1. **What is Maintenance of Certification (MOC)?**

   Maintenance of Certification is a program designed for board-certified diplomates to participate in continuous professional development, assuring lifelong learning and competency in their specialty and subspecialty. All Member Boards of the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) agreed to require their diplomates to actively participate in MOC.

   The ABMG MOC program is comprised of activities performed continuously in a 10-year cycle; the activities are grouped into four parts, as follows:
   - **Part I:** Licensure and Professional Standing
   - **Part II:** Lifelong Learning and Self-Assessment
   - **Part III:** Cognitive Expertise
   - **Part IV:** Practice Performance Assessment

2. **Who must participate in the MOC program?**

   - Diplomates with time-limited certificates
   - Program Directors, Training Directors and primary laboratory directors of ABMG-accredited laboratory training programs, including those with lifetime certificates
   - Members of the ABMG Board of Directors, including those with lifetime certificates
   - Members of ABMG committees, including those with lifetime certificates

   **NOTE:** Diplomates with lifetime certificates, while not required, are strongly encouraged to enroll in MOC.

3. **What are the requirements for MOC Part I?**

   a. All diplomates in **Clinical Genetics** must hold a current, unrestricted license to practice medicine in at least one jurisdiction in the United States, its territories, or Canada. Diplomates are required to notify the ABMG of any final action against their medical license in any jurisdiction. Diplomates in Clinical Genetics must upload a scanned image of their current medical license [registration card] in the ABMG Portal under MOC>Part I in order to meet this requirement.

   b. Diplomates in the **laboratory specialties** who do not hold a medical license must upload a completed Letter of Attestation of Professional Conduct (LAPC), signed by a departmental chair, human resources director, or a high-level administrator, at specified time intervals as proof of the diplomate’s integrity. The form is located in the ABMG Portal under MOC>Part I. For those diplomates who have a clinical laboratory scientist license from their state (e.g., CA), a copy of the current license may be uploaded instead of an LAPC. **NOTE:** This is an individual’s license, NOT a laboratory license.

4. **What are the requirements for MOC Part II?**

   Part II activities involve a set number of (a) **literature review and test modules** and (b) **continuing education credits**. The modules are available in the ABMG Portal. **NOTE:** Full citations for the required reading are listed in the Portal but the articles themselves are not provided by the ABMG.

   a. **Literature Review and Test Modules:**

      Diplomates are required to complete three Part II literature review modules in the ABMG Portal at specific intervals within a full 10-year MOC cycle. New modules in each specialty area are posted every two years and will be available for three years before being retired. The individual modules are comprised of five-to-eight specialty-specific articles. Diplomates are required to take the pre-reading test before being provided a list of articles. Diplomates must procure the articles and are expected to read them and answer 25 multiple-choice questions in a non-proctored setting. The responses are scored immediately. Diplomates who do not achieve a passing score may repeat the test until a passing score is attained.
b. **Continuing Education Credits:**

Diplomates must demonstrate their involvement in continuing education by documenting a specified number of continuing education credits. Continuing education activities must be provided by organizations that are accredited to offer Category 1 (or the equivalent) credits. Diplomates must document all continuing education credits by uploading scanned images of the relevant CME/CEU certificates or letters of attendance in the ABMG Portal under MOC>CME.

i. MD **Clinical Geneticists** must accrue 250 Category 1 CME credits over each 10-year cycle with an average of **25 CMEs earned per year**. At least 50% (125 credits) must be related to medical genetics, while the remainder may be in other appropriate fields.

ii. Diplomates certified in **Biochemical Genetics, Cytogenetics, or Molecular Genetics** must accrue 250 continuing education credit hours over each 10-year cycle with an average of **25 credit hours earned per year**. At least 50% (125 credits) must be related to medical genetics, while the remainder may be in other appropriate fields.

iii. Diplomates certified in the specialty of **PhD Medical Genetics** must accrue 350 credits continuing education credit hours over each 10-year cycle with an average of **35 credit hours earned per year** (see FAQ 14). At least 50% (175 credits) must be related to medical genetics, while the remainder may be in other appropriate fields.

5. **Can you provide greater detail on MOC Part III (Examination)?**

Diplomates must pass a secure, proctored, closed-book cognitive examination in each specialty area for which they are participating in MOC once during their 10-year cycle; it can be attempted up to three times but only in years 8, 9 or 10 of the MOC cycle. **NOTE:** There is a fee for each examination taken; examinations taken outside the U.S. and Canada carry an international testing site fee per examination.

