

# Policies & Procedures Manual

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## I. Overview

### A. ABWM Purpose

The American Board of Wound Management (ABWM) is dedicated to a multi-disciplinary team approach to promoting the science of prevention, care, and treatment of acute and chronic wounds. The primary mission of ABWM is to establish and monitor a national certification process, recognize competence in wound management, promote education and research, and elevate the standard of care across the continuum of wound management. ABWM is not a lobbying organization and does not promote any legislative agenda. ABWM, as a national organization, does not establish or maintain regional or local chapters.

### B. Policy & Procedures Manual Purpose

This Policy & Procedures Manual (“Manual”) is intended to supplement and complement the ABWM Bylaws by documenting the broad policies, key principles and traditional and/or typical practices pertaining to the nature, activities and Policy & Procedures of the Board. The Manual’s purpose is to inform and provide a reference guide for ABWM CWCAs<sup>®</sup>/ CWSs<sup>®</sup>/CWSPs<sup>®</sup>, Officers, Board Members and staff for consistent and efficient ABWM Policy & Procedures. In that context, this document is subject to additions and amendments as future circumstances warrant.

## II. Board of Directors

### A. Responsibilities

The Board of Directors is the elected leadership of the ABWM. The function of the Board is to facilitate the advancement and day-to-day policy and procedures of the ABWM and the Certification Examinations. Directors have a fiduciary obligation to the ABWM. They should annually review and sign the Fiduciary Obligations of ABWM Directors document and Participation Agreement.

The Executive Director is empowered by the Board of Directors to conduct all staff performance evaluations, monitor, and evaluate the performance of exam development and administration by the current exam provider and monitor and evaluate all other outside vendors, consultants and agents. The Executive Director will report any performance issues to the Board of Directors/Executive Committee.

### B. Elections

CWCAs<sup>®</sup>/CWSs<sup>®</sup>/CWSPs<sup>®</sup> who serve on the ABWM Board of Directors are elected by the Board.

Directors, except the Public Member, are required to be a CWCA<sup>®</sup>, CWS<sup>®</sup>, or CWSP<sup>®</sup> who has been certified for at least three years prior to election (*see* Bylaws Section 4.3). At least one CWCA<sup>®</sup>, CWS<sup>®</sup>, and CWSP<sup>®</sup> must be represented within the voting membership of the Board at all times.

ABWM Directors submit their ballot at a Board of Directors meeting; or via email, fax or U.S. mail. Board candidates with the highest number of votes are elected. Terms are three (3) years, unless a director is filling the seat of an open seat from a previous director.

All new directors shall, immediately following their election, receive from staff a copy of the Bylaws, Policy & Procedures Manual, copies of the previous year’s Board meeting minutes, and a packet of current Board materials.

### C. Meetings

The Board of Directors of the ABWM meets twice per year in person, or if necessary, by remote electronic means. ABWM Officers are elected by the ABWM Board of Directors to serve and represent the ABWM. They are expected to participate fully in Executive Committee and Board meetings and other activities. ABWM’s

Executive Director should be in attendance at each Board meeting. Legal Counsel and additional staff should also be in attendance when appropriate. ABWM staff provides formal notices and details of all board meetings sufficiently in advance to enable participants to make economical travel plans. In advance of each Board meeting, all Committee Chairs are asked to submit written reports in time for reproduction and inclusion in the agenda distribution to the directors.

Working with staff, the President establishes a written agenda for each meeting. This agenda, together with Committee reports, shall be emailed to all directors at least one week in advance of the meeting. At each Board meeting, staff provides extra copies of Committee reports, any additional Committee reports submitted after the agenda mailing, and the current financial report. Staff shall also report on headquarters activities.

#### D. Term of Office

Each Director of the Board may serve no more than two (2) consecutive, three (3) year terms. Should a Director's term expire while serving in an Officer position, the Director will be permitted to complete the term as Officer, including any successive Officer roles.

It is the practice of ABWM to acknowledge outgoing CWCAs<sup>®</sup>, CWSs<sup>®</sup>, and CWSPs<sup>®</sup> of the Board of Directors with plaques commemorating and thanking them for their service to ABWM at the Fall Board of Directors Meeting.

#### E. Public Member

The role of the Public Member is to represent the perspective of patients served by wound care specialists. The Public Member may have a background in advocacy or may have been a wound care patient or a caregiver/family member of a wound care patient. However this is not required.

The Public Member will meet the criteria established for public members by the Institute for Credentialing Excellence (I.C.E.) and the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA), including the following criteria.

Pursuant to the NCCA Standards, the Public Member should **NOT** be any of the following:

- A current or previous member of the profession, occupation, role, or specialty area encompassed by the certification program;
- A supervisor, manager, direct co-worker, or an employee or subordinate of individuals in the profession encompassed by the certification program;
- An employee of an individual certified by the certification program or of an employer of individuals in the profession encompassed by the certification program; or
- A person who currently receives or within the last five years has received income from the profession encompassed by the certification program.

### III. Executive Committee

#### A. Responsibilities

The Executive Committee consists of the President, President-Elect, Secretary, and Treasurer. It is the Executive Committee's job to serve the ABWM between meetings of the Board and to report to the Board on activities of the organization. The ABWM Officers and/or Executive Committee serve at the discretion of the ABWM Board of Directors. They cannot act in a manner different than the direction of the remainder of the Board. All decisions of the Executive Committee are, to the extent possible, subject to review and ratification by the Board of Directors.

## B. Election and Term of Office

The President of the ABWM shall succeed from the office of President-elect and shall hold office for one (1) two-year term.

The President-elect of the ABWM shall be elected by and from among the Board of Directors of the ABWM at the first Board meeting following the election of directors, shall take office thereupon, and shall hold office for one (1) two-year term.

The Secretary and Treasurer of the ABWM each shall be elected by and from among the Board of Directors of the ABWM at the first Board meeting following the election of directors, shall take office thereupon, shall hold office for one (1) two-year term.

## IV. Staff/Consultants

### A. Management Firm

Any contract for professional full-service management of ABWM, or for the location of the headquarters, shall be reviewed annually and shall be signed by the President on an annual calendar year basis.

### B. Legal Counsel

The Board contracts for outside legal counsel for a variety of issues. The Executive Director serves as the primary ABWM liaison with the legal counsel.

### C. Certified Public Accountant

ABWM has an independent CPA firm complete an annual audit and file the annual tax returns. ABWM staff is the primary liaison with the CPA.

## V. Committees

There are five standing committees of the Board of Directors: Exam Committee, Finance Committee, Executive Committee, Nominating Committee, and Bylaws and Procedures Committee. Committee members shall be appointed for one-year terms and may serve for up to five (5) full consecutive terms, with the exception of the Nominating Committee. Although ABWM Committees meet at the direction of their respective Chairs, the Committees shall meet at least one time per year in-person or by remote electronic means. Additional meetings may occur by telephone conference as needed. Additional information on the operations of each committee may be found in each committee's charter.

Ad hoc committees may be formed at the Board's discretion consistent with Section 6.5 of the Bylaws.

### A. Exam Committee

The Exam Committee is responsible for the administration of the board certification examination. The Exam Chair also serves on the ABWM Board of Directors as an ex-officio, non-voting Director. The Committee coordinates with ABWM Staff, ABWM's testing organization, and Committee members on a variety of Committee functions. The Committee is comprised of CWCAs<sup>®</sup>, CWSs<sup>®</sup>, and CWSPs<sup>®</sup> from all disciplines to provide fair representation for all levels of certification. The Committee usually meets twice per year to review the examination and to review new items (questions) for the exam. All members of the Exam Committee (and Item and Exam Reviews) must sign ABWM's Participation Agreement to protect the confidentiality of the exam and the exam questions.

## B. Finance Committee

The Finance Committee prepares yearly budget and oversees organizational financial planning, including the strategic plan. The Treasurer serves as the chair of the Committee. Core duties of the Committee include approving the allocation of funds and payment of bills; ensuring the preparation of accurate; timely financial reports and reviewing such reports with the Board to explain budget deviations and make recommendations. The Committee also reviews internal financial controls, budgets of special projects or committees as appropriate, and the sources of funding for the organization on an annual basis. In addition, the Committee recommends to the Board the investment and disposition of funds. It reports to the Board on a regular basis the conditions of such investments, sees to the preparation of all tax forms and licenses as required by law.

## C. Executive Committee

The Executive Committee reviews and understands the Board's guidelines on what constitutes an emergency. It meets when an emergency demands rapid action from the Board, and it is impossible to convene the full Board. The Committee acts as the legal representative for the Board during emergencies, makes decisions for the Board during an emergency, notifies the rest of the Board of the emergency as soon as possible and informs the Board of the committee's actions and decisions. The Executive Committee also serves as the primary support and sounding Board for the chief executive during normal business and crisis moments. In addition, the Executive Committee reviews the financial status of the organization and progress towards goals biannually and coordinates the development of a strategic planning process.

## D. Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee is responsible for developing or reviewing the qualifications of each Director and Officer candidate, including sets of characteristics, skills, and experience for each position. The Committee also is responsible for identifying individuals whom the ABWM would like to get to know and getting them involved with ABWM as a possible prelude to consideration for the Board, recruiting candidates for membership on the Board and Officers, evaluating all nominees and making recommendations to the Board for individuals to serve as Officers.

## E. Bylaws and Procedures Committee

The Bylaws and Procedures Committee shall advise the Board of Directors on the interpretation of the ABWM's and shall recommend changes in those Bylaws. However, the Board of Directors shall have final authority to act on any recommendations of the Committee. The Secretary serves as the Chair of this Committee. A complete review of the ABWM bylaws will be conducted by the Bylaws and Procedures Committee at least once every three years.

## VI. Financial

Oversight of the day-to-day financial management is provided by the Treasurer. Actual day-to-day management of the Board's financial affairs is the responsibility of the Executive Director and accounting staff. A Statement of Financial Position and Statement of Activities are produced monthly for review with the Treasurer. The Treasurer and Executive Director provide comprehensive financial reports to the Executive Committee as needed. Financial reports also are provided to the Board of Directors at each of its meetings and several times throughout the year. The Board's finances are reviewed, and an audit is done annually by an independent CPA firm, which provides a formal report to the Executive Committee and the Board of Directors. The audit is reviewed by the Treasurer and Executive Director and distributed to the Board of Directors when made available.

## A. Operating Policies & Practices

The Board maintains one checking account for payment of ongoing expenses and a savings account for deposit of surplus funds. Each ABWM account has four authorized signers: the President, the Treasurer, the Executive Director and an officer of ABWM's management firm, who serves in an internal, "Senior Associate" capacity at the management firm's expense.

## B. Renewal Fees

Renewals are sent to CWCAs<sup>®</sup>, CWSS<sup>®</sup> and CWSPs<sup>®</sup> on an annual basis in the fall and are due at the end of January of each year. CWCAs<sup>®</sup>, CWSS<sup>®</sup>, CWSPs<sup>®</sup>, who became first certified on or after July 1 of the calendar year do not have to pay a renewal fee until the following year. Active Exam Committee members are exempt from this requirement.

**Renewal fee paid before January 31: \$175**

**Renewal fee paid between February 1 and last day of February: \$175 + \$75 processing fee**

**Renewal fee paid between March 1 and March 31: \$175 + \$150 processing fee**

## C. Budget Development & Approval

Staff, working with the Finance Committee, develop a proposed Operating Budget for review and approval by the Board of Directors before the end of each calendar year.

## D. Reimbursement of Board and Committee Member Expenses

ABWM will reimburse necessary and reasonable travel expenses for Board and Committee members participating in ABWM meetings and industry related activities, provided that requests for reimbursement must be submitted timely as indicated below. Individuals representing ABWM should exercise discretion in incurring expenses.

