

2018 Bulletin
for
Subspecialty Certification
in
Female Pelvic Medicine
and
Reconstructive Surgery

**The American Board of
Obstetrics and Gynecology, Inc.**



2915 Vine St., Dallas, TX 75204

First in Women's Health

This Bulletin, issued in 2017, represents the official statement of the requirements for subspecialty certification for gynecologists in Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery (FPMRS) for the 2018 examinations. It applies only to those gynecologists who have completed an ABOG/ABU or ACGME approved 3-year fellowship. Urologists applying for subspecialty certification in FPMRS should contact the American Board of Urology.

Revised 18 October 2017

Important Information for all Candidates

1. Beginning in calendar year 2020, all physicians who have completed an ACGME fellowship in Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery must achieve ABOG subspecialty certification within 8 years of completion of their training. If certification is not achieved within 8 years, the physician no longer will be eligible to apply for either the qualifying or certifying subspecialty examination unless an additional 12 months of subspecialty training is completed.
2. The preparation of case lists for the Certifying Examination has been changed. Candidates will no longer submit paper case lists. Rather, submission will be electronic. Candidates **MUST** use the electronic case list forms that will be posted on their personal web page in early 2017.
3. Starting in 2017 fellows may take 8 weeks off each of the fellowship years without extending the fellowship.
4. All fees must be paid by credit card through the ABOG website (www.abog.org) and are payable in US Dollars only.
5. Deadlines are based on receipt of the information in the ABOG office. It is the candidate's responsibility to meet all deadlines. ABOG is not responsible to notify a candidate of impending deadlines. (The USPS does not guarantee on-time delivery. It is suggested that it not be used for materials that must meet a deadline.)
6. It is the responsibility of each candidate to be aware of the current requirements for certification as an ABOG subspecialist. ABOG does not assume responsibility for notifying a candidate of changing requirements for admissibility to any examination or pending loss of eligibility. Candidates must meet the requirements published in the *FPMRS Subspecialty Bulletin* for the year in which they are to take an examination.
7. Subspecialty certification is time-limited. Each subspecialty Diplomate must enter the subspecialty Maintenance of Certification (MOC) program in the year following successful certification, and must also successfully complete each year's MOC assignments to maintain certification.
8. Candidates should be familiar with the material included under the "Policies" tab on the ABOG home page.

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The Division of Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery (FPMRS)

The process of certification in FPMRS is voluntary. ABOG will not contact potential candidates. Each potential candidate for subspecialty certification is responsible for completing the application on-line at www.abog.org, for submitting all materials to ABOG at the time they are requested, and meeting all deadlines. ABOG will make the final decision concerning the applicant's eligibility for admission to the examination.

The current members of the ABOG Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery Division are listed in Appendix A.

Qualifying (Written) Examination

June 22, 2018 Qualifying Examination: Application Process

1. Applications will be accepted on-line at www.abog.org beginning September 1, 2017. Late fees will apply to applications received after 5 pm CDT October 13, 2017. The final day applications will be accepted is 5 pm CST December 15, 2017.
2. The total fee (application and examination) must be paid by credit card through the ABOG website at the time of application. If an applicant is found to be ineligible to take the examination, the examination portion of the fee will be refunded. The application portion of the fee is not refundable nor will it be credited toward a subsequent application.
3. The applicant must supply ABOG with an email address as part of the application process and notify ABOG of any change in this address.
4. Following submission of the online application form and payment of the appropriate fee, the candidate's application will be considered in accordance with the requirements in effect for that year (see below). The candidate will be notified of admissibility to the Qualifying Examination.
5. After the approval email is received, the candidate should contact Pearson VUE to obtain a seat for the examination. Candidates are urged to obtain a seat as soon as possible after notification of eligibility to avoid long distance travel to a

site with an available seat. On March 25, 2018, the ABOG reserve on seats at the Pearson VUE centers will be released. After that date it will be harder for candidates to reserve a seat at their preferred site. Seats in individual cities are limited, and are assigned on a “first come, first served” basis. ABOG will not refund any portion of the test fee if a candidate is not able to reserve a seat at their preferred testing center.

6. If special accommodations are needed for a disability, those requests must be received at the ABOG office no later than March 24, 2018, 5 pm CDT. (See Appendix B for more information about accommodations for disabilities.
7. Candidates who are lactating may request a 30 minute break and extension of their examination if they notify the ABOG office no later than March 24, 2018 and schedule at a Pearson VUE test center by the same date. After March 24, 2018 ABOG cannot guarantee that it will be possible to schedule an extended test at the candidate’s preferred testing center. Most Pearson VUE test centers have only one room that is available for breast pumping. Candidates are encouraged to make their reservations as soon as they receive approval for the test as these rooms will be assigned on a “first come, first served” basis.

June 22, 2018 Qualifying Examination: Requirements

Each of the following is a requirement for a Fellow in FPMRS to sit for the subspecialty examination. The Fellow must meet all of the requirements in effect during the year for which admission to the Qualifying Examination is requested.

