



American Board of Toxicology, Inc.

Recertification Handbook

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ABT Recertification Handbook

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INTRODUCTION

Background

The American Board of Toxicology, Inc. (ABT) certifies individuals in general toxicology through a process that evaluates expert knowledge as demonstrated by education, experience and passage of a comprehensive written examination. Certified individuals are recognized by being designated as Diplomates of the American Board of Toxicology for a period of five (5) years.

Other ABT objectives are to encourage the study of the science of toxicology and to stimulate its advancement by promulgation of exemplary standards of professional practice. It is ABT policy that Diplomates demonstrate a continual commitment to excellence in the science of toxicology and maintenance of expert knowledge of general toxicology. Successful achievement of these goals as outlined by the Board will result in an individual maintaining recognition as a Diplomat by the ABT.

Recertification Requirement

To maintain certification, a Diplomat must successfully complete a recertification process every five years. Diplomat status and all entitlements therein, including the use of the designators ABT and DABT, shall cease upon failure to complete the recertification process within established deadlines.

Overview of Performance Criteria

The ABT has identified three performance criteria by which a Diplomat will be evaluated pursuant to recertification. Diplomates who are compliant with each of the three performance criteria will be certified for an additional five years.

These criteria are:

1. Active Practice of Toxicology;
2. Continuing Education; *and*
3. Maintaining Expert Knowledge in General Toxicology.

Beginning in 2017

Beginning with applications for recertification submitted January 1, 2017 and later, the ABT will require all Diplomates to recertify via the same components of the three criteria. A standard method of recertification that is common for all applicants is in accordance with the certification industry's best practices.



Summary of Changes Beginning in 2017

The recertification application requirements will be the same for all Diplomates.

Active Practice

- Active practice is better defined, with clarification on overlap with Continuing Education (CE) requirements.

Continuing Education

- CE has been more clearly defined and credit points for activities have been updated.

Maintaining Expert Knowledge in General Toxicology.

- The open-book recertification examination will no longer be required.
- Submission of examination questions will no longer be required.
- A Literature Review Assessment will be required of all Diplomates, as described in this manual. The articles and questions from 2017 are posted on the ABT website for all Diplomates to see what the process entails.

Time Requirements for Recertification

Recertification applications are due by March 31 of the year prior to the expiration of current certification. For example, if a Diplomate is certified through December 31, 2020, the application for the next recertification must be submitted by March 31 of 2019. The ABT will review activities in each of the three performance areas and notify the Diplomate of acceptable progress or any deficiencies that need to be addressed. The Diplomate will be given the opportunity to address deficiencies during the remaining year of certification.

Fees and Deadlines

Application Fee	Deadline
Application and fee of \$300	March 31 of 4 th year
Additional \$150 Late fee added to above	After March 31 of the 4 th year

NOTE: Recertification applications MUST be formally submitted online to be considered on time. Sending a check without completing and submitting the online application will result in a late fee.



Recertification Application Procedure

All Diplomates must submit their application for recertification via the ABT website at www.abtox.org. The site is designed to track all requirements throughout the certification period. Diplomates are encouraged to visit the site often and record activities as they occur.

Years Relevant for the Performance Criteria in the Recertification Application

The time frame of the performance criteria in the recertification process begins in the fourth year of certification (i.e., years to be covered are five years since the last application was received). Because the recertification application is done in the fourth year of the five year cycle, a Diplomate's **first** recertification only covers 3 years of performance criteria. Thereafter, the years relevant for performance criteria are the five years prior to the year of application. Examples are below.

Diplomate originally certified in 2003

- Last recertification was active through December 31, 2013
- The application was submitted in March, 2012
- Current certification period is active January 1, 2014 through December 31, 2018.
- The next application will be due March 31, 2017.
- For performance criteria, years covered will be 2012 – 2016 (5 full calendar years inclusive of the year that the last application was submitted)

Diplomates Recertifying for the First Time

Diplomates recertifying for the first time will only cover 3 years of time.

