

Meaningful Accomplishment in Research

Instructions and General Information for Completion of Verification of Competence Form

The program director is asked to return the completed Verification of Competence forms for fellows who completed the Meaningful Accomplishment in Research requirement. Please complete Sections 1-6, pages 1-4 for each fellow.

A fellow should submit evidence for Meaningful Accomplishment in Research (MAR) at the time of application for the subspecialty certifying examination.

MAR Requirement: The research may be laboratory-based or clinical, but it must be hypothesis generated.

The requirement may be met in one of the following ways and submitted for review by the subspecialty subboard:

- ▶ The gold standard for meeting the requirement is a **first-authored hypothesis-driven research paper** accepted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal deemed acceptable to the subspecialty subboard. Specifically excluded are abstracts, case reports, book chapters, and review articles. A systematic review, if it meets all criteria of such a review, may fulfill the requirement. The paper should be the product of the fellowship training.
- ▶ A **Ph.D. degree** in a field of science may be acceptable. A copy of the degree certificate must be provided. Degree course work alone (eg, a master's degree) would not meet the requirement for meaningful research.
- ▶ A **thesis** accepted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for a postgraduate degree in a field relevant to the subspecialty may fulfill the requirement.

A first-authored hypothesis-driven research paper that has been **submitted but not yet accepted for publication** in a peer-reviewed journal deemed acceptable to the subspecialty subboard may fulfill the requirement. A letter from the journal confirming the submission of the manuscript and a copy of the submitted manuscript **must** be provided with the application for certification.

- ▶ Finally, in lieu of an accepted paper, the applicant may submit a **research progress report signed by both the applicant and research mentor**. The report must be written by the applicant, demonstrating an understanding of the research. The report should be no longer than five pages and **must** include (a) a statement of hypothesis, (b) delineation of methodology, (c) results and analysis, and (d) significance of the research. A research progress report may not be used to meet the requirement if the applicant is more than 2 years beyond completion of fellowship training unless there are extenuating circumstances that may have prevented submission of a manuscript. A letter of explanation must be provided by the program director/mentor. Reports that do not meet these specifications will not be accepted (see below for further clarification).

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At the time of the fellow's application for certification, the Credentials Committee of each subspecialty will review submitted research accomplishment materials and decide whether the requirement has been met.

The following may help to further clarify the research requirement:

If the policy of a research laboratory is not to award first authorship of a paper to a fellow, the program director and/or mentor must clearly describe the laboratory's policy on publication. If there are extenuating circumstances beyond the applicant's control that prevent the completion of a research project (eg, the move of a mentor, grant termination), the circumstances must be clearly documented. The research requirement must still be met; a research report must be prepared for review by the Credentials Committee of the subboard.

An approved grant, awarded by an external granting agency, will no longer meet the research requirement for individuals who entered fellowship training after January 1, 1998.

Course work will not meet the research requirement. Receipt of a master's degree (eg, in Public Health) will not of itself satisfy the research requirement.

The research progress report, as evidence of meaningful accomplishment in research, has created the most problems for applicants, program directors, and Credentials Committees. The report **must** address the four areas listed in the requirement: (a) statement of hypothesis, (b) delineation of methodology, (c) results and analysis, and (d) significance of research. A research proposal **will not** be acceptable. A published abstract **will not** be acceptable. The research progress report must be written by the applicant and must demonstrate an understanding of the research performed. Submission of raw data, as such, is not acceptable. The section on significance of research should demonstrate that the applicant has a clear understanding of the results of the research and its application to medicine. A research progress report is expected to yield a paper submitted for publication. If the report does not reflect a commitment to research by the applicant, the Credentials Committee will disapprove the report as evidence of meaningful research and the applicant will be disapproved for the certifying examination. An application for a future examination will require evidence of research accomplishment, preferably a first-authored, published paper.

Return Completed Verification of Competence Forms by July 20, 2007