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1 ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

1.1 PURPOSE OF MANUAL AND REVISIONS

1.1.1 PURPOSE

To set forth the policies and procedures by which the officers and directors of the American Board of Forensic Toxicology, Inc. (ABFT) conduct the business of the ABFT and discharge their responsibilities, as set forth in the ABFT Bylaws.

1.1.2 REVISIONS TO THE MANUAL

The ABFT is the issuing body of this, the ABFT Policy and Procedure Manual, and as such shall approve any revisions to it. Suggestions for changes to the manual shall be forwarded to the chair of the Policy and Procedure Manual Committee, with copy of information to the officers of the ABFT. The committee shall compile the suggested changes and shall present them to the board of directors for its consideration at the annual meeting or at the interim meeting.
1.2 ORGANIZATION CHARTS

1.2.1 BOARD OF DIRECTORS ORGANIZATION CHART

- President
  - Executive Director
  - Administration & Operations Director
  - Vice President
    - Secretary
    - Treasurer
    - Chair Exams
    - Chair Accreditation
    - Member at Large
    - Additional Directors
1.2.2 COMMITTEE ORGANIZATION CHART

**Officers (*) and Executive**
- *President, Chair
- *Vice President
- *Secretary
- *Treasurer
- Examination Committee Chair
- Laboratory Accreditation Committee Chair
- Executive Director, Ex Officio
- Admin. and Operations Director, Ex Officio

**Policy and Procedures**
- Vice President, Chair
- President
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Executive Director, Ex Officio
- Admin. and Operations Director, Ex Officio

**Committee on Credentials**
- Secretary, Chair
- Vice President
- Director

**Nominating**
- Secretary, Chair
- Certificant

**Finance and Audit**
- Treasurer, Chair
- Executive Director, Ex Officio

**Continuing Education**
- Chair
- President
- Vice President
- Secretary

**Website**
- President, Chair
- Executive Director
- Admin. and Operations Director

**Examination**
- Examinations Comm Chair
- Director or Certificant

**Laboratory Accreditation**
- Lab Accreditation Chair
- Director or Certificant

**Bylaws**
- Chair
- Director
1.3 FUNCTIONAL DESCRIPTIONS

1.3.1 MISSION

Forensic toxicology encompasses the measurement of alcohols, drugs, and other toxic substances in biological specimens and interpretation of such results in a medicolegal context. The mission of the ABFT is to establish and enhance voluntary standards for the practice of forensic toxicology and for the examination and recognition of scientists and laboratories providing forensic toxicology services.

1.3.2 PURPOSE

The ABFT strives to be fair and objective and shall not discriminate based on race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, creed, disability, veteran’s status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

The ABFT is an independent, self-governing organization that adheres to strict rules of confidentiality, a code of ethics, a code of professional conduct, and has a strong motivation to achieve excellence. The board has been a provider of certification in forensic toxicology since 1975.

Information found in the ABFT documents or website, including advertising, is intended to be accurate and not misleading at the time of publication.

The ABFT is a nonprofit 501(c)6 organization incorporated in the District of Columbia. The ABFT is composed of a board of directors and officers who serve staggered terms and are selected from the certificants at large by a nominating committee process.

The official language of the board is English.

1.3.3 IMPARTIALITY

The ABFT is committed to maintaining impartiality in its certification program. Policies and procedures are designed to provide separation between examination development and the certification process.

The ABFT is a stand-alone corporation dedicated to granting personal certification to individuals practicing in the forensic toxicology field. No other corporations or business concerns are associated with the ABFT.

The ABFT Board of Directors retains sole authority for granting, maintaining, recertifying, revoking certification, and expanding or reducing the scope of the certification program.

The ABFT develops certification examinations and grants certifications.
• Individuals involved in examination development do not participate in the certification process. Final decision on certification is based on a vote by the board.

• The board manages the organization and directs the certification process, to include credentialing, applicant acceptance, grading of examinations, approving certifications, approving requalifications, etc.

• Current directors, the executive director, and the administration and operations director may act as proctors at examination test sites. The proctor ensures proper administration of certification examinations. Proctors do not determine certification status.

The board shall conduct an analysis of threats to impartiality and potential conflicts of interest during the annual management review or more frequently if the need arises.

• The board shall assign members to conduct the threat analysis and to generate a report for board review. The report shall address threats and potential conflicts as well as recommendations for mitigation.

• The board shall review the report and implement the necessary changes to the ABFT policies and procedures.

• The group shall also review and suggest revisions to the ABFT conflict of interest document.

The ABFT shall maintain a publicly accessible quality policy statement. The statement shall outline the ABFT’s commitment to quality and impartiality.

The ABFT’s management system ensures that applicants, candidates, and certificants are treated impartially and equally. Issues brought forth by the management system are investigated by the Quality Assurance/Audit Committee.

The ABFT does not restrict certification to qualified applicants or give preference or financial incentives to the board or other organizations.

The ABFT derives income from application, examination, CE submission, and miscellaneous late fees. No single individual may gain undue influence in the certification program.

• Decisions of the board are by director vote according to the ABFT Bylaws. Each director has an equal vote.

• Fees are determined by the board and apply to all individuals equally.
• The ABFT shall ensure that examination and study materials do not specify any vendor, organization, etc.

• The application and examination processes are separate from the certification process.

The ABFT uses several committees to complete the work necessary to maintain its certification program.

The board shall determine minimum education and training requirements for applicants for each examination offered. The Committee on Credentials is responsible for ensuring all applicants meet minimum requirements and are treated equally.

The board shall determine minimum requalification requirements. The Subcommittee on Requalification is responsible for ensuring all certificants meet minimum requalification requirements and are treated equally.

1.3.4 CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The ABFT personnel shall notify the organization of any potential conflicts of interest. Conflicts of interest may arise when any entity has incentive to exercise undue influence upon the certification program. Such influence may be in the form of organizational pressure, financial gain, political pressure, or other. Attempts to exercise such influence may be directed at an individual or group of individuals within the ABFT.

The ABFT personnel shall not engage in actions that may constitute an actual, apparent, or potential conflict of interest with the mission, objectives, or activities of the organization and shall disclose promptly to the ABFT any such conflicts to include any business, financial, or organizational interest and affiliations which are or could be construed to be an actual, apparent, or potential conflict of interest.

1.3.5 PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Since its inception, the program has utilized appropriate experts in the development of the certification program. The program has evolved to include the following subdisciplines without any single interest predominating:

• postmortem toxicology
• human performance toxicology
• workplace drug testing
• forensic alcohol toxicology

The board shall communicate any changes to its certification requirements, the exact nature of the changes, and the effective date of the changes to its certificants via one or more of the following mechanisms:
• website
• email
• written correspondence

1.3.6 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The board of directors (board) shall consist of at least 9 and not more than 25 persons, elected by the directors from among certificants. In addition, the executive director and the administration and operations director shall serve as ex officio members of the board. A public member who shall not be a certificant may hold one position on the board. Any certificant of the organization may be elected as a member of the board whenever an eligible vacancy exists.

1.3.6.1 DUTIES OF THE BOARD

The board shall:

1. Exercise authority and responsibility according to the Bylaws in the direction and conduct of the affairs of the ABFT to promote and attain the objectives of the ABFT.

2. Establish policy and procedures for the ABFT.

3. Elect directors and officers.

4. Review committee activities and reports.

5. Perform other duties as required by the president, Executive Committee, or board decision.

1.3.6.1.1 DUTIES OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND THE ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS DIRECTOR

The executive director and the administration and operations director shall assist the officers and board in a variety of duties as directed by the president. A description of these duties is found in the Appendix.

1.3.7 OFFICERS

The officers of the corporation shall be a president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer. The officers shall be nominated from the current board of directors by committee and elected by the board at the annual meeting. The officers shall serve, in the same respective capacities, as directors of the board.
1.3.7.1 DUTIES OF THE PRESIDENT

The president shall function as the chair of the board of the ABFT. The president shall preside at meetings of the ABFT and shall perform such duties as is customary or as the ABFT Policy and Procedure Manual may require. Additionally, the president shall:

1. Coordinate executive activities, acting as decision-maker for the ABFT policy and procedures.

2. Act as an ex officio member of all committees, without vote.

3. Review, study, and make recommendations or amendments on matters of the ABFT activity.

4. Ensure that a current organizational chart is available detailing the operational and reporting structure of the ABFT.

5. Review and appoint all the ABFT ad hoc or standing committees, at a minimum of annually.

6. Serve as a communication and information source for the ABFT through newsletters and/or other publications.


8. Proactively identify internal or external threats to impartiality.


10. Act as the representative spokesperson or appoint such with concurrence of the board.

11. Have judiciary responsibilities for the ABFT under the corporate laws of the District of Columbia.

12. Call special board meetings as required.

13. If an officer is unable to fulfill the obligations of their office, appoint an interim officer until the officer can resume their duties or a subsequent election is conducted. The board shall be given the opportunity to affirm the president’s appointment.
1.3.7.2 DUTIES OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

The vice president shall assist the president in the performance of his/her duties and undertake such tasks as may be assigned by the president. The vice president shall act as presiding officer at meetings in the absence of the president and shall succeed to the presidency in the event the office of president becomes vacant for any reason. Additionally, the vice president shall:

1. Serve as the chair of the Policy and Procedure Manual Committee.
2. Serve as the chair of the Quality Assurance/Audit Committee.
3. Be responsible for the annual management review.
4. Be responsible for the annual internal audit.

1.3.7.3 DUTIES OF THE SECRETARY

The secretary shall be responsible for the official minutes of the board meetings and shall perform or supervise the execution of such additional tasks as assigned by the board. Additionally, the secretary shall:

1. Review minutes of the board meetings.
2. Ensure proper document control of the records of the ABFT.
3. Arrange for balloting when necessary.
4. Serve as the chair of the Nominating Committee.
5. Serve as the chair of the Committee on Credentials, which includes the review of new applications for certification and requests for requalification.

1.3.7.4 DUTIES OF THE TREASURER

The treasurer shall, with the assistance of the executive director, keep account, make periodic reports on, and safeguard the funds of the ABFT as provided by the board in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. The treasurer and executive director shall annually cause to be prepared a financial review of the ABFT financial records. Additionally, the treasurer shall review documents prepared by the executive director in the normal course of business as described in the duties of the executive director. In addition, the treasurer shall:

1. Review the financial records of the ABFT.
2. Assist the administrative office with the preparation of an annual budget.
3. Review and verify federal information returns have been signed and filed.

4. Approve expenditure payments. The president, treasurer, and executive director each have the authority to approve expenses; however, they cannot approve their own expenses.

5. Serve as chair of the Finance and Audit Committee.

1.3.8 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee consists of the president as chair, vice president, secretary, treasurer, chair/co-chairs of the Examination Committee, and chair of the Laboratory Accreditation Committee. In addition, the executive director and the administration and operations director serve as ex officio members of the Executive Committee. A quorum of the Executive Committee shall consist of a majority of its voting members and its formal action shall require a majority vote unless otherwise provided in the Bylaws.
1.4 AUTHORITIES, ELECTED DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS

1.4.1 BASIC DECISION-MAKING AUTHORITY

The governing body of the corporation shall be the board which shall be empowered to have, hold, control, manage, and administer all property, funds, business affairs, and operations of the board pursuant to the Articles of Incorporation and the Bylaws.

