

2021 Qualifying Exam Application and Deadlines for PGY4s

Webinar held on September 22, 2020

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SH – Sandra Hodgson

MJ – Mary Johnson

CA – Cariel Apodaca

SH: Our two panelists are Mary Johnson, who is our Exams Delivery Coordinator, and Cariel Apodaca, who is our Exams Manager. They are going to talk about our various topics today. I am going to share my screen at this point so that we can begin going through some slides that we have available to share with you.

MJ: What I'm going to talk about today is the Qualifying Exam application process. It is an online process for everyone who is meeting the requirements to apply.

The applications did go live last week on the 17th of September. The applications opened. The deadlines, as you can see, are listed for the next two, three months, regarding the application process. We do recommend that you do speak to your residents or fellows, encourage them to complete the application process online by the first deadline of the 19th of October. That way they can avoid the late fees that are listed below.

Once the applicants complete the application online, once they are approved, they will receive a notification by email instructing them on how to make their site reservation with Pearson VUE. It will actually guide them to their ABOG portal, and they will be able to get the information to go online and schedule with Pearson VUE. There was a small issue that was preventing registration, but we have been informed by Pearson VUE that that has now been corrected, and candidates can now go ahead and schedule their site.

We do recommend that candidates go ahead and schedule as quickly as possible once they've been approved, as the sites are on a first come, first served basis, and they want to go ahead and get their site location scheduled.

You may have a resident or fellow that have completed in more than one program. If so, they will not have the application to complete on their ABOG portal if we have not previously confirmed their prior training. That means that anybody who has done training in more than two programs will need to make sure that the information is correct in our system with the correct dates and documentation of completion of the first training.

The documentation can be that the Program Director for the first program logs into their portal and completes the Verification of Training form, if it's available and all the information is correct. If the information is not correct and the dates are not correct, we do recommend that you contact us at the ABOG office and we can walk you through the process of getting the information correct in our system, and then we can guide you on getting documentation to us so we can get that confirmed in our system.

Again, your resident or your fellow, if they do login and do not see the application and they feel that they should have it, they should contact us, and we can walk them through this process.

If a candidate for an exam would like to request some sort of accommodation for their test site on the day of the exam, we do ask that they submit their request to us in writing. They can send it to exams@abog.org.

If they're simply requesting the additional 30 minutes of time for lactation purposes, they do not need to provide us with documentation. They can just email us their name and their ABOG ID number and that they're requesting the additional 30 minutes for lactation and we will get that processed through for them.

If the accommodation is for something other than the lactation, they are required to provide us with documentation to support the request. Anything from a letter from a physician outlining and supporting the reason for the request, and then we will have that reviewed and the accommodation approved if allowed.

Once the candidate receives notification from us that their accommodation has been approved, they will receive instructions on how to schedule with Pearson VUE to allow for the accommodation. They should not schedule their site online until they've received the information on how to do so with the added accommodation. They are not able to schedule with any kind of accommodation in the online process. They do actually have to work with the accommodations team at Pearson VUE.

You do want to inform your residents or fellows if they think that they need to have this accommodation, they do want to email us as quickly as possible so we can get that processed through for them.

Regarding FLS for residents. Once a candidate has applied for the exam, if we have not received documentation of their completion of FLS at this time, they will receive a task on their ABOG portal, where they can upload the certificate of completion and we will be able to process that through.

If a candidate feels that they are not going to be able to complete the FLS process by the December 18th deadline, that will not be an issue. The candidate will be allowed to continue the application process and be approved. We will work through them. We have actually outlined this information in the 2021 bulletin for the Specialty Qualifying Exam, allowing candidates to continue through the process and to take the exam if they are unable to complete the FLS process.

I do recommend that they do review that information in the bulletin. If they have further questions regarding it, they should contact the board office, and we will be able to walk them through that as well.

Residents not yet completing training but are going ahead and completing FLS in their PGY3 year, if they have a certificate and completed it, they can actually email that to us at fls@abog.org, as they will not have a task to upload the completed certificate until after they apply for an exam. If they do complete it in their PGY3 year and want to go ahead and get the certificate to us, they can email it to us at fls@abog.org and we will get it processed through for them.

