

Background, Function, and Purpose

The need to identify qualified forensic scientists who can provide essential professional services for the nation's judicial and executive branches of government has long been recognized. In response to the professional need, the American Board of Forensic Toxicology (ABFT) was organized in 1975 to provide, in the interest of the public and the advancement of the sciences, a certification program in forensic toxicology. In purpose, function, and organization, the ABFT is analogous to the certifying Board in the various medical specialties and scientific fields. The ABFT is not a membership organization.

The objectives of the Board are to establish, enhance, and revise as necessary the standards of qualification for those who practice forensic toxicology and to certify as qualified scientists those voluntary applicants who comply with the requirements of the Board. The ABFT is committed to fairness, objectivity, and equal treatment and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, gender, national origin, age, creed, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. In this way, the Board aims to establish a practical and equitable system of readily identifying those who possess the requisite qualifications and competence in forensic toxicology.

Certification is based upon the candidate's personal and professional records of education, training, experience, achievement, and a formal written examination. 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. Applicants and certificants must be engaged in the practice of forensic toxicology.

The Board is a non-profit 501(c)(6) organization incorporated in the District of Columbia. It is accredited by the Forensic Specialties Accreditation Board according to standards consistent with ISO/IEC 17024.

General Provisions

- The right to deny Certification is reserved.
- Certificates of Qualification in Forensic Toxicology are valid for five years and are renewable according to standards and under conditions established by the Board, including continuing education requirements.
- Persons holding a valid Certificate of Qualification issued by the Board are entitled to use the applicable designation and initials.
- Certificates may be suspended or revoked for appropriate cause as described in the ABFT Policy and Procedure Manual.
- Qualifications, requirements, and application procedures for certification are subject to revision by the Board. The latest version can be obtained online at www.abft.org or from the ABFT office.

Fees

Certification application fee:	\$300
Annual CE submission fee:	\$120
Late & other fees:	see www.abft.org

American Board of Forensic Toxicology, Inc.
3472 Research Parkway, Ste 104-581
Colorado Springs, CO 80920
Telephone: (719) 888-5160
admin@abft.org
www.abft.org



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Professional Certification

Fellow in Forensic Toxicology
Diplomate in Forensic Toxicology
Diplomate in Forensic Alcohol Toxicology
Diplomate in Forensic Drug Toxicology
Analyst in Forensic Toxicology

The American Board of Forensic Toxicology
is accredited by the
Forensic Specialties Accreditation Board

Certifying Forensic Toxicologists since 1975

www.abft.org

American Board of Forensic Toxicology Certification Overview

General Qualifications

The American Board of Forensic Toxicology expects all persons holding a Certificate of Qualification to maintain excellent moral character, outstanding integrity, an honorable reputation, and exemplary ethical and professional standing, which are initial and continuing qualifications for recognition by the Board.

Application Procedure

After submission to the ABFT, completed applications are reviewed by the Credentials Committee. A complete application file will contain:

- Non-refundable certification application fee.
- Recent passport-style photograph.
- Properly completed application form.
- Official transcripts from all colleges or universities attended (regardless of degrees received) sent directly to the ABFT by the registrar(s). Additional criteria, not listed below, that apply to minimum hours of university level studies in chemistry are outlined in the ABFT Policy and Procedure Manual and at www.abft.org.
- Name and email address of three individuals (other than ABFT officers/directors or members of the ABFT Examination Committee) qualified to provide professional and character references. They must be knowledgeable of the applicant's work and formal training in forensic toxicology, and be qualified to verify competency, formal training, and ethical conduct relative to forensic toxicology. One reference must be the immediate supervisor. References need not be ABFT Certificants.

Certification Categories

	Fellow	Diplomate			Analyst	
		Forensic Toxicology	Forensic Alcohol Toxicology	Forensic Drug Toxicology		
Designation	F-ABFT	D-ABFT-FT	D-ABFT-FA	D-ABFT-FD	A-ABFT	
Education Degree ¹	Doctor of Philosophy or Science ²	Bachelor's	Bachelor's	Bachelor's	Bachelor's	Associate's
Semester hours of Chemistry ³	20	20	20	20	16	8
Professional Experience Subsequent to Receipt of Degree ⁴	3 years	3 years	3 years	3 years	1 year	2 years
Areas of Expertise	Forensic Toxicology	Forensic Toxicology	Forensic Alcohol Toxicology	Forensic Toxicology Workplace / Prescription Drug Monitoring	Analytical Toxicology / Chemistry ⁵	

- 1 Degrees must be obtained in biological or chemistry-related science (including pharmacy). Acceptable institutions are those accredited by regional accrediting commissions recognized by the United States Department of Education. Degrees awarded from institutions outside of the United States and Canada must be evaluated by a credentialing service accredited by the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services such as the World Education Services and must include a course-by-course analysis.
- 2 For Fellows, if transcripts do not reflect coursework in pharmacology or toxicology, details describing how such training was received are required. The Board reserves the right to request a letter from the individual(s) who provided such training. MD, DO, PharmD, DHSc, or any non-thesis related advanced degrees are not acceptable for certification as a Fellow.
- 3 Additional criteria apply to minimum semester hours of university level studies in chemistry for all categories and are outlined in the ABFT Policy and Procedure Manual and at www.abft.org.
- 4 Applicants must have completed at least the specified time of full-time professional experience (or the part-time equivalent thereof) in forensic toxicology.
- 5 The Analyst category does not include interpretative and/or opinion testimony.

Examination

- Applicants who meet the requirements will be admitted to the examination. The examination must be completed within a period of two years.
- Applicants must successfully pass the comprehensive written examination based on the principles and practice of forensic toxicology.
- 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.

Continuing Education

- Certificants are required to provide annual documentation of continuing education (CE) in the field of forensic toxicology. Certificants are exempt from CE requirements in the first year of certification. Current documentation requirements are available at www.abft.org.
- All certificants are required to submit forensic toxicology related activities with a minimum of 5 points per year. Submissions of less than 5 points shall result in immediate revocation of certification.
- An annual CE fee is collected at the time CE documentation is submitted by the Certificant.
- The fee and documentation for a minimum of five qualified CE points must be submitted every year. See below for minimum CE required for recertification.

Recertification

- The purpose of the recertification process is to determine and document that a Certificant has maintained qualifications and continues an acceptable practice of forensic toxicology. Recertification is distinct from annual documentation of CE and occurs every five years. There is no fee associated with the recertification process as long as it is submitted by the deadline. If the recertification application is not submitted by the deadline, a late fee will apply.
- Certificants must submit CE information and fee for each of the years prior to recertification. Recertification applications will not be processed unless all CE material has been submitted, including the CE that is due in the recertification year.
- The minimum continuing education (CE) requirement for first-time recertification is 40 points (20 points for Analysts). Thereafter, a minimum of 50 CE points must be earned during each five-year recertification period (25 points for Analysts).