1.4.2 DIRECTORS, OFFICERS, AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The directors, officers, and Executive Committee are described in sections 1.3.6, 1.3.7, and 1.3.8 of this policy and procedure manual.

1.4.3 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AUTHORITY

The Executive Committee shall have full authority and power to act for and on behalf of the board between meetings unless otherwise provided in the Bylaws. Actions taken by the Executive Committee shall be reported to the board as soon as practicable.

1.4.4 ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

The executive director and the director of administration and operations shall maintain an administrative office.

1.4.5 PUBLIC STATEMENTS

The president acts as the official representative of the board and is the source of all official statements. The executive director, the administration and operations director, directors, and certificants shall not make any statements on behalf of the board, unless authorized by the president.

1.4.6 USE OF THE ABFT STATIONERY (LETTERHEAD)

The board stationery shall be used only for purposes of conducting official business. The ABFT letterhead is found in the Appendix.

1.4.7 USE OF THE ABFT LOGO AND SEAL

The ABFT logo and seal shall be used only for purposes of conducting official business. The ABFT logo and seal are found in the Appendix.

1.4.8 DIRECTOR, OFFICER, AND STAFF CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

Confidentiality is a critical element of the ABFT processes and procedures involving the certification of forensic toxicologists. As acknowledgment of the important role that
confidentiality plays in ensuring the integrity of the ABFT certification program, all members of the board, support staff, and persons or entities engaged to assist in these activities shall annually (July 1) sign and abide by a confidentiality agreement, which may be found in the Appendix.
1.5 MEETINGS

1.5.1 ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting of the board shall be held at the site of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences (AAFS) annual meeting. The order of business shall be as specified in the Bylaws.

1.5.2 INTERIM MEETING

The interim meeting of the board shall be held at the site of the Society of Forensic Toxicologists (SOFT) annual meeting. The order of business shall be as specified in the Bylaws.

1.5.3 SPECIAL MEETINGS

Special meetings of the board may be called by the president or upon written request of a majority of the directors, on a date and at a time and location designated by the president. Notice of a special meeting shall be given to the directors a minimum of 15 days before the meeting date, with information regarding the subject(s) to be considered. The order of business shall be as specified in the Bylaws.

1.5.4 QUORUM

A quorum shall consist of a majority of the directors. The president may adjourn the meeting if no quorum exists. No director shall be entitled to vote using proxy.

1.5.5 CONDUCT OF BOARD BUSINESS

Business of the board, including that of an annual meeting, may be conducted by mail, conference, electronic means, or by a committee comprised of not less than two directors when authorized by a majority of the directors.

When such business conducted by mail requires a vote of the board, a two-thirds affirmative vote shall be required to carry a motion.

Electronic balloting is permitted with an appropriate acknowledgment of ballot receipt.

1.5.6 EXECUTIVE SESSION

The president may call an executive session at any meeting of the board.

1.5.7 MINUTES

The administration and operations director shall be responsible for taking and preparing the official minutes of all meetings of the board. The secretary is responsible for reviewing the minutes and presenting them to the board.
1.5.8 ELECTIONS

Prior to the annual meeting, the board shall solicit nominations from the Nominating Committee to fill eligible vacancies. Additional nominations for eligible vacancies may be made from the floor during the annual meeting. A simple majority of votes shall be required to elect a director.

The president shall appoint an interim officer/director when an officer/director is unable to fulfill their obligations. The interim officer/director shall serve until the elected officer/director resumes their duties or until a subsequent election is held.

1.5.9 TERMS OF OFFICE

The terms of office for directors shall be three years, unless otherwise specified in the Bylaws. Directors shall serve no more than three consecutive terms, unless elected to be an officer of the board or the chair of the Laboratory Accreditation Committee, in which case they may serve an additional term. Directors who have served more than three terms as of February 2002 may continue to serve until the termination of their current term and any additional terms for which they are elected.
1.6 AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

1.6.1 DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

The ABFT shall establish an award for distinguished service. The award is presented to directors who have provided exceptional service to the board during their tenure.
1.7 COMMITTEES

1.7.1 COMMITTEE ON CREDENTIALS

The Committee on Credentials is responsible for reviewing all applications for certification in forensic toxicology by the ABFT.

The secretary serves as chair of the Committee on Credentials. Additional members include the vice president and up to three directors appointed by the president.

Applications for requalification shall include a review by members of the Continuing Education Committee, to properly establish the total number of continuing education credits earned annually over the 5-year requalification period.

A Subcommittee on Requalification composed of the secretary (chair) and at least one director shall review applications for requalification.

1.7.2 LABORATORY ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE

The Laboratory Accreditation Committee is responsible for reviewing applications for laboratory accreditation in forensic toxicology by the ABFT and evaluating reports after a laboratory inspection. In addition, they are responsible for maintaining and updating the checklist and other laboratory accreditation documents.

The Laboratory Accreditation Committee is composed of a minimum of five persons including directors and certificants. Committee members may be directors and/or other certificants in good standing.

1.7.3 NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Nominating Committee is composed of five certificants not serving on the board as appointed by the president. Terms shall be three years. Two members of the Nominating Committee shall have previously served as directors. Each Nominating Committee member shall have been a certificant for a minimum of five years and be in good standing and active in forensic toxicology. The secretary shall chair the Nominating Committee. The chair is a non-voting member of the Nominating Committee.

The chair shall notify Nominating Committee members in January of each year of those directors whose terms are expiring. A request for nominations is made at this time.

Upon receipt of nominations, the slate of nominees shall be reviewed by the committee. This may be accomplished via email or teleconference. If necessary, the list of nominees may be reduced by concurrence (or ballot) to a reasonable number of candidates for the available board openings as determined by the chair. The chair shall then contact the nominees to determine their willingness to serve.
The chair shall send out an electronic ballot to be returned by the members of the Nominating Committee with their selected nominees. In the event of a tie, a run-off shall be held. If a tie remains, the Nominating Committee report shall include the names of all undecided nominees. The Nominating Committee chair does not have the ability to break the tie.

The Nominating Committee report shall be presented by the chair at the annual meeting of the board. The president shall contact the nominees and elected individuals following the annual meeting.

If a member of the Nominating Committee has a perceived conflict of interest with an individual who was nominated, that Nominating Committee member shall abstain from voting.

Ballots shall be retained by the secretary.

1.7.4 WEBSITE COMMITTEE

The ABFT Administrative Office shall establish a website. The website provides information regarding the board and its activities. In addition, an online certificant directory is maintained for those wishing to verify certificant credentials. The website shall be maintained and updated quarterly or at more frequent intervals if needed. The URL of the website is www.abft.org.

The website committee is chaired by the president. Additional committee members include the executive director and the administration and operations director.

1.7.5 POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL COMMITTEE

The ABFT Policy and Procedure Manual Committee develops, reviews, and recommends revisions to the policies and procedures. A documented review shall occur at a minimum of annually with revisions presented for review and approval by the board of directors at its annual meeting. The committee is composed of the members of the Executive Committee of the board and is chaired by the vice president.

1.7.6 BYLAWS COMMITTEE

The Bylaws Committee is charged with revising the Bylaws as needed when directed by the president or the board. The committee shall be composed of the chair and one director appointed by the president.

1.7.7 EXAMINATION COMMITTEE

Candidates for certification are given an examination to assess the candidate’s knowledge in the field of forensic toxicology. A director who is appointed by the president chairs the Examination Committee. Members include the chairs of the
Continuing Education Committee and the Committee on Credentials and other directors and certificants. The examinations are prepared and maintained by the chair of the Examination Committee until distributed to the candidates, or until given to the appropriate proctor if the Examination Committee chair is not proctoring the examination.

Subcommittees, as needed, for each examination category may exist to periodically review examination questions.

1.7.8 CONTINUING EDUCATION COMMITTEE

All fellows, diplomates, and analysts shall participate in continuing education to maintain active status in the field of forensic toxicology. The Continuing Education Committee annually reviews and evaluates the documentation submitted by certificants. The Continuing Education Committee is comprised of directors who are appointed by the president.

1.7.9 QUALITY ASSURANCE/AUDIT COMMITTEE

The vice president is chair of the Quality Assurance/Audit Committee which regularly reviews committee activities and reports to the board on an annual basis. The committee is composed of members of the Executive Committee. If required, the president may appoint additional members.

As part of the quality management review, each committee chair shall provide a semi-annual report to the vice president for presentation to the board during the annual meeting. The Executive Committee shall meet annually to review the report of the Quality Assurance/Audit Committee.

1.7.10 ADDITIONAL COMMITTEES AND MEMBERS

The president may appoint additional ad hoc committees or additional members to existing committees as needed. The president may appoint certificants in good standing to committees.
1.8 RECOGNITION BY OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

1.8.1 RECOGNIZING ORGANIZATIONS

The following organizations have recognized the ABFT:

1. American Academy of Forensic Sciences
2. Society of Forensic Toxicologists
3. California Association of Toxicologists
4. Canadian Society of Forensic Science
5. Southwestern Association of Toxicologists

1.8.2 VOTING REQUIREMENT

The board may, by two-thirds affirmative vote, invite other organizations having legitimate interest in forensic toxicology to recognize the board.

1.8.3 TERMINATION OF RECOGNITION

A recognizing organization may, in its discretion, terminate its recognition upon written notice to the board. Such recognition may also be terminated by a two-thirds affirmative vote of the board.

1.8.4 FINANCIAL OBLIGATION

A recognizing organization shall not have any obligations for financial support of the board and shall not have authority over, or responsibility for, board operations or activities. The principal role of a recognizing organization is to endorse and support the objectives and purposes of the board’s activities and programs.
1.9 CONTRACTING

1.9.1 APPOINTMENT

The board may engage in the use of contractors for purposes of records maintenance, assistance with certification and accreditation, financial management, and other services approved by the board. A Statement of Work shall exist for all contractors and shall be reviewed periodically. The contractor shall have no vested interest or conflict with the tasks being performed. The ABFT Confidentiality Agreement shall be reviewed and signed by all contractors.

No portion of the certification decision will be outsourced.

1.9.2 RECORDS MAINTENANCE

Contractors shall maintain all board records in a secure and confidential manner.
1.10 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS DIRECTOR

1.10.1 APPOINTMENT

The executive director shall be a compensated individual approved and appointed by the board. The executive director has the authority to engage the services of an administration and operations director. The specific conditions of the contract shall be determined in furtherance of the best interest of the board.

1.10.2 RESPONSIBILITIES

The executive director and the administration and operations director shall assist the board in all matters as directed by the president.

Detailed responsibilities of the executive director/administration and operations director are described in the Executive Director Job Description, which can be found in the Appendix.

1.10.3 RECORDS MAINTENANCE

The executive director and the administration and operations director shall ensure that all relevant records, correspondence, etc., are maintained securely and confidentially in the ABFT Administrative Office.
1.11 DOCUMENT CONTROL

The ABFT Administrative Office has established and shall maintain procedures to control internal documents through a master control list. These documents comprise the quality management system of the board. These documents provide structure to operations surrounding all program activities. Controlled documents are maintained and distributed by the ABFT.

1.11.1 IDENTIFICATION

Documents shall be uniquely identified by the footer which shall include:

- Document title
- Date of issue
- Issuing authority
- Revision identification
- Pagination

1.11.2 REVISIONS

All controlled documents shall be secured from unauthorized changes and shall be reviewed annually. All substantial version changes shall be distributed to the board for review and approval prior to implementation. Documentation for review and approval should be maintained.

