

ANNOUNCEMENT ABGERO MAINTENANCE OF CERTIFICATION

The American Board of Geropsychology (ABGERO) will initiate its Maintenance of Certification (MOC) program on January 1, 2015. In accordance with ABPP policy, participation in the MOC process is required of all ABGERO specialists awarded board certification on or after January 1, 2015. Specialists who completed board certification prior to that date may opt in to the process but are not required by ABPP to do so.

The ABGERO Board of Directors strongly encourages all geropsychologists to participate in the MOC process regardless of certification date, as doing so represents a strong, unified academy of board certified specialists, sets a clear leadership example for trainees and colleagues entering the board certification process, and supports ABPP in its role of setting and maintaining standards of competence and excellence.

The model for MOC proposed by ABPP and supported by ABGERO asserts that competence is established at the time of initial board certification and can be continuously updated through lifelong learning, ongoing participation in professional activities, and self-evaluation related to core competencies. MOC does ***not*** require re-examination or any type of formal test. Rather, credentialed specialists engage in a process of periodic self-evaluation by documenting once each decade the professional activities that have served to maintain competence in Geropsychology.

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Frequently Asked Questions:

1. What is MOC?

MOC stands for ‘maintenance of certification’ and is a means for documenting professional activities that serve to maintain competence over time. This model is practiced widely in medicine and has been adopted by ABPP as the mechanism for ensuring ongoing maintenance of specialty (and subspecialty) competencies.

2. What is required to pass the MOC process?

The MOC model asserts that competencies are continuously updated through routine engagement in a wide variety of ongoing professional activities and self-evaluation. ABPP has established five broad categories of professional activities that support MOC, including: (1) Collaborative Clinical Consultation, (2) Teaching and Training, (3) Ongoing Education, (4) Research, Methodologies, and Programs, and (5) Professional Leadership. Numerous professional development activities fall within each of these categories, and each activity is assigned a “credit value” based on content and/or the number of hours engaged in the activity (e.g., one credit may be earned for each hour of case consultation, clinical supervision, continuing education, etc.). To meet the professional activity criterion, ABGERO Specialists must document a total of at least 40 professional activity “credits” during the two year period prior to MOC submission, 30 of which must pertain to Geropsychology. To meet the self-evaluation criterion, Specialists must briefly describe their practice setting, their approach to an ethical or diversity issue encountered in practice, and the means by which they evaluate their clinical efficacy.

3. Does MOC involve re-examination of any kind?

No! MOC does **not** require re-examination or any type of test. MOC is simply the documentation of what competent specialists do routinely to keep their clinical skills up-to-date and to support their own professional development.

4. Is MOC required?

MOC is required of all ABGERO Specialists awarded board certification or subspecialty certification on or after January 1, 2015. Specialists who completed board certification or subspecialty certification prior to that date may opt in to the process but are not required by ABPP to do so. Once Specialists opt in to the MOC process they will be required to submit MOC materials every 10 years going forward.

5. How often is MOC required?

Specialists must complete MOC every ten years following initial board certification. MOC materials must be submitted nine years following certification (or last MOC renewal) and must document the professional activities that supported maintenance of specialty competencies during the two years prior to the submission (i.e., years 7 & 8 post-certification or last MOC renewal). Specialists who were board certified prior to January 1, 2015 who opt in to MOC may submit materials beginning in 2016, according to a timetable to be established by the ABGERO Board of Directors.

6. Why should I voluntarily do MOC if I was boarded before January, 2015?

ABGERO certified Specialists know that the competencies demonstrated at the time of initial certification are not static in nature and that the growth and evolving complexity of geropsychology science and practice require ongoing learning and self-assessment in order to continue to deliver high quality clinical outcomes. MOC provides Specialists an efficient and structured means to document the efforts that

competent specialists already pursue. Participating in the ABGERO MOC process and registering MOC status with ABPP represents a professional response to the need for public accountability and transparency which is recognized as an important quality indicator by patients, attorneys, insurers, hospitals, and the federal government. Participation in MOC also demonstrates commitment to the highest standards of practice and regard for public welfare, reasons that likely led you to pursue board certification in the first place.

