



THE AMERICAN BOARD OF  
VENOUS & LYMPHATIC MEDICINE

# Certification Candidate Handbook

Revised

**January 2025**

# INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL INFORMATION

The American Board of Venous & Lymphatic Medicine (ABVLM) Certification Process is open to licensed physicians who meet rigorous prerequisite qualifications in venous and lymphatic medicine training or experience. Physicians who wish to apply for certification are required to submit a completed application form, all fees and required supporting documentation before eligibility will be determined. The application and materials must be submitted by the official deadline as stated on the website.

All applicants are responsible for knowing and meeting American Board of Venous & Lymphatic Medicine certification process prerequisites prior to submitting their application.

**All applications are to be submitted online.** A link to the online application for either first time applications or re-take applications may be found at the ABVLM website, [www.ABVLM.org](http://www.ABVLM.org), during the application period.

At the time a physician submits an application to the ABVLM and at all times thereafter, the physician shall have a continuing obligation to promptly disclose to the ABVLM the existence or occurrence of any circumstances causing the person to fail to satisfy the foregoing conditions of eligibility to apply for and engage in the certification process administered by the ABVLM.

Official notification of eligibility to sit for the exam will not be provided by telephone or fax. Applicants will be notified of eligibility to sit for the exam via an official letter from the ABVLM office, and applicants may be notified by email transmission as well.

Questions regarding this process may be directed to an ABVLM staff member in the following ways:

**Mail:** 1800 M Street NW, Suite 400-S, Washington DC 20036

**E-mail:** [info@ABVLM.org](mailto:info@ABVLM.org)

**Phone:** (877) 699-4114

## GENERAL APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Applicants must currently be or have been certified by a member board of the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS), Bureau of Osteopathic Specialists (BOS), the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CCFP), or the Collège des médecins du Québec. Proof of such certification is required. The application is completed via an online application form.

Prior to starting an online application, the applicant must choose between two pathways: Educational (Path 1) or Experiential (Path 2).

### EDUCATIONAL PATHWAY (PATH 1) - \$1325

To qualify, the physician must have successfully completed, **WITHIN FIVE YEARS of the certification examination application date**, a residency or fellowship program (collectively, “educational programs”) for which venous disease, venous interventional treatment and venous ultrasound training was included in the core curriculum.

Educational programs may be: an approved venous & lymphatic medicine (VLM) fellowship; or an educational program meeting the above criteria and approved by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME), American Osteopathic Association (AOA), Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC), the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CCFP), or Collège des médecins du Québec.

### EXPERIENTIAL PATHWAY (PATH 2) - \$1325

To qualify the physician would be **5 YEARS OR MORE POST RESIDENCY OR FELLOWSHIP**.

## APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS EDUCATIONAL PATH (PATH 1)

- 1. Biographical Information.** Applicants must submit requested biographical, board certification, and contact information.
- 2. Program Director Reference.** Applicants will complete the invitation form for their most recent program director, and the Program Director will sign in to complete the actual reference form online.
- 3. Two Additional References.** All references must either be current ABVLM diplomates, OR be physicians certified by any member board recognized by the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS), the Bureau of Osteopathic Specialists (BOS), the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC), the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CCFP), or the Collège des médecins du Québec.

The reference(s) must come from physicians who practice in the community and are familiar with the applicant based on referral and/or observation. No more than one reference may be from a partner or associate. If you have hospital privileges, one reference must come from the Chief of the Service.

- 4. Medical Education.** A copy of your degree (MD or DO) or letter of verification from the institution. This must be a medical school in the United States accredited by the Liaison Committee for Medical Education (LCME), an accredited medical school in Canada, or an accredited osteopathic school in the United States must be uploaded. Diplomas in a language other than English will require an English translation of the document. Graduates of foreign medical schools who practice in the United States must also include a copy of their ECFMG Certificate.
- 5. Proof of Residency Completion.** Applicants must have completed Residency training in a program approved by the Accreditation Council of Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) or American Osteopathic Association (AOA) in the United States, or the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC), the College of Family Physicians of Canada, or the Collège des médecins du Québec. A copy of the Residency Certificate indicating successful completion is required.

