



ACFAS Statement on Board Certification

The American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons (ACFAS) recognizes the role of board certification as an attestation to medical providers' mastery of the standards and competencies specific to their training and practice within their specialty. Historically, board certification has provided the public with a trustworthy indication of their provider's expertise. Increasingly however, board certification is being utilized as a requisite for obtaining and maintaining hospital privileges, as well as for participation with third-party payor networks.

The podiatric profession in the United States is currently subdivided into two specialties, podiatric medicine and podiatric (foot and ankle) surgery. ACFAS supports the recognition of one certifying board per specialty, as has been the determination of the Joint Committee on the Recognition of Specialty Boards (JCRSB) of the Council on Podiatric Medical Education (CPME). This policy supports the CPME's goal of "prevention of unnecessary duplication by boards and maintenance of minimum standards for the conduct and operation of specialty boards."¹ The American Board of Foot and Ankle Surgery (ABFAS) is recognized as the certifying board in the specialty of foot and ankle surgery and The American Board of Podiatric Medicine (ABPM) is recognized as the certifying board for primary podiatric medicine and podiatric orthopaedics.

ACFAS is alarmed by the announcement from the American Board of Podiatric Medicine (ABPM) that it plans to issue an unrecognized certificate in podiatric surgery. Allowing a Certificate of Added Qualification (CAQ) not recognized by any accrediting body and circumvents the JCRSB determination risks safe patient care, the public's trust and the reputation of our profession.

ACFAS acknowledges that credentialing bodies (hospital medical staffs, third-party payors, and other entities) may require board qualification/certification as one of many measures to determine a candidate's worthiness of privileging or eligibility to provide specific services. ACFAS believes privileging, when determined to be contingent on board certification, should reflect certification or qualification by the specialty board recognized for assessing the training and demonstrated competence for the specific privilege in question.

The existence of separate certification in surgical and medical specialties in the profession of podiatry ultimately exists to protect the health and welfare of the public. It is also an important mechanism which allows doctors of podiatric medicine to develop the practice that best suits them and their ability to optimally serve their patients. The value of this distinction is maximized when clear delineations are maintained regarding the specialty training each board serves to certify. Those who have mastered the surgical aspects would be proficient enough to be board certified/qualified with ABFAS. For these reasons, ACFAS recognizes the American Board of Foot and Ankle Surgery as the only certifying board in the specialty of foot and ankle surgery and requires obtaining this certificate in order to be a Fellow of the American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons.

¹ Council on Podiatric Medical Education, <https://www.cpme.org/boards/content.cfm?ItemNumber=2423&&navItemNumber=2238>