



## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q: What is the difference between the Registered Biosafety Professional (RBP) credential and the Certified Biological Safety Professional (CBSP) credential? Do I need to obtain one before the other?**

A: The CBSP and RBP are distinct and independent biosafety credentials. An RBP is not needed to obtain a CBSP or vice versa. The differences between the CBSP and the RPB are as follows:

### **Certified Biological Safety Professional (CBSP)**

A CBSP meets specific educational and experience requirements and passes a written exam, developed and administered by ABSA. Application requirements for the exam include transcripts, references, and work history. Certification is valuable for professional development. Recipients are internationally recognized as having sufficient knowledge and experience. More information can be found at <http://www.absa.org/biocert.html>.

### **Registered Biosafety Professional (RBP)**

An RBP is an individual with documented university education or specialized training in relevant biological safety disciplines and found to be eligible for registration by the ABSA Credentialing Evaluation Board (CEB). Eligibility requirements include a minimum of 5-years of practical experience in biosafety, or a combination of education and directly related work experience. Applicants must document examples of work related knowledge, skills, and abilities in the field of biosafety. The RBP understands sufficient cell biology, pathogenic microbiology, molecular genetics, and concepts of disease transmission to enable them to apply safeguards to work with biohazardous materials. More information can be found at <http://www.absa.org/bioreg.html>.

**Q: Is there guidance for new professionals working toward an RBP or CBSP credential?**

A: The requirements for obtaining the RBP or CBSP credential are listed on the ABSA website along with supporting documents. At each ABSA conference there is a Q&A Session with members of both the Credentialing Evaluation Board (CEB) and the Credentialing Maintenance Board (CMB) to explain requirements and answer questions. Any Board Member is willing to speak with a new member regarding the process of obtaining either the RBP or CBSP credential. ABSA also has created and offers the Principles and Practices of Biosafety for new professionals with 0-3 years of experience in the field.

**Q: What constitutes a Baccalaureate degree in a physical or biological science discipline (a *relevant discipline*)?**

A: The following physical and biological sciences would be accepted for a Baccalaureate degree. The course work required for each individual program will be taken into consideration on a case by case basis

**Physical Science**

Astronomy  
Chemistry

Earth Science

Physics

**Biological Science**

Affective Neuroscience  
Anatomy  
Biomedical Science  
Biochemistry  
Biocomputers  
Biocontrol  
Biodynamics  
Bioinformatics  
Biology  
Biomaterials  
Biomechanics  
Biomonitoring  
Biophysics  
Biopolymers  
Bioprocess Technology  
Biotechnology  
Botany  
Cell Biology  
Cognitive Neuroscience  
Computational Neuroscience

Conservation Biology  
Cytology  
Developmental Biology  
Ecology  
Embryology  
Ethology  
Environmental Science  
Evolutionary Biology  
Evolutionary Genetics  
Food Science  
Genetics  
Genomics  
Health Sciences  
Immunogenetics  
Immunology  
Immunotherapy  
Marine Biology  
Medical Devices  
Medical Imaging  
Medical Technology

Microbiology  
Molecular Biology  
Neuroethology  
Neuroscience  
Oncology  
Optometry  
Parasitology  
Pathology  
Pharmaceutical Science  
Pharmacogenomics  
Pharmacology  
Physiology  
Proteomics  
Sports Science  
Structural Biology  
Systems Biology  
Toxicology  
Wildlife Biology  
Zoology

**Q: What constitutes a Masters or Doctoral degree in a relevant discipline?**

A: The following physical and biological sciences would be accepted for a Baccalaureate degree. A Masters of Public Health may not be considered a relevant program. The course work required for each individual program will be taken into consideration on a case by case basis. Examples **may** include, but are not limited to:

Bacteriology	Molecular Biology
Biology	Molecular and Cell Biology
Biological Sciences	Molecular Biology
Genetics	Parasitology
Genomics	Pathology
Microbiology	Veterinary Parasitology/Immunology
Microbial Genetics	Virology

**Q: I received my degree from an institution outside the U.S. or Canada. Do I need to submit the original transcripts along with the equivalency from a NACES (National Association of Credential Evaluation Services) approved company?**

A: No, the original detailed course-by-course equivalency report from a NACES member organization is all that is required.

**Q: How do I locate a NACES approved company?**

A: A list of approved agencies can be found at <http://www.naces.org/members.html> *Please note:* Transcripts and/or educational evaluations will not be returned to applicants.

