



AMERICAN OSTEOPATHIC ASSOCIATION

142 East Ontario Street, Chicago, IL 60611-2864 ph 312 202 8000 | 800 621 1773

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# **Policies and Procedures of the American Osteopathic Board of Neuromusculoskeletal Medicine**

Amended for BOS approval 8/31/2016

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**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES OF THE  
AMERICAN OSTEOPATHIC BOARD OF NEUROMUSCULOSKELETAL MEDICINE**

**Article I. Procedures**

To expedite and direct its activities, the American Osteopathic Board of Neuromusculoskeletal Medicine (hereinafter also referred to as “the Board” or AOBNMM) shall place into effect this set of Policies and Procedures.

This document is in addition to, and based upon, the American Osteopathic Association (AOA) Procedures of the Bureau of Osteopathic Specialists and AOA Specialty Certifying Boards (“*Policies and Procedures of the BOS*”) and the Bylaws of the Board.

**Article II. Committees**

Board committees will be established and administered as denoted in the Bylaws of the Board.

**Article III. Board Eligibility**

The AOBNMM will follow the board eligibility process and procedure as outlined in Article VIII of the *Policies and Procedures of the BOS*.

Section 1. Board Eligibility

Board eligibility commences upon the contract end date of the specialty or subspecialty training program and terminates on December 31<sup>st</sup> of the following 6<sup>th</sup> year. The Candidate must be officially approved as complete by the American Academy of Osteopathy (AAO) and acknowledged. To be approved as Complete the Candidate must complete the following:

- A. All required paperwork (reports, logs, reading & lecture lists and their scholarly work) is turned in to their program director.
- B. The program director has reviewed, signed and submitted all to the AAO within 30 days of the end of their training
- C. The AAO has reviewed and approved the resident as complete.
- D. The AOA has acknowledged this approval and notified the AAO.

Section 2. Letter of Board Eligibility

The Board may send a letter of Board Eligibility to an applicant who meets the eligibility requirements except that of passing the appropriate examinations. Board eligibility for candidates qualifying under the residency requirement is effective for six (6) years from the date of completion of residency. The candidate must successfully complete the examination for certification within that period.

Section 3. Termination of Board Eligible Status

1 If a candidate does not initiate examination within the period of board eligibility, then board eligibility  
2 status will be automatically lost and so recorded by the AOA and the Board. In such cases, candidates  
3 cannot re-register for board eligibility status, but may be eligible to petition the Board for reentry into  
4 the certification process outlined in Article VIII of the *Policies and Procedures of the BOS*.

#### 6 Section 4. Reentry into the Certification Process

7 To reenter the certification process, an applicant's petition must contain evidence of meeting the  
8 following requirements in addition to submitting the required application and supporting documents.

- 9
- 10 A. The applicant must hold an active license to practice in any state, or territory in the United States  
11 of America.
- 12
- 13 B. Documentation of current membership in good standing of the AOA or the Canadian  
14 Osteopathic Association.
- 15
- 16 C. Documentation of acquisition of 150 applicable hours of CME for most recent completed AOA  
17 cycle. Of these 150 CMEs, 50 hours per cycle must be in Category 1A,1B, 2A, 2B NMM/OMM  
18 specialty specific CME approved by the AOBNMM.
- 19
- 20 D. Payment of the application and examination fees at the time of application.
- 21
- 22

### 23 **Article IV. Initial Certification Eligibility Requirements**

#### 24 Section 1. Eligibility Criteria – Initial Certification

25 To be eligible to receive certification from the AOA through the AOBNMM, applicants for examination  
26 for certification are required to file an application which shall set forth their qualifications for  
27 examination. Applicants must demonstrate:

- 28
- 29
- 30 A. The minimum requirements for AOA board certification outlined in Article IX of the *Policies and*  
31 *Procedures of the BOS*.
- 32
- 33 B. Satisfactory completion of a one (1) year AOA-approved internship.
- 34
- 35 C. The applicant must have completed one of the following three requirements to establish board  
36 eligibility: Completion of residency must be approved by the AAO (see Article III. Section 1  
37 above) and acknowledged by the AOA.
  - 38 1. Residency training - At least two (2) years of an AOA-approved residency in  
39 Neuromusculoskeletal Medicine and Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine.
  - 40 2. Residency training - At least three (3) years of an AOA-approved residency in an integrated  
41 program which consists of at least one year of training in Neuromusculoskeletal Medicine  
42 and Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine.
  - 43 3. Residency-Plus-One Option - At least one (1) year of an AOA-approved Residency-Plus-  
44 One Option in Neuromusculoskeletal Medicine and Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine  
45 following completion of any other AOA-approved residency.
  - 46

#### 47 Section 2. Eligibility – Subspecialty in Sports Medicine

1 The Board participates in examination for Subspecialty to diplomates with additional training and  
2 experience in sports medicine through the American Osteopathic Conjoint of Board of Sports Medicine.  
3 To be eligible to be examined in this subspecialty field, an applicant must demonstrate:

- 4
- 5 A. Current certification from the American Osteopathic Board of Neuromusculoskeletal Medicine  
6 or the American Osteopathic Board of Special Proficiency in Osteopathic Manipulative  
7 Medicine. Certification must be active and in good standing.  
8
- 9 B. Successful completion of one (1) year of AOA-approved training in sports medicine no more  
10 than six (6) years prior to the date of application for certification, evident by a copy of the sports  
11 medicine certificate and a letter of recommendation from the program director.  
12

### 13 Section 3. Additional Certification Requirements

14 Subject to the recommendation of the BOS and to the approval of the AOA Board of Trustees, the  
15 AOBNMM may require such further training and/or practice in each of the specialties or subspecialties  
16 coming under its jurisdiction as, in its judgment, such subspecialty may require, provided that the  
17 additional requirement for each specialty or subspecialty is clearly set forth in the Policies and  
18 Procedures of the Board. Additions to training and/or practice requirements shall go into effect one (1)  
19 year subsequent to the announcement of such change.  
20

### 21 Section 4. Application Requirements

- 22
- 23 A. The applicant will have indicated his/her desire to be a candidate by applying online to the  
24 Board via Certifying Board Services (CBS) at the AOA by a deadline established by the Board.  
25
- 26 B. The candidate completes the online application through the Certifying Board Management  
27 System (CBMS) via links on the Board website [www.aobnmm.org](http://www.aobnmm.org). The candidate submits the  
28 application in addition to supplemental documents and the examination fees. Payment is made  
29 online via credit card. Supporting documentation includes:  
30
- 31 1. Recent photo of applicant
  - 32 2. Signed AOBNMM statement of release
  - 33 3. Osteopathic college diploma
  - 34 4. PGY 1 certificate (Board staff will verify on candidate's behalf)
  - 35 5. Residency certificate(s) for all programs completed(Board staff will verify on candidate's  
36 behalf)
  - 37 6. Documentation of other formal training and/or certifications(Board staff will verify on  
38 candidate's behalf)
  - 39 7. Letter of good standing showing you are a current member of the AOA(Board staff will  
40 verify from the Membership department on the candidate's behalf)
  - 41 8. Copy of your full, current, active medical license in a state or territory of the United  
42 States(Board staff will verify on candidate's behalf)
  - 43 9. Most recently completed AOA CME cycle report (if candidate delays examination past the  
44 year of residency completion)

### 45 Section 5. Training Requirement

46 The candidate will be eligible to take the written, oral and practical examinations when the residency  
47 program requirement has been fulfilled.  
48

Article V. Examination

Section 1. General Examination Information

Following satisfactory compliance with the prescribed requirements for examination, the applicant is required to pass appropriate examinations planned to evaluate an understanding of the scientific basis of the problems involved in the specialty of Neuromusculoskeletal medicine and osteopathic manipulative medicine.

Section 2. Examination Opportunities

The AOBNMM Policy and Procedure for re-examination is found in Article VII of this document.