In years 8-10 of the MOC cycle, the Part III examination will be available during a set time period each August. The computerized examination will be offered in a secure proctored testing center. Questions will cover, but are not limited to, the following areas: fundamental knowledge, specialty-related areas, quality assurance, safety, ethics, professionalism, legal issues, and economic issues. A diplomate may retake the examination, if necessary, however, one must pass the examination before the end of the MOC cycle.

**NOTE:** Diplomates certified in the specialty of PhD Medical Genetics are exempt from the Part III requirement since it is no longer offered as a specialty of the ABMG.

6. **What are the requirements for MOC Part IV?**

Diplomates must complete three practice evaluation/improvement modules in areas consistent with the scope of their practice within a 10-year MOC cycle. Details appear below:

a. Modules may be obtained from any source that has received prior approval from the ABMG. For example, the American College of Medical Genetics (ACMG) [ACMG Website] has developed several Part IV modules that are based on its existing standards of practice. These modules have been approved by the ABMG.

b. Official documentation of successful completion of the practice evaluation/improvement activity is required from the provider of the activity.

c. The ABMG posts a list of approved/acceptable Part IV activities currently available from various sources. For an activity that does not appear on the list, diplomates may submit a request for review and formal approval of the activity by the ABMG. Activities that may be considered for approval include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **Formal tool for evaluation of communication skills.** Communication evaluations must include evaluation and feedback from patients or medical/office staff and peers. **NOTE:** ABMG will be developing activities for peer and patient surveys.
  - **Chart review for disorders/clinical situations appropriate for a genetic specialist.** The ACMG Practice Performance modules follow this format and have been approved by the ABMG.
Similar modules from other Boards or ones developed in a specific practice will be considered, but they must include a component that allows assessment of practice improvement.

- **Academic promotion.** Such reviews must include evaluation of clinical skills, service to the institution and the medical community, educational activities, peer review, and scientific contributions. Academic promotion may only be used as one Part IV activity within a 10-year cycle. For details, see [ABMG MOC Part IV Activity: Academic Promotion](#).
- **Part IV activities from other ABMS Member Boards.**

**d.** For medical geneticists certified in a **laboratory specialty**, the following activity is also available to fulfill Part IV requirements:

- The ABMG has a specific Part IV module that is found under MOC>Part IV in the Portal. The requirements consist of three separate sections: laboratory inspection, laboratory licensure and accreditation, and proficiency testing. All of these activities are used to document ongoing practice performance evaluation and improvement. Each laboratory geneticist must provide documentation of current laboratory accreditation, evidence of lab licensure, and continued participation in quality assurance activities, such as CAP Surveys or laboratory exchanges. Detailed documentation may need to be provided at a later time, if requested.
- Any of the examples listed under item “c” above are acceptable for laboratory geneticists, if applicable.

**7. Is there an annual fee for MOC and if so, what does it include?**

Yes. Once diplomates begin participating in MOC, they will be expected to pay the annual MOC fee every year of their 10-year period. The annual fee if a flat fee; one payment covers MOC in one or more specialty. The annual fee should be paid by May 1 of each year. Diplomates who owe past MOC fees cannot recertify until payment of all outstanding fees are paid.

The ABMG has designed a fee schedule that is as low as possible while still meeting the increased costs needed to implement and maintain the MOC program. These costs include expenses for a Web-based system that (1) monitors diplomates’ progress in MOC; (2) allows diplomates to remotely participate in Part II (literature review and test) modules; (3) allows diplomates to submit Continuing Education (CE) credits via the Internet; (4) audits CE submissions; (5) allows for the development of specialty-specific Part III (MOC closed book) examinations; and (6) allows for the development of Part IV modules.

The year that the Part III examination is taken will require an additional fee for the cost of the examination.

Additional fees may be incurred in the acquisition of Continuing Education credits and the use of Part IV modules from the ACMG or sources other than the ABMG.

All fees are reviewed annually and are subject to change at the discretion of the Board.

**8. Which forms are required for MOC and where are they located?**

All required forms are located in the ABMG Portal. The only paper form that must be printed and signed is the Letter of Attestation of Professional Conduct (LAPC) for diplomates in the laboratory specialties who do not hold a medical license. This form can be downloaded from the ABMG Portal under MOC>Part I. In the future, diplomates will be able to upload a scanned image of the signed LAPC into the Portal directly; for now, please submit your LAPC to the ABMG by email to moc@abmg.org or by fax to (301) 634-7320 or by mail to ABMG at 9650 Rockville Pike, Suite 4411, Bethesda, MD 20814-3998.
9. **I just became certified for the first time. How do I begin the MOC process?**

Diplomates are automatically enrolled in the MOC program at the time they became certified. To begin participating in MOC, diplomates must enter the ABMG Portal at [www.abmg.org/portal](http://www.abmg.org/portal), accept the terms and agreements, and proceed to the MOC section. On the main MOC page, there are buttons along the left side of the page that correspond to the various components of MOC. A table at the bottom of the main MOC page outlines specific MOC requirements.

