



Maintenance of Certification

HANDBOOK FOR CERTIFICANTS

Updated April 2021

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Introduction

The American Board of Wound Management (ABWM) is a voluntary, not-for-profit organization established for the purpose of credentialing interdisciplinary practitioners in the field of wound management. The organization was founded by individuals with years of experience in wound care who are dedicated to helping patients who suffer from acute and chronic wounds of various etiologies.

The purpose of the American Board of Wound Management is to establish and administer a certification process to elevate the standard of care across the continuum of wound management. The Board is dedicated to an interdisciplinary approach in promoting prevention, care and treatment of acute and chronic wounds.

The objectives of all ABWM certification programs are to advance wound management as a discipline by:

- Identifying knowledge that is essential to the job of wound care associates and diplomates
- Advancing cooperation and information exchange among the many disciplines and organizations involved in wound care
- Recognizing those who meet the eligibility requirements for certification
- Encouraging continued professional growth and development of individuals and the field of wound management
- Raising standards and elevating the importance of ethical behavior among practitioners and researchers, by requiring certified wound care associates and diplomates to adhere to a strict code of ethics and professional standards.

Purpose of the Maintenance of Certification Requirements

ABWM promotes and supports ongoing professional development for its CWCA®, CWS®, and CWSP® certificants. All certificants renew every year and recertify by examination every 10 years.

ABWM requires annual renewal to promote professional development for wound care professionals and requires periodic recertification to ensure that individuals who hold the credential maintain an ongoing commitment to quality practice.

Annual Renewal

The annual renewal process provides certificants with the opportunity to demonstrate the reinforcement, retention, and maintenance of their knowledge and skills. Renewal also encourages and acknowledges participation in ongoing professional development activities. To support this purpose, renewal requires continuing education activities that enhance ongoing professional development, recognize learning opportunities, and provide a process for both attaining and recording professional development achievements that are directly related to the practice of wound care.

Professional development earned for renewal is accomplished by obtaining six hours of continuing education in the field of wound management each year. The process of renewing annually ensures that certificants participate in professional development activities that are directly related to the provision of wound care on a continual basis, enabling them to remain up-to-date with current best practices and emerging knowledge.

Recertification

The process of recertifying every 10 years provides the opportunity to measure the continued competence of all certificants. CWCA®, CWS®, and CWSP® certificants are required to take and pass the CWCA®, CWS®, or CWSP® examination to demonstrate that their knowledge and skills continue to meet the qualifications for providing competent wound care. Individuals applying for recertification are given the current version of the exam. Since the examination is updated continuously, recertification by examination ensures that certificants have maintained

their knowledge and skills during the time since initial certification or previous recertification.

The 10-year time period established for recertification is based on both the scope of issues that face wound care professionals and the ABWM's belief that recertification helps to ensure better patient care and increases public protection.

Renewal Requirements

A minimum of six (6) hours of continuing education are required each year to stay certified. This information should be submitted in the Annual Renewal section of your ABWM account, which you can access on our website. Your continuing education must be completed during the calendar year preceding renewal.

These hours can be achieved by attending live courses, participating online, through correspondence, or by any continuing education organization.

Continuing education is subject to audit (see documentation and verification of CE requirements section below). Individuals should retain records of all completed CE until after the audit period has ended.

Application for Renewal

CWCA®, CWS®, and CWSP® Renewals are due at the end of January of each year. The renewal fee is \$150.00. Renewal may be completed online in your ABWM Account.

Documentation & Verification of CE Requirements

ABWM will randomly audit 5% of renewals each year to verify that their continuing education has been completed. Certificants will be required to submit supporting documentation (i.e. copies of certificate of attendance or transcripts). Those failing to pass the audit will have their CWCA®, CWS®, or CWSP® revoked. The ABWM chooses to audit 5% of renewals due to staff size, volume of renewals, and the low incidence of errors or false claims in past audits.

Failure to Renew

Certificants must renew each year by submitting both their continuing education details and the annual renewal fee. Renewals must be made by January 31. Renewals submitted after January 31 will be subject to a \$75 late fee. Renewals submitted after February 28 will be subject to a \$150 late fee. A certificant's status will be revoked if they fail to renew by March 31.

