



ABCRS CertLink™ Assessment Hard Launch FAQ

The American Board of Colon and Rectal Surgery (ABCRS) is pleased to announce the launch of our new MOC Continuous Certification Assessment.

What is CertLink?

CertLink is an online platform that will deliver Quarterly questions to Diplomates of ABCRS for longitudinal assessment as an alternative to the high-stakes 10-year MOC Examination. We anticipate this will foster growth in medical knowledge, continuous certification and professional development. CertLink was created through a partnership between ABMS and FIGmd, a leading provider of clinical data registry platforms.

What is longitudinal assessment? Is there research to support this form of assessment?

Rooted in contemporary adult learning theory, CertLink will help us evaluate a longitudinal assessment model. This method uses more frequent, smaller scale assessments to help recognize deficiencies, and provide resources to guide comprehension, retention, and aid retrieval of information to apply in practice. This is especially useful for the physician community where there is a great need to identify and address knowledge gaps, access focused content, and relate subject matter to their specialties.

There are numerous studies and literature to support longitudinal assessment and contemporary adult learning theory. Two such studies, focused on medical professionals follow below:

The 2013 study, "[Brain Science Provides New Approach to Patient Safety Training](#)," which found that in more than 16 randomized trials, physicians improved long-term knowledge retention by answering questions over spaced intervals of time; and

"[Comparative Effects of Test-Enhanced Learning and Self-Explanation on Long-Term Retention](#)," which studied medical students, and found testing in combination with explaining the information is the most effective way to drive long-term retention of information.

ENROLLMENT

When do I enroll?

The Hard Launch will be comprised of the Diplomates Certified on September 16, 2017, the members of the ABCRS Board, and the MOC Committee Members. ABCRS is currently not taking any more Diplomates into this cohort. Successive groups of Diplomates will be enrolled into CertLink according to timing of the last certification, as well as preference to enter CertLink sooner. More information regarding availability to enter CertLink will be forthcoming.

NOTE: It is imperative that your ABCRS Profile is up to date with your correct email address. This will be your main point of contact with CertLink and your future CertLink Username!

The screenshot shows the CertLink login page. At the top is the CertLink logo. Below it are two input fields: "Enter Your Email Address" and "Enter Your Password". A green button labeled "Sign In To Your Account" is positioned below the password field. At the bottom, there are two dark buttons: "Forgot your password?" and "Request access to CertLink™".

How do I login to the CertLink dashboard?

The CertLink secure online dashboard can be accessed via computer or tablet. *Please note it may be difficult to view images on a smaller device. It is advisable to tour the dashboard before answering questions to get a feel for the new environment.*

A welcome email will be sent with a link to reset your CertLink password. You will be directed to the dashboard login page. Your **email address** is your Username and you will use the **new password** you just created to sign in.

How much does it cost?

There is no extra fee for CertLink. Annual fees will remain at \$500 for Diplomates initially certified after 1990, and \$200 for those certified 1990 or prior who participate in MOC. If this platform proves to be acceptable for replacement for the every 10-year Exam, the fees associated with the 10-year Exam will no longer be charged.

Are there incentives for participation?

30 Self-Assessment CMEs (required for Part II) will be waived once every 5 years for successful participation in CertLink. These CMEs are not transferable to any other Board or Institution.

Will I get a new certificate at the end of the pilot?

At the end of each five-year Continuous Certification cycle of CertLink Diplomates will be able to login to their ABCRS profile and go to the “Forms” section and download a certificate good for five years.

If I have a Lifetime Certificate and enroll in CertLink, will my Lifetime Certificate be replaced with a new certificate?

Diplomates who were certified 1990 or prior will always hold a Lifetime Certificate and participation in MOC and CertLink will continue to be voluntary. Diplomates may choose to participate for the continuing educational benefits and to fulfill the requirements of MOC.

When will Certlink start?

