

ABC 2007: The New Look of Certification

The ABC Examinations are getting a new look.

The ABC is taking steps to streamline the certification process to continue providing the best possible services to the forensic science and criminal justice communities.

The examination content will not be harder or easier. The same Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSA's) will be tested. However the certification process will be more efficient and will be designed to more fully meet the contemporary needs of the entire forensic science community.

The ABC Board is dedicated to the premise that in order to be a good forensic scientist, general knowledge regarding all of forensic science is imperative. The purpose of the new testing format is to measure both general and specialty knowledge in one exam thus minimizing the logistic and economic impact of the certification process.

Initially, ABC will offer 5 separate examinations, which will allow for certification in:

1. Drug Analysis
2. Fire Debris Analysis
3. Molecular Biology
4. Trace Analysis
5. General Criminalistics

These examinations will consist of approximately 50% General Knowledge questions and 50% specialty questions. While some similarity to the current technical specialist exam will exist, these exams will cover general knowledge more comprehensively.

The General Criminalistics Examination will replace the GKE for analysts with multiple specialties or for analysts whose specialties are not adequately represented by the other four examinations. The KSA's will be similar to those of the current GKE.

Once a candidate meets the professional and educational requirements of certification and passes the appropriate examination(s), he/she will be certified as an ABC Diplomate in the particular examination area(s).

Fellow status will be awarded based on successful proficiency testing. NOTE: proficiency testing is a requirement for most practicing analysts. Diplomate status will only be available to those persons who do not participate in proficiency testing.

Analysts currently certified by ABC will have the following status in the new program:

- Current Fellows retain Fellow status.
- Current Technical Specialists will become Fellows.
- Current Diplomates will retain Diplomate status. Practicing analysts can submit an external proficiency test if they wish to be elevated to Fellow status (Fellow in General Criminalistics). In order to gain Fellow status in a specific specialty area, the scientist must pass the appropriate ABC examination.

The current Recertification requirements as they apply to Diplomates and Fellows will not change.

ABC Board and/or Exam Committee Members will be giving presentations at Regional and National Forensic Meetings to better explain this process and answer your questions during the Fall of 2005 and Winter/Spring of 2006.

The anticipated rollout for these exams is 2007. The current certification process will remain in effect until that time.