

RECERTIFICATION

1. Scope

This procedure outlines the process by which a certificant recertifies. ABC certificants must provide proof that they have maintained an acceptable level of professional competence during the course of the five year certification cycle. The Recertification Committee is responsible for verifying that the certificants have met the professional development requirements for recertification.

2. Recertification Requirements

- 2.1 Certificants are required to attain at least 50 Continuing Education / Professional Development points over the course of each certification cycle. At least 10 of the 50 points must be acquired in Professional Development.
- 2.2 Certificants should attain their 50 points by December 31 of the year prior to the expiration of the certificate. However, in the event an individual does not have the necessary points before December 31, the points may be obtained by June 30th of the year of the certificate expiration. These points may not be claimed for the next certification cycle.
- 2.3 Certificants are required to demonstrate continued relevant work experience. Relevant work experience may include casework, teaching at the post-secondary level, research, supervision, and management. Relevant work experience may also include continued involvement in professional organizations, audits/assessments, courtroom testimony and intermittent contractual work.
- 2.4 Certificants must attain at least 15 points over the 5 year certification cycle in Specialty Area Activities for each Specialty Area in which the certificant holds a certificate.
 - 2.4.1 For certificants with Fellow certification in General Criminalistics, Specialty Area Activities may be documented as either Specialty Area points or Other Forensic Skill Building Activities or a combination of both.
 - 2.4.2 For certificants with Diplomate certification in General Criminalistics, there is no minimum point requirement for Other Forensic Skill Building Activities or Specialty Area Activity.
 - 2.4.3 Once, during a 5 year certification cycle, a certificant may use 2 employment points towards Professional Involvement or Specialty Area Activities points.
 - 2.4.4 At the request of the certificant, points may be moved from one Specialty Area certification to another. They may not be counted towards more than one Specialty Area.
- 2.5 The certificant must complete and return the ABC Rules of Professional Conduct (09-0001F) and pay associated fees every year. Fees can be paid with check or via Paypal. If the certificant wishes to claim points for the previous year, the Recertification Professional Development Report (09-0601F) and Recertification Specialty Professional Development Report (09-0611F), if applicable, must be completed and returned. The recertification information should be postmarked by March 1 of the year after the professional development was completed. For items submitted electronically, the postmark is the date of submission. The Registrar's Office may adjust the due dates if a postmark date falls on a weekend or holiday. Any adjustments are at the discretion of the Registrar's Office and will be to the benefit of the certificant.

- 2.5.1 If a certificant passes the examination between January 1 and June 30, maintenance fees and signed Rules of Professional Conduct will be due the next year.
- 2.5.2 If a certificant passes the examination between July 1 and December 31, maintenance fees and signed Rules of Professional Conduct will not be due until the year after the next year.
- 2.5.3 If all of the necessary points are obtained at any point during the five year recertification period, the certificant only needs to submit the signed ABC Rules of Professional Conduct and the Maintenance Fee.
- 2.5.4 If postmarked on or before **March 1**, the maintenance fee for a Diplomate is \$60.00 and the maintenance fee for a Fellow is \$70.00.
- 2.5.5 If postmarked between **March 2 and June 1**, a \$25.00 late fee is levied for a total due of \$85.00 for a Diplomate and \$95.00 for a Fellow.
- 2.5.6 If postmarked **later than June 1**, the forms will not be processed and the points acquired will not be counted towards those necessary for recertification. However, in order to retain certification, a late fee of \$150 is levied for a total due of \$210 for a Diplomate and \$220 for a Fellow.
- 2.5.7 If the certificant does not pay the recertification fee, including late fees, or does not submit their signed Rules of Professional Conduct by June 1 of the year in question, the certificant will be placed on probation. The Registrar will contact the certificant via e-mail or mail. Notification will include an explanation of all late fees and policies regarding non-payment of recertification fees (09-0604T).
- 2.5.8 Certificants who do not pay recertification, or late fees, or submit their signed Rules of Professional Conduct by June 1 have until December 31 to make arrears or their certificate will be suspended until all fees have been paid.
- 2.5.8.1 If the certificant does not make arrears and / or submit the signed Rules of Professional Conduct by March 1 of year following, the certification will be revoked.

