



Credentialing Maintenance (CM) Program Guide

The ABSA International Credentialing Maintenance (CM) Program ensures that ABSA Registered Biosafety Professionals (RBP(ABSAs)) and ABSA Certified Biological Safety Professionals (CBSP(ABSAs)) maintain their professional qualifications. The CM Program requires credentialed individuals to participate in professional development activities in addition to the biological safety activities encountered through their daily job functions. This is a requirement to maintain ABSA credentials.

The Credentialing Maintenance (CM) cycle is a 5-year cycle that begins on January 1 of the calendar year following the granting of an ABSA credential and ends on December 31 of the fifth year. ABSA will send notification when the initial certification is awarded and a reminder at the beginning of the calendar year in which the 5-year cycle is due to end. Credentialing Maintenance (CM) worksheets are available on the ABSA website. These worksheets must be submitted to the ABSA Credentialing Maintenance Board (CMB) by February 1 of the year following the end of the 5-year cycle.

The CM Program mandates that **40 CM points** must be earned in every 5-year cycle from among the categories of activities defined in **Acceptable Activities*. A minimum of 15 of the 40 CM points per 5-year cycle must be earned from professional development Sections 4 -8. At the time of renewing their credentials, the RBP(ABSAs)/CBSP(ABSAs) must use the CM worksheets to report their professional activities and point accrual. **CM worksheets should be submitted to the ABSA Office without supporting documentation;** however, records and documentation of activities must be retained until the end of the calendar year following the CM cycle, for purposes of audit.

**Acceptable Activities*

Biological safety or biosafety-related activities are defined as any of the domain/tasks covered by the [ABSAs CBSP Exam Content](#). Acceptable documentation has been developed for many of the professional and educational activities related to the practice of Biological Safety.

CM Point System for Activities per Hour of Education by Role- prior to January 1, 2023

Hours of Education	Attendee	Instructor	Facilitator
6 - 8 hours	1.0	2.0	0.5
3-<6 hours	0.5	1.0	0.25
2-<3 hours	0.25	0.5	0.125
1-<2 hours	0.125	0.25	2 of these = 0.125

CM Point System for Activities per Hour of Education by Role- Beginning January 1, 2023, and after

Hours of	Attendee	Instructor	Facilitator
6 - 8 hours	1.0	2.0	0.50
5-<6 hours	0.75	1.50	0.375
3 -<5 hours	0.50	1.0	0.25
2 -<3 hours	0.25	0.50	0.125
1 -<2 hours	0.125	0.25	2 of these = 0.125

Note: Activities less than one hour cannot be combined and will not be reviewed for credit.

Credentialing Fees

- Following the year of granted credential, individuals are required to pay a credentialing maintenance fee of \$25 **per** credential, **per** year.
- To recertify, all maintenance fees must be up to date within your CM cycle. The recertification fee (paid once per cycle) is a fee of \$50 for ABSA members to recertify the RBP(ABSA) and/or CBSP(ABSA) credential (maximum of \$50); \$100 for a non-member to be re-credentialed for one or both credentials (maximum \$100).
- CBSP(ABSA)s that choose to recertify by retaking the ABSA CBSP exam are responsible for the \$500 exam fee.

Emeritus

To be eligible for [Credentialed Emeritus status](#), you must be a CBSP(ABSA) or RBP(ABSA) in good standing, have been an ABSA member for at least 10 consecutive years, retired, and no longer gainfully employed in professional work. If you choose to re-instatement as an RBP or CBSP you will be required to submit documentation showing continued credentialing maintenance point accumulation. Note: Applicant must be retired as of January of the year applying.

Extreme Situation - Request of Accommodation (extension)

The Credentialing Maintenance Board (CMB) will consider extreme situations for an accommodation (of less than one year) of the due date for recredentialing. All accommodations are reviewed and/or granted on a case-by-case basis. Examples of situations which may qualify for an accommodation include medical issues, military leaves, natural disasters, or circumstances relating to the COVID-19 outbreak impacting your work or workplace. Generally, an accommodation will be granted for the same length of time as the circumstance impacted the ability to work. The CMB considers the request and submits a date for the applicant to be reviewed again. The CMB may also request documentation of the situation. CMB members are expected to maintain high ethical standards. All reasonable efforts will be made to keep all information regarding the situation confidential with the CM Board.

