

**2021 Bulletin for  
Subspecialty Certification  
in  
*Maternal-Fetal Medicine***



**Due to COVID-19, modifications have been made  
to the information contained in this bulletin.**

**This Bulletin, issued in January 2020, represents the official statement of the requirements for subspecialty certification in Maternal-Fetal Medicine (MFM) for the 2021 examinations.**

Revised September 1, 2020

## GENDER LANGUAGE DISCLAIMER

In its literature, publications, and other materials (digital and print), ABOG makes use of the word “woman” (and the pronouns “she” and “her”) to describe patients or individuals whose sex assigned at birth was female, whether they identify as female or male, as well as non-binary individuals who identify as both genders or neither gender. As gender language continues to evolve in the scientific and medical communities, ABOG will periodically reassess this usage and will make appropriate adjustments as necessary.

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR ALL CANDIDATES

The American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology understands that during the COVID-19 pandemic it may be difficult for candidates to complete the tasks related to the application process for the 2021 Subspecialty Certifying Examination. ABOG’s goal is to partner with candidates during these difficult times so that candidates who desire to take the examination will be able to complete the application and requirements. With this in mind, ABOG has made the following changes to the application and case list process for the 2021 MFM Subspecialty Certifying Examination:

1. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, ABOG has eliminated all late fees associated with the Subspecialty Certifying Examination and moved the final application date from June 30 to July 31, 2020.
2. Candidates who encounter difficulty having the Verification of Hospital Privileges Form signed due to the COVID-19 pandemic should contact the ABOG Exam Department at [Exams@abog.org](mailto:Exams@abog.org).
3. Candidates who sign up to take the examination and pay the fees but are unable to take the exam due to COVID-19 should contact the ABOG Exam Department at [Exams@abog.org](mailto:Exams@abog.org). They can either have their exam fees applied to the 2022 Subspecialty CE or receive a refund.
4. Due to COVID-19, ABOG is increasing the allowed time away from practice during the case collection period from 12 to 24 weeks. If a candidate takes more than 24 weeks of leave due to COVID-19 they should contact ABOG at [Exams@abog.org](mailto:Exams@abog.org).
5. Candidates who are unable to meet the case list requirements as outlined in this bulletin due to the COVID-19 pandemic should contact the ABOG Exam Department at [Exams@abog.org](mailto:Exams@abog.org).

The following important information is not related to COVID-19 and applies to the QE or CE or both.

1. Beginning in calendar year 2020, all physicians who have completed an ABOG or ACGME fellowship in Maternal-Fetal Medicine must achieve ABOG subspecialty certification within 8 years of completion of their training. If certification is not achieved within 8 years, the physician will no longer be eligible to apply for either the Qualifying or Certifying Subspecialty Examination unless an additional 6 months of subspecialty supervised practice is completed. Physicians who have completed subspecialty training in calendar year 2013 must be subspecialty certified by 2021 or will be required to complete an additional 6 months of supervised practice before regaining eligibility to apply for certification.

2. The submission process for the thesis and thesis affidavit for the Certifying Examination has changed. Candidates will no longer submit paper copies. All theses will be submitted in PDF format and uploaded in the candidate's ABOG Portal.
3. Starting with Academic Year 2021 graduates, ABOG will be implementing important changes to the Maternal-Fetal Medicine certification standards. See the 2021 Qualifying Examination Requirements section for further details.
4. Fellows may take up to 12 weeks off each of the fellowship years. The total time off may not exceed 20 weeks over the three years. Please see the ABOG Fellowship Leave Policy at <https://www.abog.org/about-abog/policies/fellowship-leave-policy> for details.
5. All fees must be paid by credit card through the ABOG website ([www.abog.org](http://www.abog.org)) and are payable in US Dollars only.
6. Subspecialty certification is time limited. Each subspecialty Diplomate must enter the subspecialty Maintenance of Certification (MOC) program in January following successful certification and must also successfully complete each year's MOC assignments to maintain certification.
7. Candidates should be familiar with the material in the "Policies" section found under "About ABOG" on the ABOG website.
8. The process of certification in Maternal-Fetal Medicine (MFM) is voluntary. ABOG will not contact potential candidates. Each potential candidate for subspecialty certification is responsible for completing the application online at [www.abog.org](http://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. Candidates must meet the requirements published in the MFM Subspecialty Bulletin for the year in which they are to take an examination.

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## THE DIVISION OF MATERNAL-FETAL MEDICINE (MFM)

The members of the Division of Maternal-Fetal Medicine are listed in [Appendix A](#).

### QUALIFYING (WRITTEN) EXAMINATION

#### 2021 Qualifying Examination Application Process

1. Applications will be accepted online at [www.abog.org](http://www.abog.org) beginning September 17, 2020. Late fees will apply for applications received after October 19, 2020. The final day applications will be accepted is December 18, 2020.
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.
3. The applicant must supply ABOG with an email address as part of the application process and notify ABOG of any change in this email 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 from ABOG is received, the candidate must 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 31, 2021, the ABOG reserved seats held 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 no later than the close of the application period. (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 December 18, 2020, and schedule at a Pearson VUE Testing Center by the same date. Pearson VUE Centers have limited lactation facilities which are scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis. **If a candidate requests extra time for lactation, they will have to schedule their testing site through the Pearson VUE accommodations department after contacting ABOG. If no seat is available at the closest center, and they have requested extra time, they will have to travel to an available location to sit for the examination.** (See [Appendix C](#) for more information on lactation accommodations.)
8. The Qualifying Examination will be given on June 25, 2021.

## 2021 Qualifying Examination Deadlines and Fees

The following table lists the deadlines and fees for the Qualifying Examination. Deadlines cannot be extended. All applications and fees must be submitted prior to midnight Central time on their due date. The system will prevent submission once the deadline has passed. If you fail to submit by the deadline, please email the Exam Department at [Exams@abog.org](mailto:Exams@abog.org).

After approval, if the candidate experiences an event that prevents sitting for the examination, the Board should be notified immediately. If the request to withdraw is made prior to March 16, 2021, 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. However, the application fee is not refundable. The candidate may request to have the fees moved over towards the Qualifying Examination the following year. If there is a change in the fee, the candidate will be responsible for the difference.