- Diplomate passed certification exam in fall of 2013
- Certification is active through December 31, 2018.
- First recertification application will be due March 31, 2017
- For performance criteria, years covered will be 2014 – 2016 (3 full calendar years since passing the exam)



RECERTIFICATION PERFORMANCE CRITERIA GUIDELINES

The specific guidelines for the three criteria of recertification (Active Practice, Continuing Education, and Maintaining Expert Knowledge) are outlined in this section.

ACTIVE PRACTICE OF TOXICOLOGY

Active practice is defined as performing, directing or managing toxicology activities such as research, testing, teaching, clinical practice or regulation.

Documentation of Active Practice of Toxicology

The most common way to demonstrate active practice in toxicology is via employment in a toxicology or toxicology-related field during the period of the applicant's recertification cycle. When using toxicology or toxicology-related employment to support the ABT recertification criteria of active practice in toxicology, the following information should be included in the work history section of the online ABT account.

- Job title(s)
- Job Description(s): Responsibilities and a detailed description of duties as types of functions performed (*e.g.* basic and applied research; human health risk/safety assessment of products, devices, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, etc.; regulatory toxicology; pre-clinical and clinical testing, etc.)
- Dates of position(s)

The ABT recognizes that continuous employment in a toxicology or toxicology-related area during all the years of the recertification cycle may be unrealistic for some applicants due to a variety of personal, professional and/or economic factors. As such, the ABT will consider other methods by which Diplomates can demonstrate active practice in toxicology when continuous employment in a toxicology/toxicologically-related area (for a maximum of 2 of the 5 years of the recertification cycle) is not possible. Examples of such methods are listed below. These should be documented in the Toxicology Activities section of the online ABT account.

1. Major professional accomplishments in current position such as number of preclinical toxicology studies completed or on-going, numbers and types of technical reports prepared, numbers of students trained, extramural grant support, etc.
2. List of publications using full bibliographic citations.



3. Major external activities can include presentations to regulatory agencies, Congressional or other national bodies; invited lectures on toxicology themes at universities, scientific meetings or symposia; presentation of posters; positions or memberships in toxicology-related professional societies, expert working groups, trade or academic associations; consultants and adjunct appointments; experience in litigation, negotiation or similar activities; participation in grant reviews or study sections; courses taught, indicating number of hours or lectures and brief summary of content.
4. Honors, awards or other recommendations received from professional, academic, industrial or other organizations.
5. Membership on journal editorial boards or service as reviewer of manuscripts. List journal(s) and level of effort.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

Continuing Education (CE) encompasses defined activities that serve to maintain current knowledge of the field of toxicology, but more importantly, is also aimed at expanding and advancing the Diplomate's knowledge base and skill set. The documentation provided by the Diplomate should emphasize new knowledge. A successful program of CE may encompass a myriad of diverse activities. The study of published texts, periodicals, or scientific journals germane to toxicology are means by which Diplomates routinely maintain or expand their knowledge of toxicology. Other evidence of a commitment to CE is attendance at specific programs, courses or scientific conferences where toxicology themes are presented in a comprehensive or in-depth manner.

Many toxicology positions require the toxicologist to carry out comprehensive literature reviews to aid in activities such as interpretation of toxicity testing data, risk assessment and litigation support. As these activities are often considered a part of normal job duties, they generally will not be considered to be CE activities. If these activities are tendered to represent CE activities, the Diplomate may expect to provide additional documentation that these activities do not fall within the realm of their job duties.

Please note that CE that is part of one's job duties is not considered CE, but active practice.

Credit System and Documentation

The ABT has established an objective, credit-based system for evaluation of CE activities for the Diplomate recertification process. The goal of this system is for the Diplomate to attain an average of 20 credits per year for CE activities during the applicant's recertification cycle. The



intention of this goal is to substantiate and demonstrate continuing professional development and learning as well as maintenance of competence in toxicology. Because of the diverse nature of the practice of toxicology, acceptable CE activities may be derived from a number of related scientific disciplines (*e.g.*, toxicology, pharmacology, physiology, pathology, forensic medicine, regulatory science, etc.); however, activities such as business management or marketing would not be considered acceptable. Examples are outlined in more detail in the following sections.

