



POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL

APPROVED BY THE ABFT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

February 20, 2024

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TERMS AND DEFINITIONS*

In this Policy and Procedure Manual, the following verbal forms are used:

- “shall” indicates a requirement
- “should” indicates a recommendation
- “may” indicates a permission
- “can” indicates a possibility or capability

*The following definitions are adapted from the FSAB Standards document and appear alphabetically:

Accreditation – the procedure by which a program meets all official formal requirements to be certified.

Appeal – a request by a certificant who has had certification or recertification suspended or revoked.

Applicant – an individual who has submitted an application to the ABFT with the objective of becoming certified.

Assessment – process that evaluates an individual’s fulfillment of the requirements of the certification program.

Audit – an assessment undertaken to determine compliance with standards.

Candidate – an applicant whose application has been reviewed and who is eligible to take an examination.

Certificant – individual who is currently certified by the ABFT.

Certificate – document issued by the ABFT once the named individual has fulfilled certification requirements.

Certification process – activities by which the ABFT determines that an individual fulfills certification requirements, including application, assessment, decisions on certification and recertification, and use of certificates.

Certification program – competence and other requirements related to specific occupational or skilled categories of individuals.

Certification requirements – a set of specified mandatory elements for establishing and/or maintaining certificant status.

Competence – the ability of an individual to perform effectively in a given area.

Complaint – an expression of dissatisfaction, other than an appeal, by any individual or organization to the ABFT about its activities or those of an individual certified by it, where a response is expected.

Customer – applicant, candidate, or certificant of the ABFT.

Credentialing – the process by which an individual’s education, training, and work experience are reviewed against standards of the ABFT.

Documents – policies, manuals, instructions, forms, and templates, related to a management system. Document control is per policy.

Examination – mechanism that measures a candidate’s competence by a written means.

Examinee – a candidate that is sitting for an examination.

Executive Committee – consists of the president as chair, vice president, secretary, treasurer, chair of the Examination Committee, and chair of the Laboratory Accreditation Committee. In addition, the executive director and the administration and operations director serve as ex officio members of the Executive Committee.

Experience – relevant professional experience or employment.

Extended illness – an illness that precludes the certificant from participating in virtual/online or in-person CE activities for the full year. As a result, the certificant is unable to obtain the required minimum of 5 CE points to maintain certification. Pregnancy or disease processes including, but not limited to, diabetes and hypertension do not qualify as extended illnesses.

Formal training – a formal training program is one that has a pre-defined list of training topics and is conducted by one or more individuals with expertise in those areas. The nature of the training program, dates training occurred, and the name of the trainer should be available. For training that occurred many years ago for which such records are not available, there should be a list of the training that did occur, and which is considered equivalent, even if it did not occur over a contiguous time. The training should be verifiable. Correspondence and conference attendance are not recognized as primary training. For skill-based training, the identity and qualifications of the trainer should be documented.

Impartiality – the presence of objectivity, fairness, independence, freedom from bias.

Independent – having no vested interest in the outcome of the certification/accreditation activity.

Interested party – individual, group, or organization affected by the performance of a certified person or the certification body. Examples: certified person, user of the services of the certified person, employer of the certified person, consumer, governmental authority.

Management review – a documented review or audit of the management system and records annually to ensure that they are complete and up to date.

Management system – the organizational structure, responsibilities, procedures, processes, and resources for implementing quality management.

Medical waiver – a medical waiver removes the responsibility for a certificant to submit the required number of points when approved for the occurrence of an extended illness.

Objectivity – conflicts of interest do not exist, or are resolved, so as not to adversely influence subsequent activities of the ABFT.

Personnel – individuals carrying out activities for the ABFT.

Proctor – individual who monitors the written examination but does not evaluate the competence of the candidate.

Professional development – continuing professional development includes, but is not limited to, ongoing learning, growth and professional development within the certificant's field of expertise.

Qualification – demonstrated education, training, and work experience, where applicable.

Recertification – the process whereby an individual must renew their certification after a defined period of time, and after satisfying required criteria.

Records – data and objective evidence that the management documents are followed, such as records of the current status of a certified individual, recertification, suspension or loss of certification, examination development, credentialing, certificates, and other written proof (audit reports, meeting minutes, etc.), of the observance of applicable policies and procedures. Records state results achieved or provide evidence of activities performed.

Reliability (examinations) – degree to which an examination provides a consistent measure of competency through offerings at different times and locations.

Study guide – materials provided by the ABFT to acquaint applicants with test content and scope.

Training – sufficient relevant training to reach the competencies required for the specific field.

Validity – evidence that the assessment (examination) measures what it is intended to measure to ensure competent certificants.

1 ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

1.1 PURPOSE OF MANUAL AND REVISIONS

1.1.1 PURPOSE

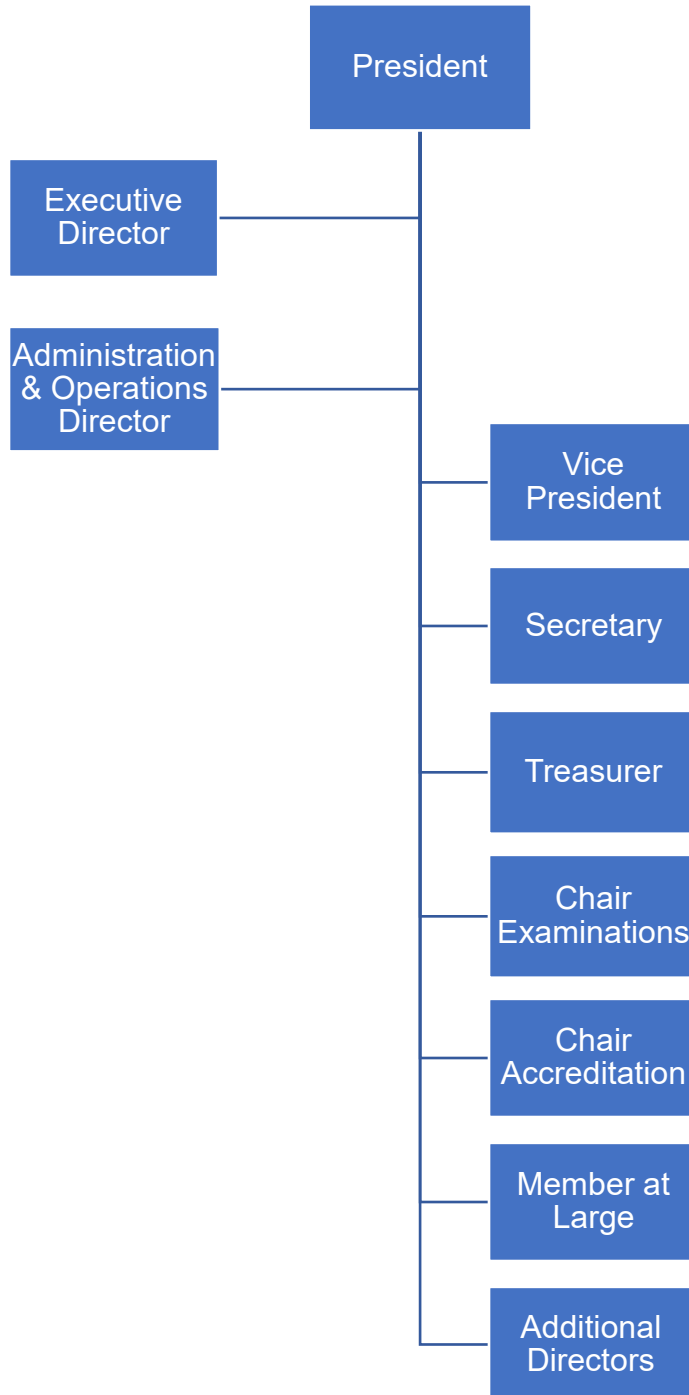
To set forth the policies and procedures by which the officers and directors of the American Board of Forensic Toxicology, Inc. (ABFT) conduct the business of the ABFT and discharge their responsibilities, as set forth in the ABFT Bylaws.

1.1.2 REVISIONS TO THE MANUAL

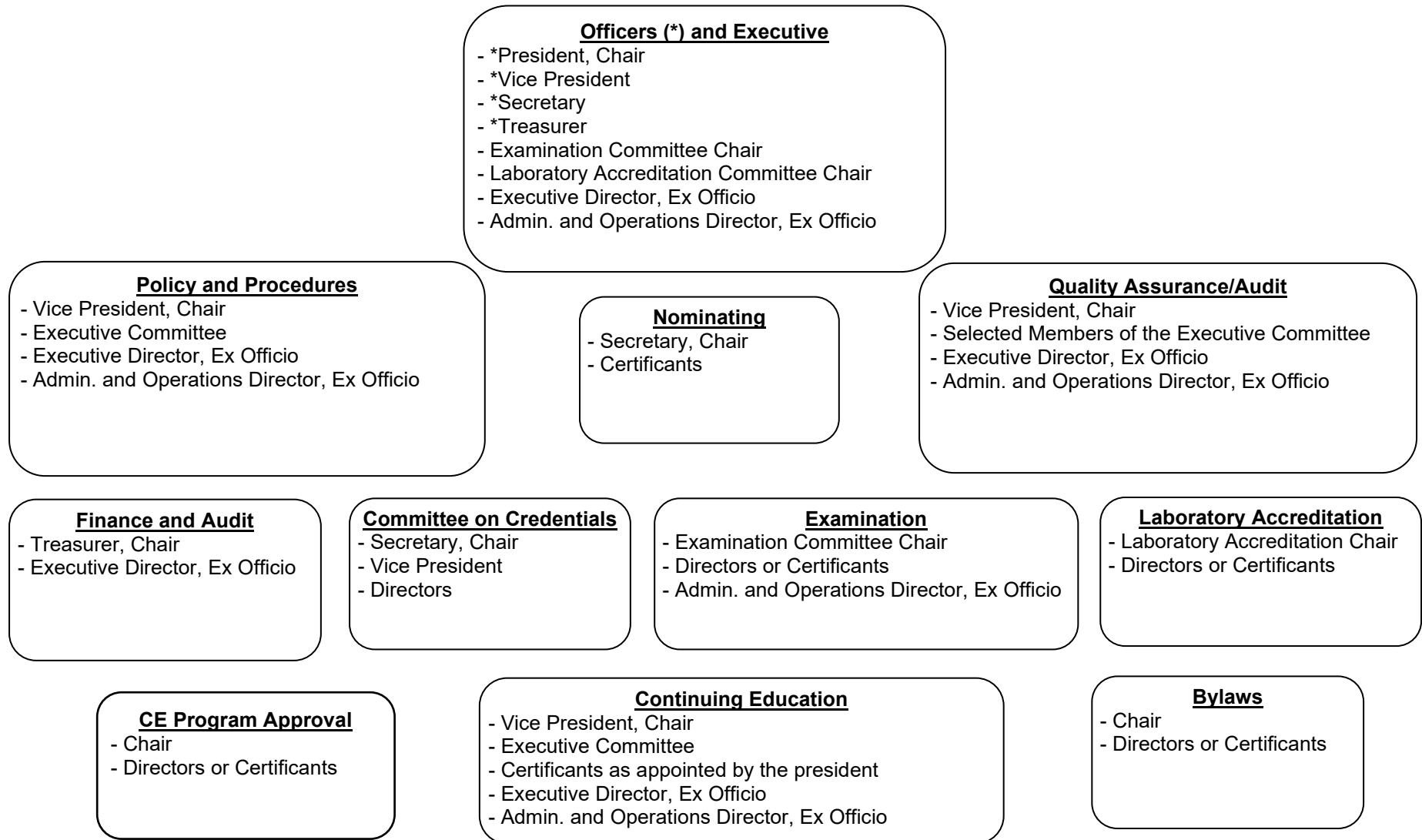
The ABFT is the issuing body of this, the ABFT Policy and Procedure Manual, and as such shall approve any revisions to it. The Policy and Procedure Manual is reviewed at a minimum of annually by the Executive Committee, and all changes are submitted to the ABFT Board of Directors (BOD) for consideration and approval. Non-substantive edits and corrections (e.g., typos) to the ABFT Policy and Procedure Manual may be recorded by the Administration and Operations Director and approved by the Executive Committee.

1.2 ORGANIZATION CHARTS

1.2.1 BOARD OF DIRECTORS ORGANIZATION CHART



1.2.2 COMMITTEE ORGANIZATION CHART



1.3 FUNCTIONAL DESCRIPTIONS

1.3.1 MISSION

Forensic toxicology encompasses the measurement of alcohols, drugs, and other toxic substances in biological specimens and interpretation of such results in a medicolegal context. The mission of the ABFT is to establish and enhance voluntary standards for the practice of forensic toxicology and for the examination and recognition of scientists and laboratories providing forensic toxicology services.

1.3.2 PURPOSE

The ABFT strives to be fair and objective and shall not discriminate based on race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, creed, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

The ABFT is an independent, self-governing organization that adheres to strict rules of confidentiality, a code of ethics, a code of professional conduct, and has a strong motivation to achieve excellence. The ABFT has been a provider of certification in forensic toxicology since 1975.

Information found in the ABFT documents or website, including advertising, is intended to be accurate and not misleading at the time of publication.

The ABFT is a nonprofit 501(c)6 organization incorporated in the District of Columbia and is accredited by the Forensic Specialties Accreditation Board (FSAB). The ABFT is composed of a board of directors and officers who serve staggered terms and are selected from the certificants at large by a nominating committee process.

The official language of the ABFT is English.

1.3.3 IMPARTIALITY

The ABFT is committed to maintaining impartiality in its certification program. Policies and procedures are designed to provide separation between examination development and the certification process.

The ABFT is an independent organization dedicated to granting personal certification to individuals practicing in the forensic toxicology field. No other organizations or business concerns are associated with the ABFT.

The ABFT Board of Directors (BOD) retains sole authority for granting, maintaining, recertifying, revoking certification, and expanding or reducing the scope of the certification program.

The ABFT develops certification examinations and grants certifications. The ABFT is not a membership organization.

- Individuals involved in examination development do not participate in the certification process. Final decision on certification is based on a vote by the BOD.
- The BOD manages the organization and directs the certification process, to include credentialing, applicant acceptance, grading of examinations, approving certifications, approving recertifications, etc.
- Current directors, the executive director, and the administration and operations director may act as proctors at examination test sites. The proctor ensures proper administration of certification examinations in accordance with the Policy and Procedure Manual. Proctors do not determine certification status.

The Quality Assurance/Audit Committee shall conduct an analysis of threats to impartiality and potential conflicts of interest during the annual management review or more frequently if the need arises.

- The Quality Assurance/Audit Committee shall conduct the threat analysis and generate a report for BOD review. The report shall address threats and potential conflicts as well as recommendations for mitigation.
- The BOD shall review the report and implement the necessary changes to the ABFT policies and procedures.
- The BOD shall also review and suggest revisions to the ABFT conflict of interest document.

The ABFT shall maintain a publicly accessible quality policy statement. The statement shall outline the ABFT's commitment to quality and impartiality ([see section 1.13.1](#)).

The ABFT's management system ensures that applicants, candidates, and certificants are treated impartially and equally. Issues brought forth by the management system are investigated by the Quality Assurance/Audit Committee.

The ABFT grants certification to qualified applicants and does not provide preference or financial incentives.

