III.A. <sup>(Core)</sup>

Please be aware of the following policies by respective boards, for eligibility for certification in the respective fields.

ABIM certification eligibility:

- <https://www.abim.org/certification/policies/general/policies.aspx>
- <https://www.abim.org/certification/policies/internal-medicine-subspecialty-policies/internal-medicine.aspx>
- Please review information in above websites before applying.
- To be admitted to the ABIM Internal Medicine Certification Examination, physicians must have satisfactorily completed, by August 31 of the year of examination, 36 calendar months, including vacation time, of U.S. or Canadian graduate medical education accredited by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME),

ABFM certification eligibility:

- <https://www.theabfm.org/cert/boardeligibility.aspx>
- The American Board of Family Medicine (ABFM) Board Eligibility Policy defines “Board Eligible” as having completed residency training but not yet attained initial certification.
- ABFM-approved alternative training may consist of training at Family Medicine residency training programs in international locations. The ABFM may or may not have an established reciprocity agreement with an approved alternative. However, all proposals for alternative training must be submitted for review and approval by the ABFM.
- **Will completing a fellowship in a subspecialty of Family Medicine qualify as an ABFM-approved alternative or an additional year of training?**
  - No, the ABFM-approved alternative must cover the full scope of Family Medicine.
- Physicians may contact [boardeligibility@theabfm.org](mailto:boardeligibility@theabfm.org) to request a board eligibility verification letter. Verification of a physician’s eligibility will not be provided directly to anyone other than the physician.