

CONVERSION OF AN ABC CERTIFICATION

1. Scope

The American Board of Criminalistics affords the opportunity for certificants to convert certification to a different status level as long as the individual meets the specified criteria for the conversion. This document outlines the procedure for converting certification from one status to another, for an individual to request a replacement certificate, or for an individual to request a certificate with a new name. Once a certification has been converted, the certificant will be responsible for obtaining all of the necessary recertification and proficiency testing criteria for that status and specialty. See Recertification (09-06) and Proficiency Testing Review Program (09-07).

2. Conversion

- 2.1 The Registrar's Office will review all conversion application information and supporting documents for completeness.
- 2.2 The Registrar's Office will ensure that the conversion applicant is in good standing with the organization.
- 2.3 The Registrar's Office will ensure that all conversion fees and certificate fees have been submitted.
- 2.4 If the conversion applicant is not in good standing or has not submitted all the required paperwork or fees, the Registrar's Office will notify the individual of the missing items. No conversion application will be processed until all information is complete.
- 2.5 The Registrar's Office will begin the Conversion Approval Form (09-0803F) for all conversion requests.
- 2.6 The Registrar's Office will submit the Conversion Approval Form to the Secretary monthly or as needed. The Secretary will initiate a Board of Directors vote on all conversion candidates.
- 2.7 Once voting has been completed, the Secretary will record the vote on the Conversion Approval Form. Additionally, the Secretary will document the Certification Date and Certificate Expiration Date. The Secretary will sign the form. A copy of the signed form will be sent to the Registrar's Office.
 - 2.7.1 Once a conversion has been approved by the Board of Directors the new certification status becomes effective.
 - 2.7.2 The certification will retain the expiration date from the previous certification level.
- 2.8 Upon receipt of the signed Conversion Approval form, the Registrar's Office will notify certificants of their status. This notification will include the date of certification, date of certificate expiration, and certification status. Notification will be made in writing (09-0805T) or via a read receipt e-mail equivalent.

- 2.8.1 If an e-mail was sent and the Registrar's Office does not receive notification that the recipient has received and read the e-mail within 14 days, the Registrar's Office may contact the certificant via phone to ensure that they have received the notification, re-send the notification to an alternate e-mail address or re-send the notification via Certified Mail. The date of the second notification will be the date of notification.
- 2.9 The Secretary will notify certificants that are not approved for conversion in writing via 09-0307T or a read receipt e-mail equivalent.
- 2.9.1 If an e-mail was sent and the Secretary does not receive notification that the recipient has received and read the e-mail within 14 days, the Secretary may contact the certificant via phone to ensure that they have received the notification, re-send the notification to an alternate e-mail address or re-send the notification via Certified Mail. The date of the second notification will be the date of notification.
- 2.10 If certificates have been requested, the Secretary will forward a copy of the signed Conversion Approval Form to the certificate preparer.
- 2.10.1 In the event the Board of Directors denies conversion to an individual, the Secretary will redact the name of the individual from the copy of the Conversion Approval Form submitted to the certificate preparer.
- 2.10.2 The certificate preparer will send the completed certificates to the President for signature.
- 2.10.3 The President will sign the certificates and submit them to the Secretary.
- 2.10.4 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.
- 2.10.5 The Secretary will sign the certificate and apply the seal.
- 2.10.6 The Secretary will return the completed certificates to the Registrar's Office.
- 2.10.7 The Registrar's Office will mail the prepared certificates to the certificants and will document the date the certificate is mailed into the Registrar's Database.
- 3. Conversion of Fellow to Diplomate**
- 3.1 A Fellow may convert certification to Diplomate in a specialty where the individual is no longer participating in proficiency testing.
- 3.2 To convert certification to Diplomate status, the Fellow certificant must be in good standing with the organization.
- 3.2.1 Certificants on probation or suspension for non-participation in proficiency testing or for deficiencies in the proficiency testing program may convert their certification as long as they are otherwise in good standing with the ABC.