2.5.7 Timeline of fees and actions:

| Postmark Date | Fee | Action |
|-----------------------|---|---|
| By March 1 | Diplomate: \$60.00 Fellow: \$70.00 | None |
| March 2 to June 1 | Diplomate: \$85.00 Fellow: \$95.00 | None After March 31, notification via e-mail or postcard indicating that the packet has not been received and late fees apply. |
| June 2 to December 31 | Diplomate: \$210.00 Fellow: \$220.00 | Recertification points will not be counted. Notify certificant via template 09-0604T. |

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| December 31 to March 1 | Previous year fees, including all late fees, PLUS current year maintenance fees. | Certificate is suspended until Rules of Professional Conduct and fees are received. After Board vote, Registrar will notify certificant via template 09-0607T. |
| March 2 and later of the year AFTER recertification fees are due | | Certificate is revoked. After Board vote, President will notify certificant via 09-0607T. |

- 2.6 If a certificant does not meet the points requirement and wishes to retain certification status, the certificant must re-apply to take the applicable certification examination(s). All current qualification, testing requirements and fees will apply.
- 2.7 Exceptions to the recertification requirements and deadlines may be granted on a case by case basis. An example of a situation that would warrant an exemption is military deployment. Certificants may request dormancy of a certificate following the Dormancy Procedure (09-10).

3. Recertification Documentation

3.1 The organization webmaster will ensure that the current versions of the required recertification documentation are available on the ABC website. The following documents will be posted:

- 09-0609S Instructions for completing the Recertification Professional Development Report
- 09-0001F ABC Rules of Professional Conduct
- 09-0608S Recertification Points Structure
- 09-0601F Recertification Professional Development Report
- 09-0611F Recertification Specialty Professional Development Report
- 09-0612F Recertification Declaration Page
- 09-0701F Proficiency Testing Certification Form

3.2 In January of each year, the Registrar will notify certificants that the forms are available to be completed. Notification may be in the form of e-mail, mail, phone, etc. Notification will be sent to the contact information provided by the certificant on the website. The certificant is responsible for ensuring contact information is accurate.

3.3 Certificants are responsible for downloading, completing and submitting the required documentation by March 1.

3.4 One copy of the recertification documentation is required.

4. Receipt of Recertification Documentation

4.1 The Registrar’s Office will perform a cursory review of the recertification packet to ensure that the following items are present and signed as required:

- Recertification Professional Development Report (09-0601F), if applicable
- Recertification Specialty Professional Development Report (09-0611F), if applicable
- Recertification Declaration (09-0612F), if applicable

- Rules of Professional Conduct (09-0001F)
- Payment Received

If any of the required information is not present, the Registrar's Office will notify the certificant (09-0604T).

- 4.2 For recertification packets received in paper form, the Registrar's Office will scan the Recertification Professional Development Report (09-0601F), Recertification Specialty Professional Development Report (09-0611F), if applicable, Recertification Declaration Page (09-0612F) and accompanying documentation.
- 4.3 Electronically submitted recertification packets will only be accepted through the ABC website. ABC will not accept recertification packets via e-mail.
- 4.4 Electronically received recertification forms will be saved with associated documentation.
- 4.5 All electronic files, either received electronically or digitized paper copies should be named with the last and first name of the certificant followed by the certificate number, Recert Packet, and the year. For example, the filename should read "Smith_John_111_Recert Packet_2000".
- 4.6 Electronic versions of the recertification paperwork will be uploaded into the shared electronic drive as soon as practicable after receipt.
- 4.7 If a check is received, the Registrar's Office will scan the recertification fee check. The file name of the check should be labeled with last name, first name, certificant number, date of check, and reason for the check.
 - 4.7.1 A copy of the scanned check must be placed into the Current Checks file in the shared electronic folder. The ABC Treasurer will download check copies at least once a week.
 - 4.7.2 The original checks will be sent to the Treasurer via certified mail.
- 4.8 If the certificant pays via Paypal, a copy of the transaction record will be retained. The file name should be labeled with last name, first name, certificant number, date of transaction and reason for transaction.
- 4.9 If the recertification packet does not have all of the required documentation, the recertification points will not be counted.
- 4.10 If no recertification fee is submitted with recertification documentation, the Registrar's Office will notify the certificant via either e-mail or mail (09-0604T).
- 4.11 Receipt of forms, points and recertification fee will be recorded in the Registrar's Database, maintained by the Registrar's Office.
- 4.12 If recertification documentation is not received postmarked by March 1, the Registrar's Office will send a reminder notification either via e-mail or mail (09-0604T).
- 4.13 If recertification documentation postmarked after June 1 is received, the recertification documentation will be returned to the certificant along with a notification of the organization

policies on recertification (09-0604T). The maintenance fee will be documented in the Certificant Database and will be handled the same as all maintenance fees.