The Diplomate is responsible for maintaining and keeping appropriate records for active practice and CE activities, including documentation of completion of CE courses, attendance at/participation in scientific programs and associated activities, webinars, etc. The ABT Recertification Committee may, in certain cases, ask for verification of the applicant's CE activities. The Diplomate is required to keep detailed documentation in their record on the ABT website, including but not limited to, full journal citations, type of activity (webinar, CE class, etc.), date, description, etc. Any supporting documentation such as certificates, receipts, etc., are **not** required to be up-loaded on the ABT website, unless requested.

Continuing Education Areas and Credits

Each applicant for recertification is required to have:

- An average of 20 CE credits per year of their recertification cycle (for a total of 100 credits over the 5-year period).
- At a minimum, 10 CE credits must be earned for each year of the applicant's recertification cycle to demonstrate continuing, active engagement in toxicology.
- Credits must come from at least two of the three different areas listed below in each year.

The ABT has categorized CE activities into three different areas (see 1 – 3, below).

1. Continuing Education
2. Professional Meeting Attendance
3. Professional Development

The following Tables (Parts 1 – 3) are provided to Diplomates as a guidance of acceptable credits. While these Tables list many common CE activities, they do not provide an exhaustive or all-inclusive list of activities. Activities not specified herein may be considered as acceptable if the recertifying Diplomate can justify that they have advanced and improved his/her scientific



or professional skills as they relate to the active practice of toxicology. As a general rule, one credit will be awarded per hour spent performing the activity in question.

Please note the two columns for CE credits. Credits earned prior to January 1, 2017 should be assigned according to the left column; credits earned after January 1, 2017 should use the new values.

1. Continuing Education (CE) Credit Guidance

Credits through 12/31/2016	Credits beginning 1/1/2017	Activity
	5 per course	Completion of toxicology and/or toxicology-related coursework as part of fulfilling requirements for a Master's or Doctorate-level degree from an accredited college or university.
1 per hour	1 per hour	Attendance at: 1) Formal toxicology and toxicology-related CE courses; 2) Formal toxicology and toxicology-related online CE courses; and 3) Webinars offered on toxicology and toxicology-related topics by academic institutions, professional organizations, trade-associations, regulatory agencies, the applicant's company, CROs, etc. <i>Note: Attending scientific sessions in meetings/conferences can NOT be applied to CE credits (see Part 2 for scientific meetings/conferences).</i>
2 per hour	3 per presentation hour	Presentation of toxicology or toxicologically-related lectures at an accredited college or university, as well as civic organizations, high schools, etc.
2 per hour	3 per presentation hour	Presentation of toxicology and/or toxicologically-related topics at scientific meetings (also includes presentations as part of CE courses, symposia, workshop, platform session, etc.).
1 per hour up to 5 per year	1 per hour up to 3 per year	Private study with the goal of expanding and advancing the applicant's knowledge base and skill set in toxicology or a toxicology-related area (for example, toxicologic pathology, BMD modelling, etc.). Private study credits will not be awarded for efforts to support presentations or publications, whether related to job duties or not.



2. Professional Meeting/Conference Attendance Credit Guidance

Credits through 12/31/2016	Credits beginning 1/1/2017	Activity
1 per hour of meeting MAXIMUM: No more than 15 per year may be claimed	2 points per one-half meeting day (4 points total per day) MAXIMUM: No more than 10 per year may be claimed	Attendance at toxicology and toxicology-related professional society meetings (e.g. ACT, ISSX, SOT, SRA, SETAC, ACVP, STP, AACT, ICT, EuroTox, AsiaTox, ICT, Country-specific toxicology organizations, etc.), workshops and conferences whether local, state, regional, national or international in nature. <i>Note: Credit for attending continuing education (CE) courses given at professional meetings/workshops/conferences is captured in the CE guidance (see Table 1, above). When captured as CE Course credit, time spent in CE courses does not count toward attendance time at professional scientific meeting/conference/workshop.</i>

