



Application Process: A 3-5 Year Plan to Become Board Certified

- ❖ This chart represents only some **EXAMPLES** of how to grow your experiences and skills to prepare for candidacy as a Board Certified Specialist.
- ❖ Make sure you have robust and varied professional accomplishments, activities, and advanced skills across a **MINIMUM** of **two of the three areas** over the course of the last 5 years or more (Education/Mentorship, Leadership, Scholarship/Research). Again, **items listed are EXAMPLES only**. Please use Appendix C for further description of this advanced skill documentation:
https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.swallowingdisorders.org/resource/resmgr/application/2024_appendix_c_final_v2.pdf

Year 1	Clinical Practice	Continuing Education	Education/Mentorship	Leadership	Scholarship/Research
REVIEW & PREPARE	<p>Review the AB-SSSD application process. Are you interested in the Clinical Track OR Academic/ Administrative Track? Are you focusing on Pediatrics, Adults, or both?</p> <p>Concentrate on finding a supportive supervisor, at your place of employment, who has expertise in dysphagia*</p> <p>Look for opportunities to evaluate and treat a variety of people with dysphagia*</p>	<p>Start attending intermediate and advanced live and/or online dysphagia* courses: state association meetings, ASHA conventions, SIG13 Perspectives, Dysphagia Research Society annual meetings, DRS Institute for Education (DRSIE), and AB-SSD's CEU courses.</p> <p>Review AB-SSD website tab: Become Board Certified → Application Process → How to Obtain & Document Continuing Education https://www.swallowingdisorders.org/page/Requirements</p>	<p>With a colleague or supervisor, prepare and submit a proposal for a poster or oral presentation at your state association or ASHA.</p> <p>Give a dysphagia* in-service to fellow SLP's working in your facility.</p> <p>Be a co-presenter with clinical staff to present an in-service to a patient/family group.</p> <p>Develop facility-specific or organization-specific patient or staff dysphagia educational materials.</p> <p>Join a dysphagia journal group and assist in organizing and leading.</p>	<p>Seek dysphagia-related opportunities at site of employment to develop leadership skills; e.g. department and facility committees, assist with dysphagia quality improvement projects.</p> <p>Participate in dysphagia-related volunteer opportunities at the local, state, or national level early on in your career so that you can move into leadership roles later.</p>	<p>Read journal articles to develop evidence-based research on dysphagia.</p> <p>Meet with a research mentor at local University programs and/or meetings such as Dysphagia Research Society and ASHA.</p> <p>Explore ways to participate in research from beginner level onward.</p>

* NOTE: The term "dysphagia" is used throughout to cover the following concepts: typical swallowing, swallowing disorders, and feeding/swallowing issues across the lifespan.

Year 2	Clinical Practice	Continuing Education	Education/Mentorship	Leadership	Scholarship/Research
<p>ENGAGE & SKILL BUILD</p>	<p>Request a mentor via the AB-SSD website. A trained mentor supports your application process: https://www.swallowingdisorders.org/page/Mentors</p> <p>Continue to develop your skill base in dysphagia focusing on a variety of diagnoses, gaining skill with diverse diagnostic and treatment opportunities.</p> <p>Competency-based learning for dysphagia (i.e., FEES, MBSS/VFSS). See DCVT (Dysphagia Competency Verification Tool) https://www.asha.org/siteassets/practice-portal/dysphagia-competency-verification-tool-users-guide.pdf</p>	<p>Review AB-SSD's CEU requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 75 hours (7.5 CEUs) in the 3 years prior to submitting application • Minimum of 1.0 Advanced CEUs • Minimum of 4.5 CEUs from ASHA Approved CE Provider • Up to 3.0 CEUs in non-ASHA approved activities <p>Record on CEU Log Sheet to track all CEUs</p> <p>Save syllabi to submit with application. Carefully record partial credit & only CEUs from dysphagia-related portions of a webinar or general conference.</p>	<p>Give a dysphagia in-service as the primary speaker to the ancillary staff within your facility or broader organization.</p> <p>Seek out teaching/lecturing opportunities that are <i>outside</i> your primary workplace.</p> <p>Independently present a dysphagia topic to a patient/family group.</p> <p>Provide in-service to regional dysphagia journal groups.</p> <p>Teach a community-based group (e.g., normal elderly on effects of aging on swallow function or disease-specific support groups).</p> <p>Plan ahead: Discuss with your manager potential opportunities for you to mentor SLPs (interns, CFYs) within your facility on dysphagia-related skills.</p>	<p>Collaborate with supervisor to critically consider strengths & weaknesses of the current dysphagia program. Initiate & develop facility-wide quality improvement dysphagia initiatives.</p> <p>Serve on various dysphagia-related interdisciplinary committees at place of employment. This provides multidisciplinary exposure and prepares you to reach out beyond your workplace in the next 3 years.</p>	<p>Become familiar with the IRB process at your facility.</p> <p>Consider participating in a current dysphagia research project in your facility. (i.e., data collection).</p> <p>Work with colleagues (within your facility and across the nation) on dysphagia-related grants.</p>
Year 3	Clinical Practice	Continuing Education	Education/Mentorship	Leadership	Scholarship/Research
<p>ADVANCE YOUR SKILLS</p>	<p>Develop & research your advanced skill areas. Examples: Adult: head/neck CA, neurogenic dysphagia. Pediatric: behavioral feeding disorders, syndromes, NICU.</p> <p>Track your clinical hours. Use Appendix B https://cdn.vmaaws.com/www.swallowingdisorders.org/resource/resmgr/application/appendix_b_v3.pdf</p>	<p>Continue to attend & record more advanced CE courses, such as those provided by AB-SSD: https://www.swallowingdisorders.org/page/courses</p> <p>See Appendix A for CEU Documentation details: https://cdn.vmaaws.com/www.swallowingdisorders.org/resource/resmgr/application/2024_appendix_a_final.pdf</p>	<p>Now that you have built skills in your institution, seek opportunities outside your facility or employer.</p> <p>Educational presentations at major regional, state, national or international conferences.</p> <p>Inquire at a local university if there is an opportunity for you to guest lecture in a graduate-level dysphagia class.</p> <p>Be the primary supervisor and mentor of an SLP graduate student or CFY.</p>	<p>Develop a comprehensive program, collect data, report results (e.g., larger quality improvement project across your healthcare organization).</p> <p>Organize and lead a dysphagia specific committee outside your institution (e.g., regional dysphagia rounds).</p> <p>Lead committees at the state, regional, and/or national level.</p>	<p>Help to develop dysphagia-related research protocols.</p> <p>Submit and have accepted a dysphagia-related research proposal to the IRB at your facility or in conjunction with an academic site.</p> <p>Co-author a peer-reviewed research paper or poster at a regional, state, or national scientific meeting.</p>

