



Becoming Certified Initiative

SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK



Since June 2021, the Becoming Certified Task Force (BCTF), which led the Becoming Certified Initiative (BCI), has gathered information, generated feedback from across the specialty, and built consensus on how to improve the process by which physicians become ABEM certified. The BCTF used various methods to elicit feedback and explored new ways to evaluate Emergency Medicine candidates.

Activity	Date
Program Director Survey	September 2021
Diplomate Survey	December 2021
EM Organization Focus Groups	January 2022
Purpose & Guiding Principles	February 2022
BCI Summit	March 2022
EM Employer Interviews	August 2022
Oral Exam Feedback	Ongoing

Program Director Survey

In fall 2021, the BCTF developed and released a survey for all EM program directors to receive their feedback on why they valued certification and what they liked and disliked about the current initial certification process. Many program directors indicated that ABEM initial certification was a high-quality process and was the “gold standard” of EM assessment.

ABEM-Certified Physician Survey

In late 2021, the BCTF developed and administered a survey to all ABEM-certified physicians about the initial certification process. Nearly half of respondents thought that ABEM should assess knowledge and skills.

EM Organization Focus Groups

In 2022, the BCTF convened focus groups with several EM organizations: AACEM, AAEM, AAEM/RSA, ACEP, CORD, EMRA, and SAEM. The goal of these focus groups was to help identify opportunities for improvement that would help inform a redesign of the initial certification process and to understand why these organizations valued certification. Each organization felt the value of certification is that it shows that board-certified physicians meet a national standard of competency and care and differentiates physicians from other providers. Many organizations did think it was important to test procedural competency if logistically feasible.

Employer Interviews

ABEM partnered with McCabe Message Partners to conduct a qualitative research campaign with EM employers to understand their perspectives about 1) the value of ABEM certification in making hiring decisions, 2) how emergency departments (EDs) are staffed and 3) the role of advanced practice providers. McCabe interviewed 29 ED medical directors who were involved in the hiring process. Interviewees were from academic medical centers, small and large health systems, physician-owned management groups, and contract management groups. McCabe found that universally, being board certified/eligible was the driving factor in making hiring decisions for the ED. Beyond ABEM certification, clinical skills and experience and communication ability weighed heavily, especially how well an applicant would interact with colleagues and patients.

Purpose & Guiding Principles

In fall 2021 work began to develop a purpose statement and set of guiding principles for BCI. The development process lasted several months with both the BCTF and the Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) developing a purpose statement and sixteen guiding principles that served as the foundation for the BCI work. In February 2022, the [purpose statement and guiding principles](#) were published.

BCI Summit

In March 2022, the BCTF hosted a one-day workshop in Chicago. A group of about 50 representatives from the EM community (e.g., EM physicians, residents, program directors, hospital leaders, department chairs, patients, EM organizations,) spent the day on a series of activities to develop new ideas on how best to assess emergency physicians. The importance of assessing communication, patient engagement, and team management skills was a recurring theme throughout the day. View the [Summit summary](#).

Oral Exam Feedback

ABEM collects feedback after each virtual Oral Exam administration. Common feedback from recent exams includes interest in an experience that is in person and is more like practice. Feedback states that ABEM should seek other ways to assess the skills and abilities needed in emergency medicine.