CertLink will begin July 2, 2018 and will coincide with a five-year MOC Cycle.

QUESTION DELIVERY AND PLATFORM

Where do I answer my questions, track my progress, and receive feedback?

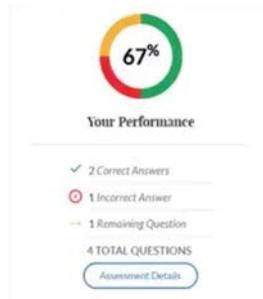
The Diplomate answers questions on a personal dashboard after logging in at <https://abcrs.mycertlink.org/dashboard/login.aspx>

The dashboard is the “HOME” screen whenever logging in or ending a question cycle. It is made up of three sections with dashboard tools on the left-hand side and the upper right-hand side.

1. Community Comparison 2. Your Performance



- When enough peer data becomes available a comparison will show the Diplomat’s score compared to the scores of other Diplomates who have already answered.



- As the Diplomat responds to questions this tile will update to display the Diplomat’s performance to-date and what is left to do during the current Quarter.
- Launch the assessment here by clicking on the green button “Begin Assessment” which will open a new page.

3. Assessment Detail



- Shows how many questions remain in the current Quarter and how many days the Diplomat still has to complete the assessment.
- Select “Assessment Details” for a breakdown of the Assessment.



How many questions do I have to answer?

Each Quarter the Diplomat will be given 18 questions to answer.

How often do I need to answer a question?

CertLink is flexible and allows Diplomates to answer the assessment questions at the pace they choose for themselves throughout the Quarter. All 18 questions will be available on day one of the Quarter. Diplomates may choose to answer all in one sitting or at his or her convenience until 11:59 pm EST the last day of the Quarter.

May I use the internet and other educational resources to answer questions?

Yes, Diplomates may use educational resources as needed so long as the question is answered in the allotted time (5 minutes per question). Please remember that the session cannot be closed out without answering once the timer has started or it will be scored as an incorrect response.

May I consult with my colleagues or peers while answering questions?

No. Assessment is considered an individual activity. As a member of ABCRS Diplomates carry an obligation for ethical behavior and professionalism in all conduct.

How much time do I have to answer a question?

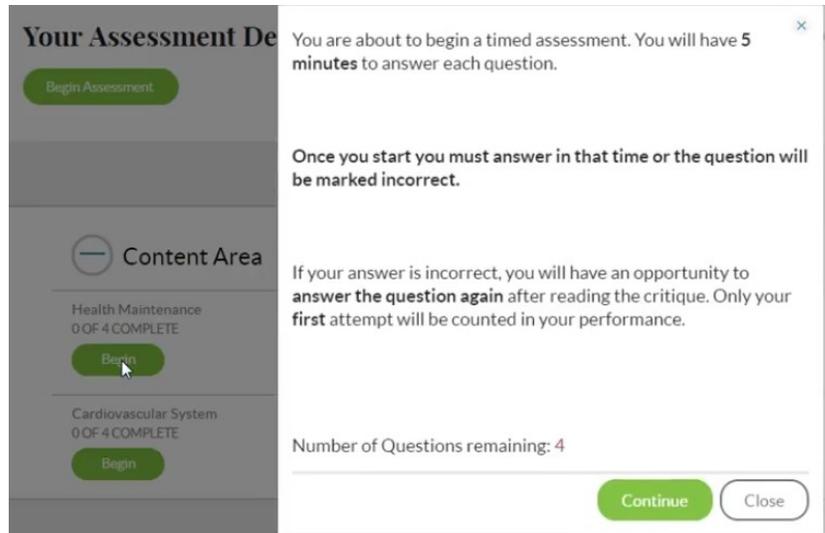
Each question is allotted five minutes.

What happens if the timer runs out before I finish answering my question?

If the timer runs out the question will be marked incorrect. Then there will be a second opportunity to answer after reading a critique. However, only the first attempt will be scored. A clone of this question may appear later. It will be scored independently and does not replace the incorrect answer.

