



NABBLM Policy Manual

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Certification Program

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 (BFLM) Physician Specialist. The JTA committee's recommendations were validated by a survey among physicians practicing BFLM, which was then used to guide the blueprint for the first 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 is responsible for exam applications and approval. 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. The exam will be taken remotely in a secure location chosen by the candidate and proctored remotely.

The first NABBLM certification exam was offered in October 2023 as a pilot. The initial exam was only for individuals who met the application criteria as a licensed and experienced Breastfeeding and Lactation Medicine Physician in the United States or Canada (grandparenting in). Subsequent exams are held biannually. Additional pathways to qualify to take the exam opened in 2025 and include the Fellowship Pathway and Alternate Pathway. The Grandparenting Pathway will end with the October 2025 exam and no candidates will be able to qualify for this pathway after this exam cycle. The exam is 150-180 single answer multiple choice questions and must be completed in a four (4) 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 with an application or recertification application 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. NABBLM maintains an online searchable database of certified NABBLM diplomates. Diplomates may request in writing to be excluded from this database, however we reserve the right to share their certification status with outside parties by direct inquiry.

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 NABBLM certification exam to become board certified. The Certification in Breastfeeding and Lactation Medicine (NABBLM-C) 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. Maintenance of certification (MOC) activities will begin in 2025 for diplomates certified in 2023 or 2024. For all others, MOC activities will begin in the calendar year following initial board certification. Initial certification is valid for five years; diplomates remain certified and in good standing by actively participating in the MOC program.

Applying for the NABBLM-C Examination

To be eligible to take the certification exam, 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.

Required Scope of Practice

1. Knowledge and skills to evaluate and manage both the lactating parent(s) and child(ren) when caring for breastfeeding or lactating patients.
2. Recognition that breastfeeding and lactation medicine involves the care of both the parent(s) and child(ren), such that the individual has the knowledge and skills to assess both during medical decision making.
3. It is expected that the BFLM physician has the knowledge and skills that would allow them to practice the full scope of Breastfeeding and Lactation Medicine even if they are in a specialty or practice setting in which they are practicing a subset of the full scope. Thus, an individual can meet the criteria to be eligible to take the certification exam despite having limitations on their current practice of BFLM so long as they otherwise demonstrate competency in knowledge and skills of the full scope of Breastfeeding and Lactation Medicine. For example, a physician in a specialty that traditionally cares for one side of the dyad or for one or both members of the dyad for a period of time less than the possible duration of a breastfeeding relationship is welcome to apply for the certification exam if they meet all other eligibility requirements.

Knowledge and Experience

1. Grandparenting Pathway
 - a. Started the practice of BFLM prior to January 2020 and have practiced Breastfeeding and Lactation Medicine independently post-training for at least four of the last five years at a diagnostic and management level.
 - b. 45 CME credits directly related to breastfeeding and lactation over the past three years, with an ideal minimum of 10 CME/year, will be required to sit for the board exam. The expectation is that an established BFLM physician who meets the standards for grandparenting will have longitudinal learning in this field; thus, exceptions to the 10 CME/year requirement will be considered on an individual basis if a commitment to longitudinal learning in this field can otherwise be demonstrated. Educational credits must be taught at a physician level so only those taught by MD, DO, MBBS, or PhD will be accepted. CMEs from databases such as UptoDate and Natural Medicines Database are not accepted.
2. Fellowship Pathway
 - a. Successful completion of a NABBLM accredited fellowship program.
3. Alternate Pathway
 - a. Comprehensive Program
 - i. Certificate from a NABBLM accredited comprehensive educational program.
 - b. Self-directed Program
 - i. Certificates from NABBLM accredited educational programs demonstrating successful mastery of content in each of the following categories:
 1. General Knowledge of Breastfeeding and Lactation Medicine
 2. Advanced Topics in Infant/Child BFLM
 3. Advanced Topics in Maternal/Parental BFLM

The application fee is \$100 (USD) and is non-refundable.

