

bone and joint conditions, ranging from broken bones from accidents to joint arthritis in elderly patients.

Q. You completed the program?

A. Yes.

Q. Dr. Johnson, you're board-certified in orthopedics, right?

A. Yes.

Q. Is that the highest certification recognized by your field?

A. Yes.

Q. How does an expert like yourself become board-certified in orthopedics?

A. Certification is controlled by the regulating body in each area of medical specialization, in my case by the American Board of Orthopedics. To become board-certified you need to complete the four-year residency program, and pass a two-day written and oral examination.

Q. You successfully completed each of those requirements?

A. Yes.

Q. Dr. Johnson, I believe you also teach orthopedics to medical students, right?

And so on. Raise the impressive credentials in the questions, and have the doctor modestly agree with them. The follow-up questions can then ask the doctor to explain the credentials. This works much better than simply asking the doctor to describe his background ("Doctor, could you tell us a little bit about your education and training?"), which requires the expert to give a long-winded answer about himself. That rarely works well.

The usual credentials you will want to bring out include:

1. undergraduate and graduate education and degrees
2. licenses and certifications
3. teaching and publications
4. positions held in important professional associations
5. public offices held
6. previous experience as an expert witness
7. any other accomplishments that have a direct bearing on the witness's expertise
8. how many times expert has done what he is testifying about

Second, supplement the qualifying examination with the expert's résumé or curriculum vitae. The résumé will further detail the expert's background and should be admissible as an exhibit, either as a business record under FRE 803(6) or as reliable hearsay under FRE 807. This is particularly useful for detailing credentials like publications, which look impressive on paper but sound boring in the courtroom. Be careful, however. Most experts create résumés with an eye toward impressing their professional colleagues, not lay people. Make sure your expert's résumé is comprehensible and persuasive to a jury. In addition, keep in mind that some courts consider the résumé as cumulative, and will let you ask about the expert's qualifications, or introduce the résumé, but not