10. **I was initially certified (or recertified) in 2002/3. My current certificate expires in 2012; what must I do to remain certified?**

By the end of 2012, you must have successfully completed ALL of the following activities and uploaded all required documentation, as appropriate, in the Portal:

a. Update all of the pages in the My Profile section of the Portal. It is critical to update your address and contact information whenever a change occurs.

b. Part I for MDs/DOs practicing **Clinical Genetics**: Upload a scanned copy of your current unrestricted medical license registration card under MOC>Part I. Continue to update your license information throughout your MOC cycle.

c. Part I for diplomates in the **laboratory specialties** who do not hold a medical license: Submit a Letter of Attestation of Professional Conduct (LAPC). This form is found in the Portal under MOC>Part I. One letter should have been submitted prior to 2010 and another one must be submitted by the end of 2012.

d. Part II: Complete two Part II literature review modules, located under MOC>Part II.

e. CME/CE: Upload evidence of 125 Continuing Education credits under MOC>CME. Half of the credits should be in medical genetics. Activities can date as far back as January 2006.

f. Part III: In 2010, 2011 or 2012, you were/are eligible to register for the closed book examination in each specialty for which you are maintaining certification.

g. Part IV: Between 2010 and 2012, complete one module and attach documentation under MOC>Part IV.

h. Payment: Starting in 2007, you were required to begin paying the annual MOC fee.

Following successful completion of all the requirements, you will receive a certificate for a new 10-year cycle [2013-2022]. MOC requirements must be fulfilled on a continuous basis to maintain your certification.

11. **I was initially certified in 2005. My current certificate expires in 2015; what must I do to remain certified?**

By the end of 2015, you must have successfully completed ALL of the following activities and uploaded all required documentation, as appropriate, in the Portal:

a. Update all of the pages in the My Profile section of the Portal. It is critical to update your address and contact information whenever a change occurs.

b. Part I for MDs/DOs practicing **Clinical Genetics**: Upload a scanned copy of your current unrestricted medical license registration card under MOC>Part I. Continue to update your license throughout your MOC cycle.

c. Part I for diplomates in the **laboratory specialties** who do not hold a medical license: Submit a Letter of Attestation of Professional Conduct (LAPC). This form is found in the Portal under MOC>Part I. One letter should have been submitted prior to 2010 and another one will be required in 2012, with a third due in 2015.

d. Part II: Complete three Part II literature review modules, located under MOC>Part II.

e. CME/CE: Upload evidence of 200 Continuing Education credits under MOC>CME. Half of the credits should be in medical genetics. Activities can date as far back as January 2006.
f. Part III: In 2013, 2014 or 2015, register for and pass the closed book examination in each specialty for which you are maintaining certification.

g. Part IV: Complete two Part IV activities. One must be completed between 2010 and 2012, and the second activity must be completed between 2013 and 2015.

h. Payment: Starting in 2007, you were required to begin paying the annual MOC fee.

Following successful completion of all requirements, you will receive a certificate for a new 10-year cycle [2016-2025]. MOC requirements must be fulfilled on a continuous basis in order to maintain your certification.

12. I was initially certified in 2007. My current certificate expires in 2017; what must I do to remain certified?

By the end of 2017, you must have successfully completed ALL of the following activities and uploaded all required documentation, as appropriate, in the Portal:

a. Update all of the pages in the My Profile section of the Portal. It is critical to update your address and contact information whenever a change occurs.

b. Part I for MDs/DOs practicing Clinical Genetics: Upload a scanned copy of your current unrestricted medical license registration card under MOC>Part I. Continue to update your license throughout your MOC cycle.

c. Part I for diplomates in the laboratory specialties who do not hold a medical license: Submit a Letter of Attestation of Professional Conduct (LAPC). This form is found in the Portal under MOC>Part I. One letter should have been submitted prior to 2010, another will be required in 2014, with a third due in 2017.

d. Part II: Complete three Part II literature review modules, located under MOC>Part II.

e. CME/CE: Upload evidence of 250 Continuing Education credits under MOC>CME. Half of the credits should be in medical genetics. Activities can date as far back as September 2007.

f. Part III: In 2015, 2016 or 2017, register for and pass the closed book examination in each specialty for which you are maintaining certification.

g. Part IV: Complete two Part IV activities. One must be completed between 2011 and 2014, and the second activity must be completed between 2015 and 2017.

h. Payment: Starting in 2009, you were required to begin paying the annual MOC fee.