### Qualifying Examination: Deadlines

September 17, 2020	Applications available online
October 19, 2020	Last day to apply without late fee penalty
December 18, 2020	Final deadline
September 2020 to February 2021	Candidates will be notified of approval to take the examination and to make a Pearson VUE Testing Center reservation
March 31, 2021	Last day to reserve seat at Pearson VUE prior to seat block release
June 25, 2021	Qualifying Examination at testing centers

### Qualifying Examination: Fees

September 17, 2020 to October 19, 2020	\$1945
October 20, 2020 to November 20, 2020	\$1945 + \$320 late fee = \$2265
November 21, 2020 to December 18, 2020	\$1945 + \$815 late fee = \$2760

## 2021 Qualifying Examination Requirements

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

1. **Specialty Qualifying Examination** A candidate may not apply for the MFM Qualifying Examination unless they have previously passed the Specialty Qualifying Examination for Certification in Obstetrics and Gynecology.
2. **Length of Training** The candidate must have been registered with ABOG and have completed a minimum of 32 of 36 months of training and will have completed training in an ACGME-accredited fellowship program in Maternal-Fetal Medicine no later than September 30 of the same year the Qualifying Examination is taken. Additionally, the candidate must have completed and presented their thesis to their Program Director and division before the completion of their fellowship. If a candidate's situation changes, and they do not successfully complete their fellowship and their thesis presentation by September 30, they will not be eligible to take the Qualifying Examination in that year. Any candidate who takes the Qualifying Exam without successfully completing fellowship and completing and presenting their thesis by September 30 of the year of the examination will have their results voided and they will not receive a refund.
3. **Allocation of Time** In order to take the Qualifying Examination the candidate must have had the following experiences during fellowship:
  - A. 18 months of MFM Core Clinical Experience, including at least:
    - i. 3 months of ultrasonography
    - ii. 2 months of outpatient Maternal-Fetal Medicine
    - iii. 2 months of Genetics and Genomics
      - a. Ultrasonography, Genetics and Genomics, and outpatient requirements can be fulfilled by block time (e.g., one-month blocks) or by the cumulative experience of shorter experiences (e.g., half- or full-day clinics over time)
    - iv. 2 months in a supervisory position on a Labor and Delivery unit
      - a. Minimum block is 2 weeks
      - b. Night and weekend call performed throughout the fellowship does not apply towards this time requirement
    - v. 1 month in a medical or surgical intensive care unit
      - a. Must participate in patient care
      - b. No MFM or OB GYN duties including night and weekend call
  - B. 12 months of protected research in one-month blocks
    - i. Conduct research leading to a thesis meeting ABOG certification requirements (Appendix D)
    - ii. Completed written thesis and presented work before MFM Division and Program Director by completion of fellowship
    - iii. 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



C. 6 months of electives

- i. Focused on specific clinical and/or research areas
- ii. Selected at the discretion of the Program Director and Fellow

D. Fellows may participate in non-subspecialty clinical activity or practice up to 10% of a work week (Monday-Friday) or ½ day (4 hours) per work week averaged over a 4-week period during all rotations

- i. These allowances do not apply to moonlighting, weekends or call.
- ii. Fellows may not be assigned to weeks, months or blocks of clinical assignments or rotations to meet this allowance.
- iii. Fellows may not be assigned to night float rotations to meet this allowance.
- iv. Fellows may not aggregate this allowance to complete training early or make up extensions in training for any reason.

4. **Curriculum** The candidate must gain expertise in the comprehensive care of maternal and fetal disorders to include high risk pregnancy, fetal evaluation and intervention, genetics, ultrasound and prenatal diagnosis, pathology and obstetrical anesthesia. Specifically, the candidate must be trained in the following areas:

Maternal-Fetal-Neonatal Physiology

Genetics/Genomics/Tetralogy

Obstetrical Critical Care

Infection Diseases

5. **Leaves of Absence** Leaves of absence and vacation may be granted at the discretion of the Program Director consistent with local institutional policy and applicable laws. The number of days that equals a “week” is a local issue that is determined by the institution and Program Director, not ABOG. Vacation weeks may be taken as part of approved leave or in addition to approved leave.

Yearly leave: The total of vacation and leaves for any reason—including, but not limited to, vacation, medical, maternity or paternal, caregiver or personal leave—may not exceed 12 weeks in any of the years of fellowship. If the maximum weeks of leave per academic year are exceeded, the fellowship must be extended for the duration of time the individual was absent in excess of 12 weeks in any fellowship year.

Total leave: In addition to the yearly leave limits, a fellow must not take a total of more than 20 weeks (five months) of leave over the three years of fellowship.

If this limit is exceeded, the fellowship must be extended for at least the duration of time that the individual was absent in excess of 20 weeks. Such extensions of training must have an educational plan outlined for the continued training with specific educational and clinical experience goals and objectives to be achieved.

Unaccrued personal time may not be used to reduce the actual time spent in a fellowship, nor to “make up” for time lost due to medical or other leave. Time missed for educational conferences does not count toward the leave thresholds.

Regardless of the amount of leave taken, fellows must complete the 18 months of MFM Core Clinical Experience and 12 months of Research as outlined in section 3 above. For more information on leave please review the ABOG Fellowship Leave Policy at <https://www.abog.org/about-abog/policies/fellowship-leave-policy>.

*Examples:*

*A fellow takes six weeks of leave in F1 and F2, and eight weeks in F3. This is a total of 20 weeks. There is no required extension of the fellowship.*

*A fellow takes 12 weeks of leave in F1, four weeks in F2, 12 weeks in F3. This is a total of 28 weeks. The fellowship must be extended by at least eight weeks with an educational plan submitted and approved by ABOG.*

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, even if unrelated to the practice of medicine, 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.
8. **Completion and Presentation of Thesis** The candidate must have completed and presented their thesis to their Program Director and division by the final date of their fellowship. If their fellowship is extended, the candidate will have until the extended final date of their fellowship to complete and present their thesis. A candidate's fellowship that is extended beyond September 30th of the year of the Qualifying Examination is not eligible to take the Qualifying Examination in that year.

## Blueprint for the Qualifying Examination

The content of the Qualifying Examination will be based on the blueprint for Maternal-Fetal Medicine. The major categories and subcategories are shown below including the percentages of the categories. For a full list of topic areas, see [Appendix E](#). The questions will be in a multiple-choice, one best answer format.

Medical Complications of Pregnancy (30%)

Medical Disorders

Critical Care

Obstetric Complications (30%)

Preterm Labor and Preterm Premature Rupture of Membranes (PPROM)

Hypertensive Disorders

Multiple Gestation

Fetal Demise

Procedures Relating to Obstetrical Complications

Obstetric Anesthesia

- Management of Obstetrical Complications
- Fetal Complications and Prenatal Diagnosis (25%)
  - Ultrasound
  - Evaluation, Management, and Diagnosis of Fetal Complications
- Genetics and Genomics (10%)
- Core Competencies and Cross Content (5%)
  - Ethics and Professionalism
  - Patient Safety
  - Interpersonal and Communication Skills
  - Systems-based Practice
  - Practice-based Learning and Improvement
  - Evidence-based Medicine

## Administration 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 Testing Center](#) 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 exam, 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 devices 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 on the candidate's person 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 on how to schedule a test site.

Candidates who are lactating may request a 30-minute break and extension of their examination if they notify the ABOG office no later than December 18, 2020, and schedule at a Pearson VUE Testing Center by the same date. Pearson VUE Centers have limited lactation facilities which are scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis. **If a candidate requests extra time for lactation, they will have to schedule their testing site through the Pearson VUE accommodations department after contacting ABOG. If no seat is available at the closest center, and they have requested extra time, they will have to travel to an available location to sit for the examination.** (See [Appendix C](#) for more information on lactation accommodations.)

