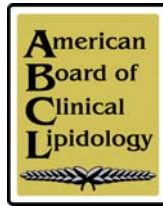


2010
Certification Candidate Handbook

www.lipidboard.org

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Introduction

The concept of a certification program for lipid specialists was spearheaded by the National Lipid Association to provide opportunities for professional development and formal recognition of the specialized expertise of health care professionals focused on lipid management. The American Board of Clinical Lipidology (ABCL) was incorporated as an independent organization in 2003 to develop and administer the certification examination. Although the ABCL is now a self-governing and separate entity from the NLA, the two organizations work collaboratively to ensure that there are adequate educational and professional development opportunities for lipid specialists to help them meet the prerequisites of the ABCL certifying examination.

The clinical practice of Lipidology refers to the delivery of direct patient care on a substantial basis. Chart review, basic research, administration, and other non-clinical activities are not considered direct involvement in the delivery of patient care.

The Mission of the ABCL is *to reduce morbidity and mortality from dyslipidemia and related diseases by certifying and evaluating knowledge and training in clinical lipidology.*

Eligibility Criteria

To become credentialed, candidates must meet 1) all Basic Requirements, and 2) the Training Requirements, which require candidates to earn 200 credit hour equivalents or “points” based on documented training and expertise in lipid management. Although rigorous, the requirements have been designed to provide any physician with demonstrated knowledge and experience in lipidology an avenue to become certified as a clinical lipid specialist.

Basic Requirements for All Candidates

1. Be a currently licensed physician (MD or DO) in the United States or Canada

2. Be certified by a primary care board (ABMS or equivalent) (i.e., Internal Medicine, Family Practice, Clinical Genetics, Geriatrics, Neurology/Vascular Neurology, Preventive Medicine, Pediatrics, Obstetrics-Gynecology)

OR

Have completed a two-year minimum relevant accredited fellowship (e.g., cardiology, endocrinology)

OR

Have two years of demonstrated appropriate experience and practice activity in the management of patients with lipid disorders

Training Requirements

Applicants are required to accumulate 200 credit hour equivalents or “points,” which are earned through documented training and expertise in lipid management as delineated below.

Final point assignments will be decided by the ABCL Credentialing Committee.

Criteria	Points	
1. Certification in a primary care board <i>Documentation: Copy of certificate from Board(s).</i>	50 points	} Max 100 Points
2. Subspecialty certification in Endocrinology, Diabetes and Metabolism (EDM), Cardiology, Nephrology OR Other relevant advanced training and/or certification, including Certified Diabetes Educator, Clinical Nutrition, Gastroenterology, Pediatric Cardiology/Endocrinology, Specialist in Clinical Hypertension <i>Documentation: Copy of certificate from Board(s).</i>	50 points 10 to 50 points*	
3. Relevant academic practice and relevant faculty appointment at an ACGME recognized institution (ie, relevant to lipid practice) <i>Documentation: Letter from Department Chair or Division Chief at the ACGME recognized academic institution(s) confirming appointment(s) and explaining relevance to lipid management.</i>	Up to 50 points*	
4. Clinical research and/or scholarly publications in the management of lipid disorders <i>Documentation: Please list and highlight all relevant scholarly, peer-reviewed publications on your CV that is attached.</i>	Up to 50 points*	
5. Balance of points not obtained in 1-4, must be earned through lipid focused continuing medical education credit obtained within the previous three years <i>Documentation: Complete the ABCL CME Credit Tracking Form and attach copies of certificates of attendance for the CME activities that you submit for points. The titles of the activities must be clearly identified. The Credentialing Committee will make the final determination on point assignments.</i>	1 point per credit hour earned	

Definition of Lipid Focused CME

Lipid Focused Continuing Medical Education is defined by the ABCL as certified continuing medical education activities on topics relating to lipids and dyslipidemia including, but not limited to:

- Atherosclerosis
- Cardiovascular disease and coronary artery disease
- Preventive cardiology
- Lifestyle management of dyslipidemias
- Pharmacologic management of dyslipidemias
- Evidence supporting dyslipidemia treatment guidelines
- Metabolic Syndrome
- Vascular biology
- Advanced lipoprotein metabolism
- Diabetic dyslipidemia
- Atherosclerosis imaging
- Obesity and CVD

Any CME activity that is endorsed or sponsored by the National Lipid Association or a regional chapter of the NLA will be automatically accepted. Visit the NLA website at www.lipid.org for information on sponsored activities.

