

ABDSM 2024 Certification Guidelines

About the American Board of Dental Sleep Medicine

Established in 2004, the American Board of Dental Sleep Medicine (ABDSM) is an independent, nonprofit, self-designated board certifying licensed dentists who treat sleep-related breathing disorders. The ABDSM designates an individual who it certifies as a *Diplomate of the American Board of Dental Sleep Medicine*.

The purpose of the ABDSM is to test knowledge and clinical proficiency in dental sleep medicine, which includes oral appliances and upper airway surgery to treat sleep-related breathing disorders such as snoring, upper airway resistance syndrome (UARS) and obstructive sleep apnea (OSA). It does not represent a new specialty of dentistry or medicine, nor does it grant or imply any legal qualification, privilege or license to practice. Rather, it simply recognizes those dentists duly licensed by law who have successfully completed the certification requirements established by the ABDSM.

Eligibility Requirements

Successful completion of the AADSM Mastery Program or a dental sleep medicine education program accredited by the AADSM as an AADSM Mastery Program Provider is required prior to applying for the exam. For more information on the AADSM Mastery Program visit aadsm.org/mastery. **Do not apply if you have not completed the AADSM Mastery Program.** Approved applicants can take the examination during any exam window within their eligibility period (three years following completion of the AADSM Mastery Program or an accredited version of the program).

The ABDSM certification process **does not** include submission of cases to the ABDSM.

Certification by the ABDSM is open to qualified applicants who are permanent residents of the United States, including territories, and Canada. International applicants who are not permanent residents of these countries are *not* eligible to attain ABDSM Diplomate status. For those individuals, International Certificant status is available.

Applicants must indicate on the application form which of these three categories applies to them:

Clinical Applicant

Clinical applicants must hold, at a minimum, a dental degree (DDS or DMD) or its equivalent and an active unrestricted license to practice dentistry in the United States, including territories, or Canada.

Academic Applicant

Academic applicants must hold, at a minimum, a dental degree (DDS or DMD) or its equivalent and an active restricted license as dental school faculty to practice dentistry in the United States or Canada. Academic applicants must currently be a full-time employee of a dental school that is accredited by either the Commission on Dental Accreditation of Canada or the Commission on Dental Accreditation of the American Dental Association. Applicants with a limited license (student) are not eligible to apply as academic applicants.

International Certificant Applicant

International Certificant status has been created to allow applicants who are not permanent residents of the United States or Canada an opportunity to demonstrate proficiency in dental sleep medicine. International Certificant applicants must hold, at a minimum, a dental degree (DDS or DMD) or its equivalent and an active unrestricted license to practice dentistry. International Certificant applicants must practice dentistry outside of the United States (including territories) and Canada.

Important Dates

There will be two windows to choose from to apply for the ABDSM examination in 2024. Below are the timelines for each window:

	Summer 2024 Exam	Winter 2025 Exam
Application Window	December 1, 2023 – May 10, 2024	May 11, 2024 – November 1, 2024
Exam Window	July 21 – August 4, 2024	January 19 – February 2, 2025

*Notification of application acceptance is sent via email 4-6 weeks after application submission.

**Notification of examination results is mailed approximately 6 weeks after the exam window.

Application Components

When evaluating your application, determine whether you meet all requirements. **If you do not meet all the prerequisite and eligibility requirements, do not submit an application.**

Applications will be reviewed by the ABDSM. The prerequisites and application must be submitted through the online application system at <https://www.abdsm.org/> by the stated dates for the examination window in which you have chosen.

Prerequisite: Dental License with Expiration Date

Applicants must provide a copy of their current dental license with expiration date. If the dental license expires before the examination date, a renewed copy of the dental license is required and must be submitted to ABDSM before it expires. Applicants cannot sit for the exam without proof of a current valid dental license. International licenses should be submitted in English or with a certified English translation.

Prerequisite: AADSM Mastery Program

Completion of the AADSM Mastery Program or a dental sleep medicine education program accredited by the AADSM as an AADSM Mastery Program provider is a required prerequisite. **Failure to complete all requirements of the AADSM Mastery Program prior to applying for the exam will result in the denial of the submitted application.**

Those who complete the AADSM Mastery Program have three years from the date in which they completed the AADSM Mastery Program or accredited program to apply for the ABDSM exam. Those who apply for the exam outside of the three-year window must submit documentation of 65 CE hours earned within the three-years immediately preceding the application date that meet the requirements in the *Continuing Education Requirements for Reapplicants* section of these guidelines.