To receive reimbursement, expenses must be submitted to ABWM headquarters on an ABWM Expense Reimbursement form within 14 days of the date the expense was incurred. **Reimbursement will not be made if the form and receipts are not received within 14 days.** IRS regulations require documentary evidence, such as a receipt or paid bill for all travel expenses of \$25.00 or more. Please attach receipts for all expenses to the Expense Reimbursement Form.

### Policy on Specific Types of Expenses:

**Food and Beverage:** Meals (food and beverage) will be reimbursed on a daily flat per-diem rate. First and last day of travel will receive a flat per-diem rate of \$55.50 per day. All other travel days will receive a flat per-diem rate of \$74.00 per day. Receipts are not required for food and beverage. The rates will be given to each member based on their travel dates regardless of any meal functions provided by the ABWM.



Example # 1: May 1-4 ABWM Meeting

Reimbursement Rate:

- May 1 = \$55.50 (travel day)
- May 2 = \$74.00
- May 3 = \$74.00
- May 4 = \$55.50 (travel day)
- Total Food and Beverage reimbursement for May 1-4 ABWM meeting = \$259

Example #2: September 2-4 ABWM Meeting

Reimbursement Rate:

- September 2 = \$55.50 (travel day)
- September 3 = \$74.00
- September 4 = \$55.50 (travel day)
- Total Food & Beverage reimbursement for September 2-4 ABWM meeting = \$185

**Air and Train:** All airline and train reservations must be made through ABWM travel agent Jim O’Neill at 301-570-0800 x 151. Any travel not booked through Jim O’Neill is not reimbursable. All airline reservations are booked standard economy-class and should be made at least 21 days in advance of travel when possible. Travel booked after the 21-day window may not be reimbursed in full by ABWM. ABWM does not provide upgrades to First Class, Business Class or Preferred Coach Class. ABWM will reimburse for one checked bag per flight.

ABWM will not reimburse for airline change fees unless approved in advance by the Executive Director.

**Auto:** Board or Committee members who choose to drive to a meeting will be reimbursed for mileage up to the amount of the lowest airfare available at the time. Mileage will be reimbursed at the published IRS rate. Gasoline and other car expenses are included in the mileage reimbursement rate.

**Rental Cars:** Rental cars are not reimbursable for ABWM volunteers without prior approval from the Executive Director.

**Hotels/Motels:** Board and Committee members are expected to stay at the meeting hotel. Room and tax will be applied to the ABWM master account. Incidental expenses and room and tax over and above official ABWM room nights will be the responsibility of the Board or Committee member. A credit card will be needed to check in (debit cards are not recommended).

**Entertainment/Miscellaneous:** Fees related to golf, tennis, other sports activities, sightseeing tours, in-room movies, movie theatres and shows are not reimbursable. ABWM will not reimburse personal expenses such as laundry/dry cleaning, toiletries/medications, magazines/newspapers and other non-essential items.

**Transportation to/from Airport:** ABWM Board and Committee members are expected to use the most cost-effective means of travel for ground transfers, for example, shuttle, Uber pool or XL, Lyft, or taxicab. If it is less expensive to drive to and from the home airport than to take a cab or shuttle, standard IRS mileage will be reimbursed, and airport parking paid (for length of official meeting).

Please Note:

1. Board and Committee members are only reimbursed for attending ABWM Board of Directors and Exam Committee meetings. Any other travel on behalf of ABWM must be approved in writing by the ABWM Executive Director.
2. Expenses are reimbursable for Board and Committee member travel expense only; spouse/guest travel is not reimbursable.
3. ABWM does not pay honoraria for attending an ABWM Board of Directors or Exam Committee meeting. Participation on the ABWM Exam Committee meeting can be used as the continuing education requirement for the ABWM annual renewal.

## E. Checks

The Executive Director must approve all checks and accounts payable. All check requests must be submitted through ABWM's Bill.com processing account. Payments are made on the 16<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> of every month.

All checks that are sent directly to the Board office, are entered into the ABWM database as soon as reasonable practical. A copy of each check, the transmittal, and the invoices sent with the payment are all filed in the invoice book. In addition, "paid" is stamped, with the date received, on the file copy of the original invoice. The transmittal, along with copies of the checks and deposit slip, is filed. All checks submitted without a complete application will be destroyed after 45 days of receipt.

## VII. Examinations

### A. Applications

Staff, led by the Manager of Certification and Recertification, are responsible for responding to all exam information inquiries; corresponding with applicants during the application process; updating the candidate database; processing payments; and forwarding testing materials to the current exam provider.

All application materials must be received at ABWM headquarters at least fifteen (15) business days prior to the applicant's desired examination date. Staff verifies all candidate information included in the exam application materials. A received application does not guarantee the applicant eligibility for examination.

### B. Re-testing

Candidates who do not pass the examination on the first attempt may reapply for the examination by submitting the Re-Test Application and current re-test fee as set by ABWM. Candidates who do not pass the examination are eligible to re-take the exam 30 days after the date of their last examination, and up to two years after the date of their last examination. Those who do not re-test within two (2) years of their last examination must re-submit the application in full. Any candidate who does not achieve a passing score after three (3) attempts must submit documentation of 20 hours of continuing education in wound management to the ABWM office prior to re-taking the examination a fourth time.

### C. Testing Administration

ABWM contracts with an official testing corporation to administer the three certification exams. ABWM staff provides the testing application forms for all approved candidates to the exam provider within fifteen (15) business days of receiving their completed application. The exam provider then provides all official notifications of location as well as pass/fail to the candidates. The exam provider keeps all items (questions) for the exam in its database. The exam provider facilitates the exam committee meetings (exam and item reviews) and provides summary information on ABWM exam statistics.

## D. Cancellations

Cancellation guidelines are set in the Candidate Handbook. An extreme situation, like a death in the family, may be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to determine if the re-testing fee would be charged.

## E. Special Cases

Irregular applications are presented to board members in the candidate's specialty. For example, questions regarding a DPM application will be presented to the members of the Board that are DPMs along with solicitation of the Exam Chair's opinion. The identity of the candidate will remain confidential.

The ABWM complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and strives to ensure that no individual with a disability (as defined by the ADA) is deprived of the opportunity to take the examination solely by reason of that disability. The ABWM will provide reasonable accommodations for candidates with disabilities.

Verification of the disability and a statement of the specific type of assistance needed must be made in writing to the ABWM at the time of application by completing the Special Accommodations Request Form. The ABWM will review the submitted forms and will contact the candidate regarding the decision for accommodations.

All requests and letters of verification will be kept confidential. Please contact the ABWM at (202) 457-8408 or [info@abwmcertified.org](mailto:info@abwmcertified.org) with any questions.

## F. Successful Candidates

All candidates who pass their examination are sent a welcome letter and are subsequently sent a customized pin and certificate. They are immediately transferred into the ABWM database and can begin using the designation upon notification by the exam provider and ABWM. It is the candidate's responsibility to ensure all contact information is up to date in the ABWM database.

## G. Unsuccessful Candidates

Candidates who fail their examination are so notified by the exam provider. These individuals' files are then retained up to two years, or until the candidate applies to re-test.

## H. Exam Appeals

Candidates who fail the exam and believe there has been a scoring error or significant irregular testing conditions that negatively impacted their test result may file an appeal. All appeal requests must be made in writing to ABWM and postmarked or emailed no later than 14 days after the receipt of the exam score report. Candidates filing an appeal may request an opportunity to re-test due to disruptive exam conditions. All appeals must describe the suspected error or problem and the requested remedy. The results of the appeal will be final.

## I. Special Testing

Upon request, ABWM will administer group exams at a hospital or facility, in conjunction with a meeting or conference or at a corporate office/headquarters. The requirements for ABWM to administer a group exam on-site can be found in Appendix D.

## VIII. Legal

### A. Revocation

Any individual holding a CWCA®/CWS®/CWSP® certification that has been revoked will be sent a certified letter from ABWM Headquarters or Legal Counsel depending on the reason for revocation. The individual will be required to cease use of the credential and to return their certificate immediately upon revocation.

### B. Trademark Use and Infringement

Legal counsel will contact any individual or organization that is inappropriately using the ABWM logo or the credential CWCA®/CWS®/CWSP®. See Appendix A for the ABWM Logo Use Policy.

### C. Confidentiality

ABWM is committed to protecting confidential and proprietary information related to applicants; candidates; certificants and the examination development, maintenance, and administration process. The confidentiality policy applies to all ABWM employees, vendors, committee members, subject matter experts, consultants, and other individuals who are permitted access to confidential information.

ABWM will disclose whether an individual holds a particular credential. Other information about applicants/certificants and their examination results is considered confidential. Exam scores will be released only to the individual candidate unless a signed release is provided. Personal information submitted by applicant/certificants with an application or renewal/recertification application is considered confidential. Personal information retained within the applicant/certificant database will be kept confidential. However, certificant records may be released if required by a court order or other legal process. In this instance, the certificant will be notified by ABWM.

Board and committee members will not disclose confidential information related to or discussed during Board meetings. This includes any verbal or written information identified as a confidential matter. If there is any question as to whether specific information is confidential, the issue should be raised with the Executive Director before the information is disclosed.

Confidential materials include but are not limited to: an individual's application status, personal applicant/certificant information, exam development documentation (including role delineation study reports, technical reports, and cut score studies), exam items and answers, exam forms, and individual exam scores. Information related to the development, administration and maintenance of the examination is also considered confidential. The names of certified individuals are not considered confidential and may be published by the ABWM.

Aggregate exam statistics (including the number of exam candidates, pass/fail rates, and total number of certificants) will be publicly available. Aggregate exam statistics, studies and reports concerning applicants/certificants will contain no information identifiable with any applicant, unless authorized in writing by the applicant.

#### **Confidentiality Agreements**

Individuals who participate in examination development activities (including, but not limited to, item writing, item review, exam form assembly, exam for review) will sign additional confidentiality and non-disclosure forms prior to having access to any confidential examination materials. Agreements are signed and collected by Executive Director or Director of Administration on an annual basis and stored electronically and subject to the ABWM document retention policy.

Individuals with access to confidential certification exam information may not assist or participate in the development of review materials or participation in review programs or courses during their service and for five years after their service has ended.

## Confidential Materials

All confidential materials will be retained in a secure manner as required by the security policy. Board and committee members will keep confidential and secure any confidential materials that are sent to them. These materials will be kept in a secure and private location at all times until they are returned to ABWM or are destroyed as directed by ABWM.

## Access to Confidential Information

Access to confidential information will be limited to those individuals who require access in order to perform necessary work related to the certification program. Access will be granted in compliance with the provisions of the security policy. Individuals with access to confidential exam content are not eligible to sit for that exam during their service or for a period of two years after their service has ended. The ABWM personnel authorized to access these confidential materials are the Executive Director, Director of Marketing and Administration, and Manager of Certification and Recertification.

## D. Subpoena Policy

In order to protect the confidentiality of materials voluntarily provided to it, ABWM will resist subpoenas issued in private litigation for those materials unless disclosure is authorized by the individual whose materials are sought.

## IX. CWCA<sup>®</sup>/CWS<sup>®</sup>/CWSP<sup>®</sup>

### A. Renewals

Certificants must renew each year by paying the annual renewal fee. Each certificant must also document six (6) hours of continuing education in wound care. Renewals must be made by January 31st or the certifiants will be subject to increasing processing fees. Failure to complete renewal procedures by April 1st of the calendar year will result in the revocation of the earned designation.

### B. Lifetime/RetiredStatus

There is no status of lifetime CWCA<sup>®</sup>/CWS<sup>®</sup>/CWSP<sup>®</sup>. Once a CWCA<sup>®</sup>/CWS<sup>®</sup>/CWSP<sup>®</sup> retires, he/she may apply for retirement status. The application can be found under the forms tab on the ABWM website and carries an annual fee of \$75.