1. **Basic Qualifying Test** The candidate must have passed the ABOG Qualifying Examination for Certification in Obstetrics and Gynecology before applying for the FPMRS Qualifying Examination.
2. **Length of Training** The candidate must have been registered with ABOG, and have either (a) completed a minimum of 32 of 36 months of fellowship training, or (b) will have completed training in an ACGME-accredited fellowship program in FPMRS no later than September 30 of the same year the qualifying test is taken.
3. **Allocation of Time** In order to take the Qualifying Examination, the candidate must have had the following experience during fellowship:
 - a. 18 months of clinical FPMRS
 - b. 12 months of protected research
 - i. Conducted research leading to a thesis meeting ABOG certification requirements (Appendix C).

- ii. Completed written thesis and presented work before FPMRS Division and Program Director by completion of fellowship
 - iii. Blocks must be no less than one month
- c. 6 months of electives
- i. Focused on a specific clinical and/or research area
 - ii. Selected at the discretion of the Program Director and Fellow
4. **Curriculum** The candidate must have a diverse experience in the management of a wide variety of clinical problems affecting the development, function, and aging of the female reproductive and urinary tract. Additionally, the candidate must have experience in the management of anal incontinence.

The candidate must have experience in medical disorders, surgical techniques, and office procedures to be able to manage complex pelvic floor and urinary conditions.

5. **Leaves of Absence** Leaves of absence and vacation may be granted to Fellows by their Program Director in accordance with local policy. The total of leaves of absence must not exceed either 8 weeks in any year or a total of 15 weeks over the three years of fellowship.

If a Fellow's leave exceeds either the yearly maximum or the program maximum, the fellowship must be extended for the duration of time the individual was absent in excess of the maximum. The number of days that equals a "week" is a local issue that is determined by the Program Director, not ABOG.

Fellows are expected to take allotted vacation time. Foregoing vacation time or necessary sick leave to shorten the 36 month requirement of training is not permitted.

6. **Moral and Ethical Behavior** The candidate must have demonstrated good moral and ethical behavior in the practice of medicine, and in interactions with peers, other medical personnel and patients. A felony conviction will be considered evidence of failure to meet this standard.
7. **Falsification of Information** Falsification of any information or failure to disclose any adverse action will result in a deferral of a candidate's eligibility to sit for the Qualifying Examination for a period of at least 3 years. If the candidate is allowed to sit for the examination at the end of the deferral period, the candidate must meet all requirements in effect at that time.

June 22, 2018 Qualifying Examination: Content

The content of the Qualifying Examination will include advanced knowledge in the subjects outlined in the *Guide to Learning in Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery*. The questions will be in a multiple-choice, one best answer format.

Conduct of the Qualifying Examination

The Qualifying Examination is scheduled to last approximately 3 hours and 45 minutes. Candidates who finish before the full time has elapsed may leave early, but if they do so, may not return. Candidates will receive information after registering on the Pearson VUE website concerning the location of their examination, as well as the time they must arrive.

Each candidate must present 2 forms of identification to be admitted to the examination. One document must include both a photograph of the candidate and the candidate's signature. The second document must include the candidate's signature. If a candidate has had a name change between application and the day of the test, they must bring a copy of an official document that verifies the name change. Examples could include, but are not limited to a marriage certificate, divorce decree, or a court ordered name change.

Candidates may not take any electronic device into the examination area, and must also submit to a screening process that may include any or all of the following: fingerprinting, palm vein scanning, wand or walkthrough scanning for metallic objects, or any other screening that may be in place at the Pearson VUE center. A candidate who refuses to submit to any screening procedure will not be allowed to sit for the examination, and no portion of the fee will be refunded.

Candidates are not allowed to access recording devices, cellular phones, paging devices, smart watches, other electronic communication and/or recording devices, and writing instruments during the Qualifying Examination. If such a device is discovered at any time during the examination, or if the candidate accesses any such device for any reason, the candidate will not receive a grade for any portion of the examination, and all fees will be forfeit.

There is no scheduled break during the examination. Candidates may take unscheduled breaks to use the restroom facilities. Unscheduled breaks should not exceed 10 minutes in length. During such breaks, a candidate may not talk with any other individual or access any electronic device. Candidates are not allowed to leave the testing center for any reason before completing the test. If a candidate violates

any of these regulations, the candidate will not receive a grade for any portion of the examination, and all fees will be forfeit.

Candidates with documented disabilities should review Appendix B, and must call the ABOG office before making a reservation at Pearson VUE for information how to schedule a test site.

Test Integrity

At the time of application for the Examination, and again at the time the test is taken, each candidate will be required to agree to the following. No candidate will be allowed to sit for the Qualifying Examination unless they agree to these terms:

1. I understand that all ABOG test materials are copyrighted, and that it is illegal to disclose the content of the examination in whole or in part to any individual, organization or business. Furthermore, I understand that if I provide the information to any such entity I may be prosecuted under the US Copyright laws.

2. I understand that if I divulge the content of the Qualifying Examination in whole or in part to any individual, organization or business, my test result, if any, will be negated and I will not be allowed to re-apply for the examination for a minimum of three years. Furthermore, if I had been awarded Diplomate status, such status will be withdrawn.

3. I understand that I may not record any portion of the Qualifying Examination by any means in whole or in part, and a violation will be treated as outlined in numbers 1 and 2 above.

