Training, Certification, and Continuous Certification

VIVIAN GAHTAN, MD
CHAIR, VSB
MARCH 2019

Disclosure

- Chair, Vascular Surgery Board

Training to Certification+

- Training Paradigms 5+2, 4+2, 0+5
- Vascular Surgery In-Training Examination (VSITE)
- 7 years to Certification
  - Vascular Qualifying Exam
  - Vascular Certifying Exam
- Continuous Certification
VSITE

- Offered annually to ACGME-accredited vascular surgery training programs (not individuals)
- An evaluation instrument used to measure residents' progress in their knowledge of vascular surgery
- **Not required as part of the board certification process**
- Includes content on both core surgery and vascular surgery
- Format:
  - Five-hour, web-based examination
  - ~200 multiple-choice questions

**Relationship between VSITE and VQE**

- **"5 + 2" Examinees**
  - N = 246
- **"0+5" Examinees**
  - N = 369

**Prerequisites for the Vascular QE**

- Clinical Training (ACGME)
  - Case Minimum Requirements
  - Training time
  - Resident Performance Assessments
  - Verification by Program Director
- Certifications (Past/Present)
  - ACLS
  - ATLS
- Professional Activity
**Vascular QE**
- Written examination - tests knowledge
- 250 multiple choice question examination secure testing center
- ~6 hours – 90 minute sessions x 4
- Results 4-8 weeks
  - Posted on website
  - Program Director informed on outcome
- Annual exam – 4 opportunities within 4 years

**Vascular CE**
- Prerequisites
  - Successful completion of Vascular QE
  - RPVI Certification
  - Full unrestricted medical license
- Oral Examination – tests application of knowledge regarding surgical judgment, clinical reasoning, problem solving ability, and knowledge of technical skills
  - One opportunity per year
  - 3 opportunities within a 3-year period

**Vascular CE**
- 2 examiner team per session
  - Director/Senior Examiner and Associate Examiner
- 3 consecutive 30 minute sessions
- 4 cases per room pre-selected
- Grade per case
- Results posted within one week
7 Years to Achieve Certification

- Total of 7 years to achieve certification (passing both QE & CE)
  - QE – 4 opportunities in 4 years
  - CE – 3 opportunities in 3 years

- Time begins ticking immediately upon completion of residency, not when application is approved
- Delay in applying or not taking exam in a given year means a lost opportunity
- ABS study showed that delay in taking QE adversely affects performance.

Continuous Certification
New Assessment - 2019

- A new assessment process for vascular surgery will launch in 2019, to replace the traditional recertification exam
  - 40 questions
  - Lower stakes
  - Required every 2 years

- VSB has convened a group of vascular surgeons to write questions
- Content will focus on important developments in vascular surgery to assist diplomates in staying up to date

Educational Format

- Assessment will have an educational format:
  - Open book
  - No time limit per question
  - Immediate learner feedback – view correct/incorrect with rationales

- Take on own computer at home or office – no testing center!
- References and a list of topics will be published in advance
Scoring

- Second attempt to answer incorrect questions will be offered at end of assessment
- Immediate results based on overall score (correct answers from 1st + 2nd attempts)
- Must attain a total of 80% correct after two attempts to pass assessment

Timing

- Must pass assessment every other year
- Time Limits
  - Two weeks to complete assessment once started
  - Can save results at any point and return later
  - If unsuccessful, can retake the assessment the following year (grace year)
  - If unsuccessful in grace year, must pass a secure exam

Advantages of New Assessment Program

- Evaluates knowledge and judgment that is more relevant to a diplomat's practice
- Structured to highlight education with emphasis on changes in contemporary practice
- More convenience and flexibility
- Less burden to prepare, less anxiety to take
- Cost savings – no travel or time away from practice
- Maintains focus on improving patient care
2018 General Surgery Assessment

Module-Selection Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th># People</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive GS</td>
<td>544</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breast</td>
<td>356</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alimentary</td>
<td>521</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abdomen</td>
<td>743</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2,064</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Result Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exam Progress</th>
<th>Pass</th>
<th>Fail</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive GS</td>
<td>535</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>544</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breast</td>
<td>353</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>356</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alimentary</td>
<td>521</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>521</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abdomen</td>
<td>743</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>743</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2,143</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2,164</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Data as of Dec. 2018

CME after Entering New Pathway

- Once diplomates pass their first vascular surgery assessment, the CME and self-assessment requirement will change to:
  - 125 CME credits over 5 years with no self-assessment required
- CME must be related to your practice
  - no other limitation on subject matter
- CME completed for state board requirements qualifies

Other Program Requirements

- Full and unrestricted medical license (US/Canada)
- Hospital or surgical center privileges (if clinically active)
- Two reference forms submitted every five years
  - Completed by chair of surgery and chair of credentials committee
- Practice improvement
  - Ongoing participation in a local, regional or national outcomes registry or quality assessment program, either individually or institutionally
- Operative log
  - 12-month operative experience report (in any specialty) every 10 years