



Becoming Certified in Addiction Medicine

ASAM Review Course

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Financial Disclosure

- No financial conflicts of interest to disclose



Objectives



- Describe the pathways to American Board of Preventive Medicine (ABPM) certification.
- List the criteria to be eligible to take the Addiction Medicine certification exam.
- Review the certification exam content and timeline.
- Identify ABPM resources to assist diplomates to meet ABPM requirements.

Eligibility Requirements & Pathways to Certification

Key Eligibility Requirements

Primary Specialty Certification

American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS)
Member Board
American Osteopathic Association (AOA)
Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC)
College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC)

Medical License

Current, unrestricted, and valid in US or Canada; no license may be restricted, revoked, suspended, or currently under such notice

Medical Degree

Training or Experience in Addiction Medicine

Practice Pathway (through 2025)
ACGME-Accredited Fellowship in Addiction Medicine

Practice Pathway



- Eligible physicians have significant Addiction Medicine practice experience or training but have not completed an ACGME-accredited Addiction Medicine fellowship.
- The Practice Pathway is open through the 2025 exam cycle.



ACGME-Accredited Fellowship Pathway

- Successful completion of an ACGME-accredited fellowship program is required.
 - At least 12 months in duration
 - If fellowship is longer than 12 months, physicians must complete all years of training for which the fellowship program is accredited.
- Addiction Medicine fellowship programs began ACGME-accreditation process in 2018.
- Beginning in 2026, the ACGME-Accredited Fellowship Pathway will be the sole pathway to ABPM certification in Addiction Medicine.

Examination Content, Questions, & Timeline

Exam Content



Assesses ability to apply knowledge rather than to recall isolated facts

Focuses on high-frequency and/or high-impact patient problems

Emphasizes clinical situations and decisions arising in the experienced Addiction Medicine specialist's practice

Core Exam Content Areas

Proportion	Content Areas
25%	01 – Definitions 02 – Genetics 03 – Pharmacokinetic and Pharmacodynamic Principles 04 – Pharmacology 05 – Neurobiology of Addiction
20%	06 – Epidemiological Concepts 07 – Epidemiological Trends of Substance Use Disorders 08 – Prevention
40%	09 – Screening, Assessment, and Brief Intervention 10 – Overview of Addiction Treatment 11 – Management of Inpatient and Outpatient Intoxication and Withdrawal 12 – Pharmacologic Interventions for Addictions 13 – Behavioral Interventions 14 – Co-Occurring and Medical Disorders among Patients with Alcohol and Other Drug Use and Addiction 15 – Co-Occurring Psychiatric Disorders among Patients with Alcohol and Other Drug Use and Addiction 16 – Pain and Addiction
15%	17 – Ethical, Legal, and Liability Issues in Addiction Practice

Exam Content by Substance/Addiction

Proportion	Substance/Addiction
15-20%	Alcohol
15-20%	Nicotine
10-15%	Opioids
7-10%	Sedatives
7-10%	Stimulants
7-10%	Cannabinoids
0.5-3%	Hallucinogens
0.5-3%	Dissociatives
0.5-3%	Inhalants
0.5-3%	Anabolic Steroids
1-3%	Other Substances
1-3%	Nonsubstance Addiction
1-5%	General/All Substances Combined

What's on the Exam?



- Multiple-Choice Questions
 - **Recall** specific important facts
 - **Interpretation**, e.g., identify a fatal study flaw, diagnose a patient
 - **Problem solving**, e.g., judgment about clinical treatment, healthcare design, 2x2 tables, etc.
- Single-Best Answer
- Calculator, drug name list, and normal range values are provided.

What's NOT on the Exam?



True/False Questions

K-Type Questions

Trick Questions

Experimental Questions

Exam Timeline

Late October/early November

All exams administered

November/December

All exams scored

December/January

Key validation process:

- Each question's performance is reviewed, focusing on low-performing questions
- Questions may be retained, re-keyed, or dropped based on performance
- Finally, each candidate's exam is rescored

January

- Board reviews exam results and characteristics
 - Ensures passing standard represents the same level of proficiency year after year
 - Eliminates effects of variance in exam difficulty from year to year

Late January

Finalized exam scores sent to examinees

- Attests that a physician has met all requirements of Addiction Medicine certification
- Effective January 1 of the year following the exam
 - Certificate will expire December 31 ten years after issuance
 - e.g., a physician who passes the 2025 certification exam will be certified effective January 1, 2026, through December 31, 2035.
 - Subject to continuing compliance with Continuing Certification Program (CCP) requirements
- Upon certification, all ABPM diplomates will participate in the CCP, including annual fee payment



Important Dates

March 31, 2024	Application window opens
May 21, 2025	Exam registration opens
June 30, 2025	Application closes
July 1-15, 2025	Late application period
September 12, 2025	Exam registration closes
October 13 – November 2, 2025	Exams administered at Pearson Vue testing centers
Late January 2026	Exam scores released to examinees

Application Info & Help

- Find more information on each pathway requirements
- <https://www.theabpm.org/become-certified/certification-overview/>
- <https://www.theabpm.org/become-certified/subspecialties/addiction-medicine/>
- Take the “Am I Eligible?” quiz to determine your readiness to apply for the certification exam
 - <https://www.theabpm.org/am-i-eligible/>

