



## **American Board of Cardiovascular Medicine**



# **ABCM Certification Handbook**

**Revision 3 – August 2023**



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## 1.0 About The ABCM

The ABCM provides Board Certification Exams for Physicians, Nurse Practitioners, Physician Assistants, Cardiac Nurses, ECG and Monitor Technicians, EMT/Paramedics, and Medical, Nursing, and technical students. The American Board of Cardiovascular Medicine, Inc. (ABCM) formed in 1996 and offers certification examinations exclusively in the medical specialty of cardiology. The ABCM has been known on an international scale for many years and certifies candidates on a global scale.

## 2.0 Accreditation

The ABCM is the current accrediting authority for the certification exams. ABCM is in the process of applying to ANAB for independent ISO 17024 accreditation and anticipates the application to be filed within 2023.

## 3.0 Certification Exams Available

The ABCM offers Certification Exams to the gamut of cardiovascular caregivers from physicians, to nurse practitioners and physician assistants, to nurses, technicians, and medical, nursing, and technical students of cardiology.

- CVNP-BC or CVPA-BC (Same Exam)
- CVRN-BC (Level I)
- CVRN-BC (Level II)
- Basic ECG-BC
- 12-Lead ECG-BC
- Advanced ECG-BC

## 4.0 The ABCM Certification Handbook

This *ABCM Certification Handbook* outlines all the policies and procedures that apply to ABCM'S certification programs, including the CVNP, CVPA, CVRN, Advanced ECG, 12-Lead ECG, and Basic ECG. The handbook includes policies and procedures for certification eligibility requirements, application process, examination, registration, rescheduling, examination, administration, scoring, retesting, and appeals. The policies and procedures in this handbook help protect ABCM'S examination content, maintain the integrity of the certification application process, and ensure that test fairness and validity for all a BCM certification candidates.

***All exam candidates must read this handbook and familiarize themselves with its contents and agree to all the policies and procedures contained within.*** The policies and procedures contained in in this handbook or part of the:

1. Certification terms of service that all candidates must accept at the time they register for an exam at ABCM (in the initial exam application)
2. ***ABCM Examination Candidate Agreement*** (the "Agreement") found at [ABCM Examination Candidate Agreement - AMERICAN BOARD OF CARDIOVASCULAR MEDICAL ACCREDITATION, INC. \(ABCM\) \(abcmcertification.com\)](https://www.abcmcertification.com/AMERICAN-BOARD-OF-CARDIOVASCULAR-MEDICAL-ACCREDITATION,INC.-ABCM)





ABCM certification examinations are made available to candidates exclusively under the terms and the Agreement, which constitutes a legally binding agreement between ABCM and the exam candidates. “You” as used herein refers to the candidate who will take or has taken an ABCM certification examination.

## 5.0 Exam Delivery

The ABCM partners with PROV Exams for delivery of online testing at either the candidate’s home, or at an authorized brick and mortar testing center. PROV Exams is a secure test delivery system for online testing. ABCM sends exam candidates a voucher and link to PROV Exams to set up their exams on a first-come, first-served basis by viewing a calendar of available dates and times. ABCM also offers pen and paper exams at regional sites where there are 40 or more exam candidates per site testing at once.

## 6.0 Impartiality Statement

The ABCM’s upper and lower management teams adhere to all principles of impartiality to ensure that its certification activities are undertaken fairly and objectively. ABCM is structured to segregate responsibilities within the organization to facilitate this commitment and to continually monitor processes to that end. ABCM understands the importance of impartiality when carrying out its certification activities, managing conflict of interest, and ensures objectivity of its certification activities. Any complaint or concern over impartiality is taken seriously and acted upon for immediate resolution.

## 7.0 Nondiscrimination Statement

The ABCM does not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, sex, gender, age, religion, or any other status that is protected by application of U.S. and international laws.

## 8.0 Terms and Conditions

As part of the certification program application process, applicants must acknowledge that they have read, understand, and have accepted the following terms and conditions in this certification handbook by signing the statement agreeing to its terms in your online application:

1. Certification terms of service found in this ***Certification Handbook***
2. ***ABCM Examination Candidate Agreement (ECA)***
3. ***Confidentiality Statement (ECS)***
4. agree to a code of ethical and professional conduct and responsibility

The following steps are required to earn an ABCM credential. Each section or step is outlined in detail in this handbook.

1. Exam eligibility requirements
2. Apply for an ABCM exam





3. Exam appointment scheduling
4. Exam overview
5. On the exam day
6. After the Exam

ABCM offers year-round testing. Once a candidate meets the eligibility requirements, the candidate can submit an exam application at the candidate's convenience and then must select a test date within the exam eligibility period of 180 days.

## 8.1 Exam Eligibility Requirements

### Professional Level Experience Required

ABCM defines professional level experience as:

1. The ability to use independent judgement and discretion in performing work **duties**.
2. Some authority for decision making.
3. In-dept work requirements outlined in job descriptions or job role models.
4. Interaction with people at multiple levels including decision makers.
5. Individual accountability for actions and results.

Eligible candidates have acquired the minimum years of required experience based on their educational level. And work level for the specific certifications, they select. Specific degrees are required to take some of the ABCM's certification exams, while others do not require a degree. An example of this would be an RN will have a nursing degree and is eligible to sit for only the nursing certification exams. And an NP or PA are required to hold a master's degree and may only take the ABCM NP/PA certification exams, etc. Technicians are considered paraprofessionals and as such do not earn academic degrees and therefore are not required to provide professional titles to sit for one of the lower-level ECG certification exams. Professional experience is required of all exam candidates, as the exams measure experience and knowledge gained on the job and through formal and informal education.

### Documenting Work Experience

Candidates must complete the Work Experience section of the application to document that the amount of professional-level work experience meets the eligibility requirements. The most recent experience will be helpful towards a candidate's eligibility. However, work experience does not need to be current or sequential. Candidates have a right to take a sabbatical from cardiology and still be eligible to return after taking the certification exam of choice.

Experience requirements for the following exams:





1. CVNP-BC or CVPA-BC – NP or PA with 2 years' experience in cardiology (preferably but not required to have been a cardiac registered nurse before becoming an NP or PA)
2. CVRN-BC Level I Exams – RN with 2 years' recommended experience as a non-acute or acute care cardiac RN (LPNs with experience may apply)
3. CVRN-BC Level II Exams – RN with 2 years' recommended experience as an acute care cardiac RN (LPNs with experience may apply)
4. Advanced ECG-BC Level III – MD, NP, or PA with 4 years' experience (RN and Techs may appeal the decision to allow testing at this higher level of electrocardiography with proof of adequate preparation)
5. 12-Lead ECG-BC Level II – RN, LPN, NP, PA, MD, CMT or ECG technicians with 2 years' experience
6. Basic ECG-BC Level I – RN, LPN, NP, PA, ECG and CMTs with 1 year experience

Appeals may be filed by lower-level staff wanting to sit for upper-level exams. An example would be a technician wanting to sit for the Advanced ECG exam or a Nurse wanting to sit for the NP/PA exam, etc. We do not want to set customers up for failure by allowing them to sit for exams above their educational levels.

## 8.2 Apply for an Exam

### Application Process

The application process is as follows:

1. Apply online by filling out the online application and submitting the exam payment
2. ABCM reviews the application to determine eligibility for a specific exam
3. Applicant to receive an email notification of application status (approved, need more information, or selected for random audit) or to provide the applicant with a voucher to the exam scheduler
4. All applicants are required to assure all info requested is provided.
5. ABCM checks the validity of each professional license provided to ensure the applicant is qualified for the exam they are applying for.
6. Once approved, the candidate must schedule an exam appointment within 180 days of their application and payment.

### Candidate Agreement

The ABCM's Candidate Agreement is a critical component of the Handbook. Candidates must accept and agree to all terms of the Agreement each time they register for and schedule an ABCM certification examination, and they must personally reaffirm their understanding and acceptance of its terms before commencing the exam on test day (must be completed each time you take the exam). The entire **Candidate Agreement** is provided in **Appendix B of the Certification Handbook** and online to be signed off as having read in the initial application form:

### Application Forms

To find application-related forms you may need, please visit <https://www.abcmcertification.com/initial-exam-applications.html> under the heading of Home.





### **Legal Name**

A candidate's full legal name including middle name, written in Latin characteristics as it appears on an official unexpired, valid government issued ID. This is the official name that will allow a candidate to be eligible to take the exam, and that will appear in the ABCM Directory of certified professionals as well as on the candidate's digital certificate once they successfully pass their exams. A copy of a government issued ID must be uploaded during your exam application process.

### **E-mail Address**

ABCM will use e-mail addresses as the primary identifier in online candidate profiles and for all communications. Because the e-mail address will be used with all online records, it is best to choose a permanent e-mail address for this purpose. If a work e-mail address is provided, remember to update it as needed (such as when changing jobs). ABCM also accepts mobile phone numbers as a means of verification and communication with candidates. Please complete an update to the mobile telephone section accordingly.