The ABFT derives income from applications, examinations, CE submissions, and miscellaneous late fees. No single individual may gain undue influence in the certification program.

- Decisions of the ABFT are by director vote according to the ABFT Bylaws. Each director has an equal vote.
- Fees are determined by the BOD and apply to all individuals equally.
- The ABFT shall ensure that examination and study materials do not specify any vendor or organization.

- The ABFT application, examination, and certification processes are independent.

The BOD shall determine minimum education and training requirements for applicants for each examination offered. The Committee on Credentials is responsible for ensuring all applicants meet minimum requirements and are treated equally.

The BOD shall determine minimum recertification requirements. The Subcommittee on Recertification is responsible for ensuring all certificants meet minimum recertification requirements and are treated equally.

1.3.4 CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The BOD and ABFT personnel shall notify the organization of any potential conflicts of interest. Conflicts of interest may arise when any entity has incentive to exercise undue influence upon the certification program. Such influence may be in the form of organizational pressure, financial gain, political pressure, or other. Attempts to exercise such influence may be directed at an individual or group of individuals within the ABFT.

The BOD and ABFT personnel shall not engage in actions that may constitute an actual, apparent, or potential conflict of interest with the mission, objectives, or activities of the organization and shall disclose promptly to the BOD any such conflicts to include any business, financial, or organizational interest and affiliations which are or could be construed to be an actual, apparent, or potential conflict of interest.

1.3.5 PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Since its inception, the program has utilized appropriate subject matter experts in the development of the certification program. The program has evolved to include the following subdisciplines without any single interest predominating:

- postmortem toxicology
- human performance toxicology
- workplace drug testing
- forensic alcohol toxicology

The ABFT shall communicate any changes to its certification requirements, the exact nature of the changes, and the effective date of the changes to its certificants via one or more of the following mechanisms:

- website
- email
- written correspondence

1.3.6 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The BOD shall consist of at least 9 and not more than 25 persons, elected by the directors from among certificants. In addition, the executive director and the administration and operations director are ex officio members of the BOD. A public member who shall not be a certificant may hold one position on the BOD. Any diplomate or fellow certificant of the ABFT may be elected as a member of the BOD whenever an eligible vacancy exists. Analysts shall not serve on the BOD.

It is the expectation that officers and members of the BOD shall attend board meetings in person at the SOFT and AAFS annual meetings and to attend additional special meetings as requested to conduct ABFT business. Officers and members of the BOD shall not provide references for applicants and shall not mentor applicants/candidates on the subject matter of the ABFT examinations.

1.3.6.1 DUTIES OF THE BOARD

The BOD shall:

1. Exercise authority and responsibility according to the Bylaws in the direction and conduct of the affairs of the ABFT to promote and attain the objectives of the ABFT.
2. Establish policies and procedures for the ABFT.
3. Elect directors and officers.
4. Review committee activities and reports.
5. Perform other duties as required by the president, Executive Committee, or BOD decision.

1.3.6.1.1 DUTIES OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND THE ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS DIRECTOR

The executive director and the administration and operations director shall assist the officers and BOD in a variety of duties as directed by the president. A description of these duties is found in the Appendix.

1.3.7 OFFICERS

The officers of the organization shall be a president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer. The officers shall be nominated from the current BOD by the Nominating Committee and elected by the BOD at the annual meeting. The officers shall serve, in the same respective capacities, as directors of the BOD.

1.3.7.1 DUTIES OF THE PRESIDENT

The president shall function as the chair of the BOD. The president shall preside at meetings of the ABFT and shall perform such duties as is customary or as the Policy and Procedure Manual may require. Additionally, the president shall:

1. Coordinate executive activities, acting as decision-maker for the ABFT policies and procedures.
2. May act as an ex officio member of any committee, without vote.
3. Review, study, and make recommendations or amendments on matters of activity of the ABFT.
4. Ensure that a current organizational chart is available detailing the operational and reporting structure of the ABFT.
5. Review and appoint all the ABFT ad hoc or standing committees, at a minimum of annually.
6. Serve as a communication and information source for the ABFT through newsletters and/or other publications.
7. Develop guidelines and principles for the Policy and Procedure Manual.
8. Proactively identify internal or external threats to impartiality.
9. Ensures yearly submission of signed Code of Ethics and Code of Professional Conduct.
10. Act as the representative spokesperson or appoint such with concurrence of the BOD.
11. Have judiciary responsibilities for the ABFT under the corporate laws of the District of Columbia.
12. Call special BOD meetings as required.
13. If an officer is unable to fulfill the obligations of their office, appoint an interim officer until the officer can resume their duties or a subsequent election is conducted. The BOD shall be given the opportunity to affirm the president's appointment.

1.3.7.2 DUTIES OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

The vice president shall assist the president in the performance of his/her duties and undertake such tasks as may be assigned by the president. The vice president shall act as presiding officer at meetings in the absence of the president and shall succeed to the presidency in the event the office of president becomes vacant for any reason. Additionally, the vice president shall:

1. Serve as the chair of the Policy and Procedure Manual Committee.
2. Serve as the chair of the Quality Assurance/Audit Committee.
3. Serve as chair of the Continuing Education Committee
4. Be responsible for the annual management review.
5. Be responsible for the annual internal audit.

1.3.7.3 DUTIES OF THE SECRETARY

The secretary shall be responsible for the official minutes of BOD meetings and shall perform or supervise the execution of such additional tasks as assigned by the BOD. Additionally, the secretary shall:

1. Review minutes of the BOD meetings.
2. Arrange for balloting when necessary.

3. Serve as the chair of the Nominating Committee.
4. Serve as the chair of the Committee on Credentials, which includes the review of new applications for certification and requests for recertification.

1.3.7.4 DUTIES OF THE TREASURER

The treasurer shall, with the assistance of the executive director, keep account of, make periodic reports on, and safeguard the funds of the ABFT in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. The treasurer and executive director shall prepare an annual financial review of the ABFT financial records. Additionally, the treasurer shall review documents prepared by the executive director in the normal course of business as described in the duties of the executive director. In addition, the treasurer shall:

1. Be a signatory on all accounts of the ABFT.
2. Review the financial records of the ABFT.
3. Assist the administrative office with the preparation of an annual budget.
4. Review and verify federal information returns have been signed and filed.
5. Approve expenditure payments. The president, treasurer, and executive director each have the authority to approve expenses; however, they cannot approve their own expenses.
6. Serve as chair of the Finance Committee. The executive director is an ex officio member of the committee.

1.3.8 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee consists of the president as chair, vice president, secretary, treasurer, chair of the Examination Committee, and chair of the Laboratory Accreditation Committee. In addition, the executive director and the administration and operations director are ex officio members of the Executive Committee. A quorum of the Executive Committee shall consist of a majority of its voting members and its formal action shall require a majority vote unless otherwise provided in the Bylaws.

1.4 AUTHORITIES, ELECTED DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS

1.4.1 BASIC DECISION-MAKING AUTHORITY

The governing body of the ABFT shall be the BOD which shall be empowered to have, hold, control, manage, and administer all property, funds, business affairs, and operations of the ABFT pursuant to the Articles of Incorporation and the Bylaws.

1.4.2 DIRECTORS, OFFICERS, AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The directors, officers, and Executive Committee are described in sections [1.3.6](#), [1.3.7](#), and [1.3.8](#) of the Policy and Procedure Manual.

1.4.3 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AUTHORITY

The Executive Committee shall have full authority and power to act for and on behalf of the BOD between meetings unless otherwise provided in the Bylaws. Actions taken by the Executive Committee shall be reported to the BOD as soon as practicable.

1.4.4 ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

The executive director and the director of administration and operations shall maintain an administrative office.

1.4.5 PUBLIC STATEMENTS

The president acts as the official representative of the ABFT and is the source of all official statements. The executive director, the administration and operations director, directors, and certifiants shall not make any statements on behalf of the ABFT, unless authorized by the president.

1.4.6 USE OF THE ABFT STATIONERY (LETTERHEAD)

The ABFT stationery shall be used only for purposes of conducting official business. The ABFT letterhead is found in the Appendix.

1.4.7 USE OF THE ABFT LOGO AND SEAL

The ABFT logo and seal shall be used only for purposes of conducting official business. The ABFT logo and seal are found in the Appendix.

1.4.8 DIRECTOR, OFFICER, AND STAFF CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

Confidentiality is a critical element of the ABFT processes and procedures involving the certification of forensic toxicologists. As acknowledgment of the important role that confidentiality plays in ensuring the integrity of the ABFT certification program, all

members of the BOD, support staff, and persons or entities engaged to assist in these activities shall annually (effective July 1) sign and abide by a confidentiality agreement, which may be found in the Appendix.

1.5 MEETINGS

1.5.1 ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting of the BOD shall be held at the American Academy of Forensic Sciences (AAFS) annual meeting. The order of business shall be as specified in the Bylaws.

1.5.2 INTERIM MEETING

The interim meeting of the BOD shall be held at the Society of Forensic Toxicologists (SOFT) annual meeting. The order of business shall be as specified in the Bylaws.

1.5.3 SPECIAL MEETINGS

Special meetings of the BOD may be called by the president or upon written request of a majority of the directors, on a date and at a time and location designated by the president. Notice of a special meeting shall be given to the directors a minimum of 15 days before the meeting date, with information regarding the subject(s) to be considered. The order of business shall be as specified in the Bylaws.

1.5.4 QUORUM

A quorum shall consist of a majority of the directors. The president may adjourn the meeting if no quorum exists. No director shall be entitled to vote using proxy.

1.5.5 CONDUCT OF BOARD BUSINESS

Business of the BOD, including that of an annual meeting, may be conducted by mail, conference, electronic means, or by a committee comprised of not less than two directors when authorized by a majority of the directors.

When such business is conducted and requires a vote of the BOD, a two-thirds affirmative vote shall be required to carry a motion.

1.5.6 EXECUTIVE SESSION

The president may request an executive session at any meeting of the BOD. To proceed, a motion and second are required.

1.5.7 MINUTES

The administration and operations director shall be responsible for taking and preparing the official minutes of all BOD meetings. The secretary is responsible for reviewing the minutes and presenting them to the BOD.

Business of the Executive Committee is not recorded in official minutes. Motions and action items are recorded and presented to the BOD.

1.5.8 ELECTIONS

Prior to the annual meeting, the BOD shall solicit nominations from the Nominating Committee to fill vacancies. Additional nominations for vacancies may be made during the annual BOD meeting. A simple majority of votes shall be required to elect a director.

The president shall appoint an interim officer/director when an officer/director is unable to fulfill their obligations. The interim officer/director shall serve until the elected officer/director resumes their duties or until a subsequent election is held.

1.5.9 TERMS OF OFFICE

The terms of office for directors shall be three years, unless otherwise specified in the Bylaws. Directors shall serve no more than three consecutive terms, unless elected as an officer of the BOD in which case they may serve an additional term.

Directors who have served more than three terms as of February 2002 may continue to serve until the termination of their current term and any additional terms for which they are elected.

A director who has completed term(s) of office may serve on the BOD after a lapse of one or more years.

1.6 AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

1.6.1 DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

The ABFT shall establish an award for distinguished service. The award is presented to directors at the completion of their term(s) at the discretion of the Executive Committee.

1.7 COMMITTEES

All committees shall report to the BOD. Members of all committees shall annually (effective July 1) sign and abide by a confidentiality agreement.

1.7.1 COMMITTEE ON CREDENTIALS

The Committee on Credentials is responsible for reviewing all applications for certification in forensic toxicology by the ABFT.

The secretary serves as chair of the Committee on Credentials. Additional members include the vice president and up to three directors appointed by the president. Members of the Committee on Credentials shall not proctor exams or serve as members of the Examination Committee.

Members of the Committee on Credentials shall not participate in the review of applications for applicants they have been involved in training (e.g., mentored by) or that they have supervised for a minimum of two years after the conclusion of the applicant's training or that are employed by their same employer.

Members of the Committee on Credentials shall not provide references for applicants and shall not mentor applicants/candidates on the subject matter of the ABFT examinations.

A Subcommittee on Recertification composed of the secretary (chair) and at least one director shall review applications for recertification.

1.7.2 LABORATORY ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE

The Laboratory Accreditation Committee is responsible for evaluating reports related to the ABFT laboratory accreditation. In addition, they are responsible for maintaining and updating the checklist and other laboratory accreditation documents.

The Laboratory Accreditation Committee is composed of a minimum of five members who may be directors and/or other certificants in good standing.

1.7.3 NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Nominating Committee is composed of five certificants not serving on the BOD as appointed by the president. The term shall be three years. Two members of the Nominating Committee shall have previously served as directors. Each Nominating Committee member shall have been a certificant for a minimum of five years and be in good standing and active in forensic toxicology. The Nominating Committee grid shall be reviewed annually by the ABFT president and the chair of the Nominating Committee. The secretary shall chair the Nominating Committee. The chair is a non-voting member of the Nominating Committee.

The chair shall notify Nominating Committee members in January of each year of those directors whose terms are expiring. A request for nominations is made at this time.

Upon receipt of nominations, the slate of nominees shall be reviewed by the Nominating Committee. This may be accomplished via email or teleconference. If necessary, the list of nominees may be reduced by concurrence (or ballot) to a reasonable number of candidates for the available BOD openings as determined by the chair. The chair shall then contact the nominees to determine their willingness to serve.

The chair shall send out an electronic ballot to be returned by the members of the Nominating Committee with their selected nominees. In the event of a tie, a run-off shall be held. If a tie remains, the Nominating Committee report shall include the names of all undecided nominees. The Nominating Committee chair does not have the ability to break the tie.

The Nominating Committee report shall be presented by the chair at the annual meeting of the BOD. The president shall contact the nominees and elected individuals following the annual meeting.

If a member of the Nominating Committee has a perceived conflict of interest with an individual who was nominated, that Nominating Committee member shall abstain from voting.

Ballots shall be retained by the secretary.

1.7.4 POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL COMMITTEE

The Policy and Procedure Manual Committee develops, reviews, and recommends revisions to the policies and procedures. A documented review shall occur at a minimum of annually with revisions presented for review and approval by the BOD at its annual meeting.

The Policy and Procedure Manual Committee is composed of the members of the Executive Committee and is chaired by the vice president. The executive director and the administration and operations director are ex officio members of the Policy and Procedure Manual Committee.

1.7.5 BYLAWS COMMITTEE

The Bylaws Committee is charged with revising the Bylaws as needed when directed by the president or the BOD. The Bylaws Committee shall be composed of the chair and at least one director appointed by the president.

1.7.6 EXAMINATION COMMITTEE

Candidates for certification are given an examination to assess the candidate's knowledge in the field of forensic toxicology. The president appoints the chair of the Examination Committee. Members of the Examination Committee include other directors and certificants. Members shall not concurrently serve as members of the Committee on Credentials. The administration and operations director is an ex officio member of the Examination Committee.

It is the expectation that members of the Examination Committee shall attend committee meetings in person at the SOFT and AAFS annual meetings and to attend additional special meetings as requested.

Members of the Examination Committee shall not provide references for applicants and shall not mentor applicants/candidates on the subject matter of the ABFT examinations.

The examinations are prepared and maintained by the ABFT Administrative Office until distributed to the appropriate proctor.

1.7.7 CONTINUING EDUCATION COMMITTEE

All fellows, diplomates, and analysts shall participate in the ABFT Continuing Education Program to maintain active status in the field of forensic toxicology. The Continuing Education Committee annually reviews and evaluates the documentation submitted by certificants.