1.11.3 ARCHIVAL OF RETIRED DOCUMENTS

Retired versions of controlled documents shall be removed from use and archived.
1.12 RECORDS MANAGEMENT

The ABFT Administrative Office shall maintain a records system that includes unique files for each applicant/certificant that may include:

- Original application
- Academic transcripts
- Letters of reference
- Proctor Certification Regarding Conflict of Interest
- Confidentiality Agreement for Candidates
- Examination Record (pass/fail)
- Correspondence
- Continuing education
- Requalification application

1.12.1 RETENTION

The ABFT Administrative Office and the board shall maintain all records (whether paper or electronic format) in its possession in a secure and confidential manner. Neither the administrative office nor the board shall destroy records without written notification from the president. Records identified for destruction are shredded.

Additionally, records may be secured, maintained, and archived in a similar fashion by any contractor performing service to the board.

All certification and operational records (e.g., minutes, year-end financial records) shall be retained indefinitely, except:

- Continuing education records which shall be retained for a minimum of two requalification cycles.
- Records of applicants who never became certificants and detailed (back-up) financial records may be destroyed after five years.
- All accreditation records of the board shall be retained for a minimum of two accreditation cycles.

1.12.2 RELEASE OF RECORDS

No records shall be released without approval of the president.
1.13 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

1.13.1 DOCUMENTATION

Reasonable expenses incurred in the conduct of board business shall be reimbursed. Receipts are required for reimbursement of expenses. If no receipts are available, written documentation shall be supplied to support any expense claims greater than $75. The ABFT General Expense Claim Form shall be used to submit expense claims. The General Expense Claim Form may be found in the Appendix.

1.13.2 EXPENSE APPROVAL AND REIMBURSEMENT

The president, treasurer, and executive director each have the authority to approve expenses; however, they cannot approve their own expenses. The president and treasurer authorize the executive director to disburse funds on behalf of the board. Board approval is required for expenditures over $5,000.

1.13.3 FISCAL POLICIES

1.13.3.1 GENERAL

The board policy pertaining to travel, lodging, and other expenses incurred in the accomplishment of board business is as follows:

Activities, purchases, and contracts shall have prior board approval.

Examples of acceptable documentation for individual expenditures of more than $75:

1. Air transportation – Paid passenger receipt
2. Bus or limousine service – Ticket stub or personal receipt
3. Taxi/Uber/Lyft fare – Personal receipt
4. Parking or toll fees – Stubs or personal receipt
5. Hotel bill – Hotel issued itemized receipt
6. Meals – Cashier or personal receipt
7. Purchases or contracts – Itemized receipt or copy of contract

1.13.3.2 TRAVEL – TRANSPORTATION

The board or president shall approve all travel in advance. If the board-approved travel is combined with other business, vacations, etc., payment of travel shall be on a basis to be agreed upon in advance. Air travel shall be restricted to economy class.
Authorized automobile trips shall be reimbursed based on the prevailing IRS Standard Mileage Rate as determined by the shortest and most usually traveled route between the point of origin and the destination. Total cost (mileage expense plus subsistence) shall not exceed the cost of the most direct coach airfare.

If car rental is authorized, the board approves the purchase of automobile insurance.

1.13.3.3 TRAVEL – HOTEL AND PER DIEM

Hotel rooms, when necessary, shall be booked at the most advantageous rate. Per diem claims shall not exceed $150/day.

1.13.3.4 OTHER EXPENSES

Board members attending annual and interim board meetings shall be reimbursed $300.

Expenses for items other than travel and subsistence (i.e., transportation to/from hotel) shall be for board business and not for personal convenience.

1.13.4 BUDGET

The treasurer along with the executive director shall propose a budget at the annual board meeting. The fiscal year is July 1 to June 30. The board shall vote to approve the budget at the annual meeting.

1.13.5 FEES

1. Certification application fee – $250 (fellow and diplomate), $150 (analyst)

2. Examination sitting fee for second attempt – $150

3. Requalification fee – N/C

4. Requalification late fee – $100

5. Reinstatement fee – $250

6. Annual CE submission fee – $100/year

7. Annual CE submission late fee – $50/year May 16-July 1

8. Annual CE submission late fee – $100/year July 2-September 1

9. Written verification of certification – $50

10. Certificate reissue fee – $50
Fees are non-refundable, unless authorized by the president and/or the board. Fees are subject to change and are payable in U.S. dollars by check, money order, or credit card.
1.14 MANAGEMENT REVIEW

1.14.1 PURPOSE

The ABFT is committed to the development and implementation of a quality management system. Management reviews shall be conducted annually to determine if the management system and operational activities remain suitable, adequate, and effective and to introduce any necessary changes and improvements.

1.14.2 ELEMENTS OF REVIEW

The management review addresses, but is not limited to:

- Fulfillment of purpose
- Policies and procedures
- Status of actions from previous internal reviews
- Outcome of internal and external audits
- Corrective and preventive actions
- Assessments by external bodies
- Feedback from stakeholders
- Adequacy of resources
- Internal and external threats, opportunities, and risks
- Safeguarding impartiality
- Appeals and complaints
- Changes that could affect the management system
- Previous reviews
- Objectives

1.14.3 DOCUMENTATION AND COMMUNICATION

The board shall maintain documentation of the management review and any findings. A plan and a schedule shall be established to address any findings.

Findings from the management review shall be communicated during the annual meeting.
1.15 INTERNAL AUDITS

The ABFT shall establish policies and procedures for conducting periodic internal audits of the certification program considering the importance of areas to be audited. Internal audits shall be conducted annually. The frequency of internal audits may be reduced by the president if the management system continues to be effectively implemented and stable.

The vice president shall designate an individual knowledgeable in the certification process to perform the internal audit. The designee shall not audit their own work. Personnel responsible for the areas audited shall be informed of the outcomes. Any actions taken resulting from the audit shall be timely and appropriate. Any opportunities for improvement shall be identified.

Audits may consist of one organization-wide audit or smaller, focused audits.

Audits may be in the form of records review, procedures review, remote audit via web conferencing, on-site, et al.

1.15.1 ELEMENTS OF INTERNAL AUDIT

Internal audits can be retroactive, directed, data specific, or facility audits. The internal audit may include:

- Verification of compliance with the ABFT Policy and Procedures Manual
- Accreditation requirements
- Certificant files
- Examinations
- Document control
- Security
- Preventive/Corrective Actions
1.16 SECURITY

1.16.1 ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

The ABFT Administrative Office is a secure facility with controlled access. Physical security includes two locks (entry lock and deadbolt) per exterior door controlled by the executive director. Filing cabinets are equipped with locks. Access to the office is by appointment only. Visitors to the office are required to complete a visitor log.

1.16.2 DOCUMENTS AND RECORDS

Current physical (paper) documents and records are stored in locked file cabinets located in the administrative office. Archived records may be stored in a secure commercial storage facility.

Electronic documents and records reside on commercial cloud-based systems where storage exists in the United States. Electronic records are stored encrypted, and password protected. Computers used to access cloud-based storage are password protected. Computers used in the administrative office are equipped with antivirus software (Norton Antivirus) and are updated automatically. Operating system security updates and patches are applied automatically.

1.16.3 EXAMINATIONS

Any company or individual contracted to perform duties related to the ABFT certification testing shall have no vested interest in the certification program or a conflict with the task assigned.

Security of the test bank is the responsibility of the current exam chair. The primary copy of the test bank is maintained on a personal computer in the custody of the Examination Committee chair and password protected. A backup of the test bank exists via a redundant password-protected copy maintained by the Examination Committee co-chair.

Examinations are generated using ExamView. A password-protected digital copy of the examination is emailed to the proctor prior to administration. It is the responsibility of the proctor to generate a hard copy of the examination. Upon completion of the scoring process, it is the responsibility of the proctor to destroy all electronic, email, and hard copies including, but not limited to, all exams and answer keys. Proctor shall also do a final delete from the Trash folder and Recycle Bin on the computer.

Access to test items shall be restricted to members of the Examination Committee, proctors, and members of the board.

Test items are selected from a test bank that contains questions evaluated for their relevance by subject matter experts.
1.17 COMPLAINTS

The ABFT shall resolve all complaints in an impartial and timely manner, including those alleging professional misconduct or negligence. The complaints-handling process shall be subject to requirements for confidentiality, as it relates to the complainant and to the subject of the complaint.

All complaints shall be addressed in writing to the ABFT Administrative Office. The Complaints Procedure is available on the website and a complaint may be filed online. The complainant shall provide sufficient information for the ABFT to adequately investigate the complaint.

The executive director/administration and operations director shall acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 14 days. Acknowledgment shall be in writing, via certified mail, to the complainant.

The executive director/administration and operations director shall document the appropriate information on the Complaint Form, attach the original complaint from the complainant with any additional pertinent information, and forward to the president within the same 14 days.

The president shall appoint a three-member Complaints Review Committee, to review the complaint and shall forward all information to the committee. This committee shall consist of members that are not involved in the subject of the complaint.

The committee shall review the complaint to ensure it relates to the ABFT certification activities and shall at the minimum, address the complaint. A plan of action may be developed as needed. The review shall occur within 14 days of committee receipt of the complaint.

The committee shall gather and verify information necessary to validate the complaint.

The committee shall track the complaint and ensure that it is resolved in a fair and timely manner.

The committee shall review and make recommendations regarding the allegations. It shall determine if the complaint is valid, if the complaint requires disciplinary action, and if that disciplinary action includes a written reprimand, suspension, or revocation. These findings shall be documented on the Complaint Form. If the complaint may require a written reprimand, suspension, or revocation, the committee will request a Suspension and Revocation Form from the ABFT Administrative Office. The administrative office shall document the appropriate information on the Suspension and Revocation Form and forward to the review committee. All findings shall be recorded on the Complaint Form and the Suspension and Revocation Form as well if the situation warrants a written reprimand, suspension, or revocation. The review committee shall communicate its conclusions to the president.
The president shall submit recommendations of a suspension or revocation to the board for a vote. The secretary shall record and certify the vote by signature.

Suspensions and revocations are effective on the date the secretary certifies the vote. A copy of the signed form is retained in the certificant's file.

The ABFT Administrative Office shall notify the complainant of the resolution by certified mail. In addition, any substantiated complaint regarding a certified individual shall be referred to the certified individual in question at an appropriate time.

If the resolution addresses a personnel matter, the complainant shall only be notified that a resolution has been reached, i.e., the specifics of the resolution shall not be outlined.

Records of the complaint shall be maintained for five years.

If certification is revoked and the certificant is barred from reapplication, records shall be retained indefinitely. If the certificant reapplies for, and successfully attains certification, records shall be maintained in the certificant's file indefinitely.

Submission, investigation, and decision on complaints shall not result in any discriminatory actions against the complainant.
1.18 NONCONFORMANCE AND CORRECTIVE ACTION

The ABFT is committed to addressing nonconformances promptly and thoroughly. When identified, potential nonconformances shall be documented and investigated. Any personnel of the ABFT may communicate a potential nonconformance. The Quality Assurance/Audit Committee is responsible for investigating, documenting, and tracking resolutions of potential nonconformances and their corrective actions.