4. I understand that I may not memorize or attempt to memorize any portion of the Qualifying Examination for the purpose of transmitting such material to any individual, organization or business.

Additional information about test security can be found on the ABOG website under "Policies."

Fees and Deadlines

June 22, 2018 Examination Fees and Deadlines

Sept 1, 2017 to 5 pm CDT Oct 13, 2017	\$1945
Oct 14, 2017 to 5 pm CST Nov 17, 2017	\$1945 + \$320 late fee = \$2265
Nov 18, 2017 to 5 pm CST Dec 15, 2017	\$1945 + \$815 late fee = \$2760

The final deadline to complete the on-line application and pay the applicable fees is 5 pm CST December 15, 2017. No application will be accepted after this date.

After approval, if the candidate experiences an event that prevents sitting for the examination, the Board should be notified immediately. If the request is made prior to 5 pm CST, March 16, 2018, and if the review committee agrees that the request is due to circumstances beyond the control of the candidate, the examination portion of the fee (\$870) may be refunded. The application fee and late fees are not refundable. In addition, the review committee will not consider any request that is based primarily on non-emergency matters.

Re-Application

A candidate who postpones or fails the Qualifying Examination must complete a new on-line application to be considered for the next scheduled Qualifying Examination. Each new application must be accompanied by a new application fee.

Applicants Ruled Not Admissible

If a decision is made by ABOG that a candidate has not met the requirements for admission to the Qualifying Examination, the candidate may appeal the decision by writing to the ABOG Executive Director. Such appeals will be forwarded to the appropriate ABOG Committee for reconsideration. If the appeal is successful, no late fees incurred during the appeal process will apply. If the successful decision occurs after the date of the Qualifying Examination, the candidate will be scheduled for the next available Qualifying Examination in the subspecialty, and no additional application fee will apply. However, the examination fee must be paid before the deadline.

If the candidate's appeal is not successful or the candidate does not appeal the inadmissibility decision, the candidate may reapply by submitting a new application, paying the appropriate fee, and meeting the requirements applicable at the time of the re-application. Documentation that the cause for the initial disapproval has been cleared must be submitted with the application.

Limitation of Eligibility

Beginning in calendar year 2020, all physicians who have completed an ABOG or ACGME fellowship in FPMRS must achieve ABOG subspecialty certification within 8 years of completion of their training. If certification is not achieved within 8 years, the physician no longer will be eligible to apply for either the Qualifying or Certifying subspecialty examination unless an additional 12 months of subspecialty training is completed.

This means that physicians who have completed subspecialty training in calendar year 2012 or earlier must be subspecialty certified by 2020 or will be required to complete an additional 12 months of training before regaining eligibility to apply for certification.

If a physician fails to achieve subspecialty certification within 8 years of completion of an accredited FPMRS fellowship program and successfully completes an additional 12 months of training, they must achieve subspecialty certification within 4 years of the completion of the additional training.

Results of the Examination

The results of the Qualifying Examination will be reported on-line to each candidate by September 15, 2018.

As part of the application process the applicant will be required to irrevocably agree that the results of the applicant's examination may be made available to the Program Director of any fellowship program in which the Applicant may have participated or in which the Applicant is currently involved, and/or the American Council of Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) for any and all purposes. Furthermore, the applicant will be required to release and agree to indemnify and hold the ABOG and its officers, directors, and employees harmless of and from any and all claims the applicant may have with regard to the effect or impact upon the applicant of the release of the applicant's examination results to the applicant's Program Director or the ACGME and waive any rights the applicant may have, if any, to have the examination results maintained in confidence.

A passing grade on the Qualifying Examination does not ensure a candidate's admissibility to the Certifying (Oral) Examination.

Certifying (Oral) Examination

April 9-11, 2018 Certifying Examination: Application Process

1. Applications will be accepted on-line at www.abog.org beginning May 1, 2017. Late fees will apply for applications received after 5 pm CDT May 31, 2017.
2. The final day applications will be accepted is 5 pm CDT June 30, 2017. Applications received after this deadline will not be processed.
3. The application fee must be paid by credit card through the ABOG website at the time of application. The application fee is not refundable.
4. The applicant must supply an email address as part of the application process. It is the candidate's responsibility to notify ABOG of any change in this address as the approval (or not) to sit for the examination will be sent to the applicant at the email address provided.
5. During the application process, a Verification of Hospital Privileges Form will print automatically. This form must be signed and faxed to the ABOG office.
6. Following submission of the on-line application form, payment of the appropriate fee, and receipt of the Verification of Hospital Privileges Form, the candidate's application will be considered in accordance with the requirements in effect for that year. (See below.)
7. If the candidate's application is approved, an email will be sent with instructions for submitting the case lists and thesis. The examination fee must be paid at this time. The case list will not be accepted unless the examination fee is paid in full by credit card on the ABOG website.
8. If full payment of the examination fee has not been received by 5 pm CDT September 29, 2017, for the 2018 examination, the candidate will not be scheduled, and no fees will be refunded.
9. Once all materials have been received by ABOG and the appropriate fees paid, the candidate will receive an Authorization for Admission Form posted on the candidate's personal ABOG webpage at least one month prior to the date of the examination. This contact will indicate the date of the candidate's examination, the time and place to report, and hotel information.
10. Each year the ABOG notifies the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), the American Society of Reproductive Medicine (ASRM),

the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS), the American Medical Association (AMA), the American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology, and The Foundation for Excellence in Women's Health. The ABOG, ACOG, AMA, AUGS, and ABMS, on request, also make this information available to the public, including, but not limited to, hospitals, agencies of government, insurers and lay persons. The ABOG also provides de-identified data to fellowship programs and to the ACGME about fellowship program pass rates to be used as a criterion to evaluate the effectiveness of program training. The ABOG may use the results of certification examinations for research purposes and may publish the results of the research.

