



# POLICY & PROCEDURE MANUAL

Updated 09/2022

34+ Years of Excellence to the Surgical Community

American Board of Surgical Assistants  
office@absa.net  
American Board of Surgical Assistants © 2022

## Table of Contents

---

Introduction, Mission & History .....	3
Purpose & Scope.....	4
ABSA Certification Governing Authority .....	5
ABSA Composition .....	6
ABSA Selection .....	8
ABSA Meetings .....	11
Training and Orientation.....	13
Confidentiality .....	14
Conflicts of Interest.....	16
Committees .....	18
Financial Management.....	19
ABSA Operational Management .....	20
Staff Orientation & Training.....	21
Impartiality Regarding Education & Training .....	22
Quality Improvement .....	23
Eligibility Requirements .....	26
Certification Fees, Deadlines, & Refunds.....	30
Code of Ethics.....	31
Awarding the SA-C Credential .....	32
Summary of Certification Activities .....	33
Fairness and Discrimination.....	34
Accommodations for Candidates with Disabilities.....	35
Designation & Certificate .....	36
Recertification Requirements.....	38
Disciplinary Policy.....	42
Examination Development & Ongoing Maintenance .....	46
Examination Administration .....	49
Security .....	52
Records Retention.....	54

APPENDIX A: Board of Directors Commitment to Serve Form ..... 56

APPENDIX B: Subject Matter Expert Commitment to Serve Form ..... 58

## **Introduction, Mission & History**

---

Last Updated: September 28, 2022

### **Introduction**

---

The policies and procedures contained in this manual are established to further describe standard methods and protocols that will be followed to better execute the mission of the American Board of Surgical Assistants (ABSA). The effective leadership of the Board of Directors will ensure the ABSA mission is enforced through governance that emphasizes the mission and vision of the ABSA and best practice for certifying organizations.

All policies and procedures detailed in this manual have been reviewed and approved by the ABSA Board of Directors. No less than annually, the Board reviews a portion of all certification policies and procedures to identify opportunities for improvement, updates, revisions, or resolution of program issues. Over a period of three years, the manual is reviewed in its entirety. Any such modifications shall be identified by the dates in the policy headers.

### **History**

---

The American Board of Surgical Assistants was founded December 30, 1987 in the State of Colorado as a Non-Profit Organization. On October 1, 1998, the American Board of Surgical Assistants was administratively dissolved by the Colorado Secretary of State's Office due to nonreceipt of the two-year corporate report. On January 27, 2000, the American Board of Surgical Assistants was reincorporated as a privately held corporation under the name ABSA, Ltd.

On September 24, 2003, the American Board of Surgical Assistants, operating under the name ABSA, Ltd. was renamed American Board of Surgical Assistants, Inc. The American Board of Surgical Assistants, Inc., Colorado Secretary of State ID Number 20001018434, is still operated as a privately held corporation, functioning as a national surgical assistant credentialing organization.

### **Mission**

---

As a leading provider of surgical assistant examination and credentialing, the ABSA strives to develop and maintain quality standards for the surgical assistant, thereby promoting safety and protection of the public. These standards include furtherment of knowledge, education, and ethical conduct of the surgical assistant, through the continuation of the credentialing process and the promotion of pre and post educational training.

The ABSA shall not discriminate, at any time, among applicants as to age, sex, race, religion, national origin, handicap, marital or other protected status.

## **Purpose & Scope**

---

Policy Number: 100

Date Approved: September 28, 2022

Date Revised:

### **Purpose and Scope: Surgical Assistant – Certified (SA-C)**

---

The primary purpose of the American Board of Surgical Assistants is to protect the public through the establishment and maintenance of standards for the Surgical Assistant – Certified (SA-C) certification program. The role and function of a surgical assistant is to assist the surgeon in the performance of a surgical procedure. The ABSA has established certification requirements for surgical assistants practicing in the United States or its territories.

SA-C professionals typically practice in acute care facilities, such as medical centers, hospitals, and surgicenters.

Individuals who earn the SA-C credential have demonstrated advanced specialty knowledge of the professional domains that encompass the tasks and knowledge required of a surgical assistant working under the guidance of a surgeon.

Certification as a surgical assistant through the ABSA (SA-C) does not allow for independent performance of any medical or surgical procedures. Certification as a surgical assistant is not intended to define requirements for employment or scope of practice, nor does it restrict who may or may not function as a surgical assistant. Certification does not guarantee employment, nor does it relieve an employer from determining the background or professional responsibilities of the assistant.

## **ABSAs Certification Governing Authority**

---

Policy Number: 102

Date Approved: September 28, 2022

Date Revised:

*Bylaws ref: Article III*

### **Authority**

---

The ABSAs Board of Directors is responsible for the business and affairs of the Corporation as established by the bylaws.

The ABSAs has sole and exclusive authority to develop, oversee, and administer the SA-C certification program. ABSAs Directors, as individuals, have no authority over the certification program or other organizational matters, except as authorized by action of the ABSAs Board.

### **ABSAs Roles and Responsibilities**

---

The ABSAs is solely responsible for all essential decisions related to the development, administration, and ongoing maintenance of the certification program. While the ABSAs may delegate ongoing program operations to employees, test development/administration vendors, and/or consultants as needed, these areas of policy level decision-making responsibility may not be subcontracted to any other organization or entity. The decisions for which the ABSAs is responsible include:

- A. Eligibility requirements for certification and recertification, application processing and eligibility decisions;
- B. Examination content, development and administration;
- C. Certification program policies
- D. Disciplinary processes and determinations;
- E. Certification-related committees, meeting rules, agendas, and frequency of meetings;
- F. Certification-related committee appointments and work assignments; and,
- G. Setting of fees for application, certification, recertification, and related services that are part of certification and recertification.

The ABSAs, in conjunction with the CEO, will be responsible for the funding, spending, and budgeting for the certification program as described in the Financial Management policy.

Annually, all Directors are required to sign a confidentiality and conflict of interest form recognizing the roles and responsibilities for serving as a member of the ABSAs.

## ABSA Composition

---

Policy Number: 103

Date Approved: September 28, 2022

Date Revised:

*Bylaws ref: Article III*

### Composition

---

The ABSA Board of Directors is composed of at least three (3) and no more than five (5) voting directors. The Board includes stakeholders of the ABSA certification program, which includes certificants and the public. Board directors are nominated by the Nominating Committee as outlined in these policies and elected by the majority vote of the Board as established in the bylaws and described in these policies.