Section 3. Examination Fees

- A. A formal application to the AOBNMM must be returned with a fee, as determined by the Board, made payable to the Board. The examination and application fee for the Initial exam is \$1200, which includes the non-refundable \$250 application fee. The examination fee and application fee for the OCC Cognitive Exam is \$600, which includes the non-refundable \$250 application fee.
B. The application fee shall be retained by the Board and is non-refundable if the applicant is denied examination or withdraws.
C. Should a candidate for examination fail either the written, oral or practical portion of the certification examination the first time, he/she must repeat that examination within the next scheduled examination date at no additional fee. If the candidate does not pass the second attempt, they can retest one more time at the next scheduled opportunity, and he/she will be required to pay an additional fee of two hundred and fifty dollars (\$250.00) If the candidate fails the second attempt, he/she will have to start over in the Initial Certification process including all required fees and documentation.
D. Any expenses incurred by the candidate are the candidate's own responsibility.
E. Fees may be changed upon action of the Board.

Article VI. Rules for the Conduct of Examinations

Section 1. - Examination - Initial Certification

The examination for initial certification consists of 3 parts: written examination consisting of no less than one hundred fifty (150) questions, a practical examination, and an oral examination.

- A. Parts of Initial Examination
1. There shall be a written examination prepared by the Board in the COM-LEX style.
2. There shall be an oral examination during which the candidate will be expected to demonstrate special proficiency in structural diagnosis and manipulative management as it relates to his/her practice discipline. This part of the initial exam will be 20 minutes in length.
3. There shall be a practical examination during which time the candidate will be expected to demonstrate proficiency in structural diagnosis and manipulative management. These

1 techniques are the most currently used modalities of osteopathic manipulative medicine as  
2 taught in most osteopathic colleges today, and include, but are not limited to direct and  
3 indirect techniques, such as cranial osteopathy, counterstrain, HVLA, muscle energy and  
4 myofascial release. Note that candidates will be expected to treat each other during the  
5 practical exam. If there is a problem, or if the candidate has questions regarding reciprocal  
6 treatment, he/she should contact the AOBNMM office for pre-test arrangements.

- 7 4. The written, oral and practical examinations will be weighed equally. Each section of the  
8 examination must be successfully completed or require re-testing.
- 9 5. These examinations will be conducted by members of the Board, The administration of the  
10 practical and oral sections of the examination may be accomplished, when necessary, with  
11 the assistance of one or more designated examiners who are diplomats of the Board acting  
12 with a member of the Board.

13  
14 B. Accommodations

- 15 1. The Policy of the Board requires that a candidate provide written documentation of their  
16 need for any specific disabilities, cautions, restrictions, or limitations regarding any aspect of  
17 the examination process. Requests for adaptations for other portions of the examination  
18 (e.g., oral, written) must likewise be in writing with corroborative evidence from appropriate  
19 professional evaluators. Written notification is required at least **90 days** prior to the  
20 examination date. (Existing physical disabilities should be identified at the time of  
21 application.).

22  
23 C. Surrogates – Practical Portion of the Examination

- 24 1. Applicants must provide, in writing, a request for exemption from any reciprocal treatment,  
25 such as HVLA or any particular treatment model, during the practical portion of the Boards  
26 examination. The applicant must provide documentation, from a treating physician, the  
27 medical reasons for being excused, the types of treatment to be avoided and the areas of the  
28 body not to be treated. Exemption from treatment to unnamed body regions will not be  
29 acceptable during this portion of the Boards examination. The candidate will be required, at  
30 his/her own expense, to provide a surrogate to replace the candidate during the practical  
31 examination for the particular treatment. However, the Board must receive notification of  
32 the use of a surrogate prior to the examination date.
- 33 2. Using a Surrogate – If a candidate requires the use of a Surrogate in their stead for the  
34 practical portion of the exam they may do so, if all of the following requirements are met:
  - 35 a. Request must be made at least **30 days in advance of examination**
  - 36 b. Candidate must provide a written (non- family member) doctor's note providing  
37 medical documentation of reason for exception from treatment
  - 38 c. Surrogate must sign a release form.
  - 39 d. Candidate is responsible for the recruitment of their own Surrogate to be treated in  
40 their stead by the assigned partner of the practical portion of the examination. The  
41 Candidate will **NOT** treat their Surrogate.
  - 42 e. AOBNMM will not pay the travel or any other expenses for the Surrogate.
  - 43 f. The Surrogate must remain with their Candidate throughout the practical exam, being  
44 treated at all stations to be fair to the other candidate, even if the Surrogate is  
45 required only for one station.

g. The Surrogate will also be assigned an ID badge that will correspond with the ID badge of the Candidate with the word Surrogate printed below.

h. AOBNMM DOES NOT assume any responsibility for the expenses or presence of the surrogate.

i. The Candidate must provide a copy of this Surrogate Policy to the Surrogate prior to signing the statement of release.