**Q: Do I need to gather all my information (transcripts, professional reference forms, etc.) to submit to the Credentialing Evaluation Board in a single packet or can they be submitted piece by piece?**

A: You may submit the information piece by piece. The ABSA Office will retain partial applications for 1-year from the date of application submission. All incomplete applications will be destroyed after 1-year.

**Q: What constitutes professional certification, licensing, or registration that require qualifications commensurate with those in the General Criteria?**

A: Examples include, but are not limited to: Sanitarian, Medical Technologist, and Infection Control Specialist. Examples which do NOT qualify include: Specialist Microbiologist in Biological Safety Microbiology, SM (NRCM), Certified Biological Safety Professional (CBSP, CIH, CSP, CHMM, CHP, etc.).

**Q: What does the Credentialing Evaluation Board consider as acceptable 'professional biological safety experience'?**

A: In order to qualify as acceptable biosafety experience, the applicant's principal responsibility must be to manage and/or direct a comprehensive biosafety program. Although biosafety program management does not need to be the applicant's only responsibility, the applicant must demonstrate they've obtained the required number of years of hands on experience managing and implementing a comprehensive biosafety program. Typical biosafety program management responsibilities may include, but are not limited to, biorisk assessment and management (including hazard identification and risk assessment, management and communication), creating and conducting biosafety related training, establishing written biosafety programs policies, and procedures, developing and maintaining site biosafety manuals and exposure control plans, establishing and leading biosafety committees, reviewing project proposals and providing advice on biosafety issues, providing technical support to medical surveillance program managers, developing and supporting implementation of infectious waste management programs, developing and recommending biosafety practices and plans for biological emergencies, providing technical advice on shipping, importing and exporting biological materials and agents, auditing biosafety and/or biosecurity programs, establishing and managing programs for regulated agents and materials (e.g. HHS/USDA Select Agents and Toxins, Deemed Export, Commerce Control List) and developing site biosecurity programs and plans and conducting biosecurity risk assessments.

**Q: How does the Credentialing Evaluation Board (CEB) ensure unbiased review of credential application submissions?**

A: The CEB evaluates each submission based on a transparent and uniform set of criteria; conflict of interest provisions have been established. Board members are approved by the ABSA Council and adhere to a high standard of professional integrity and ethics. ABSA members are encouraged to approach the Board members with any concerns of bias.

**Q: My application to become an RBP was initially denied by the Credentialing Evaluation Board (CEB). What is the appeal process?**

A: Any denial of credentials may be appealable by the applicant one time per application to the CEB as follows:

- If an applicant receives a denial of his or her application from the CEB, he or she may submit written notice to the CEB for reconsideration. If the applicant is not satisfied with the CEB's response, he or she may submit a written notice requesting an appeal to the ABSA President no later than 14-days after the denial is issued. The appeal must be based on a factual and or procedural issue with regard to the review and denial. No other issues or matters shall be considered.

- The ABSA President shall refer the matter to the Council. The Council will be provided with the necessary information to conduct an appeal review. The review will take place during a Council meeting with a quorum of Council members present. The Council shall only consider the factual and or procedural issues stated with particularity in the written notice and no other issues.
- If the Council confirms the denial, the decision is final and no other appeal process shall be available to the applicant. If the denial is not confirmed, the Council shall remit the matter to the CEB with recommendations on addressing any factual or procedural issues, along with instructions to conduct a re-review. If the CEB again denies the applicant, the decision is final and no further appeal is available.

**Q: My application to become an RBP was initially denied by the Credentialing Evaluation Board (CEB). I now feel I have overcome the deficiency listed, what is needed to request reconsideration?**

A: If your initial application was reviewed within the past 12 months, you need to submit a letter to the CEB to request reconsideration and you must supply any supporting documents that demonstrate you have met the deficiency. If more than 12 months have passed, you will need to submit the entire application packet (excluding your transcripts), including the application fee.

**Q: Can ABSA provide a specific course of study that will lead to registration or certification as a Biosafety Officer?**

A: There are a number of Biosafety Fellowship Programs available to help strengthen the biosafety professional. Some examples are:

- [National Biosafety and Biocontainment Training Program](#)
- [The University of Chicago Biosafety Training](#)

ABSA also offers a number of educational opportunities, including:

- [Principles & Practices of Biosafety](#)
- [Advanced Biosafety Training Series](#)

**Q: How do I show that as a consultant I have comprehensive biosafety program management experience?**

A: Obtain a written reference from the manager of the department(s) you are providing Biosafety consulting services that:

- verify you are managing the biosafety program on behalf of their company (e.g. you are acting as the facility BSO)
- outline the scope of the biosafety program you manage. The reference should include how many hours per day, per week, per month you spend managing their program

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