1.18.1 IDENTIFYING A NONCONFORMANCE

Certification activities include any aspect of the ABFT that could impact the certification process, such as application processing, credentialing, examination development, examination procedures, requalification, etc.

Quality issues may be identified during internal audits, complaints, quality assurance activities, etc.

The Quality Assurance/Audit Committee shall perform an initial evaluation to determine if the issue is a potential non-conformance, a potential preventive action or whether there is a need for additional investigation.

1.18.2 EVALUATION

The initial evaluation shall be completed within 30 days once assigned to the Quality Assurance/Audit Committee.

During the evaluation, the Quality Assurance/Audit Committee may determine that affected certification activities may resume or continue while the evaluation proceeds. Any affected personnel shall be notified. The date of notification and reason for resumption shall be documented.

If the evaluation reveals that a nonconformance did not occur, certification activities shall resume, and the quality assurance report shall be closed.

If a nonconformance has occurred, the following shall be considered:

- Does the nonconformance affect the customer? If so, does the customer need immediate notification?
- Must the work be recalled?
- Does the nonconforming work require a corrective action plan, or is simple correction possible?

Guidelines for implementation of the corrective action process:

- A corrective action is not punitive.
Corrective action is required in any of the following situations:

- When there is a likelihood that the nonconformity shall recur.
- When significant noncompliance with organizational policies or procedures has occurred.
- If an error is identified in examination scoring and quality control procedures did not identify the error prior to score release.
- If an error has occurred that would affect an individual’s certification status.

A single instance of nonconformity in the ABFT policies and procedures may not require corrective action. If the lapse affected examination results or certification status, corrective action may be necessary. Identification of repeated lapses may require corrective action.

The Quality Assurance/Audit Committee shall determine whether the issue is a nonconformance and if so, whether the issue requires correction or corrective action.

Corrections shall be documented in the quality assurance report.

**1.18.3 CORRECTIVE ACTION**

If it is determined that a corrective action is necessary, the affected certification activity shall continue to be suspended until completion of the corrective action plan.

Root cause analysis shall be conducted during the evaluation by the Quality Assurance/Audit Committee.

Root cause analysis shall be completed within 90 days of receipt of the evaluation documentation.

A corrective action plan may include:

- Revisions to policies and procedures or other documents
- Re-examination or re-validation of methods, exam keys, or equipment
- Re-training of personnel to include formal training, external training, or other communications as relevant

If the nonconformance directly impacted examination scoring, the Quality Assurance/Audit Committee may request review of previous examination scores. If the nonconformance was identified prior to test results being communicated, a review of previous examination scores may not be necessary.

The Quality Assurance/Audit Committee shall prepare a corrective action plan to include corrective actions, a timeline for completion, and the individuals responsible for completing the corrective actions. The corrective action plan shall also include a strategy to monitor the progress of the corrective action.
The Quality Assurance/Audit Committee shall notify the president upon completion of the corrective action.

If certification processes were suspended, the date and reason for reinstatement shall be documented on the corrective action report.

Evaluation of the effectiveness of corrective actions shall be conducted during the annual internal audit.

1.18.4 CUSTOMER NOTIFICATION

Minimally, the customer shall be notified when an examination scoring error results in a change from a failing to a passing score.

The public shall be notified of significant corrective actions if a nonconformance could compromise public trust in the ABFT and its certification program.

Minimally, public notice shall be posted on the ABFT website.

Public notice shall ensure the privacy and confidentiality of applicants, certificants, and personnel.

The ABFT president shall present the following to the board for decision:

- Does the nonconformance require public notification?
- Is notification on the website sufficient or are other mechanisms required?
- What specific information shall be provided in the public notification?

The president shall ensure that public notice is conducted in accordance with the decisions of the board.

If the issue is determined to be a quality-related one that requires public notification, the FSAB shall be notified prior to/concurrent with public notification.
1.19 CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT AND PREVENTIVE ACTION

The ABFT is committed to continual improvement of its certification program. Improvement opportunities are identified via input from personnel, audits, and corrective actions.

1.19.1 CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT

Management shall seek to continually improve the certification program. Opportunities for improvement shall be identified during audits, management reviews, surveys, and program activities.

The ABFT shall seek feedback from applicants, candidates, and certificants.

The ABFT shall annually distribute a survey to the certificants requesting feedback on the certification processes of the ABFT and its business practices.

The ABFT shall publish the Policy and Procedure Manual on the website at www.abft.org and shall post all changes. All certificants shall annually acknowledge that the Policy and Procedure Manual and any changes are available for review on the website and that a copy is available upon request.

The ABFT shall annually distribute a survey to the directors requesting feedback on topics relevant to the organization’s quality management system, policies and procedures, and future vision. The Quality Assurance/Audit Committee shall determine the survey content.

The board shall set goals for the upcoming year. Goals shall be based upon organizational needs, direction and information derived from audits and feedback from the directors and customers. Goals shall be made available to the board.

As a component of the annual management review, the board shall evaluate progress on the previous year’s goals.

1.19.2 PREVENTIVE ACTION

The vice president, as chair of the Quality Assurance/Audit Committee shall evaluate concerns related to quality. These concerns can be identified through audits, personnel, complaints, etc.

The Quality Assurance/Audit Committee shall evaluate the concern to determine if there is a potential for improvement.

The evaluation shall be completed within 30 days once assigned to the Quality Assurance/Audit Committee.
At the conclusion of the evaluation, the Quality Assurance/Audit Committee shall determine if the concern affords opportunity for a preventive action. A preventive action is warranted if a potential source of nonconformity has been identified.

The Quality Assurance/Audit Committee shall prepare a preventive action plan to include actions, a timeline for completion, and the individuals responsible for completing the preventive actions.

The Quality Assurance/Audit Committee shall notify the president upon completion of the preventive action.

Evaluation of the effectiveness of preventive actions shall be conducted during the annual internal audit.
1.20 CONFIDENTIALITY

All documents and records of the board are confidential. Information regarding a certificant or applicant shall not be disclosed to a third-party without the written consent of that individual. Where the law requires disclosure, the individual shall be notified of the information provided. The legal name of all certificants, terminal degree, designation, certificate number, current certificate expiration, city, state, and zip code shall be published in the online database unless certificant declines to participate.
2 CERTIFICATION OF FORENSIC TOXICOLOGISTS

2.1 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the ABFT are to establish, enhance, and revise as necessary, standards of qualification for those who practice forensic toxicology and to certify as qualified those voluntary applicants who comply with the requirements of the ABFT. In this way, the ABFT aims to establish a practical and equitable system of readily identifying those who possess the requisite qualifications and competence in forensic toxicology.
2.2 TYPES OF CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS

2.2.1 GENERAL

The ABFT has five certification programs:

1. Fellow in forensic toxicology (F-THE ABFT)
2. Diplomate in forensic toxicology (D-THE ABFT-FT)
3. Diplomate in forensic drug toxicology (D-THE ABFT-FD)
4. Diplomate in forensic alcohol toxicology (D-THE ABFT-FA)
5. Analyst in forensic toxicology (A-THE ABFT)

Certification is based upon the candidate’s personal and professional record of education and formal training, experience, achievement, and a passing score of 70% on a written qualifying examination. Applicants shall be persons of good moral character, outstanding integrity, good repute, and shall possess superior ethical and professional standing.

Internal or external inquiries related to certification status may be directed to the ABFT website and/or the ABFT Administrative Office. If a certificant has elected to remove their name from the online directory, the inquiry shall be directed to the administrative office. Written verification is available upon request for a fee.

2.2.2 FELLOWS

Applicants shall possess an earned Doctor of Philosophy or Doctor of Science degree in a biology or chemistry-related science (including pharmacy), from an institution acceptable to the board. Acceptable institutions are those accredited by regional accrediting commissions recognized by the United States Office of Education (USOE), those whose pertinent education programs, e.g., in chemistry, were at the time accredited by national accrediting agencies recognized by USOE, and other institutions at the discretion of the board. Degrees awarded from institutions outside of the United States and Canada shall be evaluated by a credentialing service accredited by the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NSCES) such as the World Education Services (WES).

Applicants shall have adequate undergraduate and graduate education in biology, chemistry, and documented formal training in pharmacology and/or toxicology. If transcripts do not reflect coursework in pharmacology and/or toxicology, details describing how such formal training was received are required. The board reserves the right to request a letter from the individual(s) who provided such training. Adequate undergraduate education in chemistry is defined as satisfactory completion of a minimum of 32 semester hours or 48 quarter hours of university level studies in
chemistry, including accredited courses in organic, inorganic, analytical and physical chemistry.

MD, DO, and PharmD degrees are not acceptable for certification as a fellow.

Applicants shall possess a minimum of three years full-time professional experience (or the part-time equivalent thereof) in forensic toxicology, acceptable to the board, and acquired after receipt of the doctorate degree.

A minimum of one year professional experience shall have been acquired immediately preceding the date of application.

Applicants shall be actively engaged in the practice of forensic toxicology at the time of application for certification and at the time of the qualifying examination.

Applicants shall provide three professional references from practitioners in forensic toxicology who have personal knowledge of the applicant’s work and formal training in forensic toxicology and are qualified to verify competency, formal training, and ethical conduct relative to forensic toxicology. One reference shall be from the applicant’s immediate supervisor. If the applicant’s immediate supervisor is a member of the ABFT board, an appropriate alternative reference shall be provided. Completed reference forms shall be submitted directly from the referee to the ABFT Administrative Office.

Applicants who meet these requirements shall be notified of a change to candidate status for admission to a comprehensive written examination.

2.2.3 DIPLOMATES

Applicants shall possess an earned bachelor’s degree in a biology or chemistry-related science (including pharmacy), from an institution acceptable to the board. Acceptable institutions are those accredited by regional accrediting commissions recognized by the United States Office of Education (USOE), those whose pertinent education programs, e.g., in chemistry, were at the time accredited by national accrediting agencies recognized by USOE, and other institutions at the discretion of the board. Degrees awarded from institutions outside of the United States and Canada shall be evaluated by a credentialing service accredited by the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NSCES) such as the World Education Services (WES).

Applicants shall have adequate undergraduate and graduate education in biology and chemistry. Adequate undergraduate education in chemistry is defined as satisfactory completion of a minimum of 32 semester hours or 48 quarter hours of university level studies in chemistry, including accredited courses in organic, inorganic, analytical and physical chemistry.
Applicants shall possess a minimum of three years full-time professional experience (or part-time equivalent thereof) in forensic toxicology, acceptable to the board, and acquired after receipt of the bachelor’s degree.

A minimum of one year professional experience shall have been acquired immediately preceding the date of application.

Applicants shall be actively engaged in the practice of forensic toxicology at the time of application for certification and at the time of the qualifying examination.

Applicants shall provide three professional references from practitioners in forensic toxicology who have personal knowledge of the applicant’s work and formal training in forensic toxicology and are qualified to verify competency, formal training, and ethical conduct relative to forensic toxicology. One reference shall be from the applicant’s immediate supervisor. If the applicant’s immediate supervisor is a member of the ABFT board, an appropriate alternative reference shall be provided. Completed reference forms shall be submitted directly from the referee to the ABFT Administrative Office.

Applicants who meet these requirements shall be notified of a change to candidate status for admission to a comprehensive written examination.

Note: Diplomates who have met the requirements to apply for fellow certification may do so subject to the usual application and examination processes. Upon earning their fellow certificate, they are no longer considered diplomates. Additionally, applicants who meet the requirements to apply for fellow certification may choose to apply for any diplomate certification instead.

