

<b>Graduate Medical Education Policy</b>	Primary Specialty Board Certification Examination for Fellowship
<b>Facility/Sponsor</b>	CMC/GMEC
<b>Policy Origin Date</b>	March 2019
<b>Revision Date</b>	September 2025

## **PURPOSE**

The goal of ACGME-accredited graduate medical education programs is to educate physicians who seek and achieve board certification. While program accreditation is under the purview of the ACGME, board certification is under the jurisdiction of the individual certifying boards. Residency Program Directors should encourage all eligible residency program graduates to take the certifying examination offered by the applicable certifying board. Generally, physicians must pass their primary board specialty certification examination before they are eligible to sit for a subspecialty certification.

As is outlined in the annual Fellow Contractual Agreement at Carilion Medical Center, conditions for reappointment and promotion require satisfactory completion of the training period and fulfillment of the requisites of the program and institution signifying readiness to progress to the next level of the program. Trainees in fellowship programs at Carilion Medical Center that are greater than twelve months in length must meet their primary specialty board certification requirements to continue training in their sub-specialty. Therefore, Fellows in programs that are longer than twelve months must take the certifying exam in the first twelve months of training and must pass the board certification exam for their primary specialty within the first sixteen (16) months of fellowship training to be allowed to continue in that fellowship program.

## **SCOPE**

This policy applies to all Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME), Council on Podiatric Medical Education (CPME), and Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) accredited graduate medical education programs sponsored by Carilion Medical Center (CMC).

## **DEFINITIONS**

**Trainee:** in this case, trainee refers only to fellows participating in graduate medical education programs at Carilion Medical Center.

**Fellow:** an individual enrolled in an ACGME-accredited fellowship (subspecialty or subspecialty) program who has completed a residency program in a related specialty and/or a fellowship program in a related subspecialty. Note: the term may also refer to other learners by individual institutions or programs.

**Primary Board Certification:** the official attestation by a specialty certifying board of an individual physician's knowledge and skills relative to the provision of high-quality care in a particular specialty or subspecialty, generally following successful completion of one or more examinations. The ACGME does not provide certification services.

## **PROCEDURE**

1. All Fellows in ACGME-accredited GME programs at Carilion Medical Center longer than twelve months in duration will be subject to the following:
  - a. Fellows are notified of the requirement for primary board certification as stated in their contract.

- b. Fellows must take the board examination corresponding to their primary specialty during the first twelve (12) months of fellowship training.
- c. Fellows must pass the requirements for their primary specialty board certification within the first sixteen (16) months of their fellowship training.
- d. Fellows who do not pass the certification exam during their first twelve months of training must meet with their Program Director to develop a plan for the trainee to retake the primary certifying exam.
- e. Fellows who do not pass the exam on their first attempt may be issued an abbreviated contract for their second year of training. This abbreviated contract will end on or about November 1 of the second year of training. This abbreviated contract is intended to allow the fellow sufficient time to take the examination and to receive the scores for this exam.
- f. Failure to successfully pass the requirements for primary board certification within their first 16 months of training will result in non-renewal of contract (see GME Discipline - Appeals and Due Process policy).
- g. If the fellow passes the exam taken during their second year of fellowship, they will be issued a new contract with a new end date reflecting completion of their second year. For on-cycle fellows this will be June 30 of their second year in the training program.

Designated Institutional Official	Reviewing Committee	Date Approved
Donald Kees, MD	GMEC	March 19, 2019
Arthur Ollendorff, MD	GMEC	May 17, 2022
Arthur Ollendorff, MD	GMEC	September 2025