

The table below provides a high-level comparison of selected ACGME fellowship eligibility requirements and ABIM certification pathways that may be relevant to international medical graduates. Applicants and programs should confirm current requirements directly with ACGME, ABIM and their institution’s GME office or DIO.

<b>Comparison of ACGME Fellowship Eligibility and ABIM Certification Pathways for IMGs</b>			
<b>Requirement/issue</b>	<b>ACGME – <u>fellowship eligibility exception (3.2.b.)</u></b>	<b>ABIM – <u>Pathway E: Competency-Based Medical Education</u></b>	<b>ABIM – <u>Pathway A: IMGs who are full-time U.S. or Canadian faculty</u></b>
<b>What this pathway governs</b>	<b>Fellowship entry/matriculation</b> into an ACGME-accredited ID fellowship under the “exceptionally qualified IMG applicant” exception.	<b>ABIM certification route</b> for IMGs who completed IM training abroad and then completed an ACGME-accredited ABIM subspecialty fellowship in the U.S.	<b>ABIM certification route</b> for IMGs who are <b>full-time U.S. or Canadian faculty</b> .
<b>Who it applies to</b>	IMGs who do <b>not</b> otherwise satisfy the usual fellowship eligibility requirements but may be accepted as <b>exceptionally qualified</b> .	IMG physicians who completed <b>3 years of internal medicine training abroad</b> and were accepted into an ACGME-accredited ABIM subspecialty fellowship as an <b>exceptionally qualified candidate</b> or as an ACGME-International graduate.	IMG <b>full-time faculty</b> at an LCME-/Canadian-accredited medical school or ACGME-/Canadian-accredited IM residency or subspecialty fellowship program
<b>At least 3 years of internal medicine education/training before fellowship</b>	<b>Yes.</b> If the applicant did not complete a qualifying IM program under 3.2, they must have completed <b>at least 3 years of internal medicine education abroad</b> before starting fellowship.  <b>Completion of an ACGME-I accredited internal medicine residency does not require exceptional candidate review for fellowship entry/matriculation.</b>	<b>Yes.</b> Pathway E requires <b>3 years of verified graduate medical education training in internal medicine abroad.</b>	<b>Yes, but broader wording.</b> Pathway A requires <b>3 or more years of verified graduate medical education in internal medicine and/or a subspecialty abroad.</b>

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<b>Program director/selection committee review of prior training and summative evaluations</b>	Yes.	<b>Yes, but not as an ABIM criterion itself.</b> Pathway E depends on having entered fellowship as an exceptionally qualified candidate or ACGME-I graduate.	No.
<b>GMEC review/approval</b>	Yes.	<b>Yes, but not as an ABIM criterion itself.</b> The GMEC review belongs to the ACGME exception process, not ABIM Pathway E.	No.
<b>ECFMG</b>	Yes. ACGME requires <b>verification of ECFMG certification</b> under 3.2.b.1.c.	Yes. Requires a <b>valid ECFMG certificate</b> .	<b>Yes, but not listed as a current Pathway A eligibility bullet</b> on ABIM’s Pathway A page.  However, an unrestricted medical license in the U.S. or its territories does require ECFMG certification.
<b>Clinical Competency Committee review within 12 weeks of matriculation</b>	Yes. Required for applicants accepted through the ACGME exception.	<b>Yes, but not as an ABIM criterion itself.</b> The CCC review belongs to the ACGME exception process, not ABIM Pathway E.	No.
<b>Accepted into an ACGME-accredited fellowship as an exceptionally qualified candidate</b>	Yes. This is the ACGME exception itself.	Yes. One of the key Pathway E entry conditions.	No.
<b>Completion of all required ACGME-</b>	<b>Not the main point of 3.2.b.;</b> this section is about eligibility to enter fellowship.	Yes. Must have satisfactorily completed all required subspecialty	<b>Not listed as a Pathway A criterion.</b>

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accredited fellowship training		training in the ACGME-accredited fellowship.	Pathway A requires <b>3 or more years of verified graduate medical education in internal medicine and/or a subspecialty abroad.</b>
Program director attestation in ABIM FasTrack	No.	Yes. Required for fellowship completion under Pathway E.	No.
Fellowship must have started on or after July 1, 2016	No.	Yes. Expressly required by ABIM for Pathway E.	No.
Medical license requirement	No.	Yes. Must fulfill <b>ABIM licensure requirements at the time of examination.</b>	Yes. Requires a <b>valid, unrestricted, unchallenged</b> license in the U.S., its territories or Canada.
ABIM Internal Medicine certification before subspecialty certification/exam	This is not an ACGME fellowship appointment rule.	Yes. ABIM says the physician must first become <b>certified by ABIM in internal medicine before applying for a subspecialty exam.</b>	Yes. For subspecialty eligibility, Pathway A requires <b>ABIM certification in internal medicine.</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Full-time faculty appointment</li> <li>- Assistant professor or higher</li> <li>- 3 immediately prior consecutive years at the same institution</li> </ul>	No.	No.	Yes.

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<b>Important caution</b>	ACGME says applicants considered through this exception <b>must be informed that their training may not lead to ABIM board certification.</b>	Pathway E is the ABIM route that may bridge that gap for certain IMG physicians who entered fellowship through the exceptionally qualified pathway and meet all ABIM pilot criteria.	Pathway A can address ABIM certification, but only for the narrow faculty category that meets those criteria.