Section 2. Scoring and Notification to Applicants

A. All administered examinations are psychometrically evaluated.

B. Criterion referenced standard setting method is utilized to determine the cut scores for all examinations.

C. Following the examination meeting of the Board, the Secretary notifies each applicant of their exam results within 90 days of the exam date.. The letter informs the candidate that the action of the Board is subject to the final approval of the BOS. The AOBNMM will follow the procedures outlined in Article X of the *Policies and Procedures of the BOS*.

**Article VII. Reexamination**

Section 1. Initial Failure

A candidate who fails one (1) or more section(s) of the examination shall be allowed, upon proper application, to repeat that section(s) at the very next opportunity of the original examination of that section. There is no fee for the candidate’s first attempt at re-examination.

Section 2. Second Failure

A candidate who fails one (1) or more section(s) of the examination a second time, shall be allowed, upon proper application, to repeat that section(s) a third time at the very next opportunity of the original examination of that section. There is an additional fee of \$250 to take the re-examination a second time.

Section 3. Remedial Requirements

The Board may require of the candidate a period of not less than six (6) months for further study before applying for re-examination. The Board will specify the required additional study, if applicable.

Section 4. Third Attempt

An initial candidate who fails a section of the re-examination twice shall be required to start over in the Initial Certification process including all required fees and documentation.

If the candidate is recertifying, he or she will forfeit his or her certification and must re-start the certification process.

**Article VIII. Certificates**

Section 1. Process



1 The AOBNMM will issue and maintain certificates of certification and Osteopathic Continuous  
2 Certification in accordance with the *Policies and Procedures of the BOS*.

3  
4 Section 2. Requirements for Maintaining Certification

5 To maintain his/her primary certification, diplomates must document the acquisition of 150 hours of  
6 continuing medical education (CME) per AOA CME cycle. Fifty (50) hours must be in AOBNMM  
7 approved NMM/OMM Specialty Specific CME.

8  
9 A. Hours that do not qualify toward the 50 NMM specialty specific credits would still apply toward  
10 the overall requirement of 150 credits.

11  
12 B. The 50 credits must be completed prior to the end of each of the CME cycles

13  
14 Section 3. Certificate Dates – Primary Certification

15 The date carried by primary certification certificates shall correspond with the date on which successful  
16 completion of all Board requirements is confirmed by the Board. All primary certifications issued after  
17 2001 shall be time-limited to ten (10) years. The certificate will expire on December 31, of the tenth  
18 year following issuance of the certificate. Non-time-limited primary certifications issued prior to this  
19 date without a time limit, will remain in effect.

20  
21 Section 4. Certificate Dates – Subspecialties

22 The date carried by Subspecialty certificates shall correspond with the date on which successful  
23 completion of all Board requirements is confirmed by the Board. All certification of Subspecialty  
24 certificates issued after 2000 shall be time-limited to ten (10) years. The certificate will expire on  
25 December 31, of the tenth year following issuance of the certificate. Life-time certificates which were  
26 issued prior to this date without a time limit will remain in effect.

27  
28 Section 5. Certificate Dates – Osteopathic Continuous Certification Certificates

29 The date carried by Osteopathic Continuous Certification certificates shall correspond with the date on  
30 which successful completion of all Board requirements is confirmed by the Board. All Osteopathic  
31 Continuous Certification certificates shall be time-limited to ten (10) years. The certificate will expire on  
32 December 31, of the tenth year following issuance of the certificate.

33  
34 Section 6. Inactivation, Revocation, Reinstatement, and Reactivation

35 The AOBNMM will follow the procedures regarding certificate inactivation, revocation, reinstatement  
36 and reactivation in accordance with Article XI the *Policies and Procedures of the BOS*.