The Continuing Education Committee is composed of the members of the Executive Committee and is chaired by the vice president. The president may appoint additional members to the committee as is deemed necessary and appropriate.

1.7.8 CE PROGRAM APPROVAL COMMITTEE

The CE Program Approval Committee is charged with reviewing CE offerings to ensure that the CE activity falls within the required guidelines of the ABFT to receive credit when submitted by certificants and can be endorsed prior to certificants attending the activity. This does not exclude other forensic toxicology related CE activities that meet the ABFT guidelines for documentation.

The president appoints the chair of the CE Program Approval Committee. Members of the CE Program Approval Committee include other directors and certificants.

1.7.9 QUALITY ASSURANCE/AUDIT COMMITTEE

The ABFT's management system ensures that applicants, candidates, and certificants are treated impartially and equally. Issues brought forth by the management system are investigated by the Quality Assurance/Audit Committee.

The Quality Assurance/Audit Committee is composed of selected members of the Executive Committee and is chaired by the vice president. The executive director and the administration and operations director are ex officio members of the Quality Assurance/Audit Committee.

The Quality Assurance/Audit Committee is responsible for investigating, documenting, and tracking resolutions of potential nonconformances and their corrective actions.

The vice president, as chair of the committee, shall identify concerns related to quality and the committee shall then evaluate the concern to determine if there is a potential for improvement.

A management review and internal audit shall be conducted annually to determine if the management system and operational activities remain suitable, adequate, and effective and to introduce any necessary changes and improvements. These reports shall be presented to the BOD during the annual meeting subsequent to review by the Executive Committee.

1.7.10 ADDITIONAL COMMITTEES AND MEMBERS

The president may form ad hoc committees and may appoint certificants in good standing as advisors, liaisons, or as additional members to existing committees as needed and approved by the BOD.

Advisors to the BOD may provide expertise and historical perspective. Advisors shall be selected from ABFT certificants, past officers and/or directors. The term of an advisor is one year and may be renewed. The advisor is not a member of the BOD.

Liaisons may serve to facilitate the relationship between the ABFT and other professional bodies. The term of a liaison is one year and may be renewed.

1.8 CONTRACTING

1.8.1 APPOINTMENT

The BOD may engage in the use of contractors for purposes of records maintenance, assistance with certification and accreditation, financial management, and other services approved by the BOD. The contractor shall have no vested interest or conflict with the tasks being performed. The ABFT Confidentiality Agreement shall be reviewed and signed by all contractors.

No portion of the certification decision shall be outsourced.

1.8.2 RECORDS MAINTENANCE

Contractors shall maintain all ABFT records in a secure and confidential manner.

1.9 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS DIRECTOR

1.9.1 APPOINTMENT

The executive director shall be a compensated individual approved and appointed by the BOD. The executive director has the authority to engage the services of an administration and operations director. The specific conditions of the contract shall be determined in furtherance of the best interest of the ABFT.

1.9.2 RESPONSIBILITIES

The executive director and the administration and operations director shall assist the BOD in all matters as directed by the president.

Detailed responsibilities of the executive director/administration and operations director are described in the Executive Director Job Description, which can be found in the Appendix.

1.9.3 RECORDS MAINTENANCE

The executive director and the administration and operations director shall ensure that all relevant records, correspondence, etc., are maintained securely and confidentially in the ABFT Administrative Office.

1.10 DOCUMENT CONTROL

The ABFT Administrative Office has established and shall maintain procedures to control internal documents through a master control list. These documents comprise the quality management system of the ABFT. These documents provide structure to operations surrounding all program activities. Controlled documents are maintained and distributed by the ABFT.

1.10.1 IDENTIFICATION

Documents shall be uniquely identified by the footer which shall include:

- Document title
- Date of issue
- Issuing authority
- Revision identification
- Pagination

1.10.2 REVISIONS

All controlled documents shall be secured from unauthorized changes and shall be reviewed annually. All substantial version changes shall be distributed to the BOD for review and approval prior to implementation. Documentation for review and approval should be maintained.

1.10.3 ARCHIVAL OF RETIRED DOCUMENTS

Retired versions of controlled documents shall be removed from use and archived.

1.11 RECORDS MANAGEMENT

The ABFT Administrative Office shall maintain a records system that includes unique files for each applicant/certificant that may include:

- Original application
- Academic transcripts
- Letters of reference
- Proctor Certification Regarding Conflict of Interest
- Confidentiality Agreement for Candidates
- Examination Record (pass/fail)
- Correspondence
- Continuing education
- Recertification application

1.11.1 RETENTION

The ABFT Administrative Office and the BOD shall maintain all records (whether paper or electronic format) in its possession in a secure and confidential manner. Neither the administrative office nor the BOD shall destroy records without written notification from the president unless specific permission is granted within this document. Records identified for destruction are shredded.

Additionally, records may be secured, maintained, and archived in a similar fashion by any contractor performing service to the ABFT.

All certification and operational records (e.g., minutes, year-end financial records) shall be retained indefinitely, except:

- Continuing education records which shall be retained for a minimum of one recertification period. Once a second recertification period has been completed, the continuing education records for the previous recertification period may be destroyed.
- Records of applicants who never became certificants and detailed (back-up) financial records may be destroyed after five years.
- All accreditation records of the ABFT shall be retained for a minimum of two accreditation cycles.

1.11.2 RELEASE OF RECORDS

No records shall be released without approval of the president.

1.12 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

1.12.1 DOCUMENTATION

Reasonable expenses incurred in the conduct of BOD business shall be reimbursed. Receipts are required for reimbursement of expenses. If no receipts are available, written documentation shall be supplied to support any expense claims greater than \$25. The ABFT General Expense Claim Form shall be used to submit expense claims. The General Expense Claim Form may be found in the Appendix.

1.12.2 EXPENSE APPROVAL AND REIMBURSEMENT

The president, treasurer, and executive director each have the authority to approve expenses; however, they cannot approve their own expenses. The president and treasurer authorize the executive director to disburse funds on behalf of the BOD. BOD approval is required for expenditures over \$5,000.

1.12.3 FISCAL POLICIES

1.12.3.1 GENERAL

The ABFT policy pertaining to travel, lodging, and other expenses incurred in the accomplishment of BOD business is as follows:

Activities, purchases, and contracts shall have prior BOD approval.

Examples of acceptable documentation for individual expenditures of more than \$25:

1. Air transportation – Paid passenger receipt
2. Taxi/Uber/Lyft fare – Itemized receipt
3. Parking or toll fees – Stubs or itemized receipt
4. Hotel bill – Hotel issued itemized receipt
5. Meals – Itemized receipt
6. Purchases or contracts – Itemized receipt or copy of contract

1.12.3.2 TRAVEL – TRANSPORTATION

The BOD or president shall approve all travel in advance. If the BOD-approved travel is combined with other business, vacations, etc., payment of travel shall be on a basis to be agreed upon in advance. Air travel shall be limited to economy class. Costs associated with upgrades are the responsibility of the traveler.

Authorized automobile trips shall be reimbursed based on the prevailing IRS Standard Mileage Rate as determined by the shortest and most usually traveled route between the point of origin and the destination. Total cost (mileage expense plus subsistence) shall not exceed the cost of the most direct coach airfare.

If car rental is authorized, the BOD approves the purchase of automobile insurance.

1.12.3.3 TRAVEL – HOTEL AND PER DIEM

Hotel rooms, when necessary, shall be booked at the most competitive rate.

Per diem claims, if applicable, for incidentals (e.g., food, tips) shall not exceed \$150/day.

Reimbursement of expenses associated with the meeting of the Executive Committee shall be limited to actual expenses.

1.12.3.4 OTHER EXPENSES

Reimbursement of up to \$500 for members of the BOD, who are eligible to receive reimbursement, shall be provided to offset the cost of travel for the required attendance at the annual and interim meetings of the BOD at AAFS and SOFT. Reimbursement shall be provided upon the submission of a completed expense report with receipts. Those individuals who receive any reimbursement for travel from their employer are not eligible.

Reimbursement of up to \$500 for members of the Examination Committee, who are eligible to receive reimbursement, shall be provided to offset the cost of travel for the required attendance at the annual and interim meetings of the committee at AAFS and SOFT. Reimbursement shall be provided upon the submission of a completed expense report with receipts. Those individuals who receive any reimbursement for travel from their employer are not eligible.

For those members of the BOD who also serve on the Examination Committee, the reimbursement provided shall be up to \$800 total for each set of meetings at AAFS and SOFT.

Expenses for items other than travel and subsistence (i.e., transportation to/from hotel) shall be for BOD business and not for personal convenience.

1.12.4 BUDGET

The treasurer along with the executive director shall propose a budget at the annual BOD meeting. The fiscal year is July 1 to June 30. The BOD shall vote to approve the budget at the annual meeting.

1.12.5 FEES (effective 1/1/2023)

1. Certification application fee – \$300 (all certification levels – includes one examination attempt)
2. Examination sitting fee for second attempt – \$150
3. Five-year recertification fee – N/C

4. Five-year recertification late fee – \$150
5. Reinstatement fee – \$250
6. Annual CE submission fee – \$120
7. Annual CE submission late fee – \$100 for submissions March 16-April 30
8. Annual CE submission late fee – \$200 for submissions May 1-June 30
9. Written verification of certification – \$50
10. Certificate reissue fee – \$100

Fees are non-refundable, unless authorized by the president and/or the BOD. Fees are subject to change and are payable in U.S. dollars by check, money order, or credit card.

1.13 MANAGEMENT REVIEW

1.13.1 PURPOSE

The ABFT is committed to the development and implementation of a quality management system. Management reviews shall be conducted annually to determine if the management system and operational activities remain suitable, adequate, and effective and to introduce any necessary changes and improvements.

1.13.2 ELEMENTS OF REVIEW

The management review addresses, but is not limited to:

- Fulfillment of purpose
- Policies and procedures
- Status of actions from previous internal reviews
- Outcome of internal and external audits
- Corrective and preventive actions
- Assessments by external bodies
- Feedback from stakeholders
- Adequacy of resources
- Internal and external threats, opportunities, and risks
- Safeguarding impartiality
- Appeals and complaints
- Changes that could affect the management system
- Previous reviews
- Objectives
- Goals for the following year

1.13.3 DOCUMENTATION AND COMMUNICATION

The BOD shall maintain documentation of the management review and any findings. A plan and a schedule shall be established to address any findings.

Findings from the management review shall be communicated during the annual meeting.

1.14 INTERNAL AUDITS

The ABFT shall establish policies and procedures for conducting periodic internal audits of the certification program considering the importance of areas to be audited. Internal audits shall be conducted annually.

The vice president shall designate an individual(s) knowledgeable in the certification process to perform the internal audit. The designee shall not audit their own work. Personnel responsible for the areas audited shall be informed of the outcomes. Any actions taken resulting from the audit shall be timely and appropriate. Any opportunities for improvement shall be identified.

Audits may consist of one organization-wide audit or smaller, focused audits.

Audits may be in the form of records review, procedures review, remote audit via web conferencing, on-site, et al.

1.14.1 ELEMENTS OF INTERNAL AUDIT

Internal audits can be retroactive, directed, data specific, or facility audits. The internal audit may include:

- Verification of compliance with the Policy and Procedure Manual
- Accreditation requirements
- Certificant files
- Examinations
- Document control
- Security
- Preventive/Corrective Actions

1.15 SECURITY

1.15.1 ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

The ABFT Administrative Office is a secure facility with controlled access. Physical security includes cameras, exterior doors with deadbolts and interior entrance with commercial grade lock controlled by the executive director and administration and operations director. Filing cabinets are equipped with locks. There is also a safe with a combination lock and fingerprint security for the test bank. Access to the office is by appointment only. Visitors to the office are required to complete a visitor log.

1.15.2 DOCUMENTS AND RECORDS

Current physical (paper) documents and records are stored in locked file cabinets located in the ABFT Administrative Office.

Electronic documents and records reside on commercial cloud-based systems where storage exists in the United States. Electronic records are stored encrypted, and password protected. Computers used to access cloud-based storage are password protected. Computers used in the administrative office are equipped with antivirus software (Norton Antivirus or similar) and are updated automatically. Operating system security updates and patches are applied automatically.

1.15.3 EXAMINATIONS

Any company or individual contracted to perform duties related to the ABFT certification testing shall have no vested interest in the certification program or a conflict with the task assigned.

Security of the test bank and exams is the responsibility of the ABFT Administrative Office. The primary copy of the test bank is maintained on a personal computer in the custody of the administration and operations director and password protected. A backup of the test bank exists in the ABFT Box.com account with required 2-factor authentication and password-protected access provided to the chair of the Examination Committee. In addition, a USB drive containing the test bank is kept in a safe with a combination lock and fingerprint security.

Examinations are generated using ExamView. The examination and all examination materials are prepared by the administrative office and uploaded securely and confidentially to the ABFT Box.com account with required 2-factor authentication and password-protected access provided to the proctor prior to administration. It is the responsibility of the proctor to generate a hard copy of the examination. In addition, it is the responsibility of the proctor to destroy all electronic, email, and hard copies including, but not limited to, all exams and answer sheets when notified by the administrative office that the scoring process is complete. The proctor shall also make a

final delete from the Trash folder and Recycle Bin on the computer and shall confirm the destruction and deletion of all materials with the administrative office when complete.

The chair of the Examination Committee shall destroy all electronic, email, and hard copies of examination materials including, but not limited to, all exams, answer sheets, and answer keys when the final grading is complete. After 30 days, or the end of a candidate's candidacy, the chair of the Examination Committee shall destroy their copy of the completed Examination Record. The chair of the Examination Committee shall also make a final delete from the Trash folder and Recycle Bin on the computer immediately after the final grading and at 30 days for the Examination Record and shall confirm the destruction and deletion of all materials with the administrative office when complete.

Access to test items shall be restricted to the administrative office, members of the Examination Committee, proctors, and members of the BOD.

Test items are selected from a test bank that contains questions evaluated for their relevance by subject matter experts.

1.16 COMPLAINTS

The ABFT shall resolve all complaints in an impartial and timely manner, including those alleging professional misconduct or negligence. The complaints-handling process shall be subject to requirements for confidentiality, as it relates to the complainant and to the subject of the complaint.

All complaints shall be addressed in writing to the ABFT Administrative Office. The Complaints Procedure is available on the website and a complaint may be filed online. The complainant shall provide sufficient information for the ABFT to adequately investigate the complaint.

The executive director/administration and operations director shall acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 14 calendar days. Acknowledgment shall be by a formal letter via certified mail restricted delivery with signature, to the complainant. If the signed certified mail signature card is not returned to the administrative office, the letter shall be served in person by a process server.

The executive director/administration and operations director shall document the appropriate information on the Complaint Form, attach the original complaint from the complainant with any additional pertinent information, and forward to the president within the same 14 calendar days.

The president shall appoint a three-member Complaints Committee, to review the complaint and shall forward all information to the committee. This committee shall consist of members that are not involved in the subject of the complaint.

The committee shall review the complaint, with the assistance of the administrative office, to ensure it relates to the ABFT certification activities and shall at the minimum, address the complaint. A plan of action may be developed as needed. The review shall occur within 14 calendar days of committee receipt of the complaint.

The committee shall gather and verify the information necessary to validate the complaint.