## Test Security

At the time of application for the Qualifying Examination, 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 Qualifying Examination for a minimum of three (3) years.
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.
5. I agree that de-identified results of my examination may be used for research purposes by ABOG.
6. I agree that the results of my examination will be given to my Fellowship Program Director.

Additional information about test integrity and security can be found in the “Policies” section under “About ABOG” on the ABOG website.

## Re-Application

A candidate who postpones or fails the Qualifying Examination must complete a new online 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

Associate Executive Director of Examinations. Such appeals will be forwarded to the appropriate ABOG Committee for reconsideration. If the appeal is successful, no late fees 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 portion of the fee (\$870) 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 accredited fellowship in Maternal-Fetal Medicine 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 6 months of supervised practice is completed (see policy on Regaining Eligibility for Subspecialty Certification at [www.abog.org/about-abog/policies/regaining-subspecialty-certification-eligibility](http://www.abog.org/about-abog/policies/regaining-subspecialty-certification-eligibility)).

This means that physicians who have completed subspecialty training in calendar year 2013 must be subspecialty certified by 2021 or will be required to complete 6 months of supervised practice before regaining eligibility to apply for certification.

If a physician fails to achieve subspecialty certification within 8 years of completion of an accredited Maternal-Fetal Medicine fellowship program and successfully completes an additional 6 months of supervised practice, they must achieve subspecialty certification within 4 years of the completion of the additional supervised practice. If a physician is unable to achieve certification within 4 years, they must complete a full three-year ACGME-approved fellowship in Maternal-Fetal Medicine in order to be eligible for certification.

## **Results of the Examination**

The results of the Qualifying Examination will be reported online to each candidate by September 15, 2021.

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. During the application process the applicant will be given the option to release their score to their program director in addition to the pass/fail information.

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 Examination.

## **CERTIFYING (ORAL) EXAMINATION**

### **2021 Certifying Examination Application Process**

1. Applications will be accepted online at [www.abog.org](http://www.abog.org) beginning May 1, 2020. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there will not be any late fees for the 2021 Subspecialty CE application process.
2. Because ABOG understands that applying for the Subspecialty CE may be difficult, the final day applications will be accepted has been extended from June 30 to July 31, 2020.
3. The application fee must be paid by credit card through the ABOG website at the time of application.
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 completed Verification of Hospital Privileges Form will be required. This form can be printed from the candidate's ABOG Portal and must be signed and either emailed to ABOG at [Exams@abog.org](mailto:Exams@abog.org) or faxed to the ABOG office. If a candidate is unable to obtain a completed Verification of Hospital Privileges Form due to the COVID-19 pandemic they should contact the ABOG Exam Department at [Exams@abog.org](mailto:Exams@abog.org).
6. Following submission of the online 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.
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 lists will not be accepted unless the examination fee is paid in full by credit card on the ABOG website by the deadline.
8. If full payment of the examination fee has not been received by September 30, 2020, for the 2021 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 Examination Date Notification posted on the candidate's ABOG Portal at least one month prior to the date of the examination. This form will indicate the date of the candidate's examination, the time and place to report, and hotel information.
10. Candidates may begin case list collection by logging in to their ABOG Portal and clicking on the Case List Entry button under the Certifying Examination box. The Case List Entry should be available by February 1, 2020.
11. Each year the ABOG notifies the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine (SMFM), the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS), the American Medical Association (AMA) and the American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology of the names and addresses of the Diplomates who have been certified in the course of that year. 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, SMFM, ACOG, AMA 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 may use the results of certification examinations for research purposes and may publish the results of the research.

12. As a condition for acceptance as a candidate for certification as a Diplomate in the MFM subspecialty, 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.

13. The Certifying Examination will be given on April 12-15, 2021.

## 2021 Certifying Examination Deadlines and Fees

The following table lists the deadlines and fees for the Certifying Examination. Deadlines cannot be extended. Case lists, thesis and all fees must be submitted prior to midnight Central time on their due date. The system will prevent submission once the deadline has passed. If you fail to submit by the deadline, please email the Exam Department at [Exams@abog.org](mailto:Exams@abog.org).

### Certifying Examination: Deadlines

May 1, 2020	Applications available online
July 31, 2020	No applications accepted after this date
September 2020	Candidates will be notified to submit case lists, thesis and a photograph and to pay the examination fee
September 30, 2020	Last day for receipt of thesis, photograph, and examination fee
February 1, 2021	Last day for receipt of case lists
April 12-15, 2021	Certifying Exam

### Certifying Examination: Application Fees

May 1, 2020 to July 31, 2020	\$1080
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### Certifying Examination: Examination Fees

September 30, 2020	\$1210
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### Application Deadline and Fee

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the final deadline to complete the online application and pay the applicable fee has been extended from June 30 to July 31, 2020. If the candidate feels that they are unable to take the Subspecialty Certifying Examination due to COVID-19, they should

contact the ABOG Exam Department at [Exams@abog.org](mailto:Exams@abog.org). The application fee will either be applied to the 2022 Subspecialty Certifying Examination or refunded to the candidate based on the request. The candidate's eligibility for certification will be extended by one year.

### Examination Deadline and Fee

If the candidate's application is accepted, a notice of acceptance will be emailed to the candidate in September 2020. The email will explain the process of submitting the thesis and case lists. The examination fee must be paid on or before September 30, 2020. If the candidate must withdraw from the examination due to a medical or other documented emergency, a portion of the examination fee may be refunded. The candidate may request to have the entire fee applied towards the Certifying Examination the following year. If the candidate is unable to take the exam due to COVID-19 the fees may be applied to the 2022 Subspecialty CE or refunded depending on the candidate's request. The candidate's eligibility for certification will be extended by one year.

### Thesis Deadline

The final deadline for uploading a PDF copy of the thesis in the candidate's ABOG Portal is September 30, 2020. The file should be saved as a PDF with the following naming convention: ABOG ID #-last name-MFM-thesis. The 2021 Thesis Affidavit Form should be saved as a PDF with the following naming convention: ABOG ID #-last name-MFM-TA. Both items should be uploaded on the candidate's ABOG Portal under the assigned certification tasks. Candidates must submit a thesis that adheres to the requirements listed in [Appendix D](#).

Candidates who have previously submitted a thesis and were unsuccessful in passing the examination must upload a PDF copy of the thesis using the naming convention above. Candidates may submit a previously submitted thesis or another work that was completed during fellowship. However, thesis requirements change frequently. The thesis must fulfill the requirements for the year of the exam. Prior acceptance of a thesis does not assure re-acceptance. The thesis affidavit for a previously submitted thesis does not need to be resubmitted.

### Case List Deadline

The final deadline for receipt of the case lists is February 1, 2021. Case lists must be submitted electronically using the forms available on each candidate's ABOG Portal. Candidates must submit the case lists in the proper format and include the appropriate number of cases.

