

The American Board of Pediatrics



Training Requirements for Subspecialty Certification

APPD Meeting – May 2007

Forum for Fellowship Directors

General Principles

The ABP endorses the goal of fellowship training remaining the development of future academic pediatricians while recognizing the multiple career paths available to them.

ABP Requirements for Subspecialty Certification

effective July 2004

Summary of Major Changes

- Core curriculum
- Greater flexibility in the type of activities that can meet the requirement for participation in scholarly activity
- Evaluation of scholarly accomplishments to be made at local level
- New program requirements related to creation of institutional Scholarship Oversight (thesis-like) Committees for mentoring and evaluation of fellows

Core Curriculum

All programs must include core curriculum to provide a broad foundation for scholarly activity. It should lead to an in-depth understanding of:

- Biostatistics
- Research methodology and study design
- Preparation of applications for funding and/or approval of clinical or research protocols
- Critical literature review
- Evidence-based medicine
- Ethical principles involving research

Core Curriculum

- The curriculum should lead to an understanding of the principles of adult learning and provide skills to participate effectively in:
 - Curriculum development
 - Delivery of information
 - Provision of feedback to learners
 - Assessment of educational outcomes
- Graduates should be effective in teaching both individuals and groups of learners in clinical settings, classrooms, lectures, and seminars, and also by electronic and print modalities.

Core Curriculum

The ABP is developing additional content specifications for subspecialty examinations based on the competencies related to the core curriculum in scholarly activities.

Content outline and annotated bibliography to be available in 2008

Scholarly Activity

Fellows will be expected to engage in projects in which they develop hypotheses or in projects of substantive scholarly exploration and analysis that require critical thinking.

Scholarly Activity

Areas in which scholarly activity may be pursued include, but are not limited to:

- Basic, clinical, or translational biomedicine
- Health services
- Quality improvement
- Bioethics
- Education
- Public policy

Scholarly Activity

Examples of acceptable activities include, but are not limited to:

- Biomedical research
- Critical meta-analysis of literature
- Systematic review of clinical practice with scope and rigor of a Cochrane review
- Critical analysis of public policy
- Curriculum development project with an assessment component

Work Product of Scholarly Activity

Generation of a specific written “work product” will be required. Examples of products include:

- Peer-reviewed publication in which a fellow played a substantial role
- In-depth manuscript describing a completed project
- Thesis written in connection with the pursuit of an advanced degree
- Extramural grant application that has either been accepted or favorably reviewed
- Progress report for projects of exceptional complexity, such as a multi-year clinical trial

Scholarship Oversight Committee

- Review of scholarly activity will occur at the local level
- Each fellow must have a Scholarship Oversight Committee to consist of three or more individuals, at least one of whom is based outside the subspecialty discipline
- The program director may serve as a trainee's mentor and participate in the activities of the committee, but should not be a standing member

Scholarship Oversight Committee

The committee will:

- Determine whether a specific activity is appropriate to meet the ABP guidelines
- Determine a course of preparation to ensure successful completion of the project
- Evaluate the fellow's progress
- Meet with the fellow early in the training period and regularly thereafter
- Require the fellow to present/defend the project
- Advise the program director on the fellow's progress and assess whether the fellow has met the requirement for scholarly activity

Subspecialty Training Requirements Responsibilities of the Program Director

- Establish core curriculum
- Identify a mentor for each fellow
- Create a Scholarship Oversight Committee responsible for assessing the progress of each fellow

Change in Dates of Subspecialty Examinations

- Beginning in 2007 exams usually offered in August will be offered in November and exams usually offered in November will be offered in spring of 2008
- Reason: to afford broadest opportunity for fellows to complete scholarly activity requirements

Verification of Competence Forms

- There will be a transition period when graduates may be under the Meaningful Accomplishment in Research (MAR) or Scholarly Activity (SA) requirement
- For most fellows completing training in 2007, newly designed Verification of Competence Forms will be mailed to program directors in June
- Each form contains section pertaining to MAR and SA. Complete **only** section appropriate for each fellow

Note: Applicants for 2007 exams in Endo, GI, & ID have stated in applications whether they have pursued MAR. If so, PD's will receive old Verification Forms in May 2007.

Verification of Competence Form

- As of 2007, PDs will verify competence **at end of training**, rather than at time of application
- Verification of training dates
- Satisfactory evaluation in all six areas of clinical competence required
- Verification of participation in core curriculum and final approval of scholarly activity by Scholarship Oversight Committee

Eligibility for Certifying Examination

Upon **completion of training**, the ABP will require submission of:

- Verification of Competence Form completed by program director
- A document written by the fellow describing the scholarly activity, the fellow's role in the activity, and how it relates to a career development plan
- The written "work product" of the scholarly activity

Signature of fellow, program director, and members of committee on documents 2 and 3

All three documents sent to ABP in one packet

Frequently Asked Questions

- Why can't program director serve on Scholarship Oversight Committee (SOC)?
- Must each fellow have a unique SOC?
- Must there be three members of SOC in addition to mentor? Can mentor be from outside division or outside discipline?
- Can adult subspecialist serve on SOC in the role of the "member outside discipline"?