Application Procedures

Applications are available for download on the ABCL website (www.lipidboard.org). Candidates must submit their applications with payment to ABCL by the application deadlines listed below to be considered for the exam. Payment of the examination fee must accompany your application. Before mailing your application, please review carefully the information and make sure that your application is complete and legible. All communications in regard to the exam, with the exception of exam scores, will be sent by email. Candidates are reminded to provide a current email address at the time of application and to inform ABCL of any changes.

Exam applications will be reviewed in the order in which they are received. If accepted by the Credentialing Committee, candidates will receive a confirmation notice via email confirming their approval to take the exam within four weeks of submitting their application. This letter will only confirm approval and receipt of payment and does not allow the candidate to schedule their test appointment. Scheduling permits to take the computer-based examination will be distributed via email within two weeks following the close of the application period.

Fees

Due at time of application

Application and Credentialing Fee	\$300 (non-refundable)
Examination Fee	<u>\$900</u>
Total Fees	\$1,200

The application/credentialing fee must accompany the application. Payment must be in U.S. dollars in the form of a credit card or check payable to the American Board of Clinical Lipidology. Failure to submit the fee in the correct form could result in the rejection of your application. A **one-time** \$300 nonrefundable application fee is incurred upon receipt of the application by the ABCL, regardless of eligibility outcome. The Examination Fee will be refunded if the applicant does not meet the eligibility requirements, does not submit a complete application in a timely fashion, or cancels (in writing) from the examination and certification process.

Important Dates

2010 Examinations Windows and Deadlines:

Spring Testing Window March 15—April 15, 2010
(*Application Deadline: February 26, 2010*)

Summer Testing Window June 14—July 14, 2010
(*Application Deadline: May 17, 2010*)

Fall Testing Window September 20—October 20, 2010
(*Application Deadline: August 30, 2010*)

Refunds/Cancellation Policy

Regardless of its action on any application, the ABCL will retain a \$300 nonrefundable application fee and will require candidates to pay all fees and meet eligibility criteria applicable at the time of any future application. Telephone cancellations cannot be accepted. A written notice of cancellation must be received no later than two weeks prior to the examination for a refund less a \$300 credentialing fee.

If you need to cancel or change your testing times you must notify us more than 72 hours before your actual exam time. If you cancel after the 72 hours for any reason at all there is an additional \$95.00 seating fee that will be charged back to you. No exceptions. Please take this into consideration when choosing your test date/time.

Nondiscrimination Policy

The ABCL does not discriminate against any person on the basis of age, gender, sexual orientation, race, religion, national origin, medical condition, physical disability, or marital status.

About the Examination

Exam Content

The subject content of the certifying examination reflects the knowledge, skills, and clinical judgement deemed essential for the competent practice of lipidology. The content will follow along with the outline of topics listed below and the approved Core Curriculum in Clinical Lipidology. This curriculum identifies and defines areas of knowledge important to the delivery of quality care and serves as a basis for the content of the certification examinations in Clinical Lipidology. The core curriculum is comprised of the information deemed as the most relevant clinical information for a practicing lipid specialist or lipidologist.

In general, the exam will focus on the biochemistry and metabolism of lipoproteins and the genetics, diagnosis and management of dyslipidemia and the metabolic syndrome as well as the fundamentals of vascular biology. The content of the exam is updated bi-annually by the ABCL Examination Review Committee.

There is a 4-hour window to complete the exam. The examination is constructed at the upper level of difficulty and consists of approximately 240 multiple-choice questions including:

1. A-type (one BEST choice)
2. Comparative B-type (matching one BEST choice)

The following is the existing breakdown of question content by areas of Lipidology:

20%	Pharmacologic therapy
14%	Genetic Disorders
11%	Nutrition and non-pharmacologic therapy
10%	Risk assessment and NCEP Guidelines
10%	Lipoprotein metabolism
10%	Epidemiology and clinical trials
10%	Metabolic syndrome
10%	Vascular Biology
5%	Special Populations

Examination Development and Administration

The examination for the American Board of Clinical Lipidology was developed by the ABCL Board of Directors and the Examination Review Committee. The examination is administered by the ABCL staff on behalf of the Board. Questions concerning the examination should be referred to the ABCL staff [6816 Southpoint Parkway, Suite 1000 Jacksonville, FL 32216, (904) 674-0752].