### 2.2.4 ANALYST

Applicants shall possess either an earned associate degree or an earned bachelor’s degree, in a biology or chemistry-related science from an institution acceptable to the board. Acceptable institutions are those accredited by regional accrediting commissions recognized by the Unites States Office of Education (USOE), those whose pertinent education programs, e.g., in chemistry are at the time accredited by national accrediting agencies recognized by USOE, and other institutions at the discretion of the board. Degrees awarded from institutions outside of the United States and Canada shall be evaluated by a credentialing service accredited by the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NSCES) such as the World Education Services (WES).

Applicants shall have adequate education in biology and chemistry. Adequate education in biology and chemistry for those applicants with an associate degree is defined as satisfactory completion of a minimum of 6 semester hours or 24 quarter hours of university level studies in biology and/or chemistry. Adequate education for applicants with a bachelor’s degree is defined as satisfactory completion of a minimum of 32 semester hours or 48 quarter hours of university level studies in biology and/or chemistry. Acceptable course work for both associate and bachelor’s degrees includes
physiology, cell physiology, pharmacology, toxicology, and others as deemed acceptable to the board.

Applicants with an associate degree shall possess a minimum of two years full-time professional experience (or part-time equivalent thereof) in forensic toxicology, acceptable to the board, and acquired after receipt of the associate degree.

Applicants with a bachelor’s degree shall possess a minimum of one year full-time professional experience (or part-time equivalent thereof) in forensic toxicology, acceptable to the board, and acquired after receipt of the bachelor’s degree.

A minimum of one year professional experience shall have been acquired immediately preceding the date of application.

Applicants shall be actively engaged in the practice of forensic toxicology at the time of application for certification and at the time of the qualifying examination.

Applicants shall provide two professional references from practitioners in forensic toxicology who have personal knowledge of the applicant’s work and formal training in forensic toxicology and are qualified to verify competency, formal training, and ethical conduct relative to forensic toxicology. One reference shall be from the applicant’s immediate supervisor. If the applicant’s immediate supervisor is a member of the ABFT Board, an appropriate alternative reference shall be provided. Completed reference forms shall be submitted directly from the referee to the ABFT Administrative Office.

Applicants who meet these requirements shall be notified of a change to candidate status for admission to a comprehensive written examination.
2.3 PROCESSING APPLICATIONS

Applications shall be completed within one year of receipt in the ABFT Administrative Office. Applications for certification shall include original wet signatures. Electronic equivalents are not accepted on the original application. Background checks shall be conducted on all new applicants. Upon completion of the application and background check, applications are thoroughly reviewed and evaluated by the Committee on Credentials to ensure applicants are qualified and competent.

2.3.1 DISTRIBUTION

Completed applications are received by the ABFT Administrative Office for initial review. Based on the initial review, either a request will be made for additional information, or the application will be securely sent for review to the Committee on Credentials.

2.3.2 EVALUATION

Each member of the Committee on Credentials completes an evaluation form (Excel spreadsheet) and returns it to the chair. The evaluation criteria are:

- Transcripts are evaluated to ensure they meet the criteria described in Certification Categories.
- Applicant’s experience following receipt of applicable degree as identified in Certification Categories.
- Institutional/Organization position description
- References are evaluated for:
  - personal knowledge of the applicant’s work and formal training in forensic toxicology and that they are qualified to verify competency, formal training, and ethical conduct relative to forensic toxicology. A reference can also include length of time known, working relationship with applicant, description of forensic work performed, and time devoted to work in forensic toxicology.
  - ethics
  - recommendation for certification
  - comments

The Committee on Credentials may accept the applicant for candidacy, not accept the applicant, or delay the application for additional documentation. In the case of the latter, the chair shall request that the ABFT Administrative Office contact the applicant to supply the additional documentation. If the application is delayed pending additional documentation, the Committee on Credentials shall review the complete application file.
once the information is received and re-evaluate the application. This may be accomplished via email. All records are maintained at the administrative office.

2.3.3 NOTIFICATION

The chair of the Committee on Credentials shall notify the ABFT Administrative Office if the application is accepted for candidacy or if the application is rejected. The administrative office shall then notify the applicant of the change in status to candidate on behalf of the Committee on Credentials. Copies of the notification letter are provided to the president, chair of the Examination Committee, chair of the Committee on Credentials, and the administrative office.
2.4 ETHICS AND PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

The certification process shall require that the candidate agree in writing to abide by the ethical and professional standards identified by the board. This agreement shall be documented, and the standards shall include the disciplinary procedures for any breach thereof.

Requalification shall require certificants to reaffirm in writing that they will continue to adhere to the ethical and professional standards identified by the board.

2.4.1 CODE OF ETHICS

To promote the highest quality of professional and personal conduct of its certificants, the following constitutes the Code of Ethics that is endorsed and adhered to by all certificants of the ABFT:

The ABFT expects all persons holding a Certificate of Qualification from this board to maintain the good moral character, outstanding integrity, good repute, and superior ethical and professional standing which are initial and continuing qualifications for recognition by this board, and to conform to the following principles of ethical conduct:

Always conduct themselves with honesty and integrity.

Perform all professional activities in forensic toxicology with honesty and integrity, and refrain from any knowing misrepresentation of their professional qualifications, knowledge and competence, evidence, and results of examinations, or other material facts.

Hold in proper confidence all information obtained or received during their professional practice, and refrain from misuse of any such information.

Strive to be aware of and alert to any actual or potential conflicts of interest and strive to avoid or appropriately resolve any such conflicts.

Maintain and enhance their qualifications and competence for the practice of forensic toxicology, to the best of their ability.

Act in accordance with the long-standing precepts for ethical practice of the profession of forensic toxicology, and refrain from any action or activity which would tend to bring disrepute upon or otherwise harm the profession of forensic toxicology or the ABFT.

The Code of Ethics shall be attested to at the time of application and each subsequent CE submission and requalification by the statement “I agree to abide by the ABFT Code of Ethics” with name signed, printed, and dated.
2.4.2 CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

To promote the highest quality of professional and personal conduct of its certificants, the following constitutes the Code of Professional Conduct that is endorsed and adhered to by all certificants of the ABFT:

Every certificant of the ABFT shall refrain from making an intentional misstatement or misrepresentation, to include concealment or omission of a material fact or facts in an application or any other communication to the board or its representative(s).

Every certificant of the ABFT shall refrain from exercising professional or personal conduct adverse to the best interests and purposes of the ABFT.

Every certificant of the ABFT shall refrain from providing any material misrepresentation of education, training, experience, or area of expertise.

Every certificant of the ABFT shall refrain from providing any material misrepresentation of data upon which an expert opinion or conclusion is based.

Every certificant of the ABFT shall refrain from issuing public statements that appear to represent the position of the ABFT without specific authority first obtained from the president or the board.

Every certificant of the ABFT shall report to the board any violation of this Code of Professional Conduct by another applicant, affiliate, or certificant.

Every certificant of the ABFT shall discontinue use of all claims to certification that contain any reference to the ABFT or certification upon suspension or withdrawal of certification and will return any certificates issued by the ABFT.

The Code of Professional Conduct shall be attested to at the time of application and each subsequent CE submission and requalification by the statement “I agree to abide by the ABFT Code of Professional Conduct” with name signed, printed, and dated.

2.4.3 DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE FOR CERTIFICANT VIOLATIONS

1. The board shall censure a certificant who fails to comply with the Code of Ethics or the Code of Professional Conduct. Censure may be in the form of a written reprimand, suspension, or revocation of certification.

2. A certificant or other party may submit a formal written complaint to the ABFT Administrative Office alleging a violation of the Code of Ethics or the Code of Professional Conduct.

3. The board may suspend certification of a certificant upon receipt of a complaint or knowledge/evidence of any alleged adverse behavior, activities,
or investigation of any kind. The suspension shall remain in place pending the outcome of both internal and external investigations regarding the allegations.

4. The following procedures shall apply to any complaint(s) or allegation(s) of unethical or wrongful conduct:

   a. Written complaints or allegations against a certificant shall be addressed in writing to the ABFT Administrative Office. The Complaints Procedure is available on the ABFT website, and a complaint may be filed online. The complainant shall provide sufficient information for the ABFT to adequately investigate the complaint.

   b. The executive director/administration and operations director shall acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 14 days. Acknowledgment shall be in writing, via certified mail, to the complainant.

   c. The executive director/administration and operations director shall document the appropriate information on the Complaint Form, attach the original complaint from the complainant with any additional pertinent information, and forward to the president within the same 14 days.

   d. If the situation does not involve a written complaint, but receipt of knowledge/evidence of alleged adverse behavior, activities, or investigation involving a certificant, the executive director/administration and operations director shall document the appropriate information on the Complaint Form, attach documentation of the alleged adverse behavior, activities, or investigation, and forward to the president within the same 14 days.

   e. The president shall appoint a three-member Certificant Violations Review Committee to review the complaint or knowledge/evidence of alleged adverse behavior, activities, or investigation involving a certificant and forward all information to the committee. The committee shall consist of members that are not involved in the complaint or alleged adverse behavior, activities, or investigation.

   f. If the review committee, in its preliminary determination, finds that the board does not have jurisdiction or that there is a lack of probable cause to believe that the complaint(s) or allegation(s) may be well-founded, it shall dismiss the complaint(s) or allegation(s). It shall document this information on the Complaint Form outlining such determination to the president, setting forth the basic facts and stating the reasons for its decision to dismiss. The ABFT Administrative Office shall notify the complainant(s) of the committee's decision and the reason(s) for its decision via certified mail.
g. If the review committee finds that jurisdiction exists and that there is probable cause to believe that the complaint(s) or allegation(s) may be well-founded, it shall give notice of the filing of a complaint(s) or allegation(s) to the accused and shall assemble such written data from both the accused and the accuser(s) which shall permit the review committee to determine whether the complaint(s) or allegation(s) requires further investigation. If the complaint may require a written reprimand, suspension, or revocation, the review committee shall request a Suspension and Revocation Form from the ABFT Administrative Office. The administrative office shall document the appropriate information on the Suspension and Revocation Form and forward to the review committee. All findings will be documented on the Complaint Form and the Suspension and Revocation Form as well if the situation warrants a written reprimand, suspension, or revocation.

h. Upon the approval of the president, the review committee may appoint a certificant from the ABFT to assist in the investigation of the complaint(s) or allegation(s).

i. If, because of an investigation, the review committee decides to dismiss the charge(s) without a formal hearing, it may do so. It shall document the final details on the Complaint Form and return it to the president setting forth the basic facts and stating the reason(s) for its decision. The ABFT Administrative Office shall notify the complainant(s) of the committee’s decision and the reason(s) for its decision via certified mail.

j. If the review committee decides to formally hear the charge(s), it shall give both the accused and the accuser(s) a reasonable opportunity to be heard and to confront each other. The certificant may have legal representation. The review committee shall then decide and notify both parties of its decision. The review committee shall document all findings and recommendations on the Complaint Form and the Suspension and Revocation Form as well if the decision recommended a written reprimand, suspension, or revocation. All information shall be forwarded to the president to include rationale for the decision and a recommendation for further action.

k. Following receipt of all completed forms and upon a vote of three-fourths of the directors present, the party accused of unethical or wrongful conduct may be censured in form of a written reprimand, suspension, or revocation. No director who is the subject of a pending accusation under the provisions of this procedure shall sit in deliberation on any matter concerning a breach of ethics or professional conduct.
2.5 EXAMINATION

2.5.1 GENERAL

Candidates for certification are required to pass a written, closed-book examination within two years of candidacy. The examination is the confidential, privileged, and proprietary property of the ABFT.