## 2021 Certifying Examination Requirements

Each candidate must meet the following requirements:

1. **Must be a Diplomate** of the ABOG and hold an Active Certificate in Obstetrics and Gynecology.
2. **Must have passed** the Maternal-Fetal Medicine Qualifying Examination on their most recent attempt. The one exception to this rule is that candidates who will lose their certification eligibility in 2021 may apply for the Certifying Examination prior to the release of the Qualifying Examination results.



3. **Have successfully completed** 36 months of training in an ABOG- or ACGME-accredited Maternal-Fetal Medicine fellowship program.
4. **Hold an unrestricted license to practice medicine** in all states or territories of the United States or Canada in which the candidate holds a medical license. Licenses that have been revoked, suspended or are on probation, or are subject to conditions of any type are considered to be restricted.
5. **Have privileges at one or more acute care hospitals by January 1, 2020.** While full, unrestricted privileges to perform all MFM procedures are preferred, at a minimum, these privileges must allow the candidate to perform an in-hospital consultation on patients who have been admitted. The candidate's privileges must remain in effect at the time of the Certifying Examination and may not be suspended or revoked, and the candidate must not be under investigation for patient care issues.
6. **Be of good moral and ethical character** and have 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.
7. **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.
8. **Have had an independent practice as a subspecialist** in MFM in a center or centers providing or having ready access to the essential diagnostic and therapeutic facilities for the practice of MFM from January 1, 2020, and to retain such practice until the date of the candidate's examination. During the year of practice from January 1 through December 31, 2020, no more than 24 weeks of leave is allowed for any reason (this includes medical leave, maternity leave, vacation, not starting practice by January 1, etc.) Educational conferences do not count toward the 24 weeks of leave. Practice may include locum tenens work; however, if a candidate is only performing locum tenens work, they must contact the board before applying.
9. **Submit electronic case lists** that document a practice that demonstrates sufficient depth and breadth of practice in the subspecialty of Maternal-Fetal Medicine to permit the evaluation of the candidate's ability to function in the subspecialty. The case lists must be appropriately de-identified. (See [Appendix F](#).)
10. **Submit a thesis** that meets the minimal standards of the Division of Maternal-Fetal Medicine. Each submitted thesis will be reviewed for acceptability. Prior publication in a peer-reviewed journal does not guarantee acceptance. (See [Appendix D](#) for information about thesis content.)
11. **Have not failed to disclose 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.

12. A candidate who practices outside of the United States, its territories or Canada, must submit, with the application, a letter(s) from a senior responsible officer in the hospital(s) where the candidate practices, verifying the candidate's responsibility for independent, unsupervised care of patients.

## **Blueprint for the Certifying Examination**

The content of the Certifying Examination will be based on the blueprint for Maternal-Fetal Medicine. The major categories and subcategories are shown below including the percentages of the categories. For a full list of topic areas, see [Appendix E](#).

### Medical Complications of Pregnancy (30%)

- Medical Disorders

- Critical Care

### Obstetric Complications (30%)

- Preterm Labor and Preterm Premature Rupture of Membranes (PPROM)

- Hypertensive Disorders

- Multiple Gestation

- Fetal Demise

- Procedures Relating to Obstetrical Complications

- Obstetric Anesthesia

- Management of Obstetrical Complications

### Fetal Complications and Prenatal Diagnosis (20%)

- Ultrasound

- Evaluation, Management, and Diagnosis of Fetal Complications

### Genetics and Genomics (10%)

### Core Competencies and Cross Content (10%)

- Ethics and Professionalism

- Patient Safety

- Interpersonal and Communication Skills

- Systems-based Practice

- Practice-based Learning and Improvement

- Evidence-based Medicine

In the Certifying Examination, evaluation of the candidate will include critical review and discussion of the thesis, questions related to principles of biostatistics, clinical trial and/or basic science study design, and hypothetical cases. It will also include review of the submitted case lists, discussion of structured cases, and surgical techniques. It may include interpretation of operative, radiologic and computer-generated images and videos, and simulations (radiologic studies, intraoperative photographs, etc.) The candidate should demonstrate the capability of

managing complex problems relating to Maternal-Fetal Medicine. The candidate should have the scientific methodologic training to advance knowledge in this subspecialty and to be able to interpret and evaluate new concepts and their supporting data.

## Administration of the Certifying Examination

The candidates for the 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 may not be allowed to sit for the examination. Following registration, the candidates will be taken to the ABOG testing center where an orientation will be provided. After the orientation, the candidates will be escorted to the testing floor. Each candidate will be assigned an examination room and will remain in that room for the three hours of the examination. The candidate will be informed of the names of the six examiners who will conduct their examination. If the candidate believes that one or more examiners would be unable to provide them with a fair test, an alternate examiner will be provided.

The Certifying Examination is three hours in length equally divided into the following areas:

- Thesis examination and Medical Complications of Pregnancy Case List
- Genetics, Ultrasound and Prenatal Diagnosis Structured Cases and Genetics/Fetal Disorders/Fetal Anomalies Case List
- MFM Structured Cases and Obstetrical and Surgical Complications Case List

Communication, ethics and patient safety questions may be included in each of the three major areas. Each hour will be divided into two sections of approximately 30 minutes in length. The structured cases are used to elicit the candidate's responses to specific clinical situations. The examination will be conducted in English. A list of the topics that may be covered in the examination can be found in [Appendix E](#).

Candidates may not take any electronic devices into the examination. This includes, but is not limited to, cellular phones and all devices that can record, including smart watches 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.

All theses and completed Thesis Affidavit Forms in PDF format must be uploaded on the candidate's ABOG Portal (see [Thesis Deadline section](#) for submission instructions). The candidate should bring an unmarked paper copy of the thesis to the examination.

Candidates with documented disabilities should review [Appendix B](#), and notification of the need for special testing circumstances must be submitted in writing to the ABOG by a candidate at the time of application. 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.

Candidates who will be lactating at the time of the examination should notify ABOG as soon as possible. They will be scheduled to use one of the lactation rooms on a first come, first served basis. If all the lactation rooms are full, the candidate will be given an alternative location at the ABOG Testing Center. See [Appendix C](#) for additional information on lactation.

All examinations will be conducted in English and will be administered by two examiners per section. Each examiner will grade the candidate on all the topics covered within each section.

The final grade will be determined analytically following the examination and will be released no later than four weeks following the examinations.

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

## **Test Security**

At the time of application for the Certifying Examination, each candidate will be required to agree to the following. No candidate will be allowed to sit for 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 Certifying Examination for a minimum of three years.
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.
5. I agree that de-identified results of my examination may be used for research purposes by ABOG.
6. I agree that the results of my examination will be given to my Fellowship Program Director.

On the day of the Certifying Examination, each candidate must sign the following terms of agreement. If a candidate refuses to sign the agreement, they will not be allowed to take the Certifying Examination.