Application Submission

To sit for the exam, the application, documentation of all prerequisites and the examination fee must be submitted via the ABDSM website (www.abdsm.org) between the following dates:

Application for Summer 2024 Examination: December 1, 2023 – May 10, 2024
Application for Winter 2025 Examination: May 11, 2024 – November 1, 2024

It is strongly advised to have a backup copy of the completed application for your own records, as applications will not be returned. The ABDSM will send acknowledgment of receipt of the application via email.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that applications, fees, and pre-requisites are submitted on or before the stated deadlines. No exception will be made to this requirement. Before you send your application make sure it is complete to the last detail and in the correct order.

Application Fees

New applicants or applicants who must reestablish their exam eligibility	\$995.00
Active-Duty Military Dentists <i>Subject to verification of status</i>	\$250.00
Retake Fee - During established eligibility period	\$395.00

Fee payable in U.S. dollars, drawn on a U.S. bank

Refund Policy

Application Not Accepted

If the ABDSM does not accept the application for examination, \$395 will be refunded to the applicant. Active-Duty Military Dentists will be refunded \$95 if the application is not accepted.

Withdrawals

If written notification of withdrawal from an accepted applicant is received by the ABDSM on or before the below stated dates for the selected examination window, \$395 will be refunded (\$95 for Active-Duty Military Dentists). An applicant whose notification of withdrawal is received by the ABDSM after the below stated dates for the selected application window is not entitled to a refund, except when the withdrawal is the result of a documented emergency. The applicant may apply for an emergency late withdrawal refund of \$395 by submitting proper documentation of the emergency to the ABDSM at info@ABDSM.org.

Deadline to withdraw from Summer 2024 Examination: June 30, 2024
Deadline to withdraw from Winter 2024 Examination: December 30, 2024

Transferring an Application to the Next Exam

Applicants who have received approval from the Board of Directors to sit for the examination may request approval to transfer their application to the next immediate exam window. A request to transfer must be submitted in writing to the ABDSM. If approved, a transfer request requires payment of a \$395 transfer fee.

Whether or not a second application transfer will be approved after a first-time transfer is granted depends on when the applicant completed the AADSM Mastery Program. If the applicant completed the program more than three years prior to the selected examination window, a second transfer request will not be approved. In this case, the applicant must submit a new application, pay the full fee (\$995), and submit documentation of 65 CE credits that meet the requirements as outlined in the *Continuing Education Requirements for Reapplicants* section of these guidelines. Retaking the AADSM Mastery Program in its entirety will also satisfy this CE requirement. An approved application can be transferred no more than two times in total, after which time the application will be retired and no refund will be issued. Applicants are then welcome to submit a new application, subject to all applicable guidelines and fees at the time of application.

Examination Administration

The examination is administered as a computer-based exam via Kryterion testing centers located around the world. Applicants whose applications have been approved to sit for the exam will receive instructions to select the testing center of their choice. Along with receiving notification of application acceptance, applicants will receive further information about scheduling a date and time to take the exam and other pertinent details. Testing center schedules will vary by site and may not have weekend availability.

Disclaimer: The testing centers and remote assessment software are owned and operated by an independent third-party. The testing environment and conditions may vary between centers. The ABDSM has no control over and is not responsible for the quality of the testing environment or conditions at the particular testing center or remote assessment selected by the applicant.

Applicants with Disabilities

The ABDSM recognizes that individuals with disabilities may wish to take the examination and will make reasonable accommodations for applicants with verified disabilities. The ABDSM supports the intent of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Applicants are reminded, however, that auxiliary aids (and services) can only be offered if they do not fundamentally alter the measurement of skills or knowledge the examination is intended to test (Americans with Disabilities Act, Public Law 101-336). Applicants who request accommodations due to a disability must advise the ABDSM in writing by the following dates:

Summer 2024 Examination:

June 1, 2024

Winter 2025 Examination:

December 1, 2024

The applicant may be asked to submit appropriate documentation of the disability and a description of previous accommodation provided during other examinations. If the ABDSM deems it necessary, an independent medical assessment may be requested at the expense of the ABDSM.

Examination Content

The certification examination is comprised of one hundred and fifty (150) multiple-choice questions. Applicants are allowed three (3) hours to complete the examination. The examination tests applicants on airway anatomy and physiology, adult and pediatric sleep medicine, oral appliance therapy, alternative treatment modalities, evaluation, treatment and follow-up care. A detailed review of examination content areas can be found at abdsm.org/examcontentareas.

Examination Composition

The ABDSM Board of Directors directs the composition of the certification examination.

Scoring

All scoring is performed without knowledge of the applicant's identity, and all decisions concerning examination scoring are made before the matching of names and applicant code numbers. Individual scores will not be changed.