Candidates for the written examination are required to sign a Confidentiality Agreement for Candidates whereby the candidate agrees not to copy, disclose, recreate, or disseminate any information, questions, and/or answers from the examination.

The ABFT examinations challenge examinees with the fundamental information used in the practice of forensic toxicology. Examination questions cover the areas of postmortem toxicology, human performance toxicology, workplace drug testing and prescription drug monitoring. Included in these areas of toxicology are topics such as driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs, drug overdose deaths, employee drug testing, drug testing of urine and alternate matrices, interpretation and expert opinion, and other related forensic toxicology issues. In addition, related analytical, physiological, patho-anatomical, pharmacological, and laboratory practice and management concepts are included.

Fellow and diplomate examinations consist of 130 single answer, multiple-choice questions relating to basic, general, and specific information, with a time limit of three hours. The analyst examination is comprised of 80 single answer, multiple-choice questions and with time limit of three hours.

The examination is given a minimum of twice each year, at the American Academy of Forensic Sciences (AAFS) Annual Meeting and the Society of Forensic Toxicologists (SOFT) Annual Meeting. Candidates may request to have an examination administered at a different location under the direction of the chair of the Examination Committee, a director of the board, the executive director, or the administration and operations director.

If unsuccessful at the first examination, the candidate may retake the examination a second time within their two-year period of candidacy, no sooner than 90 days following the first examination. An additional fee shall apply. An applicant may reapply for certification one time no earlier than 180 days after failing to pass the second examination and shall provide proof of remediation with the application for it to be accepted for review. The acceptance of a second application for certification rests solely with the board of directors whose decision in this process is final.

Under the second application, a candidate is allowed one examination attempt, unless there was only one attempt under the first application, for a total maximum of three examination attempts.
2.5.2 ADMISSION TO EXAMINATIONS

The chair of the Committee on Credentials notifies the ABFT Administrative Office and the chair of the Examination Committee in writing that an applicant has met all credentialing requirements to sit for the written examination. The applicant is then identified as a candidate. On behalf of the chair of the Committee on Credentials, the administrative office prepares and issues a letter of candidacy that reflects the applicant’s change in status and that the examination shall be successfully completed within two years from the date of notification.

Candidates are instructed to notify the ABFT Administrative Office in writing as to when they would like to schedule to sit for the examination. All examinations shall be scheduled through the ABFT Administrative Office. All requests to sit for an exam received by anyone outside of the administrative office shall be directed to the ABFT Administrative Office for scheduling and registration.

2.5.3 ADMINISTRATION OF EXAMINATIONS

The examination is prepared and maintained by the chair of the Examination Committee until distributed to the candidates, or the appropriate proctor if the Examination Committee chair is not proctoring the examination. The chair of the Examination Committee, a director, the executive director, or the administration and operations director may proctor examinations. Proctors shall be appropriately trained through the review of training materials provided by the ABFT Administrative Office. Proctors shall not oversee examinations of candidates they have been involved in training (mentored by) or have supervised for a minimum of two years after the conclusion of the candidate’s training.

Candidates shall present a government-issued photo identification to the proctor to gain admittance to the examination. Candidates are required to complete the Database Update Form with legal name and current and complete contact information as part of the examination registration process. Candidates shall complete the Confidentiality Agreement for Candidates prior to the beginning of the exam and shall complete the designated attestation field of the Examination Record at the completion of the exam. Candidates shall use their legal name on all paperwork.

Cell phone/smart watch use is prohibited. Phones shall be placed in airplane mode, face down, and placed out of reach of the examinee.

Candidates shall be instructed to not bring personal belongings into the exam and shall be instructed to empty pockets and place any personal items on a table in sight of the proctor. Candidate shall not have access to personal belongings during the exam.

Candidates may complete the examination in pencil or pen.

Non-programmable calculators are provided by the ABFT.

Candidates have three hours to complete the examination.
The proctor shall complete the Proctor Certification Regarding Conflict of Interest for each candidate prior to the exam and shall complete the second section of the Examination Record for each candidate at the completion of the exam.

The proctor returns the completed Confidentiality Agreement for Candidates, the Proctor Certification Regarding Conflict of Interest, the Examination Record, the Exam Answer Sheet, and the Database Update Form for each candidate by tracked courier service (U.S. Mail, UPS FedEx) or email to the chair of the Examination Committee for scoring. Upon completion of the scoring process, the chair of the Examination Committee shall notify proctors to destroy all electronic, email, and hard copies of examination test materials including, but not limited to, all exams and answer keys. Proctor shall also do a final delete from the Trash folder and Recycle Bin on the computer.

When the examination is administered at a site other than the AAFS or SOFT meeting, is proctored by a director, the executive director, or the administration and operations director, the examination is prepared by the chair of the Examination Committee and then sent by tracked courier service (U.S. Mail, UPS, FedEx) or password-protected secure email to the proctor.

### 2.5.4 CONFIDENTIALITY AND INTEGRITY OF EXAMINATION MATERIALS

Each exam shall be composed of randomized questions from the ABFT test bank for each candidate’s specific designation/category. Candidates shall be required to sign a Confidentiality Agreement for Candidates. If it becomes apparent that the integrity of an examination has been compromised, all questions on that exam shall be removed from the test bank for a duration determined by the Examination Committee at the time of the occurrence and a different comparable examination shall be offered. An investigation shall be conducted to determine the root cause of the compromise.

The members of the board, its officers, and personnel shall not copy, disclose, recreate, or disseminate any examination materials, except for the purposes of conducting business of the ABFT.

The members of the board, its officers, and personnel shall also take all steps reasonably necessary to protect the confidentiality of the written examinations, questions, and related examination development information, and to prevent unauthorized disclosure.

### 2.5.5 EXAMINATION FORMAT

The fellow and diplomate examinations consist of 130 questions in the subject matter found in Appendix. The analyst examination consists of 80 questions. Examinations are prepared from a test bank maintained by the chair of the Examination Committee. The Examination Committee prepares questions. Any certificant may contribute examination questions. As areas of interest in forensic toxicology are continuously changing with the development of new drugs and analytical techniques and instrumentation, new
questions shall be added to, and old questions deleted from the question bank. The members of the entire board periodically review the bank of questions.

Examinations consist of multiple-choice questions with five possible answers. Only one option is the correct answer.

A minimum score of 70% must be achieved to pass the exam and become certified.

2.5.6 EXAMINATION CATEGORIES AND CONTENT AREAS

Information on examination categories and content areas are found in Appendix.

2.5.7 EXAMINATION PROTOCOLS

1. The candidate shall make arrangements with the ABFT Administrative Office to appear on the scheduled date prior to the date of examination.

2. Upon arrival at the examination site, the candidate shall present a government-issued photo identification.

3. Prior to taking the examination, the candidate shall sign a Confidentiality Agreement for Candidates.

4. The proctor shall complete the Proctor Certification Regarding Conflict of Interest

5. The testing site shall:

   a. be accessible for a minimum of four hours.

   b. have appropriate security.

   c. be of sufficient size to accommodate candidates in a classroom-style seating arrangement. Empty seats between examinees are preferred. If not possible, the proctor should ensure adequate measures are taken to prevent compromise of examination i.e., that different examination versions are provided to adjacent candidates.

   d. have a head table for proctor(s) seating.

   e. be located to minimize distractions (e.g., noise and interruption).

   f. have acceptable environmental conditions (e.g., lighting and temperature).

   g. provide reasonable disability accommodations with prior board approval.
h. have a method to notify examinees of time remaining (e.g., clock, post, or announce).

6. The proctor and candidate shall complete their respective sections of the Examination Record.

7. Candidates shall use their legal name on all paperwork.

2.5.8 EXAMINATION PROCTORS

1. Identification of, and arrangements for proctor(s) shall be made at least one month prior to the examination date.

2. A proctor shall be a chair of the Examination Committee, a director, the executive director, or the administration and operations director.

3. Proctor-candidate ratio shall not exceed 1:10.

2.5.8.1 DUTIES OF THE PROCTOR

1. Proctors shall verify ID of each candidate and ensure legal name is on all forms and examination materials.

2. Proctors shall complete the Proctor Certification Regarding Conflict of Interest for each candidate prior to the exam.

3. Proctors shall provide each candidate a non-programmable calculator.

4. Proctors strive to ensure acceptable environmental conditions and reasonable disability accommodations during examinations.

5. Proctors shall facilitate restroom use during the time course of the examination. The examination materials shall be held by the proctor while the examinee is outside the testing site. Candidates shall not have access to phones, smart watches, or other personal belongings while outside the testing room during the examination.

6. Proctors shall be alert to signs of inappropriate behavior. Cheating shall be reason for immediate dismissal of the candidate from the examination and from the ABFT certification program. In such cases, examination materials shall be collected by the proctor. Documentation of the event shall be made on the Examination Record and forwarded to the chair of the Examination Committee. This decision may be appealed by the candidate if thought to be in error and is subject to the Appeals Policy.
7. Proctors shall complete the proctor attestation field of the Examination Record at the completion of exam and ensure each candidate has completed the candidate attestation field of the Examination Record.

8. Proctors shall ensure that the completed Confidentiality Agreement for Candidates, the Proctor Certification Regarding Conflict of Interest, the Examination Record, the Exam Answer Sheet, and the Database Update Form for each candidate are sent securely and confidentially to the chair of the Examination Committee.

9. Proctors shall destroy all electronic, email, and hard copies of examination test materials including, but not limited to, all exams and answer keys. Proctor shall also do a final delete from the Trash folder and Recycle Bin on the computer.

2.5.9 GRADING AND RECORDING EXAMINATION RESULTS

The chair of the Examination Committee and an additional grader shall score examinations. The additional grader can be another director, the executive director, or the administration and operations director. A passing score is 70%. The graders for the exams shall ensure there is no evidence of impropriety between exams of candidates (e.g., same question numbers missed on exam), when there are multiple candidates sitting for exams. Once the exams are scored and consistent scores are achieved between both graders, the chair of the Examination Committee completes the final section of the Examination Record. The Confidentiality Agreement for Candidates, the Proctor Certification Regarding Conflict of Interest, the Examination Record, and the Database Update Form for each candidate are sent to the ABFT Administrative Office and placed in the file of the candidate. One copy of the Examination Record is sent to the secretary. On behalf of the secretary, the administrative office issues a letter to the candidate(s) as to their success or failure. Letters may be sent to candidates via mail or electronically.

The Examination Record documents pass or fail results.

The ABFT does not provide examination scores to the board or to any individual, to include the examinee.

2.5.10 MANDATORY WAITING PERIOD FOLLOWING EXAMINATION FAILURE

Candidates who fail an examination shall not be re-examined for a minimum of 90 days. A candidate may reapply for certification one time no earlier than 180 days after failing to pass the second examination and shall provide proof of remediation with the application for it to be accepted for review. The acceptance of a second application for certification rests solely with the board of directors whose decision in this process is final.
Under the second application, a candidate is allowed one examination attempt, unless there was only one attempt under the first application, for a total maximum of three examination attempts.