37  
38 A. Non-Payment of AOA dues

- 39 1. Reinstatement of a certificate, which was revoked when the diplomate was dropped from  
40 AOA membership for nonpayment of dues, or for nonpayment of the annual registration  
41 fee, will be automatic upon reinstatement of the diplomate's AOA membership and/or  
42 payment of the registration fee.

43  
44 B. Expiration of Certificate

- 45 1. If a candidate allows their certificate to expire before recertifying, and is not in the process of  
46 retaking an examination that started before expiration, they must do the following in order  
47 to apply to recertify:  
48 a. Must sit for ALL (oral, practical and written) portions of the AOBNMM  
49 examination at the next available opportunity.

- b. Must pay an additional examination fee to cover all portions of the examination.
- c. Must provide documentation from the AOA in the form of a letter that you have been a member in good standing of the American Osteopathic Association (with current year's dues paid).
- d. Must provide documentation of appropriate amount of CME hours at the time of the examination.
- e. Must submit a copy of a current, active, medical license in a state or territory of the United States. Please note that if your license expires prior to, or shortly after the time of the exams, you will be required to supply a copy of your renewed license showing an expiration date that is past the testing date.

## Article IX. Osteopathic Continuous Certification

### Section 1.

Osteopathic Continuous Certification is offered on a voluntary basis to those diplomates holding certificates in Neuromusculoskeletal medicine and osteopathic manipulative medicine issued prior to 1995. Failure in the Osteopathic Continuous Certification process will in no way result in the loss of certification for physicians holding non-time-limited certification.

Diplomates certified after 1994 must satisfactorily complete the Osteopathic Continuous Certification process during the ten (10) year period of their time-limited certificate in order for certification to be continuously valid.

### Section 2. Eligibility for Osteopathic Continuous Certification

To be eligible for Osteopathic Continuous Certification, the diplomate must:

- A. Submit the required application, fees, release form and supporting documents as required by the Board within established deadlines as determined by the Board.
  1. Supporting Documentation
    - a. Recent photo of applicant
    - b. Signed AOBNMM statement of release
    - c. Copy of Original AOBNMM/CSPOMM certificate (Board staff will verify on candidate's behalf)
    - d. Letter of good standing from the AOA showing you are a current member of the AOA. (Board staff will verify this on candidate's behalf)
    - e. Copy of your full, current, active medical license in a state or territory of the United States (Board staff will verify on candidate's behalf)
    - f. Copies of your most recently completed CME cycle report. (Board staff will verify this on the candidate's behalf)
    - g. Curriculum vitae covering all activities from your initial certification to the current date.
- B. Demonstrate eligibility as outlined in Article XII of the *Policies and Procedures of the BOS*.
- C. Hold current primary certification in either Neuromusculoskeletal medicine and osteopathic manipulative medicine or special proficiency in osteopathic manipulative medicine under the jurisdiction of the AOBNMM. Certification must be active and in good standing.

1 D. Pass an appropriate written examination given by the Board.

2  
3 E. The Policy of the Board requires that a candidate provide written documentation of their need  
4 for any specific disabilities, cautions, restrictions, or limitations regarding any aspect of the  
5 examination process. Requests for adaptations for the written portion of the examination must  
6 be in writing with corroborative evidence from appropriate professional evaluators. Written  
7 notification is required at least **90 days** prior to the examination date. (Existing physical  
8 disabilities should be identified at the time of application.).  
9

10 Section 3. Failure to maintain Osteopathic Continuous Certification

11 For physicians holding time-dated certification, failure to successfully comply with the Osteopathic  
12 Continuous Certification process will result in the loss of certification  
13

14 Section 4. Notification of Osteopathic Continuous Certification OCC Cognitive Exam Deadline

15 The AOBNMM will notify all holders of time-limited certificates at least six (6) months prior to such  
16 time as Osteopathic Continuous Certification OCC Cognitive Exam is to be undertaken.  
17

18 Section 5. Timeline for Osteopathic Continuous Certification Examination

19 A diplomate may sit for a Osteopathic Continuous Certification examination up to two (2) years prior to  
20 the expiration of his/her existing certificate. The new Osteopathic Continuous Certification certificate  
21 will become effective as of the date of the expiration of the previous certificate.  
22

23 Section 6. Osteopathic Continuous Certification Examination

24 In order to evaluate cognitive retention of the material required to be certified in NMM, the candidate  
25 must sit for and pass a proctored written cognitive evaluation being offered twice yearly.  
26

27 Section 7. Scoring and Notification to Candidates

28  
29 A. All administered examinations are psychometrically evaluated.

