



## Credentialing Maintenance (CM) Program Guide

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. The CM Program requires credentialed individuals to participate in professional development activities/courses in addition to the biological safety activities encountered through their daily job functions.

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. Refer to the credentialing page on the ABSA website to access CM worksheets and CM cycle assignments. Worksheets must be completed by February 1 of the year following the end of the 5-year cycle.

The CM program mandates that 40 CM points be earned every CM cycle from among the categories of activities defined as **\*acceptable**. A minimum of 15 of the 40 CM points per cycle must be earned from continuing education actions described in Sections 4-7 on the CM worksheet.

**\*Acceptable** - Any biological safety or biosafety-related activity specific to as many of the domain/tasks covered by the [ABSAs CBSP Exam Content](#).

**CM worksheets should be submitted without supporting documentation;** however, records and documentation of events should be retained until the end of the calendar year following the CM cycle, for purposes of audit.

### CM Point System per Hour by Role- Effective January 1, 2023

Hours	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

### CM Point System per Hour by Role- Prior to January 1, 2023

Hours	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

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

### **Audits**

Ten percent (10%) of received CM worksheets are randomly audited for correctness. All points claimed on the worksheets must be verifiable in order to count toward the required 40 CM points. Those that do not respond to the audit notice will be removed from ABSAs list of credentialed biosafety professionals and may no longer use their CBSP/ RBP designation.

## **Credentialing Fees**

All fees are non-refundable and can be paid under your profile in the [ABSA database](#)

- Following the year of a granted credential, individuals are required to pay a credentialing maintenance fee of \$25 **per** credential, **per** year.
- The recertification fee (paid once per CM cycle) is a fee of \$50 for RBP and/or CBSP ABSA members to recertify. For the RBP and/or CBSP non-members to recertify, the fee is \$100.
- CBSPs or RBP/CBSPs that choose to recertify by retaking and passing the ABSA CBSP Exam are required to pay the \$500 sitting fee. Interested professionals should contact [credentialing@absa.org](mailto:credentialing@absa.org) for more information.

## **RBP/CBSP Emeritus Membership**

Eligibility for [RBP/CBSP emeritus membership](#) requires being a **current** ABSA member with at least ten (10) consecutive years of membership. Applicants must be retired as of January of the year applying, and no longer gainfully employed in professional work, be a **current** CBSP or RBP in good standing (no lapses in credential status and up to date on all credentialing fees). Upon application approval you may use the designation RBP (Ret) and/or CBSP (Ret). If you choose to reactivate credentials, you must submit CM worksheets demonstrating 24 points over 3 consecutive years.

## **Extenuating Circumstances- Request for Accommodation (approved extension)**

The Credentialing Maintenance Board (CMB) will consider extreme situations for accommodating additional time (**up to a total of 6 months**) of the credentialing due date. Requests are reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Examples of situations which may qualify for an extension include medical issues, military leaves, natural disasters, or circumstances relating to the COVID-19 outbreak impacting your work or workplace. 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.

The [Request for Accommodation](#) **must** be submitted **prior** to the credentialing cycle deadline (December 31). Requests will **not** be considered after a candidate fails to meet the certification requirements. The CMB requires that proof of any CM 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 submit worksheets by the new (extended) deadline. The new 5-year cycle would then begin the following January.

## **Failure to Recredential**

CBSP holders who have not accrued adequate CM points during their 5-year 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 5-year 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 a year throughout the month of June at testing centers worldwide. These individuals 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 their CBSP/ RBP designation.

RBP holders, or those with both the RBP and CBSP, who have not accrued the required CM points during their 5-year cycle may take a 1-year suspension (this does not apply to those that simply do not submit CM worksheets when due). During this time, they must earn the missing CM points plus an additional 8 for the suspended year (48 total points). During suspension, individuals will not be entitled to use the credential designation and will be removed from ABSA's list of credentialed biosafety professionals. Maintenance fees will not be required during the suspension.

Those who do not initially submit CM worksheets when due, may take a 3-year suspension. During this time, an average of 8 CM points a year over 3 consecutive years (beginning the year following cycle end) must be earned to be eligible for reinstatement. During suspension, individuals will not be entitled to use the credential designation and will be removed from ABSA's list of credentialed biosafety professionals. Maintenance fees will not be required during the suspension.

Individuals who were previously RBP credentialed are eligible to recertify under the Credentialing Evaluation Board (CEB) after a minimum of 5 years without credential.

### **Approval of all non-ABSA Sponsored Events or Activities**

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 ABSA CM approval number and ABSA CM points(s) must be provided on the worksheet (Sections 6-7) in order for the CM points to be considered.
- List only the ABSA CM points. Using P.A.C.E.®, IACET® credits, or other agencies' approval points will not be counted for ABSA recertification.
- Only activities that are verifiable should be listed on the CM Worksheet. If a person is audited, the onus will be on them to provide some type of documentation of attendance, the validity of which will be assessed by the CMB. The ABSA CM Approval numbers do not prove attendance.