As a condition for acceptance as a candidate for certification as a Diplomate of the ABOG, each candidate, at the time of the Certifying Examination, is required to sign an irrevocable waiver authorizing the dissemination of the candidate's certification status without limitation or condition.

11. After a candidate submits an application, they should open the "Publications" tab at the top of the ABOG webpage, and then click on "Fellowships" in the box on the right and then click on the appropriate subspecialty. The following information should then be printed: (1) the thesis affidavit form, (2) case log forms, and (3) the instructions for completing the case list and thesis.

April 9-11, 2018 Certifying Examination: Requirements

Each candidate must meet the following requirements:

1. [Be a Diplomate](#) of the ABOG and hold Active Certificate status.
2. [Must have passed](#) the FPMRS Qualifying Examination.
3. [May not have failed the FPMRS examination 3 times](#). If the Certifying Examination has been failed 3 times, the candidate must pass the FPMRS Qualifying Examination again to be eligible to apply for the Certifying Examination.
4. [Have successfully completed 36 months](#) of training in an ABOG or ACGME-accredited FPMRS fellowship. The fellowship training **MUST** include [12 months of research](#). Research time must be scheduled in blocks of not less than one month duration, and while in a research block, no more than 10 % (4 hours) of the Fellow's time in any week may be spent in clinical duties.
5. [Hold an unrestricted license to practice medicine](#) in all states or territories of the United States or Canada in which the candidates holds a medical license. Licenses that have been revoked, suspended or are on probation, or are subject to restrictions of any type are considered to be restricted.

6. **Hold full and unrestricted privileges** to practice in FPMRS in each hospital, surgical center, and/or medical center in which the candidate has privileges.
7. **Be of good moral and ethical character** and shown appropriate professionalism in all interactions with patients, peers, and other medical personnel. A felony conviction, even if unrelated to the practice of medicine, will be considered evidence of failure to meet this standard.
8. **Have not resigned hospital privileges or membership in any medical organization** (e.g., ACOG) while under investigation. If the candidate is under investigation or on probation, the application will not be approved. The candidate must re-apply and pay a new application fee once the probation and/or restrictions have been resolved. However, resolution of these matters does not guarantee that the candidate's application will be approved.
9. **Have completed at least 12 months of independent practice** and have hospital privileges by January 1, 2017 to practice as a subspecialist in FPMRS in a center or centers providing or having ready access to the essential diagnostic and therapeutic facilities for the practice of FPMRS and to retain such practice until the date of the candidate's examination.
10. **Submit an electronic case list** that documents a practice that demonstrates sufficient depth and breadth of practice in the subspecialty of FPMRS to permit the evaluation of the candidate's ability to function in the subspecialty. The case lists must be appropriately de-identified. (See Appendix D)
11. **Submit a thesis** that meets the minimal standards of the Division of FPMRS. Each submitted thesis will be reviewed for acceptability. Prior publication in a peer-reviewed journal does not guarantee acceptance. (See Appendix C for information about thesis content.)
12. **Have not withheld information of any adverse action.** If a non-disclosed falsification or adverse action is identified by ABOG it will result in a deferral of a candidate's eligibility to sit for the Certifying Examination for a period of at least 3 years. If the candidate is allowed to sit for the examination at the end of the deferral period, the candidate must meet all requirements in effect at that time.

Certifying Examination: Content

The Certifying Examination of the candidate will include critical review and discussion of the submitted thesis, questions related to principles of biostatistics and clinical trial design, review of the submitted case lists, hypothetical cases, discussion of surgical techniques, structured cases, and may include interpretation of operative videos and computer-generated images (imaging techniques, intraoperative

photographs, etc.), and questions related to the content of the *Guide to Learning in FPMRS*.

Conduct of the Certifying Examination

The candidates for examination will be informed of the time and place of the registration process when they receive information concerning their assigned examination date. Candidates who are late for registration will not be allowed to sit for the examination. Following registration, an orientation to the examination will be provided. After the orientation, the candidates will be taken to the ABOG testing center.

Each candidate will be assigned an examination room, and will remain in that room for the 3 hours of the examination. The candidate will be informed of the names of the 6 examiners who will conduct their examination. If the candidate believes that one or more examiners would be inappropriate to provide them with a fair test, an alternate examiner will be provided.

Candidates may not take any electronic devices into the examination. This includes, but is not limited to, cellular telephones and all devices that can record, including the Apple Watch and similar devices. If a candidate is found to have an electronic device in an examination room, the test will be halted immediately and the candidate will receive no grade for the examination. In addition, all fees will be forfeit.