30  
31 B. Criterion referenced standard setting method is utilized to determine the cut scores for all  
32 examinations.  
33

34 C. Following the examination meeting of the Board, the Secretary notifies each applicant of their  
35 exam results within 90 days of the exam date.. The letter informs the candidate that the action of  
36 the Board is subject to the final approval of the BOS. The AOBNMM will follow the  
37 procedures outlined in Article X of the *Policies and Procedures of the BOS*.  
38  
39

40 **Article X. Appeals**

41  
42 Section 1. Right of Appeal

43 If a candidate feels that the actions of this Specialty Certifying Board, with regard to the conduct of the  
44 examination, constitute unequal application of the regulations and requirements or standards,  
45 unwarranted discrimination, prejudice, unfairness or improper conduct during the examination, he/she  
46 has the right to appeal to this Specialty Certifying Board. For the Oral and Practical exam, the candidate  
47 has 24 hours to submit their notice of appeal.  
48

49 Section 2. Levels of Appeal

1 If the candidate is not satisfied with the results of an appeal before this Specialty Certifying Board,  
2 he/she has the right to further appeal to the BOS and the AOA Board of Trustees.  
3

4  
5 **Article XI. Compliance with Federal Regulations**  
6

7 The Board supports the intent of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) for candidates who meet  
8 ADA eligibility. The board will make a reasonable effort to provide qualified board candidates who  
9 have documented disabilities the necessary auxiliary aids and services that do not fundamentally alter the  
10 measurement of the skills or knowledge the board assessment process is intended to test or result in an  
11 undue burden.  
12

13  
14 **Article XII. Inquiries Regarding Status of a Physician**  
15

16 The AOBNMM will process inquiries regarding a physician’s application and certification status as  
17 outlined in Article XII, Section 13, of the *Policies and Procedures of the BOS*.  
18

19  
20 **Article XIII. Transfer of Recognition**  
21

22 Section 1. History

23 Upon approval of these documents by the AOA Board of Trustees in July 1999, those osteopathic  
24 physicians who earned Fellowship prior to March 1990 from the American Osteopathic Board of  
25 Fellowship in the American Academy of Osteopathy were approved by the AOA Board of Trustees for  
26 Certification in Neuromusculoskeletal Medicine and Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine.  
27

28 Section 2. Special Proficiency – Non-time-limited Certificates

29 Those osteopathic physicians who earned certification in special proficiency in osteopathic manipulative  
30 medicine via the American Osteopathic Board of Special Proficiency in Osteopathic Manipulative  
31 Medicine and did not hold time-dated certificates, had the option of one of the following:  
32

- 33 A. Retain current certification in special proficiency in osteopathic manipulative medicine.
- 34
- 35 B. Sit for written examination before the Board, which issued Certificates in Neuromusculoskeletal  
36 Medicine and Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine to successful candidates.  
37

38 Section 3. Special Proficiency – Time-Dated Certificates

39 Those osteopathic physicians who earned certification in special proficiency in osteopathic manipulative  
40 medicine via the American Osteopathic Board of Special Proficiency in Osteopathic Manipulative  
41 Medicine and held time-dated certificates, had the option of one of the following:  
42

- 43 A. Retain current certification in special proficiency in osteopathic manipulative medicine until its  
44 expiration.  
45
- 46 B. Prior to the expiration of the current time-dated certificate, sit for written examination before  
47 the Board, which issued certificates in Neuromusculoskeletal Medicine and Osteopathic  
48 Manipulative Medicine to successful candidates.  
49

**Article XIV. Amendments**

1  
2  
3 Amendments to the Policies and Procedures of the AOBNMM may be adopted for submission to the  
4 BOS for approval by a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the total membership of the Board at any annual  
5 meeting, following notification of such intention given at any previous meeting.