



Board Certification in the Specialty of Foot and Ankle Surgery

Approved by the ACFAS Board of Directors October 2020

The American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons (ACFAS) recognizes the role of board certification as an attestation to medical providers' mastery of the standards and competencies that are specific to their training and practice within their specialty. Historically, board certification has provided the public with a trustworthy indication of their provider's expertise. Increasingly however, board certification is being utilized as a requisite for obtaining and maintaining hospital privileges, as well as for participation with third-party payor networks.

The podiatric profession in the United States is currently subdivided into two specialties, podiatric medicine and podiatric (foot and ankle) surgery. ACFAS supports the recognition of one certifying Board per specialty, as has been the determination of the Joint Committee on the Recognition of Specialty Boards (JCRSB) of the Council on Podiatric Medical Education (CPME). This policy supports the CPME's goal of "prevention of unnecessary duplication by boards and maintenance of minimum standards for the conduct and operation of specialty boards." ¹

The American Board of Foot and Ankle Surgery (ABFAS) is recognized as the certifying board in the specialty of foot and ankle surgery and The American Board of Podiatric Medicine (ABPM) is recognized as the certifying board for primary podiatric medicine and podiatric orthopedics. Podiatric medicine and podiatric orthopedics is the medical specialty concerned with the comprehensive and continuous foot health care of patients. It integrates the biological, biomechanical, rehabilitative, clinical and behavioral sciences and encompasses first contact care, continuous care, long term care and general medicine.² The term "podiatric orthopedics" can be inaccurately interpreted as a surgical component but the term has been referenced to the biomechanical and rehabilitative aspects of foot care.³ ACFAS agrees the term refers to the biomechanical and rehabilitative aspects of foot care as described by ABPM. ACFAS recognizes the distinct differences in verification and methods of evaluation carried out by each board to assess the mastery of each specialty area and recognizes that current post graduate residency training in podiatric medicine and surgery prepares candidates to be eligible for certification by either or both boards.

POSITION STATEMENT



**American College of
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ACFAS acknowledges that credentialing bodies (hospital medical staffs, third party payors, and other entities) may require board qualification/certification as one of many measures to determine a candidate's worthiness of privileging or eligibility to provide specific services. ACFAS believes that privileging, when determined to be contingent on board certification, should reflect certification or qualification by the specialty board recognized for assessing the training and demonstrated competence for the specific privilege in question.

The existence of separate certification in surgical and medical specialties in the profession of podiatry ultimately exists to protect the health and welfare of the public. It is also an important mechanism which allows doctors of podiatric medicine to develop the practice that best suits them and their ability to optimally serve their patients. The value of this distinction is maximized when clear delineations are maintained regarding the specialty training that each board serves to certify. Those who have mastered the surgical aspects would be proficient enough to be board certified/qualified with ACFAS. For these reasons, ACFAS recognizes the American Board of Foot and Ankle Surgery as the only certifying board in the specialty of foot and ankle surgery and requires obtaining this certificate in order to be a fellow of this organization.

1. Council on Podiatric Education, <https://www.cpme.org/boards/content.cfm?ItemNumber=2423&&navItemNumber=2238>
2. American Board of Podiatric Medicine, <https://www.abpmed.org/pages/about-abpm#whatis>
3. Levrio J. The evolution of a specialty. A study of podiatric surgery. J Am Podiatr Med Assoc. 1987 Aug;77(8):419-27.

The American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons (ACFAS) is a professional society of more than 7,800 foot and ankle surgeons. Founded in 1942, ACFAS seeks to promote the art and science of foot, ankle, and related lower extremity surgery, address the concerns of foot and ankle surgeons, advance and improve standards of education and surgical skill, and advance and advocate for the highest standards of patient care and safety.