Moving on to a quick little note regarding the 2020 Specialty QE results. I know folks are wanted to know when that information is going to be released.

The candidates will be receiving notification of their result by September 30th of 2020. Candidates will have the results posted on their ABOG portal. If a Program Director has not yet completed the administrative task of verifying your resident or fellow on their training, they will need to complete this process before we can release the result to the resident or fellow. We recommend that you check with your Program Director to see if they have completed the Verification of Training forms for their residents or their fellows. They can do this by logging into the Program Director's personal ABOG portal and they will see an administrative task tab, and they will click on that to complete the residency training forms and the fellowship training forms as well.

If they have any questions regarding the information that they are seeing there, again, we ask that they contact us at exams@abog.org or if they would like to call us directly, that would be helpful as well. We'd be available to walk them through the process.

The Program Performance Reports for the 2020 examinations will also become available than October 31st of this year. These reports will be able to be found in the My Files section on the program's ABOG portal.

Is there any way you as a coordinator can go into the website to check the status of them signing up for the exam?

MJ: Actually, we do understand that in our previous system, the coordinators could go in and would be able to see that the candidate had applied for an exam. We are working with our IT department to make that update to our new system. We will be getting that information available to them as quickly as possible to allow coordinators to make sure. I know that it makes it a lot easier for the coordinator to be able to go in and confirm if all of their residents or fellows have completed the process.

Yes, we are working on getting that information made available in the residency and fellowship systems as quickly as possible.

ABOG is not being notified directly of a resident's pass/fail status for FLS?

MJ: We are receiving information, but we wanted to make the ability for the candidate to upload as well to get that information into the system. Yes, we are receiving those, and we'll be working on processing those through as well.

Do residents have to submit their FLS certification themselves? Does FLS do this for them?

MJ: The FLS SAGES will not send us a certificate specifically. So, the resident will be able to submit their FLS certificate online when the task becomes available. Actually, when they do that, that will actually keep the record certificate in our system as well. It's probably better for them if they would like to go ahead and upload that completed certificate so it's on record. They'll be able to see it in the My Files section on their ABOG portal page.

Can you address that Add/Maintain Resident task in the coordinator dashboard? I updated all of my residents, yet it still shows as pending.

MJ: That is actually going to remain pending. We'd allow that status to remain pending to give you the opportunity to go in at any time to edit an individual's record or change a date if you need to. If you have updated them, and the information is correctly listed in the system, then you don't need to do anything further unless you have to edit an individual's time that they're completing training or anything with their dates or their status. We leave that as pending for you to have that opportunity.

Can coordinators upload certificates on behalf of residents?

MJ: The only option for a coordinator to upload a certificate is to email it to us at fls@abog.org. But if it's done in that process, it will not remain in the My Files section for the resident to be able to see.

We do recommend that the resident actually upload it so that the record is in their file.

If a resident is having trouble accessing their portal, how should we direct them?

MJ: If a resident does not have access, they should contact us directly. We'll be able to provide them, once we confirm information with them, we'll be able to provide them their ABOG ID number and reset their password. We have found that sometimes the firewalls are blocking a password reset if it's done online. It is easier if they contact us directly at the board office, and we can reset their password and get them their temporary password over the phone. That way, they can reset it at that time.

SH: Again, that email address, you guys probably have it, but just in case, it's exams@abog.org, if anyone would like to send in any need for assistance or requests for assistance for anything at all, including password resets.

Will ABOG send a notification when that task to upload the certificate becomes available?

MJ: From what I've been told, our IT department has informed us that the task will become available when the candidate's application has been approved. When they receive the notification that their application has been approved and instructions on how to schedule with Pearson VUE, they will also see the task to upload their FLS certificate.

The website and the bulletin have different deadlines. One says October 18th and the other October 19th. What is the actual deadline?

MJ: The actual deadline is October 19th.

SH: Thank you for pointing that out. We will get that corrected. I appreciate the person who pointed that out.

My Program Director's dashboard keeps saying she has an admin task that needs attention: Sign Training Affidavits. But, when she clicks on it, there's nothing to sign. Does this mean the recent graduates will not get their results?

MJ: If you log in on the program's portal and check the status of your residents who just completed training, if their training is noted as being verified, then everything should be in order for somebody to receive their results.

