



AMERICAN OSTEOPATHIC BOARD OF SURGERY

Longitudinal Assessment FAQs

For specialties including Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery, Cardiothoracic Surgery,
General Vascular Surgery, Urological Surgery, Neurological Surgery

Updated Dec. 2023

Longitudinal Assessment Purpose Statement:

The American Osteopathic Board of Surgery (AOBS) transitioned from the 10-year recertification examination to a longitudinal assessment model for primary certification held in the above-mentioned specialties. The AOBS longitudinal assessment will align with the three-year Osteopathic Continuous Certification (OCC) cycle to fulfill the Component 3 requirement. Our goal is to provide flexible, effective learning opportunities for our Diplomates and promote current knowledge of optimal surgical practice.

AOBS Longitudinal Assessment Design and Structure:

- An open book assessment with the ability to save and return to at your convenience.
- Remote platform that is available online 24/7 and can be accessed from the convenience of your home or office.
- The assessment questions are untimed and can be completed during one or multiple sittings during the assessment cycle.
- Two attempts to pass the assessment questions during the annual assessment run.
- Immediate scoring upon final completion of the assessment

Frequently Asked Questions Specifically for AOBS Specialties:

Q: *What is the fee for the AOBS longitudinal assessment?*

A: The fee for all specialties is \$225 for each year which is due at the time of registration each year. You will only pay \$225 each year upon registration, meaning the total cycle fee is \$675 over three (3) years.

Q: *How do I know when my certification was issued or expires?*

A: Visit the [AOA physician portal](#) (login required) to view your certification information and to check the OCC status.

Q: How is the longitudinal assessment administered?

A: The AOBS longitudinal assessment for all of AOBS is administered through the National Board of Osteopathic Medical Examiners' (NBOME) [CATALYST](#) learning assessment platform. In addition to the learning opportunities that the CATALYST platform offers, assessments delivered on CATALYST provide both performance feedback and additional support.

You will have access to CATALYST 24/7 and can be accessed via laptop computer, tablet or smartphone.

Q: If my certification is due to expire in 2024, do I have until 2024 to complete the assessment or will my certificate become inactive?

A: All Diplomates certified in AOBS Specialties with a time-limited certificate expiring on Dec. 31, 2024, could have started entering the new process in the OCC cycle beginning in Oct. 2023 (by registering). If your certificate is set to expire in 2024, you will be required to register for the AOBS longitudinal assessment within the registration time frame from Oct. 2023 through early 2024.

Q: Once registered, how long do I have to complete the assessment?

A: Once you are registered, you will be able to access the assessment starting on Jan. 11, 2024. You will have until Sept. 30, 2024, to complete the assessment, a full nine months. For certificate holders expiring on Dec. 31, 2025, you will register in the fall of 2024 and have access for the assessment starting in Jan. 2025.

Q: What is the passing rate needed to successfully pass the assessment?

A: An 80% score is needed to pass the assessment. In other words, you must score 12 out of 15 questions correctly to pass the assessment.

Q: What if I take the assessment in the nine-month period but I fail?

A: If you fail the assessment on your first attempt, you will have one additional attempt to successfully complete and receive a passing score. Your second attempt will be available in the fourth quarter of the year (from Oct. 16 until Dec. 15) only.

Q: Is there a fee for second attempts or retakes if I fail my assessment?

A: No. One additional attempt on each question during the assessment is provided to assist you with passing the assessment. No additional out-of-pocket expenses are required. The annual fee paid at the time of registration covers the full cost of the assessment for the year.

Q: I am on my second attempt to pass the assessment and am curious about the confidence level questions.

A: After you select an answer for each question, click the submit button. Prior to NBOME logging in your answer, you are correct in that you must complete a question that asks about your confidence level. There are four options to choose from, which are not at all confident, somewhat confident, confident or highly confident.

Q: Once I'm registered, how long do I have to start the longitudinal assessment?

A: Once you are registered and have access to the CATALYST assessment platform, you may begin the assessment at any time. Just remember that one attempt must be made between Jan. 11 and Oct. 15. If you require a second attempt of any questions, you can do so within the Oct. 16 through Dec. 15 remediation period.

Q: Are the questions timed?

A: No, the questions are not timed. You will have unlimited time to answer each question, but please plan accordingly so that you have time aside to dedicate to this task. Each question should take approximately 5-15 minutes to review and answer in its entirety.

Q: If I fail the assessment, do I have to repeat all 15 questions again?

A: For AOBS specialties, the second assessment attempt provides you with just the questions you scored incorrectly. In other words, if you missed seven questions on your first attempt, you would receive those seven failed questions on your retake. However, if you fail the second attempt, you will be put into remediation until you pass the assessment. The remediation requires a repeat of all 15 questions (please see further question below regarding remediation attempts).

Q: What if I start my assessment in the first quarter of the year, but don't finish all the questions?

A: The assessment must be successfully completed no later than Oct. 15 of the assessment year. Because the assessment questions are untimed, once you begin, the assessment questions can be completed during one or multiple sittings throughout the nine months.

Completing the assessment is dependent upon your personal schedule and commitment. The assessment will resume where you previously left off. We recommend that you don't wait until October of the assessment year to start, as you could potentially forfeit one attempt if needed.