- 6. Ultrasound Training / Experience.** Applicants must attest to the performance and documentation of the findings in the clinical record of a minimum of 100 cases of focused, limited, or complete diagnostic venous duplex ultrasound examinations performed during the previous three years prior to application.
- 7. Venous Case Log.** This includes outcomes, documenting applicant’s direct participation in the active venous care in a minimum of 100 cases over the 3 years prior to the date of the application. Cases performed as part of a residency or fellowship may be included if within the appropriate time frame. Applicants **MUST** use the EMR / EHR Summary Reporting Template(summary figures with backup reports). A link to the template is provided under the Case Log step of the application. If you do not have access to an EMR/EHR system, please reach out to us at [info@abvltm.org](mailto:info@abvltm.org) for alternative submission options.

The minimum number of cases performed in the past three years is 100, subject to the “case mix” defined in the table immediately below.

<i>Type of Cases</i>	<i>Additional Information</i>
Superficial Only	Must have at least 25 cases each in two of the four Superficial categories below. The additional 50 cases can come from any of the four Superficial categories.
Deep/Pelvic/VMs Only	All 100 cases must come from the three Deep/Pelvic/Vascular Malformations categories below.
Superficial and Deep Mixed	Must have at least 25 cases each in two of the four Superficial categories below. The additional 50 cases can come from any of the seven case categories below.

- 8. Proof of Medical Licensure.** Submit a copy of all unexpired medical licenses. Online print outs are acceptable as well.
- 9. Venous and Lymphatic CME Requirement.** All applicants must have obtained a minimum of 45 CME credits in any “three- year window” in the four-year time period prior to the date of application for exam. At least 40 of those CME credits must be directly related to the field of venous and lymphatic medicine. No more than 5 credits counted toward the 45 can be related to general medical practice (for example: patient safety, systems, quality improvement, risk management, informatics, etc.). Applicants who have completed their residency or fellowship (in

which venous disease, venous interventional treatment and venous ultrasound training was included in the core curriculum) within the past 4 years are deemed to have met the 45-credit minimum from their educational activities.

**10. Professional Standing.** Professional standing questions regarding disciplinary actions and chemical dependency or substance abuse. Applicants who answer “yes” to any of these questions will be asked to submit an addendum with a complete explanation.

**11. Applicant Attestation.** Attestation by the applicant certifying that all the information on the foregoing application is true and complete, as well as agreeing to several paragraphs of other requirements and certification processes of the ABVLM.

**12. Application and Exam Fee.** Payment of application and exam fee totaling \$1325. The application fee of \$225 is non-refundable. The examination fee of \$1100 is refundable if the applicant is deemed to be ineligible for the exam.

## APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS EXPERIENCE PATH (PATH 2)

- 1. Biographical Information.** Applicants must submit requested biographical, board certification, and contact information.
- 2. Venous and Lymphatic Training/Experience.** Write and upload a description of your training and experience in venous and lymphatic medicine with dates. This shall be supplied in the form of a letter, written by the applicant, describing dates, the type of training, and with whom your training in VLM took place.
- 3. Three References.** All references must either be current ABVLM diplomates, OR be physicians certified by any member board recognized by the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS), the Bureau of Osteopathic Specialists (BOS), the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC), the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CCFP), or the Collège des médecins du Québec.

The reference(s) must come from physicians who practice in the community and are familiar with the applicant based on referral and/or observation. No more than one reference may be from a partner or associate. If you have hospital privileges, one reference must come from the Chief of the Service.

- 4. Medical Education.** A copy of your degree (MD or DO) or letter of verification from the institution. This must be a medical school in the United States accredited by the Liaison Committee for Medical Education (LCME), an accredited medical school in Canada, or an accredited osteopathic school in the United States must be uploaded. Diplomas in a language other than English will require an English translation of the document. Graduates of foreign medical schools who practice in the United States must also include a copy of their ECFMG Certificate.
- 5. Proof of Residency Completion.** Applicants must have completed Residency training in a program approved by the Accreditation Council of Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) or American Osteopathic Association (AOA) in the United States, or the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC), the College of Family Physicians of Canada, or the Collège des médecins du Québec. A copy of the Residency Certificate indicating successful completion is required.
- 6. Ultrasound Training / Experience.** The applicant must demonstrate ultrasound training and/or experience in one of the following three ways:

- a. **Hold an active RVT, RVS, RPVI or RPhS credential.** Attest to holding an active RVT, RVS, RPVI or RPhS credential. Applicants applying via an ultrasound credential must attest to the performance and documentation of the findings in the clinical record of a minimum of 100 cases of focused, limited, or complete diagnostic venous duplex ultrasound examinations performed during the previous three years prior to application. This attestation should be in the form of a signed statement from the applicant.
  - b. **Formal ultrasound training.** Applicants who obtained peripheral venous duplex ultrasound training in an ACGME-, RCPSC- or AOA-accredited residency or fellowship that includes didactic and clinical vascular laboratory/ultrasound as an integral part of the program may state that. In addition, applicants must attest to the performance and documentation of the findings in the clinical record of a minimum of 100 cases during the previous three years prior to application. This attestation should be in the form of a signed statement from the applicant.
  - c. **Ultrasound Case Log.** Complete an ABVLM Ultrasound Case Log attesting to the performance and documentation of the findings in the clinical record of a minimum of 100 cases of focused, limited, or complete diagnostic venous duplex ultrasound examinations performed during the previous three years prior to application.
7. **Venous Case Log.** Submit an ABVLM Case Log. This includes outcomes, documenting applicant's direct participation in the active venous care in a minimum of 200 cases over the 3 years prior to the date of the application. Cases performed as part of a residency or fellowship may be included if within the appropriate time frame. Applicants **MUST** use one of the EMR / EHR Summary Reporting Template (summary figures with backup reports). A link to the template is provided under the Case Log step of the application. If you do not have access to an EMR/HER system please reach out to us at [info@abwmcertified.org](mailto:info@abwmcertified.org) for an alternative template to submit your case log.



The minimum number of cases performed in the past three years is 200, subject to the “case mix” defined in the table immediately below.

<i>Type of Cases</i>	<i>Additional Information</i>
Superficial Only	Must have at least 50 cases each in two of the four Superficial categories below. The additional 100 cases can come from any of the four Superficial categories.
Deep/Pelvic/VMs Only	All 200 cases must come from the three Deep/Pelvic/Vascular Malformations categories below.
Superficial and Deep Mixed	Must have at least 50 cases each in two of the four Superficial categories below. The additional 100 cases can come from any of the seven case categories below.

8. **Proof of Medical Licensure.** Submit a copy of all unexpired medical licenses. Online print outs are acceptable as well.
  
9. **Venous and Lymphatic CME Requirement.** All applicants must have obtained a minimum of 45 CME credits in any “three- year window” in the four-year time period prior to the date of application for exam. At least 40 of those CME credits must be directly related to the field of venous and lymphatic medicine. No more than 5 credits counted toward the 45 can be related to general medical practice (examples of which are: patient safety, systems, quality improvement, risk management, informatics, etc.). Applicants who have completed their residency or fellowship (in which venous disease, venous interventional treatment and venous ultrasound training was included in the core curriculum) within the past 4 years are deemed to have met the 45-credit minimum from their educational activities. They should claim 45 credits of Category 1 CME from their accredited institution on the application form.
  
10. **Professional Standing.** Professional standing questions regarding disciplinary actions and chemical dependency or substance abuse. Applicants who answer “yes” to any of these questions will be asked to submit an addendum with a complete explanation.
  
11. **Applicant Attestation.** Attestation by the applicant certifying that all the information on the foregoing application is true and complete, as well as agreeing to several paragraphs of other requirements and certification processes of the ABVLM.

**12. Application and Exam Fee.** Payment of application and exam fee totaling \$1325. The application fee of \$225 is non-refundable. The examination fee of \$1100 is refundable if the applicant is deemed to be ineligible for the exam.

## **BOARD ELIGIBLE OPTION**

For both pathways, there is a Board Eligible Alternative. This option allows for the deferral of Step 6 and/or Step 7 (Ultrasound and/or Clinical Case Log submission) for up to two exam cycles. Applicants who meet all criteria except for the case experience requirements may apply to sit for the examination.

If the candidate passes the exam they will have Board Eligible status. The candidate will be required to complete an ABVLM Case Log for clinical procedures and an attestation or proof of ultrasound experience within the following two exam cycles. Board Eligible status will expire if the applicant fails to submit the case log and/or the attestations.

Board Eligible physicians must pay complete the annual maintenance of certification steps to maintain their certification status while working to complete their case log application requirement. Board Eligible physicians may not use the DABVLM designation until the full case log requirements have been met.

