



AMERICAN BOARD OF CRIMINALISTICS

P.O. Box 1358, Palmetto FL 34220

November 14, 2018

Re: Recertification Point Changes

The ABC strives to be a leader in the certification of forensic professionals. Part of that process is the recertification of current certificants. Certificants must earn 50 points each recertification cycle with 15 points in each of their specialties (additional points above 50 are required for more than one specialty). The ABC, through its volunteer Recertification Committee, reviews over 650 recertification packets every year for the purpose of verifying the points claimed. This represents a 100% review of all of the packets submitted. Many times point adjustments are necessary. These changes are then communicated to the certificants via a letter.

Typically, there are a handful of point adjustments each year. However, this year, there were over 500 point adjustments made. There were a variety of reasons for these changes, such as mathematical errors, entering points into the wrong section, not submitting any supporting documentation, etc. The vast majority stemmed from the lack of submitted proof of contact hours. This year's instructions indicated the following:

“For each activity reported, include supporting documentation such as copies of title pages, abstracts, certificates, copies of membership cards, professional meeting attendance receipts, grades from college courses, syllabus for college course, memos from committee chairs, audit plan documentation, etc. **If certificate does not state date(s) and number of contact hours, supply another form of documentation that provides the required information.** If supporting documentation is not received, your points will not be awarded.”

This was a slight modification of the instructions from the previous year, but it was very impactful. We found in the previous year, that it was not possible for the recertification committee to verify points claimed for a full day of training vs a half day by just reviewing a certificate with a date. The burden of providing this documentation is on the certificant who wants to remain certified.

I've received many questions from our individual certificants over the past month or so since the recertification point change letters were distributed. Many of those questions related to our trust in the certificants. On behalf of the ABC, I want to reiterate that we certify the best of the best of forensic science professionals. This level of excellence is achieved through our robust examinations, recertification, and professional conduct policies. **We trust you 100%.** However, the ABC must do our due diligence to verify all recertification activities to ensure that no certificant, whether purposefully or not, has submitted inaccurate information. If an ethics complaint were filed by another organization due to a certificant providing false information, that would put the reputation and value of all of your certificates in jeopardy. All of us here at

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the ABC are dedicated to making sure that your certificates are of the highest value in the courtroom and in your laboratory and that you are proud to be an ABC certificant.

If you feel that your recertification packet was evaluated erroneously or unfairly, you may file an appeal. This appeal will be evaluated by the ABC Appeals Committee and a decision will be communicated to you. If you are unsatisfied with that decision you have the option of appealing to the full ABC Board. You can read more detail on the appeals process on our website under the "Resources" tab. We have many appeals already in hand and will be doing our best to handle them in a timely manner. We understand that the money you spend (via your organization or out of your own pocket) to earn points is important to you. Right now, I cannot provide you with information on how individual appeals will be decided, but I can say confidently that they will be handled fairly and consistently.

Rest assured, we've heard your comments and complaints. We are going to make sure that we do a better job of communicating our expectations to you. Although we've always had a process of "beta testing" our recertification packet with ABC personnel, we recognize that sometimes what makes sense to us is not what is read by someone that is not intimately involved in the process. We will be doing more targeted testing to make sure that we have a smooth and seamless process for next year. You will see a new interface on the website for electronic submissions and you will see new instructions that clearly delineate acceptable documentation. We will also set up an email for certifiants to submit questions prior to submission of their packets. We are committed to the continuous improvement to our program.

Thank you.

Christopher Hamburg, D-ABC
President

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