### **Form of Payment**

Individual candidates must pay for their own Exam with a credit or debit card in their own name, or by check or money order. We no longer accept third party payments unless it is for groups. Exam fees are subject to change at any time without prior notice. Please refer to [www.abcmcertification.com](http://www.abcmcertification.com) for the most current fees. All payments and fees must be in U.S. dollars. ABCM accepts Visa, MasterCard, American Express, Money order, certified or cashier's checks. And any company organizational checks. Certified and cashier's checks must be made payable to ABCM in U.S. dollars and drawn on a U.S. bank. Cash and personal checks are not accepted. Note: ABCM cannot begin reviewing an application until all payments have been received and processed.

For payments by certified check or money order, candidates must first complete the online application, then send payment via mail. If you are paying for a group or multiple candidates, a single check in U.S. dollars with the exact and total amount may be used to pay for the purchase. Caution, you will be responsible to include payment for any banking wire transaction fees when using wire transfer payment methods. Employers may not use credit cards to pay for groups of more than two applicants (a company check is required when paying for more than 2 exam candidates). Individual purchases of the exam must be made using a credit card in the name of the exam candidate, third party payments are not accepted.

### **Incomplete Payments**

ABCM will return certified checks, cashier's checks and money orders to the sender if sent without proper candidate identification. Please mail payments to ABCM Accounting Department: 5929 Sun City Center, FL 33571.

ABCM will invalidate a certificate if a candidate provides payment upon application but later cancels the payment for any reason. Even though a person has passed a certification exam, if their payment is denied for any reason, the ABCM will invalidate the credential and bill the person for the amount in question. The





candidate is responsible for paying the fee because they have received the service (no exceptions). If a third party managed to pay for the exam for a particular candidate, then disputes the payment because the candidate failed the exam, the candidate themselves will be legally bound to pay for the service they received and will be billed.

### **Submitting Vouchers**

ABCM offers large employers' pre-paid vouchers when they prepay for a group to test with ABCM. The voucher provides a unique code to be used in exchange for exam types and products. Vouchers do not have a monetary value and must be used for the exact purpose and designated exam products. A voucher is valid for 180 calendar days from the date of purchase. During the 180 days, vouchers are nonrefundable in whole or in part and must be redeemed in a single transaction (no remaining credit if not used in whole). Vouchers cannot be combined with any other discount offer or promotions.

Exam candidates who redeem vouchers for payment must follow all applicable eligibility and exam rules for that specific exam-type. If a candidate does not take the exam within the application eligibility period (180 days), the candidate must reapply to take an exam and pay all applicable fees using a new voucher or another payment method. The voucher's expiration date ends its validity and cannot be redeemed or be of any value to a candidate or organization that purchased the voucher(s).

### **Application Confirmation**

ABCM and most of its partners and vendors communicate using email. Therefore, you must provide an active email address in your application to ensure you receive all communications including notifications, confirmations, and reminders.

Within two to five business day (depending upon daily volume) of processing payment, ABCM will send you an auto-generated email to confirm receipt of your application. You will receive a separate email notification with the status of the application (approved, need more information, or selected for random audit). Once eligibility is approved, you must schedule an exam appointment within the application approval's eligibility period of 180 days.

### **Timeline for Response After Applying for an Exam**

Processing time for application-related items and forms:

Type of application	Processing Time
Application that does not require additional documents or is not selected for random auditing	Two-Five business day (depending on daily volume)
Application with a special testing accommodation request form submitted	Ten business days (excluding weekends and holidays)
Application that is selected for random audit	Ten business days (excluding weekends and holidays)
Exam type change form	Ten business days (excluding weekends and holidays)







### **Name Changes**

Once you have applied for your exam and identified yourself using your legal name, you must contact ABCM if there is a mistake in the spelling of your name, or your name legally changes. In addition, you must communicate with your legal name, (no alias names without identifying yourself by your legal name as well in the same communication that you are using your alias). To change a name legally, follow this process:

1. Complete the ***ABCM Name Change Request Form***
2. Provide a scanned copy of a certified or notarized document, marriage certificate, or government issued ID showing your name change. All documents must be officially issued, valid, and unexpired.
3. All the above items must be attached and submitted via the online application which can be found at [Name Change Request Form - AMERICAN BOARD OF CARDIOVASCULAR MEDICAL ACCREDITATION, INC. \(ABCM\) \(abcmcertification.com\)](https://www.abcmcertification.com). Once the change is made, ABCM will notify you via email and send an electronic copy of the corrected certificate at no charge. Fees only apply if a hard copy is requested.

### **Changes to Personal Information**

If your mailing address, email address and/or telephone number changes, please send changes to [needinfo@abcmcertification.com](mailto:needinfo@abcmcertification.com) with the subject line “Info Change Request.”

### **Application Under Review**

ABCM, at its sole discretion, can deny an application and set its status to “ineligible,” if it has information that supports the denial and has determined any of the following:

1. Documented experience fails to meet the eligibility requirements
2. Information on the exam application has been falsified or misrepresented
3. Documentation necessary to determine eligibility is not submitted

### **Exam Application Audit**

Although ABCM reviews each application in detail, therefore does not perform random audits on Candidates.

### **Request for Reconsideration (Appeal)**

A request for reconsideration allows an individual to appeal certain adverse non-disciplinary decisions made by ABCM as part of the exam eligibility, exam testing and recertification processes.

Non-disciplinary adverse decisions for which candidates may use this appeal process are limited to:

1. Denial of eligibility to take an exam
2. Concerns about an unsuccessful exam result
3. Test administration interruptions or errors caused by a testing vendor and resulting in an incomplete or failed exam





4. Rescheduling of exam by testing vendor
5. Extension of a deadline to accommodate a medical or personal emergency
6. Denial of recertification application

A request must be made using the **Request for Appeal Form** and submitted to ABCM within 10 business days of receiving the adverse determination. The request must be filed online at [File an Appeal - AMERICAN BOARD OF CARDIOVASCULAR MEDICAL ACCREDITATION, INC. \(ABCM\) \(abcmcertification.com\)](https://www.abcmcertification.com) include date of determination, details of the circumstances, the reason for the appeal, including relevant supporting materials not previously submitted, and individuals e-mail addresses, postal address, and a phone number where the individual can be reached.

The request will be reviewed with any additional information relevant to the appeal within 10 days of receipt of the request. If there is any reason for which impartiality might be questioned, the certification staff members will recuse themselves.

The appeal request will be reviewed by the Customer Service Manager (CSM), who will obtain and review any additional relevant information from the testing vendor within 10 to 15 days of receipt of the request, the CSM will notify the individual of the decision within five business days of the determination. The determination will be final and made without prejudice or adverse implications against the appellant, the vendor or ABCM.

Note: Requests for reconsideration do not apply to cancelled, invalidated, or withheld exam scores, or to investigation outcomes where decisions were made with all facts present.

### 8.3 Scheduling an Exam Appointment

ABCM partners with PROV Exams to deliver certification exams year-round online from the comfort of your home or at a designated testing center. The ABCM encourages you to schedule your exam appointment date as soon as your exam application has been approved. Exam dates for ABCM's certifications are available on a first come first serve basis. Scheduling early increases the chance you will receive your preferred testing date, time, and location.

#### **Scheduling an Exam Appointment**

Once you have received your Link to the PROV Exam scheduler from ABCM, you will want to be prepared to provide the following to PROV Exams:

1. Your official name, exactly as it appears on your valid, unexpired, government issued ID written in Latin characters (must be the same as the name used on your exam application form).
2. Provide a valid e-mail address to PROV Exams so they can send results.
3. Your daytime phone number.
4. The name of the exam you have been approved for.





5. Your preferred appointment date and time for either a virtual online proctored exam or a physical test center where you must choose a nearby location from PROV Exams list of approved sites.

Save your PROV Exam confirmation e-mail as proof that your appointment has been set in case an issue arises on your exam day.

### **Test Center Exams**

If you decide to take your exam at a designated testing center with PROV as the online proctor server, you will need to select a test center from their list of approved centers; select one to two alternate dates, times, and locations in the event your preferred choice is not available. In case of inclement weather PROV Exams and will notify you of any changes to test site availability due to severe weather, technical problem, or other unscheduled events. If there is severe weather, a local emergency or national emergency near the testing center, contact PROV Exams for updates on closures and delays, or contact ABCM for further guidance.

You will not be assessed a rescheduling fee if PROV Exams cancels an exam due to severe weather or a local or national emergency.

All testing centers approved by PROV have suitable testing environments such as lighting, temperature control, noise control, and provisions for persons with disabilities.

For those taking an Exam at a Hospital hosting a Live Exam site, be assured that the testing room selected will be a suitable environment such as have adequate lighting, temperature, noise control, and provisions for persons with disabilities.

### **Online Proctored Exams**

ABCM offers the option for an online proctored exam. This option for proctored online testing is neither mandatory nor always available in certain geographic areas due to internet instability. If this option is available and you decide to choose it, you may schedule testing 24/7 but not on major holidays. This online option is not a replacement, but an additional test delivery option to complement the regular PROV Exam centers throughout the US. Non-U.S. examinees must use the online testing format from a home or private office.

