

Maintaining Certification

Techniques and practices in medicine and healthcare continually change. JCAHPO conducts a job task analysis every 3-5 years to validate the changes in technical knowledge and skill required to perform job functions at each level of certification. In order to assure that certificants continue to evolve with the industry's changing needs, the Certification Committee and Board of Directors established the recertification process; a process that requires you to keep current with new developments in the field of ophthalmology through continuing education credits or re-examination. Recertification enables you to demonstrate your continued knowledge to employers, peers and the general public.

An initial certification is valid for 36 months. After that period, recertification is required every three years to maintain the use of the credential. The recertification period begins exactly 36 months from the month and year that you successfully completed all requirements for initial certification. A reminder letter containing the number of credits needed for your level of certification will be issued approximately six-months prior to your recertification date.

To recertify, certificants must comply with continuing education (CE) requirements. All acceptable CE credits are classified as either Group A or Group B, and relate to knowledge needed to perform tasks identified in the JTA. Group A credits are pre-approved by JCAHPO based on medical and scientific content that is specific to, but not limited the exam blueprint. Group B credits are course related to ophthalmology but have little or no relation to the exam blueprint. Certificants who are applying for recertification may choose earning either all Group A credits, or a combination of Group A & B.

You can earn Group A credits by:

- Attending lectures, workshops, or distance-learning courses that have been awarded JCAHPO Group A credit on any of the content areas listed in this handbook.
- Completing an independent study course and quiz that has been awarded JCAHPO Group A credit on any of the content areas listed in this handbook.
- Completing topics on medical ethics, professionalism, coding and regulations that have been awarded JCAHPO Group A credit.
- Review certification exam preparation courses that have been awarded JCAHPO Group A credit.
- Teach or author courses awarded JCAHPO Group A credit. (1:1 basis).

You can earn Group B credits by:

- Attending lectures, workshops, or distance-learning courses that have been awarded JCAHPO Group B credit (topics not listed in this handbook).
- Completing independent study course and quiz that has been awarded JCAHPO Group B credit (topics not listed in this handbook).
- Attending Grand Rounds or Physicians' Continuing Medical Education (CME) in Ophthalmology, Category 1 courses approved by the American Medical Association (2 hours attended=1 credit for COAs, CCOAs, and COTs, and 1 hour attended=1 credit for COMTs.) Courses approved by the Canadian Medical Association are also acceptable in this category on the same basis as above.
- Participating in self-study (4 hours study=1 credit).

You can read journals and books, listen to audiotapes, watch videotapes or CD ROMs, or attend courses that were not awarded credit by JCAHPO or the AMA as long as the topics are related to ophthalmology.

For self-study credits, you must provide complete information on your recertification application showing a list of the materials studied, title and author, the month and year you completed the self-study, and the amount of time spent completing it.

- Teach a course carrying JCAHPO B credit (1 hour taught=1 credit)
- Author or co-author a scientific publication and/or poster. JCAHPO reviews submissions for consideration of credit. Maximum of 5 credits for first author and 3 credits for co-author. Contact JCAHPO Education Department for more details.
- Achieve CPR certification. You can count one Group B credit per card for CPR certification for a maximum of 3 Group B credits per CE cycle.

Sources of CE Credit

JCAHPO publishes a listing of all programs awarded CE credit, including independent study courses with quizzes. The list is published on the JCAHPO Web site, www.jcahpo.org. Information on CE opportunities, including distance learning options (audio tapes, videotapes, magazine articles, on-line courses), is also posted on the Web site.

Recertification Application Process

JCAHPO will mail you a recertification reminder approximately six months prior to your recertification date; however, it is your responsibility to be aware of and comply with recertification requirements. The expiration date of the certification cycle is published on your certificate and wallet card.

At the end of your certification cycle, you are required to submit the recertification application accompanied by supporting documentation and pay the recertification fee listed in the JCAHPO's fee schedule. The recertification application must be postmarked no later than the last day of the last month in your certification cycle.