### C. Maintenance of Certification

CWCA<sup>®</sup>/CWS<sup>®</sup>/CWSP<sup>®</sup> will need to recertify every ten years to maintain their certification. This entails retaking the corresponding credentialing exam upon their ten-year expiration. Certificants who are in their recertification year are not required to pay the annual renewal fees. Recertification is mandatory for anyone holding ABWM certifications.

### D. ContinuingEducationAudit

Each spring, ABWM will randomly audit 5% of renewals 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<sup>®</sup>/CWS<sup>®</sup>/CWSP<sup>®</sup> 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.

## E. Benefits of CWCA®/CWS®/CWSP®

The following are the basic benefits for the CWCA®/CWS®/CWSP® credentials:

- Use of CWCA®/CWS®/CWSP® designation
- ABWM Newsletter
- Opportunity to serve on ABWM Board and Committees
- CWCA®/CWS®/CWSP® lapel pin and patch

## F. Records Retention Policy

All documents will be retained according to the following schedule. The use of the term “documents” in this policy includes all hard copy and electronic materials. Documents received in hard copy may be converted to electronic format for storage. All confidential materials will be retained in compliance with the security policy.

### Documents Retained Indefinitely

- Examination development documentation including, but not limited to, job analysis (role delineation) studies, test specifications, records of item writing activities, cut-score studies, and technical reports.
- Examination results. ABWM will keep the exam summary results provided by the testing service after each exam indefinitely. These results are kept in the subject files at ABWM Headquarters.
- Examination items. The item bank is retained by ABWM.
- Active applicant/candidate data. Original hard copy applications, transcripts, etc. will not be maintained once the information is entered into the database or stored electronically.
- Files of active certificants, including applications.
- Active contracts
- Audit reports and financial statements
- Meeting minutes
- Legal correspondence and documents
- Certificate of Insurance

ABWM follows the exam provider’s policy and retains tests (both used and unused) for a minimum of six months after the conclusion of an examination. At some point after that six-month mark, the exam provider sends these materials to be destroyed by a professional document destruction company.

### Documents Retained for Seven Years

- Inactive certificant files retained for 7 years after file becomes inactive (current files are retained indefinitely)
- Expense reports
- Accounting/bookkeeping records (except as noted above)
- Expired/terminated contracts
- Confidentiality Agreements
- Conflict of Interest Agreements

### Documents Retained for Three Years

- Inactive personnel files
- Inactive candidate files, including applications
- General correspondence

## G. Security

ABWM will oversee security practices that seeks to ensure a secure, fair, and consistent examination administration process for all candidates.

Confidential information (*see Confidentiality policy*) will be maintained in a secure manner with restricted access, as outlined in this policy.

Access to confidential materials (both printed and electronic) will be limited to only those staff and volunteers (including Board members and subject matter experts) who require access to the information. These individuals will sign a nondisclosure agreement before being granted access to any confidential examination information. Staff and volunteers will receive training in ABWM security protocols during the onboarding process to ensure full understanding of all security procedures.

ABWM's testing sites and any other vendors, consultants or contractors will be required to maintain strict security of all examination materials and other confidential materials.

### Examination Administration

The security of the ABWM certification examinations is of the utmost importance. Security policies, procedures, and practices will be periodically monitored to ensure that the exam is adequately protected (*see Quality Improvement Policy*).

### Physical Security

Confidential materials will be stored in areas with restricted access at all times. Office areas containing confidential files will be locked when not occupied by authorized personnel. File cabinets containing confidential materials will remain locked when not in use.

When shipping is required, confidential materials will be shipped using a traceable shipping method and delivery will be confirmed.

### Electronic Security

Routine backups will be performed for all electronic data.

If confidential documents are transmitted via email the electronic files will be encrypted and/or secured with a password before being sent. Confidential materials stored on secure digital files or similar media will be encrypted and/or password protected. Confidential materials stored on ABWM servers and hard drives will have limited access for authorized personnel. Personal computers/ laptops will be password protected.

Passwords will be communicated separately from data transmission.

### Violations

Any suspected security violations will be reported promptly for investigation by staff. Test sites are required to immediately report any exam administration irregularities to ABWM.

Security violations will be regularly reported to the Board for review and action as needed.

## H. Disciplinary Policy

In the event an individual applicant or certificant violates ABWM certification rules or policies, ABWM may reprimand or suspend the applicant/certificant or may revoke certification.

The grounds for sanctions under these procedures are as follows:



- Conviction of a felony or other crime of moral turpitude under federal or state law in a matter related to the practice of, or qualifications for, wound management.
- Gross negligence, willful misconduct, or other unethical conduct in the performance of services for which the individual has achieved certification from ABWM.
- Fraud or misrepresentation in an initial application or renewal/recertification application for any ABWM certification.

Information regarding the complaint process will be available to the public via the ABWM website or other published documents. A complete copy of this policy will be made available to any individual upon request.

Referral to appropriate federal, state, or local government agencies may be made about the conduct of the applicant/certificant in appropriate situations. Individuals initially bringing complaints are not entitled to any relief or damages by virtue of this process, although they will receive notice of the action taken.

### **Complaints**

Complaints may be submitted in writing by any individual or entity. ABWM cannot guarantee the confidentiality of any complainant or the substance of any complaint. However, ABWM will redact any identifying information about a complainant and/or respondent prior to providing it to the ABWM Executive Director. Upon receipt and preliminary review of a complaint the ABWM Executive Director may conclude, in the Executive Director's sole discretion, that the submission:

- contains unreliable or insufficient information, or
- is patently frivolous or inconsequential.

In such cases, the Executive Director may determine that the submission does not constitute a valid and actionable complaint that would justify bringing it before the ABWM Board for investigation and a determination of whether there has been a violation. If so, the submission is disposed of by notice from the Executive Director to its submitter, if the submitter is identified. All such preliminary dispositions by the Executive Director are reported to the Board at its next meeting.

If a submission is deemed by the Executive Director to be a valid and actionable complaint, the Executive Director shall see that written notice is provided to the applicant/certificant whose conduct has been called into question and to that individual's employer, if applicable. The certificant whose conduct is at issue shall also be given the opportunity to respond to the complaint. The Executive Director also shall ensure that the individual submitting the complaint receives notice that the complaint is being reviewed by the Board.

### **Complaint Review**

For each complaint that the Executive Director concludes is a valid and actionable complaint, the Board authorizes an investigation into its specific facts or circumstances to whatever extent is necessary in order to clarify, expand, or corroborate the information provided by the submitter.

The Executive Director appoints a Review Committee of three or more individuals, who may or may not be members of the Board to investigate and make an appropriate determination with respect to each such valid and actionable complaint; the Review Committee may review one or more such complaints as determined by the Executive Director.

The Review Committee initially determines whether it is appropriate to review the complaint under these Procedures or whether the matter should be referred to another entity engaged in the administration of law. The timeline for responses and for providing any additional information shall be established by the Review Committee. The Review Committee may be assisted in the conduct of its investigation by other members of the Board or by staff or legal counsel.



Both the individual submitting the complaint and the certificant who is the subject of the investigation (or his or her employer) may be contacted for additional information with respect to the complaint. The Review Committee, or the Board on its behalf, may at its discretion contact such other individuals who may have knowledge of the facts and circumstances surrounding the complaint.

All investigations and deliberations of the Review Committee and the Board are conducted in confidence, with all written communications sealed and marked "Personal and Confidential," and they are conducted objectively, without any indication of prejudice. An investigation may be directed toward any aspect of a complaint which is relevant or potentially relevant. Formal hearings are not held, and the parties are not expected to be represented by counsel, although the Review Committee and Board may consult their own counsel.

Members of the Review Committee shall be reimbursed for reasonable expenses incurred in connection with the activities of the Committee.

### **Determination of Violation**

Upon completion of an investigation, the Review Committee recommends whether the Board should make a determination that there has been a violation of ABWM policies and rules.

- When the Review Committee recommends that the Board find a violation, the Review Committee also recommends imposition of an appropriate sanction. If the Review Committee so recommends, a proposed determination with a proposed sanction is prepared and is presented by a representative of the Review Committee to the Board along with the record of the Review Committee's investigation.
- If the Review Committee recommends against a determination that a violation has occurred, the complaint is dismissed with notice to the applicant/certificant, the applicant/certificant's employer (if relevant), and the individual or entity who submitted the complaint; a summary report is also made to the Board.

The Board reviews the recommendation of the Review Committee based upon the record of the investigation. The Board may accept, reject, or modify the Review Committee's recommendation, either with respect to the determination of a violation or the recommended sanction to be imposed. If the Board makes a determination that a violation has occurred, this determination and the imposition of a sanction are promulgated by written notice to the certificant, the certificant's employer, and to the individual submitting the complaint, if the submitter agrees in advance and in writing to maintain in confidence whatever portion of the information is not made public by the Board.

In certain circumstances, the Board may consider a recommendation from the Review Committee that the applicant/certificant who has violated the certification program policies or rules should be offered an opportunity to submit a written assurance that the conduct in question has been terminated and will not recur. The decision of the Review Committee to make such a recommendation and of the Board to accept it are within their respective discretionary powers. If such an offer is extended, the applicant/certificant at issue must submit the required written assurance within thirty days of receipt of the offer, and the assurance must be submitted in terms that are acceptable to the Board. If the Board accepts the assurance, notice is given to the certificant's employer and to the submitter of the complaint, if the submitter agrees in advance and in writing to maintain the information in confidence.

### **Sanctions**

Any of the following sanctions may be imposed upon an applicant/certificant who has been determined to have violated the policies and rules of an ABWM certification program(s), although the sanction applied must reasonably relate to the nature and severity of the violation, focusing on reformation of the conduct of the member and deterrence of similar conduct by others:

- written reprimand to the applicant/certificant;
- suspension of the applicant/certificant for a designated period; or
- termination of the certificant’s certification(s) from the ABWM.

For each of these three sanctions, a summary of the determination and the sanction with the certificant’s name is published by the ABWM.

Certificants who have been terminated shall have their certification revoked. If certification is revoked, any and all certificates or other materials requested by the ABWM must be returned promptly to the ABWM.

## I. Disciplinary Appeals Policy

Within thirty (30) days from receipt of notice of a determination by the ABWM Board that an applicant/certificant violated the certification program policies and/or rules, the affected individual may submit to the ABWM in writing a request for an appeal.

Upon receipt of a request for appeal, the President of the Board establishes an appellate body consisting of at least three, but not more than five, individuals. This Appeal Board may review one or more appeals, upon request of the President. No current members of the Review Committee or the Board may serve on the Appeal Board; further, no one with any personal involvement or conflict of interest may serve on the Appeal Board. Members of the Appeal Board may be reimbursed for reasonable expenses incurred in connection with the activities of the Board.

The Appeal Board may only review whether the determination by the Board of a violation of the certification program policies and/or rules was inappropriate because of:

1. material errors of fact, or
2. failure of the Review Committee or the Board to conform to published criteria, policies, or procedures.

Only facts and conditions up to and including the time of the Board’s determination as represented by facts known to the ABWM are considered during an appeal. The appeal shall not include any trial-type proceeding. Legal counsel for the appellant is not expected to participate in the appeal process, unless requested by the appellant and approved by the Appeal Board. The Appeal Board may consult with or involve ABWM legal counsel.

The Appeal Board conducts and completes the appeal within ninety (90) days after receipt of the request for an appeal. Submissions are made according to whatever schedule is reasonably established by the Appeal Board. The decision of the Appeal Board, including a statement of the reasons for the decision, is reported to the Board.

## X. Examination Development

### A. Volunteer Agreements

#### Confidentiality Agreements

Individuals who participate in examination development activities (including, but not limited to, item writing, item review, exam form assembly, exam for review) will sign additional confidentiality and non-disclosure agreements prior to having access to any confidential examination materials. Volunteers are subject to the terms of this agreement for a period of two years after their term as a board member or other volunteer expires.

