Credentialing Maintenance (CM) Program Guide

The ABSA International Credentialing Maintenance (CM) Program ensures that ABSA Registered Biosafety Professionals (RBP(ABSA)s) and ABSA Certified Biological Safety Professionals (CBSP(ABSA)s) 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 five-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 five-year cycle from among the categories of activities defined in *Acceptable Activities*. A minimum of 15 of the 40 CM points per five-year cycle must be earned from professional development Sections 4-8. At the time of renewing their credentials, the RBP(ABSA)/CBSP(ABSA) 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 ABSA CBSP examination. Acceptable documentation has been developed for many of the professional and educational activities related to the practice of Biological Safety.

**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 dues 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).
- For CBSP(ABSA)s that choose to recertify by retaking the ABSA CBSP exam have a $500 fee.

**Audit:** Each cycle, ten percent of CM worksheets will be selected at random (computerized) by the ABSA Office for audit. If selected, RBP(ABSA)s/CBSP(ABSA)s will be required to submit supporting documentation for the activities listed on their worksheet where points are claimed within 30 days. Failure to respond to audit will result in losing your credential(s).

**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 chose 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.
Extenuating Circumstances (Extension Request): Examples of situations which may qualify for an extension include serious medical issues, military leave, natural disasters impacting your work or workplace, or conditions related to COVID-19.

The CMB will consider extenuating circumstances for an extension of the due date for credentialing requirements. The form must be submitted prior to the cycle deadline for recertification along with the CM worksheets. Submission of the worksheets gives proof of any CM points earned prior to or after the term of extenuating circumstances and demonstrates working towards meeting the points requirement. All extensions are granted on a case-by-case basis and will not be considered after a candidate fails to meet the 40 CM point requirement.

During the time of the extension, individuals may no longer use the RBP/CBSP(ABSA) credential and will not be asked to pay maintenance fees. Requesters are required to earn a total of 48 CM points to regain status and must be claimed/earned within the years provided by the CMB. Requesters must obtain their missing CM points plus an additional 8 points for the extension year. Depending on the extension request reason, the CMB may revise the years permitted to claim/earn CM points. Recertification may occur after the CM worksheets are received by February 1 following the extension year-end and with CMB approval.

Failure to Recredential: CBSP(ABSA) Credential holders who have not accrued adequate CM points during their CM cycle may choose to renew their credentials by taking and passing the ABSA CBSP Exam. Passing the examination earns all 40 CM points required for the current five-year CM cycle. To renew credentials by examination, credential holders must be in good standing (up to date on all maintenance dues) and notify the ABSA Office prior to February 1 of their 5th 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)s who have not accrued adequate CM points during their 5-year cycle may petition the CMB to receive an extension (listed above). If they are unsuccessful, they can submit the CM worksheet after obtaining an average of 8 points per year for three consecutive years (beginning the year following cycle end). Individuals that were previously RBP credentialed are eligible to recertify under the Credentialing Evaluation Board (CEB) after a minimum of 5 years.

Individuals that hold both the RBP(ABSA) and CBSP(ABSA)s that do not maintain the 40 cm points per 5-year cycle have a few options.

1. Earn the missing points plus the 8 points for current year to maintain both.
2. Can either retake the ABSA CBSP exam and upon passing, be recredentialed in the CBSP(ABSA) only and lose the RBP(ABSA).
3. Complete the three consecutive year route and the RBP(ABSA) will be reinstated but the CBSP(ABSA) will be dropped.

Approval of Activities not Sponsored/co-sponsored by ABSA or an ABSA Affiliate: Courses or activities that require CM approval (i.e., not sponsored by ABSA or its affiliates) 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)

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)

- Membership in ABSA International – 1.0 CM point per year.
- Membership in an official ABSA affiliate – 0.5 CM point per year (max 2 affiliates/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, dues receipts or canceled checks. 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 (current Executive Committee) on the ABSA Council – 3.0 CM points per year.
- Service on the ABSA Council (excluding current Executive Committee) – 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 – 0.5 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 chairperson or co-chair on an ABSA committee – 2.0 CM point (effective January 1, 2022; not retroactive); Service by Council as committee chair does not receive CM points.
- Service on an ABSA committee, subcommittee, task force, working group, or Board – 1.0 CM point per year (effective January 1, 2022; not retroactive); Service by an ABSA officer as liaison on an ABSA Committee does not receive CM points.
- Service as a mentor in the ABSA mentoring program – 0.5 CM points per mentee.
- Service on a non-ABSA biosafety-related governmental commission, council, and committee (national, state, and local) – 0.5 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) – 0.5 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 (Domain/Tasks) and 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 - 0.5 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 – 0.5 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, Local/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 Biosecurity Symposium – 0.5 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 – 0.5 CM point per half-day or 1.0 CM point per day of technical program.
• Luncheon or 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, canceled checks, 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 Courses: 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, 0.5 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 0.5 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 (e.g., Biosafety Review Course) – 0.125 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 (Domain/Tasks). 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 -0.5 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 0.125 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 0.5 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 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.

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 (Domain/Tasks).

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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