3. Professional Development Credit Guidance

Credits through 12/31/2016	Credits beginning 1/1/2017	Activity
1	2 per journal article	Invited peer-review of a submitted journal article
1	2 per proposal/report	Invited review of grant proposal or report
4	4	First or sole authorship of a publication of original research in a peer-reviewed journal.
2	2	Contributing (other than first) authorship of a publication of original research in a peer-reviewed journal.
10 for sole; 5 for lead	4	First or sole author of a review article or book chapter published in a peer-reviewed journal or book
2	2	Contributing author of a review article or book chapter published in a peer-reviewed journal or book
10 per year	10 per year	Serving as an Editor-in-Chief, Editor or Associate Editor of a peer-reviewed journal or a book/textbook (If serving in these capacities, no credits may be claimed from review/referee of articles for the journal or book/textbook)
5 per year	3 per year	Serving on peer-reviewed journal Editorial Boards or as an Editorial Advisor
3	3	First or sole author for a poster presentation at a national, international, regional or local toxicology or toxicology-related professional meeting

3. Professional Development Credit Guidance (continued)

Credits through 12/31/2016	Credits beginning 1/1/2017	Activity
1	1	Contributing author for a poster presentation at a national, international or local meeting
	5 per year	Service, during the period of recertification, in an elected position (e.g. President, President-Elect, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Board Member, Councilor, etc.) of a recognized National or International Toxicology Society/Organization such as SOT, ACT, Eurotox, Asiatox, ICT, ABT, etc.
	3 per year	Service, during the period of recertification, in an elected position (e.g. President, President-Elect, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Councilor, etc.) of a Regional or Local Toxicology Society/Organization such as Regional Chapters of SOT
	3 per year	Service, during the period of recertification, in an elected position (e.g. President, President-Elect, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, etc.) of a Specialty Section of a toxicology-related organization
	2 per year	Service, during the period of recertification, as an appointed member of a committee(s) for a professional organization such as SOT, ACT, Eurotox, Asiatox, ICT, BTS, etc.
	3 per year	Service on national or international toxicology or toxicologically-related committees/workgroups/taskforces including, but not limited to, those sponsored by government agencies, non-profit organizations, professional societies, etc.
1 per year per professional society	1 per year per professional society	Full or Associate Membership in professional scientific societies at the National level. Diplomates should document membership in scientific societies. Student memberships will not be counted for quantitative value; only memberships held during the period of recertification will be counted.
	1 per hour up to 5 per year	Participate/volunteer to educate toxicology-related topics (e.g., K-12 programs, non-toxicology-related organizations, disseminating toxicology information to public or media)
Note: For any of the Services to toxicology-related organizations, Diplomates can claim only one of those listed above each year.		

The ABT recognizes that the active practice of toxicology criteria also includes items identified in the professional development component within CE. Many professional development activities enhance the applicant's knowledge and experience relating to their job function. The ABT Board recognized there are instances where applicants are not readily able to attend scientific meetings or continuing education courses. Therefore, the Board is providing an option to recertifying Diplomates to apply professional development CE activities as part of either the active practice of toxicology or CE credits.



MAINTAINING EXPERT KNOWLEDGE OF GENERAL TOXICOLOGY

It is held that an objective mechanism is required for the Diplomate and ABT to gauge the success of their efforts to maintain expert knowledge in general toxicology. All Diplomates will be evaluated in this process in the same way via a Literature Review Assessment.

In the fourth year of the recertification cycle, the Diplomate will receive questions and 4 different reference sources (open-access) that will include, but are not limited to, journal articles, current events or regulatory documents. The Diplomate may choose two of the sources to review and answer the accompanying questions privately. The Diplomates must correctly answer 80% of the questions as determined by the Board of Directors. If the Diplomate does not achieve a passing score, they will be required to answer the questions for the other two sources in the fourth year. Failure to achieve a passing score for the second time will result in the Diplomate being required to answer **all** questions for four new sources in the fifth year of recertification. If the Diplomate then does not obtain a passing score, they will be required to retake the certification examination in the fifth year of their certification period.