[‘Request of Accommodation’](#) **must** be submitted **prior** to the cycle deadline for credentialing. Accommodations will not be considered after a candidate fails to meet the recredentialing requirements. The CMB requires that proof of any credentialing maintenance points earned prior to or after the extreme situation be submitted to show that the applicant is/was working towards meeting the requirements before or after the situation occurred.

Requesters must obtain 40 points over the 5-year cycle and added accommodation time approved by the CMB.

Failure to Recredential

CBSP(ABSA) holders who have not accrued adequate CM points during their 5-year cycle and did not make a ‘Request of Accommodation’ (prior to worksheet submission) may choose to renew their credentials by taking and passing the ABSA CBSP Exam (requestors are responsible for all exam costs). Passing the examination earns all 40 CM points required for the 5-year CM cycle. To renew credentials by examination, credential holders must be in good standing (up to date on all maintenance fees) and notify the ABSA Office prior to February 1 of their fifth year. This will ensure that the credential holder’s active status does not lapse. The exam is administered once per year throughout the month of June at testing centers worldwide. CBSP(ABSA) holders who fail to fulfill the program requirements and fail to renew their credentials by examination will be removed from ABSA’s list of credentialed biosafety professionals and may no longer use the CBSP(ABSA) designation.

RBP(ABSA) holders and/or CBSP(ABSA) holders who have not accrued the required CM points during their 5-year cycle have a few options. The first option is taking a 1-year suspension. During this time, they must earn their missing CM points plus an additional 8 for the suspended year (48 total points). Individuals will not be entitled to use their credential designation and will be removed from ABSA’s list of credentialed biosafety professionals. Maintenance fees will not be required during the suspension.

The second option is taking a 3-year suspension. During this time, they must earn an average of 8 CM points a year over 3 consecutive years (beginning the year following cycle end). Individuals will not be entitled to use their credential designation and will be removed from ABSA's list of credentialed biosafety professionals. Maintenance fees will not be required during the suspension.

Individuals that were previously RBP(ABSA) credentialed are eligible to recertify under the Credentialing Evaluation Board (CEB) after a minimum of 5 years.

Approval of Activities not Sponsored, Co-sponsored by ABSA, or ABSA Affiliate Sponsored: Courses or activities that require CM approval must be submitted for review prior to submitting the CM worksheet, ideally in the same year in which they occur as documentation is more easily attainable.

- The CM approval number and CM points must be provided on the worksheet (where indicated) in order for the CM points to count.
- List only the ABSA CM points. Using P.A.C.E.®, IACET credits, or other agencies' approval points/contact hours will **not** be counted as CM points.

1. Professional Biosafety Practice

(Maximum points allowed per year: 2.0 / Maximum points allowed per cycle: 10)

Summarize biosafety-related duties and include the percentage of time spent on biosafety.

- RBP(ABSA)s/CBSP(ABSA)s involved in acceptable professional biosafety practice for 50% or greater per year – 2.0 CM points.
- RBP(ABSA)s/CBSP(ABSA)s involved in acceptable professional biosafety practice for 20% or greater but less than 50% per year – 1.0 CM point.

Acceptable Support Documentation for Audit (section 1):

A letter from employer verifying dates of employment and biological safety responsibilities. Biological safety consultants who are self-employed may document their practice by letterhead, employee identification number (if incorporated) and a list of clients for the documentation period.

2. Professional Biological Safety Organization Membership

(Maximum points allowed per year: 2.0 / Maximum points allowed per cycle: 10)

- Membership in ABSA International – 1.0 CM point per year.
- Membership in an official [ABSA affiliate](#) – 0.50 CM point per year (max 2 affiliates/per year). Credit is not awarded for membership in AIHA, CSHEMA, ASM, or other alliance organizations.

