



**The North American Board of
Breastfeeding and Lactation Medicine
Candidate Booklet
Grandparenting-In Exam 2024**

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Table of Contents

Overview	3
Certification Overview	4
About the Exam	4
Statement of Non-Discrimination	4
Confidentiality	4
Criteria for Certification	5
Applying for the NABBLM-C Examination	5
Educational Background and Licensure Requirements	6
Education	6
Required Scope of Practice and Experience	6
Documentation needed to complete the NABBLM-C Application	6
For candidates licensed in the USA	7
For candidates licensed in Canada	7
For all candidates	7
The application will be reviewed after the following are completed prior to the deadline:	7
Candidate eligibility	7
NABBLM Certification Exam Fee	7
Examination Appointment Policy	8
Deferral	8
Cancellation Policy	8
No Show Policy	8
Preparing for the Certification Examination	8
Taking the Certification Exam	8
Scheduling	8
Live Remote Proctoring	9
Non-disclosure and general terms of use agreement	9
Checklist for preparing for the online exam	9
During the exam	11
Upon finishing the exam	11
After the Examination	11
Candidates who pass the exam	11
Candidates who do not pass the exam	12
Appeals & Testing Concerns	12
NABBLM-C Re-certification	13
Link to Code of Ethical and Professional Conduct in Policy Manual	13

Overview

The North American Board of Breastfeeding and Lactation Medicine (NABBLM) is a voluntary, autonomous board that provides direction for the education and skills physicians need to become board certified as Physician Breastfeeding and Lactation Medicine (BFLM) Specialists. NABBLM also administers the exam for Physician Breastfeeding and Lactation Medicine board certification and provides a maintenance of certification program. NABBLM is independent of other Breastfeeding Medicine and Lactation organizations.

NABBLM's Mission:

- Set standards for training that prepares physicians for board certification in Breastfeeding and Lactation Medicine.
- Create a process for certification and maintenance of certification in Breastfeeding and Lactation Medicine.
- Certify physicians who have met the educational, clinical training, and examination requirements to practice Breastfeeding and lactation Medicine.
- Provide and endorse resources for physicians to maintain high professional standards through professional development and lifelong learning in Breastfeeding and Lactation Medicine
- Serve the public by ensuring that all physicians practicing Breastfeeding and Lactation Medicine meet the highest standards of excellence in clinical care.

Educate other professions and the public about the field of Breastfeeding and Lactation Medicine:

1. Maintain a public registry of physicians who are certified by the NABBLM.
2. Create public and professional awareness of the field of Breastfeeding and Lactation Medicine and its importance in promoting, protecting and supporting lactating families in a manner that is inclusive and equitable.
3. Facilitate the integration of Breastfeeding and Lactation Medicine as required education for all physicians-in-training.

Advance the field of Breastfeeding and Lactation Medicine:

- Establish Breastfeeding and Lactation Medicine as a clinical medical specialty in academic centers and other healthcare settings.
- Cultivate leaders in Breastfeeding and Lactation Medicine to expand the specialty's impact on clinical medicine, public health, medical education, human rights, policy, research, and advocacy.

Certification Overview

About the Exam

The NABBLM certification exam has been created with guidance from a psychometrician. A psychometrician is an individual who practices the science of educational and psychological measurement. The process included a Job Task Analysis Committee (JTA) of subject matter experts (SMEs) who outlined the tasks, knowledge, skills, tools, abilities and characteristics needed to become a Breastfeeding and Lactation Medicine Physician Specialist. The JTA committee's recommendations were validated by a survey among physicians practicing Breastfeeding and Lactation Medicine, which was then used to guide the blueprint for the NABBLM certification exam. NABBLM recognizes that the tasks, knowledge and skills outlined for this exam may not be relevant for every individual who takes this exam.

NABBLM has set standards for the requirements for board certification and is responsible for the exam application process. NABBLM partners with Assessment Systems, a test development and delivery company responsible for the examination administration, exam security, scoring and statistical analysis of examination content. Each exam is taken in a secure location chosen by the candidate and proctored remotely.

The NABBLM certification exam will be offered in April and October 2024 for individuals who meet the requirements for certification to be grandparented-in as a licensed and experienced Breastfeeding and Lactation Medicine Physician in the United States or Canada. The exam will be 150-180 single answer multiple choice questions and must be completed in a 6 hour window of time.

Statement of Non-Discrimination

NABBLM offers examinations to all eligible persons regardless of age, gender, race, religion, national origin, or disability. This statement also applies to the hiring and firing of staff and selection of volunteers and board members.