The committee shall track the complaint and ensure that it is resolved in a fair and timely manner.

The committee shall review and make recommendations regarding the allegations. All recommendations shall be consistent with the Policy and Procedure Manual and FSAB Standards. It shall determine if the complaint is valid, if the complaint requires disciplinary action, and if that disciplinary action includes a written reprimand, suspension, or revocation. These findings shall be documented on the Complaint Form. If the complaint may require a written reprimand, suspension, or revocation, the committee shall request a Suspension and Revocation Form from the administrative office. The administrative office shall document the appropriate information on the

Suspension and Revocation Form and forward it to the committee. All findings shall be recorded by the committee on the Complaint Form and the Suspension and Revocation Form as well if the situation warrants a written reprimand, suspension, or revocation. The committee shall forward all forms and communicate its conclusions to the president and the administrative office.

The president shall submit recommendations of a reprimand, suspension, or revocation to the BOD for a vote. The secretary shall record and certify the vote by signature.

Reprimands, suspensions, and revocations are effective on the date the secretary certifies the vote. A copy of the signed form is retained in the certificant's file.

The administrative office shall notify the complainant, and their representative, if applicable, of the resolution by a formal letter via certified mail restricted delivery with signature. In addition, any substantiated complaint regarding a certificant shall be referred to the certificant in question at an appropriate time. If the signed certified mail signature card is not returned to the administrative office, the letter shall be served in person by a process server.

If the resolution addresses a personnel matter, the complainant shall only be notified that a resolution has been reached, i.e., the specifics of the resolution shall not be outlined.

Records of the complaint shall be maintained indefinitely.

If certification is revoked and the certificant is barred from reapplication, records shall be retained indefinitely. If the certificant reapplies for, and successfully attains certification, records shall be maintained in the certificant's file indefinitely.

Submission, investigation, and decision on complaints shall not result in any discriminatory actions against the complainant.

1.17 NONCONFORMANCE AND CORRECTIVE ACTION

The ABFT is committed to addressing nonconformances promptly and thoroughly. When identified, potential nonconformances shall be documented and investigated. Any personnel of the ABFT may communicate a potential nonconformance. The Quality Assurance/Audit Committee is responsible for investigating, documenting, and tracking resolutions of potential nonconformances and their corrective actions.

1.17.1 IDENTIFYING A NONCONFORMANCE

Certification activities include any aspect of the ABFT that could impact the certification process, such as application processing, credentialing, examination development, examination procedures, recertification, etc.

Quality issues may be identified during internal audits, complaints, quality assurance activities, etc.

The Quality Assurance/Audit Committee shall perform an initial evaluation to determine if the issue is a potential nonconformance, a potential preventive action, or whether there is a need for additional investigation.

1.17.2 EVALUATION

The initial evaluation shall be completed within 30 calendar days once assigned to the Quality Assurance/Audit Committee.

During the evaluation, the Quality Assurance/Audit Committee may determine that affected certification activities may resume or continue while the evaluation proceeds. Any affected personnel shall be notified. The date of notification and reason for resumption shall be documented.

If the evaluation reveals that a nonconformance did not occur, certification activities shall resume, and the quality assurance report shall be closed.

If a nonconformance has occurred, the following shall be considered:

- Does the nonconformance affect the customer? If so, does the customer need immediate notification?
- Must the work be recalled?
- Does the nonconforming work require a corrective action plan or is simple correction possible?

Guidelines for implementation of the corrective action process:

A corrective action is not punitive.

Corrective action is required in any of the following situations:

- When there is a likelihood that the nonconformity shall recur.
- When significant noncompliance with organizational policies or procedures has occurred.
- If an error is identified in examination scoring and quality control procedures did not identify the error prior to score release.
- If an error has occurred that would affect an individual's certification status.

A single instance of nonconformity in the ABFT policies and procedures may not require corrective action. If the lapse affected examination results or certification status, corrective action may be necessary. Identification of repeated lapses may require corrective action.

The Quality Assurance/Audit Committee shall determine whether the issue is a nonconformance and if so, whether the issue requires correction or corrective action.

Corrections shall be documented in the quality assurance report.

1.17.3 CORRECTIVE ACTION

If it is determined that a corrective action is necessary, the affected certification activity shall continue to be suspended until completion of the corrective action plan.

Root cause analysis shall be conducted during the evaluation by the Quality Assurance/Audit Committee.

Root cause analysis shall be completed within 90 calendar days of receipt of the evaluation documentation.

A corrective action plan may include:

- Revisions to policies and procedures or other documents
- Re-examination or re-validation of methods, exam keys, or equipment
- Re-training of personnel to include formal training, external training, or other communications as relevant

If the nonconformance directly impacted examination scoring, the Quality Assurance/Audit Committee may request review of previous examination scores. If the nonconformance was identified prior to test results being communicated, a review of previous examination scores may not be necessary.

The Quality Assurance/Audit Committee shall prepare a corrective action plan to include corrective actions, a timeline for completion, and the individuals responsible for completing the corrective actions. The corrective action plan shall also include a strategy to monitor the progress of the corrective action.

The Quality Assurance/Audit Committee shall notify the president upon completion of the corrective action.

If certification processes were suspended, the date and reason for reinstatement shall be documented on the corrective action report.

Evaluation of the effectiveness of corrective actions shall be conducted during the annual internal audit.

1.17.4 CUSTOMER NOTIFICATION

Minimally, the customer shall be notified when an examination scoring error results in a change from a failing to a passing score.

The public shall be notified of significant corrective actions if a nonconformance could compromise public trust in the ABFT and its certification program.

Minimally, public notices shall be posted on the ABFT website.

Public notice shall ensure the privacy and confidentiality of applicants, candidates, certificants, BOD, and personnel.

The president shall present the following to the BOD for decision:

- Does the nonconformance require a public notification?
- Is a notification on the website sufficient or are other mechanisms required?
- What specific information shall be provided in the public notification?

The president shall ensure that public notice is conducted in accordance with the decisions of the BOD.

If the issue is determined to be a quality-related one that requires public notification, the FSAB shall be notified prior to/concurrent with public notification.

1.18 CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT AND PREVENTIVE ACTION

The ABFT is committed to continual improvement of its certification program. Improvement opportunities are identified via input from personnel, audits, and corrective actions.

1.18.1 CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT

Management shall seek to continually improve the certification program. Opportunities for improvement shall be identified during audits, management reviews, surveys, and program activities.

The ABFT shall seek feedback from applicants, candidates, and certificants.

The ABFT shall provide information, including updates to the ABFT certification program, to certificants on a periodic basis.

The ABFT shall annually distribute a survey to the certificants requesting feedback on the certification processes of the ABFT and its business practices.

The ABFT shall publish the Policy and Procedure Manual on the website at www.abft.org and shall post all changes. All certificants shall annually acknowledge that the Policy and Procedure Manual and any changes are available for review on the website and that a copy is available upon request.

The ABFT shall annually distribute a survey to the directors requesting feedback on topics relevant to the organization's quality management system, policies and procedures, and future vision. The Quality Assurance/Audit Committee shall determine the survey content.

The Quality Assurance/Audit Committee shall set goals for the upcoming year. Goals shall be based upon organizational needs, direction and information derived from audits and feedback from the directors and customers. Goals shall be presented to the BOD at the annual meeting.

As a component of the annual management review, the BOD shall evaluate progress on the previous year's goals.

1.18.2 PREVENTIVE ACTION

The vice president, as chair of the Quality Assurance/Audit Committee shall identify concerns related to quality. These concerns can be identified through audits, personnel, complaints, etc.

The Quality Assurance/Audit Committee shall then evaluate the concern to determine if there is a potential for improvement.

The evaluation shall be completed within 30 calendar days once assigned to the Quality Assurance/Audit Committee.

At the conclusion of the evaluation, the Quality Assurance/Audit Committee shall determine if the concern affords opportunity for a preventive action. A preventive action is warranted if a potential source of nonconformity has been identified.

The Quality Assurance/Audit Committee shall prepare a preventive action plan to include actions, a timeline for completion, and the individuals responsible for completing the preventive actions.

The Quality Assurance/Audit Committee shall notify the president upon completion of the preventive action.

An evaluation of the effectiveness of preventive actions shall be conducted during the annual internal audit.

1.19 CONFIDENTIALITY

All documents and records of the ABFT are confidential. Information regarding a certificant, candidate, or applicant shall not be disclosed to a third-party without the written consent of that individual. Where the law requires disclosure, the individual shall be notified of the information provided. The legal name of all certificants, terminal degree, certification designation, certificate number, certification expiration, and state/province, shall be published in the online certificant directory. Certificants from the EU shall be requested to opt in to the online certificant directory annually.

2 CERTIFICATION OF FORENSIC TOXICOLOGISTS

2.1 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the ABFT are to establish, enhance, and revise as necessary, standards of qualification for those who practice forensic toxicology and to certify as qualified those voluntary applicants who comply with the requirements of the ABFT. In this way, the ABFT aims to establish a practical and equitable system of readily identifying those who possess the requisite qualifications and competence in forensic toxicology.

2.2 TYPES OF CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS

2.2.1 GENERAL

The ABFT has five certification programs:

1. Fellow in forensic toxicology (F-ABFT)
2. Diplomate in forensic toxicology (D-ABFT-FT)
3. Diplomate in forensic drug toxicology (D-ABFT-FD)
4. Diplomate in forensic alcohol toxicology (D-ABFT-FA)
5. Analyst in forensic toxicology (A-ABFT)

Certification is based upon the candidate's personal and professional record of education and formal training, experience, achievement, and a passing score of 70% on a written qualifying examination. Applicants shall be persons of good moral character, outstanding integrity, good repute, and shall possess superior ethical and professional standing.

Internal or external inquiries related to certification status may be directed to the ABFT website at www.abft.org and/or the ABFT Administrative Office. If a certificant has elected to remove their name from the online directory, the inquiry shall be directed to the administrative office. Written verification is available upon request for a fee.

2.2.2 FELLOWS

Applicants shall possess an earned Doctor of Philosophy or Doctor of Science degree in a biology or chemistry-related science (including pharmacy), from an institution acceptable to the BOD. Acceptable institutions are those accredited by regional accrediting commissions recognized by the United States Office of Education (USOE), those whose pertinent education programs (e.g., in chemistry), were at the time accredited by national accrediting agencies recognized by USOE, and other institutions at the discretion of the BOD. Degrees awarded from institutions outside of the United States and Canada shall be evaluated by a credentialing service accredited by the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NSCES) such as the World Education Services (WES) and must include a course-by-course analysis.

Applicants shall have adequate undergraduate and graduate education in biology, chemistry, and documented formal training in pharmacology and/or toxicology. If transcripts do not reflect coursework in pharmacology and/or toxicology, details describing how such formal training was received are required. The Committee on Credentials reserves the right to request a letter from the individual(s) who provided such training. Adequate undergraduate education in chemistry is defined as satisfactory completion of a minimum of 32 semester hours of university level studies in chemistry (e.g., accredited courses in organic, inorganic, analytical, and physical chemistry).

MD, DO, PharmD, DHSc, or any non-thesis related advanced degrees are not acceptable for certification as a fellow.

Applicants shall possess a minimum of three years full-time professional experience (or the part-time equivalent thereof) in forensic toxicology, acceptable to the BOD, that has been acquired after receipt of the doctorate degree.

A minimum of one-year professional experience shall have been acquired immediately preceding the date of application.

Applicants shall be actively engaged and employed in the field of forensic toxicology at the time of application and at the time of the examination.

Applicants shall demonstrate professional development, competence, and continued work experience in the field of forensic toxicology at the time of application for certification and at the time of the qualifying examination.

Affirmation of the ethical and professional standards of the ABFT is required at the time of application.

Applicants shall provide three professional references from practitioners in forensic toxicology who have personal knowledge of the applicant's work and formal training in forensic toxicology and are qualified to verify competency, formal training, and ethical conduct relative to forensic toxicology. One reference shall be from the applicant's immediate supervisor. If the applicant's immediate supervisor is a member of the ABFT BOD or a member of the ABFT Examination Committee, an appropriate alternative reference acceptable to the Committee on Credentials shall be provided. Completed reference forms shall be submitted directly from the referee to the ABFT Administrative Office.

Applicants who meet these requirements shall be notified of a change to candidate status for admission to a comprehensive written examination.

2.2.3 DIPLOMATES

Applicants shall possess an earned bachelor's degree in a biology or chemistry-related science (including pharmacy), from an institution acceptable to the BOD. Acceptable institutions are those accredited by regional accrediting commissions recognized by the United States Office of Education (USOE), those whose pertinent education programs (e.g., in chemistry), were at the time accredited by national accrediting agencies recognized by USOE, and other institutions at the discretion of the BOD. Degrees awarded from institutions outside of the United States and Canada shall be evaluated by a credentialing service accredited by the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NSCES) such as the World Education Services (WES) and must include a course-by-course analysis.

Applicants shall have adequate undergraduate and graduate education in biology and chemistry. Adequate undergraduate education in chemistry is defined as satisfactory completion of a minimum of 32 semester hours of university level studies in chemistry (e.g., accredited courses in organic, inorganic, analytical and physical chemistry).

Applicants shall possess a minimum of three years full-time professional experience (or the part-time equivalent thereof) in forensic toxicology, acceptable to the BOD, that has been acquired after receipt of the bachelor's degree.

A minimum of one-year professional experience shall have been acquired immediately preceding the date of application.

Applicants shall be actively engaged and employed in the field of forensic toxicology at the time of application and at the time of the examination.

Applicants shall demonstrate professional development, competence, and continued work experience in the field of forensic toxicology at the time of application for certification and at the time of the qualifying examination.

Affirmation of the ethical and professional standards of the ABFT is required at the time of application.

Applicants shall provide three professional references from practitioners in forensic toxicology who have personal knowledge of the applicant's work and formal training in forensic toxicology and are qualified to verify competency, formal training, and ethical conduct relative to forensic toxicology. One reference shall be from the applicant's immediate supervisor. If the applicant's immediate supervisor is a member of the ABFT BOD or a member of the ABFT Examination Committee, an appropriate alternative reference acceptable to the Committee on Credentials shall be provided. Completed reference forms shall be submitted directly from the referee to the ABFT Administrative Office.

Applicants who meet these requirements shall be notified of a change to candidate status for admission to a comprehensive written examination.

Note: Diplomate certificants who have met the requirements to apply for fellow certification may do so subject to the usual application and examination processes. Upon earning their fellow certification, they are no longer considered diplomates. Additionally, applicants who meet the requirements to apply for fellow certification may choose to apply for any diplomate certification instead. Also, note that multiple diplomate certifications (e.g., D-ABFT-FA and D-ABFT-FT) shall be subject to multiple annual continuing education submission fees, although separate continuing education submissions are not required.

2.2.4 ANALYST

Applicants shall possess either an earned associate degree or an earned bachelor's degree, in a biology or chemistry-related science from an institution acceptable to the BOD. Acceptable institutions are those accredited by regional accrediting commissions recognized by the United States Office of Education (USOE), those whose pertinent education programs (e.g., in chemistry), are at the time accredited by national accrediting agencies recognized by USOE, and other institutions at the discretion of the BOD. Degrees awarded from institutions outside of the United States and Canada shall be evaluated by a credentialing service accredited by the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NSCES) such as the World Education Services (WES) and must include a course-by-course analysis.