Computerized Testing Center Information

The ABCL exam is administered by computer, during three 30-day testing windows per year, through Kryterion Testing Centers. Exam candidates approved to take the exam are given a scheduling permit by way of an email which enables them to schedule their testing appointment at a Kryterion testing location, date and time of their choice. Exam dates and times during the testing windows are dependent on each Kryterion facility's hours of operation. Once you have selected your Kryterion host location, the date and the time of the exam is dependent upon the availability of that specific location. You must select your Kryterion host location within 48 hours prior to taking the exam.

To see all available HOST locations please visit <http://lipidboard.org/testingcenters.pdf>.

A total of 4 hours is allocated for all exam appointments unless special accommodations, requested under the Americans with Disabilities Act, have been arranged.

Rules for the Examination

Strict security measures are maintained throughout all phases of examination development and administration. Candidates are required to present a form of photo identification in order to enter the testing center. Trained proctors supervise the administration of the examination, maintaining the strictest security throughout the testing period. Irregularities observed during the testing period, such as creating a disturbance, giving or receiving unauthorized information or aid to or from other persons, or attempting to remove test materials or notes from the testing room, may be sufficient cause to terminate candidate participation in the examination administration or to invalidate a score. Irregularities may also be evidenced by subsequent statistical analysis of testing materials. The ABCL reserves the right to investigate each incident of suspected misconduct or irregularity. The examination is a copyrighted work of the American Board of Clinical Lipidology. Any unauthorized copying of the exam or of any questions may constitute copyright infringement.

- All candidates must provide current, valid photo identification bearing your signature. Examples are a valid driver's license, government (including state) issued identification card or passport.
- All candidates should arrive at the test site approximately 30 minutes prior to testing time. Late arrivals maybe be admitted but will not be given extra time.
- No books or other reference materials may be taken into the examination room.
- Simple calculators are permitted, but no personal digital assistants (PDAs), books or other reference materials may be taken into the examination room.
- No signaling devices, including pagers, cellular phones, laptops, and alarms may be operative during the examination.
- Food (including candy and gum), beverages, and tobacco products are not permitted in the testing room.
- No test materials, documents, or memoranda of any sort are to be taken from the examination room.
- The examination will be held only on the day and at the time scheduled.
- No questions concerning content of the examination may be asked during the testing period. The candidate should listen carefully to the instructions given by the proctor and should read carefully all directions in the test booklet.
- Exam candidates may leave the testing room to use the restroom but will not receive any additional time to complete the examination.

Reporting of Results

The passing score is based on an expected level of knowledge; it is not related to the distribution of scores obtained during a particular examination administration. In other words, each candidate is measured against a standard of knowledge, not against the performance of other individuals taking the examination.

Candidates will be notified by the ABCL within 4 weeks whether they have passed or failed the examination. All candidates will receive: (a) a letter indicating the percentage of correct questions needed to pass the examination and the percentage of questions they answered correctly and (b) a diagnostic report showing their performance in each content area.

Request for Hand Scoring

Candidates who fail the examination may request that their examination be re-scored by hand to verify reported scores. Requests must be made in writing, provide justification for the request and be accompanied by a check or money order in the amount of \$50, made payable to the ABCL. The written request must include the candidate's name, date of birth, Social Security Number or assigned ID number, mailing address and signature. Requests for hand scoring can be honored only up to three (3) months after the testing date and should be directed to the ABCL office. This process will take approximately 30 days.

Re-Examination

The ABCL certification exam may be taken up to three (3) times upon filing of a new application and paying the re-examination fee (\$450) each time (the credentialing fee is a one-time fee and will not be charged for re-examinations).

Scope of Certification

The eligibility requirements and examination materials for the ABCL certification program have been developed based on substantial review and analysis of the current state of medical and scientific knowledge of the treatment of lipid disorders, as reflected in the medical literature. The ABCL Board of Directors with the assistance and advice of professionals in relevant fields, have developed a certification program that recognizes accepted levels of knowledge and expertise in the profession, with the goal of improving patient care.