The CEO of ABSA is a non-voting, ex-officio member of the Board and may attend meetings of the Board but has no voting privileges.

Position	Number	Term Length	Qualifications	Voting	Selection
SA-C Certificant Board Directors	2-4	3 years	Hold the SA-C credential in good standing.  Has been a surgical assistant for at least four (4) years.  Demonstrated experience with oversight boards and/or leadership functions.	Voting	Nominated by Nominating Committee; Elected by majority vote of the ABSA Board
Public Member Board Director	1	3 years	Represents the interest of the public in health and safety through a willingness to be a public advocate for consumers of surgical-assistant services.  Meets NCCA public member requirements.	Voting	Nominated by Nominating Committee; Elected by majority vote of the ABSA Board
Chief Executive Officer (CEO)	1	Ex-officio	Is CEO of the ABSA.	Non-voting	N/A

### Officers

---

The officers of the Board include the President, Secretary, and Treasurer. Officers may serve in more than one role at the discretion of the Board; however, a Director may not serve in all three officer roles.

### Terms

---

Terms begin January 1 and conclude December 31.

The terms of office of the Board Members will be staggered so that no more than one half of the Board is elected each year. Voting Board Directors will serve a three-year term and may serve no more than two consecutive terms. Despite the expiration of any Board Member's term, the Board Member will continue to serve until a successor has been elected.

The Officers of the Board will serve three-year terms in their officer role and may be re-elected to additional terms in the same or a different officer role. Any combined terms in officer positions may not exceed the length of the individual's Directorship.

## **Qualifications**

---

### *Certificant Board Directors*

Any SA-C credential holder shall be eligible for nomination as a Certificant Board Director who meets all the following:

- 1) Holds the ABSA's SA-C credential and is in good standing;
- 2) Has been a surgical assistant - certified (SA-C) for at least four (4) years prior to election;
- 3) Demonstrated experience with oversight boards and/or leadership functions.

### *Public Member*

Any member of the Public who is not qualified to hold the SA-C credential and meets the Public Member qualifications established by ABSA shall be eligible for nomination as a Public Board Director. The public member shall not practice as a surgical assistant or employed in a related field. The Public Board Director will be selected to represent the interest of the public in health and safety through a willingness to be a public advocate for patients/recipients of surgical assistant services.

The ABSA Public Member is appointed to represent patients who are the direct and indirect users of certificant's services and to effectively advocate for their interests. The Public Member has the same privileges and authority and is expected to perform the same duties as those of all other voting ABSA Directors. The Public Member will meet the criteria established in the current National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA) *Standards for the Accreditation of Certification Programs*.

As such, the public member is NOT:

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

## **Limitations**

---

No ABSA Board Member shall have any familial or supervisory relationship with any other ABSA Board Member.



## ABSAs Selection

---

Policy Number: 104

Date Approved: September 28, 2022

Date Revised:

Bylaws ref: Article III and IV

### Selection of ABSAs Board Directors

---

A three-person Nominating Committee will be selected to solicit and screen candidates for upcoming vacant Board positions:

- The Board President will appoint two members of the Nominating Committee with approval of the Board. Of the two members appointed by the President, one will be a current voting member of the Board who will serve as Chair of the Nominating Committee, and one will not be a current member of the Board.
- The ABSAs Shareholder(s) will appoint one member of the Nominating Committee.

A shareholder of the ABSAs may not serve on the Nominating Committee.

The Nominating Committee will solicit and screen qualified candidates for vacant, voting Board positions. Qualified candidates for the Board member positions may apply through an open Call for Nominations process. The Nominating Committee will work with the COO to prepare a nomination form.

Prior to the Call for Nominations process, the Nominating Committee will communicate with the Board to establish:

- The number and types of open positions;
- The names of any existing Board members who are eligible for, and interested in, serving an additional term;
- Any candidates recommended by Board members; and,
- Any skills and/or demographic representation needed by the Board (in addition to the required qualifications).

Self-nominations are encouraged. Additionally, the Nominating Committee may recruit nominations beyond those that are submitted from the Call for Nominations process, including recruiting from current or previous successful exam development volunteers and other candidates.

The Nominating Committee will present a slate of candidate(s) to fill the open board position(s) to the Board of Directors for election. All voting Directors are elected by majority vote of the Board of Directors at the annual meeting of the Board.

### Board Criteria

---

The Nominating Committee will present an appropriate slate of candidates to the Board of Directors for election. The Nominating Committee is responsible for reviewing the skills and characteristics of Board member candidates which includes, but is not limited to, the following criteria:

- selected to ensure, to the extent reasonably possible, that the Board is a diverse group in terms of gender, geographic location, practice areas, educational backgrounds, and employment experience
- qualified for the Board position with relevant education, training and experience
- not have a conflict of interest with the mission statement, purpose and operation of ABSAs

The Nominating Committee will accept nominations of any individual who meets the qualifications of the position for which he/she is nominated. Candidates will be screened to ensure they meet the required qualifications and are willing and able to serve if elected.

## **Elections**

---

The Board of Directors' annual election is the responsibility of the Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee submits nominations to the Board of Directors.

A ballot with the Nominating Committee-endorsed nominees is sent to the Board prior to the designated meeting. Packets include a nominee's:

- biography,
- current resume / CV
- nomination form,
- and a ballot.

The election uses a majority vote process. For a candidate to be seated on the Board, the majority of the ballots of the eligible voting Board Directors cast for the nominee must be affirmative. A nominee who fails to receive a majority of affirmative votes will not be seated. Election results are announced at the designated meeting.

## **Officers**

---

The officers of the ABSA Board are a President, a Secretary, and a Treasurer. At the Board's sole discretion, an Officer may hold one (1) or more Officer positions. However, the President will not also serve as Secretary or Treasurer.

Officers shall be elected at the Annual Meeting of the Board. Officers shall be elected by secret ballot. If there is only one candidate for an office, that candidate shall be appointed by declaration of the Board. The officers of the ABSA shall be elected from among current directors.

The officers perform those duties as defined in the ABSA bylaws and assigned by the ABSA Board.