In May of the fourth year of recertification, all Diplomates who have submitted their recertification applications will be sent instructions via email on how to complete the assessment. **NOTE: Instructions and Assessment information will not be sent out until the Diplomate has submitted their recertification application and paid all applicable fees.**

APPLICATION REVIEW

All applications receive a comprehensive review. This process is overseen by the Recertification Committee. Diplomates will be notified in writing of any deficiencies in their applications and given the chance to address these deficiencies. Notification will be sent in the fall of the fourth year for timely applications and late applications submitted prior to the fall of the fourth year. For applications submitted after the fall of the fourth year, the review will be conducted and notification will be sent within one month after application receipt.

Additional information for deficient applications in the areas of CE and Active Practice must be submitted via the individual's online account on the ABT website. Diplomates who do not pass the Literature Review Assessment will be sent information regarding how to proceed.

Once a Diplomate is approved for recertification, a confirmation letter and a certification sticker to place on their certificate will be sent via postal mail in December of the 5th year of the current certification period, indicating their certification for the next five years.



SUMMARY OF THE RECERTIFICATION PROCESS

Certification Years 1, 2 and 3

The Diplomate should continually maintain and update their online ABT account with the activities germane to the Active Practice and Continuing Education criteria for recertification, according to the sections above in this manual.

Certification Year 4

1. The Diplomate is notified by the ABT that formal application for recertification is required.*
2. The Diplomate submits the application for recertification via the online system on the ABT website and provides data in support of continuing education and active practice in toxicology. The applicant also submits the recertification fee in the amount established by the ABT Board of Directors.
3. The Diplomate receives and completes the Literature Review Assessment.
4. The ABT reviews the entire application and provides an interim opinion as to satisfactory progress or deficiencies.
5. Diplomates failing to pass the Literature Review Assessment are given two subsequent opportunities to achieve a passing score.

Certification Year 5

Diplomates that fail to achieve a passing grade on the Literature Review Assessment will be required to retake the certification exam in year 5.

The ABT conducts a final review of the updated recertification application and either:

- a) certifies the Diplomate for an additional five-year period, or
- b) requires the Diplomate to take and pass the formal certification examination, or
- c) informs the Diplomate their certification has expired

Note: For years 4 and 5 of the certification process, the Diplomate should continue to maintain their online account with details of Active Practice and Continuing Education information. This data will be used in the following cycle of recertification.

***It is the responsibility of the Diplomate to ensure the American Board of Toxicology receives any address changes. Service by regular mail to your last known address of record constitutes adequate and sufficient notice to you for any official communication. Remember, recertification begins in the fourth year. If you don't hear from the ABT office by March 31st of the fourth year, please contact our office.**



GROUNDS FOR REVOCATION OF DIPLOMATE STATUS

Decertification of a Diplomate of the American Board of Toxicology (ABT) either by revocation of certification or denial of recertification, may occur for the following reasons: (1) there has been a judgment of conviction entered against the Diplomate for any misdemeanor or felony which, under the circumstances of the case, involved conduct that substantially relates to the Diplomate's professional activity; (2) there has been a judgment of conviction entered against the Diplomate for a felony involving dishonest conduct; (3) there has been an adverse fact-finding by a court or government agency that creates substantial and justifiable doubt about the Diplomate's professional integrity; or (4) the Diplomate has committed fraud with substantial connection to his professional activities or to his certification or recertification. The full process for decertification is available by contacting the ABT office.

ABT POLICY ON RETIRED STATUS

As of March 6, 2010, the American Board of Toxicology Board of Directors has formalized the cessation of the designation "DABT, Retired." In previous years, an individual was allowed to use this designation and forgo future recertification if working no more than 25% of their time in the toxicology field. Due to the complications in enforcing such a policy, and the impossibility of overseeing whether retired Diplomates are still working and how much, the Board decided to no longer offer such a designation. If no longer certified, a former Diplomate may list DABT followed by the years of certification, as illustrated below.

John Doe, DABT 1980-2005

PRIVACY POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to describe (1) the information and data ABT considers as private, and (2) steps taken to safeguard private information.

ABT Website

The ABT website is separated into four distinct areas: Public (no login password required), Candidates (login password required), Diplomates Only (login password required), and Board of Directors Only (login password required). The use of the website will continue to evolve and the following general principles will be followed.