## **Conflict of Interest Agreements/Recusals**

All staff, Board Members, committees, task forces and their members, vendors, and consultants who participate in examination development activities (including, but not limited to, job analysis, item writing, item review, exam form assembly, exam for review) will sign conflict of interest agreements prior to having access to any confidential examination materials. The method of recusal is outlined in the ABWM Participation Agreement, subsection on Conflicts of Interest (See Appendix C).

## **B. Examination Development**

### **Examination Development & Maintenance**

The Board participates in and provides oversight for the development and ongoing maintenance of the ABWM examinations. The Board and ABWM Executive Director work in partnership with a testing vendor to ensure the examination is developed and maintained in a manner consistent with generally accepted psychometric principles, educational testing practices, and national accreditation standards for certification programs.

### **Subject Matter Experts (SMEs)**

The Board and ABWM Executive Director select diverse groups of qualified subject matter experts (SMEs) to participate in exam development activities throughout the exam development process. The Board of Directors/Executive Committee will approve the final SME panel.

SMEs are selected based on their demonstrated expertise, experience level, geographic representation, and specialty area.

Each working group of SMEs, to the extent reasonably possible, will be representative of the wound management certified population and when selected for a specific task will represent:

- A range of wound care leadership experience
- A range of practice areas, job settings, specialties, etc.
- A range of geographical areas, cultural, ethnic diversity, and gender diversity

SMEs will be appointed on an ad-hoc basis to working groups and committees. Appointments will be made by the Exam Committee Chair and/or the ABWM Executive Director. Members of the Board, with the exception of the public member, may serve as SMEs. The public member is welcome to participate in examination development activities as an observer.

Subject matter experts serving on working groups and committees participate in the various steps of the test development process (job analysis, item writing, item review, form assembly, cut score). To promote continuity, some SMEs serve on multiple working groups and/or committees. SMEs serving on multiple item development working groups/committees may not be the sole judge, authority, or reviewer of their own work.

SMEs will receive training from the psychometric team prior to every meeting. In addition, The ABWM Handbook for Exam Committee Participants provides participants with terminology, tips for writing test items, content outlines and the purpose of the various exam meeting (item writing, item review, job analysis, etc.). The Handbook for Exam Committee Participants is provided to each SME in advance of any Exam Committee meeting.

## Job Analysis Studies

A job analysis is a comprehensive definition of the tasks performed by professionals currently holding the credential. The purpose of the job analysis is to describe, in specific terms, the precise nature of the tasks performed by incumbent professionals who work in the field of nursing for which the examination is being developed.

The Board oversees job analysis studies which identify entry level or advanced competencies upon which a certification examination is legally based. The study process involves preliminary task identification, verification of these tasks using a statistically sound study methodology, and subsequent definition of the examination content based on the job analysis results. A cut score study is completed after each job analysis.

To ensure the examination programs continue to test knowledge and skills germane to current practice, the Board will generally conduct a job analysis study every five years. If the SMEs conducting examination development activities indicate that the examination specifications remain current, a job analysis may be conducted somewhat less frequently, but in no instance less than every eight years. A standard setting is conducted after each job analysis.

## Examination Specifications

The content for the exam will be determined based on the recommended content outline and content area weights developed from the Job Analysis Study. The final content outline and corresponding content weights will be approved by the Board.

Examination time limits will be developed by the Board in consultation with a qualified psychometrician. Time limits will allow sufficient time for the vast majority of candidates to complete the exam, without providing unnecessary additional time.

## Item Writing and Review

The development of all items for the exam will be directly linked to the approved content outline. SMEs trained by the testing vendor will write and review items for the examinations.

SME item writers and reviewers will:

- Complete mandatory training provided by the ABWM Executive Director and/or testing vendor on item writing/review for certification examinations.
- Submit a signed confidentiality form & conflict of interest form prior to participating in any item writing/review activities.
- Have an item writing/review style guide available for reference.

Once items have been written by trained SMEs, they will be stored in an item bank, and reviewed by the Exam Committee and the testing vendor/qualified psychometrician for potential revision and approval. Once an item has satisfactorily completed this review process, it will be approved within the item bank as available for pretesting. Items are reviewed again if they are included on a test form (see Test Assembly below).

Item writing activities may be conducted to build and maintain an item bank that is robust enough for exam development needs.

Item writing activities may occur during in-person meetings and/or at other times or via teleconference/screen sharing or other technologies that allow everyone present to participate fully, items to be seen by participants, and for all participants to be heard. Trained, experienced item writers and item reviewers may submit raw items via email or remote item writing authoring system.

The ABWM Executive Director and Board of Directors may consider incentives such as offering continuing education credit for participation in an Item Writing Workshop. A certificate of attendance may be issued to eligible item writers/reviewers for recordkeeping purposes.

### **Item Bank**

An Item Bank is an essential tool in test development which integrates the content development, publishing and measurement services functions into one program.

An Item Bank will be maintained to include all items developed for the ABWM certification examinations.

Data for each item stored in the item bank will include, as appropriate: current status (*e.g.* draft, revise, active, retired), stem, correct key, distractors, content outline linkage, reference, author, comments, and performance statistics.

To maintain security and continuity within ABWM, the Executive Director will oversee all certification item bank procedures. The Exam Committee will oversee the maintenance of the certification item bank(s).

ABWM examination items will be securely stored in the testing vendor's proprietary item banking software.

### **Exam Form Assembly and Approval**

A draft examination based on the current content outline will be assembled by the testing provider, while consulting with a psychometrician and be reviewed by the Exam Committee. Each draft will meet the requirements of the test specifications with respect to content and weighting.

The Exam Committee will review the exam in its entirety including both the scored portion of the examination and the pretest items. As needed, scored items may be replaced by other previously pretested items, and the non-scored pretest items may be edited. Representatives of the Exam Committee will be involved in final approval of the examination.

Items that are permanently retired from use may be modified and used for other purposes (*e.g.*, sample questions or practice tests). Once an item has been retired and published it cannot be used on an exam.

Depending on the number of test takers per year and other factors, examination forms should be replaced periodically. Decisions regarding the number of test forms for each examination, the manner in which equivalence is established for the test forms, and the frequency for replacing the examination forms will be made each year by the Exam Committee in consultation with a qualified psychometrician.

### **Item Writer Workshop**

Workshops are held at various dates and locations throughout the country and strive to obtain a broad geographic and professional mix. During Item Writer Workshops, wound care professionals are provided with an overview of test item construction and are then asked to write out questions on specific content areas as outlined in the Content Outlines for the CWCA<sup>®</sup>, CWS<sup>®</sup> and CWSP<sup>®</sup> examinations. Copies of the Content Outlines are provided to individuals participating on the committee. Individuals attending Item Writer Workshops should plan to bring with them reference texts, a laptop, and high-quality digital photographs of wounds that can be incorporated into test questions. During the workshop, participants write multiple choice questions and develop case scenarios with a series of associated questions. Item Writer Workshops last between one and two days.

## Item Review Meeting

During Item Review Meetings, the Exam Committee, along with a small, diverse group of certified specialists, examine, edit, approve and code new items for addition to the data bank for either the CWS®, CWCA® or CWSP® exams. These items typically have been developed at an Item Writer Workshop. The Item Review group is led by a psychometrician from the exam provider. Each item is carefully scrutinized to make sure it is contemporary, properly written, has a single best answer and three plausible wrong, or less appropriate choices, termed “distractors”. Once edited and approved, the item is then coded to the appropriate test Content Outline and is then placed into the approved area of the data bank for use in an upcoming examination. It is helpful that persons attending the Item Review Meeting bring with them several reference texts. Item Review Meetings generally last a day and a half.

## Exam Review Meetings

At Exam Review Meetings, the Exam Committee and a small, diverse group of certified specialists meet to approve examinations for the CWS®, CWCA®, or CWSP® that will be administered during the calendar year. This typically involves the review of two forms of a test that are similar in content, but different in actual questions. The review group members work independently to examine every item that has been selected to represent the ABWM test specifications for content to be covered in the examination. Participants make sure the item is current, properly keyed for the correct answer, and that distractors are plausible. Any problems are discussed collectively by the group and the item appropriately edited. Once approved a cut score process is performed. This is a psychometric process that involves the setting of the passing score for each examination. These meetings are led by a psychometrician from the testing provider. It is helpful that participants bring several reference texts with them to this meeting should items need verification. Exam review meetings generally last a day and a half.

## Establishing a Passing Point

The passing point for each exam is established using a criterion-referenced technique. Qualified and trained SMEs on the Cut Score Subcommittee will participate in recommending the passing point under the guidance of a qualified psychometrician. The passing point recommendation will be considered by the Board. The Board is responsible for final approval of the passing point for each examination.

The process used to determine the passing point will be documented as part of a qualified psychometrician’s technical report. Any dialogue with regard to the recommended passing point from the Board must be consistent with generally accepted psychometric principles and will be documented in the technical report along with the rationale for any adjustments to the recommended passing point.

Specific methodologies for establishing the passing score for exams, and ensuring test forms are equivalent, will be selected by a qualified psychometrician based on compliance with national accreditation standards.

## Test Analysis | Technical Reports

Performance statistics will be calculated and retained for exam items and each examination form. A statistical analysis will be performed by the qualified psychometrician following each administration of the exam. When exam forms are constructed from items that have not been previously used or pretested, the statistical analysis will be reviewed prior to release of the final exam scores to candidates. As needed, items may be removed from scoring or other adjustments made, as approved by the Board in consultation with a qualified psychometrician.

Test analysis or technical reports will be produced by a qualified psychometrician and reviewed by the Exam Committee (SME item writers) to evaluate the reliability and effectiveness of the examination and to determine any areas that must be reviewed or revised.

At a minimum, the technical reports will include a summary of the exam administration, the number of exam takers, the passing point and number of exam items, measures of average performance, measures of performance variability, reliability indices, pass-fail percentages, and recommendations from a qualified psychometrician.

## C. Exam Administration

### Exam Administration

The 2.5-hour, 120 multiple-choice question CWCA® exam, 3-hour, 150 multiple-choice question CWS® exam, and 3.5-hour, 180 multiple-choice question CWSP® exam are computer administered at exam provider locations nationwide.

The number of items and time limits are:

1. The CWCA® examination will consist of 100 scored and 20 pretest items with a 2.5-hour examination period.
2. The CWS® examination will consist of 125 scored and 25 pretest items with a 3-hour examination period.
3. The CWSP® examination will consist of 150 scored and 30 pretest items with a 3.5-hour examination period.

### Site Selection

ABWM examinations are administered at testing sites located throughout the United States and Internationally. Testing sites have been selected to provide accessibility to the most candidates in the most controlled, secure and consistent environments possible. To ensure that examination results for all candidates are earned under comparable conditions and represent fair and accurate measurement, test sites meet the following criteria:

- Examination rooms will be quiet and free of disruption
- Rooms will have adequate and comfortable ventilation, lighting and temperature
- All exam administrations will be monitored by approved supervisors
- Entrances/exits will be monitored/controlled and working fire exits will be available
- The test site will be ADA compliant
- Candidates will have access to restroom facilities

The Board reserves the right to visit test sites at any time to monitor compliance with security policies and procedures. A current listing of exam provider locations, including addresses and driving directions, may be viewed at online. Specific address information is provided when candidates schedule an examination appointment.

### Identification Requirements

Candidates are required to present two (2) valid forms of identification, one with a current photograph at the testing site. Both forms of identification must be current and include the candidate's current name and signature. Candidates will be required to sign a roster for verification of identity.



The primary form of identification must be one of the following: driver’s license with photograph; state identification card with photograph; passport; military identification card with photograph.

The secondary form of identification must display the candidates name and signature for signature verification (e.g., credit card with signature, social security card with signature, employment/student ID card with signature).

All identification must be valid and must be an original document. Birth certificates, social security cards without signature, student and employee IDs, and marriage certificates are examples of unacceptable forms of identification. Candidates will not be admitted to the examination without proper identification. There will be no refund of the examination fee.