## **Nomination and Election Schedule**

---

- June: Board selects Nominating Committee
- July: Any Board members eligible to serve a 2nd term notify the Nominating Committee Chair of their interest
- July: Nominating Committee determines number and types of open positions
- August – September: Call for Nominations disseminated for open board positions
- October: Nominating Committee finalizes candidate selections and prepares ballot
- November: Board elections are held for vacant board positions
- January 1: Board Terms begin
- January: Elections are held for officer positions

## **Resignation, Vacancies, and Removal**

---

A Board Director may resign at any time by providing written notice to the Board. The written notice includes the effective date of the resignation. If no date is provided, the President determines the effective date.

Any Director may be removed by the Board for any reason or no reason by a majority vote of the Board at an Annual Meeting of the Board or a Special or Regular Meeting of the Board in accordance with the bylaws. A Director may be removed for cause by the CEO should the Director act against the best interest of the certification program in accordance with the bylaws.

A vacancy on the Board shall be filled for the unexpired portion of the term by majority vote of the remaining Board.

### *Officer Vacancies & Resignations*

The Board may fill a vacancy in any office because of death, resignation, removal, disqualification, or otherwise. If the office of President, Secretary or Treasurer becomes vacant for any reason, the Board, by majority vote, may choose a successor or successors who shall hold office for the unexpired term.

Any officer may resign at any time by submitting a written resignation to the President, or the Secretary, in the case of the President's resignation.

Any Officer or agent appointed by the Board may be removed by the Board for any reason or no reason by a majority vote of the Board at an Annual Meeting of the Board or a Special or Regular Meeting of the Board in accordance with the bylaws. An officer may be removed for cause by the CEO should the Director act against the best interest of the certification program in accordance with the bylaws.

## **ABSA Meetings**

---

Policy Number: 105

Date Approved: September 28, 2022

Date Revised:

*Bylaws ref: Article III*

### **Meetings**

---

A meeting of the Board will be held annually, in person whenever possible. The Corporation must hold its Annual Meeting of Directors within the earlier of: (a) six (6) months after the end of the Corporation's fiscal year; or (b) fifteen (15) months after its last Annual Meeting.

Regular meetings of the ABSA Board are typically held once a quarter.

Special and Regular Meetings of the Board will be held for such purposes deemed necessary by the Board. A Special and/or Regular Meeting of the Board may only be called by the: (a) Board at which a quorum is present; and/or (b) Corporation's President.

Meetings may be held in person, via conference calls, via electronic screen sharing, or by other permitted means as long as all Board directors in attendance can participate and be heard and a quorum is present.

### **Quorum and Voting**

---

A majority of the entire membership of the Board will constitute a quorum at any meeting.

In all matters, any act of the Board must be passed by an affirmative vote of the majority of Board present in person at the meeting and entitled to vote on the matter, unless the vote of a greater number of Directors is required by law, the Corporation's Articles of Incorporation, or the ABSA bylaws.

Proxy voting of the Board is not permitted.

In the absence of a scheduled meeting, the Board may resolve matters via email vote. Email votes are reserved for issues that require quick resolution and do not require lengthy discussion or in situations where a special meeting cannot be convened in a timely manner. Email votes must have participation from all voting members and must be unanimous to be considered as an act of the Board. In addition, issues resolved via email vote must be reported at the next regular or special meeting of the Board and recorded in the meeting minutes.

Any action taken at any Annual Meeting of Directors and/or Special Meeting and/or Regular Meeting of Directors may be taken without a meeting, without prior notice and without a vote if a consent or consents in writing, setting forth the action to be taken, is signed by all of the voting Directors.

### **Meeting Notices**

---

Board directors receive written notice of the Annual Meeting of the Board of at least ten (10) and not more than sixty (60) days before the date of such meeting.

Board directors receive notice of regularly scheduled or special meetings at least two (2) days in advance of the meeting.

### **Participation**

---

It is critical that each Director make every reasonable effort to attend or participate in, as applicable: (a) the regularly scheduled annual meeting of the Board; (b) the regularly scheduled conference calls; and (c) the Committee meetings of which he/she is a member. Directors will be given as much advance notice of meeting dates and times as reasonably possible.

### **Agendas**

---

Meeting agendas will be developed by the COO and Board President and will be distributed one week in advance of any regular or special meeting or on the date the meeting is scheduled, whichever occurs later. Any Board director may recommend items for the agenda. With the approval of the President, meeting

agendas may be updated and/or revised as needed after distribution. The President will approve meeting agendas before they are distributed. Meeting agendas may be sent via email or any other means approved by the President.

When necessary to respond to a time sensitive issue, a meeting agenda may be distributed with less advance notice.

## **Minutes**

---

The Secretary of the Board will prepare the official minutes of the Board with assistance from the COO.

Meeting minutes will be considered confidential unless otherwise specified. Meeting minutes will normally include the decisions made by the Board. Minutes are not required to include all discussion or background information presented to the Board.

Meeting minutes will be distributed within two (2) weeks following each meeting and will be distributed to all members of the Board. Meeting minutes will be retained according to the requirements of the Board record retention policy.

## Training and Orientation

---

Policy Number: 106

Date Approved: September 28, 2022

Date Revised:

All ABSA directors receive an appropriate orientation at the beginning of their initial term. All Board members are required to sign a confidentiality and conflict of interest agreement at the beginning of their initial term and every year thereafter (see Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest policies) and receive an appropriate orientation at or prior to the beginning of their initial term.

### Orientation Materials

---

All Board members receive an appropriate orientation at or prior to the beginning of their initial term.

Orientation materials include:

- ABSA Bylaws
- ABSA Policy and Procedure Manual
- Candidate handbook
- Board minutes for the previous year
- Financial reports for the previous year
- Other materials as needed to provide adequate background information for the new director

### Orientation Session

---

As schedules allow, newly selected Board members will attend, as observers, the Board meeting prior to the start of their term for orientation purposes.

An annual orientation training session will be provided for Board members. While all Board members are strongly encouraged to participate in the training session, the session is mandatory for new members. The training session will include (but is not limited to):

- An overview of Board policies and meeting procedures
- An overview of the certification program
- An overview of the accreditation standards for certification programs and certification program best practices
- An overview of the examination development process including introductory psychometric information

## Confidentiality

---

Policy Number: 107

Date Approved: September 28, 2022

Date Revised:

### Confidential Information

---

The ABSA is committed to protecting confidential and/or proprietary information related to applicants, candidates, certificants, and the examination development, maintenance, and administration process. The confidentiality policy applies to all ABSA employees, ABSA directors, committee members, subject matter experts, consultants, and other individuals who are permitted access to confidential information. These individuals are required to sign confidentiality forms/attestations.