ABT is committed to honoring the privacy of those visiting the web site. The ABT website employs “session cookies” only. No record is made of anyone accessing the site, and there is no sharing of information about access to the site.

- A. Public portion of site. Only information regarding the nature and mission of ABT, appropriate news items, and general information for potential candidates are available in this area.
- B. Candidate portion of site. In this part of the site, accessible by user ID and password, candidates will submit their application for the exam and track the application status. In addition, they will be able to review their results.
- C. Diplomates Only portion of site. In this user ID and password protected area of the website, active Diplomates can access the ABT newsletter, and Searchable Directory. Diplomates should safeguard their user IDs and passwords, and must not give them to others for access, since this would compromise sensitive private information. In addition, this portion of the site is where Diplomates will maintain records of their contact information and recertification activities.
- D. Board of Directors Only portion of site. This area is used for the work of the current ABT Board of Directors.

Diplomate Directory

The Searchable Directory is available in the Diplomates Only portion of the web site. It is ABT policy that this directory is produced solely as a service to Diplomates and contains current contact information as provided by the Diplomate. Diplomates have the right to “opt out” of having their contact information listed in the Directory by informing the ABT office of that choice in writing and in a timely manner.



ABT will not knowingly publish in any other form to sell or otherwise distribute this directory. Further, ABT policy prohibits the use of the directory by any individual or organization other than the ABT Board of Directors for purposes such as mass communications, including e-mailing and telephone soliciting. Diplomates must not distribute the directory or other Diplomate contact information to non-Diplomates.

Office Inquiries

In response to inquiries about Diplomate status, the ABT office will only confirm whether or not an individual is certified. An example of information that will not be released is the dates of previous certifications for a former Diplomate who is not currently certified. ABT reserves the right to release and/or publicize names of newly certified and recertified individuals. If a Diplomate does not wish their name to be released, they must inform the ABT office in writing in a timely manner.

Regarding the ABT financial matters, all inquiries will be referred to the Treasurer. ABT will comply with all governmental regulations affecting public disclosure for non-profit organizations.

Application Materials and Exam

All information contained in application materials (representation of qualifications, supporting documentation, certification eligibility and recertification eligibility material) is confidential and will not be released to anyone outside the Board of Directors. Individual certification exam scores are not available to anyone other than the graders.

Board of Directors Candidates

Board members will not reveal to anyone outside the Board the name of any candidate who was not elected to the Board.

REPLACEMENT CERTIFICATES

Replacement certificates are generally available once per year at the same time certificates for new Diplomates are ordered. Requests for replacement certificates must be received by December 1, along with payment of \$20. Certificates can be ordered at other times of the year, but the cost is then \$100. Please contact the ABT office to order a replacement certificate.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS REGARDING RECERTIFICATION

1. My certification doesn't expire until the end of next year. Why do I have to apply for recertification almost two years early?

The recertification process begins early so that if a Diplomate's application is found deficient, they will have ample time to address these deficiencies.

2. I never got the letter. My address changed. Will you waive the late fee?

No. It is the responsibility of the Diplomate to ensure ABT receives any address changes. Mail service by regular mail to your last known address of record constitutes adequate and sufficient notice to you for any official communication. Recertification begins in the fourth year. If you don't hear from the ABT office by March 31 of the fourth year, please contact our office.

3. But I updated my address with SOT!! Didn't you get it?

ABT is a separate entity than SOT. We do not share databases.

4. What is your policy on address changes?

It is the responsibility of the Diplomate to ensure the ABT receives any address changes. Service by regular mail to your last known address of record constitutes adequate and sufficient notice to you for any official communication.

5. I listed that I went to the SOT and ACT meetings every year. Isn't that enough continuing education?

Attending scientific or professional meetings alone is not sufficient to satisfy the continuing education requirement for recertification. Diplomates are encouraged to keep ongoing online records of their continuing education activities with the online tracking system. Please refer to the CE section of this manual for details.

6. How much is the recertification fee?

Currently, the standard fee is \$300 for all Diplomates. The additional late fee is \$150. There is a \$30 processing fee charged for returned checks.

7. Do you accept credit cards?

We accept MasterCard, Visa, American Express, and Discover.