Can I skip or “pass” on a question and return to it later after I’ve opened it?

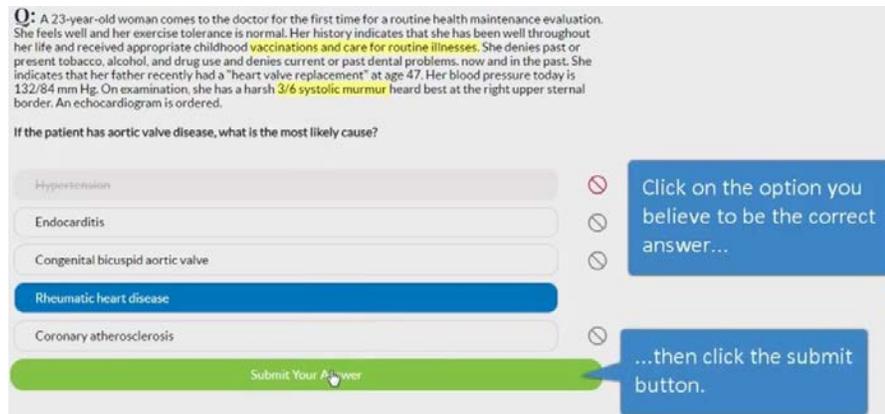
No. Once a Diplomate starts a question it must be answered in the allotted time or the question will be marked incorrect.



What types of questions will I receive?

Diplomates will receive multiple-choice answer style questions presented in random order. They will represent the pillars of Colorectal Surgery including:

- Perioperative (Includes Endoscopy)
- Malignancy
- Anorectal Disease
- Benign Disease
- Pelvic Floor
- Miscellaneous



What tools are available?

There are four navigation menus, located at the top-left and top-right on the home page, and top-middle on the assessment and critique pages.

Top-Left Menu

- **DASHBOARD:** Clicking on DASHBOARD from other pages will return the Diplomate to the “Home” screen. The Diplomate may be asked to confirm this action depending on the page being left.
- **ASSESSMENT:** Directs the Diplomate to the Assessments Details Page.
- **QUESTION HISTORY:** Collection of critiques and references related to the questions the Diplomate has already answered. The actual questions will NOT be able to be viewed again, however the presented information can be used to assess knowledge gaps and support future learning.
- **RESOURCES:** Suggests additional educational resources.

Assessment Page Menu

- **QUIT:** Quitting without submitting will score the question incorrect.
- **HIGHLIGHTER:** The Diplomate is able to select text within the question and highlight it during the allotted time.
- **CALCULATOR:** A scientific calculator is available if needed.
- **SCRATCHPAD:** Any note made on the scratchpad will only be available during the time allotted for the question. If a Diplomate would like to make a permanent note for later reference please use the NOTES section on the CRITIQUE screen after answering the question.



Critique Page Menu

- **DASHBOARD:** Clicking on DASHBOARD from other pages will return the Diplomate to the “Home” screen. The Diplomate may be asked to confirm this action depending on the page being left.
- **HIGHLIGHTER:** The Diplomate is able to select text within the question and highlight it during the allotted time.
- **FAVORITE:** Tag a question to view its key learning point and critique in Question History.
- **FEEDBACK:** This is the specified place Diplomates have to provide feedback to ABCRS about specific questions. It is ONLY available on the Critique page.
- **NOTES:** Enter and save thoughts about a question for viewing later in Question History.