Year 4	Clinical Practice	Continuing Education	Education/Mentorship	Leadership	Scholarship/Research
ADVANCED SKILLS & CAREER ADVANCEMENT	<p>Explore the career ladder at your institution for advancement in your position that enhances your clinical expertise in dysphagia (if applicable, as some clinicians may be self-employed).</p> <p>Continue to track your dysphagia hours.</p>	<p>Confirm that you are obtaining 75 hours (7.5 CEUs) in intermediate to advanced content in the 3 years prior to your application submission date. Follow AB-SSD requirements as noted above, in the website, and in resources listed below.</p>	<p>Educational presentations at major regional, state, national or international conferences.</p> <p>Consider being a primary author or co-author of a dysphagia-related paper published in a dysphagia professional peer-reviewed publication such as SIG 13 Perspectives.</p> <p>Teach dysphagia course at local university.</p>	<p>Continue to expand committee memberships and chairperson roles in dysphagia-related organizations outside your facility/institution, such as ASHA, SIG 13, DRS, IDDSI.</p> <p>Lead an initiative to expand a dysphagia-related program across your healthcare institution, outside your specific facility.</p>	<p>Present a peer-reviewed research paper or poster at a scientific meeting.(i.e. DRS).</p> <p>Actively participate in research activities in dysphagia with some form of direct patient contact.</p> <p>Publish a chapter in a peer-reviewed book.</p>
Year 5	Clinical Practice	Continuing Education	Education/Mentorship	Leadership	Scholarship/Research
ARE YOU READY?	<p>Review final preparations with your Mentor before you apply.</p> <p>Make sure you have the minimum # of hours per year, meeting requirements for your track.</p> <p>Review <i>Readiness Checklist</i> with Mentor: https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.swallowingdisorders.org/resource/resmgr/application/2024_readiness_cklist_final.pdf</p>	<p>Review your CEU Log Sheet & ASHA Transcript. Do you have 10 hours (1.0 CEUs) in Advanced hours?</p> <p>Meet all requirements?</p> <p>You need 75 hours (7.5 CEUs) in your application's look-back period of 3 years prior to your application submission date.</p>	<p>Provide all educational and mentorship performance within the past 5 years or more. Document sufficient variety, details, and dates with examples to illustrate intermediate to advanced skills. Review this with your mentor.</p> <p>These skills in swallowing and feeding/swallowing disorders must go beyond those expected in the applicant's job description. It is expected that the majority of your professional activities will be outside your institution.</p>	<p>Demonstrate consistent leadership skills at regional, state, national, and international level. The majority of your leadership roles are expected to be outside your facility or institution.</p>	<p>Demonstrate active participation in dysphagia research.</p> <p>Publish at least 1 peer-reviewed research article on dysphagia.</p> <p>Present peer-reviewed research at a national or international scientific meeting.</p>

HELPFUL LINKS:

- AB-SSD website's Become Board Certified Application Process: <https://www.swallowingdisorders.org/page/Requirements>
- Become Board Certified Resources (CEU Log Sheet): <https://www.swallowingdisorders.org/page/applicationandresources>
- **Readiness Checklist:** https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.swallowingdisorders.org/resource/resmgr/application/2024_readiness_cklist_final.pdf
- **Appendix A** CEU Doc: https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.swallowingdisorders.org/resource/resmgr/application/2024_appendix_a_final.pdf
- **Appendix B** Clinical Hours: https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.swallowingdisorders.org/resource/resmgr/application/appendix_b_v3.pdf
- **Appendix C** Skill Doc: https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.swallowingdisorders.org/resource/resmgr/application/2024_appendix_c_final_v2.pdf