



Credentialing Maintenance (CM) Program – FAQ

Program Overview

The ABSA International Credentialing Maintenance (CM) Program ensures that ABSA Registered Biosafety Professionals (RBP)s and ABSA Certified Biological Safety Professionals (CBSP)s maintain their professional qualifications by participating in professional development activities in addition to the biological safety activities encountered through their daily job functions. More information is posted on the [credentialing page](#) of the ABSA website including the [CM Program Guide](#) and [Assigned Credentialing Cycles](#) dates.

1. If I hold both the RBP and CBSP credentials, do I need to go through the recertification process twice? How many ABSA CM points do I need?

No. If you hold both credentials, your cycle dates re-set to January 1 of the following year of last awarded credential. A total of 40 CM points is required for one or both credentials to recertify.

2. Is there an emeritus membership status option for CBSP(ABSAs) and RBP(ABSAs) retirees?

Yes. If you are an RBP or CBSP in good standing, are retired, and no longer gainfully employed in professional biosafety work, you may apply for [Credentialed Emeritus](#) status.

3. Are P.A.C.E.® Contact Hours equivalent to ABSA CM points?

No. ABSA CM points are based on hours of involvement, which may not agree with the number of P.A.C.E.® contact hours awarded. P.A.C.E.® credit does not count toward the 40-hour requirement for recertification.

4. How does the Credentialing Maintenance Board (CMB) ensure unbiased review of CM applications and CM cycle renewal submissions?

The CMB evaluates each submission based on a transparent and uniform set of criteria and conflict of interest measures that are in place. Board members are approved by the ABSA Council and adhere to a high standard of professional integrity and ethics.

Credentialing Maintenance (CM) Applications and Recertification

1. Why did my application for CM points get turned down?

When you receive notice of the outcome of your CM application, you are informed of the reason(s) the CMB was unable to approve your request. There are a few main reasons why applications are rejected. The course material was not [biosafety-related](#) or at least 1-hour worth of biosafety material to merit CM points;. In order to adequately review, the CM Board needs a course agenda or syllabus (describing topics covered) and documented length of time on the biosafety related subjects.

2. If I have problems accumulating enough points for my appointed cycle, could I switch to another cycle? What if I forget to submit my CM Worksheet?

Individuals that are up for renewal, that do not have sufficient points, will not be moved to another CM cycle. If there has been an extreme situation that has prevented you from acting as a biosafety professional for a period of time, submit a [Request for Accommodations](#) (approved extension). Applicants requesting accommodation must submit the request prior to their deadline for recertification. Accommodation requests will not be considered after a candidate has submitted their CM worksheets and has failed to meet the CM point requirements. All Requests are considered on a case-by-case basis by the Credentialing Maintenance Board (CMB).

Failure to submit the CM worksheets by the deadline will result in the suspension of your ABSA credential(s). The complete explanation on reinstating your credential(s) may be found in the [CM Program guide](#) on the ABSA website.

3. Can I submit all my CM Applications along with my CM Worksheets at the end of my cycle?

Submit your CM worksheets by the February 1 deadline and complete any outstanding [applications for CM points](#) as soon as possible. The applications will be reviewed prior to review of your CM worksheets.

The CM Board **strongly** encourages individuals to submit CM applications as close to the date of the activity as possible. This is beneficial to the candidate for two reasons.

1. It is easier to obtain the necessary supporting documentation right after the activity/course occurs vs. trying to verify the specifics of a course 5 years later.
2. It provides you with a better understanding of how many points you have earned to date (in case an activity isn't approved at the level you had hoped it would be).

Sections 1 & 2: Professional Biosafety Practice and Association Membership

1. If I take the same course more than once during my Credentialing Maintenance (CM) cycle, am I able to claim ABSA CM points for each time I take the course? For example, a shipping class that I must take every few years.

First, confirm whether it's required as part of your job as a biosafety professional (Section 1 credit). If is it not required as part of your job, you may only claim CM points for this course once during your five-year cycle. If it is a different course on the same topic and not part of your job, you need to [apply for CM points](#).

2. I am a member of an "international biosafety association" and have taken courses at their association events. Why do I need to submit documentation as to the content of attended courses?

Unless your association is listed as an [official ABSA affiliate](#), courses must be reviewed for content and inclusion into the [professional development activities list](#) on our website. An [application for CM points](#) will need to be submitted to determine the [biosafety content](#) and possible points.

Sections 3 & 4: Professional Organization Service, Professional Publications and Presentations/Posters

1. How is service on an ABSA committee counted for Credentialing Maintenance (CM) points?

Committee service runs the calendar year and if less than a full year of service, time will be prorated. If interested in volunteering opportunities (available to ABSA members only), visit the [Get Involved](#) form on the website.

2. If I serve on an IBC, IACUC, or IRB committee(s) at my place of employment, am I able to claim those committee memberships for ABSA CM points?