Re-examinations shall be a different version from the first examination and shall be scheduled through the ABFT Administrative Office. All requests to sit for an exam received by anyone outside of the administrative office shall be directed to the ABFT Administrative Office for scheduling and registration.

2.5.11 EXAMINATION REVIEW PROCESS

The examination review process may involve the entire test bank or select focus questions. Select questions are reviewed when it becomes apparent that candidates may be interpreting either the question, or at least one distractor, in an unintended manner. The ABFT may employ examination software products to assist in the development of examination test banks, test composition, scoring, and analysis of test items and examinations.

Examination questions are reviewed not only for relevancy and potential bias but for the effectiveness of distractors. By looking at the pattern of examinees responses to test questions, it may be determined why items operate as they do and how to improve the reliability of the test item.

When the annual comprehensive review of the test bank is conducted, the test bank is divided into groups of approximately 60-80 test items and distributed to the Examination Committee for review. Additional certificants may participate in the review of test items as authorized by the president. Reviewers evaluate each test item across four specific areas: significance; clarity; unambiguous correct answer and relevance to present practice. Test items are scored from 1-4 based on the degree of acceptability for each area evaluated. Questions are also reviewed for spelling, typographical errors, and suggested grammatical changes. Reviewers also identify the competency or sub-competency covered by the question.

Each test item is accompanied with the following instructions:

1. Enter the test item number and a score of one to four under each heading of the evaluation matrix.

   a. Acceptable

   b. Acceptable, consider revision

   c. Acceptable, revision required

   d. Unacceptable, remove from test bank
2. Enter the number for the competency or sub-competency associated with the test item as found in the relevant study guide.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question Number</th>
<th>Significance</th>
<th>Clarity of Question</th>
<th>Unambiguous Correct Answer</th>
<th>Relevance to Present Practice</th>
<th>Competency Number</th>
</tr>
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</tbody>
</table>

Documentation of test item reviews are submitted to the chair of the Examination Committee. Scores are recorded in a database for additional evaluation by the Examination Committee. The chair of the Examination Committee maintains the database. The Examination Committee shall recommend test items for revision or deletion. Revised test items shall undergo the review process prior to inclusion in the test bank.

Test items are assigned to a specific competency within the test bank.

If a candidate or proctor identifies a test item for review, the chair of the Examination Committee shall send the test item, or portions thereof, to the Examination Committee for evaluation.

As new drugs, techniques, or processes are identified that are relevant to forensic toxicology, the chair of the Examination Committee shall request submission of new test items from the Examination Committee.

**2.5.12 STORAGE AND DISTRIBUTION OF EXAMINATIONS**

The chair of the Examination Committee maintains a record of all completed examinations. A record is kept as to preparation, date exam was attempted, and exam version. Completed records are kept for one year after the time of testing. This time is deemed sufficient by the board to allow for an appeal by a candidate of an examination result. After one year, or the end of a candidate’s candidacy, the chair of the Examination Committee may destroy the completed Examination Record. The Examination Record shall indicate pass/fail and not the numerical score.

**2.5.13 REQUESTS FOR DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION**

As a concept and in practice, reasonable accommodations shall be made for candidates with an identified disability according to the ADA. Such accommodations prevent limitations to the evaluation of knowledge and experience in whatever manner those are assessed.

The following concepts related to certification should be considered:

1. Disabilities shall not interfere with a candidate’s examination; requests for reasonable accommodations are considered on a case-by-case basis.
2. Each successful candidate shall be given the opportunity to claim a disability and request an accommodation for the exam.

3. Disabilities shall be documented and verified by a health care provider.

4. Requests shall be submitted in writing to the ABFT Administrative Office to include proposed reasonable accommodations.

5. The administrative office shall forward requests for reasonable accommodations to the chair of the Examination Committee.

6. The Examination Committee shall approve or disapprove the request with justification. The committee reserves the right to confer with independent subject matter experts to determine the merit of the request and proposed accommodations.

7. Denial of requests for reasonable accommodations is subject to the appeals process.
2.6 APPROVAL OF CERTIFICANTS AND ISSUING OF CERTIFICATES

When certification requirements are met, the names of proposed certificants are provided to the secretary by the chair of the Examination Committee. The secretary shall submit these names to the board for vote.

The board shall issue certificates of qualification in forensic toxicology to persons who have fully complied with all requirements and have been approved by the board. Certificates shall be valid for five years and will expire on December 31 of the fifth year.

Each certificate shall remain the property of the board. Each certificant shall be entitled to its possession, unless expired or revoked.
2.7 CONTINUING EDUCATION

All certificants shall participate in continuing education (CE) in the field of forensic toxicology to maintain active status, competency, and knowledge of current and relevant technology and requirements. The board shall accept educational activities in a variety of areas related to forensic toxicology.

2.7.1 GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

To maintain certification, certificants shall comply with the continuing education program requirements for their certification category as set forth in the sections below.

Certificants shall complete and submit the ABFT Continuing Education Program – Annual Submission Form annually to the ABFT Administrative Office.

The program utilizes a point system which requires supporting documentation. One hour of activity shall be equivalent to 0.25 points.

Certificants shall maintain supporting documentation for all continuing education activities claimed during each five-year requalification cycle.

Randomly selected certificants shall be audited annually such that all certificants are audited at least once during a five-year cycle.

Continuing education submissions shall be current prior to requalification. Certificants are exempt from continuing education requirements in the first year of certification.

Certificants who fail to meet CE requirements shall have their certification revoked. Those certificants who fail to submit their annual CE shall be required to apply for reinstatement by December 31. A completed CE submission form and payment of the associated late fee and $250 reinstatement fee shall be required prior to the granting of reinstatement. After December 31, certificants shall be required to surrender their certificate, reapply, and successfully pass the current relevant written certification examination.

The Continuing Education Committee shall review annual continuing education submissions during a special meeting convened by the president.

The continuing education activity timeline is as follows:

March 15: DocuSign submission form emailed to certificants.
April 15: DocuSign 30-day reminder emailed followed by weekly reminders.
May 15: Deadline for CE submission without late fee.
May 16-July1: CE submissions are assessed a $50 late fee.
July 2-Sept. 1: CE submissions are assessed a $100 late fee.

September 2: Certificate is revoked for non-compliance with CE submission.

Sept. 2-15: Notices of certification revocation sent by email and certified letter.

Fall EC Meeting: Review of CE submissions. Results posted to the certificant portal.

December 31: Deadline for reinstatement.

After Dec. 31: Certificants are required to surrender their certificate, reapply, and successfully pass the current relevant written certification examination.

2.7.2 FELLOW AND DIPLOMATE CE REQUIREMENTS

Fellows and diplomates shall earn a minimum of 50 continuing education points during each five-year requalification cycle.

Fellows and diplomates are required to submit a minimum of five points per year. Submissions of less than five points that do not qualify for a medical waiver shall result in revocation of certification. Certificants shall be required to surrender their certificate, reapply, and successfully pass the current relevant written certification examination. Reinstatement option does not apply.

Fellows and diplomates are encouraged to submit a minimum of 10 points per year to accumulate the required number of points over the entire five-year cycle.

Accumulated points greater than what is required to requalify do not carry-over into the next requalification period.

2.7.3 ANALYST CE REQUIREMENTS

Analysts shall earn 25 continuing education points during each five-year requalification cycle.

Analysts are required to submit a minimum of two points per year. Submissions of less than two points that do not qualify for a medical waiver shall result in revocation of certification. Certificants shall be required to surrender their certificate, reapply, and successfully pass the current relevant written certification examination. Reinstatement option does not apply.

Analysts are encouraged to submit a minimum of five points per year to accumulate the required number of points over the entire five-year cycle.
Accumulated points greater than what is required to requalify do not carry-over into the next requalification period.

2.7.4 MEDICAL WAIVER

In the case of an extended illness, a medical waiver may be granted by the board no more than once per five-year requalification cycle. The ABFT Continuing Education Program – Annual Submission Form and fee shall be submitted with a written request for a waiver.

Following approval, the annual CE points requirement shall be zero. The cumulative CE points shall be prorated over the five-year requalification cycle based upon certification category as follows:

- Fellows and diplomates
  - Initial requalification – 40 points
  - Initial requalification prorated – 30 points
  - Subsequent requalification – 50 points
  - Subsequent requalification prorated – 40 points

- Analyst
  - Initial requalification – 20 points
  - Initial requalification prorated – 15 points
  - Subsequent requalification – 25 points
  - Subsequent requalification prorated – 20 points
2.8 REQUALIFICATION

The Subcommittee on Requalification, composed of the secretary and a minimum of one additional director, is responsible for reviewing applications for requalification. An application may be submitted to the board for consideration if requalification status is challenged. Requalification shall be for five years from the end of the prior certification or requalification.

2.8.1 DISTRIBUTION

Approximately three months prior to the end of the certification period, certificants shall receive a requalification application to include instructions for completion. Background checks shall be conducted on all applicants. Upon the timely completion of the application and background check, the Subcommittee on Requalification shall thoroughly review the application to ensure applicants are qualified and competent. Additional documentation may be requested. Certificants whose applications for requalification are not received by the due date shall be assessed a late fee.

2.8.2 EVALUATION

The Subcommittee on Requalification shall review the requalification application for:

- Current employment status in the field of forensic toxicology
- Cumulative continuing education points of not less than their respective requirements that demonstrate competency and knowledge of current and relevant technology and requirements
- Curriculum vitae
- Competency risk assessment

The Subcommittee on Requalification shall determine requalification status based on the above criteria to determine if the certificant has demonstrated sufficient competency to requalify.

Certificants that fail to accumulate the required minimum CE points during a five-year requalification period shall not requalify and must reapply and successfully pass the current relevant written certification examination.

2.8.3 NOTIFICATION

Requalification is for five years commencing at the end of the prior certification or requalification period. The administrative office on behalf of the secretary shall notify the certificant as to requalification status.

Certificants whose application and background check has not been received by the certificate expiration date, shall be sent an email followed by a certified letter indicating that their Certificate of Qualification has lapsed.
Certificants that have successfully requalified will receive email notification of requalification and a current Certificate of Qualification.

Copies of the notification are sent to the president, secretary, executive director, and administration and operations director.

2.8.4 REINSTATEMENT

Certificants whose Certificate of Qualification has expired, may petition the board for reinstatement within 6 months of the date of certificate expiration. Reinstatement may be granted by board vote after the Subcommittee on Requalification has accepted the application for requalification, the requalification late fee has been paid, and the reinstatement fee has been paid.
2.9 RISK PREVENTION

Unqualified or incompetent certificants pose a risk to the ABFT. The ABFT is a professional organization for the certification of qualified and competent individuals and shall adhere to its policies to mitigate risk from unqualified or incompetent certificants.

2.9.1 APPLICANTS FOR CERTIFICATION

Applicants shall have adequate education for their level of certification and have documented formal training in pharmacology and/or toxicology. If transcripts do not reflect coursework in pharmacology and/or toxicology, details describing how such formal training was received are required.

Applicants shall provide an institutional/organization position description for their current employment. Applicants shall be actively engaged in the practice of forensic toxicology at the time of application for certification and at the time of the qualifying examination.

The Code of Ethics shall be attested to at the time of application and each subsequent CE submission and requalification by the statement “I agree to abide by the ABFT Code of Ethics” with name signed, printed, and dated.