Documentation needed to complete the NABBLM-C Application

NABBLM reserves the right to verify all information provided by the candidate. We do not require uploading documentation such as proof of board certification or medical licensure at the time of application. NABBLM will conduct random audits of education, licensure, medical 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 15 days of request will disqualify the candidate from taking the board examination. 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 College License number
2. Date of licensure

For all candidates applying for the Grandparenting Pathway

1. Information on 45 CME credits in Breastfeeding and Lactation Medicine in the last three years, including the sponsoring organization, the lecturer (if not at a physician conference), date, and number of credits. Educational credits must be taught at a physician level so only those taught by MD, DO, MBBS, PhD will be accepted.

For all candidates applying for the Fellowship or Alternate Pathways

1. Certificate of completion from a NABBLM accredited program(s)

The application is considered complete when:

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

Candidate eligibility

The candidate's application is reviewed by the Credentials and Accreditation Committee. If the candidate is deemed eligible to take the exam, the candidate will receive an email that notifies them of their eligibility. They will then be able to pay the exam fee. Once the 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 NABBLM certification exam is \$1500 (USD). The exam fee is due two weeks prior to the exam window opening.

Examination Appointment Policy

Cancellation Policy

If the candidate chooses to cancel their exam after they have paid the exam fee, a processing fee of \$100 (USD) will be withheld from the examination fee, in addition to the nonrefundable application fee of \$100 (USD). Cancellation may be done up to the start date and time of the final exam.

No Show Policy

If the candidate is not present for the start of the exam without prior notification, the exam fee will not be refunded.

Deferment Policy

Candidates who are approved to sit for the exam may request a deferment to the next exam cycle for any reason. The application and exam fees must be paid in the cycle in which the candidate was originally approved. Fees are non-refundable and non-transferable beyond the next immediate exam cycle.

Candidates who wish to defer must notify NABBLM via email sent to admin@nabblm.org before the close of the exam period and prior to accessing or opening the exam. Email timestamps will be used to verify the timing of deferment requests. Candidates will receive an email confirming receipt of their deferment request.

Deferment requests submitted after a candidate has accessed or opened the exam will not be accepted.

Candidates who do not complete the exam in the next cycle immediately following their deferment will forfeit all paid fees. They must submit a new application and pay new fees if they wish to sit for a future 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 developing and administering the examination for board certification. NABBLM does not require, provide, or endorse any specific study guides, review courses, or other examination materials.

Please visit [our blueprint](#) 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 candidate does NOT need to schedule their exam in advance; instead, once the examination period has begun they can access the exam at any time of their choosing until the examination window closes.

The 2025 exams will be held during the following periods:

- April 23, 2025 - April 26, 2025
- October 22, 2025 - October 25, 2025

The exam will be available beginning at 12am PST on the first day of the window and will close at 11:59pm PST on the last day of the window. Candidates must complete the exam within one four (4) hour block of time. There is the option to take one 30 minute break between test sections to accommodate personal needs including lactation.

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 a 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.

At the conclusion of the exam there is an opportunity to provide written feedback on the exam content and your experience with the exam process.

Checklist for preparing for the online exam

Before Check-in:

1. You will need stable 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. Log in to your Certemy account and click on "Register and Take Test." You will need to complete the non-disclosure and confidentiality questions in order for your exam to be recognized as being completed. Once this is completed, you will see the link in Certemy to the following remote proctoring website.
3. 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.
4. If you have persistent difficulties launching the exam or communicating with the proctor please contact us at admin@nabblm to notify us. We are not available 24/7 but will get back to you as soon as possible.

Check-in:

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.

You will also need a secondary camera for this proctoring process; most use their smartphones, but you can use a tablet. The proctor will guide 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 permitted to have a blank piece of paper to take notes and a writing utensil. The paper will need to be shown to the proctor prior to beginning the exam to ensure it is blank. At the completion of the exam the proctor will observe you shredding/discarding the paper in compliance with the non-disclosure agreement that was signed.
4. You are not permitted to have any recording devices on the desk or within reach.
5. You are not permitted to have any examination related materials posted in the room.
6. You are not permitted to have any unauthorized programs running on your desktop computer/laptop/tablet during the examination.
7. You are not permitted to be connected to a virtual network.
8. You may only have a single computer monitor.
9. You are not permitted to be connected to an email program or search engine other than what is being used for the examination.
10. You are not permitted to have any programs that are recording in the background running.
11. You are not permitted to have any open documents available.
12. You are not permitted to use any unauthorized headphones during the examination.
13. Maintain silence - refrain from unnecessary conversations except to the proctor.
14. You are not permitted to make or receive phone calls or text messages while writing the examination.
15. Your webcam, speakers and microphone on your cellular smartphone or tablet and your computer must remain active throughout the examination.
16. You must remain in view of the proctor while actively taking the exam.