Confidentiality

NABBLM is committed to protecting confidential and/or proprietary information related to applicants, candidates, and the examination development, maintenance, and administration process.

Confidential information includes but is not limited to an individual's application status, personal applicant/diplomate information, exam development documentation (including job analysis study reports, technical reports, and cut score studies), exam items and answers, exam forms, item banks, and individual exam scores.

NABBLM will not disclose confidential applicant/diplomate information unless authorized in writing by the individual or as required by law. If information is released due to a legal matter, NABBLM will inform the individual.

Personal information submitted by applicants/diplomates during the initial or recertification application process is considered confidential. Personal information retained within the applicant/diplomate database will be kept confidential.

All application information, including the status of an application, is confidential and will not be shared with any party other than NABBLM's examination development or administration vendors, as needed, for certification processing purposes.

Information about applicants/diplomates and their examination results is considered confidential. Exam results will be released only to the individual candidate unless a signed release is provided. The NABBLM can disclose that a diplomate is certified in responding to an inquiry from an outside party.

Any aggregate examination statistics that are made publicly available, such as aggregate examination statistics, studies and reports concerning applicants/candidates/diplomates will contain no information identifiable with any applicant/candidates/diplomates, unless authorized in writing by the individual.

Criteria for Certification

Physicians who are already practicing Breastfeeding and Lactation Medicine and who are seeking Board Certification in Breastfeeding and Lactation Medicine must meet the eligibility requirements and pass the initial NABBLM certification exam to become board certified. The Certification in Breastfeeding and Lactation Medicine (NABBLM-C) designation is valid for as long as the physician continues to participate in and successfully complete their maintenance of certification responsibilities, and maintain a current, valid, unrestricted license to practice allopathic or osteopathic medicine in a state or jurisdiction of the United States, or province or territory of Canada. The maintenance of certification activities will begin in 2025 for those who take the exams in 2023 and 2024. Board certification is granted for a period of 5 years, with re-certification cycles being 5 years. Please see **NABBLM-C Recertification for more information**.

Applying for the NABBLM-C Examination

The Grandparenting process is for physicians who have extensive knowledge and skills supporting both the parent and infant/child in Breastfeeding and Lactation Medicine. These physicians are already capable of diagnosing and managing all of the conditions as listed in the NABBLM exam [blueprint](#) and canon of knowledge. Not all physicians who practice with the lactating dyad are at this level, even with some experience and other certifications.

Physicians who do not yet possess this full skill set, experience, and knowledge base are encouraged to apply to the Transitional Pathway. Details are forthcoming and expected by mid 2024.

To be eligible to take the certification exam under the Grandparenting Pathway in 2024 you must meet the following requirements:

Educational Background and Licensure Requirements

1. Graduation from an accredited allopathic or osteopathic medical school in the United States or Canada, or possession of Final Certification by the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG) if graduated from a medical school in a different country.
2. Possession of a current, valid, unrestricted license to practice allopathic or osteopathic medicine in a state or jurisdiction of the United States, or province or territory of Canada.
3. Current or previous board-certification by a medical specialty board recognized by the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) or the American Osteopathic Association (AOA) for physicians practicing in the United States OR current or previous certification by the College of Family Physicians of Canada or the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada for physicians practicing in Canada.

Education

1. 45 CME credits directly related to breastfeeding and lactation medicine over the past 3 years will be required to sit for the board exam.
 - a. Educational credits must be taught at a physician level. Only those taught by MD, DO, MBBS, PhD, PharmD will be accepted.
 - b. A CME certificate must have been obtained.
 - c. Education from non-BFLM focused databases such as from Up-to-Date, Medscape are not acceptable (even when CME is awarded).
 - d. In order to demonstrate consistent and longitudinal ongoing learning, at least 10 CME credits per year must have been earned during each of the last 3 years with a total of at least 45 CME credits.

Required Scope of Practice and Experience

1. Practicing Breastfeeding and Lactation Medicine independently post-training for at least 3 of the last 4 years at a diagnostic and management level. Over 1000 hours of patient facing time with parent and infant/child should be completed prior to application (for reference, ½ day of clinic per year is 200 hours).
2. Knowledge and skills, as outlined in the NABBLM knowledge categories, to evaluate and manage both the lactating parent(s) and child(ren) when caring for breastfeeding or lactating patients.
3. Recognition that breastfeeding and lactation medicine involves the care of both the parent(s) and child(ren), such that the individual routinely assesses both during medical decision making.