The online exam delivery system is administered by PROV Exams. The process uses live proctors who monitor the entire process with enhanced security features, allowing you to take the exam at your convenience from your home or private office. The delivery format for the online testing at home or your private office is the same experience as testing at a center, regardless of which delivery method you prefer.

### **Exam Appointment Rescheduling**

You must pay ABCM a non-refundable fee each time you change or cancel your appointment without proper notification time of 3 business days' notice; you are not guaranteed a new appointment for the time you need if you try to reschedule, remember scheduling is on a first come first serve basis. You must reschedule your exam appointment at least 3 business days before your original test date was scheduled or all fees will





be forfeited, and you will have to reschedule your exam appointment online with PROV Exams and pay the penalty to ABCM of \$75 for not notifying PROV Exams of your change in schedule 3 days prior to your scheduled exam.

### **How to Reschedule your Exam Online**

1. Log into your account with PROV Exams using the email address provided to you by PROV Exams.
2. Under Appointments, click on the exam that you need to re-schedule.
3. On the Exam appointment details page, click reschedule.
4. Select your new testing date and time. For test center changes, click on “Test Center” to see availability at other locations for your preferred date.
5. Pay ABCM the rescheduling fee online at [www.abcmcertification.com](http://www.abcmcertification.com).

A new confirmation will be sent to you by email with the new appointment date and time. If you do not receive a new appointment, contact PROV Exams immediately for resolution.

If you have an approved special testing accommodation and want to reschedule your appointment, it is your responsibility to verify with PROV Exams that the rescheduled exam appointment with this accommodation has been received and approved.

### **Refund Policy**

Once an exam application is approved, no refunds will be made if you simply change your mind or no longer wish to take the exam.

At its sole discretion ABCM may consider issuing a refund in certain situations, especially if an applicant is made ineligible. A processing fee will be applied in all situations. Fees are subject to change at any time and without prior notice.

Note: If a refund is authorized, their credit that was used for payment will be issued the credit. It may take up to two billing cycles for a refund to be reflected on a credit card statement.

### **No Show Policy**

You are considered a no show if you:

1. Are an inactive candidate (no response, no rescheduling, expired eligibility)
2. Arrive more than 15 minutes late for the exam appointment!
3. Do not appear for the exam appointment
4. Do not have proper or valid identification





5. Do not cancel the physical test center exam or online appointment at least three business days before the scheduled exam.

### **Medical or Personal Emergency Considerations**

A Medical or Personal Emergency is an unplanned event within three days or 36 hours of the exam appointment that prevents you from taking the exam. A medical or personal emergency may apply on a case-by-case basis to you or to one of your immediate family members (spouse, child, or parent) as defined by the family Medical Leave Act. Minor medical events or personal obligations that happen near your exam date are not considered medical or personal emergencies. If you encounter a medical or personal emergency, please contact ABCM by e-mail at [info@abcmcertification.com](mailto:info@abcmcertification.com) with the subject line “Medical Emergency, Must Reschedule,” or by phone at 813-812-7222. You must do so within 3 calendar days of the missed exam date. ABCM will work with each candidate on a case-by-case basis to decide the best course of action. Exams are rescheduled in the event of a medical or personal emergency and no refunds will be provided.

Disqualifiers: If you miss your exam appointment because you are too busy or are unprepared for your exam and change your mind, you will not receive a refund or any other exception. Work rescheduling emergencies or projects are not considered personal emergencies.

### **Exam Fee**

Fees are subject to change at any time without prior notice. Please refer to <https://www.abcmcertification.com> for the most current information available on fees.

### **Eligibility and Scheduling Requirements**

Candidates must meet all eligibility requirements to take an ABCM exam and make their exam appointment with our the PROV Exam scheduler as soon as the application is approved, and exam payment has been made.

You will receive an email stating your eligibility for the exam you applied for and a link to the exam scheduler will be sent in this same email if you are approved for your exam.

Once you have received your email notice of eligibility and the link to the PROV Exam scheduler, please note that it is valid for only 180 calendar days from the application approval date. This means that the exam must be scheduled and taken within those 180 days. If a candidate does not schedule a date to take the exam within 180 calendar days, the exam application eligibility expires, and the candidate will need to reapply and pay all applicable fees.

Once an exam is scheduled with PROV Exams, neither changing the exam type nor loss of interest in taking the exam are allowed. No refunds will be made if a candidate changes their mind or no longer wishes to take the exam.





### **Requesting Special Testing Accommodations**

ABCM attempts to accommodate candidates with certain disabilities who need special and reasonable arrangements to take their exam. Depending on the venue and request type ABCM will coordinate with PROV Exams to provide reasonable auxiliary aids and services.

Note: The online proctored exam venue offers very limited accommodation options, therefore, consider making a test center appointment when applying for special accommodations; note that there is an additional fee associated with testing center or brick and mortar centers that must be paid for by the exam candidate. The ABCM does not set these fees, you will need to check with PROV Exams who will be organizing your special needs Exam for associated fees.

Requests for special accommodation should be made during the application process. There is a designated box on the application form for disabilities, and you will need to also submit the required **Special Testing Accommodation Request Form** found at: [Application for Special Needs Accommodations - AMERICAN BOARD OF CARDIOVASCULAR MEDICAL ACCREDITATION, INC. \(ABCM\) \(abcmcertification.com\)](#)

Once you complete the applicant portion of the form, request that a professionally licensed or credentialed individual complete the documentation of disability related needs section of the Special Testing Accommodation Request Form. The description provided must include the type of disability, and an explanation of past accommodation made for your specific disability, along with any specific testing accommodation requested.

Note: ABCM's partner PROV Exams may not be able to fulfill all special accommodation requests. Additionally, PROV Exams will not be able to comply with the request if the operating conditions, local laws, or customs make the request unlawful, impossible, or economically unsound.

### **Delayed Application Requests**

If a candidate needs to submit a **Special Testing Accommodation Request Form** [Special Accommodations Request & Appeals - AMERICAN BOARD OF CARDIOVASCULAR MEDICINE, INC. \(ABCM\) \(abcmcertification.com\)](#) after having applied for and already scheduled an Exam with PROV Exams, the candidate must complete and apply for a Special Accommodations within the exam eligibility period of 180 days. The candidate must also cancel the already scheduled appointment at least three business days before they are scheduled to test.

Notice: Late accommodation requests are considered and handled on a case-by-case basis.

Once ABCM receives your completed Special Accommodations Form, we will review and coordinate with PROV Exams to set up the reasonable and available accommodation. You will be sent an e-mail notification from ABCM informing you to proceed to schedule a new exam appointment.





## 8.4 Exam Overview

### About the Exams

ABCM's exams are made up of a variety of questions or item types that require you to call on your professional experience to select the best answer. Questions are mostly multiple choice with a few true false questions.

Each exam includes scored questions and pretest questions randomly distributed throughout the exam. Pretest questions are not counted in the final scores. The length of time given to complete an exam depends on the exam type.

All questions are classified based on one of the following cognitive levels:

1. Knowledge/comprehension, recalling factual material, such as definitions.
2. Application/problem solving, applying familiar principles or generalizations to solve real medical problems.
3. Synthesis/evaluation: combining different elements and using critical thinking skills to solve a complex problem.

Visit <https://abcmcertification.com> to see the exam matrix for the exam you plan to take.

### Employment Law Changes

Employment laws are ever-changing, making it critical for the exam candidates to know their own institutions, laws and regulations regarding certification that are in effect at the time of their exam application.

### How are the Exams Developed?

ABCM follows certification industries best practice to create and update all exams. ABCM subject matter experts (SME's) are involved in every step of the exam development process, which is overseen by ABCM exam committee.

### Use of Pretest Questions Not Counted in Grading

ABCM is committed to offering exams that contain current and relevant content. We achieve this goal by reviewing current questions and developing new ones to reflect changes in the profession. The ABCM meets with the exam committee at the end of each calendar year to go over the performance of each exam question used during the year being surveyed. All exams include new questions that have not been used on previous versions of the exam type. These items are known as pretest questions.

ABCM includes pretest questions and its exams to gather valuable data about the new questions before they are included in future tests. These pretest questions are:





1. Not distinguished from actual test questions, so that no one will know what a pretest is and what is a real test question.
2. Scattered throughout the exam so you will answer them with the same care in which you would answer scored questions.
3. Not counted or included in determining the final exam score.

### **How is the Passing Score Set?**

ABCM uses the modified Angoff method to set the cut score on every exam, which is a common industry standard method of setting cut scores on credentialing exams.

The Angoff method uses field experts to determine the difficulty of each question. It defines the cut off score as the lowest score a minimally acceptable candidate is likely to achieve. At the beginning of the standard setting meeting, SME's discuss requirements to take the exam type, attributes of candidates who take the exam, and the characteristics of minimally qualified or minimally competent candidates (MCC) with respect to the credentialing type. After discussing the MCC, SMEs individually rate each item with respect to the MCC, where each rating is the expected percent of the MCCs who correctly answered and item. After the SMEs individually rate items, they discuss their ratings as a group with the goal of reflecting on the reasons for their rating and being able to adjust their rating based on their rationale from other SMEs with different career experiences. After one to two rounds of discussion and rating adjustment, the final recommended cut score is presented to ABCM as the average final-round sum of the ratings for an individual SME across all SMEs in the panel.