**Testing or Other Irregularities**

Occasionally, testing, administrative, or other irregularities occur that affect an individual or a group of test takers. Such problems include, without limitation, administrative errors, defective equipment or materials, improper access to test content and/or the unauthorized general availability of test content, as well as, other disruptions of test administrations (for example, natural disasters and other emergencies.) When irregularities occur, the ABWM Executive Director and/or testing vendor will conduct an investigation to provide information to the Board. Based on this information, the Board may direct either not to score the test or to cancel the test score. When it is appropriate to do so, the Board will give affected test takers the opportunity to take the test again as soon as possible, without charge. Affected test takers will be notified of the reasons for the cancellation and their options for retaking the test. Any appeal process does not apply to testing or administrative irregularities.

**Score Reporting**

Candidates will receive notification of their results from the exam provider immediately upon completion of the examination if the scored portion of the examination form is composed of previously used or pretested items to sufficiently support instant score reporting and if the exam is administered electronically.

Score reports will include a “pass” or “fail” result, scoring information, and general information regarding administrative next steps.

Diagnostic information is provided on score reports. Diagnostic breakdowns, calculated per domain, are intended to identify content areas by showing areas of relative strength and weakness. Information is provided to assist the candidate in identifying areas of study for purposes of subsequent examination.

On occasion, occurrences, such as computer malfunction or misconduct by a candidate, may cause a score to be suspect. ABWM and the test provider reserve the right to void or withhold examination results if, upon investigation, violation of its regulations is discovered.

**D. Testing Vendor Supervisors**

**Exam Provider Supervisors**

The exam provider provides secure, user-friendly, high quality computerized examination delivery services to credentialing bodies, and the candidates which they examine, at available secure and monitored locations around the world.

In addition to the exam provider’s strict examination design procedures, a vital part of ensuring defensible examination results is to ensure that all examinations administered in any exam provider testing center the country are given under standardized and impartial conditions.

Supervisors at each site will:

- Ensure the office is open during designated times.
- Greet candidates in a courteous and professional manner.



- Verify the identification of candidates and exam provider-authorized visitors.
- Ensure ONLY authorized items are allowed into the testing room.
- Carefully, consistently and clearly provide instructions to all candidates.
- Promptly begin examination sessions.
- Monitor candidates during examination sessions.
- Provide score reports to candidates.
- Ensure NO unauthorized materials leave the Assessment Center.
- Complete and submit any and all necessary reports to the exam provider.
- Maintain a quiet, secure and professional testing environment

Supervisors are not allowed to answer any questions related to the content of the examination. Supervisors will provide each candidate with authorized scratch paper and one pencil. The scratch paper must be collected at the end of the examination.

### **Selection & Training of Supervisors**

The testing vendor is responsible for the selection and continued training of their examination supervisors.

Qualified supervisors authorized by exam provider must review the exam provider's Supervisor's Manual and sign the Supervisor Agreement before administering examinations.

Testing vendor supervisors administrating the ABWM examinations at testing sites are required to read and acknowledge the testing vendors manual which includes (but is not limited to):

- Exam Provider Contact Information
- Overview of the Supervisor's Job Duties
- Examination Administration Procedures
- Power Failure or System Malfunction
- Candidate Score/Examination Completion Report Not Printed
- Accessing the Supervisor Module
- Equipment Problems
- Known Security Violation Devices
- Examination System's Help Screens
- Candidate Comment Form
- Irregularity Report Form
- Emergency Procedures

## Administration Security

The exam provider's administration and security standards are designed to ensure all candidates are provided the same opportunity to demonstrate their abilities. The Assessment Center is continuously monitored by audio and video surveillance equipment for security purposes.

The following security procedures apply during the examination:

- Examinations are proprietary. No cameras, notes, tape recorders, Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs), pagers or cellular phones are allowed in the testing room. Possession of a cellular phone or other electronic devices is strictly prohibited and will result in dismissal from the examination.
- Only silent, non-programmable calculators without alpha keys or printing capabilities are allowed in the testing room.
- No guests, visitors or family members are allowed in the testing room or reception areas.

## Monitoring of Candidates

The exam provider maintains test administration and test security standards that are designed to ensure that all candidates are provided the same opportunity to demonstrate their abilities and to prevent any candidates from gaining an unfair advantage over others due to testing irregularities or misconduct. Testing centers will be continuously monitored by audio and video surveillance equipment for security purposes.

## XI. Other

### A. Internet

The Board has an appropriate Internet web site for the purpose of organizational promotion, resources, and exam information dissemination. CWCA<sup>®</sup>/CWS<sup>®</sup>/CWSP<sup>®</sup> shall have their names listed in the Find a Specialists section on the web site.

### B. Database

ABWM will maintain separate databases for CWCA<sup>®</sup>/CWS<sup>®</sup>/CWSP<sup>®</sup> and candidates. These databases will also contain renewal information for CWCA<sup>®</sup>/CWS<sup>®</sup>/CWSP<sup>®</sup> and exam application status for candidates.

Database information is updated at least annually when CWCA<sup>®</sup>/CWS<sup>®</sup>/CWSP<sup>®</sup> renews.

### C. Minutes

Within 10 business days of each business meeting of the Executive Committee and Board of Directors, ABWM staff shall prepare and submit Minutes of the meeting to the Secretary for review and approval prior to their dissemination.

### D. Mailing/E-Mail List Use

The Board nor the staff may sell or distribute the mailing or e-mail list of certificants.

### E. Verification of CWCA<sup>®</sup>/CWS<sup>®</sup>/CWSP<sup>®</sup> Certification

ABWM will respond to requests, made in writing, to verify certification and date of certification only. Certification status may also be verified using a searchable online database or by calling the ABWM headquarters office.

## F. Miscellaneous

Staff is responsible for sending monthly status reports to the Board regarding re-registrations, exam candidates, information requests, etc.

## G. Quality Improvement

### **Policy & Procedures Review**

On at least an annual basis, ABWM staff and the Board of Directors and related committees will audit the policies and procedures of ABWM and all published candidate information to ensure that all information accurately reflects the needs of the certification programs.

ABWM will periodically monitor the security policies and practices of its exam administration vendor. The Board will review an annual summary of all security irregularities and related actions.

### **Board Policy**

The Board of Directors is charged with setting policy. Policy recommendations may be made by staff or any Director. Once a policy has been recommended it is voted upon by the Board of Directors at one of the two scheduled Board meetings. If it is a time sensitive policy recommendation a special Board meeting will be called, or it will be voted upon by the Executive Committee.

### **Board Review and Oversight**

At least annually the Board will review a summary of all complaints (related to disciplinary matters), disciplinary investigations and action, and appeals. The Board will review the summary for any patterns and to discuss opportunities for process improvement.

At least annually the Board will review a test/item analysis report that will include any exam-related concerns/recommendations identified by staff and/or the psychometric consultant.

Any significant exam administration irregularities will be reported to the Board.

### **MOST RECENT AMENDMENT:**

November 1, 2023

**Appendix A: Logo Use Policy**  
**License of the American Board of Wound Management Logo and**  
**Credential for Individuals Who Pass the CWS, CWCA, CWSP exams.**

The attached logo and credential are the property of the American Board of Wound Management ("ABWM") but may be used by ABWM certificants and diplomates in good standing in accordance with the terms and conditions set forth below. Use of the logo and credential shall constitute consideration for, agreement to, and acceptance of the following terms and conditions of this license by the user:

1. The attached logo and credential is the sole and exclusive property of ABWM. This logo may be used only by ABWM certificants and diplomates in good standing if and only if such use is made pursuant to the terms and conditions of this limited and revocable license. Any failure by a user to comply with the terms and conditions contained herein may result in the immediate revocation of this license, in addition to any other sanctions imposed by ABWM. The interpretation and enforcement (or lack thereof) of these terms and conditions, and compliance therewith, shall be made by ABWM in its sole discretion.
2. Failure to pay renewal fees or failure to maintain the appropriate certification through re-examination will result in the revocation of this limited license of use. Any use of the logo or credential by an individual who is no longer certified by ABWM will result in legal action against the individual.
3. As set forth on the Attachment, the logo and credential are made available to ABWM certificants and diplomates in good standing. The logo and designation may not be revised or altered in any way and must be displayed in the same form as produced by ABWM. The logo must be printed in its official colors as provided.
4. The logo and designation may be used in a professional manner on business cards, stationery, literature, advertisements, storefront window, website, or in any other comparable manner to signify the appropriate credential by the certificant.

The logo and credential may not be used in any manner that, in the sole discretion of ABWM: discredits ABWM or tarnishes its reputation and goodwill; is false or misleading; violates the rights of others; violates any law, regulation or other public policy; or mischaracterizes the relationship between ABWM and the certificant or diplomate, including but not limited to any use of the logo that might be reasonably construed as an endorsement, approval, or sponsorship by ABWM of the certificant or the certificant's business or medical practice, or that might be reasonably construed as support or encouragement to utilize the certificant's products or services.

5. Members of the ABWM Board of Directors or ABWM Committee Members may use the logo in conjunction with their status as an Officer, Director, or Committee Member in their business cards, stationery, literature, advertisements, storefront window, website, or in any other comparable manner to signify their participation on the Board of Directors or designated Committee.
6. Use of the logo shall create no rights for certificants and diplomates in or to the logo or their use beyond the terms and conditions of this limited and revocable license. The logo shall remain at all times the sole and exclusive intellectual property of ABWM. ABWM shall have the right, from time to time, to request samples of use of the logo from which it may determine compliance with these terms and conditions. Without further notice, ABWM reserves the right to prohibit use of the logo if it determines, in its sole discretion, that a the logo usage, whether willful or negligent, is not in strict accordance with the terms and conditions of this license, otherwise could discredit ABWM or tarnish its reputation and goodwill, or the certificant is not in good standing with ABWM.

7. Any questions concerning use of the logos or the terms and conditions of this license should be directed to the ABWM Executive Director.

Accepted \_\_\_\_\_

Signature

Print name \_\_\_\_\_

Company Name \_\_\_\_\_

Website \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B: ABWM Fiduciary Obligations of Directors Agreement

### AMERICAN BOARD OF WOUND MANAGEMENT (ABWM) FIDUCIARY OBLIGATIONS OF ABWM DIRECTORS

Directors of a nonprofit corporation have a fiduciary obligation to exercise their powers and judgment in the best interests of ABWM. This fiduciary obligation includes a duty of care and a duty of loyalty.

#### 1. Duty of Care

- a. An ABWM director must discharge his or her duties as a director, including his or her duties as an officer and a committee member:
  - i. In good faith;
  - ii. With the care an ordinarily prudent person in a like position would exercise under similar circumstances; and
  - iii. In a manner he or she reasonably believes to be in the best interests of ABWM.
- b. In discharging his or her duties, a director may rely on information, opinions, reports, or statements, including financial statements and other financial data, if prepared or presented by:
  - i. One or more officers or employees of ABWM whom the director reasonably believes to be reliable and competent in the matters presented;
  - ii. Legal counsel, public accountants, or other persons as to matters the director reasonably believes are within the persons' professional or expert competence; or
  - iii. A committee of the board of directors of which he or she is not a member if the director reasonably believes the committee merits confidence.
- c. A director is not acting in good faith if he or she has knowledge concerning the matter in question that makes reliance otherwise permitted by subsection (2) unwarranted.
- d. A director is not liable for any action taken as a director, or any failure to take any action, if he or she performed the duties of his or her office in compliance with this section.

#### 2. Duty of Loyalty

An ABWM director owes a duty of loyalty to the ABWM. In accordance with that duty, an ABWM director may not:

- a. disclose confidential information of the ABWM;
- b. compete with the ABWM;
- c. assist or act on behalf of a person or entity that competes with the ABWM;
- d. usurp a business opportunity of the ABWM; or
- e. obtain secret or unfair profits through a transaction with the ABWM.