Applicants shall have adequate education in biology and/or chemistry. Adequate education in biology and/or chemistry for those applicants with an associate degree is defined as satisfactory completion of a minimum of 8 semester hours of university level studies in biology and/or chemistry. Adequate education for applicants with a bachelor's degree is defined as satisfactory completion of a minimum of 32 semester hours of university level studies in biology and/or chemistry. Acceptable course work for both associate and bachelor's degrees includes physiology, cell physiology, pharmacology, toxicology, and others as deemed acceptable to the BOD.

Applicants with an associate degree shall possess a minimum of two years full-time professional experience (or the part-time equivalent thereof) in forensic toxicology, acceptable to the BOD, that has been acquired after receipt of the associate degree.

Applicants with a bachelor's degree shall possess a minimum of one year full-time professional experience (or the part-time equivalent thereof) in forensic toxicology, acceptable to the BOD, that has been acquired after receipt of the bachelor's degree.

A minimum of one-year professional experience shall have been acquired immediately preceding the date of application.

Applicants shall be actively engaged and employed in the field of forensic toxicology at the time of application and at the time of the examination.

Applicants shall demonstrate professional development, competence, and continued work experience in the field of forensic toxicology at the time of application for certification and at the time of the qualifying examination.

Affirmation of the ethical and professional standards of the ABFT is required at the time of application.

Applicants shall provide three professional references from practitioners in forensic toxicology who have personal knowledge of the applicant's work and formal training in forensic toxicology and are qualified to verify competency, formal training, and ethical

conduct relative to forensic toxicology. One reference shall be from the applicant's immediate supervisor. If the applicant's immediate supervisor is a member of the ABFT BOD or a member of the ABFT Examination Committee, an appropriate alternative reference acceptable to the Committee on Credentials shall be provided. Completed reference forms shall be submitted directly from the referee to the ABFT Administrative Office.

Applicants who meet these requirements shall be notified of a change to candidate status for admission to a comprehensive written examination.

Note: Analyst certificants who have met the requirements to apply for diplomate or fellow certification may do so by submitting a new application with payment of the associated fee and are subject to the usual application and examination processes. Upon earning their upgraded certification, they are no longer considered an analyst.

2.3 PROCESSING APPLICATIONS

Applications shall be completed within one year of receipt in the ABFT Administrative Office. Applications for certification shall include wet signatures and must not be a copy. Electronic equivalents are not accepted on the application. All application documents shall be the versions on the ABFT website at www.abft.org to be accepted. Background checks shall be conducted on all new applicants. Upon completion of the application and background check, applications are thoroughly reviewed and evaluated by the Committee on Credentials to ensure applicants are qualified and competent.

2.3.1 DISTRIBUTION

Completed applications are received by the ABFT Administrative Office for initial review. Based on the initial review, either a request shall be made for additional information, or the application shall be securely sent for review to the Committee on Credentials.

2.3.2 EVALUATION

Each member of the Committee on Credentials completes an evaluation form (Excel spreadsheet) and returns it to the chair. The evaluation criteria are:

- Transcripts are evaluated to ensure they meet the criteria described in [Certification Categories](#).
- Applicant's experience following receipt of applicable degree as identified in [Certification Categories](#).
- Institutional/Organization position description
- References are evaluated for:
 - personal knowledge of the applicant's work and formal training in forensic toxicology and that they are qualified to verify competency, formal training, and ethical conduct relative to forensic toxicology. A reference can also include length of time known, working relationship with applicant, description of forensic work performed, and time devoted to work in forensic toxicology.
 - ethics
 - recommendation for certification
 - comments

The Committee on Credentials may accept the applicant for candidacy, not accept the applicant, or delay the application for additional documentation. In the case of the latter, the chair shall request that the ABFT Administrative Office contact the applicant to supply the additional documentation. If the application is delayed pending additional documentation, the Committee on Credentials shall review the complete application file once the information is received and re-evaluate the application. This may be accomplished via email. All records are maintained at the administrative office.

2.3.3 NOTIFICATION

The chair of the Committee on Credentials shall notify the ABFT Administrative Office if the application is accepted for candidacy or if the application is rejected. The administrative office shall then notify the applicant of the change in status to candidate on behalf of the Committee on Credentials. Copies of the notification letter are provided to the president, chair of the Examination Committee and chair of the Committee on Credentials.

2.3.4 CANDIDACY CHANGE REQUEST

Once approved for candidacy, a candidate may apply to change their certification designation prior to sitting for the exam. The individual must complete the Candidacy Designation Change Request Application, provide a current and updated curriculum vitae (CV), a formal institutional/organization position description from current employer, a copy of current driver's license or passport, and pay the required \$100 fee. The application shall be submitted to the Committee on Credentials for approval.

Diplomate or fellow candidates cannot downgrade to analyst.

2.4 ETHICS AND PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

The certification process shall require that the applicant agree in writing to abide by the ethical and professional standards identified by the ABFT. This agreement shall be documented, and the standards shall include the disciplinary procedures for any breach thereof.

Recertification shall require certificants to reaffirm in writing that they shall continue to adhere to the ethical and professional standards identified by the ABFT.

2.4.1 CODE OF ETHICS

To promote the highest quality of professional and personal conduct of its certificants, the following constitutes the Code of Ethics that is endorsed and adhered to by all certificants of the American Board of Forensic Toxicology (ABFT):

The American Board of Forensic Toxicology (ABFT) expects all persons certified by the ABFT to maintain the excellent moral character, outstanding integrity, upstanding repute, and exemplary ethical and professional standing which are initial and continuing qualifications for recognition by the ABFT, and to conform to the following principles of ethical conduct:

Always conduct themselves with honesty and integrity.

Perform all professional activities in forensic toxicology with honesty and integrity, and refrain from any knowing misrepresentation of their professional qualifications, certifications, knowledge and competence, evidence, and results of examinations, or other material facts.

Hold in proper confidence all information obtained or received during their professional practice, and refrain from misuse of any such information.

Strive to be aware of and alert to any actual or potential conflicts of interest and strive to avoid or appropriately resolve any such conflicts.

Maintain and enhance their qualifications and competence for the practice of forensic toxicology, to the best of their ability.

Disclose their certification level and designation to all interested parties including, but not limited to, employers, medical examiners, coroners, attorneys, law enforcement, other medical doctors; opinion testimony in deposition and/or trial.

Act in accordance with the long-standing precepts for ethical practice of the profession of forensic toxicology, and refrain from any action or activity which would tend to bring disrepute upon or otherwise harm the profession of forensic toxicology or the ABFT.

The Code of Ethics shall be attested to at the time of application and each subsequent continuing education submission and recertification by the statement “I agree to abide by the ABFT Code of Ethics” with name signed, printed, and dated.

2.4.2 CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

To promote the highest quality of professional and personal conduct of its certificants, the following constitutes the Code of Professional Conduct that is endorsed and adhered to by all certificants of the American Board of Forensic Toxicology (ABFT):

Every certificant of the (ABFT) shall refrain from making an intentional misstatement or misrepresentation, to include concealment or omission of a material fact or facts in an application or any other communication to the board of directors (BOD) or its representative(s).

Every certificant of the ABFT shall refrain from exercising professional or personal conduct adverse to the best interests and purposes of the ABFT.

Every certificant of the ABFT shall refrain from providing any material misrepresentation of education, training, experience, certifications, or area of expertise.

Every certificant of the ABFT shall disclose their certification level and designation to all interested parties including, but not limited to, employers, medical examiners, coroners, attorneys, law enforcement, other medical doctors; opinion testimony in deposition and/or trial.

Every certificant of the ABFT shall refrain from providing any material misrepresentation of data upon which an expert opinion or conclusion is based.

Every certificant of the ABFT shall refrain from issuing public statements that appear to represent the position of the ABFT without specific authority first obtained from the president.

Every certificant of the ABFT shall abide by the ANSI/ASB Best Practice Recommendation 037, First Edition 2019 titled “Guidelines for Opinions and Testimony in Forensic Toxicology.”

Every certificant of the ABFT shall report to the BOD any violation of this Code of Professional Conduct by another applicant, candidate, affiliate, or certificant.

Every certificant of the ABFT shall discontinue use of all claims to certification that contain any reference to the ABFT or certification upon suspension or withdrawal of certification, whether voluntary or involuntary, and shall return any current certificate issued by the ABFT.

The Code of Professional Conduct shall be attested to at the time of application and each subsequent continuing education submission and recertification by the statement "I agree to abide by the ABFT Code of Professional Conduct" with name signed, printed, and dated.

2.4.3 DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE FOR CERTIFICANT VIOLATIONS

1. The ABFT shall censure a certificant who fails to comply with the Code of Ethics or the Code of Professional Conduct. Censure may be in the form of a written reprimand, suspension, or revocation of certification.
2. A certificant or other party may submit a formal written complaint to the ABFT Administrative Office alleging a violation of the Code of Ethics or the Code of Professional Conduct.
3. The ABFT may suspend certification of a certificant upon receipt of a complaint or knowledge/evidence of any alleged adverse behavior, activities, or investigation of any kind. The suspension shall remain in place pending the outcome of both internal and external investigations regarding the allegations.
4. The following procedures shall apply to any complaint(s) or allegation(s) of unethical or wrongful conduct:
 - a. Written complaints or allegations against a certificant shall be addressed in writing to the administrative office. The Complaints Procedure is available on the ABFT website at www.abft.org, and a complaint may be filed online. The complainant shall provide sufficient information for the ABFT to adequately investigate the complaint.
 - b. The executive director/administration and operations director shall acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 14 calendar days. Acknowledgment shall be by a formal letter via certified mail restricted delivery with signature, to the complainant. If the signed certified mail signature card is not returned to the administrative office, the letter shall be served in person by a process server.
 - c. The executive director/administration and operations director shall document the appropriate information on the Complaint Form, attach the original complaint from the complainant with any additional pertinent information, and forward to the president within the same 14 calendar days.
 - d. If the situation does not involve a written complaint, but receipt of knowledge/evidence of alleged adverse behavior, activities, or investigation involving a certificant, the executive director/administration and operations director shall document the appropriate information on the Complaint Form, attach documentation of the alleged adverse behavior, activities, or investigation, and forward to the president within the same 14 calendar days.
 - e. The president shall appoint a three-member Certificant Violations Committee to review the complaint or knowledge/evidence of alleged adverse behavior, activities, or investigation involving a certificant and forward all information to the committee. The committee shall consist of

members that are not involved in the complaint or alleged adverse behavior, activities, or investigation.

- f. The committee shall conduct a preliminary review, with the assistance of the administrative office, to determine if the ABFT has jurisdiction or that there is a lack of probable cause to believe that the complaint(s) or allegation(s) may be substantiated. If so, it shall dismiss the complaint(s) or allegation(s) and shall document this information on the Complaint Form outlining such determination to the president and the administrative office, setting forth the basic facts and stating the reasons for its decision to dismiss. The administrative office shall notify the complainant(s) of the committee's decision and the rationale for its decision by a formal letter via certified mail restricted delivery with signature. If the signed certified mail signature card is not returned to the administrative office, the letter shall be served in person by a process server.
- g. If the committee finds that jurisdiction exists and that there is probable cause to believe that the complaint(s) or allegation(s) may be substantiated, it shall notify the president and the administrative office who shall give notice of the filing of a complaint(s) or allegation(s) to the accused and shall assemble such written data from both the accused and the accuser(s) which shall permit the committee to determine whether the complaint(s) or allegation(s) requires further investigation and a hearing. If the complaint may require a written reprimand, suspension, or revocation, the committee shall request a Suspension and Revocation Form from the administrative office. The administrative office shall document the appropriate information on the Suspension and Revocation Form and forward it to the committee. All findings shall be documented on the Complaint Form and the Suspension and Revocation Form as well if the situation warrants a written reprimand, suspension, or revocation.
- h. Upon the approval of the president, the committee may appoint a certificant from the ABFT to assist in the investigation of the complaint(s) or allegation(s).
- i. If, because of an investigation, the committee decides to dismiss the charge(s) without a formal hearing, it may do so. It shall document the final details on the Complaint Form and return it to the president and the administrative office setting forth the basic facts and stating the reason(s) for its decision. The administrative office shall notify the complainant(s) of the committee's decision and the rationale for its decision by a formal letter via certified mail restricted delivery with signature. If the signed certified mail signature card is not returned to the administrative office, the letter shall be served in person by a process server.
- j. If the committee decides to formally hear the charge(s), it shall give both the accused and the accuser(s), if applicable, a reasonable opportunity to be heard and to confront each other. The president and the administrative office shall be present at the hearing and the certificant may have legal representation. The committee shall then decide and notify both parties of its decision. The committee shall document all findings and

recommendations on the Complaint Form and the Suspension and Revocation Form as well if the decision recommended a written reprimand, suspension, or revocation. All information shall be forwarded to the president and the administrative office to include the rationale for the decision and a recommendation for further action. All decisions and recommendations by the committee shall be consistent with the Policy and Procedure Manual and FSAB Standards.

- k. Following receipt of all completed forms and upon a vote of three-fourths of the directors present, the party accused of unethical or wrongful conduct may be censured in the form of a written reprimand, suspension, or revocation. No director who is the subject of a pending accusation under the provisions of this procedure shall sit in deliberation on any matter concerning a breach of ethics or professional conduct.

2.5 EXAMINATION

2.5.1 GENERAL

Candidates for certification are required to pass a written, closed-book examination within two years of candidacy. The examination is the confidential, privileged, and proprietary property of the ABFT.

Candidates for the written examination are required to sign a Confidentiality Agreement for Candidates whereby the candidate agrees not to copy, disclose, recreate, or disseminate any information, questions, and/or answers from the examination.

The ABFT examinations challenge examinees with the fundamental information used in the practice of forensic toxicology. Examination questions cover the areas of postmortem toxicology, human performance toxicology, workplace drug testing and prescription drug monitoring. Included in these areas of toxicology are topics such as driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs, drug overdose deaths, employee drug testing, drug testing of urine and alternate matrices, interpretation and expert opinion, and other related forensic toxicology issues. In addition, related analytical, physiological, patho-anatomical, pharmacological, and laboratory practice and management concepts are included.

Fellow and diplomate examinations consist of 130 single answer, multiple-choice questions relating to basic, general, and specific information, with a time limit of three hours. The analyst examination is comprised of 100 single answer, multiple-choice questions and also has a time limit of three hours.

The examination is given a minimum of twice each year, at the American Academy of Forensic Sciences (AAFS) Annual Meeting and the Society of Forensic Toxicologists (SOFT) Annual Meeting. Candidates may request to have an examination administered at a different location under the direction of the chair of the Examination Committee, a director of the BOD, the executive director, or the administration and operations director.

If unsuccessful at the first examination, the candidate may retake the examination a second time within their two-year period of candidacy, no sooner than 90 days following the first examination. An additional fee shall apply. An applicant may reapply for certification one time no earlier than 180 days after failing to pass the second examination and shall provide proof of remediation (e.g., relevant coursework) with the application for it to be accepted for review. The acceptance of a second application for certification rests solely with the Committee on Credentials whose decision in this process is final.

Under the second application, a candidate is allowed one examination attempt, unless there was only one attempt under the first application, for a total maximum of three

examination attempts. A third application shall be allowed if the candidate has not had three examination attempts.