### **Why are Scaled Scores Used?**

The purpose of scaled scores is to ensure both fairness and consistency in reporting scores to all candidates. By using the modified Angoff model, scores are converted to a common scale to account for the difference in difficulty on multiple versions of an exam. ABCM also creates and maintains multiple versions of the exam for security reasons. As ABCM develops newer versions, some questions in each content area are replaced. These changes may cause one version to be slightly more difficult than another. To account for any such differences, ABCM uses a process known as equating, where we ensure all exams are scored fairly. The passing score for each exam type is set at 70, regardless of the version of an exam a candidate takes.

### **Preparing for an Exam**

There are no two exam candidates with the same professional experience and knowledge base, and exam candidates' cardiovascular knowledge and experiences vary tremendously. Therefore, it is not possible to train for the exam by reading certain books or memorizing specific information. The best way to decide how to prepare is to review the Exam study guides for applicable content in each functional area of the selected exam type. If additional learning resources are needed. By far the best way to prepare is to request the study guide for the exam you are preparing to take to study each item using up-to-date resources published within the past 5 years. There are a few targeted organizations who set the standards of education and practice for cardiac professionals, one may seek out including the Marriott Heart Foundation's Nursing and Nurse







Practitioner divisions (AACN and ACCNP), the American College of Cardiology (ACC), the American Heart Association (AHA), and a host of targeted societies such as the Heart Failure Society of America, or the Hypertension Society and so on, and a host of cardiology reference books are available.

### **Optional Retake Services**

The ABCM has a policy allowing for one retake of an exam for a discounted rate. If a candidate fails to pass the exam successfully on the second try, the candidate will be asked to wait for 60 days before taking the exam a third time at the full fee as listed at the time of application to retake. Candidates retaking the exam after a failure do not need to resubmit the exam application but must pay the online retake fee for the exam. Fees are subject to change without prior notice.

An e-mail notification will be sent to candidates who have paid the retake fee providing them with a new voucher and link to PROV Exams. Retake candidates do not need to resubmit an application. There is no waiting period for a first-time failure. Once a Candidate has received the voucher for a retake, it is their responsibility to schedule their exam appointment within the allotted 180-day exam eligibility period.

If an exam candidate purchases a retake of the exam and does not take the exam within the allotted time frame of 180 days, the application is deemed ineligible, and the fee, minus a processing fee, will be automatically refunded to the original method of payment or applied to a different exam type for which the candidate applies and is deemed eligible.

### **Exam Type Change**

Exam candidates may request an exam type change if an exam appointment has not already been scheduled with PROV Exams.

For instance, one may choose to take the CVRN I exam if they failed the CVRN II exam, or one failed the 12-Lead ECG Exam and chose to take the Basic ECG Exam instead of the more difficult level.

### **Requesting Exam Extension Time**

If an exam candidate has not already set up their exam date with PROV Exams, they may request an extension if they do so at least 10 days before the end of their 180-day time eligibility, the ABCM will extend the time another 30 days. Candidates must complete and submit an **Exam Eligibility Extension Form** found at: [Exam Eligibility Extension - AMERICAN BOARD OF CARDIOVASCULAR MEDICAL ACCREDITATION, INC. \(ABCM\) \(abcmcertification.com\)](https://www.abcmcertification.com). The requirements to apply and submit the extension form include:

1. Completing the request at least 10 calendar days prior to the end of the original eligibility period.
2. Provide a validated reason for the extension.

Once approved for an extension, ABCM will add 30 calendar days to the end of the original 180 calendar day eligibility period.

However, if a candidate has already scheduled their exam with PROV Exams, they must remember to reschedule with PROV Exams at least 3 days prior to their scheduled exam date to avoid a \$75 fee.





### Summary of Exam Application Status

Item	Credit Card or Voucher Payment
Application approved by ABCM	Candidate can schedule and take the exam within 180 calendar days from the application approval date.
Application made ineligible	The candidate must apply for the new exam type for which the candidate is eligible. Refund all except a \$65 processing per fee. Note: If payment was with a credit card, ABCM will issue a refund minus the processing fee.
Rescheduling an online Exam appointment: if you want to change the exam date within the original 180-day calendar period of eligibility, contact PROV Exams at least 3 days prior to any scheduled exam date to avoid financial penalty by PROV Exams.	An individual may reschedule their exam date or physical test center exam appointment provided it is done at least 3 business days prior to the appointment to avoid financial penalty.
Exam Eligibility Extension is for 30 days, if a candidate is unable to test within the original 180 calendar days of eligibility, the candidate may request an extension by completing the Exam Eligibility Extension Form online.	The request must be submitted at least 10 days before the 180-day calendar of eligibility expires. There are no extension fees for first time extensions, however there is a processing fee of \$25 if a second extension is requested. Fees are subject to change without prior notification.
Never miss scheduled exam appointments. Missed appointments are considered a No Show.	No show, no refund, exception, or extension will be provided. You will need to reapply and pay all applicable fees.

## 8.5 On the Exam Day

ABCM exams are administered one of two ways:

- 1) at a live exam site where there are 40 or more candidates testing at the same time with a live proctor onsite conducting the exam, or
- 2) by a highly secured online proctoring service called PROV Exams. You can either test in the comfort of your own home or at a regional testing Center designated by ABCM or PROV Exams.

When logging in for an online proctored exam or when taking an exam at a testing facility, a valid legal ID must be provided to the Proctor. Without a valid, unexpired, government issued photo ID showing the exact eligibility's full name written in Latin characters, the candidate cannot take the exam.

The candidate must cancel the appointment with PROV Exams at least 3 days before the actual exam date to avoid forfeiting exam eligibility and all associated fees.

Likewise, if a candidate arrives late, or without the required identification, matching the name under which the eligibility was approved, they will not be permitted to take the exam and will forfeit all associated fees unless there are emergency reasons for being late that can be documented. To submit an appeal of a decision, fill out the online Appeals form and submit it electronically.





### **Identification Requirements**

1. The first and last name on the ID must exactly match the first and last name on the exam application for which the candidate was deemed eligible.
2. All IDs required must be issued by the country in which the candidate is being tested. If the candidate does not have the qualifying ID issued from the country they are testing in, an international travel passport in Latin characters from their country or citizenship is required.
3. Candidate is required to present one form of original (no photocopies), valid (unexpired) government issued ID that includes their name, recent recognizable photograph, and signature.
4. Signature and Photo – If taking the exam online with PROV Exams, they will capture a photo of you before you start your exam and will ask you to produce your valid ID of which they will take a photo of.
5. Whether a live or online exam experience, your entire exam process will be videotaped should there ever be a need to determine impartiality or to verify that cheating did not take place during an exam, and to monitor the proctor servers to assure they are following policy and procedures during the onboarding of an exam and during the entire process.

### **Valid Acceptable forms of Identification**

1. International travel passport – cannot be expired
2. Driver’s license – cannot be expired
3. Military ID – cannot be expired
4. Alien registration card (green card, permanent resident, visa) – cannot be expired.

### **Use of Hyphenated Names**

If your last name is hyphenated, your ID must match at least one of the last names. Additionally, your signature must match the signature on the ID, and the picture on the ID must match the person presenting it.

### **PROV Test Center Rules**

The following rules are enforced for all testing sites including testing centers and home environments, to ensure a secure, fair, and consistent test experience for all test takers.

1. Arrive at the testing center, or log into your online proctored exam at least 15 minutes before your scheduled exam time.
2. If you miss your appointment or do not have a valid, unexpired photo ID, you cannot take the exam and will lose all your fees.
3. If you arrive more than 15 minutes late to your appointment, you may be refused admission or access to an exam, and exam fees may be forfeited.





4. You will be asked to present your valid photo ID.
5. Testing center administrators and online proctors are instructed to make a copy of your valid photo ID.
6. And your digital signature used to sign in for your exam must match the signature on your photo ID.
7. You will be directed to store any personal belongings in a testing center locker.
8. If taking your exam from home, you will be directed to remove all personal belongings from the desk area where you will be taking your exam.
9. This includes items such as mobile phones (turned off), other electronic devices, no ear buds of any kind are allowed, hat, purse or bag, coat, jacket, or additional outdoor accessories, or a smart watch.
10. You may not have pens, pencils, or paper present during your exam.
11. ABCM does allow one 5-minute unscheduled break if needed but may not take your cell phone with you during the break. Keep in mind this unscheduled break will take from your allotted time to take your exam. You will be screened upon return from the unscheduled break.
12. Note: If you are taking an online proctored exam, you cannot leave the Web camera view (except for one 5-minute restroom break), cannot mumble or read the questions out loud, or have wandering unfocused eye movements, otherwise, at the discretion of the Proctor, your exam may be immediately cancelled, and you will forfeit the exam seat and all fees associated.
13. You cannot leave the test center or your home desk computer during the exam or use a mobile device during the test or during your break.
14. Your exam will be terminated if you leave the test center or use a mobile device.
15. Study materials may not be reviewed or referenced during the examination or during any break and will result in your examination being terminated and your exam invalidated.
16. You cannot smoke during the examination whether taking live or online.
17. If testing at a testing center, religious headwear may be worn into the testing room, however it is required to be inspected by the testing center proctor before entry into the testing room is permitted. If testing at home on your own computer, religious headwear is not permitted.
18. If testing at a testing center, PROV Exams cannot guarantee a noise free environment, so in this case ABCM would allow a simple pair of earmuffs, not a headset wired or wireless, to





cancel out external noise and allow you to focus on the proctor's voice only (no ear buds allowed).