#### 3. Conflicts of Interest

##### a. Required Disclosures

- i. Each ABWM director must execute a copy of the ABWM Participation Agreement and comply with its disclosure requirements. Signed Participation Agreements will be retained for the duration of the term of service and a minimum of seven years thereafter.

ii. An ABWM director who has or may have a financial or personal interest in any matter must disclose the actual or potential conflict when the matter is first raised before the ABWM or the committee and, at the discretion of the President or committee chair, must recuse himself or herself from voting on the matter. Recusals will be documented in the minutes of the meeting.

b. Voting Obligations

i. An ABWM director who is not concurrently a director or employee of another organization must vote in the best interests of the ABWM – not the other organization.

ii. An ABWM director who is also a director or employee of another organization must vote in the best interests of the ABWM – not the other organization – unless the proposed ABWM action would be in direct conflict with clearly articulated policy of the other organization, in which case:

1. The ABWM director must disclose the existence of the conflicting interest, and all facts of which the director is aware regarding the matter at issue, when the matter is first raised before the ABWM or an ABWM committee, and must be recused from voting on the matter.

or

2. If the ABWM director is unable to fully reveal all the information necessary to make the required disclosure, he or she must be recused from even participating in the deliberations of the ABWM or the ABWM committee.

c. Obligations Following Board Action

i. Once approved by the ABWM Board of Directors, a transaction must be accepted and supported by all directors, including those who may have had a conflict of interest regarding the matter at issue.

ii. All directors, including those who may have had a conflict of interest, must maintain the confidentiality of ABWM deliberations as instructed by the Board of Directors or the President.

4. Confidentiality

a. In connection with a Director's service on the ABWM Board of Directors, a Director will be exposed to highly confidential information related to the ABWM's activities such as membership lists; contracts; educational products; test materials, information related to test materials, candidates' cut scores on the certification examination, and data regarding pass/fail percentages on the certification examination; and internal memoranda, reports, and other materials or records of a confidential nature (the "Confidential Information").

b. In order to protect the Confidential Information, Directors may not make copies of, disclose, remove from a review site, remove from any office of the ABWM, or assist or permit others to copy, disclose, remove from a review site, or remove from any office of the ABWM any Confidential Information unless specifically authorized to do so by the Executive Committee or the President, and may not use Confidential Information for any purpose whatsoever except directly in connection with the Director's service to the ABWM. Further, the above promise of confidentiality shall be in effect during the director's term(s) on the ABWM Board of Directors and at all times thereafter.

## APPENDIX C: ABWM Participation Agreement

### AMERICAN BOARD OF WOUND MANAGEMENT (ABWM) PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT

This Participation Agreement contains the requirements for participation by ABWM directors, officers, or committee members in ABWM projects and activities (“ABWM Activities”). These requirements include agreement to the following:

- A. Fiduciary Obligations of ABWM Directors;
- B. Code of Conduct for Board/Committee Meetings;
- C. ABWM Conflicts of Interest Policy;
- D. Maintenance of Confidentiality;
- E. Originality of Work Product;
- F. Work-for-Hire Statement/Assignment;
- G. Hold Harmless Statement; and
- H. Recertification Policy for Exam Committee Members

Fail to honor these commitments may subject the individual to removal from the body of the ABWM on which he or she serves, as well as forfeiture of any eligibility for indemnification or insurance that he or she may have under the bylaws of the ABWM or otherwise.

#### A. FIDUCIARY OBLIGATIONS OF ABWM DIRECTORS

ABWM Directors have legally-enforceable fiduciary obligations to exercise their powers and judgment in the best interests of ABWM. Fiduciary obligations include a duty of care and a duty of loyalty, as well as strict adherence to the ABWM Conflicts of Interest Policy and the other obligations set forth in this ABWM Participation Agreement.

##### a. Duty of Care

- i. An ABWM director must discharge his or her duties as a director, including his or her duties as an officer and a committee member:
  - 1. In good faith;
  - 2. In a manner he or she reasonably believes to be in the best interests of ABWM; and
  - 3. With the care an ordinarily prudent person in a like position would exercise under similar circumstances, including the following:
    - Be familiar with ABWM Bylaws, exempt purposes, and general laws applicable to ABWM
    - Review written materials and related information before attending board meetings
    - Regularly attend and participate at board meetings



- Exercise good faith, independent judgment: don't just go with the majority, or follow the views of the "expert" in the group
- ii. In discharging his or her duties, a director may rely on information, opinions, reports, or statements, including financial statements and other financial data, if prepared or presented by:
  1. One or more officers or employees of ABWM whom the director reasonably believes to be reliable and competent in the matters presented;
  2. Legal counsel, public accountants, or other persons as to matters the director reasonably believes are within the persons' professional or expert competence; or
  3. A committee of the board of directors of which he or she is not a member if the director reasonably believes the committee merits confidence.
- iii. A director is not acting in good faith if he or she has knowledge concerning the matter in question that makes reliance otherwise permitted by subsection 1.2 unwarranted.

b. Duty of Loyalty

- i. An ABWM director owes a duty of loyalty to ABWM. In accordance with that duty, an ABWM director may not:
  1. Disclose confidential information of ABWM;
  2. Compete with ABWM;
  3. Assist or act on behalf of a person or entity that competes with ABWM;
  4. Usurp a business opportunity of ABWM;
  5. Assist another person or entity to usurp a business opportunity of ABWM;
  6. Obtain secret or unfair profits through a transaction with ABWM; or
  7. Profit financially through confidential information gained by virtue of his or her position with ABWM.

B. CODE OF CONDUCT FOR BOARD/COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The undersigned understands and hereby agrees that he or she (and their guests) are expected to adhere to standards of professionalism and act in a responsible manner at all ABWM meeting and events.

C. ABWM CONFLICT OF INTERESTS POLICY

The undersigned understands and agrees that any relationship that may call into question whether an officer, director, committee member, employee, consultant or agent of ABWM (the "ABWM individual") is acting solely in the best interests of ABWM must be disclosed before the ABWM individual participates in any decision-making or takes any action on behalf of ABWM which might be implicated by the relationship. Examples of relationships which raise potential conflicts of interest include the following:

- The ABWM individual owns stock or has any other financial interest in an entity which could be affected by a decision or action of ABWM – or a direct competitor of such entity.
- The ABWM individual is an officer, director, or employee of, serves as a consultant to, or has a close personal relationship with, any entity or person that could be affected by a decision or action of ABWM – or a direct competitor of such entity.

- The ABWM individual receives a payment, gift, or anything else of value greater than \$250 from an entity or person that could be affected by a decision or action of ABWM – or a direct competitor of such entity.

Disclosure of any such relationship, or any other relationship that might present a possible conflict of interest, must be made to the President of ABWM, the chair of the relevant committee, or the Executive Director of ABWM.

Disclosure of a possible conflict of interest does not necessarily disqualify the ABWM individual from participation in a decision or action. Rather, it enables the President or committee chair to determine the appropriate response. In some instances, it will turn out that there is no conflict at all. In others, disclosure of the relationship to the Board or relevant committee may suffice. In still others, the ABWM individual may be asked not to vote on an issue or not to play any role whatsoever in the discussion, decision or action. The specific response will be determined pursuant to the ABWM Conflicts of Interest policy for directors, or by the President or committee chair based on the nature of the relationship, its potential for affecting the ABWM individual's undivided loyalty to ABWM, the significance of the ABWM decision or action, and any other relevant factors.

#### D. MAINTENANCE OF CONFIDENTIALITY

The undersigned understands and hereby agrees that, in connection with the undersigned's service to the ABWM, the undersigned may be exposed to highly confidential information related to the ABWM's activities such as membership lists; contracts; educational products; test materials, information related to test materials, candidates' cut scores on the certification examination, and data regarding pass/fail percentages on the certification examination; and internal memoranda, reports, and other materials or records of a confidential nature (the "Confidential Information").

In order to protect the Confidential Information, the undersigned hereby promises not to make copies of, disclose, remove from a review site, remove from any office of the ABWM, or assist or permit others to copy, disclose, remove from a review site, or remove from any office of the ABWM any Confidential information unless specifically authorized to do so by the Executive Committee or the President, and not to use Confidential Information for any purpose whatsoever except directly in connection with the undersigned's service to the ABWM. Further, the above promise of confidentiality shall be in effect during the tenure of the undersigned's service to the ABWM Board of Directors and at all times thereafter.

Further, if the undersigned is a member of the Examination Committee, or is involved in any other manner with, or has access to, the certification examination, the undersigned understands and expressly agrees not to, either directly or indirectly, conduct or assist or participate in conducting a review program for the certification examination for potential candidates, or to develop and/or deliver training materials during and for five years following the undersigned's tenure of service to the ABWM.

#### E. ORIGINALITY OF WORK PRODUCT

The undersigned understands and hereby agrees that:

- Any and all material that I contribute to an ABWM examination or any other ABWM document or material is an original work that has not previously been published in whole or part;

- Any and all material that I contribute does not and will not, when provided to the ABWM under this Agreement or when published by the ABWM, infringe the intellectual property rights, moral rights, rights of privacy or any similar rights of any person, breach any contract with, or any obligation of confidentiality owed to, any third party, or contain anything which is libelous; and
- I hereby assume the entire responsibility and liability for all claims, losses, and damages, governmental charges or fines, attorney's fees, and other costs caused by or in any manner arising out of or associated with the provision of non-original work to the ABWM, and agree to indemnify and hold harmless the ABWM and its officers, directors, employees, and agents against all such claims, losses, and damages.

#### F. WORK-FOR-HIRE STATEMENT/ASSIGNMENT

The undersigned, who currently provides or shall provide services to ABWM as a director, officer, director, or committee member, in which capacity the undersigned will prepare and contribute certain materials for use by ABWM, hereby agrees that any and all original material contributed by the undersigned shall be deemed to be a work made for hire for ABWM. To the extent that such contribution is not deemed to be a work made for hire under the United States copyright laws, or is not similarly treated under the copyright laws of any other country, the undersigned hereby assigns to ABWM all right, title, and interest in such contribution, including the right to sue for infringement.

#### G. HOLD HARMLESS STATEMENT

The undersigned acknowledges and agrees that the decision to participate in ABWM activities, including, but not limited to, attending meetings or traveling to any destination in support of those activities, is completely voluntary. The undersigned hereby agrees to hold ABWM, and its officers, directors, members, employees and agents, harmless from any complaint, claim or damage arising out of or in connection with any attendance at, travel to, or participation in, any and all ABWM activities.

#### H. 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.

Approved:  
October 9, 2015 ABWM Board of Directors

## APPENDIX D: Special Testing Policy

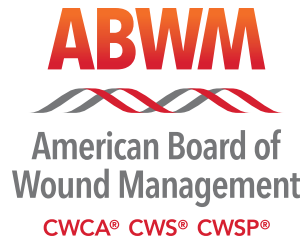
The American Board of Wound Management (ABWM) is pleased to offer testing for the CWCA<sup>®</sup>, CWS<sup>®</sup> and CWSP<sup>®</sup> board certification exams year-round, 7 days a week at over 180 locations throughout the United States. Additionally, ABWM exams can be administered by appointment at over 400 locations internationally.