Additional examination attempts may be allowed if a candidate/certificant applies for a different certification level and is approved by the Committee on Credentials.

2.5.2 ADMISSION TO EXAMINATIONS

The chair of the Committee on Credentials notifies the ABFT Administrative Office and the chair of the Examination Committee in writing that an applicant has met all credentialing requirements to sit for the written examination. The applicant is then identified as a candidate. On behalf of the chair of the Committee on Credentials, the administrative office prepares and issues a letter of candidacy that reflects the applicant's change in status and that the examination shall be successfully completed within two years from the date of notification.

Candidates are instructed to notify the administrative office in writing a minimum of 30 days prior to when they would like to schedule to sit for the examination. All examinations shall be scheduled through the administrative office. All requests to sit for an exam shall be directed to the administrative office for scheduling and registration.

2.5.3 ADMINISTRATION OF EXAMINATIONS

The examination is prepared and maintained by the ABFT Administrative Office until distributed to the appropriate proctor. The chair of the Examination Committee, a director, the executive director, or the administration and operations director may proctor examinations. Members of the Committee on Credentials shall not proctor exams or serve as members of the Examination Committee.

Proctors shall be appropriately trained through the review of training materials provided by the administrative office. Proctors shall not oversee examinations of candidates they have been involved in training (e.g., mentored by) or that they have supervised for a minimum of two years after the conclusion of the candidate's training or that are employed by their same employer. Proctor-candidate ratio shall not exceed 1:10.

When the examination is administered at a site other than the AAFS or SOFT meeting or the administrative office and is proctored by a director or the chair of the Examination Committee, the examination and all examination materials are prepared by the administrative office and uploaded securely and confidentially to the ABFT Box.com account with required 2-factor authentication and password-protected access provided to the proctor.

Candidates shall present a government-issued photo identification to the proctor to gain admittance to the examination.

Candidates are required to complete the Database Update Form with their legal name and current and complete contact information.

Candidates shall attest to current work experience in the field of forensic toxicology on the examination date.

Candidates shall complete the Confidentiality Agreement for Candidates prior to the beginning of the exam and shall complete the designated attestation field of the Examination Record at the completion of the exam.

Candidates shall attest that they are actively engaged and employed in the field of forensic toxicology at the time of the examination.

Candidates shall use their legal name on all paperwork.

Cell phone/smart watch use is prohibited. These devices shall be placed in airplane mode and placed out of reach of the examinee.

Candidates shall be instructed not to bring personal belongings into the exam and shall not have access to personal belongings during the exam. All personal items shall be placed on a table out of reach of the candidate.

Candidates may complete the examination in pencil or pen.

Non-programmable calculators are provided by the ABFT.

Candidates have three hours to complete the examination.

Proctors shall complete the Proctor Certification Regarding Conflict of Interest for each candidate prior to the exam and shall complete the second section of the Examination Record for each candidate at the completion of the exam.

Proctors shall upload the exam and the completed Confidentiality Agreement for Candidates, the Proctor Certification Regarding Conflict of Interest, the Examination Record, the Exam Answer Sheet, and the Database Update Form for each candidate securely and confidentially to the ABFT Box.com account for the initial grading by the administration and operations director. The materials shall then be uploaded securely and confidentially to the ABFT Box.com account by the administrative office to the chair of the Examination Committee for final grading.

Proctors shall destroy all electronic, email, and hard copies of examination materials including, but not limited to, all exams and answer sheets when notified by the administrative office that the scoring process is complete. The proctor shall also make a final delete from the Trash folder and Recycle Bin on the computer and shall confirm the destruction and deletion of all materials with the administrative office when complete.

2.5.4 CONFIDENTIALITY AND INTEGRITY OF EXAMINATION MATERIALS

Each exam shall be composed of randomized questions from the ABFT test bank for each candidate's specific designation/category. Candidates shall be required to sign a

Confidentiality Agreement for Candidates. If it becomes apparent that the integrity of an examination has been compromised, all questions on that examination shall be removed from the test bank for a duration determined by the Examination Committee at the time of the occurrence and a different comparable examination shall be offered. An investigation shall be conducted to determine the root cause of the compromise.

The members of the BOD, its officers, and personnel shall not copy, disclose, recreate, or disseminate any examination materials, except for the purposes of conducting business of the ABFT. The members of the BOD, its officers, and personnel shall also take all steps reasonably necessary to protect the confidentiality of the written examinations, questions, and related examination development information, and to prevent unauthorized disclosure.

2.5.5 EXAMINATION FORMAT

The fellow and diplomate examinations consist of 130 questions in the subject matter found in Appendix. The analyst examination consists of 100 questions. Examinations are prepared from a test bank maintained by the ABFT Administrative Office. The Examination Committee prepares questions. A certificant may contribute examination questions with five possible answers and accompanying rationale and references. The acceptance of the questions and the awarding of continuing education points shall be at the discretion of the Examination Committee. As areas of interest in forensic toxicology are continuously changing with the development of new drugs and analytical techniques and instrumentation, new questions shall be added to, and old questions deleted from the question bank.

Examinations consist of multiple-choice questions with five possible answers. Only one option is the correct answer.

A minimum score of 70% must be achieved to pass the exam and become certified.

2.5.6 EXAMINATION CATEGORIES AND CONTENT AREAS

Information on examination categories and content areas is found on the website and in the study guides posted on the website

2.5.7 EXAMINATION SITE PROTOCOL

1. The testing site shall:
 - a. not be a private residence or hotel guest room.
 - b. be accessible for a minimum of four hours, 30 minutes prior to and 30 minutes after the exam.
 - c. have appropriate security.
 - d. be of sufficient size to accommodate candidates in a classroom-style seating arrangement. Empty seats between examinees are preferred. If not possible, the proctor should ensure adequate measures are taken to

- prevent compromise of examination, i.e., that different examination versions are provided to adjacent candidates.
- e. have a head table for proctor(s) seating.
 - f. be located to minimize distractions (e.g., noise and interruption).
 - g. have acceptable environmental conditions (e.g., lighting and temperature).
 - h. provide reasonable disability accommodation with prior Examination Committee approval.
 - i. have a method to notify examinees of time remaining (e.g., clock, post, or announce).

2.5.8 DUTIES OF THE PROCTOR

1. Proctor shall generate a hard copy of the examination and enter the version number of the exam on the answer sheet prior to distributing it to the candidate.
2. Proctors shall verify the ID of each candidate and ensure the legal name is on all forms and examination materials.
3. Proctors shall complete the Proctor Certification Regarding Conflict of Interest for each candidate prior to the exam.
4. Proctors shall provide each candidate with a non-programmable calculator.
5. Proctors shall remain in the examination room for the duration of the examination.
6. Proctors strive to ensure acceptable environmental conditions and reasonable disability accommodation during examinations.
7. Proctors shall facilitate restroom use during the time course of the examination. The examination materials shall be held by the proctor while the examinee is outside the testing site. Candidates shall not have access to phones, smart watches, or other personal belongings while outside the testing room during the examination.
8. Proctors shall be alert to signs of inappropriate behavior. Cheating shall be reason for immediate dismissal of the candidate from the examination and from the ABFT certification program. In such cases, examination materials shall be collected by the proctor. Documentation of the event shall be made on the Examination Record and forwarded to the chair of the Examination Committee. This decision may be appealed by the candidate if thought to be in error and is subject to the Appeals Policy.
9. Proctors shall record the start and stop time of the exam at the top of the Examination Record.
10. Proctors shall complete the proctor attestation field of the Examination Record at the completion of exam and ensure each candidate has completed the candidate attestation field of the Examination Record.
11. Proctors shall upload the exam and the completed Confidentiality Agreement for Candidates, the Proctor Certification Regarding Conflict of Interest, the Examination Record, the Exam Answer Sheet, and the Database Update

- Form for each candidate securely and confidentially to the ABFT Administrative Office via the ABFT Box.com account for the initial grading.
12. Proctors shall destroy all electronic, email, and hard copies of examination test materials including, but not limited to, all exams and answer sheets when notified by the administrative office that the scoring process is complete. Proctors shall also make a final delete from the Trash folder and Recycle Bin on the computer and shall confirm the destruction and deletion of all materials with the administrative office when complete.

2.5.9 GRADING AND RECORDING EXAMINATION RESULTS

The administration and operations director and the chair of the Examination Committee shall score examinations. A passing score is 70%. The graders for the exams shall ensure there is no evidence of impropriety between exams of candidates (e.g., same question numbers missed on exam), when there are multiple candidates sitting for exams. Once the exams are scored and consistent scores are achieved between both graders, the chair of the Examination Committee completes the final section of the Examination Record.

Proctors shall upload the exam and the completed Confidentiality Agreement for Candidates, the Proctor Certification Regarding Conflict of Interest, the Examination Record, the Exam Answer Sheet, and the Database Update Form for each candidate securely and confidentially to the ABFT Box.com account for the initial grading by the administration and operations director. The materials shall then be uploaded securely and confidentially to the ABFT Box.com account by the administrative office to the chair of the Examination Committee for final grading. The Examination Record shall indicate pass/fail and not the numerical score. The ABFT does not provide examination scores to the BOD or to any individual, to include the examinee.

The chair of the Examination Committee shall forward the Database Update Form and the completed Examination Record to the secretary. On behalf of the secretary, the administrative office issues a letter to the candidate(s) as to success or failure. Letters may be sent to candidates via mail or electronically.

The Confidentiality Agreement for Candidates, the Proctor Certification Regarding Conflict of Interest, the Examination Record, and the Database Update Form for each candidate are maintained at the ABFT Administrative Office and placed in the file of the candidate.

2.5.10 MANDATORY WAITING PERIOD FOLLOWING EXAMINATION FAILURE

Candidates who fail an examination shall not be re-examined for a minimum of 90 days. A candidate may reapply for certification one time no earlier than 180 days after failing to pass the second examination and shall provide proof of remediation (e.g., relevant coursework) with the application for it to be accepted for review. The acceptance of a second application for certification rests solely with the Committee on Credentials whose decision in this process is final.

Under the second application, a candidate is allowed one examination attempt, unless there was only one attempt under the first application, for a total maximum of three examination attempts. A third application shall be allowed if the candidate has not had three examination attempts.

Re-examinations shall be a different version from the first examination and shall be scheduled through the ABFT Administrative Office. All requests to sit for an exam shall be directed to the administrative office for scheduling and registration.

2.5.11 EXAMINATION REVIEW PROCESS

The examination review process may involve the entire test bank or select focus questions. Select questions are reviewed when it becomes apparent that candidates may be interpreting either the question, or at least one distractor, in an unintended manner. The ABFT may employ examination software products to assist in the development of examination test banks, test composition, scoring, and analysis of test items and examinations. The ABFT Administrative Office has the responsibility and control of the test bank and exams.

Examination questions are reviewed not only for relevancy and potential bias but for the effectiveness of distractors. By looking at the pattern of examinees responses to test questions, it may be determined why items operate as they do and how to improve the reliability of the test item.

When the annual comprehensive review of the test banks is conducted, one test bank at a time is divided into groups and distributed to the Examination Committee for review. Reviewers evaluate each test item across four specific areas: significance; clarity; unambiguous correct answer and relevance to present practice. Test items are scored from 1-4 based on the degree of acceptability for each area evaluated. Questions are reviewed by the Administration and Operations Director for spelling, typographical and grammatical errors, , and to verify the format is in line with the standards adopted by the ABFT for writing multiple choice questions and the exam blueprint. In addition, questions are reviewed for reliability and validity. Reviewers also identify the competency or sub-competency covered by the question.

Each test item is accompanied with the following instructions:

1. Enter the test item number and a score of one to four under each heading of the evaluation matrix.
 - a. Acceptable
 - b. Acceptable, consider revision
 - c. Acceptable, revision required
 - d. Unacceptable, remove from test bank
2. Enter the number for the competency or sub-competency associated with the test item as found in the relevant study guide.

Question Number	Significance	Clarity of Question	Unambiguous Correct Answer	Relevance to Present Practice	Competency Number

Documentation of test item reviews is submitted to the chair of the Examination Committee and the administration and operations director. Scores are recorded in a database for additional evaluation by the Examination Committee. The ABFT Administrative Office maintains the database. The Examination Committee shall recommend test items for revision or deletion. Revised test items shall undergo the review process prior to inclusion in the test bank.

Test items are assigned to a specific competency within the test bank.

If a candidate or proctor identifies a test item for review, the administration and operations director shall send the information regarding the test item to the chair of the Examination Committee to determine the need for further evaluation.

As new drugs, techniques, or processes are identified that are relevant to forensic toxicology, the chair of the Examination Committee shall request submission of new test items from the Examination Committee. Reliability and validity must be determined for any new questions prior to being added to the test bank.

Study guides shall be reviewed annually to be in alignment with review of test items.

2.5.12 STORAGE AND DISTRIBUTION OF EXAMINATIONS

The ABFT Administrative Office maintains a record of all completed examinations. A record is kept as to preparation, the date the exam was attempted, and the exam version. The exam and answer sheet for each candidate that sits for the exam are kept for 30 days after the time of testing in a safe at the administrative office after which time they shall be destroyed. This time is deemed sufficient by the BOD to allow for an appeal by a candidate of an examination result.

The chair of the Examination Committee shall destroy all electronic, email, and hard copies of examination materials including, but not limited to, all exams, answer sheets, and answer keys when the final grading is complete. After 30 days, or the end of a candidate's candidacy, the chair of the Examination Committee shall destroy their copy of the completed Examination Record. The chair of the Examination Committee shall also make a final delete from the Trash folder and Recycle Bin on the computer immediately after the final grading and at 30 days for the Examination Record and shall confirm the destruction and deletion of all materials with the administrative office when complete.

2.5.13 REQUESTS FOR DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION

As a concept and in practice, reasonable accommodation shall be made for candidates with an identified disability according to the ADA. Such accommodation prevents limitations to the evaluation of knowledge and experience in whatever manner those are assessed. All accommodation, except for those needed for physical limitations, shall occur only at the ABFT Administrative Office.

The following concepts related to certification should be considered:

1. Disabilities shall not interfere with a candidate's examination; requests for reasonable accommodation are considered on a case-by-case basis.
2. Each successful candidate shall be given the opportunity to claim disability and request accommodation for the exam.
3. Disabilities shall be documented and verified by a health care provider.
4. Requests shall be submitted in writing to the administrative office to include the proposed reasonable accommodation.
5. The administrative office shall forward requests for reasonable accommodation to the chair of the Examination Committee.
6. The Examination Committee shall approve or disapprove the request with justification. The committee reserves the right to confer with independent subject matter experts to determine the merit of the request and proposed accommodation.
7. Denial of requests for reasonable accommodation is subject to the appeals process.

2.6 APPROVAL OF CERTIFICANTS AND ISSUING OF CERTIFICATES

When certification requirements are met, the names of proposed certificants are provided to the secretary by the chair of the Examination Committee. The secretary shall submit these names to the BOD for a vote. Directors shall abstain from the vote of approval of a candidate when the candidate is their supervisor, they have proctored the candidate's exam, or they are the candidate's supervisor or the director of the laboratory where the candidate is employed.

The ABFT shall approve certification and issue certificates of qualification in forensic toxicology to persons who have fully complied with all requirements for certification and have been approved by the BOD. Certification shall expire on December 31 of the fifth year of certification.