## **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.

- RBPs/CBSPs involved in professional biosafety practice for 50% or greater per year – 2.0 CM points.
- RBPs/CBSPs involved in professional biosafety practice for 20% or greater but less than 50% per year – 1.0 CM point.
- Biosafety Consultants may claim points in Section 1 (Biosafety Practice) **or** itemize biosafety activities in Sections 4-7 (Professional Development).

### **Acceptable Support Documentation for Audit - Section 1:**

A letter/email 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. ABSA / ABSA Affiliate Association 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. If you are unsure your organization is an ABSA affiliate, please check the [ABSA website](#).

### **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 previous years).
- Service on the **current** ABSA Council (excluding President, Past-President, and President-Elect) – 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 Lead – 2.0 CM points per year. Service by a Team Lead on one of their committees will not receive additional 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 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 previous years). Serving as Council liaison on an ABSA committee will not receive additional points.
- Service as an official ABSA mentor in the mentoring program – 0.50 CM points per mentee.
- Service on a non-ABSA biosafety-related governmental commission, council, or committee (national, state, and local) – 0.50 CM point per committee, per year. Examples include serving on a committee to revise the BMBL, working on an NIH Office of Science Policy activity, or service on a local public health committee. 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 (Section 1 credit).
- Service on a non-ABSA, biosafety-related non-governmental commission, council, or committee (e.g., community member of an IBC or an AIHA biosafety committee member) – 0.50 CM point per committee 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 (Section 1 credit).

#### **Acceptable Support Documentation for Audit - Section 3:**

A letter or other documentation supplied from the organization verifying the dates of committee membership and position held or service a mentor/mentee.

#### **4. Professional Publications and Presentations: (Author, Editor, or Reviewer), Presentations (Technical, Scientific, Poster), LAI Database, and Blog Posting**

(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 – 2.0 CM points per author.
- 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 – 2.0 CM point per author.
- Giving a biosafety-related technical/scientific presentation or poster 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.
- Chief Editors of [Applied Biosafety](#)– 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 ABSA LAI database – 0.125 CM points per 2 articles.
- Service related to ABSA [Blog Postings](#) – 0.125 CM points per post (maximum of 8 posts per 5-year cycle).

#### **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.

**Posters:** Documentation showing your name as an author and copy of program indicating your name, name of the meeting, and date of presentation.

**LAI Database:** Acceptance letter or confirmation email.

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

**5. ABSA Sponsored, Co-Sponsored, or Affiliate Sponsored Event (Conference, Symposia, Professional Development Activity)**

(Maximum points allowed per year: No limit)

- Attending an ABSA event – possible 0.125 CM point per hour, 0.50 CM point per half-day or 1.0 CM point per full day.
- Attending a dinner meeting of ABSA affiliates that includes a biosafety-related presentation – 0.25 CM point per meeting.
- Completing a [Learning Verification](#) Opportunity– 0.25 point per successful quiz.
- Teaching an ABSA course– 0.25 CM points per hour, 1.0 CM point per half day or 2.0 CM points per full day. Points will not be awarded for teaching the same course/program more than once during a calendar year.
- Facilitating an ABSA training– 0.125 CM point per 2 hours, 0.25 per half day, or 0.50 CM point per day. CM Points will not be awarded for facilitating the same course/program more than once during a calendar year. Facilitators cannot receive attendee CM points on courses they are facilitating.

**Acceptable Support Documentation for Audit - Section 5:**

**Attendee:** A document of the event, sponsor, and dates attended. Certificates of completion or proof of attendance with the RBP/CBSP's name and date are acceptable. (i.e., registration receipts, email confirmation, approved travel/expense reports, hotel receipts, or airline tickets, etc.).

**Learning Verification Opportunity:** Screenshot of completed quiz with 80% score or higher.

**Student:** A copy of the course attendance certificate will serve to verify attendance.

**Teacher:** A copy of the course brochure or relevant program indicating instructor name, course title, and the number of hours involved.

**Facilitator:** A copy of the course brochure or relevant program indicating facilitator name, course title, and the number of hours involved.

**6. \*\*Non-ABSA Sponsored Event (Conference, Symposia, Meeting, or Professional Development Activity)**

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

Professional Development refers to a pre-conference course, pre-symposia, webinar, or live training. An Application for CM Points will need to be completed with information about the sponsor, program/event and 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 section of the ABSA website under [Professional Development Activities](#). Any activity/course where points are claimed, 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 points and cannot be combined.

- **Attending** an approved biosafety-related educational course - possible 0.125 CM point per hour, 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.

#### **Acceptable Support Documentation for Audit - Section 6:**

**Student:** A certificate of completion indicating course title, date(s) of attendance, and the ABSA CM 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 CM approval number.

### **7. 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 ABSA CM points are 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.

#### **Acceptable Support Documentation for Audit - Section 7:**

**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 and credits earned.

**Teacher:** A letter from the academic institution or course sponsor verifying that the RBP/ CBSP 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