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.

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.

You are not permitted to exit the session until the proctor has confirmed the section or examination has been completed or submitted.

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 four (4) hours including the optional break. A time clock will run throughout the four (4) hours.
 - a. The test will be composed of two sections, with 75-85 questions in each section. Between sections you have the option of taking up to a 40 minute break. The break time is included in the total testing time of four (4) hours. You do not need to stay in the room for the break but you will remain connected to the proctor for the duration of 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 30-minute timer visible on the screen.
 - 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 seven (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.
3. Please note that it may take up to 24 hours for your Certemy account to reflect that your exam has been completed.

After the Examination

Candidates will receive their exam results by email within four (4) weeks of the end of the examination period.

Standard setting is a psychometric process used to establish the cut score for a criterion-based examination form. The resulting cut score serves as a pass/fail point for the exam that links exam scores to performance standards and requirements. The standard setting methodology used to establish the cut score for the NABBLM-C is commonly referred to as a modified-Angoff procedure. This method uses ratings from a large, representative panel of subject matter experts to assess the relative difficulty of questions on the NABBLM-C examination.

Candidates who pass the exam

Candidates who pass the exam will receive an email informing them of their passing result. Their certificate will be available for download from their Certemy account (located in the Digital Wallet tab). 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, except as permitted by earning NABBLM accreditation.

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, along with how they performed with respect to the cut point. If a candidate opts to retake the exam, they will have a

maximum of 2 retakes. The candidate must reapply and pay the full application and exam fees for each subsequent exam(s). If a candidate is approved to retake the exam, a maximum of three (3) total attempts are allowed within a five (5) year period.

Appeals & Testing Concerns

We rely on our testing partner to provide a pleasant testing experience for every candidate. There is an opportunity to share your comments at the end of the exam. Please feel free to leave your suggestions and comments there or using the post-test comment section in Certemy.

Candidates who fail the exam and believe irregular testing conditions were a contributing factor may file an appeal to the Credentials and Accreditation 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 and Accreditation 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. In accordance with the non-disclosure agreement, you may not replicate any portion of the exam but can provide a descriptive account of any pertinent exam details.
- Once the NABBLM office has received this information, it will be sent to the NABBLM Credentials and Accreditation 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.

Internal policies not included in the candidate booklet include:

Application Review

Applications will be reviewed by a quorum of the Credentials and Accreditation Committee. NABBLM staff will do a preliminary review and obtain clarifying information prior to the meeting. The Credentials and Accreditation Committee reserves the right to request further information and/or verification of information provided. The Credentials and Accreditation Committee reserves the right to decline any CME that is deemed to be substandard in quality.

Auditing Procedures

The Credentials and Accreditation Committee will audit no less than 10% of applications received.

Auditing will validate

- State or province license (online or provided by applicant)
- Board Certification (online or provided by applicant)

- Breastfeeding and Lactation Medicine Practice (short narrative by applicant)
- CME certificates

The applicant will receive an email notification that their application has been randomly selected for auditing. They will be required to submit their information within 15 days of receipt of that email.

NABBLM-C Recertification

Maintenance of certification (MOC) activities will begin in 2025 for diplomates certified in 2023 or 2024. For all others, MOC activities will begin in the calendar year following initial board certification. Initial certification is valid for five years; diplomates remain certified and in good standing by actively participating in the MOC program.

Diplomates are expected to engage in MOC activities on an annual basis to maintain active participation status. Failure to complete required MOC activities in any given year will result in the diplomate being marked as “**inactive in the MOC program**” for that year. All requirements for the year in which they were inactive will need to be completed prior to moving on to the current year MOC activities.