Examination Results

Applicants are informed of their exam results via mail. Actual scores, regardless of the results, will not be provided; the ABDSM provides candidates with notification as to whether they passed the exam or did not pass. Results are not available by telephone. Information regarding the number of applicants who passed or failed the examination will not be provided.

Appeal Procedure

Applicants may appeal a negative determination (rejection of prerequisites or failure of examination) by submitting a written explanation of the reason for refuting the determination with a nonrefundable appeal fee of \$395. This appeal must be made within 30 days of the date of the notification letter. All materials must be submitted in writing to the American Board of Dental Sleep Medicine, 901 Warrenville Road, Suite 180, Lisle, IL 60532. All appeals are carefully reviewed, and a final decision is made by the ABDSM Board of Directors.

Reapplication

Not Achieving a Passing Exam Score

Applicants who did not achieve a passing score on their first attempt are eligible to retake the examination during their eligibility period (three years following completion of the AADSM Mastery Program or an accredited version of the program).

Retaking the Examination

Eligible candidates may apply to retake the examination annually during their eligibility period following their first failed attempt by submitting the following during the application window:

- Application (submitted online at www.abdsm.org)
- Re-take application fee of \$395
- Current dental license

If Not Eligible to Retake the Examination

If the applicant is ineligible for an examination retake, a new application and fee must be submitted. In addition to any other requirements that may be in place at the time of the new application, the candidate must also submit documentation of 65 CE hours that have been completed within the 3 years prior to the application deadline, meet the CE requirements outlined in these guidelines, and have not previously been submitted. Retaking the AADSM Mastery Program in its entirety will satisfy the CE requirement.

Continuing Education Requirements for Reapplicants

The ABDSM accepts only ADA CERP recognized or AGD PACE approved continuing education credits in dental sleep medicine or sleep medicine provided by a non-profit organization or accredited universities. Up to ten (10) credits may be *AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™* in sleep medicine. Applicants must be the participant of all submitted courses and not the instructor. Though applicants are encouraged to participate in AADSM educational opportunities, including the AADSM Annual Meeting, this is not a requirement.

To confirm that a particular CE provider is a not-for-profit organization, visit GuideStar's website at www.guidestar.org and search for their listing. All IRS-registered non-profit organizations will be listed on GuideStar.

To receive credit for CE, the following documentation must be submitted for each course:

1. CE verification letter or certificate issued by the course provider. CE transcripts of any kind are not acceptable for verifying continuing education credits.
2. Educational objectives or a detailed agenda that clearly show that the course was science-based education in dental sleep medicine or sleep medicine. If a course includes a mixture of applicable and non-applicable topics, circle those credit hours that do apply.

To demonstrate that applicants are furthering their clinical knowledge of dental sleep medicine, practice management and billing credit hours are not accepted. Temporomandibular disorder credit hours are accepted toward the ABDSM requirement only when the course objectives clearly document a prominent dental sleep medicine focus.

Self-instructional and electronically mediated learning activities in dental sleep medicine that are either ADA CERP recognized or AGD PACE approved and provided by a non-profit organization or accredited university may count towards this requirement. A maximum of ten (10) credits from self-instructional or electronically mediated activities are acceptable.

International Certificants and Canadian Reapplicants

All prerequisites and application requirements for applicants wishing to reapply outside of their three-year eligibility period shall apply to International Certificants and Canadian applicants with the following exceptions:

- CE credits must meet all requirements except they need not be ADA CERP recognized or AGD PACE approved.

Professional Designation

The use of these designations in any form prior to notification by the ABDSM Board of Directors that all requirements have been successfully completed is strictly prohibited. Upon notification by the ABDSM, individuals may use the following options to display their respective designation:

- Diplomat, American Board of Dental Sleep Medicine
- Diplomat, ABDSM
- D. ABDSM
- International Certificant, American Board of Dental Sleep Medicine
- International Certificant, ABDSM

In the context of a sentence, the following is permissible:

- Dr. (Name) is a Diplomat of the American Board of Dental Sleep Medicine
- Dr. (Name) is an International Certificant of the American Board of Dental Sleep Medicine

To protect themselves from action on the part of state licensing boards, Diplomates of the ABDSM must not use the following terms to describe their designation:

- Board-certified
- Certified
- Credentialed
- Certification

For information about state-specific advertising regulations, please refer to your state's dental practice act.

Scope of the Designation

Diplomat status does not denote specialty status or specialty recognition. Furthermore, it does not confer or imply any legal qualification, licensure, or privilege in professional activities as they relate to oral appliance therapy or oral surgery for sleep disordered breathing. It signifies a professional commitment to education, knowledge and experience in dental sleep medicine. It recognizes those dentists duly licensed by law who have successfully completed the board certification requirements established by the ABDSM. Dental sleep medicine is not recognized as a specialty area by the American Dental Association.