Confidential materials include but are not limited to an individual's application status, personal applicant/certificant information, exam development documentation (including job analysis study reports, technical reports, and cut score studies), exam items and answers, exam forms, item banks, and individual exam scores.

### Release of Information

---

The ABSA will not disclose confidential applicant/candidate/certificant information unless authorized in writing by the individual or as required by law.

Information about an applicant/candidate/certificant will only be released to that applicant/candidate/certificant unless release of the information is authorized in writing by the individual or is required by law. Personal information submitted by applicants/candidates/certificants with an application or recertification application is considered confidential. Personal information retained within the ABSA database will be kept confidential.

All application information is confidential and will not be shared with any party other than ABSA's examination development or administration vendors for certification processing purposes.

Information about candidates/certificants and their examination results is considered confidential. Exam scores will be released only to the individual candidate unless a signed release is provided.

ABSA directors will not disclose confidential information related to or discussed during ABSA meetings. This includes any verbal or written information identified as a confidential matter.

Information related to the development, administration and maintenance of the examination is considered confidential.

To ensure the security of the examination, all test materials are confidential and will not be released to any person or agency, except as required by these policies for the purpose of examination development and administration.

### Certification Verification

---

The Chief Operating Officer (COO) maintains a database of all active applicants/candidates/certificants. The names and credential of ABSA-certified individuals and their certification status are not considered confidential and are published by ABSA for credential verification purposes.

Verification will be accessible via the certification program's web page on the ABSA website or by contacting the ABSA office. Online verification of certification status will include the certification number, name (first & last), status, original certification date, recertification date and certification expiration date.

Certificants may opt-out of inclusion in the online verification system by contacting the ABSA via email.

Written verification of credentialed status may be obtained if requested by providing the certificant name and certification number or certificant's date of birth via email to the ABSA certification staff. Only the certification status (i.e., currently certified or not currently certified) may be shared. No other data may be shared without written permission from the credentialed practitioner.

Application status, information about whether or not an individual has taken the examination, and score

information will not be released to those requesting verification and are treated as provided in the ABSA Confidentiality Policy.

### **Aggregate Data**

---

Aggregate examination statistics for a minimum of three years (including the number of examination candidates, pass rates and the current total number of certificants) will be made publicly available. Aggregate examination statistics, studies and reports concerning applicants/candidates/certificants will contain no information identifiable with any applicants/candidates/certificants, unless authorized in writing by the individual.

### **Confidentiality Agreements**

---

Individuals involved or given access to confidential certification program and/or personal information must sign agreements prior to gaining access to such information. The COO is responsible for ensuring that each individual affected by the confidentiality policy signs the respective agreement and that the signed agreements are maintained in accordance with the record retention schedule.

Confidentiality agreements shall restrict individuals from participating in the development or delivery of any course or instructional process intended to prepare candidates for the certification exam during their service/employment and for two (2) years afterward. Volunteers and staff must also wait a minimum of two (2) years after their service/involvement/employment before being considered eligible to take the certification examination.

#### *Applicants*

Applicants for certification will be required to attest to the ABSA confidentiality policy regarding exam content as part of the initial certification and recertification application process.

#### *Board Members*

Before beginning his or her term of office, and each year thereafter, each Board member will sign a confidentiality agreement stating that he/she will not disclose any confidential information. If a question is raised as to the confidentiality of certain information, confidentiality will be determined by the ABSA President.

#### *Volunteers*

Individuals who participate in examination development activities (including, but not limited to, item writing, item review, exam form assembly, exam form review) will sign additional confidentiality forms prior to having access to any confidential examination materials. Confidentiality forms will be renewed prior to each examination development activity for individuals who continue to participate in the ABSA examination development activities.

#### *Staff*

Before beginning his or her employment, each certification staff member will sign a confidentiality agreement stating that he/she will not disclose any confidential information.

### **Confidential Materials**

---

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

### **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 during the time frame for which access is required. Access will be granted in compliance with the provisions of the security policy.



## Conflicts of Interest

---

Policy Number: 108

Date Approved: September 28, 2022

Date Revised:

A conflict of interest is defined as a situation in which personal or professional concerns or connections of an individual affect his or her ability to place the welfare of the ABSA before personal benefits.

The ABSA supports operational, administrative, and examination related policies that are free from actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest by employees, subcontractors, and those in elected, appointed, or volunteer positions. All Board members, staff, committee members, SMEs, and consultant/contractors are required to sign a conflict-of-interest agreement. Agreements with consultants, contractors, and vendors may be included in their contracts.

No voting Board member shall derive any personal profit or gain from his or her participation in the ABSA.

### Duty to Disclose

---

Each ABSA director will agree fully and promptly to disclose to the ABSA Board of Directors and the COO any existing or potential conflict of interest the Board director may have, of either a personal, professional, business or financial nature and will refrain from participation in any decision on such matter. This includes avoiding potential and actual conflicts of interest, as well as perceptions of conflicts of interest, including but not limited to:

- a social, professional, or economic relationship with other parties that may affect his/her judgment and/or ability to act in the best interest of ABSA or its certification program;
- a material economic gain or loss from a decision made by ABSA;
- a position to experience material or economic gain by using confidential or proprietary information gained by his/her association with the Board or SA-C certification program; and
- failure to properly disclose an actual, potential, or apparent conflict of interest.

Members of the Board will disclose all other Boards that they are a member of and any changes of employment during their service on the ABSA.

### Conflict of Interest Agreement

---

The COO is responsible for ensuring that each individual affected by the conflict-of-interest policy signs the respective agreement and that the signed agreements are maintained in accordance with the record retention schedule.

#### *Board Members*

Before beginning his or her term of office, and each year thereafter, each Board member will sign a conflict-of-interest agreement stating that he/she will not engage in actions that may constitute an actual, apparent, or potential conflict of interest with the mission and activities of the ABSA. If a question is raised as to a potential conflict of interest, conflicts will be determined by the ABSA President. If a question is raised as to a potential conflict of interest related to the President, the conflict will be determined by the remaining Board Directors.

After disclosing a possible conflict of interest, and if conferred by Board members, the Board member should immediately recuse him/herself from participating in the transaction or matter and not be privy to any information relating to the transaction. The recusal of any Board member should be documented in the respective minutes of the applicable regular or special meeting.