Diplomates who do not actively participate in the MOC program over the course of their five-year certification period will not be eligible to renew their certification through the MOC pathway. Instead, they will be required to **reapply for certification, complete a new educational course, and retake the NABBLM certification exam** in order to regain certification status. This process is more time-intensive and costly, and is not intended to serve as a routine pathway for recertification.

Annual MOC participation is designed to be clinically relevant, accessible, and cost-effective — and is the recommended route for maintaining NABBLM certification in good standing. Diplomates with any extenuating circumstances may contact the board directly.

Educational Program Accreditation

The Fellowship and Alternate Pathways require an applicant to have completed NABBLM accredited education. The purpose of accreditation is to ensure that the educational program meets NABBLM’s standards for acquisition of the knowledge and skills to practice BFLM including complete coverage of the certification exam blueprint, use of evidence-based medicine, physician oversight, internal quality improvement processes, and utilization of adult learning techniques. Accreditation does not confer NABBLM’s universal endorsement of the content of the educational program.

Confidentiality

NABBLM is committed to protecting confidential and/or proprietary information submitted by an educational program applying for accreditation. Access to the materials that are shared for evaluation as part of the accreditation process will be restricted to members of the Credentials and Accreditation Committee and relevant NABBLM staff. These individuals will sign a non-disclosure agreement if requested by the organization/institution applying for program accreditation. It is the applying organization/institution’s responsibility to notify NABBLM of the need to sign a non-disclosure

agreement prior to payment of the accreditation application fee and to provide said non-disclosure agreement.

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

All accreditation application information, including the status of an application, is confidential and will not be shared with any party. Once accreditation is granted, NABBLM reserves the right to publish the names of NABBLM-accredited programs on its website and will provide a seal that the Accredited Program may use for marketing and promotional purposes on their website and other communication or marketing materials.

Application for Accreditation

Education requirements to practice evidence-based BFLM must be rigorous to ensure competency and quality in this emerging field. Accredited programs will be assessed initially and every two years thereafter to ensure ongoing compliance. An accredited program is one that demonstrates:

- experienced BFLM physician leadership
- consistency in high quality programming that is for physicians at an evaluation and management level
- quality improvement processes to maintain excellent programming and consistency
- course content that is mapped to the NABBLM blueprint to achieve comprehensive education
- evaluation of learners' competency

Fellowship Pathway

Fellowship Program Requirements

1. General
 - a. Identifiable experienced BFLM physician leadership
 - b. Defined selective application process
 - c. Appropriate internal resources and review
 - d. Internal processes for quality improvement
 - e. Final evaluation is individualized and ensures that each candidate has completed their personal individualized self assessments, has completed required assignments, and demonstrated competency with all clinical skills
2. Didactic education
 - a. For physicians by physicians or appropriate level educators based on topic
 - b. Individual self assessment is part of the evaluation process
 - c. Adult learning style that is interactive and includes some group interaction between participants, in person or virtual
 - d. Covers all aspects of the NABBLM blueprint
 - e. Greater than 100 hours of direct or indirect educational time
3. Clinical skills

- a. Individual evaluation to ensure each graduate has appropriate and comprehensive clinical skills and experience (competency is likely to require 1000 hours over 2+ years)
 - i. Individual self assessment is part of the evaluation process
 - ii. Program will have a defined clinical hour requirement
 - iii. Evaluation will include a clinical skills checklist that covers the blueprint, and may include case logs, standardized patients/cases, direct evaluation of skills, and/or case discussion with mentors/assessors

Alternate Pathway

Comprehensive Program - Comprehensive Course Requirements

- 1. General
 - a. Identifiable experienced BFLM physician leadership
 - b. Appropriate internal resources and review
 - c. Internal processes for quality improvement
 - d. Final evaluation is individualized and ensures that each candidate has completed their self assessments and required assignments
- 2. Didactic education
 - a. For physicians by physicians or appropriate level educators based on topic
 - b. Individual self assessment is part of the evaluation process
 - c. Adult learning style that is interactive and includes some group interaction between participants, in person or virtual
 - d. Covers all aspects of the blueprint
 - e. Greater than 100 hours of direct or indirect educational time
 - f. Evaluation will include standardized cases and/or case discussions

Self-Directed Program - Component Course Requirements - Educational providers may create a course to cover one of three sections of the blueprint. The sections are General Topics in BFLM, Advanced Topics in Infant/Child BFLM, and Advanced Topics in Maternal/Parental BFLM. Applicants for board certification will need to complete courses in each section and submit certificates in order to be eligible for board certification.

