

Background, Functions and Purposes of the American Board of Forensic Toxicology, Inc.

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 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 objective of the Board is 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. 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 record of education and training, experience, achievement, and a formal written examination.

The Board is a non-profit organization incorporated in the District of Columbia. It is recognized by the American Academy of Forensic Sciences, the Society of Forensic Toxicologists, the California Association of Toxicologists, the Canadian Society of Forensic Science, and the Southwestern Association of Toxicologists. The Board is composed of officers and other directors, who serve staggered terms and are selected from the Certificants at large by a Nominating Committee process.

General Provisions Concerning Certification

- The right to deny Certification is reserved.
- Certificates of Qualification as a Forensic Toxicology Specialist 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 designation "Forensic Toxicology Specialist of the American Board of Forensic Toxicology" and the initials "FTS-ABFT" whenever professionally appropriate.
- Certificates may be suspended or revoked for appropriate cause, under an elaborate system of safeguards for the individual concerned.

ABFT IS RECOGNIZED BY:

American Academy of Forensic Sciences
Society of Forensic Toxicologists
California Association of Toxicologists
Canadian Society of Forensic Science
Southwestern Association of Toxicologists

ABFT is actively involved in supporting the activities of SWGTOX (The Scientific Working Group for Toxicology). SWGTOX (www.SWGTOX.org) is supported by the U.S. Department of Justice and also funded by ABFT and Society of Forensic Toxicologists (SOFT). The mission of the SWGTOX is to investigate, analyze, develop and disseminate consensus in standards of practice for forensic toxicology.

An introduction to the nature and purposes of the Board, with a summary of requirements for certification and application procedures.

Forensic
Toxicology
Specialist

2010

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Qualifications and Requirements for Certification as a Forensic Toxicology Specialist

GENERAL QUALIFICATIONS

- Applicants must be persons of good moral character, high integrity and good repute, and must possess high ethical and professional standing.

EDUCATION

- Applicants must have completed an earned Bachelor's Degree in one of the natural sciences, from an institution acceptable to the Board. Acceptable institutions are those accredited by regional accrediting commissions recognized by the United States Office of Education (USOE). Degrees awarded from institutions outside the USA and Canada must be evaluated by a degree credentialing service such as World Education Services.

- Applicants must have adequate education in biology and chemistry, which may include pharmacology or toxicology. (An example of adequate education in chemistry is satisfactory completion of college level studies in chemistry, including accredited courses in inorganic, organic, analytical and physical chemistry.)

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Applicants must have completed at least three years of full-time professional experience (or the part-time equivalent thereof) in forensic toxicology, subsequent to completion of a Bachelor's Degree.

- At least one year of the professional experience must have been acquired during the three years immediately preceding the date of application.

- Applicants are required to document a record of appropriate professional activities in forensic toxicology, in keeping with the concept that "forensic toxicology is the study and practice of the application of toxicology to the purposes of the law."

EXAMINATION

- Applicants who meet the listed requirements will be admitted to the examination. The examination must be completed within a period of 2 years.

- Applicants must successfully pass the comprehensive written examination based on the principles and practice of forensic toxicology.

- Applicants who fail in the examination may apply within one year for one re-examination, without additional fee.

CONTINUING EDUCATION AND ANNUAL FEES

- Once certified, all certificants are required to provide annual documentation of continuing education in the field of forensic toxicology. The acceptable documentation is subject to change. Current documentation requirements are available on the ABFT website.

- An annual maintenance fee of \$100 is collected at the time continuing education documentation is submitted by the Certificant.

Procedures for Application and Certification

- Application forms and instructions for their submission can be obtained from:

The American Board of Forensic Toxicology, Inc.
Attn: The Forensic Sciences Foundation, Inc.
410 North 21st Street
Colorado Springs, CO 80904
Telephone: (719) 636-1100
Fax: (719) 636-1993
e-mail: office@abft.org
or download from www.abft.org

- The completed application should be returned to the above address with the application fee of \$150, of which no portion is refundable. Hence, only persons who believe they clearly meet the stated qualifications and requirements for certification should submit applications.

- A recent photograph must accompany the application. The applicant must also identify three professional and character references from persons (other than Directors of the Board) knowledgeable about the applicant's forensic toxicology experience, to be sent directly to the Board's office by each writer. Official transcripts from all colleges or universities attended (irrespective of degrees received) must also be sent directly to the Board's office by the registrar(s). Foreign applicants must have their transcripts evaluated by an outside credentialing organization such as World Education Services prior to application.

- Completed applications are reviewed by the Credentials Committee of the Board, and following successful completion of an examination, their recommendation is considered by the Board of Directors for final action. Successful candidates are issued a Certificate of Qualification as a Forensic Toxicology Specialist of the American Board of Forensic Toxicology.

Requalification

The purpose of the Requalification process is to determine and document that a Forensic Toxicology Specialist has maintained qualifications and continues an accept-

able practice of forensic toxicology. Requalification is distinct from annual documentation of continuing education and occurs every five years. There is no fee associated with the requalification process.

Requirements for Requalification

- Forensic Toxicology Specialists must demonstrate and attest to their good moral character, integrity and high ethical and professional standing.

- Forensic Toxicology Specialists must participate in continued professional education activity in forensic toxicology such as conferences, workshops, practice, research, teaching or administration, and document continuing education in forensic toxicology or related fields and/or other evidence of contributions to the science or profession of forensic toxicology.

- Forensic Toxicology Specialists must have met the minimum requirements for evidence of continued education for the prior five-year cycle.

Procedure for Requalification

- Approximately three months before the end of the current Certification or Requalification time period, Forensic Toxicology Specialists will receive a Requalification Application form together with instruction for completing the application.

- Upon timely receipt of the application and supporting documents, the Committee on Credentials and Requalification will review the application. Some cases may be submitted to the full Board of Directors, who will vote on whether the Forensic Toxicology Specialist should be requalified. Requalification is for five years commencing at the end of the prior Certification or Requalification time period.

- Requalified Forensic Toxicology Specialists will receive notification together with a certificate of requalification.