Acceptable Support Documentation for Audit (section 2):

A copy of membership certificate(s) indicating dates of membership or dues receipts/payment confirmation. Letterhead document from affiliate group indicating membership dates is acceptable.

3. Technical/Professional Organization Service

(Maximum points allowed per year: No limit)

- Service as President, President-Elect, or Past President on the current ABSA Council – 3.0 CM points per year (effective January 1, 2022; not retroactive; 2.0 CM point for all previous years).
- Service on the current ABSA Council (not including current Exec Comm) – 2.0 CM points per year.
- Service on the Council or Board of an official [ABSA affiliate](#) – 1.0 CM point per year.
- Service on an ABSA affiliate committee – 0.50 CM point per year.
- Service in ABSA as Team Leader – 2.0 CM points per year. Service by a Team Leader on one of their committees does not receive CM points.
- Service as Chair or Co-chair on an ABSA committee – 2.0 CM point (effective January 1, 2022; not retroactive; 1.0 point for all previous years)
- Service on an ABSA committee, subcommittee, task force, working group, or Board – 1.0 CM point per year (effective January 1, 2022; not retroactive; 0.50 point for all previous years). Council liaison on an ABSA Committee does not receive CM points.
- Service as a mentor in the ABSA mentoring program – 0.50 CM points per mentee.

- Service on a non-ABSA biosafety-related governmental commission, council, and committee (national, state, and local) – 0.50 CM point per committee per year. Examples of such service include serving on a committee to revise BMBL, working on an NIH Office of Science Policy (OSP) activity, or a local public health committee. RBPs/CBSPs who are government employees do **not** receive credit for these activities if it is considered part of their job description.
- Service on a non-ABSA, biosafety-related non-governmental commission, council, or committee (e.g., community member of an IBC, AIHA biosafety committee member) – 0.50 CM point per year. Credit will **not** be awarded for service on these committees if the service is considered part of an individual's job description with their employer.

Acceptable Support Documentation for Audit (section 3):

A letter or other documentation supplied from the organization verifying the dates of committee membership, service as an officer or mentor.

4. Professional Publications and Presentations: (Author, Editor, or Reviewer), Presentations (Technical, Scientific, Poster, or Ambassador Program), LAI Database, and Blog Post
(Maximum points allowed per year: No Limit)

To count as a biosafety-related activity, the contents of the publication/presentation must be clearly relevant to one and/or more of tasks on the [ABSA CBSP Exam Content](#) biosafety must be clearly addressed. All applications are reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

- Each peer-reviewed, biosafety-related paper or article which has been published during the current certification cycle – 2.0 CM points.
- CM points for articles in non-peer reviewed publications will be determined by the CMB. [Complete the CM Application](#) for review – 0.50 points.
- Each published, single author biosafety-related book – 5.0 CM points.
- Editors of biosafety-related books – 3.0 CM points per volume per editor regardless of the number of editors.
- Each published chapter in a biosafety-related book – 1.0 CM point per author
- Chief Editors of *Applied Biosafety, the Journal of ABSA International* – 2.0 CM points per year.
- Associate and Assistant Editors of *Applied Biosafety* – 1.0 CM point per year.
- Reviewers for *Applied Biosafety* or reviewers of a biological safety-related paper in a recognized (indexed) journal – 0.50 CM point per article reviewed.
- Service related to the Ambassador Program – 0.25 CM per presentation or activity. (e.g., presenting to a non-technical group about ABSA International or biosafety, such as high school career day, STEM program, or assisting at Clinical or Public Health Labs).
- Service related to the LAI database – 0.125 CM points per 2 articles.
- Service related to Blog Posting – 0.125 CM points per post (maximum of 8 posts per 5-year cycle).
- Giving a biosafety-related technical/scientific presentation before a professional audience – 1.0 CM point. (Credit may be claimed only once for the same scientific information presented.)
- Development of a biosafety-related technical/scientific exhibit displayed in a poster session at a national technical/ scientific meeting – 1.0 CM point. (Credit may be claimed only once for the same scientific information developed.)