If their training has not been verified, it will say that on the program's portal page. If you still continue to have an issue or question, we recommend that you contact us at the board office and let us know. We will research why there's an issue with the portal and the administrative task.

You should be able to confirm that your residents' training has been verified. If it has not, then your Program Director continues to not see anybody there, but you don't have anybody verified, please contact us at the board office so we can get that straightened out for you.

CA: If I can just add on too to what Mary just said. The answer is, like Mary said, if there's nobody there and there should be because their training is not showing as verified, then absolutely contact us. I think it's important to note that that task, kind of like the Add/Maintain Residents, is meant to last permanently and will not go away.

The Program Director will always see that task. As we talked about a little but earlier, you may have a resident or fellow who transfers to a different program, and your Program Director needs to be able to sign off on that as well.

That task is there just in the chance that you need it. If there's nothing there to sign, there's no further action required at this time.

Can there be a completed option included for our tasks? It's confusing.

SH: If I understand that question correctly, I believe there is within the portal a box at the top of your task list where you can actually click on that and it will enable you to either hide completed tasks or show them so that you can kind of filter and see what you have completed versus what you have not. Cariel or Mary, correct me if I'm wrong about that. I haven't looked at it in a bit, but I think that there's an option that allows you to click on the box and enables to see tasks that you have completed and then unclick it shows you all the tasks, including those tasks that are pending and tasks that are completed.

MJ: You are correct, Sandra. There is a Hide Completed Tasks next to the Administrative Tasks statement on their portal. If they click that, it will hide the ones that have been completed. The Add/Maintain Residents will continue to stay pending to allow the opportunity for coordinators to go in and make a change to a date if necessary.

Should Add/Maintain Residents be pending?

MJ: Yes. That will remain pending to allow coordinators to go in and edit a date if necessary.

I do not see my graduated residents to confirm their Training Affidavits.

MJ: Just to confirm, if you're referring to your residents that just finished and you've advanced your residents, they may have already advanced off. If they're not there, we can confirm that their Training Affidavit has already been processed through because they would not roll off of the system until that has been confirmed.

If you do have a further question regarding that, please give me a call and I will walk through that with you.

Are we able to see our graduates in the system?

MJ: Again, the system will not continue to list all of them if they completed and you've advanced your residents.

I have advanced my residents three times, but they are still pre-July 1 PGY1s. How do I make this work?

MJ: On that one, I'm going to encourage you, having the Program Coordinator give us a call so we can see if there's an issue in the system, and why they're not advancing. Typically, the process is that you should make sure that you enter all of your new residents first, and then go through the advancing residents process. That way, everybody will advance correctly with the correct years. But, if you are not getting something advanced, please email us and let us know. We'll take a further look at the system and see why your residents are not advancing.

SH: The same individual says, "All four years are not advancing." It sounds like that may require either an email or a telephone call, perhaps, to you Mary.

Feel free to contact Mary here at the office. She can help you through that and make sure that it gets done.

They also said, "My new ones were entered as zero. They advanced, and then none of the rest did."

Definitely, I would say, if you would contact Mary here at the office via telephone, Mary, right? Is that accurate? You could help her resolve that issue?

MJ: Right, a phone call in this situation would be the easiest to resolve the problems.

I have advanced my PGY4s from 2019-2020, but they are still listed. Will they eventually be removed from the Maintain Program Resident list?

MJ: Yes, they will. Yes, they will. Once everything is updated and results are released, they will roll off the list.

CA: I think Mary did a great job on this. I think that was a great summary of everything. Really appreciate everybody's attendance. We'll make sure that we get this recording out in case there's any questions. If anybody has any questions we didn't answer, please contact us.

I think Mary did a really good job.

SH: I will echo that. Thank you so much to all of you who attended this webinar. Just a reminder, we do have on our website previously recorded webinars. You can find that, I believe, under the Program Resources tab along the top of our website. If you have any questions about locating that page, feel free to email us at communications@abog.org. We're happy to share that link with you so you can get directly to that page. Again, thank you so much to all of you. Thank you, Mary and Cariel. We're getting a couple more thank yous in. We appreciate everyone, and we will be talking to you again soon. Be sure you look out for more emails about upcoming ABOG webinars. Thank you!