Board Eligible statuses will be reviewed and potentially updated only annually when the general application period is open. If the candidate fulfills the case log requirements during that application period, they will be certified with the next set of diplomates.

## **ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION, WAIVER REQUESTS**

If there are one or more specific requirements that an applicant feels should be waived due to extenuating and/or extraordinary circumstances, they may submit an Application for Waiver of Certification Exam Requirements. Please reach out to staff via email at [info@abvlm.org](mailto:info@abvlm.org) for more information.

For any waiver to be considered and evaluated by the Eligibility Review Committee, the applicant is required to complete their full application, including the non-refundable application fee.

Submission of a waiver does not guarantee that a waiver will be granted. All waivers are subject to denial for any reason. If the applicant is deemed ineligible to sit for the exam, the exam fee paid will be refunded, but the non-refundable application fee will be retained by the ABVLM to cover the costs of application processing.

## **CANDIDATE ADA ACCOMODATIONS**

Applicants may request an accommodation in the administration of the examination under the Candidates with Disabilities Policy. Documentation required under the policy must be submitted via email to the HQ Office and concurrent with the completion of the application.

## **QUALIFIED APPLICANTS**

The ADA defines an individual with a disability as a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits that person in one or more major life activities, has a record of such impairment, or is regarded as having such impairment. “Major life activities” include functions such as caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working. A “qualified” individual with a disability is one who meets the requirements to sit for the examination and, with or without reasonable accommodation, can perform the essential functions of a physician specializing in venous medicine.

## **REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION**

Reasonable Accommodation means a modification in the examination administration that does not fundamentally alter the requirements for certification or the measurement of the knowledge, skills and abilities that the examination is designed to evaluate, and that does not impose an undue hardship.

## **DOCUMENTATION AND REQUEST FOR CONSIDERATION**

To ensure sufficient time to process the request and arrange for accommodations, candidates should submit their written requests when they submit their certification application. Appropriate supporting documentation is required and should be sent to ABVLM headquarters office with the letter and application documents. Requests for accommodations and supporting materials will be maintained separately from the application and registration materials and used only for the consideration of the request.

Candidates requesting accommodations must provide the following materials to ABVLM:

1. A signed, written request for accommodations, describing in detail the specific accommodation(s) requested. The request shall include contact information such as phone number, address, and e-mail address, as well as birth date, which will be used for identification purposes only.
2. Signed, current documentation of the disability by a qualified professional. The required documentation shall include a diagnosis of the specific disability by a

professional qualified to assess and diagnose the asserted disability. The documentation must include:

- a. A current, valid, professionally recognized diagnosis of the candidate's disability (e.g. pursuant to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM IV: revised)) by an appropriately qualified expert with copies of and reported scores from professionally recognized diagnostic tests, where applicable. To be considered current, such documentation generally must be based on evaluations conducted no more than five years prior to the request for an accommodation.
- b. Documentation that clearly identifies the nature and extent of the functional limitations that exist as a result of the diagnosed disability.
- c. Sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the functional limitation substantially limits the individual in performing one or more major life activity.
- d. Specific information about the significance of the impact the disability has on the candidate in the testing environment.
- e. A history of any accommodations previously granted in any educational program or examination.
- f. Specific recommendations for accommodations.
- g. An explanation of why each accommodation is recommended and why it is necessary to alleviate the impact of the disability in taking the certification examination.

## **REVIEW OF REQUESTS AND NOTIFICATION OF DECISION**

The ABVLM will consider requests for special accommodations following the receipt of all necessary materials, and it will make every effort to process requests promptly. The candidate has the responsibility to submit the required documentation in a timely manner. If a request is not approved, notification will include the reason it was denied.

## **APPEAL PROCESS**

In the event the ABVLM Office or Executive Officers denies a request for accommodation, the candidate may submit a written statement of appeal to the Full ABVLM Board of Directors. The notice of appeal must be submitted within 60 days of the date of the decision letter.

Upon receipt of an appeal from an ABVLM candidate, the Full Board will review the appeal at its next regularly scheduled meeting. The candidate will be notified by email of the Board's decision and the reasons for it within 45 days following the meeting at which the appeal is considered. The decision of the full ABVLM Board shall be final and binding on both the candidate and ABVLM.