Following successful completion of all requirements, you will receive a certificate for a new 10-year cycle [2018-2027]. MOC requirements must be fulfilled on a continuous basis in order to maintain your certification.

13. I was initially certified in 2009 or later. What must I do to remain certified?

Please see Participation in MOC, Definitions and Parameters for detailed information on MOC components, requirements, and timelines.

14. I am certified in PhD Medical Genetics. How do I maintain my certification?

Diplomates maintaining certification in PhD Medical Genetics only, must complete the following requirements:

a. Update all of the pages in the My Profile section of the Portal. It is critical to update your address and contact information whenever a change occurs.

b. Part I: Upload a completed Letter of Attestation of Professional Conduct (LAPC), signed by a departmental chair, human resources director, or a high-level administrator at specified time intervals. The form is located in the ABMG Portal under MOC>Part I.
b. Part II: Complete three Part II literature review modules in Clinical Genetics.

c. CME/CE: Upload evidence of 350 CEU credit hours over each 10-year cycle with an average of 35 CEUs earned per year.

d. Part III: PhD medical geneticists are exempt from taking the Part III examination.

e. Part IV: Complete three Part IV modules, if clinically active.

f. Payment: Pay the annual MOC fee each year.

Diplomates maintaining certification in PhD Medical Genetics and a laboratory specialty must complete the following:

a. Update all of the pages in the My Profile section of the Portal. It is critical to update your address and contact information whenever a change occurs.

b. Part I: Upload a completed Letter of Attestation of Professional Conduct (one letter will cover both specialties), signed by a departmental chair, human resources director, or a high-level administrator, at specified time intervals. The form is located in the ABMG Portal under MOC>Part I.

c. Part II: Complete four Part II literature review modules within the 10-year cycle; a minimum of two modules must be in the laboratory specialty, while the other two may be in the laboratory specialty or in Clinical Genetics.

d. CME/CE: Upload evidence of 350 CEU credit hours over each 10-year cycle with an average of 35 CEUs earned per year. CE credits can be shared between the two specialties.

e. Part III: Successfully pass the Part III examination in the laboratory specialty only. Diplomates certified in PhD Medical Genetics are exempt from the Part III examination, since it is no longer offered as a specialty of the ABMG.

f. Part IV: PhD medical geneticists must participate in two clinically relevant Part IV modules within each 10-year cycle to fulfill MOC requirements for their PhD Medical Genetics certification unless they declare themselves clinically inactive. Two Part IV modules for the laboratory specialty must also be completed within each 10-year cycle.

g. Payment: Pay the annual MOC fee each year; one payment covers MOC in one or more specialty.

15. I am certified in two ABMG specialties with the same expiration date. How do I maintain my certification in both?

a. Part I: Requirements will be credited for both specialties.

b. Part II: The literature review modules are specialty-specific. You are required to complete two modules in each specialty at specified intervals, for a total of four during a 10-year cycle.

c. CME/CE: Continuing education credits are not specialty-specific; you are required to document 250 credit hours (not 500) over a 10-year cycle.

d. A Part III: A closed book examination must be successfully completed for each specialty in which you are participating in MOC.

e. Part IV: Activities may be apportioned between the two specialties. Some activities will be specialty-neutral while others will be specific to the specialty. Four modules must be completed in a 10-year cycle. NOTE: If one of the specialties is PhD Medical Genetics, please see FAQ 14 for details.

f. Payment: Pay the annual MOC fee each year by May 1; one payment covers MOC in one or more specialty.

16. I am certified in two ABMG specialties with different expiration dates. How do I maintain my certification in both?

In most cases, you can combine the requirements for your two specialties. The Part III examinations (one must be taken in each specialty for which you are participating in MOC) must be
17. **Is it possible to combine MOC activities and requirements if I am also participating in MOC for another ABMS Board?**

Most Member Boards of the ABMS have agreed to provide reciprocal credit for some MOC activities. The ABMG will accept one module for Part II and one module for Part IV that were satisfactorily completed for another Board’s MOC program. Diplomates may request credit for activities completed for another ABMS Board. Please submit documentation for review and approval.