- 1. General
 - a. Identifiable experienced BFLM physician leadership
 - b. Appropriate internal resources and review
 - c. Internal processes for quality improvement
 - d. Final evaluation ensures that each candidate has completed required assignments and achieved competency of the material covered.
- 2. Didactic education
 - a. For physicians by physicians or appropriate level educators based on topic
 - b. Individual self assessment is part of the evaluation process
 - c. Adult learning techniques are utilized
 - d. Covers all aspects of the respective blueprint topics
 - i. General Topics in BFLM

- ii. Advanced Topics in Infant/Child BFLM
- iii. Advanced Topics in Maternal/Parent BFLM

Documentation Needed for Accreditation Application

The following information will be needed to complete the application for NABBLM Accreditation of an educational program:

- Name of educational course/program
- Name and contact information of the affiliated institution/organization
- Name, contact information, BFLM experience, and CV of the program director
- Name and CV for all core faculty
- List of all faculty
- Syllabus and course description
- Course website address
- Program application process
- Learner evaluation process
- Description of internal quality improvement processes
- Description of adult learning techniques utilized in the program
- Number of hours of didactic (direct and indirect) education
- Number of hours of clinical education, if applicable
- Submission of audiovisual materials covering the following blueprint topics
 - Fellowship and Comprehensive Courses
 - Breast pain and pathology inclusive of infections and masses
 - Delayed secretory activation
 - Differential diagnosis of insufficient milk production/hyperlactation
 - Differential diagnosis of milk transfer issues at the breast
 - Impact of maternal/infant care interventions on mental health (short and long term)
 - Infant anatomy related to breastfeeding/lactation
 - Infant medical conditions affecting breastfeeding and lactation (prematurity, hypoglycemia, jaundice)
 - Infant related risk factors for breastfeeding and lactation difficulties
 - Integration of maternal medical issues and lactation (gestational diabetes, thyroid)
 - Component Courses
 - General Topics in BFLM
 - Breast pain and pathology inclusive of infections and masses
 - Delayed secretory activation
 - Differential diagnosis of insufficient milk production/hyperlactation
 - Differential diagnosis of milk transfer issues at the breast
 - Impact of maternal/infant care interventions on mental health (short and long term)
 - Advanced Topics in Infant/Child BFLM

- Differential diagnosis of milk transfer issues at the breast
- Infant anatomy related to breastfeeding/lactation
- Infant medical conditions affecting breastfeeding and lactation (prematurity, hypoglycemia, jaundice)
- Infant related risk factors for breastfeeding and lactation difficulties
- Advanced Topics in Maternal/Parental BFLM
 - Breast pain and pathology inclusive of infections and masses
 - Delayed secretory activation
 - Differential diagnosis of insufficient milk production/hyperlactation
 - Integration of maternal medical issues and lactation (gestational diabetes, thyroid)

Accreditation Application Fee

The application fee for NABBLM Accreditation of an educational program is as follows. All fees are in USD.

- Fellowship program - \$2500
- Comprehensive program - \$2000
- Component course - \$1500

Conduct Policy

NABBLM is an autonomous multidisciplinary board that provides direction for and administers the certification process for physicians in Breastfeeding and Lactation Medicine.

NABBLM is committed to maintaining a high level of excellence in practice, ethical conduct and integrity by its Board of Directors, staff, and diplomates.