Board members must refrain from acting, debating, or voting on any action or other decision in which the

personal or financial interests of the member conflict with the objects and purposes of ABSA.

*Volunteers*

Individuals who participate in examination development activities (including, but not limited to, item writing, item review, exam form assembly, exam form review) will sign additional conflict of interest forms prior to having access to any confidential examination materials. All volunteers are required to annually acknowledge and agree to all terms and conditions of this policy. All volunteers must disclose any actual, potential, or apparent conflict of interest to the Board.

Volunteers must refrain from acting, debating, or voting on any action or other decision in which the personal or financial interests of the member conflict with the objects and purposes of ABSA.

Committee members who disclose a real, potential, or perceived conflict of interest may also be relieved from their committee assignment or reassigned to another committee.

*Staff*

Before beginning his or her employ, certification staff members will sign a conflict-of-interest agreement stating that he/she will not engage in actions that may constitute an actual, apparent, or potential conflict of interest with the mission and activities of the ABSA.

## Committees

---

Policy Number: 109

Date Approved: September 28, 2022

Date Revised:

### Establishing Committees

---

The ABSA may establish committees and appoint members to committees, sub-committees, working groups, and/or task forces (herein after collectively referred to as committees) as needed. Such committees may include, but are not limited to, a disciplinary committee, nominating committee, and item writing committee.

### Authority

---

Committees will function in an advisory capacity to the ABSA and will follow all ABSA policies and procedures. Committees will not act on behalf of ABSA nor commit to any course of action unless specifically authorized to do so by the Board. All actions of committees must be approved by the full Board. The Board may dissolve or restructure any committee as deemed necessary.

### Composition, Selection & Terms

---

Committee members and committee Chairs are appointed by the President of the ABSA, with the approval of the ABSA Board of Directors. At least one Board Director will serve on each committee as determined by the Board.

Committee members are appointed for 1-year terms and may be reappointed for additional terms as appropriate.

Committees will have a minimum of three members. There is no mandatory limit on the maximum number of committee members, but in appointing the committee members the ABSA will consider the anticipated workload of the committee and the need for the committee to be able to work efficiently.

### Qualifications

---

With the exception of any public members appointed to a committee, all committee members will be surgical assistants and/or related professionals. To the extent reasonably possible, examination development-related committees will reflect the diversity of SA-C certificants. Geographic representation, specialty/practice area, populations served, and experience level will be considered. Failure to maintain SA-C certification status may result in loss of an appointed committee position.

### Standing Committees

---

- Nominating Committee (*reference ABSA Selection policy*)

### Ad-Hoc Committees

---

- Disciplinary Committee
- Examination Development Committee (item writing; item review; form assembly)
- Job/Practice Analysis Committee
- Standard Setting Committee

## **Financial Management**

---

Policy Number: 110

Date Approved: September 28, 2022

Date Revised:

### **Financial Resources**

---

The ABSA shall have sufficient and adequate resources to conduct effective and thorough certification and recertification program activities. The revenue and income generated by the certification program will be used to support such certification and recertification activities, as well as ABSA operations.

Financial management of ABSA is conducted using Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP). ABSA hires an independent CPA firm to prepare financials statements and to file annual tax returns.

### **Compensation**

---

ABSA Board Members are not compensated for their services as Board Members, but may be compensated at reasonable, fair-market, arms-length rates for specialty services performed where an ABSA Board Member has specialty expertise, and pursuant to the Conflicts of Interest Policy.

### **Contracts and Invoice Approval**

---

All contracts for certification program activities will be reviewed and recommended for approval by the Board. The COO shall ensure the review of contracts by legal counsel, if needed. Contracts for certification program activities shall be executed by the CEO upon recommendation from the Board.

Any invoices not supported by previously approved contracts must be approved by the Board prior to payment being issued. Approval via email is acceptable.

### **Expense Reimbursement**

---

Board Members may be reimbursed for reasonable expenses as determined by the full Board.

### **Financial Reporting**

---

Financial statements will include the certification income, expenses, and net assets for a specific period of time. The Board receives and reviews the most recent statement of activities at each regular meeting.

### **Budget**

---

The Board will develop an annual operating budget for the certification program and will ensure that the budget provides adequate financial resources to conduct effective certification and recertification activities.

Establishment of appropriate fees for testing, retesting, and recertification will be proposed as part of the budget process.

The COO and Treasurer, with input from the CEO, draft the annual budget for Board review and approval. The Treasurer will ensure that the certification program operates within the approved budget.

## ABSAs Operational Management

---

Policy Number: 111

Date Approved: September 28, 2022

Date Revised:

### Chief Operating Officer (COO)

---

ABSAs will employ a qualified individual to manage the day-to-day operation of the certification program under the oversight of the Board and CEO. The COO will be responsible for daily certification program operations management, providing administrative support to the Board, and for implementing policy decisions made by the Board.

The COO will be responsible for:

1. Providing routine updates to the Board of Directors regarding certification activities including:
  - Updates at each Board meeting
  - Supervising and managing the daily operations of the certification program
2. Supporting the Board's responsibility to develop a budget for the operation of the certification program by:
  - Working with the Treasurer to prepare a budget for the Board's review
  - Monitoring ongoing compliance with the approved budget
  - Providing regular budget updates to the Board of Directors
3. Implementing all policies, strategic plans, and directives of the Board of Directors
4. Coordinating and monitoring any employees or consultants tasked to work on the certification program and managing and monitoring certification vendors/contractors
5. Overseeing communication with candidates and certificants including maintaining a candidate handbook, application forms, and up-to-date web site content
6. Overseeing certification and recertification application review and eligibility decisions
7. Maintaining a database of certificants including, but not limited to, application information, certification examination and recertification dates, exam scores, etc.
8. Providing compliance oversight by:
  - Monitoring and ensuring compliance with certification program accreditation standards
  - Ensuring maintenance of all certification files and records
9. Serving as administrative support to the Board of Directors and its committees, subcommittees and/or task forces
10. Providing customer service and administrative support for the certification program
11. Developing and distributing meeting materials and other documentation to the Board
12. Completing training/professional development activities necessary to remain informed regarding certification program best practices and accreditation requirements
13. Other duties as assigned by the Board of Directors

### Performance Evaluation

---

The COO will report to the Board of Directors. An annual performance review will be conducted by the President of the Board.