- 3.3 The following items must be submitted to the Registrar's Office:
- Application for Conversion of Certification (09-0802F)
 - One time \$15 certificate replacement fee for each specialty conversion if the certificant wishes to receive a new certificate
- 3.4 Certificants will be granted Diplomate status in the specialty area in which the Fellow certificate was held.
- 3.4.1 For certificants who had taken the General Knowledge Examination, the Diplomate status will be held in General Criminalistics.
- 4. Conversion of Diplomate to Fellow**
- 4.1 A Diplomate may convert certification to Fellow in any specialty area in which the individual holds a Diplomate certificate.
- 4.2 To convert certification to Fellow status the Diplomate certificate holder must be in good standing with the organization.
- 4.3 The following items must be submitted to the Registrar's Office:
- Application for Conversion of Certification (09-0802F)
 - Proficiency Testing Certification Form (09-0701F) and required supporting documentation as defined in 09-07 Proficiency Review Program
 - One time \$20 conversion fee for each specialty conversion
 - One time \$15 certificate replacement fee for each specialty conversion if the certificant wishes to receive a new certificate
 - The certification replacement fee will be waived for any Diplomate seeking to convert to Fellow within the first year of certification if the Application for Conversion (09-0802F) is received within one year of the date on the notification of certification (09-0512T).
- 4.4 A certificant may also become a Fellow in General Criminalistics if the following circumstances apply:
- the certificant has taken and passed the General Knowledge Examination or the CAC Certification Examination;
 - proficiency test results have been provided
- 4.4.1 A certificant may apply to become a Fellow in General Criminalistics if the certificant has not achieved the necessary points in the original specialty area over the course of five years.
- 5. Conversion to Emeritus Status**
- 5.1 ABC allows for the conversion of certification to Emeritus status with the following conditions:
- The certificant must be leaving the field of forensics.
 - The certificant must be in good standing at the time of the request for conversion.
 - The certificant must have maintained certification for a minimum of 10 years.

- Certificants who retire from the field, but work intermittently, are still considered eligible for Emeritus status.
- 5.2 Once certification has been converted to Emeritus status, the certification cannot be converted back to Diplomate or Fellow. If an individual wishes to re-instate Diplomate or Fellow status, the individual must re-apply and be treated as a new applicant.
- 5.3 No conversion or certificate replacement fees apply for this certification conversion.
- 5.4 Because Emeritus status is not a certification status, but an acknowledgement of continued good standing or service to the organization, there is no credential or letter designation. However, the ABC does allow for individuals with approved Emeritus status to indicate this status on resumes, CV's, etc. Indication should be made in such a way to clearly communicate that the individual is not currently certified.
- 5.5 A new certificate will not be issued for Emeritus status. Emeritus status will be confirmed via a letter (09-0804T) and designation on the ABC website.
- 5.6 Emeritus status is a permanent status, however the certificant is expected to continue to abide by the organization's Rules of Professional Conduct. Failure to do so may result in revocation of Emeritus status. See Complaints (09-01).
- 5.7 The certificant must submit the Application for Conversion of Certification (09-0802F) to the Registrar's Office. The request must be made within one year of departure from forensic service.
- 5.8 The Registrar's Office will ensure that the certificant is in good standing and has been certified for a minimum of 10 years.
- 5.9 By majority vote of the Board special circumstances may be granted to certificants who have less than 10 years of experience or otherwise do not meet criteria for Emeritus status but who have made significant contributions to the field or the organization.
- 5.10 The Registrar's Office will denote the status change in the Registrar's Database and on the website.
- 6. Name Change or Certificate Replacement**
- 6.1 An individual may request to have the name under which they are certified changed. The individual must complete the Application for Conversion of Certificate (09-0802F) and provide proof of the legal name change. Appropriate proof would include a copy of the marriage certificate, name change certificate or other legal document produced as a result of a name change. The document must include the certificant's previous name as well as the certificant's new name.
- 6.2 An individual may request a new certificate or certificates in the event of loss or damage. An Application for Conversion of Certificate (09-0802F) must be completed.

- 6.3 If a certificant requests a new certificate, a fee of \$15 will be levied for each new certificate generated.
- 6.4 The Registrar's Office will ensure that the certificant is in good standing and that all required paperwork and fees have been submitted.
- 6.5 Name change requests and certificate replacement requests will be submitted to the Secretary for approval via either the Conversion Approval Form (09-0803F) or the Candidate Approval Form (09-0505F). The Registrar's Office will include a note indicating the purpose of the new certificate request.
- 6.5.1 If the completed form includes just name change or replacement certificate requests, the Secretary can approve the change directly and have the new certificate ordered.

7. **Records Retention**

- 7.1 The official records are retained by the Registrar's Office according to the following schedule. Records may be either paper or electronic. Paper records will be retained in the Registrar's Office. Electronic records will be retained in a shared electronic storage location accessible to the Registrar's Office. Exceptions will be noted in the retention schedule. All records are confidential and will be securely destroyed on a schedule amenable to the Registrar, but no earlier than the defined schedule.

| Record | Retention |
|---------------|---|
| 09-0802F | 5 years after a certificant's status becomes inactive |
| 09-0803F | 10 years |
| 09-0804T | 5 years |
| 09-0307T | 5 years after a candidate's, affiliate's or certificant's status becomes inactive |
| 09-0805T | 5 years after a candidate's, affiliate's or certificant's status becomes inactive |
| 09-0701F | 5 years |