Maintenance of Certification

To demonstrate currency and maintain certification, the following two requirements must be fulfilled:

1. Maintain twenty-five (25) hours of CE credits in dental sleep medicine or sleep medicine every two (2) years.

- A minimum of five (5) hours must be ADA CERP-recognized or AGD PACE-approved continuing education credits in dental sleep medicine provided by a non-profit organization, an accredited university, or a for-profit organization.
- A maximum of twenty (20) credits may be AMA PRA Category 1 CME credits in sleep medicine.
- A maximum of six (6) credit hours may be in practice management, billing, and coding for dental sleep medicine.
- The Diplomate must be a participant, not the instructor.
- Though Diplomates are encouraged to participate in AADSM educational opportunities, including the AADSM Annual Meeting, this is not a requirement.
- Self-instructional or electronically mediated activities are accepted.
- Temporomandibular disorder credit hours are accepted toward the ABDSM requirement when the course objectives clearly document a prominent dental sleep medicine focus.
- A maximum of thirteen (13) hours can be counted from credits earned by lecturing or authoring activities. *Note: the ABDSM does not issue CE hours for lecturing and authorship; instead, the hours from these activities will count towards the total required CE hours for Maintenance of Certification.* The following criteria must be met to use lecturing or authoring activities toward MOC requirements:
 - Lectures and Presentations
 - Each hour of lecture is accepted as equivalent to one CE credit.
 - The material must be presented within the two years prior to the current year and repeated presentations of the same material will not be accepted.
 - Only presentations on dental sleep medicine topics in ADA CERP or AGD PACE recognized programs will be accepted.
 - Submit a letter from the course sponsor or provider that verifies you as the presenter along with the date and title of the presentation.
 - Authoring Activities
 - Articles on dental sleep medicine topics published in peer-reviewed journals are accepted as equivalent to two CE credits.
 - Articles must be published within the two years prior to the current year.
 - Any of the article's authors may use the article to meet their maintenance of certification requirements.
 - Include a link to the article that verifies your role as author as well as the article's publication date.
 - Book chapters on dental sleep medicine topics are accepted as equivalent to four CE credits.
 - Books must be published within the two years prior to the current year.
 - Any of the chapter's authors or editors may use the chapter to meet their maintenance of certification requirements.
 - Include a link to the book that verifies your role as author or editor as well as the book's publication date.

- Proof of CE must be provided to the ABDSM upon request. To receive credit for CE, the following documentation must be submitted for each course:
 1. CE verification letter or certificate issued by the course provider. CE transcripts of any kind are not acceptable for verifying continuing education credits.
 2. Educational objectives or a detailed agenda that clearly show that the course was science-based education in dental sleep medicine or sleep medicine. If a course includes a mixture of applicable and non-applicable topics, circle those credit hours that do apply.
- 2. Pay an annual administrative fee of \$200.**
- Invoices for this fee are mailed in January. The fee must be payable in U.S. dollars, drawn on a U.S. bank.
 - Active-Duty Military Dentists who submit a copy of their military ID pay a discounted fee of \$50.

Ethics

The ABDSM expects all candidates to comply with the most recent *American Dental Association Principles of Ethics and Code of Professional Conduct*. Honor violations are taken seriously and may result in disqualification or retraction of the Diplomate designation. Once Diplomate status is revoked by the ABDSM, it will not be reinstated. Individuals wishing to reinstate their designation after revocation will need to reapply as new applicants.

Disclaimer

These guidelines are not intended to supersede state dental practice acts. The ABDSM advises all dentists to contact the dental licensing board in their state to verify the approved scope of practice for their license and practice accordingly.

The ABDSM board is self-designated and does not confer recognized specialty status by any other certifying organization. Personal use of the ABDSM Diplomate and International Certificant designation shall be the responsibility of each individual. The ABDSM assumes no liability for how each individual displays their designation.

The ABDSM advises all Diplomates and International Certificants to follow the *American Dental Association Principles of Ethics and Code of Professional Conduct* when advertising their status. It is also strongly recommended that each individual consult their state or local regulatory agency and adhere to their requirements. Most state licensing agencies do NOT permit advertising the credential. The Diplomate designation should only be used if it does not conflict with each certificant's local regulations and code of ethics.

These guidelines are subject to change without notice. The latest updates can be found at www.abdsm.org.

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*Any correspondence to the members of the Board of Directors should be directed through the
ABDSM National Office.*

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