Each pair of examiners will award a grade in their area. Members of the ABOG Board of Directors will decide the candidate's final grade after reviewing all of the information from the examination. The examination will be conducted in English.

At the end of the examination, the candidates will return to the registration area.

Test Integrity

At the time of application for the Examination, and again at the time the test is taken, each candidate will be required to agree to the following. No candidate will be allowed to take the Certifying Examination unless they agree to these terms:

1. I understand that all ABOG test materials are copyrighted, and that it is illegal to disclose the content of the examination in whole or in part to any individual, organization or business. Furthermore, I understand that if I provide the information to any such entity I may be prosecuted under the US Copyright laws.
2. I understand that if I divulge the content of the Certifying Examination in whole or in part to any individual, organization or business, my test result, if any, will be negated and I will not be allowed to re-apply for the examination for a minimum of

three years. Furthermore, if I had been awarded Diplomate status, such status will be withdrawn.

3. I understand that I may not record any portion of the Certifying Examination by any means in whole or in part, and a violation will be treated as outlined in numbers 1 and 2 above.

4. I understand that I may not memorize or attempt to memorize any portion of the Certifying Examination for the purpose of transmitting such material to any individual, organization or business.

Additional information about test security can be found on the ABOG website under "Policies."

April 9-11, 2018 Certifying Examination: Fees and Deadlines

Application Fee and Deadlines

May 1, 2017 to 5 pm CDT May 31, 2017	\$1080
June 1, 2017 to 5 pm CDT June 16, 2017	\$1080 + \$310 late fee = \$1390
June 17, 2017 to 5 pm CDT June 30, 2017	\$1080 + \$780 late fee = \$1860

The final deadline to complete the on-line application and pay the applicable fees is 5 pm CDT June 30, 2017. No application will be accepted after this date and time. Application fees are non-refundable, and cannot be credited toward a future application.

Examination Fee and Deadline

If the candidate's application is accepted, an email of acceptance will be sent in to the candidate in September, 2017. The email will explain the process of submitting the thesis and case lists. The examination fee must be paid on or before 5 pm CDT September 29, 2017. (The thesis is due the same day. See below.)

September, 2017 to 5 pm CDT September 29, 2017	\$1210
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5 pm CDT September 29, 2017 is the final deadline for receipt of the Examination Fee. No late payments will be accepted. If the candidate must withdraw from the examination on or before February 1, 2018 due to a medical or other emergency, a portion of the examination fee may be refunded.

Thesis Deadline

5 pm CST September 29, 2017

5 pm CST September 29, 2017 is the final deadline for receipt of 4 copies of the thesis in the ABOG office. One copy of the completed thesis affidavit form must be submitted with the thesis (see Application Process #11 above). Theses must be mailed; electronic submissions are not accepted. Theses received after this date will not be accepted. Candidates should submit their theses using a service with tracking. (The USPS does not guarantee on-time delivery.) Candidates must submit a thesis that adheres to the requirements listed in Appendix C.

Candidates who have previously submitted a thesis and were unsuccessful in passing the examination must resubmit 4 copies of their thesis. The same thesis may be submitted. However, thesis requirements change frequently. The thesis must fulfill the requirements for the year of the test. Prior acceptance of a thesis does not assure re-acceptance.

Case List Deadline

5 pm CST February 1, 2017

5 pm CST February 1, 2018 is the final deadline for receipt of the case lists. Case lists must be submitted electronically using the forms available on each candidate's web page. Candidates must submit the case list in the proper format and include the appropriate number of cases.

Applicants Ruled Not Admissible

If a decision is made by ABOG that a candidate has not met the requirements for admission to the Certifying Examination, the candidate may appeal the decision by writing to the ABOG Executive Director. Such appeals will be forwarded to the appropriate ABOG Committee for reconsideration. If the appeal is successful, no late fees incurred during the appeal process will apply. If the successful decision occurs after the date of the Certifying Examination, the candidate will be scheduled for the next available Certifying Examination in the subspecialty and no additional application fee will apply. However, the examination fee must be paid before the deadline.

If the candidate's appeal is not successful, or the candidate does not appeal the inadmissibility decision, the candidate may reapply by submitting a new application, paying the application fee and meeting the requirements applicable at the time of the re-application. Documentation that the cause for the initial disapproval has been cleared must be submitted with the application.

Re-Application

A candidate who fails the Certifying Examination must complete a new on-line application and pay a new application fee. Following notification of approval to retake the Certifying Examination, the candidate must submit a new case list, thesis (either the same or new) and pay the examination fee on or before the established deadlines.

Limitations

The duration of Active Candidate status is limited.

1. Certification must be achieved within 8 years of the completion of the subspecialty training.
2. The subspecialty Qualifying Examination must be repeated and passed by the candidate if the Certifying Examination is failed 3 consecutive times.