As such, a Board Certified Breastfeeding and Lactation Medicine Physician (NABBLM-C)

- should never represent themselves either directly or indirectly, as anything other than a NABBLM-C unless they hold other license/certification that allows them to do so.
- should practice within the scope of their knowledge, skills, and abilities.
- will not provide services that are limited by state, provincial, or territorial law to provision by another health care professional only.
- must remain in good standing relative to governmental requirements as a condition of continued credentialing.
- should take credit, including authorship, only for work they have actually performed and give credit to the contributions of others as warranted.
- shall maintain a professional knowledge and skill level required to ensure that patients and families receive excellent medical care based on current evidence by participating in and completing maintenance of certification requirements.
- shall accept no personal compensation from any party that would influence or require special consideration in the provision of care to any patient.
- shall adhere to the principles and aims of the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes.

- shall cooperate in every reasonable and proper way with other physicians and work with them in the advancement of quality patient care.
- shall be dedicated to providing competent and legally permissible services within the scope of the knowledge and skills of their respective credentials.
- shall provide services with integrity, competence, diligence, and compassion.
- shall provide Breastfeeding and Lactation Medicine information in a manner that is consistent with evidence-based science and medicine.
- shall respect the rights of clients, colleagues, and health professionals, and shall safeguard client confidences within the boundaries of the law.
- shall maintain confidentiality and do not communicate to a third party not involved in that patient's care without the prior written consent of the patient or as required by law.
- will be truthful about their qualifications and the limitations of their expertise and provide services consistent with their competencies.
- shall provide patient care impartially; provide no special privilege to any individual patient based on the patient's race, color, creed, sex, sexual preference, gender identity, age, national origin or handicap.

Applicants or Diplomates will receive a Denial or Revocation of Certification based on the following conduct:

- Presentation of fraudulent documents or falsifying information when applying for certification or recertification.
- Failure to comply with testing policies during the exam. This would include any misconduct during the exam that could end or void the exam immediately, or any incidents that are brought to light through later audit or review.
- Using a title, designation, credential or license, company name, letterhead, publication, term, title or document which states or implies an ability, relationship or qualification that does not exist.
- Not cooperating with a NABBLM disciplinary investigation or proceeding.
- Attempting to prevent or interfere with a complaint being filed or NABBLM disciplinary investigation or proceeding to occur.
- Failure to abide by the NABBLM Bylaws or any rules or requirements established by the Board, including, but not limited to, NABBLM's Ethical Code and Professional Conduct.
- Has a license or certificate to practice medicine suspended, revoked, or otherwise limited.
- Violation or misuse of any of the NABBLM's Intellectual Property Rights.
- Offering of any financial or other benefit to any director, officer, employee, proctor, or other agent or representative of NABBLM in return for any right, privilege, or benefit which is not usually granted by NABBLM to other similarly situated candidates or persons.
- Failing to comply with the continuing requirements for diplomate status.

Disciplinary Policy

To maintain and enhance the credibility of the NABBLM-C certification program NABBLM has adopted the following procedures to allow individuals to bring complaints concerning the conduct of individuals who are candidates or diplomates of NABBLM.

In the event an individual candidate or diplomate violates the NABBLM Code of Ethical and Professional Conduct, certification rules, or NABBLM policies, the Credentials and Accreditation Committee may reprimand or suspend the individual or revoke certification.

The grounds for sanctions under these procedures may include, but are not necessarily limited to:

- Violation of the NABBLM Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct.
- Violation of established NABBLM policies, rules and requirements.
- Fraud or misrepresentation in an initial application or renewal application for certification.

Information regarding the complaint process will be available to the public via the NABBLM website or other published documents. A complete copy of this policy will be publicly available.

Actions taken under this policy do not constitute enforcement of the law, although referral to appropriate federal, state/provincial, or local government agencies may be made about the conduct of the candidate or diplomate in appropriate situations. Individuals initially bringing complaints are not entitled to any relief or damages by virtue of this process, although they will receive notice of the actions taken.

Complaints

Complaints may be submitted by any individual or entity. Complaints should be reported to NABBLM in writing by email to admin@nabblm.org and should include the name of the person submitting the complaint, the name of the person the complaint is regarding along with other relevant identifying information, a detailed description of factual allegations supporting the suspected violations, citation to the policy or rule involved, and any relevant supporting documentation.