Acceptable Support Documentation for Audit (section 4):

Article/Paper/Book Chapter: A copy of the first page indicating the title, name of the publication, date of publication, the CBSP's name as author and other authors (if applicable).

Book: A copy of the title page indicating the title, publisher, date of publication, the RBP/CBSP's name as author and other authors (if applicable).

Editors/Reviewers: Letters or other documentation of service as a reviewer of papers or articles.

Presentations/exhibits: A copy of the program indicating the name of the meeting, the date of the meeting, the scheduling of the paper/exhibit, the author(s), and identification of the presenter.

Ambassador Presentation/Activity: Documentation of services rendered, signed by a supervisor or manager.

LAI Database: Acceptance letter or confirmation email.

Blog Posting: Screenshot of article with submitters name and date or email confirmation.

5. Conferences, Symposia, Regional Meetings: Sponsored or co-sponsored by ABSA or ABSA Affiliate
(Maximum points allowed per year: No limit)

Attendance at the annual ABSA Conference or Symposium – 0.50 CM point per half-day or 1.0 CM point per day. Pre-conference/Pre-symposia courses should be listed in Section 6.

- Biological safety-related conferences or symposia where ABSA co-sponsors the activity with a recognized national organization, such as CDC, NIH, APIC, etc., are acceptable for CM points – 0.5 CM point per half-day or 1.0 CM point per day. (e.g., USDA ARS Symposium). Programs (formally organized scientific or career-related seminars, roundtables, symposia, or colloquia) sponsored by official [ABSA affiliates](#) – 0.50 CM point per half-day or 1.0 CM point per day of technical program.
- Dinner meeting of ABSA affiliates that include a technical or biosafety-related guest presentation – 0.25 CM point per meeting.

Acceptable Support Documentation for Audit (section 5):

RBP(ABSA)s/CBSP(ABSA)s must document the name of the conference or symposium, sponsoring organization, dates of attendance and proof of attendance (i.e., registration receipts, email confirmation, approved travel/expense reports, hotel receipts, or airline tickets, etc.). Certificates of completion with the RBP(ABSA)/CBSP(ABSA)'s name and date are acceptable.

6. Professional Development Activities: Sponsored or co-sponsored by ABSA or ABSA Affiliate
(Maximum points allowed per year for students and teachers: No limit)

[Professional Development Activities](#) in section 6 refers to a pre-conference course at an ABSA sponsored, co-sponsored, or affiliate sponsored conference, symposia, webinar, or live training. All courses must be a minimum of 1-hour to qualify for CM points and cannot be combined.

- Attending an ABSA professional development activity – 0.125 CM point per hour, 0.50 CM point per half day, or 1.0 CM point per day. Points will not be awarded for attending the same course or program more than once during a recertification cycle.
- Facilitating an ABSA professional development activity– 0.125 CM point per 2 hours, 0.25 per half day, or 0.50 CM point per day. Attendance points will not be awarded to facilitators on courses they facilitate.
- Peer review and submission of comments for an ABSA owned course (Risk Assessment, BSL-3 Operations, etc.) would be worth 1-hr credit per module reviewed.
- Teaching an ABSA professional development activity– 0.25 CM points per hour, 1.0 CM point per half day or 2.0 CM points per day. Points will not be awarded for teaching the same course or program more than once during a calendar year. Where multiple teachers are involved, if they are actively participating during the entire course, the points apply to all teachers. For courses where periods exist when a teacher is not involved or responsible for the class, points should be based only upon actual class involvement time– 0.25 CM points = 1 hour of involvement.

Acceptable Support Documentation for Audit (section 6):

Student: A copy of the course attendance certificate will serve to verify attendance of an ABSA Professional Development Activity and other ABSA-sponsored courses.

Teacher: A copy of the course brochure or relevant program indicating the course you taught, and the number of hours involved.

7. Professional Development Activities: Not ABSA Sponsored/Co-sponsored/Affiliate Sponsored
(Maximum points allowed per year for students and teachers: No limit)

Professional Development Activities in section 7 refers to a pre-conference course at a conference, symposia, webinar, or live training that are not ABSA sponsored/co-sponsored, or Affiliate sponsored.