### **Comfort and Essential Aids**

Certain items defined as minor comfort aids are slowed in the testing room as soon as they are inspected by the proctor before they are brought into the testing room. These items include:

1. Tissues, such as Kleenex
2. Cough drops (must be unwrapped)
3. Pillow for supporting neck, back, or injured limb
4. Sweater, sweatshirt, or blazer (if the item has pockets and the candidate does not want to remove the item for inspection, the candidate will be asked to show that the pockets are empty)
5. Prescription eyeglasses and/or hearing aids
6. Neck braces or collars (worn by people with neck injuries)
7. Insulin pump attached to a person's body

### **Exam Processes for Online Exam Sites**

Candidates are sent their vouchers by ABCM to access PROV Exam's scheduler to set up a date and time for their exam. Instructions are sent to the candidate by PROV Exams that they will need when onboarding their online exams on exam day.

Online proctored exams are monitored with one-on-one proctors, and the sessions are all recorded as audio and video for retrieval by the ABCM administrative offices should there be an issue with a proctor or examinee. Examinees must conduct a virtual, web cam-based check in to launch an online proctoring exam session.

### **Some Steps to Follow**

1. It is important to be on time.
2. Have your driver's license available to show the proctor
3. Turn off browser pop-up blockers
4. You will be asked to shut down any non-essential application (such as email or chat)
5. Follow the link to the online exam as instructed by PROV Exams.
6. Sign into your ABCM account with PROV to start your exam.
7. Complete your system test to assure your computer is compatible.
8. Take the exam





Examinees can submit comments about specific exam items during the exam by following the on-screen instructions to type in comments. ABCM will review all comments submitted but will not respond to comments directly to the person who made them. Please note, however, you cannot ask questions about the exam content of anyone.

Upon completion of the online exam, a pass/fail notice is sent by PROV Exams approximately 24 hours after the completion of the exam.

Actual scores will come from ABCM within 3 days of taking the exam.

### **Exam Processes for Live Exam Sites**

At testing centers or brick and mortar facilities such as hospitals wanting to test large groups at one time, the exams are monitored by a single live proctor. These exam sites are not audio or video recorded unless the proctor must step out to the restroom and at the proctor's discretion, they can turn on video recording or have an ABCM approved backup proctor standby over the exam group or person until the designated proctor returns to the room. However, since there is a live person onsite at live exam sites minimizes the need for audio and video recordings as the proctor can give a first-hand account of what takes place at live exam sites. There are occasions where a testing center is selected by the candidate from PROV's list of approved testing centers, and in these cases, there is a one-on-one proctor who can monitor a single person without audio and video recordings being made. The proctors never leave the testing room even to take a restroom break, without having a backup proctor to stand in for a few minutes.

At live sites, there is no opportunity to provide feedback on the exam other than verbal comments made by examinees as they leave the exam site. However, examinees at these sites are encouraged to write a review about the experience if they so desire. Test results are processed and released one week after the live exam site is complete.

### **Cheating and Exam Security**

To protect and secure the integrity of its exams, ABCM retains the right to cancel any test score obtained in a questionable manner. Before you can take an ABCM certification exam, you must agree to **An Exam Confidentiality Statement found at:** [Examination Confidentiality Statement - AMERICAN BOARD OF CARDIOVASCULAR MEDICAL ACCREDITATION, INC. \(ABCM\) \(abcmcertification.com\)](https://www.abcmcertification.com/examination-confidentiality-statement). Failure to agree to the statement will prevent you from being able to take your exam.

This statement says, among other things, that you understand that the exam and the questions it contains are the exclusive property of ABCM. You must also confirm your understanding that you may not disclose, publish, reproduce, or transmit any part of the exam, in any form, by any means, whether oral, written, electronic, or mechanical formats, for any purpose, without the written permission of ABCM. This includes but is not limited to memorizing and sharing exam questions or topics with anyone, or comparing information taught in a certification preparation course with actual exam questions, in whole or in part. Theft or attempted theft of any exam content is punishable as a felony.





Violation of exam confidentiality is a serious ethical breach that could result in disciplinary actions by the ABCM, including possible suspension or revocation of a certification already earned.

### **Online Testing Requirements**

Remember when taking an online proctored exam, you cannot leave the web-camera area, take breaks, or mumble, or have wandering unfocused eye movements. Here are the requirements for taking an ABCM exam with our online proctors.

1. Must have a laptop or PC/MAC to take proctored exams on and a stable internet connection.
2. Have the desk area cleared of any paper, books, pens, pencils, listening devices, recording devices, cell phones, or any electronic devices whatever.
3. The proctor will scan the room and approve or disprove of the testing area.
4. You will need to have your valid state ID available for the proctor to scan.
4. Agree to the exam testing rules.
5. You will be video recorded during the entire exam process.
6. No breaks allowed when testing from home or private office.
7. The proctor may terminate the exam if an exam policy is violated.
8. You will get a pass or fail notice within an hour of your exam completion and a final score within the next week.
9. You will be able to print the pass/fail notice.
10. Please do not allow any person to be in the room with you during the exam.

### **ABCM's Right to Cancel, Invalidate and Withhold Scores**

ABCM is committed to reporting valid scores that accurately reflect a candidate's performance on an ABCM certification exam. ABCM therefore maintains test administration, security and scoring standards designed to assure that all candidates are given the same opportunity to demonstrate their abilities and to prevent some candidates from gaining an unfair advantage over others. ABCM reserves the right to conduct psychometric and statistical analyses of ABCM examination response data to identify potential irregularities and to ensure score validity. ABCM reserves the right to cancel, invalidate, or withhold test scores if any psychometric or statistical analysis provides a reasonable basis to question the test scores validity.

ABCM further reserves the right in its sole discretion to cancel, invalidate or withhold the examination score with reason to conclude that:

1. there is a reasonable basis to question the exam score validity
2. the test irregularity occurred before, during or after the administration of the exam





3. a candidate violated the terms of the candidate agreement
4. a violation of the policies and procedures of ABCMs exam administration has occurred

If ABCM cancels or invalidates an exam score because there is reasonable basis to question the exam score's validity, ABCM is not obligated to further investigate the matter or to determine whether any regularity or violation has occurred. ABCM may cancel or invalidate the score and provide the impacted candidate with another opportunity to take their exam later. If there is a reasonable basis to question the scores validity neither candidate nor other ABCM certificate holders are entitled to appeal ABCMs decision to cancel or invalidate a score.

In its sole discretion, the ABCM has the right to withhold exam scores pending the outcome of an investigation related to those scores, to determine whether an irregularity or violation has indeed taken place.

Neither candidates nor certificate holders are entitled to appeal ABCM's decision to withhold an exam score pending the investigation of a related matter. If there is a basis for withholding a score pending investigation, ABCM will inform the examinee in writing (by email) that the score is being withheld and then inform the examinee when the investigation is complete and provide the decision to be made by ABCM related to the exam score. If ABCM cancels or invalidates an exam score following an investigation and makes a finding that a candidate has previously passed and received certification, was found to have violated the terms of the candidate agreement or has participated it in a testing irregularity, ABCM may take any actions against the person in question.

To be perfectly straightforward, ABCM's complaints and disciplinary policy does not apply to ABCM decision to cancel, invalidate, or withhold and examination score of any candidate or certificate for any reason.

## 9.6 Examinee Violations and ABCM Investigations

### Violations and Testing Irregularities

If ABCM receives information that a testing irregularity has occurred and that an individual has violated the terms of the Certification Terms of Use, the candidate agreement, the exam handbook, or any conduct of one or more persons, or events or conditions of testing may have been compromised or puts the exams in jeopardy of a future compromise, and/or threatens the integrity or validity of the exam in question.

In its sole discretion, the ABCM reserves the right, but is not obligated, to investigate the matter and gather all relevant facts with which to determine what actions, if any, must be taken in response to the facts presented.

Upon receiving notice from ABCM that an investigation has been opened, the exam candidate should:

1. Cooperate with the investigation.
2. Disclose to ABCM or its designee all knowledge that could potentially relate to the investigation.
3. Produce all documents and materials requested by ABCM or its designee.







4. Upon request, agree to either an in person or remote (virtual) interview conducted by or on behalf of ABCM.
5. Answer truthfully and completely all questions asked by ABCM or its designee.

If a person refuses to cooperate with any investigation or presents false or misleading information in relation to the investigation, the ABCM will consider these actions or lack of, a material breach of the Candidate Agreement. In this case the ABCM will take the following action against the person.