Documentation needed to complete the NABBLM-C Application

NABBLM reserves the right to verify all information provided by the candidate including querying certifying agencies to ensure that the candidate's CME documentation represents their actual educational activity. NABBLM will conduct random audits of education, licensure, medical training, certification and CME among new and recertifying applicants. Applicants selected for audit will be required to provide documentation verifying that the eligibility criteria are met. NABBLM will contact selected applicants for audit and provide additional detail on the requirements. Failure to provide necessary documentation within 10 business days of request may result in rejection of their application. Falsifying information may subject the applicant to either rejection of their application

or for those recertifying, disciplinary action by the Conduct Committee. Application fees will not be refunded.

Candidates will need to have the following information for the application:

For candidates licensed in the USA

1. State license number and expiration date
2. National Provider Identifier Number (NPI)

For candidates licensed in Canada

1. Provincial provider number
2. Date of licensure

For all candidates

1. Information on 45 CME credits in Breastfeeding and Lactation Medicine in the last 3 years. Please have information on the sponsoring organization, the lecturer (if not at a physician conference), date, and number of credits. *please see the section Applying for the Exam for full CME requirements*
 - a. For example, not every lecture at an Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine conference needs to be listed. Individual courses that are not a part of a physician Breastfeeding Medicine conference will require complete information.

The application will be reviewed after the following are completed prior to the deadline:

1. All requested information has been submitted.
2. Payment for application fee.

Candidate eligibility

The candidate's application is reviewed by the credentials committee. If the candidate is deemed eligible to take the exam, the candidate will receive an email that notifies them of their eligibility and a link to pay the exam fees. Once payment for the exam fee is received, the candidate will receive information on the details for taking the exam.

NABBLM will provide reasonable and appropriate testing accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended for individuals with documented disabilities who request and demonstrate the need for accommodation as required by law. ADA regulations define a person with a disability as someone with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. NABBLM requires documentation to validate the type and severity of a disability to enable accommodations to be specifically matched with the identified functional limitation, in order to provide equal access to exam functions for all examinees. Applicants should indicate on the application form if an accommodation is requested. Documentation from a licensed healthcare provider is required for submission to document the needed accommodations. NABBLM will contact individuals directly to review the request.

To apply, please visit nabblm.org

NABBLM Certification Exam Fee

The fee for the April 2024 Grandparenting-in NABBLM certification exam is \$1500.00 in the national currency of either US or Canada where the applicant is licensed to practice.

Examination Appointment Policy

Deferral

A deferral is defined as a candidate signing up for and paying for the pilot exam, but requesting to defer until the next available exam. In this case the candidate will be offered the opportunity to take a subsequent exam within the next year and will be responsible for the difference in cost between the subsequent exam and the amount paid for the pilot exam.

Cancellation Policy

If the candidate chooses to cancel their exam after they have paid the exam fee, a processing fee of \$100 will be withheld from the examination fee. Cancellation may be done up to the final date of the exam. Application fees are nonrefundable.

No Show Policy

If the candidate is not present for the exam without prior notification, the exam fee will not be refunded. The candidate would have the option of applying their exam fee to a subsequent exam within 1 year. Candidates who “no show” will be required to forfeit a \$100 processing fee and are responsible for the cost difference between the pilot exam and the subsequent exam.

Preparing for the Certification Examination

The NABBLM exam blueprint can be used for preparation for the exam. NABBLM encourages exam candidates to study and learn from materials prepared by physicians and other providers. NABBLM’s role is in developing and administering the examination for board certification. NABBLM does not endorse any specific review courses or study guides for the 2024 exams.

Please visit

https://nabblm.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/NABBLM-C_exam_blueprint_public_23.07.pdf
for the exam outline.

Taking the Certification Exam

Scheduling

After a candidate’s application has been accepted and the exam fee is paid, the candidate will receive information via email on how to access their exam.

The exam will be available starting at 12:00am PST on April 17, 2024 and closing on April 20, 2024 at 11:59pm PST. Live proctors are available 24/7 and there is no need to schedule a specific time. Candidates must complete the exam within one 6 hour block of time. Breaks will be permitted between test sections to accommodate personal needs including lactation. NABBLM anticipates that most candidates will finish the exam within 4-6 hours with two breaks up to 40 minutes each in length.