Attendees or sponsors of non-ABSA and non-ABSA affiliate conferences, symposia, programs, and meetings must apply to ABSA before CM points will be granted. An Application for CM Points will need to be completed with information about the sponsor, agenda or program, date(s) of the program and contact hours.

The CMB will determine whether points will be awarded, based on the relevance of the activity to biosafety by using the [ABSA CBSP Exam Content](#). Applicants will need to indicate the appropriate domain/task number(s) that characterizes the biosafety content to the Board. Approval numbers and associated CM points will be listed in the credentialing maintenance section of the ABSA website under [Professional Development Activities](#). Any activity/course must have the CM Approval number entered. Points claimed without an approval number will not be considered. All courses must be a minimum of 1- hour to qualify for CM points and cannot be combined.

- **Attending** an approved biosafety-related educational course -0.50 CM point per half day, 1.0 CM point per day. (Points will not be awarded for attending the same course more than once during a cycle.)
- **Teaching** an approved biosafety-related education course – 1.0 CM point per half day, 2.0 CM points per day. (Points will not be awarded for teaching the same course more than once during a year or if it is part of your job description.) Where multiple teachers are involved, if they are actively participating during the entire course, the points apply to all teachers. For courses where periods exist when a teacher is not involved or responsible for the class, points should be based only upon actual class involvement time and 0.25 CM point = 1 hour of involvement.
- Updating an online training module = 50% of what teaching the course would be, i.e., a 4-hr module would be worth 0.50 CM per review.
- Peer review and submission of comments for an ABSA owned course (Risk Assessment, Principles and Practices of Biosafety®, etc.) would be worth 0.125 CM point per module reviewed

Acceptable Support Documentation for Audit (section 7):

Student: A copy of certificate of completion indicating course title, date(s) of attendance, and CMB approval number. Attendance may also be documented by a letter, attendance roster or some other documentation from the sponsor verifying the completion of the entire course or educational program.

Teacher: A letter from the academic institution or course sponsor verifying that you taught the course, program, or seminar and a copy of the catalog description or information brochure indicating title of the course or program, date(s) taught, topics covered, length of presentation (in hours), and the CMB approval number.

Peer Review: A letter/email confirmation from ABSA verifying the module(s) reviewed and the date of submission

8. College/University Courses

(Maximum points allowed per year for students and teachers: No limit)

ABSA CM points can be earned by completing or teaching biological safety-related college or university courses. Courses must be offered through an institution accredited by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). Non-college courses with American Council on Education (ACE) credit are also acceptable for CM points. Points can only be claimed if received within the 5-year cycle.

Attendees or Instructors must apply to ABSA before CM points will be granted. An [Application for CM Points](#) will need to be completed with information about the sponsor/institution, syllabus or program, date(s) of the program and contact hours. The CMB will determine whether points will be awarded, based on the relevance of the activity to biosafety by using the [ABSA CBSP Exam Content](#).

Applicants will need to indicate the appropriate domain/task number(s) that characterizes the biosafety content to the Board. Approval numbers and associated CM points will not be listed on the Professional Development Activities list as these are specific to the applicant

- Students – 1.0 CM point per semester hour.
- Teachers – 2.0 CM points per semester hour.
- MA/MS dissertation-2.5 CM points; PhD dissertation-5.0 CM points.
- International courses will be evaluated for U.S. equivalence by the CMB.

Acceptable Support Documentation for Audit (section 8):

Student: A copy of the official transcript/e-transcript bearing the Registrar's stamp or seal indicating the date of completion and credits earned. A description of the course content, passing grade, date of completion & credits earned.

Teacher: A letter from the academic institution or course sponsor verifying that the RBP(ABSA)/CBSP(ABSA) was appointed to teach the course, program, or seminar and a copy of the catalog description or information brochure indicating title of the course or program, date(s) taught, topics covered, and the number of credits earned per student

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