

POSITION STATEMENT



**American College of
Foot and Ankle Surgeons®**
Proven leaders. Lifelong learners. Changing lives.

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Board Certification in the Specialty of Foot and Ankle Surgery

Approved by the ACFAS Board of Directors, July 2023

The American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons (ACFAS) acknowledges the role of board certification as

attestation to medical providers' mastery of the standards and competencies that are specific to their training and practice within their specialty. Board certification provides the public with a trustworthy indication of a 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 Specialty Board Recognition Committee (SBRC) of the Council on Podiatric Medical Education (CPME) currently recognizes two distinct specialties in which doctors of podiatric medicine may be board certified: medicine and surgery. ACFAS supports the recognition of one certifying Board per specialty. 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."ⁱ

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 integrates the biological, biomechanical, rehabilitative, clinical, and behavioral sciences and encompasses first contact care, continuous care, long term care and general medicine. The term "podiatric orthopedics" can be inaccurately interpreted as a surgical component, but the term refers to the biomechanical and rehabilitative aspects of foot care.ⁱⁱ ACFAS agrees with the definition as has been 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. ACFAS further recognizes that current post graduate residency training in podiatric medicine and surgery prepares candidates to be eligible for certification by either or both boards.

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 qualification or certification by the specialty board recognized for assessing the training and demonstrated competence for the specific privilege in question.

The delineation of distinct board certification in surgical and medical specialties in the profession of podiatry ultimately exists to protect the health and welfare of the public. The value of this distinction is maximized when clear delineations are maintained regarding the specialty training that each board certifies serves to certify. Those candidates who have mastered the surgical aspects of the foot and ankle would be proficient enough to be board qualified/certified with ABFAS. For these reasons, ACFAS

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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 certification in order to be a fellow of this organization.

ⁱ Council on Podiatric Education, <https://www.cpme.org/boards/content.cfm?ItemNumber=2423&&navItemNumber=2238>

ⁱⁱ 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 just over 8,000 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.