Live Remote Proctoring

The NABBLM exam will be administered by live remote proctoring. This permits the candidate to test from their home or office in place of a testing center. This is the only option for the NABBLM exam at this time. The remote proctor protects against academic dishonesty by confirming the test taker's identity and recording the surroundings during the exam through audio and video recording. Please carefully review the guidelines below to determine the best time and place to take the examination.

Non-disclosure and general terms of use agreement

Prior to starting the NABBLM certification exam, you will be asked to sign the following non-disclosure and general terms of use agreement. Failure to accept this agreement will disqualify the candidate from taking the exam, and the exam fee will be forfeited.

By acknowledging that you have read this agreement, you are indicating that you agree to the terms and conditions set forth below:

- I understand that the contents of this exam are the property of the NABBLM and are copyrighted under the laws of the United States.*
- I understand that I am expressly prohibited from disclosing, publishing, reproducing, or transmitting this exam, in whole or in part, in any form or by any means, oral or written, electronic or mechanical, for any purpose.*
- I understand that using any prohibited aids in connection with the exam, attempting to give or receive assistance, or otherwise communicate in any form about or during the exam is strictly prohibited.*
- I have read, understand, and agree that my exam may not be scored, the exam fee may be forfeited, and I may be barred from future NABBLM examinations if NABBLM has reason to believe that I am involved in exam misconduct or any other testing irregularity that could compromise the integrity of the exam. Failure to abide by these terms and conditions can and will result in the cancellation of your exam score and/or pursuit of any other legal remedies available to NABBLM.*

Checklist for preparing for the online exam

Before Check-in:

1. You will need proper internet connectivity, computer configuration and video-enabled smartphone for the examination. For information on optimizing online test-taking, please visit <https://app.fasttestweb.com/testing/pr/87/6?rldbqn=1>
2. **Your online test will be remotely proctored by www.ascproctor.com**
 - a. Go to **www.ascproctor.com** --> click on 'Select Your School/Organization'--> click on *North American Board of Breastfeeding and Lactation Medicine*--> Enter your information--> launch chat with live proctor. Once you've established communication with your proctor, they will have all the information needed for you to launch your exam. If you are having trouble connecting to the proctor, please visit [Trouble connecting?](#) for troubleshooting.

Check-in:

1. Please have your government-issued photo identification document (ID) (e.g. driver's license, passport, military ID) to present to the proctor. You will need to have the ID within reach, and your face must be fully visible.
2. You will also need a secondary camera for this proctoring process- most use their smartphones, but you can use a tablet. The proctor will walk you through this set up process.

Test Day Rules

1. You must take your exam in a private area with no other persons or animals present in the room.
2. You are permitted to have a smartphone stand, extension cord (to help scan the room using your computer), a beverage, and tissues in a closed pack.
3. You are not permitted to have any recording devices on the desk or within reach.
4. You are not permitted to have any examination related materials posted in the room.
5. You are not permitted to have any unauthorized programs running on your desktop computer/laptop/tablet during the examination.
6. You are not permitted to be connected to a virtual network.
7. You may only have a single computer monitor.
8. You are not permitted to be connected to an email program or search engine other than what is being used for the examination.
9. You are not permitted to have any programs that are recording in the background running.
10. You are not permitted to have any open documents available.
11. You are not permitted to use any unauthorized headphones during the examination.
12. Maintain silence- refrain from unnecessary conversations except to the proctor.
13. You are not permitted to make or receive phone calls or text messages while writing the examination.
14. Your webcam, speakers and microphone on your cellular smartphone or tablet and your computer must remain active throughout the examination.
15. You must remain in view of the proctor while actively taking the exam.
16. Please plan to use the restroom before beginning the exam, or during a designated break between exam sections. If you take an unscheduled break your test will be terminated.
17. If you get disconnected from the proctor during your session, please stop where you are in your examination and wait for the proctor to call you to provide further instructions. If you are disconnected from the proctor for more than 5 minutes, the proctor is authorized to end your examination session. In the event this takes place, you may not be permitted to complete your examination, your results may be invalid, and you may have to pay additional fees based on the circumstances.
18. You are not permitted to exit the session until the proctor has confirmed the section or examination has been completed or submitted.
19. If the proctor finds you in violation of any of the rules listed above, the proctor is authorized to end your examination session. In the event this takes place, you may not be permitted to complete your examination, your results might be voided, and you may be required to forfeit all fees paid to NABBLM.