## Staff Orientation & Training

---

Policy Number: 112

Date Approved: September 28, 2022

Date Revised:

The Board understands that managing the daily operations of a professional certification program and monitoring compliance with national accreditation standards presents many challenges. Staff members who have a strong working knowledge of certification program best practices, national accreditation standards, examination development practices and basic psychometric principles can ensure that the program makes well informed and effective decisions.

The Board expects the COO to participate in professional development activities related to certification program administration at least annually. These activities may include, but are not limited to:

- attendance at certification industry conferences or seminars, such as those provided by the Institute of Credentialing Excellence, the Association of Test Publishers, and/or Certification Networking Group; and
- participation in seminars, workshops, and/or webinars; and
- review of published white papers, journal articles, and textbooks.

Staff members who spend at least a portion of their time providing support for the certification programs will receive orientation regarding certification program and examination development best practices. This orientation may include participation in the Board training/orientation sessions.

## **Impartiality Regarding Education & Training**

---

Policy Number: 113

Date Approved: September 28, 2022

Date Revised:

The ABSA's role is in developing and administering certification examinations to determine the qualifications of candidates for certification. The ABSA does not require, provide, accredit, or endorse any specific study guides, training or review courses, or other examination preparation products. The ABSA Board, certification staff, certification committee members, and certification subject matter experts do not have involvement in the creation, accreditation, approval, endorsement or delivery of examination review courses, preparatory materials, educational programs, or training programs/products that prepare candidates for the SA-C certification examination.

During their term(s) of service, participation, or employment and for two (2) years afterward, all those with access to confidential exam information, including Board members, volunteers, and certification staff, will not be directly involved in the development or delivery of any educational or training program and/or product designed or intended to prepare individuals to take the SA-C certification examination. This includes training programs, exam review/exam prep courses, and study guides. Confidentiality agreements shall restrict individuals from participating in the development or delivery of any course or instructional process intended to prepare candidates for the SA-C exam during their service/employment and for two (2) years afterward.

This does not limit Board members from working as faculty members and teaching in an academic program with students that may take the SA-C examination. Board members may be faculty members who prepare students to work in the profession, however, they cannot specifically teach courses which prepare students and/or provide exam prep for students.

Board members, volunteers and certification staff will wait a minimum of two (2) years after their service/participation/employment before being considered eligible to take the SA-C examination.

## Quality Improvement

---

Policy Number: 114

Date Approved: September 28, 2022

Date Revised:

### Purpose

---

ABSA is responsible for providing an objective, fair, and standardized certification program for surgical assistants that meets and maintains compliance with national accreditation standards for certification programs, fulfills the mission of ABSA, and contributes to the legal defensibility of the program. To support these objectives, ABSA routinely evaluates the program through a quality assurance plan to ensure the consistent application of policies and procedures, to detect needed corrective measures, and identify opportunities for improvement.

### Annual Internal Audit

---

#### *Frequency*

An internal audit will be conducted annually to review the areas described below and any other program areas as determined necessary by the Board or staff. The purpose of the audit will be to identify opportunities for improvement, policy updates, or resolution of program issues. ABSA may trigger an audit outside of the prescribed frequency as needed.

#### *Auditor Selection*

The internal audit may be conducted by ABSA staff or contracted to a consultant, at the discretion of the Board in consultation with staff. The individual conducting the audit should not evaluate his/her own work.

#### *Reporting & Management Review*

At the completion of the audit, the auditor will submit a written summary report of the audit findings to the Board.

The Board, or a subcommittee of the Board on the Board's behalf, will conduct and document a management review. During the management review the Board (or its subcommittee) will determine necessary corrective and preventative actions, develop a timeline for each action item, and assign responsibilities as needed. These decisions will be documented in a management review report or meeting minutes. Recommended policy revisions will be referred to the Board for review and approval.

#### *Internal Audit Areas of Focus*

<b>Certification Program</b>	<b>Goal of Internal Audit</b>
<b>Policy Review</b>	Verify consistent implementation of all certification program policies and/or identify necessary updates for the Board's consideration.
<b>Application Processing</b>	Ensure applications for both certification and recertification are reviewed in a fair and timely manner consistent with the application review policy to verify that candidates meet established requirements.
<b>Published Information</b>	Verify that all certification program published documents (Candidate Handbook, web site, certification activities summary, etc.) are accurate and current.
<b>Examination Development</b>	Verify consistent implementation of all exam development policies and procedures, including those associated with: the job analysis, item writing and review, form assembly and review, standard setting, and technical review.  Confirm that examination development activities are conducted under the oversight of a qualified psychometrician and are adequately documented.



<b>Examination Administration</b>	Evaluate all exam administration policies and procedures, including, but not limited to, ensuring proctor and test center quality, reviewing candidate feedback, monitoring the accuracy of the scoring process, score reporting.
<b>Security</b>	Ensure ABSA and its testing vendor consistently implement required security practices. Confirm that ongoing monitoring of the contracted testing company has occurred as required by the Exam Administration policy.
<b>Record Retention</b>	Ensure records are developed, kept, and disposed of in keeping with the Record Retention Policy.
<b>Confidentiality</b>	Verify confidential information, as defined by policy, is handled appropriately and that current, signed agreements are on file for individuals with access to confidential information.
<b>Conflict of Interest</b>	Verify that those who are subject to the Conflict-of-Interest policy have current, signed agreements on file.
<b>Complaints, Disciplinary Actions, and Appeals</b>	Ensure that complaints and appeals are reviewed and processed in accordance with policy and that disciplinary actions are carried out fairly and consistently and in accordance with policy.
<b>Training</b>	Confirm that Board members received required orientation and that SMEs and the COO have participated in training as required by policy.
<b>Customer Service</b>	Customer service aspects listed below will be reviewed to identify recommendations for improvement.
<b>Management Review Tracking</b>	Confirm that action items identified in previous management reports have been completed, are in progress, have been modified, or are planned for implementation. For items that have been implemented, determine effectiveness (if applicable).

Financial management of ABSA is conducted using Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP). ABSA hires an independent CPA firm to prepare financials statements and to file annual tax returns. The Board receives and reviews financial statements at least quarterly.

### **Errors Found during Normal Program Operations**

Errors discovered during the course of normal program operations will trigger a required review to quickly address correction of the error. The COO will work with the testing vendor and/or all involved parties (vendors, consultants, etc.) to gather information, determine a plan of action, and allocate resources for the resolution of the issue. An action plan, based on the specific error and any associated risk to the integrity of the certification program, will be developed and documented.