Top-Right Menu

NEED HELP?: Provides information about the current page, FAQs, and Board Contact information. **If there is a technical issue or support the Diplomate can create a support ticket here.**



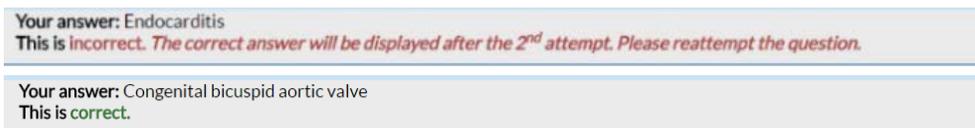
NOTE: Please **DO NOT LEAVE FEEDBACK REGARDING QUESTIONS IN SUPPORT TICKETS!** If a Diplomate has a question or concern about a specific question it should be offered in the Critique section by clicking on the “Feedback” tool.

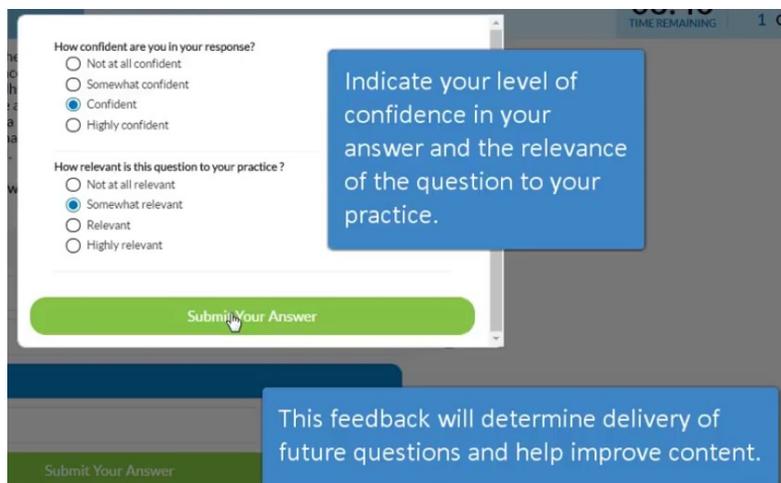
- **MESSAGES:** Link to CertLink notifications and emails.
- **MY ACCOUNT:** Displays important information related to the Diplomate’s account. Certain fields are available to update while others require contacting ABCRS to update.
- **SIGN OUT:** Click here when ready to securely exit the platform.

TRACKING PROGRESS AND RECIVING FEEDBACK FROM CERTLINK

How will I know if I answered my questions correctly or incorrectly?

The Diplomate will see the answer chosen and the correct answer. If answered incorrectly, a second attempt is provided with the correct answer displayed after the second response.





After I answer a question and hit submit will the system ask for immediate feedback?

After each question, Diplomates will be asked to rate how confident they are in their response and how relevant the question is to their practice. Feedback will determine delivery of future questions and help improve content and relevance to practice.

What type of immediate feedback will I receive in regard to my performance after I answer a question?

The Diplomate will receive a Critique that explains the correct answer, the Key Point, and References (see below). The Diplomate can also

track progress on his or her personal Dashboard at any time. (Please see *Community Comparison and Your Performance*).

DASHBOARD
 ASSESSMENT
 QUESTION HISTORY
 RESOURCES

Your answer: Congenital bicuspid aortic valve
This is correct.

Key Point: Congenital bicuspid aortic valve is the most common cause of significant aortic valve disease in young healthy individuals without a history of dental disease or drug use.

Critique: Bicuspid aortic valve is the most likely cause of heart valve disease in this family. It is the most common congenital heart defect in the United States, with a prevalence of approximately 1%-2%. This valve disorder appears to have a genetic basis, with an autosomal dominant pattern of inheritance and incomplete penetrance. The children of a patient with a bicuspid aortic valve have about a 10% chance of having this condition. Because most patients with a bicuspid aortic valve will eventually develop significant aortic valve dysfunction (stenosis or insufficiency) and/or aortopathy (e.g. aortic root dilation) screening of first-degree relatives of affected patients with echocardiography is recommended. Rheumatic heart disease can also cause valve disease but its incidence is low in the United States, especially with appropriate treatment for streptococcal pharyngitis.

