

What Is a Certificate of Added Qualifications in Surgery of the Hand?

Hand Surgery is a specialized field of medicine that includes the investigation, preservation, and restoration by medical, surgical, and rehabilitative means of all structures of the upper extremity directly affecting the form and function of the hand and wrist.

In 1982, the American Boards of Orthopaedic Surgery, Plastic Surgery, and Surgery were asked by the American Association for Hand Surgery and the American Society for Surgery of the Hand to consider special recognition of those Diplomates of these Boards who had demonstrated special qualifications in Surgery of the Hand.

The three Boards applied to the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) for authorization to offer a Certificate of Added Qualifications in Surgery of the Hand, which was granted. The ABMS intends the Certification in the Subspecialty of Surgery of the Hand for only those surgeons who, by virtue of additional fellowship training, practice characteristics reflecting a major commitment to Hand Surgery, and through contributions to this field, have demonstrated qualifications in hand surgery that deserve special recognition.

To qualify for Certification in the Subspecialty of Surgery of the Hand, a surgeon must, among numerous other requirements, have been in the active practice of hand surgery for at least two years following the completion of formal training, have as his major professional activity the field of plastic surgery, hold full operating privileges in an accredited hospital and have successfully passed all examinations prescribed by the Joint Committee on Surgery of the Hand of the American Boards of Orthopaedic Surgery, Plastic Surgery, and Surgery.

Candidates who enter a fellowship in Surgery of the Hand (as of 1999 or later) must enter and satisfactorily complete a one-year fellowship accredited by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME). Hand surgery fellowship and plastic surgery residency requirements must be fulfilled, with submission of a list of at least 125 Surgery of the Hand cases, fulfilling at least six of the nine following categories, managed during a consecutive twelve-month period. (Bone and Joint, Nerve, Tendon and Muscle, Skin and Wound Problems, Contracture and Joint Stiffness, Tumor, Congenital, Microsurgery Vascular, and Non-operative)