Frequently Asked Questions

- Can fellows in Canada meet the new requirements?
- What happens if I transfer or take a leave of absence?
- I have finished my training, can I use new requirements to apply?
- What should be in document written by fellow describing scholarly activity and career plans?
How does this differ from work product?

Scholarly Activity Surveys

(to obtain feedback on development of core curriculum and SOC)

- PDs surveyed with 2006 Tracking Rosters (n=679)
 - In 57% of programs the department or institution has assumed responsibility for core curriculum while in 47% of programs, the fellowship program is responsible
 - Programs with a formal curriculum in:
 - Biostatistics (85%)
 - Teaching skills (65%)
 - Evidence based medicine (73%)
 - Curriculum development (44%)

Scholarly Activity Surveys

(to obtain feedback on development of core curriculum and SOC)

- Fellows surveyed at time of application for 2007 SITE exam
 - Of fellows who began training in 2004 (n=735)
 - 97% have SOC appointed
 - 94% have met with SOC on one or more occasion
 - Fellows at all levels who have participated in a formal curriculum: (n=2449)
 - Biostatistics (63%)
 - Teaching skills (62%)
 - Evidence based medicine (68%)
 - Curriculum development (41%)

Accreditation vs Certification

Accreditation:

Training programs are reviewed by the Residency Review Committee to ensure that they are meeting certain prespecified criteria

Certification:

Individuals are evaluated after training to determine whether or not they meet the standards set forth by the ABP for certified specialists and subspecialists

Where Does ABP Fit Into Process of Accreditation?

- Decision to offer a subspecialty certificate usually leads to a petition to ACGME to accredit training programs
- ABP provides substantial input to the development of initial subspecialty program requirements and periodic revisions via the subboards
- ABP's standards for certification influence the content of program requirements

RRC Requirements for Subspecialty Training (effective January 2007)

- Incorporates six general competencies
- Mandates core curriculum to foster scholarly activities
- Mandates SOC for each fellow
- Mandates scholarly project to be designed and conducted by each fellow
- ABP certifying exam pass rate of 75% of first-time takers

Standard Pathway

- General Pediatrics – 3 years
- Fellowship – 3 years
- Scholarly activity required
(Includes those with Ph.D.s)

Non-Standard Pathways for Subspecialty Certification

- Designed to provide flexibility while ensuring competence
- Commonly (but mistakenly) called “fast-tracking” but each pathway differs in:
 - Content of general pediatrics training
 - Length of general pediatrics and fellowship training
 - Time of eligibility for certifying examinations
- Not the purview of ACGME (Pediatrics RRC)

Non-Standard Pathways for Subspecialty Certification

- Allows exceptional individual with superior overall competence to shorten general pediatrics residency before fellowship
 - Special Alternative Pathway
- Sustains research interest and productivity by allowing up to 11 months of research during residency
 - Integrated Research Pathway
- Allows individual committed to an academic career as physician scientist to shorten residency and add a research year to fellowship
 - Accelerated Research Pathway

Subspecialty Fast-tracking Pathway

- General Pediatrics – 3 years
- Fellowship – 2 years
- Prerequisite – research accomplished prior to fellowship (in area related to career path)
- Scholarly activity requirement waived

Special Alternative Pathway

- General Pediatrics – 2 years
(specific training requirements)
- Fellowship – 3 years
(specific training requirements in first year)
- Prerequisite – superior PL-1 performance and screening examination
- Scholarly activity required

Integrated Research Pathway

- General Pediatrics – 3 years
(including 1 year of research)
- Fellowship – 2 or 3 years
- Prerequisite – PhD
- Scholarly activity required
(clinical or laboratory-based research expected)

Accelerated Research Pathway

New pathway designed to accommodate and encourage candidates who are committed to an academic career as physician scientists. It is intended to assist in development of skilled clinical and laboratory investigators.

Accelerated Research Pathway

- Two core years of general pediatrics training containing 20 months of specified experiences
- Four years of subspecialty training
- Total required duration of training is six years
- General and subspecialty training need not be taken at the same institution
- Not all programs expected to offer ARP

Accelerated Research Pathway

- General Pediatrics – 2 years
(specific training requirements)
- Fellowship – minimum 4 years
- Scholarly activity required
(clinical or laboratory-based research expected)

**effective for trainees entering GP training, July 2004*

Avoid “Pathway Confusion”

- MD/PhDs or those with extensive research accomplishment before residency might be best served by SAP or IRP
- SAP and Subspecialty Fast-tracking are only options to shorten overall training
- IRP allows immersion in GP for three years while maintaining research productivity
 - viewed by some as an advantage
- ARP requires no prior research experience, but does require firm commitment to career as physician scientist recognized before or early in PL-1 year