- Part I requires separate submission of documentation to each Board.
- Part III examinations are required for each Board specialty you are maintaining.
- The American Board of Pediatrics, Internal Medicine (and others, currently under negotiation) have agreed that if you are meeting the ongoing requirements of MOC for one Board (including ABMG), the following will apply:
  - If the diplomate is participating in MOC for ABMG and ABPeds or ABIM, all completed Part II and Part IV activities for one Board will be accepted by the other Board.
  - If the diplomate is actively participating in MOC for ABMG and ABOG, all ABOG Part II activities will fulfill the ABMG Part II requirements. Genetics-related Part IV ABOG modules will be accepted for the ABMG Part IV requirements.
  - Other Board relationships are currently in progress; please contact the ABMG for details.

18. **I am an ABMG diplomate with a time-limited certificate who lives overseas. Can I participate in MOC and if so, can I take my Part III examination abroad or do I need to return to the U.S.?**

ABMG diplomates who live overseas are encouraged to participate in MOC if they wish to maintain their certificates. Since many of the MOC activities are administered and available through the ABMG Portal, most diplomates should be able to complete all of the requirements. **NOTE:** ABMG recognizes CMEs issued in Canada and Europe if the sponsoring organization is accredited by one of the following:

- Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada
- College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada
- Association of Faculties of Medicine of Canada
- European Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education of the European Union of Medical Specialty Societies

The MOC Part III closed-book examination is offered in various locations abroad. There is an additional fee for taking the examination outside of the U.S. and Canada. Please contact the ABMG for additional information.

19. **I hold a lifetime (not time-limited) certificate. Do I need to participate in the MOC process to maintain my certification or is my initial certificate still valid?**

All certificates issued before 1993 are not time-limited and remain valid for life, so you will not lose your diplomate status; however, the ABMG strongly encourages lifetime certificate holders to participate in the MOC program. To join MOC, please contact the ABMG directly. MOC is comprised of activities that all of us are doing routinely in our practice and it is only a small, additional burden.

**NOTE:** ALL program directors, laboratory directors, laboratory training directors of ABMG-accredited training programs, and ABMG Board of Directors are required to participate in MOC, regardless if they have lifetime certificates.
20. **I am no longer clinically active in medical genetics. However, I am involved in research, teaching, administration, or other related fields. How do I maintain my certification with the ABMG?**

Clinically inactive diplomates who want to maintain their certification must contact the ABMG (moc@abmg.org) to document this status. Clinically inactive diplomates must participate in Part I, Part II, and Part III MOC activities in their specialty area; Part IV activities are not required. Details about clinically inactive status may be found at Clinically Active and Clinically Inactive Status for ABMG Diplomates.

21. **My ABMG certification has expired; what must I do to regain certification?**

Individuals whose certificates have expired are no longer diplomates of the ABMG. To become recertified, you must pass both the initial certification examination in your specialty and the general examination. You are not required to submit a new logbook or letters of recommendation. Until you pass the examination, you are not considered to be certified by the ABMG and do not have diplomate status. Check the ABMG website under Training and Certification for the next available certification examination.

22. **What happens if I do not complete the requirements within the specified time intervals?**

MOC is a continuous process. Diplomates who do not meet the requirements of the MOC program within the appropriate time intervals will be listed on the ABMS and ABMG websites as “not meeting requirements” of MOC. If you fall behind in MOC requirements for more than a few years, it is likely that you will not be able to maintain certification and will not be able to recertify at the end of your cycle. For details, go to Participation in MOC, Definitions and Parameters.

23. **What happens if I do not complete all of the requirements within the 10-year MOC cycle?**

Diplomates with time-limited certificates who have successfully completed all but one of the major MOC requirements (Parts II, III, or IV) by the end of the 10-year cycle will be granted a one-year grace period to complete the requirement and regain certification in their specialty. During the one-year grace period, the individual will not maintain diplomate status nor be listed on the ABMG Web site, and will be reported as “not certified” to the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS). Details can be found at Participation in MOC, Definitions and Parameters.

24. **What happens if I do not complete two or more major requirements (Parts II, III, or IV) by the end of my 10-year cycle?**

If two or more requirements are not completed, your certificate will expire and you will lose your diplomate status. To recertify, you must apply for the next initial certification examination and pass both the general and the specialty examinations. No new logbook or letters of recommendation are required. You must pay the applicable fees for the certification examination.

25. **What if I do not wish to actively participate in MOC?**

Active and ongoing participation in MOC is required to maintain certification for time-limited certificates holders. Diplomates must meet the requirements of MOC before the expiration date on their certificates in order to remain certified. Diplomates who hold time-limited certificates and do not meet the ongoing requirements of the MOC program will be listed on the ABMS and ABMG websites as “not meeting requirements” of MOC.

26. **What if my question is not addressed in these FAQs?**

Please contact the ABMG Administrative Office for assistance by telephone to (301) 634-7315 or email at moc@abmg.org.