Endocarditis is unlikely in the absence of systemic symptoms or other risk factors. Hypertension and coronary atherosclerosis are unlikely in this patient because of his normal blood pressure. These conditions also are more likely to cause obstructive coronary disease and heart failure than valve disease.

References:
 Otto CM, Prendergast B. Aortic-valve stenosis--from patients at risk to severe valve obstruction. *N Engl J Med.* 2014 Aug 21;371(8):744-56. doi: 10.1056/NEJMra1313875. Review. <http://pubmed.gov/25140960>.
 Losenno KL, Chu MW. Bicuspid aortic valve disease. *CMAJ.* 2013 Dec 10;185(18):1599. doi: 10.1503/cmaj.121875. Epub 2013 Jun 3. Review. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3855119/>.

Dashboard
Next Question

Does the system allow for special accommodations?

Diplomates with special needs will be accommodated. Please submit all paperwork to the Board Office a minimum of 90 days before the start of a new Quarter in order to receive the appropriate accommodations required.

What happens if I have a life emergency or have need of a long-term break?

A total of 288 questions will be answered in four years with continuous participation. Successful participation, also includes keeping up with the other parts of MOC which together will maintain Diplomates' Board Certification. The fifth year of the cycle can be a year free of questions, or used to extend the cycle if life events intervene. ABCRS understands that our Diplomates are people with busy lives and unexpected things happen. CertLink is designed for flexibility for life emergencies, life events, and long-term breaks. ABCRS must be contacted and appropriate documentation provided for the time away from the program.



How can I provide feedback or dispute a question on CertLink to ABCRS?

Diplomates have an opportunity to provide feedback on each question after submitting the answer and reading the critique. At the top of the screen click on the “FEEDBACK” tool button and this will allow you to share your thoughts with the Board.

What type of messages will I receive from the system?

CertLink will periodically send out automated reminders in MESSAGES located on the top-right, as well as to each Diplomate’s designated email address. It will inform Diplomates on how many questions are left to complete, due date, where they can access the questions, and to whom they can direct any questions. See sample Quarter Reminder:

Dear Dr. <Last Name>,

The segment is nearly over and our system shows you still have unanswered CertLink questions. Please sign in at <https://abcrs.mycertlink.org> to answer your questions by 11:59pm EST on <Segment End Date>. **Note: Any questions remaining unanswered after this date will be recorded as incorrect.**

Days remaining: <Days Remaining>

Questions remaining: <Items Remaining>

Please email abcrs@mycertlink.org with any questions or issues.

Regards,

The American Board of Colon and Rectal Surgery

What is considered successful participation and a passing score?

Diplomates will be enrolled into a five-year Continuous Certification CertLink cycle. Successful participation requires Diplomates to answer a minimum of 70% of 288 questions correctly over the five-year cycle.

In addition to the MOC Annual Fee, **once every 5 years**, each Diplomate must also complete the following requirements:

MOC Requirements

Part I: Professional Standing

- **Verification of Full Licensure** - Submit a copy of your medical license to the board office.
- **Chief of Staff Evaluation** – Form is located inside of your MOC Profile. Print, and have your Chief of Staff or Chief of Surgery sign and mail/fax/email to the Board office.
- **Documentation of Hospital Privileges** - Form is located inside of your MOC Profile. Print, and have your Chief of Staff or Chief of Surgery sign and mail/fax/email to the Board office.

Part II: Lifelong Learning and Self-Assessment Requirements

- Complete **90 AMA PRA Category I CME Credits™** every five years. Enter on MOC Profile Page.
- Over a five-year cycle, **50 of the 90 AMA PRA Category I Credits** must include a **Self-Assessment Activity**. CARSEP or SESAP are recommended; however, any accredited CME activity that provides AMA PRA Category I credits, and a Self-Assessment component (with a passing score of greater than 75%), will be accepted for MOC Part II Self-Assessment. Enter on MOC Profile Page.
 - **NOTE: 30 Self-Assessment CMEs will be waived once every 5 years for successful participation in CertLink—an average score of 70% or higher over the course of the 5-year cycle will fulfill participation.**

Part IV: Evaluation of Performance in Practice

- Part IV of ABCRS MOC requires ongoing participation in a local, regional or national outcomes registry

What happens if I don’t achieve a passing score and I am participating?