The Code of Professional Conduct shall be attested to at the time of application and each subsequent CE submission and requalification by the statement “I agree to abide by the ABFT Code of Professional Conduct” with name signed, printed, and dated.

Applicants shall provide references from practitioners in forensic toxicology who have personal knowledge of the applicant’s work and formal training in forensic toxicology and are qualified to verify competency, formal training, and ethical conduct relative to forensic toxicology. One reference shall be from the applicant’s immediate supervisor.

Background checks shall be conducted on all applicants. Upon completion of the application and background check, applications are thoroughly reviewed and evaluated by the Committee on Credentials.

Candidates for certification are required to pass a written, closed-book examination within two years of candidacy. Each candidate must have a minimum score of 70% to pass the exam and become certified. There shall be a maximum of three examination attempts.

The ABFT examinations challenge examinees with the fundamental information used in the practice of forensic toxicology. Examination questions cover the areas of postmortem toxicology, human performance toxicology, workplace drug testing, and prescription drug monitoring. Included in these areas of toxicology are topics such as driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs, drug overdose deaths, employee drug testing, drug testing of urine and alternate matrices, interpretation and expert opinion, and other related forensic toxicology issues. In addition, related analytical, physiological,
patho-anatomical, pharmacological, and laboratory practice and management concepts are included.

Candidates that pass the exam shall have their information sent to the board for final approval to become a certificant.

Certificants that do not submit CE or submit less than five points shall have their certification revoked and shall be required to surrender their certificate, reapply, and successfully pass the current relevant written certification examination.

The board may suspend certification of a certificant upon receipt of a complaint or knowledge/evidence of any alleged adverse behavior, activities, or investigation of any kind and shall follow the Complaints Procedure and Disciplinary Procedure for Certificant Violations to determine resolution. The ABFT shall consult with legal counsel.

2.9.2 APPLICANTS FOR REQUALIFICATION

Approximately three months prior to the end of the certification period, certificants shall receive a requalification application.

Applications shall include a current and updated curriculum vitae and applicants shall be actively engaged in the field of forensic toxicology.

Applicants shall have cumulative continuing education points that demonstrate competency and knowledge of current and relevant technology and requirements. The CE submission process has been updated and is submitted via DocuSign. Documentation is required for all claimed activities.

Background checks shall be conducted on all applicants. Upon the timely completion of the application and background check, the Subcommittee on Requalification shall thoroughly review the application to determine if the certificant has demonstrated sufficient competency to requalify. Additional documentation may be requested.

Certificants that fail to accumulate the required minimum CE points during a five-year requalification period shall not requalify and must reapply and successfully pass the current relevant written certification examination.
2.10 SUSPENSION AND REVOCATION OF CERTIFICATES

The board at its discretion may suspend or revoke certification status based on evidence of a violation of the ABFT Code of Ethics or Code of Professional Conduct, a felony conviction or falsification, intentional omission, misrepresentation of credentials, alleged adverse behavior/activities, or investigation of any kind. If an individual’s certification is suspended or revoked, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) shall be notified. Certificants failing to meet CE requirements are subject to revocation.

This procedure outlines the process by which the ABFT administers suspensions and revocations. Additional relevant procedures define the specific requirements leading to suspension and/or revocation. Each procedure describes the steps required to reverse suspension. Suspension and revocation shall only be reversed through the appeals process. No further attempt shall be made to contact the individual when notifications of suspension or revocation are determined to be undeliverable and are returned to the ABFT Administrative Office.

2.10.1 SUSPENSION

Certificants may be placed on suspension upon the recommendation of a complaint investigation or knowledge/evidence of any alleged adverse behavior, activities, or investigation of any kind.

Upon submission of a complaint or knowledge/evidence of adverse behavior, activities, or investigation of any kind, the executive director/administration and operations director shall document the appropriate information on the Suspension and Revocation Form and forward to the president for review.

Upon review, if the complaint or the receipt of evidence is found to warrant further investigation, the president shall convene a three-member panel to review and make recommendations regarding the allegations. The panel’s findings and/or recommendations shall be documented on the Suspension and Revocation Form.

The completed form shall be submitted to the president.

The president shall submit the findings to the board for a vote. The secretary shall record and certify the vote by signature.

Suspensions are effective on the date that the secretary certifies the vote. A copy of the signed form is retained in the certificant’s file.

Certificants shall not present themselves as certified during the suspension period.

Continued use of the certification designation shall result in immediate revocation of certification.
Notification of suspension shall be first by email followed by a formal letter via certified mail from the administrative office.

Certificants suspended because of a complaint investigation or other internal investigation shall receive notification in writing from the administrative office on behalf of the secretary.

Notifications shall include the ABFT’s policies on the use of certification designation during suspension.

Suspension shall be removed (reversed, rescinded) upon vote by the board. The vote to reinstate the certificant shall follow the same process by which suspension was given.

Notification of reinstatement shall be made via email and/or in writing from the administrative office.

A certificant’s suspension status shall be documented in the certificant database. Certificant status shall be removed from the online certificant directory within 30 days.

If the certificant is unable to meet the timeline established in the procedure for reinstatement, the certificant may request an extension in writing to the administrative office. The Executive Committee shall determine if an extension is warranted as well as the scope of the extension.

2.10.2 REVOCATION

Certificants shall have their certification revoked for failing to meet CE requirements and must apply for reinstatement. A completed CE submission form and payment of the associated late fee and $250 reinstatement fee shall be required prior to the granting of reinstatement. After December 31, certificants shall be required to surrender their certificate, reapply, and successfully pass the current relevant certification examination.

Certificants may have their certification revoked if their suspension is not resolved by the timelines defined in the relevant procedures. Additionally, certificants may have their status revoked upon recommendation by a complaints review panel or other internal investigation panel.

Upon submission of a complaint or knowledge/evidence alleging adverse behavior, activities, or investigation of any kind, the executive director/administration and operations director shall document the appropriate information on the Suspension and Revocation Form and forward to the president for review.

Upon review, if the complaint or knowledge/evidence is found to warrant further investigation, the president shall convene a three-member panel to review and make recommendations regarding the allegations. The panel’s findings and/or recommendations shall be documented on the Suspension and Revocation Form.
The completed form shall be submitted to the president.

The president shall submit the findings to the board for a vote. The secretary shall record and certify the vote by signature.

Revocations are effective on the date that the secretary certifies the vote. A copy of the signed form is retained in the certificant’s file.

Certificants shall not present themselves as certified upon revocation.

Notification of revocation shall be first by email followed by a formal letter via certified mail from the administrative office.

Notifications shall include the ABFT’s policies on the use of certification designation following revocation.

A certificant’s revocation status shall be documented in the certificant database.

Certificant status shall be permanently removed from the online certificant directory within 30 days.
2.11 APPEALS AND RECONSIDERATIONS

2.11.1 APPEALS POLICY

Submission, investigation, and decision on appeals or reconsiderations shall not result in any discriminatory actions against the appellant. The board shall as necessary, adopt and promulgate, maintain, and revise, an appeals policy to resolve questions or challenges to suspension or revocation of certification or requalification.

2.11.2 APPEAL OF BOARD ACTIONS

A person whose certification or requalification is suspended or revoked shall be entitled to appeal any such action by the board. Appeals must be submitted in writing within 30 days of the notification date. The request shall be lodged in accordance with the Appeals Policy. The Appeal Procedure of Certificants is available on the website and a request for an appeal may also be filed online.

2.11.3 APPEAL PROCEDURE OF CERTIFICANTS

A certificant who has had certification or requalification suspended or revoked may request a formal appeal of the board action.

Such requests shall be made in writing to the ABFT Administrative Office within 30 days of the certificant receiving notice of the action and shall include why the certificant believes the decision to be erroneous and shall include supporting documentation of compliance with program standards for certification or requalification.

The executive director/administration and operations director shall acknowledge receipt of the request for appeal within 14 days. Acknowledgment shall be in writing, via certified mail, to the appellant.

The executive director/administration and operations director shall document the appropriate information on the Appeal and Reconsideration Form, attach the original request for appeal from the appellant with any additional pertinent information, and forward to the president within the same 14 days.

The president shall appoint a three-member Appeals Review Committee to review the appeal, two of whom shall be directors who are not currently serving on the Committee on Credentials.

The committee shall review the request for appeal within 14 days of committee receipt of the appeal.

The committee shall gather and verify information necessary to validate the appeal.
The committee shall track the process and ensure that it is resolved in an impartial and timely manner.

After review, the committee shall document its findings on the Appeal and Reconsideration Form and forward it to the board. The board shall respond within 60 days of receiving notice of appeal.

The appellant shall be notified in writing when the board has received the request for appeal. The certificant may be represented by counsel at the hearing.

After review, the board shall determine whether to reverse its prior decision. Within 14 days of the hearing date, the ABFT Administrative Office shall notify the individual of the board's decision via certified mail. Notification shall include a brief statement outlining the basis of the appeal and reason for the board's decision.

A request for appeal shall not stay a board action to suspend or revoke certification or requalification.

2.11.4 RECONSIDERATION OF BOARD ACTIONS

An applicant/certificant denied certification, requalification, or a request for reasonable accommodations shall be entitled to request reconsideration of any such board action in writing within 30 days of the notification date, to include any supporting documentation. The Reconsideration Procedure of Applicants and Certificants is available on the website and a request for reconsideration may also be filed online.

2.11.5 RECONSIDERATION PROCEDURE OF APPLICANTS AND CERTIFICANTS

An applicant or certificant may request that a denial of certification or requalification be reconsidered. Requests for reconsideration shall be evaluated by the Committee on Credentials.

Requests shall be made in writing to the ABFT Administrative Office within 30 days of the applicant or certificant receiving notice of the action and shall include why the applicant or certificant believes the decision to be erroneous and shall include supporting documentation of compliance with program standards for certification or requalification.

The executive director/administration and operations director shall acknowledge receipt of the request for reconsideration within 14 days. Acknowledgment shall be in writing, via certified mail, to the appellant.

The executive director/administration and operations director shall document the appropriate information on the Appeal and Reconsideration Form, attach the original request for reconsideration from the appellant with any additional pertinent information, and forward to the president within the same 14 days.
The president shall appoint a three-member Reconsiderations Review Committee that shall consist of three members currently serving on the Committee on Credentials.

The committee shall review the request for reconsideration. The review shall occur within 14 days of committee receipt of the request.

The committee shall gather and verify information necessary to validate the request for reconsideration.

The committee shall track the process and ensure that it is resolved in an impartial and timely manner.

After review, the committee shall determine whether to reverse its prior decision. All findings are documented on the Appeal and Reconsideration Form. Within 14 days of the final review date, the ABFT Administrative Office shall notify the individual of the committee's decision via certified mail. Notification shall include a brief statement outlining the basis of the reconsideration and reason for the committee's decision.

A request for reconsideration shall not stay the denial of certification or requalification.

2.11.6 FINALITY OF ACTIONS

The board, acting through its duly elected officers and directors and its duly designated agents, shall have the sole jurisdiction, power, authority, and right to determine the outcome of and final action upon any challenge to or appeal of any action or decision of the board, and the outcome of any request for reconsideration of actions or decisions of the Committee on Credentials. The decision of the board on any such requests for reconsideration, challenge, or appeal shall be final and conclusive.
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