Your recertification application must include:

- The signature/endorsement of your sponsoring ophthalmologist to verify that he/she knows you, confirm your continued knowledgeable and skill in the field, and that you are working within established JCAHPO guidelines.
Note: CCOAs are not required to have a sponsoring ophthalmologist. CCOAs must include their supervisor's signature on their application. ROUBs and CDOSs may have a supervising physician as their sponsor.
- A list of all CE credits earned, signed by you to verify that you have completed the required continuing education.

The first time you apply for recertification or if you submit a recertification application late, you must provide proof of your attendance or participation at all CE courses listed on your application.

JCAHPO conducts random audits of recertification applications, requesting proof of attendance and participation at all CE courses listed on the application. Please retain all documentation of your attendance in case you are audited. Once you have received your certificate and wallet card, there is no need to retain documentation except for your own records.

Alternative to CE Credits for Recertification

You may apply to take a multiple-choice computer-administered exam at your current core certification level in lieu of earning CE credits during your certification period. To be recertified using the examination option, you must successfully complete the multiple-choice examination appropriate for your current level. In order to avoid a lapse in your certification, the exam must be completed before the expiration of your certification. The Skill Evaluation or Performance Test do not need to be repeated.

Please contact the Certification Department for an application and more details if you plan to pursue this method of recertification.

Non-Certified Status

If you do not apply for recertification or miss the recertification application deadline, you will be placed on non-certified status. Individuals who are placed on non-certified status are not permitted to represent themselves as JCAHPO-certified personnel; and they may not utilize the credential after their name on business cards, stationery, name badges, etc.

From the time you are placed on non-certified status, you will have 12 months to apply for recertification before your credential becomes revoked. Within that 12-month period, the number of continuing education credits required to recertify your credential do not increase, but an \$85 late fee will be assessed.

You may choose to take the multiple-choice exam at your previous core certification level in lieu of earning CE credits. The exam must be successfully completed within 12 months from the time you are placed on non-certified status. The Skill Evaluation or Performance Test do not need to be repeated. Please contact JCAHPO for an application and more details if you plan to pursue this method of recertification.

Please note: Certificants will not receive new recertification dates when they recertify within the 12-month InActive status.

Example: Jennifer's COMT certificate is dated September 30, 2005 through September 30, 2008. She is not ready to complete her recertification application by her deadline.

- If her recertification application is processed and accepted after September 30, 2008, and before September 30, 2009 (one year late), no additional credits are needed, but a late fee is assessed.
- Even if Jennifer recertified September 1, 2009, her next recertification cycle is still September 30, 2008 through September 30, 2011 and all credits will need to be earned during that time period. Any credits that Jennifer earned between September 30, 2008, and before September 30, 2009, that were not used to satisfy her original recertification, may be carried over.

If your non-certified status continues for longer than 12 months, your certification will be considered revoked. Please contact the JCAHPO Certification Department to discuss your reinstatement options.

Denial of Recertification

If, during the process of applying for recertification, allegations of a violation of the JCAHPO Standards, Procedures, and Sanctions Pertaining to Certification and Recertification are investigated and proven true, this may result in the denial of recertification, either on a temporary or permanent basis, depending on the circumstances. Certificants are expected to fully cooperate with the investigation. See pages 43-46 for more information.

Hardship Cases

Individuals who have failed to comply with recertification requirements due to hardship have an opportunity to request a review of their case. A written request must be submitted to the Secretary of Certification.

The request must be postmarked within 30 days of your recertification deadline and include detailed supporting documentation regarding the hardship. Examples of hardship include health and extended active duty with the military.

Appeal Procedure

Any candidate may appeal determinations related to initial exam ineligibility, examination results or recertification audits. The appeal must be in writing and received within 30 days of being notified of examination results, audit or ineligibility. The appeal should be addressed to the Secretary of Certification and include: a detailed written explanation of the grounds for your appeal, any evidence or documentation to support the reason a decision should be overturned, and the appeal fee noted on pages 41-42. The burden of proof is the responsibility of the applicant.

JCAHPO's Secretary of Certification will submit the appeal to members of the Certification Committee for review, and a written notification of the Committee's decision will be mailed in four to six weeks. If the initial appeal is denied, you may appeal to the JCAHPO Board of Directors within 30 days. The Board's decision will be final and binding.