Information submitted during the complaint and investigation process is considered confidential and will be handled in accordance with NABBLM'S Confidentiality Policy. Inquiries or submissions other than complaints may be reviewed and handled by NABBLM or its staff members at its discretion.

Upon receipt and preliminary review of a complaint involving the certification program, NABBLM staff consultation with the Credentials and Accreditation Committee may conclude, in their sole discretion, that the submission:

- contains unreliable or insufficient information, or
- is patently frivolous or inconsequential.

In such cases, NABBLM staff may determine that the submission does not constitute a valid and actionable complaint that would justify bringing it before the Committee for investigation and a determination of whether there has been a violation of substantive requirements of the certification process. If so, the submission is disposed of by notice from the Credentials and Accreditation Committee Chair to the submitter, if the submitter is identified. All such preliminary dispositions by the Chair are reported to the Committee at its next meeting.

Preliminary review will be conducted within 30 calendar days of receipt of the complaint.

If a submission is deemed by the Committee or Credentials and Accreditation Staff to be a valid and actionable complaint, the Committee shall see that written notice is provided to the candidate/diplomate whose conduct has been called into question. The candidate/diplomate whose

conduct is at issue shall also be given the opportunity to respond to the complaint. The Committee also shall ensure that the individual submitting the complaint receives notice within 30 days of receipt that the complaint is being reviewed by the Committee.

Complaint Review

For each complaint that the Credentials and Accreditation Committee concludes is a valid and actionable complaint, NABBLM authorizes an investigation into its specific facts or circumstances to whatever extent is necessary in order to clarify, expand, or corroborate the information provided by the submitter.

The Committee appoints a Complaint Review Committee. The Complaint Review Committee initially determines whether it is appropriate to review the complaint under these procedures or whether the matter should be referred to another entity engaged in the administration of law. The timeline for responses and for providing any additional information shall be established by the Complaint Review Committee. The review and investigation will be completed in an appropriate amount of time, not to exceed six months, unless there are extenuating circumstances that require an extended time period. The Complaint Review Committee may be assisted in the conduct of its investigation by NABBLM staff or legal counsel. The Chair exercises general supervision over all investigations.

Both the individual submitting the complaint and the candidate/diplomate who is the subject of the investigation (or their employer) may be contacted for additional information with respect to the complaint. The Complaint Review Committee, or the Credentials and Accreditation Committee on its behalf, may at its discretion contact such other individuals who may have knowledge of the facts and circumstances surrounding the complaint.

All investigations and deliberations of the Complaint Review Committee and the Credentials and Accreditation Committee are conducted in confidence, with all written communications sealed and marked "Personal and Confidential," and they are conducted objectively, without any indication of prejudice. An investigation may be directed toward any aspect of a complaint which is relevant or potentially relevant. Formal hearings are not held and the parties are not expected to be represented by counsel, although the Complaint Review Committee and Credentials and Accreditation Committee may consult their own counsel.

Determination of Violation

Upon completion of an investigation, the Complaint Review Committee recommends whether the Credentials and Accreditation Committee should make a determination that there has been a violation of NABBLM policies and rules. When the Complaint Review Committee recommends that the Credentials and Accreditation Committee find a violation, the Complaint Review Committee recommends imposition of an appropriate sanction. If the Complaint Review Committee so recommends, a proposed determination with a proposed sanction is prepared under the supervision of the Chair and is presented by a representative of the Complaint Review Committee to the Credentials and Accreditation Committee along with the record of the Complaint Review Committee's investigation.

If the Complaint Review Committee recommends against a determination that a violation has occurred, the complaint is dismissed with notice to the candidate/diplomate, the candidate/diplomate's employer, and the individual or entity who submitted the complaint; a summary report is also made to the Credentials and Accreditation Committee.

If the Complaint Review Committee recommends a determination that a violation has occurred, the Credentials and Accreditation Committee reviews the recommendation of the Complaint Review Committee based upon the record of the investigation. The Credentials and Accreditation Committee may accept, reject, or modify the Complaint Review Committee's recommendation, either with respect to the determination of a violation or the recommended sanction to be imposed. If the Credentials and Accreditation Committee makes a determination that a violation has occurred, this determination and the imposition of a sanction are communicated by written notice to the candidate/diplomate.