During the exam

1. The total maximum test time is 6 hours including breaks. A time clock will run throughout the 6 hours.
 - a. The test will be composed of 3 sections, 50-60 questions in each section. Between sections you have the option of taking up to a 40 minute break. You do not need to stay in the room for the break. You will not be allowed to return to a previous test section after returning from the break.
 - b. When a break comes, the instructions on the screen will say that it is optional, and there will be a 40-minute timer in the top-right corner.
 - c. You must inform your proctor when you are ready to take a scheduled break, using the Chat function on top of your screen, and receive confirmation before leaving your seat. You will be required to go through security checks when you return. Please allow at least 7 minutes of your break time for security checks once you have returned to your desk. Your test will resume after this screen and cannot be paused.

Upon finishing the exam

1. Please notify your proctor using the Chat function on the screen once you have reached the end of your test
2. Report any issues that occur during your test to your proctor immediately. If there was an issue that may have affected your results, you must report it to the ASC proctor within 48 hours of your test. No corrective action will be taken for problems that are reported after scores have been released or more than 48 hours after the test sitting, whichever comes first.

After the Examination

Participants of the exam will receive their exam results by email after the exam is complete, expected by the end of May 2024.

Candidates who pass the exam

Candidates who pass the exam will receive an email informing them of their passing result and a formal certificate via mail. Diplomates with a passing score may use NABBLM-C as an acronym for board certification, or use the term 'Board Certified Breastfeeding and Lactation Medicine Physician'. Candidates who have successfully completed all the requirements may use the credential once they have received official notification of NABBLM-C certification. Candidates who have passed the exam may use the awarded designation as long as their certification remains current.

Except as permitted by this policy, any use or display of NABBLM certification marks and/or logos without the prior written permission of NABBLM is prohibited. Any candidate or diplomate who manufactures, modifies, reproduces, distributes or uses a fraudulent or otherwise unauthorized NABBLM certificate, NABBLM designation or other credential may be subject to disciplinary action, including denial or revocation of eligibility for certification. Any individual who engages in such behavior also may be subject to legal action.

Education and training providers may not use the NABBLM name, logos, or certification marks to state or imply any approval or endorsement by NABBLM of the educational materials.

Individuals who have met the certification standards are authorized to use the following certification mark in communications and marketing materials:

- The credential may be designated as NABBLM-C or Board Certified Breastfeeding and Lactation Medicine Physician.
- The credential is typically used after the name following any academic degrees and licensure (e.g., Jane Smith, MD, NABBLM-C).
- The mark must be clearly associated with the individual(s) certified by the NABBLM.

NABBLM reserves the right to include all certified individuals in a public database at the NABBLM website. Individuals may opt out of the public database with written notice to NABBLM.

Candidates who do not pass the exam

Candidates who do not pass the exam will receive domain-level score reports, so they are aware of the areas that they need to study, along with how they performed with respect to the cut point. They may apply again for the next available test cycle.

Appeals & Testing Concerns

We rely on our testing partner to provide a pleasant testing experience for every candidate. We will provide an opportunity for general comments via a survey emailed after the exam. You may also reach out to us via the contact page on the NABBLM website.

Candidates who fail the exam and believe irregular testing conditions were a contributing factor may file an appeal to the Credentials Committee. All appeal requests must be made in writing and postmarked or emailed within 30 days from the receipt of the exam score report. All appeals must describe the suspected error or problem and the requested remedy. The Credentials Committee will review the information and make a final decision within 30 days of receipt. The decision of the Committee shall be final.

If you have an examination issue that you would like to have directly addressed, please contact NABBLM at admin@nabblm.org. Processes for specific issues are outlined below.

To appeal a certification decision, please submit an appeal request to admin@nabblm.org that describes the reason for the certification decision appeal.

- Please attach all supporting documentation that provides evidence for your appeal.
- Once the NABBLM office has received this information, it will be sent to the NABBLM Credentials Committee who reviews all of the details and supporting evidence. This process may take 30 business days to complete.
- Once a decision has been made, the NABBLM office will contact you via email with the decision.

NABBLM-C Re-certification

No recertification test is required for individuals who have been certified NABBLM-C. The NABBLM certification is valid until December 31, 2029 for those who take the exam in 2024. To maintain certification beyond 5 years one must remain active in the NABBLM Maintenance of Certification (MOC) Program.

The NABBLM MOC program will be clinically focused at a reasonable cost (estimated \$150 per year to start). The MOC program will include continuing education activities with the goal of keeping abreast of evidence-based Breastfeeding and Lactation Medicine.

Link to Code of Ethical and Professional Conduct in Policy Manual