However, no certification program can guarantee competence or successful treatment to the public. In addition, given the rapid changes in medical knowledge and the speed of scientific developments, the ABCL cannot warrant that the examination materials will at all times reflect the most current state of the art. New developments are included in the examination only after practitioners of Lipidology have accepted them.

Attainment of Designation and Re-designation

Eligible candidates who successfully pass the exam will be recognized as achieving status as a “**Diplomate of the American Board of Clinical Lipidology**” and will receive certificates from the ABCL. A registry of designated board certified individuals will be maintained by the ABCL and may be reported in various publications and on the ABCL website at www.lipidboard.org

The “Diplomate of the American Board of Clinical Lipidology” designation is recognized for a period of 10 years at which time the candidate must retake and pass the current Board Exam for Clinical Lipidology in order to maintain designation.

Confidentiality

The ABCL will release the individual test scores by mail only and only to the individual examinees. Any questions concerning test results should be referred to the ABCL office at 904-674-0752.

Mail Complete Application Packages to:

American Board of Clinical Lipidology
ATTN: Certification Coordinator
6816 Southpoint Parkway, Suite 1000
Jacksonville, FL 32216
Fax: 904-998-0855

Questions:

Phone: 904.674.0752

E-Mail: tmackowiak@lipidboard.org or nsirdevan@lipidboard.org

The American Board of Clinical Lipidology (ABCL)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: Why is there a board certification program in Clinical Lipidology?

Atherosclerotic events, including myocardial infarction and stroke, account for approximately one-third of all deaths in the U.S. Lipid management employing dietary, lifestyle, and pharmacologic modalities has been demonstrated to be one of the most effective strategies for the prospective treatment of cardiovascular disease. Yet, the number of specialists with expertise in lipid management is inadequate to address this large population of patients.

The American Board of Clinical Lipidology was established to assess the level of knowledge required to be certified as a Clinical Lipidologist, to encourage professional growth in the practice of Lipidology, and to enhance physician practice behavior to improve the quality of patient care.

Q: Who is a Clinical Lipidologist?

Clinical Lipidologists are physicians who come from a variety of backgrounds such as general Internal Medicine, Cardiology, Endocrinology, Nephrology, Family Practice, Osteopathy, and Obstetrics & Gynecology. The ABCL certification program establishes a consistent benchmark of expertise in the field of clinical Lipidology. A statistical breakdown of current Diplomates is available on the lipidboard.org website.

Q: Why should I become a certified Clinical Lipidologist?

The commitment to achieve certification by the American Board of Clinical Lipidology requires hard work, time and effort, however, the recognition carries with it significant, long-term value including the following benefits:

- Certification by the ABCL signifies that you have documented your commitment to continued professional development in Lipidology.
- Certification provides assurance to the public, your colleagues and the medical profession that you have successfully completed a course of education in lipid management and have passed an additional rigorous examination in clinical Lipidology.
- Certification contributes to your professional stature and credibility in the field and provides stronger credentials for enhanced professional and advancement opportunities.

Q: What is a “Diplomate of the ABCL”?

A Diplomate has successfully credentialed and passed the certification exam, and has been endorsed by the American Board of Clinical Lipidology as displaying a high level of experience, knowledge, and competence in clinical lipidology.

Q: Is a Diplomate the same as a “Fellow”?

No. A Fellow would normally have met a standard designated by a professional organization such as the NLA, AHA, ACC, AACE, etc. Once granted the title of “Fellow,” the acronym specifying the type of fellowship awarded can be used as a professional title, e.g., John Smith, MD, FNLA, FAHA.

Q: What are the requirements for certification?

Eligibility requirements for the examination are outlined on the website and in the application and handbook available for download on the site.

Q: How long does it take to qualify for the ABCL exam?

It depends on if you have earned the requisite number of points required to successfully credential for the exam by the time of application. A physician board-certified by a primary care board such as ABIM or ABFM and also holding subspecialty certification in a related field such as endocrinology or cardiology would automatically possess 100 of the 200 points necessary to sit for the ABCL exam. After you apply, the Credentialing Committee will decide within 30 days whether you qualify for the exam. See the eligibility requirements for more information.

Q: How many physicians have been certified by the ABCL to date?