Each certificate shall remain the property of the ABFT. Each certificant shall be entitled to its possession unless certification has expired or has been revoked.

Once certified, each certificant must disclose their certification level and designation to all interested parties including, but not limited to, employers, medical examiners, coroners, attorneys, law enforcement, other medical doctors; opinion testimony in deposition and/or trial.

2.7 CONTINUING EDUCATION

All certificants shall participate in continuing education (CE) in the field of forensic toxicology to maintain active status, competency, and knowledge of current and relevant technology and requirements. The ABFT shall accept educational activities in a variety of areas related to forensic toxicology. The generalities of these areas are communicated to certificants through email correspondence and the continuing education section of the ABFT website at www.abft.org.

2.7.1 CE PROGRAM APPROVAL COMMITTEE PROCESS

The CE Program Approval Committee shall conduct the following steps to vet CE programs:

1. Requests for approval are sent to the ABFT Administrative Office.
2. The administrative office shall respond and attach the Continuing Education Activity Pre-Approval Application and the Continuing Education Faculty Information and Disclosure Form.
3. Once these forms have been received by the administrative office and it is determined that they are complete, the information shall be forwarded to the chair of the ABFT CE Program Approval Committee for committee review and approval.
4. The committee shall document its review on the Continuing Education Activity Pre-Approval Review Form and shall ask the administrative office to request additional information from the CE provider if required for approval.
5. Upon approval, the administrative office shall advise the CE provider of the approval and shall provide the ABFT statement of endorsement for inclusion in the program's promotional material.
6. When CE is submitted, the ABFT shall have the approval on file and shall award points accordingly.

2.7.2 GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

To maintain certification, certificants shall comply with the Continuing Education Program requirements for their certification category as set forth in the sections below.

Certificants shall complete and submit the ABFT Continuing Education Program – Annual Submission Form annually to the ABFT Administrative Office. It is the responsibility of the certificant to ensure that CE is submitted annually in accordance with the CE submission policies of the ABFT and to contact the administrative office if they do not receive the CE submission form.

Certificants shall submit only qualified forensic toxicology related activities with a minimum total of five accurately calculated points.

The program utilizes a point system which requires supporting documentation. One hour of virtual/online activity shall be equivalent to 0.25 points.

Certificants shall maintain supporting documentation for all continuing education activities claimed during each five-year recertification period. Randomly selected certificants shall be audited annually such that all certificants are audited at least once during a five-year period.

Continuing education submissions shall be current prior to recertification. Certificants are exempt from continuing education requirements in the first year of certification but must sign the Code of Ethics and Code of Professional Conduct.

Certificants who fail to meet continuing education requirements shall have their certification revoked as follows:

- Those certificants who fail to submit their annual CE by July 1 shall have their certification revoked. If the individual would like to be certified by the ABFT, they must apply for reinstatement by October 31. A completed CE submission form and payment of the \$200 late fee and \$250 reinstatement fee for a total of \$570 shall be required prior to the granting of reinstatement. After October 31, certificants shall be required to surrender their certificate to the administrative office. If the reinstatement deadline has passed and the individual would like to be certified, they must reapply and successfully pass the current relevant written certification examination.
- Submissions of less than five qualified and accurately calculated points shall result in immediate revocation of certification and certificants shall be required to surrender their certificate to the administrative office. If the individual would like to be certified by the ABFT, they must reapply and successfully pass the current relevant written certification examination. The reinstatement option does not apply.
- All CE revocations shall be reviewed by the Executive Committee prior to certificant notice of revocation.

Certificants that do not earn the required cumulative points for their designation over the five-year recertification period and do not take advantage of the exam option in lieu of reapplication or are unsuccessful in their exam attempt shall not recertify and shall be required to surrender their certificate to the administrative office. They are no longer certified by the ABFT. Otherwise, if the individual chooses, they may reapply in accordance with the usual application and examination processes of the ABFT and shall be bound by application and examination limits. The reinstatement option does not apply.

The Continuing Education Committee shall review a randomized 15-20% of the annual continuing education submissions during a special meeting convened by the president.

The continuing education activity timeline is as follows:

January 15:	DocuSign submission form emailed to certificants.
February 15:	DocuSign 30-day reminder followed by weekly reminders.
March 15:	Deadline for CE submission without late fee.
March 16-April 30:	CE submissions are assessed a \$100 late fee.
May 1-June 30:	CE submissions are assessed a \$200 late fee.
July 1:	Certification is revoked for non-compliance with CE submission.
July 1-15:	Executive Committee review of non-compliance CE submission revocations. Notices of certification revocation sent by email and by a formal letter via certified mail restricted delivery with signature following the review. If the signed certified mail signature card is not returned to the administrative office, the letter shall be served in person by a process server.
Summer:	Review of all CE submissions and Executive Committee review of revocations for submissions of less than five points. Points shall be posted to the certificant portal no later than September 1.
October 31:	Deadline for reinstatement.
After October 31:	Certificants that have not submitted CE are required to surrender their certificate to the administrative office. If the individual would like to be certified by the ABFT, they must reapply and successfully pass the current relevant written certification examination.

2.7.3 FELLOW AND DIPLOMATE CE REQUIREMENTS

Fellows and diplomates shall earn a minimum of 50 continuing education points during each five-year recertification period.

Fellows and diplomates are required to submit forensic toxicology related activities with a minimum total of five points per year. Submissions of less than five qualified and accurately calculated points shall result in immediate revocation of certification and certificants shall be required to surrender their certificate to the ABFT Administrative Office. If the individual would like to be certified by the ABFT they must reapply and successfully pass the current relevant written certification examination. The reinstatement option does not apply.

Fellows and diplomates should submit a minimum of 10 points per year to accumulate the required minimum CE points over the five-year recertification period.

Cumulative points greater than what is required to recertify do not carry-over into the next recertification period.

2.7.4 ANALYST CE REQUIREMENTS

Analysts shall earn 25 continuing education points during each five-year recertification period.

Analysts are required to submit forensic toxicology related activities with a minimum total of five points per year. Submissions of less than five qualified and accurately calculated points shall result in immediate revocation of certification and certificants shall be required to surrender their certificate to the ABFT Administrative Office. If the individual would like to be certified by the ABFT, they must reapply and successfully pass the current relevant written certification examination. The reinstatement option does not apply.

Cumulative points greater than what is required to recertify do not carry-over into the next recertification period.

2.7.5 MEDICAL WAIVER

A medical waiver may be requested for an extended illness as defined in the Terms and Conditions section at the beginning of this document.

The terms of the medical waiver are as follows:

1. A medical waiver may be granted by the Executive Committee no more than once per five-year recertification period.
2. The CE submission form and associated fee shall be submitted with this written request for a waiver.
3. Once approved, the annual CE requirements shall be zero for the year and the required cumulative points for the current recertification period shall be decreased by 10 points (5 points for analyst).
4. If the medical waiver is denied, the current CE submission form must be submitted with the required number of points in accordance with the ABFT Policy and Procedure Manual.

2.8 RECERTIFICATION

The Subcommittee on Recertification, composed of the secretary and a minimum of two additional directors, is responsible for reviewing applications for recertification. An application may be submitted to the BOD for consideration if recertification status is challenged. Recertification shall be for five years from the end of the prior certification or recertification.

Recertification shall require the applicant to be actively engaged and employed in the field of forensic toxicology at the time of recertification.

Recertification shall require successful demonstration of continuing professional development, competence, and continued work experience in the field of forensic toxicology as well as reaffirmation of the ethical and professional standards of the ABFT.

An examination option rather than reapplication shall be offered in lieu of sufficient cumulative points to recertify and shall only apply to recertification. The individual must successfully pass the current relevant certification examination. There shall be only one examination attempt. Attempts under previous applications shall not disqualify the individual from sitting for the exam (e.g., has had three examination attempts). A \$150 examination fee is required. All examinations shall be scheduled through the ABFT Administrative Office and may occur at any time in the recertification year when it is known they shall not recertify via the usual recertification process.

2.8.1 DISTRIBUTION

Approximately three months prior to the end of the certification period, certificants shall receive a recertification application to include instructions for completion. Background checks shall be conducted on all applicants. Upon the timely completion of the application and background check, the Subcommittee on Recertification shall thoroughly review the application to ensure applicants are qualified and competent. Additional documentation may be requested. Certificants whose applications for recertification are not received by the due date shall be assessed a late fee.

2.8.2 EVALUATION

The Subcommittee on Recertification shall review the recertification application for:

- Current work experience in the field of forensic toxicology (current formal institutional/organization position description)
- Cumulative continuing education points of not less than their respective requirements that demonstrate competency and knowledge of current and relevant technology and requirements
- Actively engaged and employed in the field of forensic toxicology at the time of recertification

- Curriculum vitae (updated within the last calendar year)
- Competency risk assessment
- Successful demonstration of continuing professional development, competence, and continued work experience in the field of forensic toxicology
- Reaffirmation of the ethical and professional standards of the ABFT

The Subcommittee on Recertification shall determine if the certificant has demonstrated sufficient competency to recertify based on the review of the application and the above criteria. Certificants who do not meet the above criteria shall not recertify and shall no longer be certified by the ABFT.

Certificants that fail to accumulate the required minimum CE points during a five-year recertification period shall not recertify. If an individual would like to remain certified by the ABFT, they must notify the ABFT Administrative Office immediately to declare their intent to exercise the exam option and schedule the exam.

The examination must be completed prior to the date certification expires. There shall be no exceptions. If the individual is unsuccessful or chooses to not utilize the exam option, they shall be required to surrender their certificate to the administrative office and shall no longer be certified by the ABFT. Otherwise, if the individual chooses, they may reapply in accordance with the usual application and examination processes of the ABFT and shall be bound by application and examination limits.

2.8.3 NOTIFICATION

Recertification is for five years commencing at the end of the prior certification or recertification period. The ABFT Administrative Office on behalf of the secretary shall notify the certificant as to recertification status.

Certificants whose application and background check has not been received by the certification expiration date or certificants whose application review determined the certificant did not demonstrate sufficient competency to recertify based on the required criteria, shall be sent an email followed by a formal letter via certified mail restricted delivery with signature, indicating that their certification has lapsed. If the signed certified mail signature card is not returned to the administrative office, the letter shall be served in person by a process server.

Certificants that have successfully requalified shall receive email notification of recertification and a current Certificate of Qualification.

Copies of the notification are sent to the president, secretary, and executive director.

2.8.4 REINSTATEMENT

Certificants whose certification has expired due to no application, may petition the BOD for reinstatement within 6 months of the date of certification expiration. Reinstatement

may be granted by BOD vote after the Subcommittee on Recertification has accepted the application for recertification, the recertification late fee has been paid, and the reinstatement fee has been paid.

2.9 RISK PREVENTION

Unqualified or incompetent certificants pose a risk to the ABFT. The ABFT is a professional organization for the certification of qualified and competent individuals and shall adhere to its policies to mitigate risk from unqualified or incompetent certificants.

2.9.1 APPLICANTS FOR CERTIFICATION

Applicants shall have adequate education for their level of certification and have documented formal training in pharmacology and/or toxicology. If transcripts do not reflect coursework in pharmacology and/or toxicology, details describing how such formal training was received are required.

Applicants shall provide a formal institutional/organization position description for their current employment and shall provide a current curriculum vitae updated within the last calendar year.

Applicants shall be actively engaged and employed in the field of forensic toxicology at the time of application and at the time of the examination.

Applicants shall demonstrate professional development, competence, and continued work experience in the field of forensic toxicology at the time of application for certification and at the time of the qualifying examination.

The Code of Ethics shall be attested to at the time of application and each subsequent CE submission and recertification by the statement "I agree to abide by the ABFT Code of Ethics" with name signed, printed, and dated.

The Code of Professional Conduct shall be attested to at the time of application and each subsequent CE submission and recertification by the statement "I agree to abide by the ABFT Code of Professional Conduct" with name signed, printed, and dated.

Applicants shall provide references from practitioners in forensic toxicology who have personal knowledge of the applicant's work and formal training in forensic toxicology and are qualified to verify competency, formal training, and ethical conduct relative to forensic toxicology. One reference shall be from the applicant's immediate supervisor. If the applicant's immediate supervisor is a member of the ABFT BOD or a member of the ABFT Examination Committee, an appropriate alternative reference acceptable to the Committee on Credentials shall be provided.

Background checks shall be conducted on all applicants. Upon completion of the application and background check, applications are thoroughly reviewed and evaluated by the Committee on Credentials.

Candidates for certification are required to pass a written, closed-book examination within two years of candidacy. Each candidate must have a minimum score of 70% to

pass the exam and become certified. There shall be a maximum of three examination attempts.

The ABFT examinations challenge examinees with the fundamental information used in the practice of forensic toxicology. Examination questions cover the areas of postmortem toxicology, human performance toxicology, workplace drug testing, and prescription drug monitoring. Included in these areas of toxicology are topics such as driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs, drug overdose deaths, employee drug testing, drug testing of urine and alternate matrices, interpretation and expert opinion, and other related forensic toxicology issues. In addition, related analytical, physiological, patho-anatomical, pharmacological, and laboratory practice and management concepts are included.

Candidates that pass the exam shall have their information sent to the BOD for final approval to become a certificant.

Certificants that do not submit CE or submit less than five accurately calculated points for qualified forensic toxicology related activities shall have their certification revoked and shall be required to surrender their certificate to the ABFT Administrative Office. If the individual would like to be certified by the ABFT, they must reapply and successfully pass the current relevant written certification examination.

The ABFT may suspend certification of a certificant upon receipt of a complaint or knowledge/evidence of any alleged adverse behavior, activities, or investigation of any kind and shall follow the Complaints Procedure and Disciplinary Procedure for Certificant Violations to determine resolution. The ABFT shall consult with legal counsel.

2.9.2 APPLICANTS FOR RECERTIFICATION

Approximately three months prior to the end of the certification period, certificants shall receive a recertification application.

Applicants shall have required cumulative continuing education points that demonstrate competency and knowledge of current and relevant technology and requirements. Continuing education submissions are submitted via DocuSign and documentation is required for all claimed activities.

Background checks shall be conducted on all applicants. Upon the timely completion of the application and background check, the Subcommittee on Recertification shall thoroughly review the application and based on the required criteria shall determine if the certificant has demonstrated sufficient competency to recertify. Additional documentation may be requested.

Recertification shall require the applicant to be actively engaged and employed in the field of forensic toxicology at the time of recertification.

Recertification shall require successful demonstration of continuing professional development, competence, and continued work experience in the field of forensic toxicology as well as reaffirmation of the ethical and professional standards of the ABFT.

Applications shall include a current formal institutional/organization position description and a current curriculum vitae updated within the last calendar year.

Certificants that fail to accumulate the required minimum CE points during a five-year recertification period shall not recertify. An examination option rather than reapplication shall be offered in lieu of sufficient cumulative points to recertify and shall only apply to recertification.

If an individual would like to remain certified by the ABFT, they must notify the ABFT Administrative Office immediately to declare their intent to exercise the exam option and schedule the exam. All examinations shall be scheduled through the administrative office and may occur at any time in the recertification year when it is known they shall not recertify via the usual recertification process.

The individual must successfully pass the current relevant certification examination. There shall be only one examination attempt. Attempts under previous applications shall not disqualify the individual from sitting for the exam (e.g., has had three examination attempts). A \$150 examination fee is required. The examination must be completed prior to the date certification expires. There shall be no exceptions.