1. Prohibit the candidate from taking an ABCM certification examination for a fixed period or indefinitely.
2. Cancel the candidates' ABCM Exam appointment, prior to them taking the exam and, if the test is being administered in person, require the candidate to leave the testing center.
3. Invalidate or cancel the candidates score, before or after scores are reported, without a refund.
4. If the candidate previously passed an exam and obtained an ABCM certification, suspend or revoke all their ABCM certifications for a fixed period or indefinitely.
5. Pursue civil legal action against the candidate.
6. Refer the matter for criminal prosecution if the candidate engaged in criminal conduct.

#### **ABCM has Right to Deny, Suspend, or Withdraw a Certification**

##### **EXPLANATION OF TERMS:**

**“Denial”** is the temporary refusal by ABCM to provide a certification to a candidate seeking certification or re-certification.

**“Suspension”** refers to a temporary removal of a person’s certification, typically while awaiting a corrective action, payment, corrections to records, or some other condition that can be resolved.

**“Withdrawal”** is the complete cancellation or removal of a person’s certification, typically due to a violation of an ABCM policy, rule or contractual agreement, or some other serious infraction.

#### **ABCM Procedure for Denial, Suspension, or withdrawal of Certification:**

Candidates seeking certification shall undergo the necessary application and examination per the rules for each specific certification scheme. After the examination, a decision on certification is made per the procedure ***Certification Council & Final Certification Decisions***.

A **Denial** may be issued when a candidate fails the examination or where other problems arise which cause ABCM to elect not to issue certification. Denials are a temporary condition, and the applicant may submit a | new application for reconsideration.





- Assuming the decision has been to grant the certification, the certified person must then maintain their eligibility per the specific requirements defined in the appropriate **Certification Scheme** document.
- The ABCM may elect to suspend or withdraw a certification when certain conditions arise. These include violation of ABCM terms and conditions, professional conduct, or if evidence arises which brings into question the validity of the certified person’s original certification.
- A decision for suspension or withdrawal is typically made by the President but may also come from a decision issued by the Certification Council (CC) or Board.
- For suspensions or withdrawals, the certified person is notified via email of the decision.
- In all cases – for denials, suspensions, or withdrawals – the person is notified of their right to appeal per the procedure **Complaints & Appeals**.
- The **ABCM Examination Candidate Agreement** provides legally enforceable requirements for each candidate, prohibiting them from promoting their certification while it is suspended, and/or removing all references for their certification if withdrawn.

#### **Suspensions:**

For certified persons who have their certification suspended, the ABCM will provide an explanation of the conditions that brought on the suspension, and a description of what corrective actions must be taken by the person to restore the suspension.

- This explanation must also include a defined period for the corrective actions to be completed, or the suspension will be converted to a withdrawal.
- During the suspension, the person must continue to adhere to the rules defined in the procedure **References to ABCM Certification & Use of Marks**.
- In all cases, a suspension may not exceed six (6) months; any suspension exceeding six months must be converted to a withdrawal.
- Once the person has provided ABCM evidence of the corrective action, the President, CC or Board will review the evidence and decide on whether to lift the suspension.
- If the decision is to maintain the suspension, and if six months has not elapsed, the person will be informed of what further actions are required. If the six-month period has elapsed, the suspension will be converted to a withdrawal.
- If the decision is to lift the suspension, the person is notified, and their suspension is lifted. The necessary records (see section 5) are updated accordingly.

#### **Withdrawals:**

- For certified persons who have their certification withdrawn, the ABCM will provide an explanation of the conditions that brought on the withdrawal.
- Persons with withdrawn certificates are also notified of their obligations to comply with the rules defined in the procedure **References to ABCM Certification & Use of Marks** which remove their right to use the ABCM mark or claim certification.





### **Filing Appeals for Disputes under Investigation**

The candidate requesting an appeal is required to file an online request by email for appeal at: [File an Appeal - AMERICAN BOARD OF CARDIOVASCULAR MEDICAL ACCREDITATION, INC. \(ABCM\) \(abcmcertification.com\)](#), providing your statement describing the grounds for the appeal, why the appeal should be granted and all supporting evidence, with ABCM, within 30 days of receipt of the written violation notice and the sanctions to be imposed by ABCM for the violation.

In rendering a final decision, ABCM will consider whether their staff acted reasonably in good faith and in accordance with its own policy and procedures. If the candidate does not respond within 30 days of receiving the violation notice, the appeal will not be considered.

The initial appeal will be decided by ABCM staff who will render a written decision on the appeal within 30 days of receiving all the appellants submission documents. ABCM will let the candidate know after 30 days of their decision, and if ABCM will pursue a civil legal action against the appellant or refer the matter for criminal prosecution. The appellant has 30 days after ABCM's decision to file a second appeal which will be handed off to an independent committee of now ABCM employees for review and a decision. Once the committee has decided and informed the appellant, there are no further appeal opportunities allowed by ABCM.

## **8.6 What Happens After Candidates Take an Exam**

### **Scoring and Results Reporting**

If testing online from a home or private office, or at an independent testing center, candidates will receive a pass/fail notice within 24 hours of testing and are notified by email. Actual scores will be available in one to three business days and will also be sent by email. The results will be available to ABCM at the same time they are available to the exam candidates and will be sent by PROV Exams.

If testing at a hospital or facility arranged by a hospital or corporation, and if the test is administered by pen and paper rather than online, the results will be available 3 business days after the completion of the exam and will be issued by email from ABCM.

If you have not received notification of your exam results five business days after taking the exam, contact ABCM by sending an e-mail to [info@abcmcertification.com](mailto:info@abcmcertification.com) with the subject line "Not Received Results for Online Test" and state the date you took the exam and if online with PROV or live with ABCM.

### **Electronic and Hard Copy of Certificates**

ABCM now sends both electronic copies of an official certificate by email, and the official hard copy of the certificate in the mail to successful first-time exam candidates. ABCM sends out a renewed certificate email and a hard copy in the mail to those recertifying; the electronic copy should be downloaded and printed and stored in personal files for later retrieval. Those needing a copy because it was lost or damaged will be required to pay a small processing fee for the replacement in the mail.





### **Candidate Testing Complaints and Issues**

If you encounter problems with the proctoring of your exam either online or at a live exam site, you will need to fill out a complaint form found at found at: [File a Complaint - AMERICAN BOARD OF CARDIOVASCULAR MEDICAL ACCREDITATION, INC. \(ABCM\) \(abcmcertification.com\)](https://www.abcmcertification.com). The form is submitted electronically, and you will receive feedback within three business days of receipt of your complaint form. ABCM may not have a resolution at the time they respond but will inform you what steps are being taken to remedy the situation.

### **The Exam Report**

ABCM and PROV both inform exam candidates of passing or failing their exam by email. Each exam has a scaled score, which depends on the exam taken. If a candidate is unsuccessful and did not pass their exam the first time, they will receive a scaled score indicating how far from the passing score they were. An explanation of the candidate performance level on each of the exam topic areas is also provided. This performance level report helps the candidate by giving them scores in each category of testing as a guide for future studies whether the candidate passed their exam or not. Provided the candidate meets the requirements for certification in the application process and scores well in the certification exam and there are no issues or irregularities or concern, the ABCM will then base the sole decision based on the candidate having met the requirements.

### **Retaking the Exam**

After two unsuccessful tries at an Exam, Candidates have a 60-day study period before they can reschedule and retake their exam (if there are documented extenuating circumstances such as an employer is suspending the candidate without pay, the ABCM will reconsider the policy). The candidate must then go to [www.abcmcertification.com](https://www.abcmcertification.com) and pay for the retake of their specific exam after the 60-day study period. They will then be contacted by ABCM who will issue a new exam voucher to reschedule. It is the candidates responsible to contact ABCM when they are ready to retest by paying their exam retake fee and communicate by email with ABCM that they are applying to retake their exam with the subject line "Retake Exam" [info@abcmcertification.com](mailto:info@abcmcertification.com); ABCM does not send a reminder notice, so mark your calendar and follow through after the 60-day study period.

### **How Long is a Certification Valid for?**

All ABCM certifications are valid for a 3-year renewable period. Renewal requires the candidate to visit the website at [abcmcertification.com](https://www.abcmcertification.com) and pay their recertification fee, and then to fill out the recertification application online. During the application process, the candidate will be asked to upload the appropriate number of CEs or CMEs (have them scanned and saved in a computer file for easy retrieval) completed in the topic area of certification. The candidate will also be required to upload a copy of their valid ID (have scanned and saved in a computer file for easy retrieval).

### **Rules for use of ABCM Credentials - Recertification:**

To use any credential awarded by ABCM, the candidate must have successfully completed and passed their examination. To continue to use any credential awarded by ABCM after the 3-year renewal period, the





candidate must have paid the renewal fee, obtained the appropriate number of CEs required for their specific certification and uploaded them into their recertification application along with a copy of their valid state ID for verification four weeks prior to the end of their 3-year renewal period.

The ABCM considers changes in regulatory requirements, scheme requirements as dictated by changing industry, risk of a person becoming stagnant less they are forced to continue to study, and the frequency of surveillance of certified persons ongoing learning all provide the rationale for hosting a 3-year renewal period rather than a 5-year period such as other certification bodies require.