1. I understand that all of the test materials used in ABOG examinations are copyrighted.
2. I understand that I may not provide any information before, during or after the examination concerning the content of the examination including, but not limited to, test items and cases, to anyone, for any reason, including, but not limited to, anyone who is scheduled to take the examination or may be eligible to take the examination; to any formal or informal test preparation group, service or company; or to any person representing a company or other entity that provides courses, practice tests or other study material for the examination.
3. I understand that I may not reproduce and/or distribute any examination materials, by any means including memorization, recording, internet or other method that would allow any other individual, company or organization to recreate, in whole or in part, any test questions.
4. I agree that during any ABOG examination I will not have in my possession any notes, papers, study materials, formulas, pens, pencils, cellular telephones, photographic equipment, or recording devices. I will not have any type of electronic device that could provide information that could be used to answer questions on the examination. I further

agree that if I am discovered to have any such device in my possession during and/or examination, the test will be immediately halted, and I will not receive a grade for the examination.

5. I agree that if anyone observes any action of mine that may be interpreted as violating or potentially violating test administration rules, the test will be halted immediately, and I will receive no grade for the examination.
6. I understand that if I violate any part of this agreement my test results will be canceled and that I may be subject to further sanctions and/or legal action and I will not be allowed to re-apply for the examination for a minimum of three years.
7. I understand and agree that if the ABOG discovers that I have violated any terms of this agreement after I have been awarded Diplomate status, such status will be revoked.
8. I agree that, if requested, I will fully participate in the investigation of any suspected violation of the contract of agreement with any candidate and ABOG.
9. I attest that since the date of my application and to the day of my examination, I have had no limitation or suspension of hospital privileges, substance abuse offenses, or suspension, revocation or restriction placed on my license to practice medicine in any state or country.
10. I agree the ABOG is authorized to make my name and business address available on request to the public including, but not limited to, hospitals, insurers, agencies of government, specialty societies, lay persons, my Program Director(s) and/or the Accreditation Council of Graduate Medical Education (ACGME).
11. I agree that de-identified results of my examination may be used for research purposes by ABOG.
12. I agree that my results may be released to my program director by name.
13. I understand and irrevocably agree that, if I am certified as a Diplomate of the ABOG, the ABOG is authorized to provide my name and business address for publication in or by the following: Obstetrics & Gynecology, The American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology, The Directory of Medical Specialists, the American Board of Medical Specialties Directory of Certified Obstetricians and Gynecologists, and the Directory of American Medical Association. In addition, my name and business address will be forwarded to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.

Additional information about test integrity and security can be found in the “Policies” section under “About ABOG” on the ABOG website.

## **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 Associate Executive Director of Examinations. Such appeals will be forwarded to the appropriate ABOG Committee for reconsideration. If the appeal is successful, no late fees 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 online application and pay a new application fee. Following notification of approval to retake the Certifying Examination, the candidate must submit new case lists, thesis and pay the examination fee on or before the established deadlines. Candidates may submit a previously submitted thesis or another work that was completed in fellowship.

## Limitations

The duration of Active Candidate status is limited.

Beginning in calendar year 2020, all physicians who have completed an ABOG or ACGME fellowship in Maternal-Fetal Medicine 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 6 months of supervised practice is completed. Physicians who have completed subspecialty training in calendar year 2013 must be subspecialty certified by 2021 or will be required to complete an additional 6 months of supervised practice before regaining eligibility to apply for certification. See policy on Regaining Eligibility for Subspecialty Certification found [here](#).

## Case Lists

### Case List Entry

All information for the case lists for the 2021 MFM Certifying Examination must be entered online. To enter a case, a candidate must access their ABOG Portal and click on "Caselist Entry." The entry process is simple, and common abbreviations are acceptable (see [Appendix G](#)). If a problem is encountered, there is a frequently asked questions (FAQ) button where most questions will be answered. However, if the problem is not resolved, the candidate should call the ABOG Exam Department or email [Exams@abog.org](mailto:Exams@abog.org).

The case list information can be entered through any device with an internet connection, including smartphones, laptops, tablets and desktop computers.

Candidates will be asked to enter patient-identifying information in the Case List Entry System (i.e. Hospital, Patient Initial and Patient ID fields). This patient identification will only be used on the patient lists for verification by hospital medical records staff. The electronic copy of the case list that is submitted to ABOG will be electronically de-identified and will not contain the patient-identifying information. The case description fields in the Case List Entry System should not contain any patient identifying information.

## Case List Submission

The candidate must submit their case list to the ABOG office electronically. The candidate must upload their case list and case list affidavit(s) to the ABOG office using the Case List Entry System located on their ABOG Portal. The Case List Entry System will become available to candidates no later than February 1 on their ABOG Portal. List patients that meet the category requirements as listed in the following [Case Lists Content](#) section that were primarily cared for by the candidate between January 1 and December 31, 2020. During the 12 months of case collection, no more than 24 weeks away from clinical practice is allowed.

Any case list that fails to provide the required information, includes an insufficient number of patients, is inadequately or incompletely prepared, is not appropriately de-identified, or fails to provide sufficient breadth and depth of clinical problems may disqualify the candidate from admission to the Certifying Examination. The candidate is personally responsible for the proper preparation, de-identified accuracy, and completeness of their case list.

The completeness and accuracy of all submitted case lists are subject to audit by the ABOG. All audits will be conducted in accordance with the provisions of the HIPAA Privacy Rule. Permission to conduct on-site audits will be required of each candidate prior to final approval to take the Certifying Examination.

Falsification of information in the case list may result in ineligibility to apply for the Certifying Examination for a minimum of three years. The candidate must then meet all requirements in effect at the end of the deferred period. If the falsification is discovered after the candidate has successfully completed the Certifying Examination, the results of the test will be voided, and the candidate's certification will be revoked.

Candidates who are unable to meet the case list requirements as outlined in this bulletin due to the COVID-19 pandemic should contact the ABOG Exam Department at [Exams@abog.org](mailto:Exams@abog.org).

## Case List Preparation

### The candidate must:

1. Submit the case lists electronically by the published deadline.
2. Use the online Case List Entry that can be found on their ABOG Portal. The use of any other form or format is not allowed. A paper case list is not acceptable.
3. Collect cases between January 1 and December 31, 2020. If enough cases cannot be collected in a one-year period of time, the collection of cases can be extended to 18 months or 2 years. However, it may not include cases collected during fellowship.
4. Not include any case previously used on a prior case list for a Specialty or Subspecialty Certifying Examination.
5. Have the case lists certified by the appropriate personnel of the institution(s) in which the care was given.
6. De-identify the case lists in accordance with the requirements of Section 164.514(a)(b) and (b)(2)(i)&(ii) of the Final Privacy Rule. (See [Appendix F](#).)
7. Use standard English language nomenclature. The list of acceptable abbreviations can be found in [Appendix G](#).
8. **List the patient only once.** If the patient is admitted more than once you should provide information regarding the additional admissions 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 as sufficient breadth and depth of clinical difficulty to demonstrate that the candidate is practicing the full spectrum of MFM.

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

Candidates who are unable to meet the case list requirements as outlined in this bulletin due to the COVID-19 pandemic should contact the ABOG Exam department at [Exams@abog.org](mailto:Exams@abog.org).