In certain circumstances, the Credentials and Accreditation Committee may consider a recommendation from the Complaint Review Committee that the candidate/diplomate who has violated the certification program policies or rules should be offered an opportunity to submit a written assurance that the conduct in question has been terminated and will not recur. The decision of the Complaint Review Committee to make such a recommendation and of the Credentials and Accreditation Committee to accept it are within their respective discretionary powers. If such an offer is extended, the candidate/diplomate at issue must submit the required written assurance within 30 days of receipt of the offer, and the assurance must be submitted in terms that are acceptable to the Credentials and Accreditation Committee.

Sanctions

Any of the following sanctions may be imposed by the Credentials and Accreditation Committee upon a candidate/diplomate whom the aforementioned Committee has determined to have violated the policies and rules of its certification program(s), although the sanction applied must reasonably relate to the nature and severity of the violation, focusing on reformation of the conduct of the member and deterrence of similar conduct by others:

- written reprimand to the candidate/diplomate
- suspension of the diplomate for a designated period
- suspension of the candidate's application eligibility for a designated period
- termination of the diplomate's certification
- termination of the candidate's application eligibility for a designated period

For sanctions that include suspension or termination, a summary of the final determination and the sanction with the candidate/diplomate's name and date is published by the Credentials and Accreditation Committee and NABBLM.

Those who have been terminated shall have their certification revoked and may not be considered for certification in the future. If certification is revoked, any and all certificates or other materials requested by the Credentials and Accreditation Committee must be returned promptly to the Committee.

Appeal

Within 30 days from receipt of notice of a determination by the Credentials and Accreditation Committee that a candidate/diplomate violated the certification program policies and/or rules, the affected candidate/diplomate may submit to the Credentials and Accreditation Committee in writing a request for an appeal.

Upon receipt of a request for appeal, the Credentials and Accreditation Committee establishes an appellate body called the Appeal Committee. The majority of members should hold a current NABBLM certification. The Appeal Committee may review one or more appeals, upon request of the Chair of the Credentials and Accreditation Committee. No current members of the Complaint Review Committee or the Credentials and Accreditation Committee may serve on the Appeal Committee; further, no one with any personal involvement or conflict of interest may serve on the Appeal Committee. Appeal Committee members must not be involved in the original decision.

The Appeal Committee may only review whether the determination by the Credentials and Accreditation Committee of a violation of the certification program policies and/or rules was inappropriate because of material errors of fact, or failure of the Complaint Review Committee or the Credentials and Accreditation Committee to conform to published criteria, policies, or procedures.

Only facts and conditions up to and including the time of the Credentials and Accreditation Committee's determination as represented by facts known to the said Committee are considered during an appeal. The appeal shall not include a hearing or any similar trial-type proceeding. The Credentials and Accreditation Committee and Appeal Committee may consult legal counsel.

The Appeal Committee conducts and completes the appeal within 90 days after receipt of the request for an appeal. Written appellate submissions and any reply submissions may be made by authorized representatives of the member and of the Appeal Committee. Submissions are made according to whichever schedule is reasonably established by the Appeal Committee. The decision of the Appeal Committee either affirms or overrules the determination of the Credentials and Accreditation Committee but does not address a sanction imposed by the Credentials and Accreditation Committee.

The Appeal Committee decision is binding upon the Credentials and Accreditation Committee, the candidate/diplomate who is subject to the termination, and all other persons.

Resignation

If a diplomate who is the subject of a complaint voluntarily surrenders their certification at any time during the pendency of a complaint under these Procedures, the complaint is dismissed without any further action by the Complaint Review Committee, the Credentials and Accreditation Committee, or an Appeal Committee established after an appeal. The entire record is sealed, and the individual may not reapply for certification by NABBLM. However, the Credentials and Accreditation Committee may authorize their Committee Chair to communicate the fact and date of resignation, and the fact and general nature of the complaint, which was pending at the time of the resignation, if requested by a government entity engaged in the administration of law.