Q: What is the participation requirement for the longitudinal assessment?

A: Participation in longitudinal assessment will be required on an annual basis. Fifteen items will be released each calendar year totaling 45 items each cycle. Diplomates will have 15 items to attempt every year with an 80% passing score.

Q: How do I prepare for the longitudinal assessment?

A: The assessment for AOBS Specialties is similar to your preparation for the OCC Written Exam prior to longitudinal assessment. Component 3 of Osteopathic Continuous Certification required the testing of and assessment of a physician's specialty medical knowledge, as well as core competencies in the provision of health care.

Q: What types of questions can be expected on the longitudinal assessment?

A: The content includes assessing diplomates knowledge and practice of the surgical professional so that continuing education expectations of the osteopathic profession are withheld.

Q: *General Surgery and Surgical Critical Care assessment questions are article based. Will specialty surgery questions also be linked to articles provided?*

A: Cardiothoracic Surgery, Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery, Urological Surgery and General Vascular Surgery do not have articles provided as part of the assessment. You will not be redirected to articles to read beforehand or during the assessment. The 2023 assessment for Neurological Surgery Diplomates was based off of *The Guidelines for the Management of Severe Traumatic Brain Injury, 4th Edition*. The 2024 assessment for Neurological Surgery Diplomates will be derived from *The Guidelines for the Management of Acute Cervical Spine and Spinal Cord Injuries*. Diplomates will be provided access on the CATALYST platform.

Q: *Is there a late fee for registration?*

A: No. At this time, a late fee will not be assessed at the time of registration.

Q: *Who developed the content of the AOBS longitudinal assessment?*

A: The AOBS longitudinal assessment was developed by AOA board certified osteopathic surgeons who represent the AOBS Division of Examiners. These physicians are also known as subject matter experts (SME).

Each SME has a wealth of knowledge in content appropriate for ongoing osteopathic certification, including being trained in professional item writing. All questions administered during the longitudinal assessment were written with the assistance of medical editors and psychometric staff of the AOA Certifying Board Services department and the NBOME. Questions are submitted and vetted by the AOBS Division of Examiners as appropriate, debated and voted upon for acceptance.

Q: *Will I receive CME credits for successfully completing the AOBS longitudinal assessment?*

A: Yes. A total of 5.0 AOA Category 1-B credits will be awarded at the end of the calendar year upon successful completion of the assessment. A total of 15.0 AOA Category 1-B credits will be awarded for the cycle, assuming a Diplomate passes all three years. Credits will not be awarded should a diplomate fail the assessment.

Q: *Will I receive a new certificate once I complete the longitudinal assessment?*

A: If your certificate was granted to you prior to 2018, it currently has an issuant date, and an expiration date. After 2018, the AOA discontinued putting expiration dates on certificates to enhance the nature of continuous learning. You will only receive a new certificate if your current certificate has an expiration date, and all other OCC components have been met. For those who will not receive a new certificate, you will receive a formal letter from the AOA confirming successful completion of OCC Component 3. Should you ever need a new certificate, remember that you can order one through the AOA Physician's Profile.

Q: What if I fail my longitudinal assessment?

A: Again, you will receive two attempts on the assessment. Remember that the assessment will provide you with the correct answers. If a diplomate truly fails the assessment two times, this is of great concern to the AOBS Board. The Bureau of Osteopathic Specialists (BOS) is currently furthering their discussion on remediation, and we anticipate changes to be announced later in 2024 which may determine an inactive status. However, at the present time, Diplomates will remain active but should know that they must complete the assessment they failed and successfully pass before moving to the next administration. Diplomates will be provided with access to the assessment on the AOA's Learning Management System to do so.

Q: How long do I have to complete the remediation assessment?

A: You will have six (6) months during this grace period to successfully pass the assessment. The time frame is Jan. 1 to June 1.

Q: Will the remediation assessment be hosted on NBOME/Catalyst?

A: The remediation assessment will not be on the NBOME Catalyst platform but will be available on the AOA's Learning Management System. Each Diplomate will be provided with instructions and a secure log-in.

Q: When will I have access to the assessment if I am in remediation?

A: Diplomates will be provided access to the assessment if in remediation, starting in January of the following cycle.

Q: How many attempts do I have to pass the assessment if I am in remediation?

A: Like the first assessment, you will only be given two (2) opportunities to pass the assessment and must retake all questions for the assessment you are repeating. That is, all 15 questions must be scored correctly on your attempt between the time frame of Jan. 1 to June 1.

Q: What if I again fail both attempts in the remediation assessment?

A: Should you fail both remediation attempts, you must again pay the registration fee and will be granted two (2) additional attempts. Diplomates will continuously be charged the same fee with the same attempts until they pass the cycle they are catching up on. You must pass this assessment in order to move on to the current assessment cycle. Until then, your certificate will remain inactive.

Q: Should I experience issues accessing the platform, who should I contact?

A: If you have any technical questions or concerns regarding features and functionality of the CATALYST platform, contact NBOME Client Services at clientservices@nbome.org or (866) 479-6828. If you are in remediation and are attempting to pass the assessment on the AOA's Learning Management System, please call (312) 202-8078. For general questions please email us at AOBS@osteopathic.org.