- 4.14 If the certificant omits a page of the packet or piece of documentation, the certificant may submit the missing documentation.
 - 4.14.1 If recertification packet was submitted via mail, only the missing documentation needs to be submitted. The submission must be via mail.
 - 4.14.2 If the recertification packet was submitted electronically, the entire packet including the missing documentation needs to be submitted. The submission must be electronic.
 - 4.14.3 If the new submission is not postmarked by March 1, applicable late fees will apply. New documentation will not be considered after June 1.

5. Recertification Committee Investigation

- 5.1 In January of each year, the Recertification Chair(s) will be given a list of certificants that will require review.
- 5.2 By June 1, the Recertification Liaison will have assembled the recertification committee consisting of approximately 35 to 45 investigators and approximately 4 to 9 reviewers. The committee will consist of Reviewers and Investigators. There will be enough committee members to have 5-10 investigators assigned to each reviewer.
 - 5.2.1 The Recertification Co-Chairs will assign committee members to either Review or Investigator roles and will assign each Investigator to a Reviewer.
- 5.3 By mid-June of each year, the Recertification Liaison will provide the Recertification Committee members with detailed instructions of the recertification review (09-0615S).
- 5.4 The Registrar's Office will be responsible for assigning Recertification Investigators and ensuring that the investigations are conducted in a timely manner.
- 5.5 The Recertification Chair will maintain a list of approved continuing education and will ensure that the investigators have access to the list.
 - 5.5.1 In the event a certificant claims points for continuing education that has not been previously approved, the Chair will contact the Director responsible for approving trainings.
 - 5.5.2 The Director will work with the certificant to attain the information necessary to approve the training.
 - 5.5.3 The Director will notify the Chair if the training has been approved.
 - 5.5.4 The Director will update the approved training list accordingly.

- 5.6 The Recertification Committee Chair(s) will maintain a spreadsheet, or other similar mechanism, to record the following:
- certificant reviewed by Investigator
 - reviewer responsible for each Investigator
 - chair responsible for each Reviewer
 - which packets had a second or third review and by whom
 - notation of any points changes
- 5.7 The Investigator will review all points claimed in Recertification Professional Development Report (09-0601F) and Recertification Specialty Professional Development Report (09-0611F), if applicable. The Investigator will document the review on the Recertification Committee Checklist (09-0602F).
- 5.8 Once the Investigator has completed his/her review of recertification packets, the Investigator will notify his/her Reviewer.
- 5.8.1 To ensure consistency, the Reviewer will be responsible for reviewing a minimum of 10% of the completed checklists from each investigator.
- 5.8.2 The Reviewer will review all recertification packets that result in point changes. These reviews may be included in the 10% review.
- 5.8.3 In the event the Reviewer does not agree with the Investigator, the assigned Chair will be notified. The Chair will do a final review.
- 5.8.4 If the Investigator is found to have made an error, the Reviewer will conduct a review of all of that Investigator's work. A Quality Report (10-0201F) may be initiated per the procedure on *Nonconforming Work and Corrective Action (10-02)*.
- 5.8.5 If the Reviewer is found to have made an error, the managing Recertification Committee Chair, in cooperation with the Quality Assurance Chair, will determine the appropriate action. A Quality Report (10-0201F) may be initiated per the procedure on *Nonconforming Work and Corrective Action (10-02)*.
- 5.8.6 The Reviewer and the Chair will sign the Recertification Committee Checklist (09-0602F) when applicable.
- 5.9 The Recertification Chair(s) will be responsible for notifying the Registrar's Office of completed reviews in a timely manner and based on a mutually agreeable time frame. However, the reviews must be completed by September 1 of each year.
- 5.10 The Registrar's Office will be responsible for including the recertification paperwork and investigation information in the certificant's file.
- 5.11 If during the initial review, the Investigator is unable to confirm the information, the investigator will contact the Recertification Committee Chair(s) to resolve any pending concerns.

- 5.11.1 The Recertification Committee Chair(s) will make a decision on the concern. If the Recertification Committee Chair(s) are unable to reach a decision, the Recertification Committee Liaison of the Board of Directors will be contacted for guidance.
- 5.11.2 If no resolution is reached, the Recertification Committee Checklist (09-0602F) will be completed and returned to the Registrar's Office with a notation to indicate a concern and the points for the section in question will not be completed.
- 5.11.3 The Recertification Liaison will address any pending concerns with the Board of Directors and will complete the Recertification Committee Checklist (09-0602F) once a resolution has been reached.

