

NABBLM

NORTH AMERICAN BOARD OF
BREASTFEEDING & LACTATION MEDICINE



Certification Program Manual

(Candidate Booklet)

Updated June 2026

Contents

About NABBLM	3
Certification Program Manual (Candidate Booklet)	3
About the Exam	3
Statement of Nondiscrimination	3
Confidentiality	3
Criteria for Certification	4
Applying for the NABBLM-C Examination	4
Examination Appointment Policies	6
Preparing for the Certification Examination	6
Taking the Certification Exam	7
Checklist for Preparing for the Online Exam	7
Test Day Rules	8
After the Examination	9

About NABBLM

Founded in 2024, The North American Board of Breastfeeding & Lactation Medicine (NABBLM) establishes and maintains standards for certification in Breastfeeding and Lactation Medicine (BFLM) to advance excellence in patient care across all medical disciplines.

NABBLM is a 501 (c) (3) organization governed by a volunteer Board of Directors. Committees of the Board: 1. produce the certification exam, 2. manage the Maintenance of Certification (MOC) program, 3. define the requirements for educational programs and applicants, and 4. oversee the applicant review processes and accreditation of educational programs.

NABBLM envisions breastfeeding and lactation medicine as a growing physician specialty with robust training and career pathways yielding greater access to high-quality, collaborative, evidence-based care to all families.

Certification Program Manual (Candidate Booklet)

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 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 exam is 150-180 single answer multiple choice questions and must be completed in a four (4) hour window of time.

The first NABBLM certification exam was offered in October 2023 as a pilot. The initial exams were only for individuals who met the application criteria as a licensed and experienced Breastfeeding and Lactation Medicine Physician in the United States or Canada. Additional pathways to qualify to take the exam opened in 2025 and include the Fellowship Pathway and Alternate Pathway. The Grandparenting Pathway ended with the October 2025 exam.

Statement of Nondiscrimination

NABBLM offers examinations to all eligible persons regardless of age, gender, race, religion, national origin, or disability.

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, studies, and-or reports concerning applicants / candidates / diplomates that are made publicly available 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 activities 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.

Breastfeeding and Lactation Medicine Knowledge

1. Fellowship Pathway: Successful completion of a NABBLM accredited fellowship program with a certificate of completion dated within the prior 3 years.
2. Alternate Pathway: Certificate from a NABBLM accredited comprehensive educational program with a certificate of completion dated within the prior 3 years.

Application Fee

1. The application fee is \$100 (USD)
2. The application fee 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 calendar 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)
3. Certificate of completion from a NABBLM accredited program(s) dated within the prior 3 years

For candidates licensed in Canada:

1. Provincial College License number
2. Date of licensure
3. Certificate of completion from a NABBLM accredited program(s) dated within the prior 3 years

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.

Accommodation

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.

NABBLM Certification Exam Fee

The fee for the NABBLM certification exam is \$1,500 (USD). The exam fee is due two weeks prior to the exam window opening.

Examination Appointment Policies

Cancellation Policy

If a candidate chooses to cancel their exam after paying the exam fee, NABBLM will withhold a \$100 USD processing fee, and the remaining exam fee will be refunded. The \$100 USD application fee is non-refundable. Candidates who wish to cancel must notify NABBLM via email sent to admin@nabblm.org before the exam window opens. Email timestamps will be used to verify whether requests were received by the applicable deadline. Candidates will receive an email confirming receipt of their cancellation request.

No Show Policy

A candidate who does not complete the examination before the close of the examination window, and for whom NABBLM has not received a cancellation or deferment request by the applicable deadline, will be considered a no-show. No-show candidates will forfeit the entire examination fee and the non-refundable application fee. If a candidate provides a cancellation request within the time allowed, their fee will be refunded after the exam window closes.

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 window and prior to accessing or opening the exam. Email timestamps will be used to verify whether requests were received by the applicable deadline. 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 to develop and administer 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 2026 exam will be held:
November 3, 2026 - November 11, 2026**

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, all candidates are asked to sign a non-disclosure and general terms of use agreement. Failure to accept this agreement will disqualify a candidate from taking the exam, and their 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. Please note you are not permitted to take notes regarding test questions or concerns regarding the process during the exam. Doing so may result in the nullification of your score.

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 remote proctoring website.
3. 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 candidates use their smartphones, but you can use a tablet as well. 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 and a writing utensil to take notes. 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 30 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 you must receive confirmation from the proctor 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. Once you have reached the end of your test, please notify your proctor using the Chat function on the screen.
2. Report any issues that occurred 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 approximately 3 months after the exam window closes.

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 by participating in Maintenance of Certification (MOC.)

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 emailed notice to NABBLM via admin@nabblm.org.

Candidates Who Do Not Pass the Exam

Candidates who do not pass the examination will receive domain-level score reports, including performance relative to the passing standard. Candidates who wish to retake the examination must submit a new application and pay all applicable fees for each examination attempt.

A candidate may attempt the NABBLM certification examination a maximum of three (3) times within any five (5) year period, measured from the date of the candidate's first examination attempt. Attempt limitations are intended to support examination integrity, validity, and security.

Candidates who exhaust the maximum number of allowable attempts must complete additional qualifying education or training approved by NABBLM before becoming eligible to reapply for the examination. Reapplications will be evaluated according to the eligibility requirements and policies in effect at the time of the new application. Completion of additional education or training does not automatically confer eligibility for future examination attempts.