If the individual is unsuccessful or chooses to not utilize the exam option, they shall be required to surrender their certificate to the administrative office and shall no longer be certified by the ABFT. Otherwise, if the individual chooses, they may reapply in accordance with the usual application and examination processes of the ABFT and shall be bound by application and examination limits.

2.10 SUSPENSION AND REVOCATION OF CERTIFICATION

The BOD at its discretion may suspend or revoke certification status based on evidence of a violation of the ABFT Code of Ethics or Code of Professional Conduct, a felony conviction or falsification, intentional omission, misrepresentation of credentials, alleged adverse behavior/activities, or investigation of any kind. If an individual's certification is suspended or revoked, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) shall be notified. Certificants failing to meet continuing education requirements are subject to revocation.

This procedure outlines the process by which the ABFT administers suspensions and revocations. Additional relevant procedures define the specific requirements leading to suspension and/or revocation. Each procedure describes the steps required to reverse suspension. Suspension and revocation shall only be reversed through the appeals process. No further attempt shall be made to contact the individual when notifications of suspension or revocation are determined to be undeliverable and are returned to the ABFT Administrative Office.

2.10.1 SUSPENSION

Certificants may be placed on suspension upon the recommendation of a complaint investigation or knowledge/evidence of any alleged adverse behavior, activities, or investigation of any kind.

Upon submission of a complaint or knowledge/evidence of adverse behavior, activities, or investigation of any kind, the executive director/administration and operations director shall document the appropriate information on the Suspension and Revocation Form and forward to the president for review.

Upon review, if the complaint or the receipt of evidence is found to warrant further investigation, the president shall convene a three-member committee to review the allegations, with the assistance of the ABFT Administrative Office, and make their recommendations. The Suspension and Revocation Committee's findings and/or recommendations shall be documented on the Suspension and Revocation Form. All recommendations by the committee shall be consistent with the Policy and Procedure Manual and FSAB Standards.

The completed form shall be submitted to the president and the ABFT Administrative Office.

The administrative office shall submit the findings to the BOD for review and subsequent vote. The secretary shall record and certify the vote by signature.

Suspensions are effective on the date that the secretary certifies the vote. A copy of the signed form is retained in the certificant's file.

Certificants shall not present themselves as certified during the suspension period. Continued use of the certification designation shall result in immediate revocation of certification.

Notification of suspension shall be first by email followed by a formal letter via certified mail restricted delivery with signature from the administrative office. If the signed certified mail signature card is not returned to the administrative office, the letter shall be served in person by a process server.

Certificants suspended because of a complaint investigation or other internal investigation shall receive notification by a formal letter via certified mail restricted delivery with signature from the administrative office on behalf of the secretary. If the signed certified mail signature card is not returned to the administrative office, the letter shall be served in person by a process server.

Notifications shall include the ABFT's policies on the use of certification designation during suspension.

Suspension shall be removed (reversed, rescinded) upon vote by the BOD. The vote to reinstate the certificant shall follow the same process by which suspension was given.

Notification of reinstatement shall be made via email and/or by formal letter from the administrative office.

A certificant's suspension status shall be documented in the certificant database. Certificant status shall be removed from the online certificant directory within 30 days.

If the certificant is unable to meet the timeline established in the procedure for reinstatement, the certificant may request an extension in writing to the administrative office. The Executive Committee shall determine if an extension is warranted as well as the scope of the extension.

2.10.2 REVOCATION

Certificants shall have their certification revoked for failing to meet continuing education requirements. Certificants who fail to meet continuing education requirements shall have their certification revoked as follows:

- Those certificants who fail to submit their annual CE by July 1 shall have their certification revoked. If the individual would like to be certified by the ABFT, they must apply for reinstatement by October 31. A completed CE submission form and payment of the \$200 late fee and \$250 reinstatement fee for a total of \$570 shall be required prior to the granting of reinstatement. After October 31, certificants shall be required to surrender their certificate to the ABFT Administrative Office. If the reinstatement deadline has passed and the individual

would like to be certified, they must reapply and successfully pass the current relevant written certification examination.

- Submissions of less than five accurately calculated points for qualified forensic toxicology related activities shall result in revocation of certification and certificants shall be required to surrender their certificate to the administrative office. If the individual would like to be certified by the ABFT, they must reapply and successfully pass the current relevant written certification examination. The reinstatement option does not apply.
- All CE revocations shall be reviewed by the Executive Committee prior to certificant notice of revocation.

Certificants may have their certification revoked if their suspension is not resolved by the timelines defined in the relevant procedures. Additionally, certificants may have their status revoked upon recommendation by the Complaints Committee or other internal investigation panel.

Upon submission of a complaint or knowledge/evidence alleging adverse behavior, activities, or investigation of any kind, the executive director/administration and operations director shall document the appropriate information on the Suspension and Revocation Form and forward to the president for review.

Upon review, if the complaint or knowledge/evidence is found to warrant further investigation, the president shall convene a three-member committee to review, with the assistance of the administrative office, and make recommendations regarding the allegations. The administrative office shall enter the known information on the Suspension and Revocation Form and forward it to the Suspension and Revocation Committee. The committee's findings and/or recommendations shall be documented on the Suspension and Revocation Form. All recommendations by the committee shall be consistent with the Policy and Procedure Manual and FSAB Standards.

The completed form shall be submitted to the president and the administrative office.

The administrative office shall submit the findings to the BOD for a vote. The secretary shall record and certify the vote by signature.

Revocations are effective on the date that the secretary certifies the vote. A copy of the signed form is retained in the certificant's file.

Certificants shall not present themselves as certified upon revocation.

Notification of revocation shall be first by email followed by a formal letter via certified mail restricted delivery with signature from the administrative office. If the signed certified mail signature card is not returned to the administrative office, the letter shall be served in person by a process server.

Notifications shall include the ABFT's policies on the use of certification designation following revocation.

A certificant's revocation status shall be documented in the certificant database.

Certificant status shall be permanently removed from the online certificant directory within 30 days.

2.11 APPEALS AND RECONSIDERATIONS

2.11.1 APPEALS POLICY

Submission, investigation, and decision on appeals or reconsiderations shall not result in any discriminatory actions against the appellant. The BOD shall as necessary, adopt and promulgate, maintain, and revise, an appeals policy to resolve questions or challenges to suspension or revocation of certification or recertification.

2.11.2 APPEAL OF BOARD ACTIONS

A person whose certification or recertification is suspended or revoked shall be entitled to appeal any such action by the BOD. Appeals must be submitted in writing within 30 days of the notification date. The request shall be lodged in accordance with the Appeals Policy. The Appeal Procedure of Certificants is available on the website and a request for an appeal may also be filed online.

2.11.3 APPEAL PROCEDURE FOR CERTIFICANTS

A certificant who has had certification or recertification suspended or revoked may request a formal appeal of the BOD action.

Such requests shall be made in writing to the ABFT Administrative Office within 30 calendar days of the certificant receiving notice of the action and shall include why the certificant believes the decision to be erroneous and shall include supporting documentation of compliance with program standards for certification or recertification.

The executive director/administration and operations director shall acknowledge receipt of the request for an appeal within 14 calendar days. Acknowledgment shall be by a formal letter via certified mail restricted delivery with signature, to the appellant. If the signed certified mail signature card is not returned to the administrative office, the letter shall be served in person by a process server.

The executive director/administration and operations director shall document the appropriate information on the Appeal and Reconsideration Form, attach the original request for appeal from the appellant with any additional pertinent information, and forward to the president within the same 14 calendar days.

The president shall appoint a three-member Appeals Committee to review the appeal, two of whom shall be directors who are not currently serving on the Committee on Credentials.

The committee shall review the request for appeal, with the assistance of the administrative office, within 14 calendar days of committee receipt of the appeal.

The committee shall gather and verify the information necessary to validate the appeal. Validation that an erroneous decision occurred and that the certificant is in compliance must be confirmed prior to an appeal moving forward. If the decision that is the subject of the appeal is determined to be consistent with the Policy and Procedure Manual and the certificant is found to be non-compliant, the appeal shall be dismissed as invalid. This finding shall be documented on the Appeal and Reconsideration Form and forwarded to the administrative office and the president. The administrative office shall notify the appellant of this decision.

If the appeal is found to be valid, the committee shall track the process and ensure that it is resolved in an impartial and timely manner.

Once the appeal is determined to be valid, the committee shall document its findings on the Appeal and Reconsideration Form and forward it to the president and the administrative office. All recommendations shall be consistent with the Policy and Procedure Manual and FSAB Standards. The administrative office shall forward the findings of the committee to the BOD. A hearing date shall be set within 60 days of the BOD receiving notice of appeal.

The appellant shall be notified by a formal letter via certified mail restricted delivery with signature from the administrative office when the BOD has received the request for appeal. The certificant may be represented by counsel at the hearing. If the signed certified mail signature card is not returned to the administrative office, the letter shall be served in person by a process server.

At the hearing, the BOD shall determine whether to reverse its prior decision. Within 14 days of the hearing date, the administrative office shall notify the individual of the BOD's decision by a formal letter via certified mail restricted delivery with signature. Notification shall include a brief statement outlining the basis of the appeal and rationale for the BOD's decision. If the signed certified mail signature card is not returned to the administrative office, the letter shall be served in person by a process server.

A request for appeal shall not stay a BOD action to suspend or revoke certification or recertification.

2.11.4 RECONSIDERATION OF BOARD ACTIONS

An applicant/certificant denied certification, recertification, or a request for reasonable accommodation shall be entitled to request reconsideration of any such BOD action in writing within 30 calendar days of the notification date, to include any supporting documentation. The Reconsideration Procedure of Applicants and Certificants is available on the website and a request for reconsideration may also be filed online.

2.11.5 RECONSIDERATION PROCEDURE FOR APPLICANTS AND CERTIFICANTS

An applicant or certificant may request that a denial of certification or recertification be reconsidered. Requests for reconsideration shall be evaluated by the Committee on Credentials.

Requests shall be made in writing to the ABFT Administrative Office within 30 calendar days of the applicant or certificant receiving notice of the action and shall include why the applicant or certificant believes the decision to be erroneous and shall include supporting documentation of compliance with program standards for certification or recertification.

The executive director/administration and operations director shall acknowledge receipt of the request for reconsideration within 14 calendar days. Acknowledgment shall be by a formal letter via certified mail restricted delivery with signature, to the appellant. If the signed certified mail signature card is not returned to the administrative office, the letter shall be served in person by a process server.

The executive director/administration and operations director shall document the appropriate information on the Appeal and Reconsideration Form, attach the original request for reconsideration from the appellant with any additional pertinent information, and forward to the president within the same 14 calendar days.

The president shall appoint a three-member Reconsiderations Committee that shall consist of three members currently serving on the Committee on Credentials.

The committee shall review the request for reconsideration with the assistance of the administrative office. The review shall occur within 14 calendar days of committee receipt of the request.

The committee shall gather and verify the information necessary to validate the request for reconsideration. Validation that an erroneous decision occurred and that the certificant is in compliance must be confirmed prior to a reconsideration moving forward. If the decision that is the subject of the appeal is determined to be consistent with the Policy and Procedure Manual and the certificant is found to be non-compliant, the appeal shall be dismissed as invalid. This finding shall be documented on the Appeal and Reconsideration Form and forwarded to the administrative office and the president. The administrative office shall notify the appellant of this decision.

If the request for reconsideration is found to be valid, the committee shall track the process and ensure that it is resolved in an impartial and timely manner.

After a review that confirms the request for reconsideration may be valid, the committee shall determine whether to reverse its prior decision. All findings are documented on the Appeal and Reconsideration Form and forwarded to the president and the administrative office. All recommendations shall be consistent with the Policy and

Procedure Manual and FSAB Standards. The administrative office shall forward the findings of the committee to the BOD for a vote.

The vote shall occur within 14 calendar days of the BOD's receipt of the request for reconsideration. The administrative office shall notify the individual of the BOD's decision by a formal letter via certified mail restricted delivery with signature. Notification shall include a brief statement outlining the basis of the reconsideration and rationale for the committee's decision. If the signed certified mail signature card is not returned to the administrative office, the letter shall be served in person by a process server.

A request for reconsideration shall not stay the denial of certification or recertification.

2.11.6 RECONSIDERATION PROCEDURE FOR CANDIDATES

A candidate may request that an unsuccessful result on an examination be reconsidered. Requests for reconsideration shall be evaluated by the ABFT Administration and Operations Director and the Examination Committee.

Requests shall be made in writing to the ABFT Administrative Office within 30 calendar days of the candidate receiving notice of the exam results and shall include why the candidate believes the result to be erroneous and shall include supporting documentation.

The executive director/administration and operations director shall acknowledge receipt of the request for reconsideration within 14 calendar days. Acknowledgment shall be by a formal letter via certified mail restricted delivery with signature, to the appellant. If the signed certified mail signature card is not returned to the administrative office, the letter shall be served in person by a process server.

The executive director/administration and operations director shall document the appropriate information on the Appeal and Reconsideration Form, attach the original request for reconsideration from the appellant with any additional pertinent information, and forward to the president within the same 14 calendar days.

The president shall appoint a three-member Reconsiderations Committee that shall consist of three members currently serving on the Examination Committee.

The administration and operations director and the chair of the Examination Committee shall conduct repeat independent gradings of the candidate's exam. The gradings and the committee review of the request for reconsideration with the assistance of the administrative office shall occur within 14 calendar days of the committee's receipt of the request.

The administration and operations director and the chair of the Examination Committee shall independently verify the gradings of all candidates that sat for the same exam on the same date. The chair of the Examination Committee shall conduct an analysis of the

questions missed among the candidates. This information shall be provided to the remaining two members of the committee. Validation that an erroneous result occurred must be confirmed prior to the reconsideration moving forward. If the exam result is found to be correct, the appeal shall be dismissed as invalid. This finding shall be documented on the Appeal and Reconsideration Form and forwarded to the administrative office and the president. The administrative office shall notify the appellant of this decision.

If the request for reconsideration is found to be valid, the committee shall track the process and ensure that it is resolved in an impartial and timely manner.

After a review that confirms the request for reconsideration may be valid, the committee shall determine whether to reverse the exam result. All findings are documented on the Appeal and Reconsideration Form and forwarded to the president and the administrative office. All recommendations shall be consistent with the Policy and Procedure Manual and FSAB Standards. The administrative office shall forward the findings of the committee to the BOD for a vote.

The vote shall occur within 14 calendar days of the BOD's receipt of the request for reconsideration. The administrative office shall notify the individual of the BOD's decision by a formal letter via certified mail restricted delivery with signature. Notification shall include a brief statement outlining the basis of the reconsideration and rationale for the committee's decision. If the signed certified mail signature card is not returned to the administrative office, the letter shall be served in person by a process server.

2.11.7 FINALITY OF ACTIONS

The BOD, acting through its duly elected officers and directors and its duly designated agents, shall have the sole jurisdiction, power, authority, and right to determine the outcome of and final action upon any challenge to or appeal of any action or decision of the BOD, and the outcome of any request for reconsideration of actions or decisions of the Committee on Credentials. The decision of the BOD on any such requests for reconsideration, challenge, or appeal shall be final and conclusive.

3 Appendix

3.1 CORPORATE DOCUMENTS

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3.4.3.1 ANALYST CE POINT ADJUSTMENT PAGES

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