6. Documentation of Points

- 6.1 Once all points are confirmed by the Recertification Committee, the Registrar's Office will confirm the points in the Registrar's Database using the information provided by the investigator on the Recertification Committee Checklist (09-0602F).
- 6.2 If a discrepancy is noted between the claimed points and those confirmed by the Recertification Committee, the Registrar will notify the certificant (09-0614T) or an e-mail equivalent.
 - 6.2.1 The certificant will have 30 days from the date of notification to dispute the points difference. If no response is received within the 30 days, the points documented by the Recertification Committee will stand.
 - 6.2.2 If the certificant disputes the points, the Registrar will notify the Recertification Committee Chair who will review the appropriate recertification professional development reports and make a final decision about the points awarded for the recertification year.
 - 6.2.3 If the certificant is unhappy with the resolution, a formal appeal may be initiated in writing to the Registrar's Office. The appeal must be postmarked within 45 days of the notification of the Recertification Committee Chair's decision. *See 09-09 Challenges and Appeals.*
- 6.3 The final Recertification Committee Checklist (09-0602F) will be filed in the certificant's file.
- 6.4 The Registrar's Office will document the date that recertification review information was received from the Recertification Committee on the Recertification Checklist (09-0603F).

7. Recertification

- 7.1 Certificant files are reviewed annually for certificate expiration date, recertification points and proficiency test status. The review should occur before June of each year.
- 7.2 If the expiration date of the certificate has been reached and all recertification requirements have been met, a new certificate will be issued, bearing the same certificate number as the Diplomat or Fellow's original certificate.
- 7.3 The new certificate expiration date shall be July 31st of the fifth year from the date of the previous certificate expiration date.
 - 7.3.1 All certificates held by the same individual will expire on the same date.

- 7.3.2 Recertification points will be pro-rated to account for achievement of certification statuses at different intervals.
- 7.4 Monthly, or as needed, the Registrar's Office will submit to the Secretary via the Certification Approval Form (09-0505F) the list of certificants who have met recertification requirements.
- 7.4.1 The Registrar's Office will check the names in the Registrar's Database to ensure correct spelling.
- 7.4.2 The Registrar's Office will review the Member's Side of the website to ensure that ABC has documentation that certificants have met all of the requirements to recertify as Diplomate or Fellow as appropriate.
- 7.5 The Secretary will submit the list of certificants to the Board of Directors for a vote to grant certification.
- 7.6 Once voting has been completed, the Secretary will record the vote on the Certification Approval form. Additionally the Secretary will document the Certification Date and Certificate Expiration Date. The Secretary will sign the form.
- 7.7 The Secretary will forward a copy of the signed Certification Approval form to the certificate preparer.
- 7.7.1 In the event the Board of Directors denies certification to an individual, the Secretary will redact the name of the individual from the copy of the Certification Approval form submitted to the certificate preparer.
- 7.8 The certificate preparer will generate the certificates for the organization.
- 7.8.1 ABC certificates expire on July 31st, five years after certification was granted.
- 7.8.2 If additional certifications are attained, all certificates will maintain the original expiration date.
- 7.9 The Certificate Preparer will send the completed certificates to the President for signature.
- 7.10 The Registrar's Office will submit a corresponding set of congratulatory letters (09-0606T) to the President. The President will sign the letters and return them to the Registrar's Office.
- 7.11 The President will sign the certificates and submit them to the Secretary.
- 7.12 The Secretary will review the certificates for correctness. If errors are identified in the certificates, the Secretary will address the error with the Registrar's Office and the President.
- 7.13 The Secretary will sign the certificate and apply the seal.
- 7.14 The Secretary will return the completed certificates to the Registrar's Office
- 7.15 The Registrar's Office will document the date the certificate is mailed into the Registrar's Database.