The COO, or other applicable party, will write a summary report of the event and resolution and distribute it to the ABSA Board. The report may include strategies for preventing similar errors from future occurrence.

### **Standards for Customer Service**

Customer service standards are an integral component of business that are usually defined in terms of accessibility, accuracy, appropriateness, excellence, and timeliness. As part of the annual internal audit, the internal auditor will review the following aspects of customer service and identify recommendations for improvement in these areas in the written audit summary.

#### *Accessibility*

Applicants, candidates, and certificants have easy access to up-to-date, accurate, on-line certification program information.

Information regarding the code of conduct, disciplinary policy, and complaint process is publicly available.

### *Accuracy*

Information provided on the website and in the candidate handbook is current and accurate.

Accurate information will be given, to the best of their ability, by certification program staff to potential applicants, candidates, and certificants in response to questions received via telephone, email, or other methods.

The searchable directory of SA-C certificants on the web site will be accurate and will be updated following testing sessions and recertification deadlines.

### *Appropriateness*

Certification program staff will work to ensure that the expectations of potential applicants, candidates, and certificants are met.

Certification program staff will maintain compliance with ABSA policies and procedures.

### *Timelines*

All complete applications for certification and recertification, and requests for certification verification will be initially processed by certification program staff within a 7-14 business day timeframe following receipt.

Any missing or incomplete information in applications for initial certification or recertification will be communicated to the applicant as soon as noted by certification program staff.

Phone coverage will be during normal business hours of 8 a.m. – 4 p.m. (CST) Monday through Friday, except holidays.

The COO will work to resolve or forward to the Board, complaints within 1 week of receipt, except where other timelines are established by disciplinary, complaints, and appeals policies and procedures.

Certification staff will acknowledge receipt of email or mail inquiries or requests within 3 business days.

## Eligibility Requirements

---

Policy Number: 200

Date Approved: September 28, 2022

Date Revised:

### Purpose

---

ABSA has developed eligibility requirements to ensure that the certification application process is fair and impartial. Membership in any organization is not a prerequisite for the SA-C certification program.

### Requirements

---

All individuals who seek certification must meet the established eligibility requirements. Professionals may apply for certification through one of three pathways, dependent on their professional discipline.

#### **Physician Discipline (Medical Doctor, Dentist) Pathway**

1. **Education:** Completion of a medical program either in the United States or internationally recognized by the International Medical Education Directory (IMED).
2. **Experience:** Completion of residency or advanced training (e.g., surgical rotation) plus a minimum of two (2) years of primary or advanced surgical experience.

#### **Licensed & Non-Licensed Allied Health Professionals (Physician Assistant, Nurse Practitioner, Registered Nurse, Licensed Practical Nurse, Surgical Technologist, and Surgical Assistant) Pathway**

1. **Education:** Completion of a formal surgical assistant training program that meets the published criteria established by the ABSA (see a-k below). Surgical Technology Programs do not qualify.
  - a. General Surgical procedures and anatomy
  - b. Gynecological surgical procedures and anatomy
  - c. Orthopedic surgical procedures and anatomy
  - d. Neurological surgical procedures and anatomy
  - e. Cardiothoracic surgical procedures and anatomy
  - f. Surgical Pharmacology and Anesthesia
  - g. Medical Terminology
  - h. Surgical Interpersonal Interactions
  - i. Wound Healing and Infection Control
  - j. Surgical Assisting Skills, Principals and Technique
  - k. First Assisting Clinical Case requirements
    - i. 50 Major, General cases
    - ii. 25 Major, Gynecological cases
    - iii. 25 Major, Orthopedic cases
    - iv. 35 Miscellaneous cases
2. **Experience:** Completion of a minimum of two (2) years of clinical surgical scrub experience.

3. **Manual Skills Assessment:** Satisfactory completion of an evaluation by a licensed surgeon who evaluates the applicant's ability to perform tying and suturing competently and smoothly.
  - a. Surgeons will indicate "Satisfactory" or "Non-Satisfactory" on the evaluation. Of the 10 skills listed on the Manual Skills Evaluation, a surgeon must indicate that the applicant has completed at least 7 satisfactorily.
  - b. Surgeons may allow the applicant two attempts to satisfactorily demonstrate each skill. Individual skills may be demonstrated in multiple procedures.
  - c. Surgeons must complete the evaluation following the instructions listed in the form. Incorrectly completed forms will not be accepted.

### **Certified Surgical Assistant Pathway**

1. **Surgical Assistant certification:** hold an active certification in surgical assisting offered by another entity.
2. **Experience:** Completion of a minimum of two (2) years of clinical surgical scrub experience.
3. **Manual Skills Assessment:** Satisfactory completion of an evaluation by a surgeon who evaluates the applicant's ability to perform tying and suturing competently and smoothly. Guidelines for satisfactory completion of the skills assessment are detailed in the previous pathway.

### **All Applicants**

1. **Code of Ethics and Application Accuracy Attestation and Application Acknowledgements:** Applicants must attest to comply with the ABSA Code of Ethics. Applicants and certificants must abide to practice surgical assisting in a manner consistent with the certification standards and responsibilities set forth in the ABSA Code of Ethics. Applicants must attest to the accuracy of information reported within the application. Applicants attest to the accuracy of the information submitted and agreement to adhere to certification program policies.
2. **Examination:** Passing score on the SA-C examination.

### **Rationale**

Each eligibility requirement has been established to ensure that certified individuals have an acceptable level of knowledge, as evidenced by the examination and education requirements, and skill, as evidenced by the experience requirement, needed to provide advanced specialty services of surgical assisting.

A rationale for each eligibility requirement has been established as follows.

### **Physician Discipline (Medical Doctor, Dentist) Pathway**

1. **Education:** The level of education required for the physician pathway is consistent with the level of education required to practice as a medical doctor or dentist providing surgical services, which ensures that applicants have training that is specific to surgical assisting and the SA-C examination content.
2. **Experience:** The two (2) year experience requirement is necessary to ensure that applicants have adequate work experience and to give applicants a reasonable base from which they should be able to pass the SA-C exam.