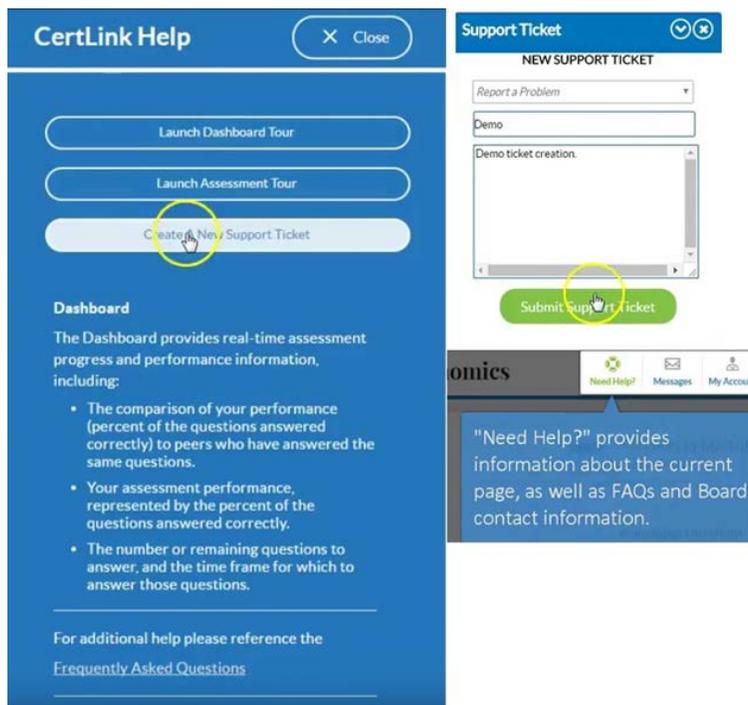
If the Diplomate is participating but the performance is below 70% correct after two years, s/he will receive an email notifying them of their performance, and detailing the options for correction. If a passing score is not achieved by the end of the fourth year, the Diplomate will be required to answer 288 questions and achieve 70% correct **in the fifth year of the cycle**. If the Diplomate fails to achieve this goal, a written secure exam or other re-entry pathway may be required.

How should I prepare to take the assessment through CertLink?

No preparation or study guides are necessary. CertLink and its longitudinal assessment model are part of a process to maintain “walking around knowledge” as well as gain new knowledge, and discover knowledge gaps and areas of weakness. Seeing these questions repeated with slight variations over the Quarters has been shown to be one of the best methods for retaining information.

How do I receive support on the dashboard?

On the top right click on “Need Help?” and it will open up a new window called CertLink Help. Click on “Create a New Support Ticket” and a Support Ticket window will open. Choose a type of issue from the drop-down menu. Write the message. Click on “Submit Support Ticket” to send.



What other ABMS Member Boards are launching a pilot?

A number of ABMS Member Boards are exploring the idea of, or actively conducting, pilots to evaluate longitudinal assessment. The ABMS Member Boards participating in CertLink pilots include:

- Nuclear Medicine
- Dermatology
- Medical Genetics and Genomics
- Otolaryngology
- Pathology
- Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation

Contact information

If you have any questions please contact Cindy Ozog, Continuous Certification Coordinator at ABCRS CertLink@ABCRS.org or 734-282-9400 between 8:30 am – 4:30 pm EST Monday - Friday.

(PLEASE NOTE: User Support Tickets MUST be generated in the “NEED HELP?” section of the Dashboard and NOT sent to CertLink@ABCRS.org)