8. Failure to Recertify

- 8.1 Certificants who choose to allow their certification to expire must notify the Registrar's Office prior to the expiration date to ensure that they remain in good standing. Certificants must be in good standing for their certification to expire.
- 8.2 Certificants who have enough points to recertify but have not submitted their previous year's maintenance fees and signed Rules of Professional Conduct (09-0001F) will not be issued a new certificate until those items are received. See Section 2 for a schedule of fees, deadlines and notifications.
- 8.3 Certificants who do not have enough points to recertify must still pay their previous year's maintenance fees and submit their Rules of Professional Conduct (09-0001F) by March 1 to remain in good standing and to allow their certification to expire. See Section 2 for a schedule of fees, deadlines and notifications.
- 8.4 Certificants who do not have enough points to recertify and have not paid their maintenance fees, including any applicable late fees and/or have not submitted their signed Rules of Professional Conduct (09-0001F) by the expiration of their certification will have their certification revoked and will be in poor standing.
- 8.5 If the expiration date of the certificate has been reached and the certificant is in poor standing, certification will be revoked.
- 8.5.1 After July 31st, but prior to September 30th, the Registrar's Office will complete the Certification Revocation Form (09-0003F) to document the individuals who have not recertified and the reason for the failed recertification.
- 8.5.2 As soon as practicable, the Failure to Recertify Form will be submitted to the Secretary who will forward the document to the Board of Directors for a vote.
- 8.5.3 Candidates who fail to recertify will be notified by the Registrar's Office via 09-0605T.
- 8.6 In order to apply to take a certification examination, an applicant must be in good standing. Applicants not in good standing must make arrears before the application process will be completed.
- 9. Acceptance of Forensic Organizations**
- 9.1 The American Board of Criminalistics will maintain a list of approved forensic organizations for the purposes of granting recertification points.
- 9.2 Forensic organizations, or organizations with a forensic component, may be added to the list of approved forensic organizations at the discretion of the Board. Organizations may request to be added to the list of approved forensic organizations. This request must be received in writing.
- 9.3 The organization must be comprised of a membership that is actively engaged in the application of the natural sciences to the examination of physical evidence in legal issues, or is engaged in the application of management principles and techniques to the field of forensic science, or represents academics dedicated to the teaching of forensic science.

- 9.4 The purpose or objectives of the organization include some combination of the following intentions:
- Dissemination of information within a field of forensic science
 - The exchange of ideas, information, data, and/or statistics within a field of forensic science
 - Stimulation of the development of new techniques and methodologies within a field of forensic science
 - Promotion of uniform methodologies and quality standards within a field of forensic science
 - Foster friendship and a cooperative spirit among practitioners
- 8.5 The operations of the organization should have the following components:
- Non-Profit
 - Constitution or set of bylaws and rules
 - Code of Ethics or Professional Conduct Guidelines
 - Membership Guidelines and a mechanism for screening for professional competency
 - Organized Leadership in the form of a Board of Directors, Executive Board, or Set of Officers
 - Members have a mechanism for input to the organization (voting, etc.)
 - Membership must be open to any qualified individual
 - Demonstration that the organization is currently active
- 8.6 The Board will vote on all requests to be an approved forensic organization. Upon Board approval the ABC will notify certificants via the website that a new forensic organization has been approved.
- 8.7 Upon approval, certificants may earn points for membership in or attendance at meetings of the organization.
- 8.7.1 If an organization has been approved prior to June 1, certificants may request to be given points for that organization for the recertification year prior. Points will not be automatically granted, a request must be made to the Registrar's Office.
- 8.7.2 If an organization has been approved after June 1, points will not be awarded for that organization until the next recertification packet submissions.
- 10. Approval of Trainings**
- 10.1 One Director will be assigned to approve trainings and maintain the approved training list on the website.
- 10.2 The Registrar's Office will submit any requests for approved training to the Director.
- 10.3 The Director will review the supplied information and will approve or disapprove trainings.
- 10.3.1 Courses approved for CEU or ILU do not need to be approved.
- 10.4 The Director may consult the full BoD if needed prior to approving or disapproving any course.
- 10.5 The Director will periodically review the approved training list. Approximately 20% of the trainings will be reviewed annually to ensure the trainings are still valid and relevant.

11. Record Retention

11.1 The recertification information for the previous recertification periods (dates and points) will be retained in the Recertification Database.

| <u>Record</u> | <u>Retention</u> |
|----------------------------|---|
| 09-0601F | Paper copy, if received, will be retained until the end of the calendar year of receipt, electronic version will be retained a minimum of 5 years |
| 09-0602F | 5 years |
| 09-0603F | 5 years |
| 09-0604T | 5 years |
| 09-0605T | 5 years |
| 09-0606T | 5 years |
| 09-0607T | 5 years |
| 09-0610F | 5 years |
| 09-0611F | Paper copy, if received, will be retained until the end of the calendar year of receipt, electronic version will be retained a minimum of 5 years |
| 09-0612F | Paper copy, if received, will be retained until the end of the calendar year of receipt, electronic version will be retained a minimum of 5 years |
| 09-0614T | 5 years |
| 09-0701F (if applicable) | Paper copy, if received, will be retained until the end of the calendar year of receipt, electronic version will be retained a minimum of 5 years |
| 09-0001F, signed page only | Paper copy, if received, will be retained until the end of the calendar year of receipt, electronic version will be retained a minimum of 5 years |
| 09-0002F | 10 years |
| 09-0003F | 10 years |