



ASO Author Reflections: The New Continuous Certification Program and CME—What Is It, and How Can the Society of Surgical Oncologist Help with the New Requirements?

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PAST

Continuing Medical Education (CME) and Maintenance of Certification (MOC) requirements by the American Board of Surgery have recently changed. In the past, recertifying surgeons had to complete a 10-year high-stakes written exam in addition to 150 AMA PRA Category 1 credits over 5 years, with at least 50 self-assessment credits.¹ Due to increasing practice demands and burnout among physicians, most physicians felt that MOC was a burden.² The Board heard our concerns and decided to change the requirements. Our article reviews current MOC and CME requirements and lists options to complete these requisites as offered through the Society of Surgical Oncology.

PRESENT

What are the new requirements, and how can the Society of Surgical Oncology help? The new Continuous Certification Program consists of a Continuous Certification

Assessment (i.e., exam) that is completed every 2 years after the surgeon's certificate expires. The exam is an online, open-book test. The exam consists of 40 questions: 20 core surgery and 20 practice-related questions. The practice-related questions include Comprehensive General Surgery, Abdomen, Alimentary Tract, or Breast Surgery. This subdivision of questions helps to address the concerns of especially Surgical Oncologist and Breast Surgeons, whose practice is limited solely to a specific field and not to general surgery as a whole. Continuous Certification, MOC in the old system, now requires 125 CME credits once diplomates pass the new assessment exam. The SSO supports continuing education, with annual meetings, webinars, and enduring materials that can be accessed to meet MOC and CME requirements.³

FUTURE

The requirements for CME and Continuous Certification have changed. The American Board of Surgery heard the concerns of its Diplomates and now offers a more frequent, less high-stakes exam that is tailored to our individual and specialized practices. The Society of Surgical Oncology educational offerings will continue to evolve with this changing paradigm. We will continue to listen to our members concerns and give them the necessary forums and educational opportunities to help them maintain their hard earned Board Certification.

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