## Case Lists Content

### Medical Complications of Pregnancy

A list of 30 patients (no more or fewer) from the candidate's practice with medical complications of pregnancy must be submitted online. Individual patients who presented with any of the following problems should be listed. The required number of patients in each category is listed below. Do not list more than the required number of cases and a patient may be listed only once.

Cardiac, cardiovascular (chronic hypertension) and pulmonary (asthma, pneumonia)	5 cases
Endocrine, including pregestational diabetes mellitus and thyroid disorders	5 cases
Gastrointestinal, including inflammatory bowel disease and gastric bypass surgery	2 cases
Hematologic and oncologic, including hypercoagulable disorders and thrombophilias, hemoglobinopathies and thrombophlebitis	5 cases
Immunological, including autoimmune disorders (collagen vascular disease) and transplants	3 cases
Infectious disease (HIV, pyelonephritis, hepatitis)	5 cases
Neurological and psychiatric, including drug or alcohol abuse	2 cases
Renal disease	3 cases

### Obstetrical and Surgical Complications

A list of 30 patients (no more or fewer) from the candidate's practice with obstetrical and surgical complications must be submitted online. Individual patients who presented with any of the following problems should be listed. The required number of patients in each category is listed below. Do not list more than the required number of cases and a patient may be listed only once.

Multiple gestations and complications including twin-twin transfusion syndrome	5 cases
Placental abnormalities, including previa, abruption and accreta	3 cases
Hypertension, preeclampsia and eclampsia	5 cases



Preterm labor and preterm cervical dilation or shortening	5 cases
Preterm premature rupture of membranes (PPROM)	5 cases
Recurrent pregnancy loss, cervical insufficiency, uterine anomalies, fetal demise	2 cases
Surgical (non-obstetric surgery, burns, trauma)	2 cases
Antepartum and peripartum intensive care, including mechanical ventilation or invasive hemodynamic monitoring, massive hemorrhage, pulmonary edema, acute renal failure, septic shock, anesthesia complications, ARDS	3 cases

### Genetics/Fetal Disorders/Fetal Anomalies

A list of 30 patients (no more or fewer) from the candidate's practice with genetics/fetal disorders/fetal anomalies must be submitted online. Individual patients who presented with any of the following problems should be listed. The required number of patients in each category is listed below. Do not list more than the required number of cases and each patient may be listed only once.

Alloimmunization (Rh, thrombocytopenia), immune and non-immune hydrops	3 cases
Fetal anatomic malformations	8 cases
Fetal chromosomal and genetic abnormalities	8 cases
Fetal growth restriction	8 cases
Fetal infections (CMV, parvovirus, toxoplasmosis)	3 cases

### Certifying Examination Appeals

At the completion of the Certifying Examination, if 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 examination. To do so, a candidate must telephone the Board office (214-871-1619).

If the request is granted:

1. No final grade will be assigned, and all grades will be discarded;
2. A second examination will be provided approximately one year later at the next regularly scheduled annual MFM Certifying Examinations at no additional charge;
3. The candidate must prepare new case lists 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 final results of the candidate's Certifying Examination.

Appeals based on the composition of the Certifying Examination team will not be considered if the candidate was informed before the start of the 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.

## **Results of the Examination**

The results of the Certifying Examination will be reported online to each candidate no later than four weeks following the date of their examination.

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.

## **LENGTH OF CERTIFICATION**

All certificates issued by ABOG after 2008 are time limited. The certification of a Diplomate who successfully passes the Maternal-Fetal Medicine Certifying Examination in April 2021 will expire on December 31, 2022, unless all of the 2022 MOC assignments have been successfully completed. Applications for the 2022 MOC process will be available online beginning in January 2022.

## APPENDIX A: ABOG DIVISION OF MATERNAL-FETAL MEDICINE

Jeanne Sheffield, MD, <b>Division Chair</b>	Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine
Michal Elovitz, MD	Perelman School of Medicine University of Pennsylvania
Jane Hitti, MD	University of Washington School of Medicine
Brenna Hughes, MD	Duke University School of Medicine
Mary Norton, MD	University of California, San Francisco School of Medicine
Alan Tita, MD	University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Medicine

## **APPENDIX B: CANDIDATE DISABILITY**

The American Board of Obstetrics & Gynecology, Inc. (ABOG) 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.

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.

Accommodations for the Qualifying and Certifying Examination will only be considered with appropriate documentation. ABOG shall not exclude any candidate from the Qualifying or Certifying 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.

### **Qualifying Examination**

For the Qualifying Examination, the candidate must provide sufficient documentation no later than the close of the application period to permit the ABOG to verify the existence, nature, and extent of the disability. 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 or accommodations cannot reasonably be provided, ABOG will notify the candidate and will indicate those alternative accommodations which 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 during the application period 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 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 examination but must pay a new application and examination fee.

## **Certifying Examination**

For the Certifying Examination, notification of the need for special testing circumstances must be submitted in writing to the ABOG by a candidate at the time of application. This deadline is necessary in order to allow the ABOG time to request the required documentation, to review the records and to verify the disability, if necessary.

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 provides 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 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.

## **APPENDIX C: LACTATION ACCOMMODATIONS**

### **Qualifying Examination**

Candidates who are lactating may request a 30-minute break and extension of their examination if they notify the ABOG office no later than December 18, 2020, and schedule at a Pearson VUE Testing Center by the same date. Most Pearson VUE Testing Centers have only one room available for breast pumping, so 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. If a candidate requests extra time for lactation, they must schedule their testing site through the Pearson VUE accommodations department after contacting ABOG. If no seat is available at the closest center, and they have requested extra time, they will have to travel to an available location to sit for the examination. As Pearson VUE testing centers have limited lactation facilities, ABOG cannot guarantee that the candidate will be able to schedule at their preferred testing center.

### **Certifying Examination**

Candidates who are lactating will be given an opportunity to use a pump prior to their examination. Please notify the ABOG office as soon as you know you will need the lactation facilities. At the time of notification, a lactation room will be reserved for the candidate. The rooms are booked on a first-come, first-served basis. If all of the lactation rooms are full, the candidate will be given an alternative location at the ABOG Testing Center. Candidates are allowed to bring their own breast pump with them to the testing center.

## APPENDIX D: THESIS

A thesis is required by the Division of Maternal-Fetal Medicine and must be submitted by the date listed in this *Bulletin* and according to the guidelines for preparation listed below. The Division will review the thesis and make a decision concerning acceptability. Prior publication of a thesis 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 2021 Thesis Affidavit Form in PDF format must be uploaded on the candidate's ABOG Portal. Please see the [Thesis Deadline section](#) for further submission instructions.

### Preparation

1. **Format:** The format of the thesis must comply with the instructions for authors for a major peer-reviewed journal in a field related to Maternal-Fetal Medicine 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, the hypothesis, and the name of the journal.

The thesis must be type-written in single-spaced 12-point type.

Electronic copies or 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 and must be in the form of a simple declarative sentence. The hypothesis must be included in the body of the paper, not just in the Abstract. 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 and on the cover page.
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 and any co-authors.