If they are part of your job responsibilities, then they are covered in the basic points awarded for serving as a biosafety professional (Section 1 credit). However, if your service on these committees is not part of your assigned job responsibilities, then you may be able to claim CM points under Technical/Professional Organization Service (Section 3).

3. How can I maintain my ABSA credential(s) when my employer is not able to pay for me to attend the ABSA Annual Conference or other biosafety training and I can't afford to pay for them myself?

ABSA is continuously working to provide information on free/low-cost/no-travel solutions to acquiring CM points. The [Biosafety Calendar](#) is a great resource to use for finding information on any upcoming events as well as past (recorded) webinars.

Any biosafety-related activity can be [submitted for review](#). The points don't have to come from just ABSA and ABSA affiliate-related activities. Check the [Professional Development Activities list](#) on the website for previously approved courses. Most of the pre-approved [CDC online courses](#) listed are free of charge.

Other examples include joining a committee or board within your local/regional biosafety [affiliate](#) association Technical/Professional Organization Service (Section 3) or by serving as a community IBC member, if it is **not** part of your regular job duties. ABSA members can also receive CM points for contributing ABSA [blog articles](#) and completing quizzes as [Learning Verification Opportunities](#).

4. How are publications evaluated for ABSA CM credit?

ABSA CM points will be given only for biosafety-related publications. To count as biosafety-related, the contents of the publication **must** be clearly relevant to one or more of tasks on the [CBSP Exam Content](#) list. If a publication's focus is on basic science without specific relevance to the exam content, CM points cannot be awarded.

5. If I teach or facilitate the same course multiple times per year, do I get credit each time?

You can get credit for teaching or facilitating a specific course once per year and only if it is **not** part of your regular job duties as a biosafety professional (Section 1 credit).

Sections 5 & 6: Professional Development (Conferences, Webinars, and Symposiums)

1. How do I know whether a non-ABSA course has already been approved for ABSA CM points?

Non-ABSA courses that have already been approved by the Credentialing Maintenance Board (CMB) for ABSA CM points are found in the [Professional Development Activities](#) list on the website. Each approved course is assigned points and an approval number. Activities may be found by searching for course title (PDA), sponsor (who presented the course), or by date.

2. Other professional organizations approve full credit for their professionals to attend the ABSA Annual Conference. Why don't I get full credit for their conference (ABIH, CSHEMA, etc.) toward my ABSA CM point total?

The Credentialing Maintenance Board (CMB) will only approve material relevant to the [field of biosafety](#) for ABSA CM points. If you attend an "industrial hygiene conference" or other event that has biosafety-related session(s), [CMB review](#) is required.

3. Why don't I receive ABSA CM full credit for individual courses when I complete mandated biosafety training at my own institution?

Biosafety training required for one's job may not be claimed for CM points because credit for these activities is applied under Professional Biosafety Practice (Section 1 credit). Professional **elective** developmental trainings may be eligible for CM points by submitting an [application for CM Points](#). You have the option to claim training for points under Sections 5 and 6 (Professional Development) and forgo claiming the 2 points/year under Section 1.

4. I am a Biosafety Consultant, and all the training I deliver and courses I teach could be considered "part of my job" and not allowable for ABSA CM points. What is the best way to complete my CM Worksheet to maximize my points total?

In this case, it may be advisable for you to claim all your lectures and training for points individually in Sections 4-7 and forgo claiming the 2 points/year under Professional Biosafety Practice (Section 1 credit).

5. If I attend a multi-day "Hazardous Material Shipping", "Incident Command", "Emergency Response", or another similar course, can I claim one (1) ABSA CM point for each day of training?

No, only the content that applies to shipping, working with biological materials, or other biosafety topics will be considered for ABSA CM points. If you would like credit for sections of courses like those listed above, first ensure that they are not required as part of your job (Section 1 credit credit), then complete an [application for CM points](#).

Section 7: College/University Courses

1. If I teach a biosafety course as part of my job responsibilities, will it count for ABSA CM points?

No, CM points are only available when biosafety-related courses are taught outside your regular job responsibilities.

2. Will my Master's or PhD work apply to maintaining my ABSA credential(s)?

If the courses or dissertation apply to biosafety and were completed within your CM cycle, they will be considered for CM points under College/ University Courses (Section 7). An [application for CM points](#) must be completed to determine if material is relevant to the [field of biosafety](#).

3. I am a university professor and manage a BSL-3 facility. However, I am not the BSO, and I teach several courses in microbiology. How can I maintain my ABSA credentials, if teaching the course is considered "part of my job"?

If you do not claim the points under Professional Biosafety Practice (Section 1), you can list all the courses you teach each year for points, based on the number of credit hours (2.0 CM/semester hour). A specific college/university course may only be claimed for credit once per year.