



## MEDICAL BOARD OF CALIFORNIA

### Executive Office



## Application and Licensing for Physicians and Surgeons

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### Does California issue a resident's or training license?

No. California only issues one license, a plenary license for physicians and surgeons, which allows a person to practice medicine in California. However, an exemption to licensure is offered to residents who are early in their postgraduate (PG) training program (as discussed in the following question).

**NOTE:** US/Canadian medical school graduates (US/Can) must complete the Postgraduate Training Registration Form, which the GME Office will submit to the Medical Board (Board). This notice is required so that your participation in a California training program is registered with the Board. International medical graduates (IMGs) must apply to the Board for a Postgraduate Authorization Training Letter (PTAL), which must be issued prior to commencing training in California.

#### How much PG training must I complete before I am eligible for licensure?

A US/Can must complete 12 continuous months of training in a single program to be eligible for licensure. Further, a US/Can must be licensed by the end of the 24th month of training. In calculating these months, the Board counts all approved training in the US (ACGME) or Canada (RCPSC), whether or not credit was granted.

An IMG must complete 24 months of training to be eligible for licensure; the final 12 months being used towards eligibility must be continuous and in a single program. Further, an IMG must be licensed by the end of the 36th month of training. In calculating these months, the Board counts all approved training in the US (ACGME) or Canada (RCPSC), whether or not credit was granted.

#### What are the costs related to licensure?

There are two fees involved in the licensing process. The first fee is the application fee, which is **\$491** and includes the \$49 non-refundable fingerprint processing fee. This combined fee must be paid before the review of your application can begin. On-line payment of the application fee does not take the place of submitting a hard-copy application (Form L1A-L1E).

Once your application is complete, you must pay an initial license fee of \$808 before a license can be issued; this amount includes a mandatory \$25 fee. However, if you are enrolled in an ACGME/RCPSC training program on the date you apply or are licensed, you are eligible for a 50 percent reduction of the initial license fee. To be eligible for the reduced fee, your program must document your current enrollment in the program; a payment of **\$416.50** will be required, which includes a mandatory \$25 fee.

#### When should I apply?

Since a US/Can cannot be licensed until one year of training has been completed and documented by the Program Director, you should not submit your application until after the first six months of training have been completed. Please do not wait to submit an application until all documentation is complete. Further, documentation relating to your application can be submitted at any time; you do not need to wait until your application has been submitted, as that may delay the review.

IMGs, in submitting an application for a PTAL, already have completed most of the application process.

### **Do I have to take Step 3 before I can apply for licensure?**

No. You are not required to take and pass the USMLE Step 3 before you apply; however, a license will not be issued to any applicant who has not passed all three steps. To obtain licensure in California, you must pass Step 3 within four attempts.

A PTAL cannot be issued to an IMG until the applicant has passed Step 1 and both components of Step 2 (Clinical Skills and Clinical Knowledge) and a license will not be issued until you have passed Step 3.

### **What are the time frames for getting licensed?**

To be considered an applicant, you must submit both the application and the application fee. Applicants will receive a letter notifying them when both items have been received; this letter also provides applicants with information on how to track the status of their application on-line.

Once an application and the application fee have been received, staff must complete the initial review within 60 working days, although this often occurs in less time. The applicant then is notified in writing of the application status and given an itemized list of documents needed to complete the file. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that any missing documents are sent to the Board. These subsequent documents also will be reviewed in order of receipt. The length of time it takes to obtain a license is related to how long it takes for all required documents to be received at the Board.

If the application is complete and approved upon first review (including receipt of the initial license fee), a license will be issued promptly if there are no grounds for denial.

### **How long is my license valid?**

Upon approval of your application file and payment of the initial license fee, your license will be issued and will be valid until the last day of your second birth month after licensure. The expiration date is based on your birth month—we do not consider the birth date. If you wait until your birth month for licensure, then your license will be valid for a full 24-month period. Should you choose to be licensed as soon as possible, your license may be valid for as few as 13 months – depending upon when you reach the second birth month after licensure.

### **Do I have to get fingerprinted?**

Yes. In California, the process is completed using Live Scan, which is an electronic fingerprinting process. Your prints will be sent to both the California Department of Justice (DOJ) and the FBI to search for any criminal history. Out-of-state applicants can submit the traditional paper fingerprint cards or come to California to use Live Scan.

### **I already have been fingerprinted previously; can the Medical Board access those prints?**

No. Federal law allows a rap sheet to be released only to the agency that requested it. You will need to undergo the fingerprinting and criminal history check process again specifically for the Medical Board.

### **Must I disclose all criminal convictions, even minor offenses in college?**

You must disclose all convictions as well as all cases in which you pled guilty or *nolo contendere*, even if they have been expunged pursuant to Section 1203.4 of the Penal Code. This includes all citations, infractions, misdemeanors, and felonies.

Applicants should be aware that the Board receives information regarding actions that have been dismissed or expunged, and the application forms advise applicants to disclose all prior convictions including those that have been dismissed or expunged. In addition, the Board will be notified of all future criminal actions through subsequent rap sheets by the DOJ and/or the FBI.

If you are uncertain about how to answer any question on the application, you should consult legal counsel. It may be wiser to disclose too much information than to be caught in a misunderstanding.

(L-FAQs, 03/2012)