The cover page should only list the title of the thesis, the candidate's name (do not list any co-authors), the hypothesis, and the name of the journal.

Acknowledgements are not allowed.

4. **Subject Matter:** The subject matter must clearly relate to the area of Maternal-Fetal Medicine and be of significant importance to the field.
5. **Research:** The thesis must be based on clinical or laboratory 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 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:
- book chapters
  - case reports
  - case series
  - electronic copy of published thesis
8. **Potentially Acceptable Papers:** Any thesis submitted must be the product of a significantly thoughtful and robust research effort and will be reviewed by the subspecialty division for acceptability. Reports of the results of treatment of patients from a practice or department are not acceptable as these are considered to be a case series. All thesis must have the hypothesis listed on the cover page and in the body of the thesis and be of significant importance to the field of Maternal-Fetal Medicine.
- Laboratory, translational, and animal studies.**
  - Randomized Controlled Trial:** The study must adhere to the CONSORT guidelines.
  - Meta-Analysis and Systemic Review:** The report must adhere to the PRISMA or MOOSE guidelines.
  - Cost-Effective Analysis:** The study must adhere to the principles set forth in the "WHO Guide to Cost-Effective Analysis."
  - Case-Control Study:** The study must conform to the STROBE guidelines for observational studies.
  - Cohort Study:** The candidate must have developed the cohort. The submitted thesis must conform to the STROBE guidelines for observational studies.
  - Survey-Collected Data:** The candidate must have developed the questionnaire or used a previously validated questionnaire and there should be a 50% return and completion of the questionnaire. The submitted thesis must conform to the STROBE guidelines for observational studies.
  - Epidemiologic Studies:** The submitted thesis must conform to the STROBE guidelines for Epidemiological Studies.
  - Mechanistic Trials:** Mechanistic studies should meet NIH criteria for a clinical trial.

## 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.

- Hypothesis
  - What were the study objectives?
  - What was the population studied?
  - What was the population to which the investigators intended to apply their findings?
- Methods
  - Was the study an experiment, case-control study, randomized clinical trial, planned observations, or a retrospective analysis of records?



- b. Were there possible sources of sample selection bias?
  - c. How comparable was the control group?
  - d. What was the statistical power of the study?
  - e. Was the design of the study appropriate for the hypothesis to be tested?
3. Results
- a. Were there clear definitions of the terms used (i.e., diagnostic criteria, inclusion criteria, measurements made and outcome variables)?
  - b. Were the observations reliable and reproducible?
  - c. What were the sensitivity, specificity and predictive values of the methods?
4. Presentation of Findings
- a. Were the findings presented clearly, objectively, and in sufficient detail?
  - b. Were the findings internally consistent (i.e., did the numbers add up properly and could the different tables be reconciled, etc.)?
5. Analysis of the Results
- a. Were the data worthy of statistical analysis? If so, were the methods of analysis appropriate to the source and nature of the data?
  - b. Were the analyses correctly performed and interpreted?
  - c. 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)?
  - d. Were the statistical analytic techniques, and the significance level described?
  - e. Was there use of measured sensitivity without specificity?
6. Conclusions and Discussion
- a. Which conclusions were justified by the findings?
  - b. Were the conclusions relevant to the hypothesis?
7. Limitations and Study Redesign
- a. If the study could be repeated, how could the experimental design be revised to provide better reliability and validity of the conclusions?
8. 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 E: MFM QUALIFYING AND CERTIFYING EXAMINATION TOPICS**

### **Medical Complications of Pregnancy**

1. Medical Disorders
  - a. Evaluate, diagnose and manage medical disorders
  - b. Provide preconception, post-delivery counseling (including contraception) for patients with medical disorders
  - c. Counsel patients about maternal physiology, fetal and neonatal implications of their medical condition(s)
  - d. Counsel patients on impact of medical disorders on delivery timing
  - e. Counsel patients with medical disorders regarding drugs and biologics
  - f. Manage antenatal care for patients with medical disorders
  - g. Manage intrapartum and postpartum care for patients with medical disorders
2. Critical Care
  - a. Evaluate and diagnose critical care conditions
  - b. Manage critical care conditions and interpret hemodynamic monitoring
  - c. Identify critically ill patients and facilitate transfer to higher level of care
  - d. Manage antenatal care and delivery timing for critically ill patients
  - e. Manage intrapartum and postpartum care for critically ill patients
  - f. Counsel critically ill patients regarding drugs and biologics
  - g. Manage massive obstetric hemorrhage
  - h. Manage obstetric coagulopathy

### **Obstetric Complications**

1. Preterm Labor and Preterm Premature Rupture of Membranes (PPROM)
  - a. Identify risk factors for preterm birth
  - b. Counsel patients on risk-reduction strategies for preterm birth
  - c. Counsel patients on limits of viability, prognosis and management
  - d. Manage PPRM
  - e. Manage preterm labor and delivery
  - f. Manage cervical insufficiency
2. Hypertensive Disorders
  - a. Manage hypertensive disease in pregnancy
  - b. Manage preeclampsia

- c. Manage eclampsia
3. Multiple Gestation
    - a. Counsel and manage patients on associated complications and pregnancy outcomes based on chorionicity for twin gestations
    - b. Counsel and manage high-order multiple gestations
    - c. Counsel patients on indications and risks associated with fetal reduction
  4. Fetal Demise
    - a. Provide preconception counseling for recurrent pregnancy loss
    - b. Evaluate and manage patients with a fetal demise and /or recurrent pregnancy loss
    - c. Evaluate and manage patient for bereavement and /or postpartum depression
  5. Procedures Relating to Obstetrical Complications
    - a. Amniocentesis and amnioreduction for fetal lung maturation
    - b. External cephalic version
    - c. Peripartum hysterectomy
    - d. Cervical cerclage
    - e. Chorionic villus sampling
    - f. Cordocentesis and fetal transfusion
  6. Obstetric Anesthesia
    - a. Counsel medically complicated patients regarding the different anesthetic options including benefits, risks and contraindications (e.g. systemic analgesia and sedation, general anesthesia, regional anesthesia); for example, cardiac arrest, respiratory arrest, aspiration pneumonitis, hypotension, high spinal or total spinal, convulsions, neuropathy, headaches, hypothermia
    - b. Identify, diagnose and co-manage anesthetic complications (e.g. cardiac arrest, respiratory arrest, aspiration pneumonitis, hypotension, high spinal or total spinal, convulsions, neuropathy, headaches, hypothermia)
  7. Management of Obstetrical Complications
    - a. Amniotic fluid embolism (AFE)
    - b. Acute fatty liver of pregnancy (AFLP)
    - c. Placental abruption
    - d. Abnormal placentation (e.g. accreta, increta, percreta, vasa previa and placenta previa)
    - e. Gestational trophoblastic disease
    - f. Ruptured uterus
    - g. Cholestasis of pregnancy
    - h. Uterine anomalies

- i. Ovarian masses
- j. Dermatologic conditions (e.g. PUPPS, herpes gestationis)
- k. Fetomaternal hemorrhage
- l. Trauma
- m. Abnormally implanted pregnancies (abdominal, cervical and c-section scar)