Upon request, ABWM will administer group exams at a hospital or facility, in conjunction with a meeting or conference or at a corporate office/headquarters. The requirements for ABWM to administer a group exam on-site is as follows:

1. A minimum of 20 exams must be guaranteed (any combination of CWCA<sup>®</sup>, CWS<sup>®</sup> and CWSP<sup>®</sup>) for ABWM to administer exams on-site.
2. A minimum of 60 days' notice is required for ABWM to schedule special exam administration.
3. All exams must be prepaid in U.S. funds, 45 days in advance of scheduled exam administration.
4. A facility to administer the exams must be provided. ABWM will provide logistical information on test room requirements, a/v requirements.\* ABWM will provide the laptops for the exam administration.
5. ABWM can administer a maximum of 30 computer-based exams at one scheduled seating. If there are over 30 candidates, additional times will be scheduled. Alternatively, the exam can be administered to all candidates via paper and pencil. Results for computer-based testing are immediate. Results for paper and pencil administered exams will be provided within six weeks.
6. All candidates must meet the eligibility requirements as outlined in the Candidate Handbooks that are on ABWM website. [www.abwmcertified.org](http://www.abwmcertified.org)
7. Score reports (pass/fail notification) will be provided within six weeks of the exam date to the candidate only.
8. Retests, missed exams and rescheduled exams will be administered at a local testing center for a fee.
9. All exams are administered in English.
10. All candidates are tested on U.S. practice and standards as described in the Exam Content Outlines of the Candidate Handbooks.
11. Once certified, candidates are required to submit 6 hours of continuing education and \$150 U.S. funds annually, which allows for continued use of the certification credential.
12. Candidates are required to retest by exam every 10 years.

For additional information, please contact Chris Murphy, Executive Director, at [cmurphy@abwmcertified.org](mailto:cmurphy@abwmcertified.org) or 202-457-8408.

\*When administering exams outside of an ABWM testing center, ABWM cannot guarantee testing environment (noise, room temp, etc.). ABWM does provide ear plugs to all candidates in case of noise disturbance.



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**AMERICAN BOARD OF WOUND MANAGEMENT**

**Appeal Process for Adverse Decisions Affecting Certification as a Certified Wound Care Associate® (CWCA®), Certified Wound Specialist® (CWS®) and Certified Wound Specialist Physician® (CWSP®)**

The following adverse decisions affecting eligibility or certification (“Adverse Decisions”) by the American Board of Wound Management (“ABWM”) are subject to appeal:

**A. Adverse Administrative Decisions**

- (1) Denial of a request for extension of an established deadline or for exception to other administrative requirements.
- (2) Denial of a grievance regarding examination administration.

**B. Adverse Substantive Decisions**

- (1) Rejection of credentials for eligibility to sit for an ABWM examination.
- (2) Revocation of eligibility to sit for an ABWM examination.
- (3) Denial of certification.
- (4) Revocation or suspension of certification.

**C. Adverse Disciplinary Decisions based on:**

- (1) Irregular behavior before, during or after an ABWM examination.
- (2) Manufacture or use of fraudulent ABWM credentials.
- (3) Legal, regulatory or credentialing action, or documented allegations of misconduct.

**NO APPEAL may be taken from an adverse decision based on an individual’s receipt of a failing grade on an ABWM examination absent extraordinary circumstances, as determined solely by the ABWM.**

**I. CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY**

ABWM Directors shall not participate in discussions of, or vote on, any review or appeal in which the Director has or has had a substantial personal or professional relationship with the candidate/ CWCA®, CWS®, CWSP® at issue.

**II. NOTICE OF ADVERSE DECISION**

An individual who has received an Adverse Decision shall be sent a prompt written Notice of Adverse Decision. The Notice shall state the reason(s) for the Adverse Decision and shall inform the individual that he or she has the right to seek review of the Adverse Decision by filing a timely written Request for Review with the ABWM.

### III. REQUEST FOR REVIEW

To be valid, a Request for Review must be postmarked within 30 calendar days after the date of the Notice of Adverse Decision. The Request must contain a statement of why the individual believes that the Adverse Decision was improper and must include (1) any supporting documentation that the individual wishes to have considered as part of the review, and (2) an appeal fee of \$50 for appeal of an adverse administrative decision or \$100 for appeal of an adverse substantive decision or an adverse disciplinary decision.

**If a Request for Review is not postmarked within 30 calendar days, the Adverse Decision shall constitute the final decision of the ABWM on the matter and shall not be subject to appeal absent extraordinary circumstances, as determined solely by the ABWM.**

#### A. Composition and Role of Review Panel

A Review Panel shall be the first level of review for all adverse decisions except disciplinary decisions, which may be appealed directly to the Executive Committee.

The Review Panel shall consist of three current ABWM Directors; no more than one shall be a member of the Executive Committee.

The Review Panel shall consider the Notice of Adverse Decision and the Request for Review, including any supporting documentation submitted by the individual. The Review Panel also may, at its discretion, request or receive, and review, additional information. The foregoing shall constitute the Review Record. A copy of the Review Record shall be forwarded to the individual at least ten calendar days before the meeting of the Review Panel.

*The review shall be conducted pursuant to the procedures set forth in Section B (for administrative decisions), Section C (for substantive decisions), or Section D (for disciplinary decisions).*

#### B. Final Review of Administrative Decisions

A timely Request for Review of a denial of an extension of an established deadline, an exception to any other administrative requirement, or a denial of a grievance regarding administration of an ABWM examination, will be **finally reviewed** by an ABWM Review Panel within 30 calendar days after receipt of the Request for Review.

Based on its review of the Review Record, the Review Panel may, at its discretion, take one of the following actions:

- (1) Affirm the Adverse Decision,
- (2) Modify the Adverse Decision, or
- (3) Reverse the Adverse Decision

The individual shall be notified in writing of the Review Panel's action, including the reasons therefor, within 10 business days after the Review Panel reaches its decision.

THE REVIEW PANEL'S DECISION ON ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS SHALL CONSTITUTE THE FINAL DECISION OF THE ABWM ON THE MATTER AND SHALL NOT BE SUBJECT TO APPEAL ABSENT EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES, AS DETERMINED SOLELY BY THE ABWM.

#### C. Review of Adverse Substantive Decisions

A timely Request for Review of an adverse substantive decision shall be reviewed by an ABWM Review Panel within 60 calendar days after receipt of the Request for Review. Based on its review of the Review Record, the Review Panel may, at its discretion, take one of the following actions:

- (1) Affirm the Adverse Decision,
- (2) Modify the Adverse Decision, or

- (3) Reverse the Adverse Decision, in which event the decision of the Review Panel shall constitute the final decision of the ABWM on the matter.

The individual shall be notified in writing of the Review Panel's action, including the reasons therefor, within 15 business days after the Review Panel reaches its decision.

#### **D. Review of Adverse Disciplinary Decisions**

Adverse disciplinary decisions may be appealed directly to the Executive Committee as set forth below.

### **IV. REQUEST FOR APPEAL**

An individual who has received notice that an adverse substantive decision has been affirmed or modified by a Review Panel, or notice of an adverse disciplinary decision, may appeal to the ABWM Board of Directors by filing a written Request for Appeal with the ABWM. To be valid, the Request for Appeal must be postmarked within 30 calendar days after the date of the Notice of decision. The decision to grant an Appeal is at the sole discretion of the Executive Committee.

**If a Request for Appeal is not postmarked within 30 calendar days, the Adverse Decision shall constitute the final decision of the ABWM on the matter and shall not be subject to appeal absent extraordinary circumstances, as determined solely by the ABWM.**

### **V. DECISION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

A timely Request for Appeal from an adverse substantive decision affirmed or modified by the Review Panel, or from an adverse disciplinary decision, shall be considered by the Executive Committee. If the Executive Committee determines that an Appeal should be granted, the Appeal will be heard by the Board of Directors at its next regularly scheduled meeting occurring at least 60 calendar days after receipt of the Request for Appeal. Any member of the Executive Committee who participated in prior consideration of the Adverse Decision shall not participate in discussions of, or vote on, the matter.

The Executive Committee shall consider the Review Record, the Notice of Affirmation or Modification of Adverse Decision, or the Notice of Disciplinary Action, and the Request for Appeal. The foregoing shall constitute the Appeal Record.

The individual shall be notified in writing of the Executive Committee's decision, including the reasons therefor, within 10 business days after the Committee reaches its decision.

**THE DECISION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE TO DENY A REQUEST FOR APPEAL SHALL CONSTITUTE THE FINAL DECISION OF THE ABWM ON THE MATTER AND SHALL NOT BE SUBJECT TO FURTHER APPEAL ABSENT EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES, AS DETERMINED SOLELY BY THE ABWM.**

### **VI. APPEAL TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

The Executive Committee shall, at its discretion, determine whether a hearing involving a telephonic or personal appearance by the appellant may be useful to resolve the issues.

#### **A. Appeal Without A Hearing**

If the Executive Committee determines that a hearing on the Appeal would not be useful, the ABWM shall notify the individual (1) of that decision and (2) that the individual may submit a written statement relating to the matter for the Board's consideration. Such statement must be submitted no later than 30 calendar days after the date of the notice. The ABWM Board of Directors shall review the Appeal Record and any statement timely submitted by the individual, and shall determine by majority vote of those members voting, whether to ratify, reverse, or modify the Adverse Decision. The individual shall be notified in writing of the decision, including the reasons therefor, within 60 calendar days after the Board reaches its decision.



THE DECISION BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS SHALL CONSTITUTE THE FINAL DECISION OF THE ABWM ON THE MATTER AND SHALL NOT BE SUBJECT TO FURTHER APPEAL.

## **B. Appeal With A Hearing**

If the Executive Committee determines that a hearing on the Appeal may be useful, it shall set a hearing for its next regularly scheduled meeting of the ABWM Board of Directors occurring at least 60 calendar days after receipt of the Request for Appeal.

Not less than 30 calendar days prior to the scheduled date of the hearing, the ABWM shall notify the individual in writing of the date, time, and place of the hearing. The Notice of Hearing also shall advise the individual that he or she:

- (1) may appear personally before the Board of Directors;
- (2) may be accompanied by legal counsel; and
- (3) may submit a written statement relating to the matter for the Board's consideration.

The individual's written intent to appear personally before the Board stating whether it will be with or without legal counsel, and the candidate/CWS®'s written statement must be received by the ABWM no later than 15 business days before the scheduled date of the hearing. If counsel will be present, he/she must be identified in the statement.

An individual who chooses to appear before the Board of Directors, shall be given the opportunity to make a statement summarizing the individual's position. At the discretion of the Board, the individual's legal counsel may make an opening or closing statement. The Board shall not be bound by technical rules of evidence usually employed in legal proceedings, but may consider any evidence it deems appropriate.

A record of the proceedings shall be kept. A copy of the hearing record shall be made available to the individual upon payment of the cost of reproduction. All expenses incurred by the individual in connection with the hearing shall be borne by the candidate/CWS®.

If the individual requests to appear personally at the hearing and, without good cause, fails to appear and fails to advise the ABWM in writing more than 7 calendar days before the scheduled date of the hearing that he or she will not appear at the hearing, the Board may elect to notify the candidate/CWS® that no other opportunity for a personal appearance shall be provided.

Following the hearing, the Board of Directors shall determine by majority vote of those members voting whether to ratify, reverse, or modify the Adverse Decision. The individual shall be notified in writing of the decision, including the reasons therefor, within 60 calendar days after the Board reaches its decision.

THE DECISION BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS SHALL CONSTITUTE THE FINAL DECISION OF THE ABWM ON THE MATTER AND SHALL NOT BE SUBJECT TO FURTHER APPEAL.



**VII. SUBMISSIONS TO THE ABWM**

Whenever there is a requirement for a written notice, request or other writing to be submitted to the ABWM, such writing shall be addressed to the following:

Christopher M. Murphy  
Executive Director  
American Board of Wound Management  
1800 M Street NW  
Suite 400S  
Washington, DC 20036

\*

\*

\*

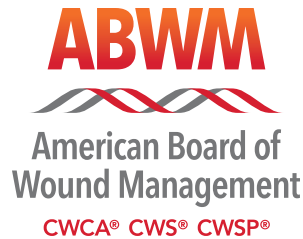
The procedures set forth above for the review and appeal of Adverse Decisions may be subject to an expedited schedule when deemed necessary by the ABWM.