Case Lists

Preparation of the Case Lists

The candidate must:

1. Submit the case list electronically by the published deadline.
2. Submit the summary sheet by the published deadline. The summary sheets should reflect the combined totals from all health care sites.
3. Use the electronic forms that can be found on their personal ABOG web page. The use of any other form or format is not allowed. A paper case list is not acceptable.
4. Collect cases between January 1, and December 31, 2017. If enough cases cannot be collected in a one year period of time, the collection of cases can be extended to 2 years. However, if a 2 year case list is used, it may not include cases collected during fellowship.
5. Not include any case previously used on a prior case list for a basic or subspecialty Certifying Examination.
6. Have the case list certified by the appropriate personnel of the institution(s) in which the care was given.
7. De-identify the case list in accordance with the requirements of Section 164.514(a)(b) and (b)(2)(i)&(ii) of the Final Privacy Rule. (See Appendix D.)

8. Use standard English language nomenclature. Common abbreviations are acceptable. There is no list of acceptable abbreviations.

9. **List the patient only once.** If the patient is admitted or seen more than once you should provide information regarding the additional encounters in the appropriate boxes.

For physicians who are in group practice where responsibility for patients is shared, the decision whether to list a particular patient should be based on which physician had primary responsibility for the inpatient care. However, when asked to perform a consult on an inpatient on another physician's service, that patient may be listed.

The case lists must include sufficient numbers as well sufficient breadth and depth of clinical difficulty to demonstrate that the candidate is practicing the full spectrum of FPMRS.

All submitted case lists are subject to audit by the ABOG to ensure completeness and accuracy.

Case List Content

Two types of case must be submitted: (1) surgical cases, and (2) office practice cases. No patient may be listed more than once, and no patient may be included on both case lists. That is, patients who are evaluated in the office and subsequently have surgery should only be listed on the surgical case list. Patients that are admitted multiple times or have multiple surgeries may only be listed once.

Surgical Case List

The surgical case list must include ALL surgical patients from ALL sites for which the candidate had primary responsibility during the case collection period. It **MUST** include a minimum of 50 FPMRS surgical cases. The surgical list must contain a minimum of 25 prolapse cases and a minimum of 25 urinary incontinence cases. No patient can be listed more than once on the surgical case list.

Office Practice Case List

You must submit 40 patients—no more, no fewer—who received non-surgical, office management. A patient may be listed only once. Do **NOT** include any patients who are on the surgical case list. At least 1, but no more than 10 patients must be listed in each of the following 5 categories:

1. Pelvic Organ Prolapse
2. Urinary Incontinence

3. Urinary Tract Symptoms: Urgency, Frequency, Nocturia, Voiding Dysfunction
Urinary Retention, Sensory Disorders
4. Urinary Tract Disorders: Fistulae, Diverticula, Infections
5. Pelvic Floor Disorders: Defecation Disorders, Fecal Incontinence, Anorectal Disorders, Rectovaginal Fistulae, Sexual Dysfunction, Vaginal Pain

Certifying Examination Appeals

If, at the completion of the Certifying Examination, a candidate believes the examination has not been conducted in a fair and unprejudiced manner, a second examination may be requested. The request must be made within one hour of the completion of the Certifying Examination. To do so, a candidate must telephone the Board office (214-871-1619).

If the request is granted:

1. the results of the appealed examination, regardless whether pass or fail, will be discarded;
2. a second examination will be provided approximately one year later at the next regularly scheduled annual Certifying Examinations at no additional charge;
3. the candidate must prepare a new case list in accordance with the requirements listed in the *Bulletin* for the year in which the appeal test occurs;
4. the repeat examination will be conducted by a different team of examiners, who will not be informed that this examination is being conducted as a result of an appeal;
5. neither the questions nor the candidate's answers on the first examination will be known to or taken into account by the second group of examiners; and,
6. the decision of the examiners conducting the second examination will be used by the Board to record the results of the candidates Certifying Examination.

Appeals based on the composition of the Certifying Examination team will not be considered if the candidate was informed before the Certifying Examination of the identity of each member of the team and did not object to the participation of any member in time for an acceptable substitute to be provided.

Appeals based on the content of the examination, the sufficiency or accuracy of the answers given, or the final grade will not be considered.

Length of Certification

All certificates issued by ABOG after 2008 are time-limited. The certification of a Diplomate who successfully passes the FPMRS Certifying Examination in April 2018 will expire on December 31, 2019 unless all of the 2019 MOC assignments have been successfully completed. Applications for the 2019 MOC process will be available on-line beginning in January 2019.

Appendices

Appendix A: Division of Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery

Linda Brubaker, MD Director	University of California, San Diego	Division
Marlene Corton, MD	University of Texas, Southwestern	
Charles Nager, MD	University of California, San Diego	
Karen Noblett, MD	University of California, Riverside	
Rebecca Rogers, MD	Dell Medical School	
Paul Tulikangas, MD	University of Connecticut	

Appendix B: Candidate Disability

The American Board of Obstetrics & Gynecology, Inc. (ABOG or Board) provides reasonable accommodations in accordance with The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) as amended by the ADA Amendments Act of 2013 (ADAAA) (collectively the ADA) and, therefore, will provide or allow the use of necessary auxiliary aids, services or testing conditions that do not fundamentally alter the measurement of the skills or knowledge the Board assessment program and examination is intended to test. Candidates must indicate through the examination application if special testing accommodations under the ADA are needed. Accommodations will only be considered with appropriate documentation. In order to implement this policy, notification of the need for special testing circumstances must be submitted in writing to the ABOG by a candidate at least 90 days prior to the time that the candidate submits the application for the Board's examination. This deadline is necessary in order to allow the Board to request the required documentation, to review the records and to verify the disability, if necessary.