The ABGERO Board and MOC Committee have made every effort to tailor the MOC requirements to geropsychological practice and to minimize documentation burden. The ABGERO MOC process does not involve re-examination and is not designed to be punitive. Even in the unlikely event that your current professional activities do not meet ABGERO MOC criteria, you will be provided specific, constructive feedback on meeting MOC criteria and given one year to resubmit materials.

Finally, MOC participation sets a clear leadership example for colleagues and geropsychology students across all levels of training, and supports ABPP in its mission to establish and uphold standards for specialty clinical practice.

7. What specifically will the MOC process entail?

The MOC process is comprised of two parts. Specialists will complete: (1) an electronic form, known as the ABGERO Specialty Continuing Professional Development (SCPD) Grid, to document professional activities and calculate “credits” (Discussed earlier in [FAQ #2](#)); and (2) a minimum of four brief questions related to clinical practice and setting, a recent ethical/diversity issue encountered, and the means by which clinical efficacy is evaluated.

8. How does the SCPD Grid work?

The SCPD Grid is a fillable pdf document that is accessed through the ABPP online portal (SharePoint). The grid contains five professional activity categories (Collaborative Clinical Consultation, Teaching/Training, Ongoing Education, Research/ Methodology, and Professional Leadership) with examples of specific activities subsumed within each category. Specialists will calculate credit values for each activity in which they engaged during the two years prior to their MOC submission deadline. The credit values will be entered into the grid and the specialist will check off each specific foundational and functional competency supported by that activity (please refer to the [ABGERO Candidate Manual](#) for a review of geropsychology competencies). Specialists may review and download the SCPD grid and glossary of qualifying activities and credit values at any time so that, if desired, the grid may be completed prospectively over the two years leading up to the MOC submission date. The grid automatically updates credit totals as new activities are recorded.

9. What if I don’t engage in all of the activities in the grid?

ABGERO recognizes that professional activities will vary widely from one specialist to the next, depending upon their areas of interest, work setting, and primary roles (e.g., clinician, researcher, academician). Specialists do not need to engage in all activities within a given category and may satisfy ABGERO professional activity criteria by documenting activities in as few as two of the five grid categories.

10. How can someone in private practice meet the professional activity criteria?

ABPP and ABGERO recognize that some practitioners may have less opportunity or access to professional activities within certain grid categories. To address this, ABGERO has provided credit values for a number of activities across several grid categories that are attainable outside of institutional settings. Examples include case consultation with colleagues, mentorship activities, professional meeting attendance, formal continuing education, self-learning activities, practice sample review, clinical practice management activities, and others.

11. What was the rationale for adding self-evaluation questions?

This component is required by ABPP. Whereas the SCPD grid provides a quantitative summary of the Specialist's professional activities, the self-evaluation questions give the Specialist opportunities to provide contextual information, elaborate on the information supplied in the grid, and address foundational competencies regarding ethical practice and self-assessment. ABGERO has structured the questions to be as brief and objective as possible.

12. What if I am certified by another ABPP board? Do I need to submit separate MOC documentation to ABGERO?

Each board is developing its own specialty-specific requirements regarding MOC. ABGERO will require all Specialists, including those holding multiple certifications, to demonstrate maintenance of geropsychology competencies; however, the timing of MOC submission may be adjusted to allow such Specialists to streamline the submission process. Specific details regarding MOC submissions from those who are certified by multiple ABPP Specialty Boards are currently being developed by the ABPP MOC Work Group and will be forthcoming. Ultimately, each Specialist will be responsible for knowing the MOC requirements to maintain all of their ABPP certifications.

13. Are there record-keeping requirements?

Yes. MOC applicants are strongly encouraged to retain a file of supporting documents associated with claimed professional activities on the SCPD grid (e.g., certificates of attendance at professional conferences, dates, frequencies, and duration of consultations, mentorship activities, etc). The ABGERO MOC Committee may request copies of this information in the event that a question arises regarding the submitted materials. Additionally, a small number of MOC submissions will be randomly audited to maintain quality control, and support material may be requested to facilitate this process.

14. What if I have more questions?

If you have questions that are not addressed in this FAQ or the [ABGERO Candidate Manual](#), please contact the ABGERO MOC Director via the ABGERO Central Office: vmolinari@usf.edu