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Effective: \_\_\_\_\_

Last Revision: \_\_\_\_\_

Effective: \_\_\_\_\_



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## AMERICAN BOARD OF WOUND MANAGEMENT

# Disciplinary Actions Based On Irregular Behavior; Fraudulent Credentials; Legal, Regulatory Or Credentialing Action; Or Documented Allegations Of Misconduct

## DISCIPLINARY POLICY

### A. Irregular Behavior

#### 1. During an Examination

The performance of all candidates taking an examination will be monitored. Test center personnel will notify the American Board of Wound Management ("ABWM") office immediately by phone of any candidate who appears to give or receive assistance, or otherwise engage in dishonest or other irregular behavior during the examination, and will follow up with a written report of the incident.

Any candidate who engages in, or assists another individual to engage in, cheating or other dishonest or irregular behavior, or otherwise violates the security of an examination, may be subject to disciplinary action, including denial or revocation of eligibility or certification.

#### 2. After an Examination

Any candidate or certificant who removes or attempts to remove materials from the test center, or reproduces, distributes, displays or otherwise misuses a test question or any part of a test question from an examination, or assists another individual to do any of the above, may be subject to disciplinary action, including denial or revocation of eligibility or certification. Any individual who engages in such improper behavior also may be subject to legal action.

#### 3. At Any Time

Any candidate or certificant who obtains, attempts to obtain, or assists another person to obtain or attempt to obtain, eligibility or certification by deceptive means, including but not limited to submitting or assisting another person to submit to the ABWM any document which contains a material misstatement of fact or omits to state a material fact, may be subject to disciplinary action, including denial or revocation of eligibility or certification.

#### 4. Application Following Disciplinary Action Based on Irregular Behavior

An individual whose eligibility or certification has been denied or revoked by the ABWM for a specified time period based on irregular behavior may reapply to the ABWM following expiration of such time period. Action on all applications following denial or revocation shall be at the sole discretion of the ABWM.

## **B. Fraudulent Credentials**

### **1. Use of Fraudulent Credentials**

Any candidate or certificant who manufactures, modifies, reproduces, distributes or uses a fraudulent or otherwise unauthorized ABWM certificate or other credential, or assists another individual to do any of the above, may be subject to disciplinary action, including denial or revocation of eligibility or certification. Any individual who engages in such irregular behavior also may be subject to legal action.

### **2. Application Following Disciplinary Action Based on Fraudulent Credentials**

An individual whose eligibility, certification, recertification or proficiency recognition has been denied or revoked by the ABWM for a specified time period based on fraudulent credentials may reapply to the ABWM following expiration of such time period. Action on all applications following denial or revocation shall be at the sole discretion of the ABWM.

## **C. Legal, Regulatory or Credentialing Action, or Documented Allegations of Misconduct**

### **1. Automatic Denial or Revocation**

The ABWM will automatically deny or revoke an individual's eligibility or certification in the following circumstances:

- Adjudication by a court that the individual is mentally incompetent.
- Conviction of or pleading no contest to a felony that is, in the view of the ABWM, related to health care practice.
- Loss of the individual's license to practice due to behavior that is, in the view of the ABWM, related to health care practice.

### **2. Discretionary Denial, Revocation or Suspension**

The ABWM may, at its discretion, deny, suspend or revoke an individual's eligibility or certification in any of the following circumstances.

- Conviction of or pleading no contest to a felony.
- Loss of the individual's license to practice.
- Documented allegations of gross incompetence or unethical conduct.

### **3. Application Following Disciplinary Action Based on Legal, Regulatory, or Credentialing Action**

An individual whose eligibility or certification has been denied or revoked by the ABWM based on a legal, regulatory or credentialing action, or on documented allegations of misconduct, may reapply to the ABWM when the situation underlying the ABWM's decision has been remedied or the term of the disciplinary action has ended. If the decision was based on conviction of or pleading no contest to a felony, the individual may not apply until all sentences have been served and, unless the ABWM by a two-thirds vote of all directors grants an exception, until all judgments have been satisfied. Action on all applications following denial or revocation shall be at the sole discretion of the ABWM.

## DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

1. If it comes to the attention of any Director or staff member of the ABWM that an individual may have engaged in irregular behavior; may have manufactured or utilized fraudulent ABWM credentials; or was the subject of a legal, regulatory or credentialing action or documented allegations of misconduct; the Director or staff member shall promptly notify the Executive Director of such allegations.
2. The Executive Director shall make a reasonable effort to investigate the facts of the matter. If, following such investigation, the Executive Director determines that there is a reasonable basis to believe that the allegations are true, the individual shall be notified in writing about the allegations and about possible disciplinary and/or legal actions which may be taken by the ABWM. The individual shall be informed that he or she has the right, within 30 days, to submit a written response to the allegations and/or to request a telephone interview with, or a personal appearance before, an ad hoc Disciplinary Review Panel.
3. The Disciplinary Review Panel shall be appointed by the President of the ABWM and shall consist of three directors; no more than one shall be a member of the Executive Committee.
4. If the candidate or certificant requests a telephone interview with, or a personal appearance before, the Disciplinary Review Panel, he or she shall be given 30 days written notice of the place, date and time of the interview. During the interview or appearance, the individual shall be given a full opportunity to discuss, explain, and attempt to refute the allegations made against him or her.
5. The Disciplinary Review Panel shall review all of the documentation submitted concerning the matter. The Panel also may, at its discretion, request or receive, and review, additional information. The foregoing shall constitute the Disciplinary Review Record. A copy of the Record shall be forwarded to the individual at least ten calendar days before the meeting of the Panel.

Based on its review of the Disciplinary Review Record, and the individual's statement during the interview or appearance, if any, the Disciplinary Review Panel shall, at its discretion, determine whether one or more of the following disciplinary actions is appropriate under the circumstances:

- a. order a candidate to retake an examination at a time and place to be determined by the Disciplinary Review Panel;
- b. refuse to release the score of a candidate and, thereby, deny his or her current application for certification;
- c. require a candidate to wait a specified period of time before reapplying to take any ABWM examination;
- d. revoke a candidate's eligibility to sit for future examinations;
- e. revoke a certificant's certification; or
- f. take a combination of any of the above actions or such other action that the Disciplinary Review Panel may deem appropriate in the particular circumstances before it.

In addition, in appropriate circumstances, the Disciplinary Review Panel may recommend to the ABWM Board of Directors that legal action be taken.

6. Disciplinary actions are subject to appeal pursuant to the ABWM ***Appeal Process for Adverse Decisions Affecting Certification.***



# Record Retention Policy

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**Association Management Strategies Inc.**

Address: 1800 M Street, NW, Suite #400S

Telephone: (202) 530-5910

Date: 10/1/2022

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## Document Retention on AMS Policies and Procedures

The corporate records of AMS are important assets. Corporate records include essentially all documents produced by staff during their work, whether paper or electronic. This includes memoranda, e-mails, contracts, minutes of meetings, or reports and records of work.

AMS is required by law to maintain certain types of corporate records for specified and recommended periods of time. Failure to retain records for these minimum periods could subject the individual and the organization to penalties and fines, or cause AMS to obstruct justice, spoil potential evidence in a lawsuit, place AMS in contempt of court, or seriously disadvantage itself in litigation.

AMS expects all staff to fully comply with any published records retention or destruction policies and schedules.

If you believe, or AMS informs you, that certain records are relevant to litigation, or potential litigation (i.e., a dispute that could result in litigation), then you must preserve those records until it is legally determined that the records are no longer needed. This exception supersedes any previously or subsequently established destruction schedule for those records. If you believe this exception may apply or have any question regarding the possible applicability of this exception, you should retain the records and bring the matter to the attention of Human Resources.

From time-to-time AMS may establish retention or destruction policies or schedules for specific categories of records to ensure legal compliance, and to accomplish other objectives, such as preserving intellectual property and cost management. These schedules can be obtained from Human Resources or the accounting department.

Failure to comply with AMS's Document Retention Policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

## Record Retention Policy

A record retention policy should minimize both the legal risks flowing from hastily drafted or misleading documents and the adverse inferences that may arise from the selective destruction of documents in the absence of such a policy. Moreover, the expense of storing obsolete documents, as well as the cost of retrieving documents in response to business requests, government investigations or litigation, should be reduced.

To minimize these costs and risks, the Association Management Strategies Inc (“Association”) has adopted the following record retention policy for the systematic retention and destruction of documents based on statutory or regulatory record-keeping requirements and practical business needs.

It is the intention of this policy that documents be retained only so long as they are (1) necessary to the conduct of the Association’s business; (2) required to be kept by statute or government regulation; or (3) relevant to pending or foreseeable investigations or litigation. Retention periods are based primarily on current federal record-keeping requirements and state statutes of limitation. Currently relevant documents should be filed systematically and accessibly. Documents that must be maintained permanently can be catalogued and, if possible, reduced to some secure form of electronic record for storage and easy access when needed.

To achieve these objectives, procedures will be established so that documents are filed in the appropriate place, the number of copies is catalogued, and documents are retrieved and destroyed on pre-established "pull" dates. One individual will have overall responsibility for initial implementation and yearly review of compliance with this policy. The program itself will be reviewed periodically to ensure governmental requirements are being met, business needs are satisfied, and changes in hardware and software do not prevent access to stored electronic records.

Associations and members can also be subject to criminal penalties under provisions of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002, which prohibits corruptly tampering with, altering, destroying, or concealing records to prevent their availability for use in an “official proceeding.”

No document, including an electronic document, shall be intentionally altered, covered-up, falsified or destroyed, nor shall any employee or agent of the Association be directed to do so, to prevent its use in an official proceeding. Upon becoming aware that any document may reasonably be anticipated to be useful in any actual or reasonably predictable official proceeding, staff shall override any document retention policy or procedure that might result in the destruction of or inability to find any such document. All

attorneys employed or retained by the Association shall be given a copy of this policy and are hereby instructed to inform the Association’s management of any documents of potential use in an official proceeding.

## Retention Period

The following schedule provides retention periods for the major categories of documents, both paper and electronic, for the Association.

Type of Record	Retention Period
<b>Accounting</b>	
Auditors' reports	Permanent
Budgets	7 Years
Cancelled checks, generally	6 Years
Chart of accounts	6 Years
Depreciation records	Permanent
Officer, director, and staff expense reports	3 Years
Employee/contractor earnings records	3 Years
End of year financial statements	Permanent
Inventory lists	7 Years
Invoices	7 Years
Petty cash vouchers	3 Years
Subsidiary ledgers (accounts receivable, accounts Payable, etc.)	7 Years
<b>Corporate</b>	
Annual reports	Permanent
Approved Board minutes and records of all actions taken by Board without a meeting	Permanent
Approved executive committee minutes and records of all actions taken by executive committee without a meeting	Permanent
Approved minutes of all members’ meetings and records of all actions taken by members without a meeting	Permanent
Articles of Incorporation	Permanent
Authorizations for expenditures	7 Years
Bylaws (including prior versions)	Permanent
Conflict of Interest files	7 Years
Contracts, sales (UCC)	7 Years



Membership applications	5 Years
Membership ballots	5 Years
Membership names and addresses	Current
Notes (internal reports, memos, etc.)	3 Years
Policies	Permanent
Whistleblower Policy complaint files	7 Years
Written communications to rejected applicants	5 Years
Written communications to members, general	3 Years
Written communications to members, member discipline	5 Years
<b>Correspondence</b>	
General, routine	3 Years
<b>Insurance</b>	
Accident reports	7 Years
Insurance policies	Permanent
<b>Intellectual Property</b>	
Trademark registrations, copyright registrations, patents	Permanent
<b>Tax</b>	
Exempt status IRS determination letter, application, and related correspondence	Permanent
Income tax returns and cancelled checks (federal, state, and local)	Permanent
Property tax returns	Permanent
Sales and use tax returns	4 Years
<b>Legal</b>	
Claims and litigation files (except drafts)	Permanent
<b>Employment</b>	
Insert as applicable	