

# ABFM Maintenance of Certification process is simplified

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In the latest issue of the [ABFM Phoenix](#), Dr. James Puffer, President of the American Board of Family Medicine, addresses the maintenance of certification process changes.

The maintenance of certification process was introduced almost 15 years ago. The initial certification examination was straight forward. Since then, there has been the addition of online modules to facilitate more efficient completion of quality improvement activities and added new self-assessment modules. However, it was complicated with all sorts of new terminology and acronyms — Parts I, II, III and IV, SAMS, PPMs, MIMMs, etc. And multiple payment plans, with multiple permutations of payment methodology that are dependent on when you were transitioned into this new process to add to it.

Well, that will all change this month. Log-on to the [ABFM website](#) and see for yourself:

- The activities that you will complete to continue your certification have been named to accurately describe what they are more accurately. Knowledge Self-Assessment (KSA) replaces Self-Assessment Module (SAM). Clinical Self-Assessment (CSA) replaces Clinical Simulation.
- ABFM is unlinking the KSA and CSA. Therefore, following completion of a group study KSA, the participant receives 8 LIVE AAFP CME Credits. The remaining 4 LIVE AAFP CME Credits will be received following completing of the CSA within one year.
- To increase your flexibility to meet your requirements for continuous certification, all of these activities will be assigned a point value and you simply need to accumulate 50 points every three years with the completion of at least one knowledge self-assessment, at least one performance improvement activity and any other activities of your choosing to reach this point total.
- Payment will be simplified as well. The previous methodology was confusing, because it always seemed that payment was associated with paying for a module when in fact you were paying a process fee that amortized the total cost of certification (including the examination) over your entire certification cycle, which also depended on whether you chose a 7- or 10-year option. Now you will simply pay that same amount on an annual basis. Once you have paid your annual fee, you can undertake and complete as many activities as you would like. If you find that you don't like a particular module, simply quit and try another module that may be more to your liking at no additional cost. Since many of you like to prepay your fees, we have reinstated the ability to do that as well. ABFM is also implementing a 50% discount for long-standing diplomates over the age of 70 that will be retroactive to the beginning of this calendar year.

Read the [ABFM Phoenix](#) for a full overview of changes and for results of the feedback about the examination process as well as upcoming changes.