The ADA defines a person with a disability as someone with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities such as walking, standing, seeing, hearing, eating, sleeping, speaking, breathing, learning, reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating or working.

The purpose of accommodations is to provide equal access to ABOG examinations for all individuals. Accommodations offset the identified functional limitation so that the impact of impairment is minimized by means of an auxiliary aid or an adjustment to the testing procedure. Functional limitation refers to the aspects of a disability that interfere with an individual's ability to function in some capacity on a regular and continuing basis.

The purpose of documentation is to validate that an applicant for test accommodations is a disabled individual as defined by the ADA and to provide guidance in determining effective accommodations. Comprehensive information by a qualified professional is necessary to allow the ABOG to understand the nature and extent of the applicant's disability and the resulting functional impairment that limits access to its examinations. It is essential that an applicant's documentation provide a clear explanation of the functional impairment and a rationale for the requested accommodation.

No candidate shall be offered an accommodation that would compromise the ABOG's examination's ability to test accurately the skills and knowledge it purports to measure and no auxiliary aid or service will be provided which will fundamentally alter the examination or will result in an undue burden to ABOG.

ABOG shall not exclude any candidate from the Qualifying Examination solely because of a disability if the ABOG is provided with notice of the disability in time to permit the ABOG to make such adjustments in the examination as are reasonably necessary to accommodate the disability. The candidate must provide sufficient documentation to permit the ABOG to verify the existence, nature, and extent of the disability no fewer than 90 days prior to the date of the examination. The documentation must specify the requirements or accommodations determined to be necessary to overcome or compensate for the disability. In addition, the candidate must supply any additional information the ABOG may subsequently request in a timely manner.

If any of the requirements cannot reasonably be provided, ABOG will notify the candidate and will indicate those alternative accommodations that the ABOG determines to be appropriate in consideration of the disability claimed and documented, and the integrity of the examination. If the candidate fails to notify ABOG of a disability 90 days before the examination and fails to achieve a passing grade, that candidate may not appeal the results of the examination, but shall be entitled to sit for the next regularly scheduled written examination, but must pay a new application and examination fee.

If a candidate claims that their examination results were adversely affected by illness, injury or other temporary physical impairment at the time of the examination, that candidate may not appeal the results of the examination. However, if the candidate provides sufficient evidence of such illness, injury or impairment, they shall be entitled to sit for the next regularly scheduled written examination, but must pay a new application and examination fee.

Appendix C: Thesis

A thesis is required by the Division of FPMRS and must be submitted by the date listed in this Bulletin and according to the guidelines for preparation listed below. The FPMRS Division will review the thesis and make an independent decision concerning acceptability. Prior publication or acceptance of a thesis for publication by a refereed journal does not guarantee acceptance of the thesis for the Certifying Examination. It is not necessary for the thesis to have been published.

One copy of the completed thesis Affidavit Form must be submitted with 4 copies of the thesis.

Preparation

1. **Format:** The format of the thesis must comply with the instructions for authors for a peer-reviewed journal in a field related to FPMRS except as noted below. The name of the journal must be identified clearly on the cover page of the manuscript. Theses that are not in the proper journal format will be rejected.

The cover page of the thesis should only show the thesis title, the name of the candidate and the journal format.

The thesis must be type-written in 12 point type, single-spaced, and double-sided on standard 8 1/2 x 11 paper.

Reprints of published manuscripts are not acceptable.

Some journals require a "Summary" in addition to the "Discussion" section.

2. **Hypothesis:** The thesis must clearly state the hypothesis to be tested. It is not sufficient to say "The objective of this study was to..." Whenever possible, the hypothesis should include a statement such as, "Our hypothesis is that XXX is statistically significantly different from YYY." Conversely, the null hypothesis may be stated. The hypothesis must appear in the body of the thesis.

3. **De-Identification and Authorship:** The candidate must remove all wording in all areas of the thesis that would allow an examiner to be able to identify the institution where the study was performed.

The cover page should only list the title of the thesis, the candidate's name (no co-authors) and the journal format.

4. **Subject Matter:** The subject matter should clearly relate to the area of FPMRS.

5. **Research** The thesis must be based on clinical or basic research performed during the fellowship period. A review of work performed by others is not acceptable.

6. **IRB Approval:** All research involving humans and animals must be reviewed and approved by the human or animal institutional review boards (IRBs) of the sponsoring institution. If the research is considered to be exempt from IRB approval, a statement from the IRB to that effect must be included with the thesis.

7. **Unacceptable Papers:** The following are NOT acceptable for a Fellow's thesis:

- a. book chapters
- b. case reports
- c. case series

8. **Potentially Acceptable Papers:** Whenever possible, it is suggested that the submitted thesis be the result of work performed by the candidate in a laboratory setting. The study must have a clearly designated hypothesis to be tested. The hypothesis must be stated in the form of a null hypothesis to be refuted or not.