Renewal Policy for Exam Committee Participants

Examination Committee members shall be required to pay annual renewal fees to maintain ABWM certification. In addition, while serving on the Exam Committee the annual six hours of continuing education requirement shall not be required. The rationale to waive the continuing education requirement is that service on the Exam Committee provides a valuable source of continuing education, which requires far more than the minimum of six hours required.

Recertification Requirements

All CWCA®, CWS®, and CWSP® certificants are required to recertify every 10 years before the anniversary of their certification date. The recertification process requires you to sit for the CWCA®, CWS®, or CWSP® Exam, which will be offered on a continuous basis throughout the year. The recertification fee is \$375.00 for CWCA® associates, \$575.00 for CWS® diplomates, and \$995.00 for CWSP® diplomates. CWS® diplomates who are MDs, DOs, or DPMs have the option to recertify as a CWSP®.

Diplomates must achieve a passing score on the exam. Failure of this examination will result in revocation of the certification.

Please review the Candidate Handbook (available for download from www.abwmcertified.org) for detailed examination information including details on scheduling, examination rules and procedures, and score reporting.

Candidates who will sit for the recertification examination in the upcoming year will not be invoiced for the renewal payment, but still must record their continuing education information in their ABWM account.

Application for Recertification Examination

The application and required documentation for recertification will be reviewed for completeness and appropriateness by the Executive Director who will recommend to the ABWM Credentials Committee approval or denial of the candidate's eligibility to sit for the certification examination. Those candidates who successfully complete the eligibility review and pass the written examination will be presented with the credential. Candidates will be notified in writing directly by ABWM's testing company of the examination results immediately upon completion of the examination.

The recertification application link is available at www.abwmcertified.org

Failure to Recertify

Certificants will receive notices and a warning letter by mail prior to certification expiration. If the recertification process is not completed successfully prior to the expiration date, certification will be revoked. It is the responsibility of each certificant to keep track of deadlines and submit applications on time.

Recertification Policy for Exam Committee Members

Members of the Exam Committee whose 10-year retesting requirement applies while serving on the committee are not permitted to retake the examination until one year has passed following their last day of service on the Exam Committee. During this one-year period, the former member of the Exam Committee is subject to payment of the annual renewal fees and documentation of six hours of continuing education per calendar year. During this one-year period, the certification status of the former member of the Exam Committee shall be extended. At that point, the former member of the Exam Committee has one calendar year to take and pass the recertification examination.

Verification & Confidentiality

By applying for recertification, certificants authorize ABWM to make whatever inquiries and investigations it deems necessary to verify credentials and professional standing.

Information provided on the recertification application form and any information or material received or generated by ABWM in connection with the initial certification and recertification process is kept confidential and will not be released without the certificant's written authorization or unless such release is required by law. An individual's certification status is a matter of public record and may be disclosed. Information from certificants' applications and examination(s) may be used by ABWM for purposes of statistical analysis and may be published in aggregate form with no identifying information.

Reinstatement

If certification is revoked due to failure to renew or recertify, the individual must submit a new application and pass the examination to earn the certification.

Lifetime/Retired Status

There is no status of retired or lifetime CWCA®, CWS®, or CWSP® status. Once a CWCA®, CWS®, or CWSP® retires, he/she forfeits the designation. In order to maintain certification, a valid license is needed and all renewal and recertification policies must be maintained.

Appeal of Adverse Decisions

Certificants who have been denied renewal or recertification based on failure to meet the requirements may file an appeal with ABWM. The individual should submit a letter to the ABWM Board of Directors, along with any applicable documentation. The appeal will be reviewed by the Board within 30 days and a decision will be sent to the individual, in writing, within 30 days of the decision.

Nondiscrimination Statement

ABWM does not discriminate among applicants/certificants on the basis of age, gender, race, color, religion, national origin, disability, marital status, or any other protected characteristic.

Questions?

For additional information check the ABWM web site at www.abwmcertified.org or contact ABWM at 202.457.8408 or info@abwmcertified.org.