

# WHAT IS A BOARD CERTIFIED ORTHODONTIST?



Board certification requires hundreds of additional hours of preparation to test judgment, skill and knowledge to demonstrate the highest quality of orthodontic care.

\*COUNCIL ON DENTAL ACCREDITATION OF THE AMERICAN DENTAL ASSOC.

Are all orthodontists Board Certified?

No. All orthodontists must be licensed to practice, but at this time only 1 in 3 orthodontists have continued on to complete Board Certification.

The American Board of Orthodontics (ABO) certification process signifies a unique achievement—a significant step beyond the two to three years of advanced education required for a dentist to become a specialist in orthodontics. The process requires the orthodontist to demonstrate actual accomplishments in patient care with detailed case reports on the treatment provided for a broad range of patient problems. Board certification is a voluntary achievement that all orthodontists do not choose to pursue. In order to become board certified by the ABO, an individual orthodontist is thoroughly interviewed by a highly respected panel of examiners to demonstrate their orthodontic knowledge, clinical skills and judgment.

How many certifying boards are recognized by the American Dental Association in the specialty of orthodontics?

One. The American Board of Orthodontics (ABO) is the only certifying board in the specialty that is recognized by the American Dental Association. The ABO was founded in 1929 and is the oldest specialty board in dentistry. The board's purpose is to elevate the quality of orthodontic care for the public by promoting excellence through certification, education and professional collaboration.

Why would an orthodontist choose to complete this voluntary certification process?

Successful completion of the examination process demonstrates the orthodontist's highest commitment to excellence in orthodontics – to both the orthodontic profession and the general public. It represents a commitment by a licensed specialist that he/she has the necessary knowledge base and skills to treat patients to the highest of standards. It exemplifies a practitioner's commitment to continue to keep abreast of the latest advances in patient care and to continue to deliver these latest advances to patients. Many orthodontists see it as a demonstration of their dedication to the specialty and the highest level of personal achievement.

What steps are required to complete the ABO certification process?

Since the establishment of the ABO in 1929, the certification process requirements have continued to adjust to the demands of the specialty.

Today, the process involves a thorough Written Examination (240 questions) covering all areas of information which an orthodontist should be knowledgeable. Successful completion of this “board exam” allows the orthodontist to proceed to the Clinical Examination where they present detailed case reports from their practice/residency, demonstrating a history of excellence in patient care. These cases are evaluated by a panel of examiners and later discussed during an oral examination where the applicant is tested on a wide variety of academic and clinical topics. After successful completion of these examinations, the orthodontist has officially achieved Board Certification, for a time-limited period. The orthodontist must go through Certification Renewal every 10 years to maintain their certification status by demonstrating this continued level of patient care.