Failure to submit a recertification application early (four weeks) will most likely result in expiration of the credential and then the candidate will not be allowed to use the credential for any reason until recertification has been completed and notification sent out to the candidate.

#### CE Requirements for Each Certification Scheme:

- Advanced ECG Reading Level III = 15 CE/CME over three years
- 12-Lead ECG Reading Level II = 15 CE/CME over three years
- Basic ECG Reading Level I = 15 CE/CME over three years
- Cardiovascular Nurse Practitioners Level IV = 30 CE/CME over three years
- Cardiovascular Physician Assistants Level IV = 30 CE/CME over three years
- Cardiovascular Nursing Level I = 30 CE/CME over three years
- Cardiovascular Nursing Level II = 30 CE/CME over three years

If CE/CME requirements are not met on time, certification status will be placed in a suspension mode until the corrected documentation is provided. Notification will be provided by email to those affected by this policy.

#### **Credentials offered by ABCM:**

The following credentials are given out by ABCM to successful candidates and may be used for professional advancement if they are valid:

- Advanced ECG Reading Level III = Advanced ECG-BC
- 12-Lead ECG Reading Level II = 12Lead ECG-BC
- Basic ECG Reading Level I = Basic ECG-BC
- Cardiovascular Nurse Practitioners Level IV = CVNP-BC
- Cardiovascular Physician Assistants Level IV = CVPA-BC
- Cardiovascular Nursing Level I = CVRN-BC
- Cardiovascular Nursing Level II = CVRN-BC

#### Sample Use of a Credentials:

*James Swinley, MD, Advanced ECG-BC*

*James Swinley, BS, ECG Tech -12Lead ECG-BC*





*James Swinley, CMT – Basic ECG-BC*  
*Donna Stevens, ACNP, MSN, CVNP-BC*  
*Donna Stevens, MS - CVPA-BC*  
*Candice Owens, BSN - CVRN-BC*  
*Candice Owens, MSN - CVRN-BC*

If you are uncertain as to how to use your credential, reach out to ABCM for assistance at [needinfo@abcmcertification.com](mailto:needinfo@abcmcertification.com) with the subject line of “Use of Credential.”

### **Confidentiality**

ABCM will not disclose any professional or personal confidential information about a certification holder, unless authorized in writing by the certification holder or as required by law. This includes information on any documentation regarding a disability and the need for accommodation in testing. Certification status is not considered confidential information. Approval to provide a certified persons certification status is the only info that ABCM releases to 3<sup>rd</sup> party verifiers. Candidates must agree to the release of information in their initial application process.

### **Exam Results are Considered Confidential**

Exam results are considered confidential and are released only to the individual candidate unless a signed release is provided in advance. Results are not released by phone. They are released both by email notification, and by sending the results in written form in the US mail.

All personal information submitted by exam candidates and those already holding a certification with their application is kept confidential.

### **Application Status is Confidential**

A candidate’s application status is considered confidential and will not be disclosed to any third party by phone, by email, or by any other means.

### **Aggregate Data is Confidential**

Aggregate exam statistics, studies, and reports about applicants or certification holders will not contain information that would allow a third party to identify a candidate or person holding a certification with ABCM.





## Appendix A: Manual Approval and Revision History

Rev.	Nature of Change(s)	Release Date	Approved By
0	Original release.	15 Dec 2022	J. Cooper
1	Updated to improve text overall.	9 Feb 2023	J. Cooper
2	Updated for ISO 17024 conformity.	1 July 2023	J. Cooper

## Appendix B: ABCM Examination Candidate Agreement

Read and agree to having read it and agree with its stipulations when you fill out the actual exam application.

### ABCM Examination Candidate Agreement Rev. 0

The ABCM's Examination Candidate Agreement (ECA) is a legally binding contract between you and ABCM that sets forth the terms and conditions under which ABCM will permit you to take an ABCM certification examination. You must read, acknowledge, and accept the terms of this ECA before you are permitted to register for, schedule and take an ABCM examination. If you do not agree to the terms of this ECA, you will not be permitted to register for or take any ABCM examination. Adherence to the ECA is necessary to enable ABCM to maintain fair examinations, ensure the validity of examination results and maintain the integrity and value of ABCM's professional cardiology certifications.

***In the Exam application you will be asked to sign that you affirm to ABCM that all the below representations and statements to ABCM, are true and correct, and you are acknowledging that you have read and understand all these requirements, rules, and policies, and that you agree to abide by all of them.***

- I affirm that I will inform ABCM if there is any reason that I cannot continue to perform my certification requirements in a timely manner or within 5 days of the knowledge of my inability to continue my responsibilities.
- I affirm that I am the person whose name and address appears on my ABCM certification application, my registration for this, ABCM examination, and the government issued photo identification that I will present or have presented with my application. At the time, I created an account with ABCM, I read and accepted the certification terms of service, and I understand that my participation in ABCM's certification programs, including the certification application process, is governed by the certification terms of service, as well as the terms contained in this ECA and the certification policies and procedures handbook, and I agree to abide by all of the policies, procedures, terms and conditions contained herein. I am taking this ABCM examination solely for the purpose of pursuing the ABCM certification for which I have applied, and for no other purpose. I affirm that I am not taking the ABCM examination on behalf of any other person. I affirmed that all information that I provided to ABCM at the time of my certification application and my registration for this examination and at any time thereafter are complete, accurate and completely true. And that, if any of the information that I previously provided to ABCM has changed since the time I provided it, I have submitted updated information that is complete, accurate and true, and reflects all such changes. I understand that providing false, misleading, or incomplete information to ABCM shall be considered a violation of the ECA and will be subject me to one or more of the consequences provided herein for violations of the ECA.





- I understand and agree that, as a condition of taking the ABCM’s examination in person at a test center, I am subject to security screening prior to admission and readmission to the building and or room where the ABCM examination is administered. I further understand and agree that the security screening process for in person testing at a test center may include requiring me to:
  - Demonstrate that my pockets are empty.
  - Remove any backpack, bag, jacket, and/or noncorrective eyewear, glasses, sunglasses, coat, hooded sweatshirt, scarf, or hat. These items are prohibited.
  - Identify any item you are wearing or holding that can be exempted as a genuine religious prop.
  - Lift pant legs up or push my sleeves up to my elbows if requested.
  - Submit personal items for inspection by a test administrator at live testing sites.
- I understand and agree that I will not be permitted to take or resume taking an examination if I refuse to submit to security screening as described above or to remove the item(s) prohibited. Personal items, except for a genuine religious purpose prior to entering the room where the ABCM examination is administered, are at the sole discretion of test administrator.
- I further understand and agree that if I am taking a remote online proctored exam from my home office through ABCM’s test administration vendor PROV Exams, I have the sole and exclusive responsibility to ensure that I have the required computer devices, computer operating system, software, browser, uninterrupted Internet connection and electrical power required to take the ABCM exam remotely.
- I understand that these requirements are explained on our website and that I am also responsible for taking note of them and being prepared. I am also responsible for creating a suitable testing environment, and successfully completing the PROV Exam systems check prior to taking the remote online proctored ABCM exam, which are also detailed on our website. I understand that ABCM is not responsible for any technical problems that my computer devices, or operating system, software, browser, internet connection, or electrical power may interrupt, delay, or interfere with my ability to start, take, or complete a remote online proctored ABCM exam. If I experience a technical problem in any of these areas, during the administration of a remote online proctored ABCM exam, I understand that I must notify the remote Proctor at PROV Exams immediately and follow the proctors’ instructions.
- I further understand and agree that ABCM, its authorized and trusted test centers and the test administration vendor (PROV Exams) and acting on behalf of ABCM will take and use still digital photographs of me, video and audio recordings of me, and collect and use other personally identifiable information from me and about me for the purpose of monitoring, administrative, proctoring and or providing technical support of ABCM examination administrators, all of which will be retained and possessed as part of my ABCM examination administration records. For remote online proctored ABCM exams, ABCM authorized and trust to test administration vendors (PROV Exams), test administrators, and proctors, acting on behalf of ABCM, will monitor live video and audio feeds of me and the physical location where I am testing. For example, the room in my home or office where I will test, all of which will be recorded, processed, and retained as part of my ABCM examination administered records. I understand and agree that I am taking a remote online proctored exam from my home office, and I am obligated to take and submit digital photographs of my testing environment, my government issued valid photo identification and my face. I have carefully reviewed additional details and requirements about ABCM’s remote online exam administration process and procedures at ABCM’s website. I understand that I can obtain additional information concerning the collection, transmission, processing, and retention of my personal data including, without limitation, photographs and video and audio recordings by reading ABCM’s privacy policy.
- I understand and agree that the following conduct, whether attempted or completed, is strictly prohibited:







- Copying, capturing, recording, collecting, reconstructing, memorizing, discussing, soliciting, transmitting, broadcasting, streaming, or distributing ABCM examination content to anyone.
  - Giving or receiving unauthorized assistance on an ABCM exam.
  - Viewing the content of another examinee’s computer display or exam papers during an ABCM exam.
  - Possessing or accessing prohibited personal items while inside a room where an ABCM’s exam is being administered.
  - Taking an ABCM examination on behalf of another person.
  - Possessing, accessing, or using a cellular phone or any device that connects to a cellular network or the internet while inside a room where an ABCM examination is being administered, or in any location during unscheduled examination breaks, other than the computer on which you are taking the examination.
  - Possessing, accessing, or using any electronic device, camera, recording device, or photographic equipment of any kind while inside a room where an ABCM examination is being administered.
  - Possessing, accessing, or using any books, notes, paper, notetaking materials, study materials, or test taking aids of any kind while inside a room where an ABCM exam is being administered, or in any location during unscheduled exam breaks, speaking out loud to yourself or any other person during a remote online proctored exam administered at your home or home office.
  - Intentionally positioning yourself so that you are not visible or only partially visible to the webcam on your computer during a remote online proctored exam administered at your Home Office.
  - Failing or refusing to submit to security screening or the inspection of personal items upon request by a test administrator or any time prior to or during an ABCM examination.
  - Failing to or refusing to strictly comply with the instructions and request of a test administrator at any time prior to or during the ABCM exam administration.
  - Engaging in disruptive, threatening, abusive or disrespectful behavior in or near any building where an ABCM exam is being administered.
  - For remote online, proctored ABCM exams, obstructing the visibility of yourself or your surroundings from the webcam, or moving out of the view of the webcam.
  - Talking or communicating with anyone other than a test proctor, or other approved test reader (if requested and approved in advance) while inside a room where an ABCM exam is being administered.
- I understand and agree that engaging in any of the above-described prohibited conduct shall be considered a violation of the CEA. I agree to follow the instructions and request of all test administrators and proctors and understand that my failure or refusal to follow instructions or comply with request from a test administrator or proctor shall be considered a violation of the CEA.
  - I am aware that ABCM examinations are considered confidential, and that their contents are disclosed to me at the time of test administration in a limited context to permit me to test in pursuit of the ABCM certification for which I have applied, and for no other purpose. I understand that ABCM’s examinations, questions, reading passages, answer choices, graphic images, and all related examination content contained within ABPM exams are protected by the United States and International copyright laws, and that ABCM examination content is a trade secret under the United States and International law. I agree that I will not discuss or disclose ABCM examination content orally, in writing, or on the internet, or through any other medium existing today or invented in the future.
  - I agree that I will not copy, reproduce, adapt, disclose, or transmit ABCM’s examination content, in whole or in part, or assist or solicit anyone else in doing the same. I further agree that I will not reconstruct ABCM examination content from memory, by dictation, or by any other means, for any purpose. I understand that prohibited acts under these terms include but are not limited to describing questions, answer choices, hypothetical scenarios, reading passages, images or graphics from any ABCM examination; identifying terms or concepts contained in exam questions or responses; sharing answers to questions; referring others to information I saw on the exam; reconstructing a list of topics on the exam; soliciting or discussing exam questions, answer choices, reading passages, images, graphics, or topics in person, through telephonic or electronic communication, or on





internet chat rooms, social media, private or public groups, message boards, forums, or through any other means of communication.

- I understand and agree that I am also not permitted to possess, solicit, read, study from, study or otherwise use confidential information about ABCM exams during my own exam preparation. I affirm that I have not engaged in such conduct prior to taking this ABCM exam and that I will not engage in such conduct during or after the exam. I also agree not to ask for other individuals to disclose exam content to me or to seek out actual live, confidential exam content from any other source. I agree that if I received or have access to information or materials in any form and from any source, including but not limited to e-mail, instant messages, text messages, website content, social media post, electronic bulletin boards, internet based groups, digital or electronic files, and/or paper documents that I personally believe contains confidential ABCM exam content, or has been represented to contain ABCM exam content, I will immediately report its existence to ABCM. I agree that I will fully cooperate with an investigation by ABCM related to my receipt or access to information believed or represented to contain ABCM exam content.
- I understand and agree that ABCM reserves the right to use statistical and psychometric analyses to evaluate the validity of examination response data and sources. I understand and agree that ABCM utilizes these reliable scientific methods to determine whether scores should be withheld, invalidated, canceled, or investigated further to determine whether a candidate violated the terms of the CEA. I further understand and agree that, if ABCM has a reasonable basis to question examination response data or examination results, whether identified through the use of statistical analysis, psychometric analysis or any other reliable method or source of information, ABCM reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to withhold, cancel and invalidate examination scores, without any requirement to demonstrate that I or any other candidate violated the terms of the candidate agreement. I agree that if ABCM invalidates my examination score, I will not be entitled to a refund for the examination, and I will be required to pay the established fee to take the examination again if I am permitted by ABCM to take the exam again.
- I understand and agree that ABCM reserves the right to, but is not obligated to, investigate any alleged violation of this CEA or any alleged activity or circumstances that may compromise the validity, integrity, or security of any portion of an ABCM examination, or the results thereof. Upon receiving notice from ABCM that it is investigating an alleged violation related to the examination, I understand and agree that I am required to:
  - Fully cooperate with the investigation.
  - Disclosed to ABCM all knowledge that could potentially relate to the investigation.
  - Produce all documents, data and materials requested by ABCM.
  - Upon request, submit to an in person or remote interview, in ABCM's sole discretion, conducted by or on behalf of ABCM.
  - Truthfully and completely answer all questions asked by ABCM.
- I also understand and agree that if I provide false or misleading information to ABCM at any time, violate the terms of this CEA, refuse to comply with any directions given to me by a test administrator, engage in any activity that may compromise the validity, integrity, or security of any ABCM examination, or fail to fully cooperate in any investigation related to ABCM's examinations, that ABCM may, in its sole discretion, directly or through its authorized representatives:
  - Interrupt, suspend and or terminate the administration of my ABCM examination.
  - Confiscate any items from me during an ABCM examination administration that a test administrator reasonably believes is relevant to a potential violation of this CEA, including, but not limited to, notes, electronic devices, and prohibited personal items.
  - Withhold, cancel, or invalidate my examination scores, before or after the scores are reported, without a refund.
  - Prohibit or disqualify me from taking ABCM examinations for a fixed period or permanently.





- Impose special conditions on taking future ABCM examinations.
  - If I previously passed an ABCM certification exam and obtained any ABCM certification, suspend or revoke any or all my ABCM certifications for a fixed period or indefinitely.
  - ABCM may pursue a civil lawsuit against me based upon my conduct in violation of the CEA and or refer the matter for criminal prosecution by state and/or federal authorities or any government agency with jurisdiction.
- I will not represent myself as certified by ABCM unless and until I received an official written communication from ABCM advising me that ABCM has determined that I have met all requirements of certification and that ABCM has granted me a certification for which I have applied.

By signing, I am representing to ABCM that all the prior information, statements, and affirmations that I have provided to ABCM are true and correct, including but not limited to all my affirmations contained in this CEA. I am further confirming my agreement to all the terms and conditions set forth in this CEA, including, without limitation, the consequences for making false or misleading statements to ABCM, and for violating any terms of this candidate agreement.

If there is any part of this candidate agreement that you do not understand or agree with, you are not permitted to register for or take any ABCM examinations.

#### **PROV Exams Online and at Testing Centers**

PROV Exams provides ABCM with remote proctoring services for our online examinations as well as they can set up appointments at designated testing centers approved by PROV Exams. I understand that I will be taking the exam online whether from my home or at a designated testing center and that I will pay an extra fee to take my certification examination at a designated testing center. I further understand that I will be taking the exam online whether I am taking it from my home or a designated testing center. I take full responsibility to pre-pay ABCM for taking my examination at a designated testing center.

#### **ABCM Code of Ethics**

The ABCM's Code of Ethics, has been adopted to advance and uphold the highest standards of service and conduct recognized by all certified persons using any of the following credentials: Advanced ECG-BC, 12 Lead ECG-BC, Basic ECG-BC or CMT-BC, CVNP-BC, CVPA-BC, or CVRN-BC.

Holding an ABCM certification obligates the user to comply with the mandates and requirements of all applicable laws and regulations of the certification body. All certified people are required to act in an ethical and professional manner by adhering to these standards and ensuring public confidence in the integrity of their profession.

#### **Professional Responsibility**

As an ABCM certified person, you accept professional responsibility for both your individual decisions and actions. As an advocate for the Cardiology profession, you should engage in educational activities that enhance the knowledge and perceived value of the organization.

#### **Professional Development**

As an ABCM certified person, you must meet the highest standards of competence and commit to strengthen your competencies.





Certified persons must commit to continuous learning, skills development, and applications of new knowledge related to both cardiology management and the success of the organizations you serve. ABCM requires proof of continuing education relevant to the certification held every three years to maintain the certification obtained.

**ABCM Complaints and Disciplinary Policy – Agree to the terms and conditions of the Candidate Agreement during the initial exam application, so be sure to read this document carefully.**

You must agree that you have read, understand, accept, and agree with the terms and conditions of this Candidate Agreement. By agreeing that you have read and agree to this document in your application form, that it is as good as applying your written or electronic signature to this Candidate Agreement itself. You must agree to the certification terms of service, the full candidate agreement, code of ethical and professional responsibility, and ABCM's certification policies and procedures in this Certification Handbook.