In addition to laboratory studies, the following are potentially acceptable study types, but **must represent a substantial research effort** consistent with the time spent on research rotations. Reports of the results of treatment of patients from a practice or department are not acceptable as these are considered to be case series.

- a. **Randomized Controlled Trial:** The report must represent subject matter that is of significant importance to the field, and must adhere to the CONSORT guidelines.
- b. **Meta-analysis and Systemic Review:** The report must represent subject matter that is of significant importance to the field, and must adhere to the PRISMA or MOOSE guidelines.
- c. **Cost-effective analysis:** The study must represent subject matter that is of significant importance to the field, and must conform with the principles set forth in the "WHO guide to Cost-Effective Analysis."
- d. **Case-control study:** If there is a well-defined objective with a specific hypothesis to be tested, and if the subject matter is of significant importance to the field, the thesis will be reviewed by the subspecialty division for possible acceptance. The submitted thesis must conform to the STROBE guidelines for observational studies.
- e. **Cohort study:** The subspecialty division will review the thesis for possible acceptability if (a) the candidate developed the cohort [i.e., data-mining of established datasets is rarely acceptable], (b) there is a well-defined hypothesis to be tested, and (c) the subject matter is of significant importance to the field. The submitted thesis must conform to the STROBE guidelines for observational studies.
- f. **Survey-collected data:** The subspecialty division will review the thesis for possible acceptability if (a) the candidate developed the questionnaire or used a previously validated questionnaire, (b) the subject matter is of significant importance to the field, (c) there is a well-defined hypothesis to be tested, (d) the

recipients of the questionnaire are selected to avoid bias, and (e) there is at least 50% return and completion of the questionnaire. The submitted thesis must conform to the STROBE guidelines for observational studies.

9. **Thesis Defense:** During the Certifying Examination, the candidate may be asked one or all of the following questions. Additional questions may be asked which are not listed in this outline.

a. Hypothesis

- 1) What were the study objectives?
- 2) What was the population studied?
- 3) What was the population to which the investigators intended to apply their findings?

b. Design of the investigation

- 1) Was the study an experiment, case control study, randomized clinical trial, planned observations, or a retrospective analysis of records?
- 2) Were there possible sources of sample selection bias?
- 3) How comparable was the control group?
- 4) What was the statistical power of the study?
- 5) Was the design of the study appropriate for the hypothesis to be tested?

c. Observations

- 1) Were there clear definitions of the terms used (i.e., diagnostic criteria, inclusion criteria, measurements made and outcome variables)?
- 2) Were the observations reliable and reproducible?
- 3) What were the sensitivity, specificity and predictive values of the methods?

d. Presentation of findings

- 1) Were the findings presented clearly, objectively, and in sufficient detail?
- 2) Were the findings internally consistent (i.e., did the numbers add up properly and could the different tables be reconciled, etc.)?

e. Analysis of the results

- 1) Were the data worthy of statistical analysis? If so, were the methods of analysis appropriate to the source and nature of the data?
- 2) Were the analyses correctly performed and interpreted?
- 3) Were there analyses sufficient to ascertain whether "significant differences" might, in fact, have been due to a lack of comparability of the groups (e.g., age, clinical characteristics, or other relevant variables)?
- 4) Were the statistical analytic techniques, and the significance level described?
- 5) Was there use of measured sensitivity without specificity?

f. Conclusions or summary

- 1) Which conclusions were justified by the findings?
- 2) Were the conclusions relevant to the hypothesis?

g. Redesign of the study

If the study could be repeated, how could the experimental design be revised to provide better reliability and validity of the conclusions?

h. Knowledge of the breadth and depth of subject matter

A candidate may be asked about specific references cited in the thesis. The candidate will be judged on their knowledge of the literature related to the subject of the thesis.

Appendix D: De-Identification of Case Lists

General

Pursuant to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), the Secretary of the DHHS issued a Final Privacy Rule (HIPAA Privacy Rule) governing the terms and conditions by which health care providers can make available individually identifiable health information. The HIPAA Privacy Rule permits the release of patient information if the information does not permit the patient to be individually identified. Therefore, candidates must exclude from the case lists submitted to the Board such information as could permit the identification of an individual patient.

The HIPAA Privacy Rule specifically enumerates the categories of information which must be removed from patient case lists in order for such case lists to be de-identified and thereby become available for submission to the Board.

Section 164.514(b) provides that a physician/candidate may determine that health information is not individually identifiable health information only if the following identifiers are removed:

- a. Names
- b. Geographic subdivisions smaller than a State
- c. Birth date, admission date, discharge date, date of death; and all ages over 89 except that such ages and elements may be aggregated into a single category of age 90 or older
- d. Telephone numbers, fax numbers, email addresses, social security numbers, medical record numbers, health plan beneficiary numbers, account numbers, certificate and/or license numbers
- e. Biometric identifiers, including finger and voice prints
- f. Full face photographic images and any comparable images
- g. Any other unique identifying number, characteristic, or codes.

The de-identification of patient case lists does not allow the omission of any cases involving patients under the candidate's care which are otherwise required to be reported. Any effort to use the HIPAA rule to avoid listing patients will disqualify the candidate from the examination and additional disciplinary action as appropriate. The completeness of the candidate's case list is subject to audit by the Board.