Since November 2005, more than 525 physicians have achieved certification in Clinical Lipidology. Approximately 100 physicians sit for the exam each year.

Q: Is the examination difficult? What is the pass rate?

Many Diplomates say it is one of the more rigorous exams they have taken. The pass rate ranges from 80-85%.

Q: When is recertification required?

Recertification must be completed ten years after initial certification and it will require that you take part in ongoing continuing professional education and development.

Q: Are there courses or reference materials to assist in preparation for the examination?

Continuing Education:

The National Lipid Association (NLA) offers a lifelong learning program that paves the way for professional development and recognition of the distinct and specialized knowledge required of clinical lipidologists. Lipidology is an evolving field that requires clinicians to stay abreast of the latest clinical research and treatment guidelines and to apply this knowledge in practice. The NLA strives has developed educational activities at all levels of competency and provides continuous clinical updates, opportunities for self-assessment and practice improvement.

The ABCL recommends the National Lipid Association's 4-Volume Self-Assessment Program (NLA-SAP) and the NLA's Masters in Lipidology Advanced Training and Board Review Course as the best preparation for the ABCL exam. In addition, the credit hours earned from participating in these activities will help you to meet the credentialing criteria.

Please visit www.lipid.org and click on the Education & Meetings button to find out more information about these continuing education activities.

Textbooks:

There are a number of excellent new textbooks in clinical Lipidology and authored by our members. A list is provided on www.lipid.org on the "Bookshelf" page (found under the "Education & Meetings" button). Many of these textbooks, such as Therapeutic Lipidology, are available to NLA members at a significant discount off the publisher's price.

Q: Tell me more about the Certifying Examination

You will have up to 4 hours to complete the exam, which consists of approximately 240 multiple-choice questions. The subject content of the certifying examination reflects the knowledge, skills, and attitudes deemed essential for the competent practice of Lipidology, as outlined in the approved Core Curriculum in Clinical Lipidology. The content focuses broadly on the biochemistry and metabolism of lipids and lipoproteins; the genetics, diagnosis and management dyslipidemias and the metabolic syndrome; and, the fundamentals of vascular biology. The examination has been constructed at the upper level of difficulty. The specific content breakdown can be found in the ABCL Applicant Handbook.

Q: What are the Fees?

Application and Credentialing Fee	\$300 (non-refundable)*
Examination Fee.....	\$900
Total Certification Fee.....	\$1,200

* A **one-time** \$300 nonrefundable application fee is incurred upon receipt of the application by the ABCL, regardless of eligibility outcome.

Q: Is ABCL recognized by the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS)?

The ABCL is an independent certifying board, established as a nonprofit 501c3 organization in 2003. At this time, the board is not recognized by the ABMS or any other accrediting agency. The leadership of the NLA and the ABCL are committed to the formal recognition and designation of specialty status for the field of Clinical Lipidology by the ABMS, however, this is a long-term pursuit. The process of applying for ABMS recognition is rigorous and many requirements must be met before ABMS will consider an application from a new Board, including the approval of ACGME recognized training programs in the field.

*Please note that several states restrict a physician's use of the term "board certification" to those boards recognized by the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS). The American Board of Clinical Lipidology adheres to the "AMA Guidelines for Truthful Advertising Physician Services," used to ascertain the legitimacy of certifying boards, although the ABCL has not been recognized by the American Board of Medical Specialties. However, because several states prohibit a physician from advertising "board certification" by a Board not recognized by the ABMS, physicians should consult with state law before explicitly advertising "board certification" by the ABCL. Use of the term "Diplomate of the American Board of Clinical Lipidology" is acceptable in all states.

For your convenience, a list of state regulations is available from the ABCL office by request. Because such laws change frequently, however, ABCL Diplomates should consult with local authorities to ascertain local regulations before advertising their ABCL board certification.

Q: What if I am not a physician?

The Accreditation Council for Clinical Lipidology (ACCL) offers two certification and credentialing pathways for allied health professionals and other para-professionals working in or specializing in clinical lipid management. Visit www.lipidspecialist.org for complete details.

Q: Do you offer certification to physicians practicing outside of the United States?

The ABCL certification program is currently open to physicians licensed in the United States or Canada *only*. The credentialing criteria and the examination terminology have been designed to meet US standards. A separate international certification program is under consideration.