## **Fetal Complications and Prenatal Diagnosis**

1. Ultrasound
  - a. Perform and interpret 1st trimester ultrasound for singleton and multiple gestations
  - b. Perform and interpret 2nd and 3rd trimester ultrasound
  - c. Recognize normal and abnormal maternal, fetal, and placental anatomy
  - d. Apply knowledge of the limitations of ultrasound to determine need for additional imaging modalities
  - e. Determine indication for and perform Doppler studies (umbilical artery and MCA, color, m-mode)
  - f. Determine indication for and perform 3D and 4D ultrasound
  - g. Perform and interpret cervical length assessment
  - h. Manage disorders of amniotic fluid volume
  - i. Perform and interpret fetal echocardiography
  - j. Perform ultrasound assessment of chorionicity
2. Evaluation, Management, and Diagnosis of Fetal Complications
  - a. Fetal structural abnormalities
  - b. Fetal growth restriction
  - c. Genetic disorders (e.g. chromosomal abnormalities, DiGeorge's, skeletal dysplasia, syndromes)
  - d. Fetal hydrops
  - e. Isoimmunization
  - f. Alloimmune thrombocytopenia
  - g. Fetal infections

## **Genetics and Genomics**

- a. Obtain a genetic history and perform a three-generation pedigree, perform preconception genetic counseling, and counsel patients on Mendelian patterns of inheritance (e.g. autosomal dominant, autosomal recessive, co-dominant, X-linked recessive, X-linked dominant) and non-Mendelian patterns of inheritance (e.g. trinucleotide repeat disorders, imprinting, uniparental disomy, mitochondrial inheritance, germline mosaicism, multifactorial and polygenic inheritance)

- b. Counsel patients on benefits and limitations of PGS/ PGD (preimplantation genetic diagnosis)
- c. Counsel patients on and perform expanded and ethnicity-based carrier screening
- d. Counsel patients on different methods of aneuploidy screening and interpret results
- e. Counsel patients on prenatal testing (e.g. fetal karyotype, chromosomal microarray, biochemical and molecular tests, whole exome sequencing)

## **Core Competencies and Cross Content**

1. Ethics and Professionalism
  - a. Systematically engage in practice review to identify health disparities
  - b. When engaged in shared clinical decision making, incorporate patient, family, and cultural considerations in making treatment recommendations
  - c. When providing care for patients, consider psychological, sexual, and social implications of various treatment options
2. Patient Safety
  - a. Systematically analyze the practice for safety improvements (e.g. root cause analysis)
  - b. Systematically engage in practice reviews for safety improvements (e.g. root cause analysis)
  - c. Incorporate the standard use of procedural briefings, “time outs”, and debriefings in clinical practice
  - d. Participate in the review of sentinel events, reportable events, and near misses
  - e. Implement universal protocols (e.g. bundles, checklists) to help ensure patient safety
3. Interpersonal and Communication Skills
  - a. Communicate to patient and family regarding adverse outcomes and medical errors
  - b. Demonstrate sensitivity and responsiveness when communicating with a diverse patient population, including but not limited to diversity in gender, age, culture, race, religion, disabilities, and sexual orientation
  - c. Provide comprehensive information when referring patients to other professionals
4. Systems-based Practice
  - a. Incorporate considerations of cost awareness and risk-benefit analysis in patient care
  - b. Provide care with multidisciplinary teams to promote patient safety and optimize patient outcomes
5. Practice-based Learning and Improvement
  - a. Design or participate in practice or hospital quality improvement activities
6. Evidence-based Medicine
  - a. Incorporate evidence-based practices and national guidelines to improve practice patterns and outcomes

b. Implement evidence-based protocols to enhance recovery after surgery (ERAS)

## APPENDIX F: DE-IDENTIFICATION OF CASE LISTS

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:

1. Names
2. Geographic subdivisions smaller than a state
3. Date of birth, 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
4. Telephone numbers, fax numbers, email addresses, social security numbers, medical record numbers, health plan beneficiary numbers, account numbers, certificate and/or license numbers
5. Biometric identifiers, including finger and voice prints
6. Full face photographic images and any comparable images
7. Any other unique identifying number, characteristic, or codes

**The submission of any patient information in the case description fields of the Case Lists is strictly prohibited and can result in disapproval for the Certifying Examination.** 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 lists is subject to audit by the Board.

## **APPENDIX G: APPROVED ABBREVIATIONS**

A&P Repair-Anterior and posterior colporrhaphy

AB Abortion

AIDS Acquired immuno deficiency syndrome

ASCUS Atypical cells of undetermined significance

BMI Body mass index

BSO Bilateral salpingo-oophorectomy

BTL Bilateral tubal ligation

CBC Complete blood count

CD Cesarean delivery

CIN Cervical intraepithelial neoplasia

cm Centimeter

CT Computerized tomography

D&C Dilatation and curettage

D&E Dilatation and evacuation

DEXA Dual-energy x-ray absorptiometry

DHEAS Dehydroepiandrosterone sulfate

DM Diabetes mellitus

DVT Deep vein thrombosis

E2 Estradiol

EBL Estimated blood loss

ECC Endocervical curettage

EFW Estimated fetal weight

EGA Estimated gestational age

EKG/ECG Electrocardiogram

FGR Fetal growth restriction

FSH Follicle-stimulating hormone

FHR Feta heart rate

GBS Group B strep

GDM Gestational diabetes mellitus

gm Gram

HIV Human immunodeficiency virus

HCG Human chorionic gonadotropin



HPV Human papillomavirus  
HRT Hormone replacement therapy  
HSV Herpes simplex virus  
IM Intramuscular  
IV Intravenous  
IUD Intrauterine device  
IUFD Intrauterine fetal death  
IUP Intrauterine pregnancy  
kg Kilogram  
LAVH Laparoscopic-assisted vaginal hysterectomy  
LEEP Loop electrosurgical procedure  
LGA Large for gestational age  
LH Luteinizing hormone or laparoscopic hysterectomy  
LMP Last menstrual period  
MIS Minimally invasive surgery  
ml Milliliter  
MRI Magnetic resonance imaging  
NST Non-stress test  
OA Occiput Anterior – may be preceded by R (right) or L (left)  
OP Occiput Posterior  
OT Occiput Transverse  
PAP Papanicolaou smear  
PCOS Polycystic ovarian syndrome  
PP Postpartum  
PPH Postpartum hemorrhage  
PROM Premature rupture of membranes  
PTL Preterm labor  
SAB Spontaneous abortion  
S/D (ratio) Systolic/diastolic ratio  
SGA Small for gestational age  
SROM Spontaneous rupture of membranes  
STD/STI Sexually transmitted disease/infection  
SUI Stress urinary incontinence

SVD Spontaneous vaginal delivery  
TAH Total abdominal hysterectomy  
TSH Thyroid - stimulating hormone  
TVH Total vaginal hysterectomy  
US Ultrasonography  
VBAC Vaginal birth after cesarean delivery