### **Licensed & Non-Licensed Allied Health Professionals (Physician Assistant, Nurse Practitioner, Registered Nurse, Licensed Practical Nurse, Surgical Technologist, and Surgical Assistant) Pathway**

1. **Education:** The formal surgical assistant training program requirement ensures that applicants have training that is specific to surgical assisting and the SA-C examination content.
2. **Experience:** The two (2) year experience requirement is necessary to ensure that applicants have adequate work experience and to give applicants a reasonable base from which they should be able to pass the SA-C exam.
3. **Manual Skills Assessment:** Sewing and tying skills are part of a surgical assistants' requisites while working in the operating theater.

### **Certified Surgical Assistant Pathway**

1. **Certification:** The current surgical assistant certification is documentation that the applicant has completed a training program and passed another surgical assistant board ensuring that applicants have training that is specific to surgical assisting and the SA-C examination content.
2. **Experience:** The two (2) year experience requirement is necessary to ensure that applicants have adequate work experience and to give applicants a reasonable base from which they should be able to pass the SA-C exam.
3. **Manual Skills Assessment:** Sewing and tying skills are part of a surgical assistants' requirements while working in the operating theater.

### All Applicants

1. **Code of Ethics and Application Accuracy Attestation and Application Acknowledgements:** The requirement for adherence to the Code of Ethics provides increased awareness of expected ethical behaviors as well as increased public protection through a process that provides a reporting and investigation mechanism for Code of Ethics violations. Applicants attest to the accuracy of the information submitted and agreement to adhere to certification program policies.
2. **Examination:** Applicants are required to pass the SA-C examination to demonstrate that their education, experience, and training have resulted in sufficient understanding of the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to provide safe and competent evidence-based surgical assisting services as determined by the job analysis studies and represented on the examination content outline.

### Eligibility Verification

Only complete certification applications will be accepted. Incomplete applications will be returned to the applicant who may address the deficiencies and resubmit the application for review, adhering to established application deadlines.

Verification of each eligibility component will be conducted by certification staff as follows in order to ensure applicants have successfully satisfied each requirement:

#### Physician Discipline (Medical Doctor, Dentist) Pathway

1. **Education:** Applicants will submit a copy of their diploma. The medical school will be verified against the IMED.
2. **Experience:** Applicants will submit a copy of their resume. The resume will be verified for applicable work experience.

#### Licensed & Non-Licensed Allied Health Professionals (Physician Assistant, Nurse Practitioner, Registered Nurse, Licensed Practical Nurse, Surgical Technologist, and Surgical Assistant) Pathway

1. **Education:** Applicants will submit a certificate of completion verifying satisfactory completion of the surgical assisting training program. ABSA will verify the program meets the determined criteria by reviewing the program website or other publicly available materials. If needed and requested by ABSA, applicants may be required to submit a program agenda or outline to assist in this verification process.
2. **Experience:** Applicants will submit a copy of their resume. The resume will be verified for applicable work experience.
3. **Manual Skills Assessment:** If seven of the ten skills are marked "satisfactory" the evaluation is accepted. The surgeon is instructed to allow the applicant two attempts for each skill. If a minimum of seven skills are not marked "satisfactory," the application is not approved.

### Certification Pathway

1. **Certification:** Applicants will submit a copy of their current certification (i.e., certificate).
2. **Experience:** Applicants will submit a copy of their resume. The resume will be verified for applicable work experience.

- 3. Manual Skills Assessment:** If seven of the ten skills are marked “satisfactory” the evaluation is accepted. The surgeon is instructed to allow the applicant two attempts for each skill. If a minimum of seven skills are not marked “satisfactory,” the application is not approved.

### **All Applicants**

- 1. Code of Ethics and Application Accuracy Attestation and Application Acknowledgements:** System rules will ensure completion of the required attestation and acknowledgements and will not allow submission of the application without completion of the attestation.

ABSA reserves the right to verify any information provided on the application and/or as part of the application process.

### **Eligibility Appeal**

---

Applicants who are notified that they do not meet the eligibility requirements may appeal this decision by sending a written notice of the appeal to the ABSA COO within 30 days of communication of the adverse eligibility decision. The COO will forward the notice to the Board of Directors for review.

The Board will review the applicant’s information and will make a final decision regarding eligibility. No new or additional information may be submitted with the appeal request. The eligibility appeal will be reviewed within 45 days of receipt. Written notice of the final decision will be sent to the applicant within 30 days of the review.

The ABSA Board may appoint a sub-committee or appeal review committee for the purpose of reviewing eligibility appeals and making final determinations regarding eligibility appeals.

## **Certification Fees, Deadlines, & Refunds**

---

Policy Number: 201

Date Approved: September 28, 2022

Date Revised:

### **Application Deadlines**

---

Complete applications with all required documentation and fees must be submitted by published deadlines, if applicable.

### **Fees**

---

Certification, recertification, retest, and late fees will be established by the Board and published on the ABSA website. Fees must be remitted with the corresponding application.

### **Refunds**

---

If an individual wishes to cancel an application for initial certification, retesting, or recertification, the request must be submitted in writing (via email) to ABSA. An administration fee will apply. Refunds will be issued within six weeks. Refunds will not be issued once the individual has taken the exam for which he/she applied or after a recertification decision has been issued.

## Code of Ethics

---

Policy Number: 202

Date Approved: September 28, 2022

Date Revised:

### Introduction

---

The ABSA Code of Ethics (Code) applies to each certificant of the ABSA and each individual seeking certification from ABSA (candidates or applicants).

All applicants and certificants agree to the ABSA Code of Ethics as a condition of certification during the application process. Violation of any portion of the Code may result in disciplinary action as outlined in the Disciplinary Policy.

The Code will be published and available to all applicants and certificants.

### Purpose

---

The Code establishes the basic ethical standards for the professional behavior of ABSA certificants and candidates. The Code is designed to provide both appropriate ethical practice guidelines and enforceable standards of conduct for all certificants and candidates.

### Code of Ethics

---

The ABSA supports appropriate, professional standards designed to protect the public. ABSA certificants and candidates for certification provide surgical assisting services in a manner that promotes integrity and reflects positively on the profession, consistent with accepted moral, ethical, and legal standards and within the relevant scope of practice. The role and function of a surgery assistant is to assist the surgeon in the performance of a surgical procedure.

Certification as a surgical assistant through the ABSA does not allow for any independent performance of any medical or surgical procedures within the United States of America or its territories.

Certificants and candidates have the obligation to practice in a manner consistent with the ABSA certification standards and responsibilities set forth below. This includes the obligations to maintain and demonstrate high standards of integrity and professional conduct; accept responsibility for their actions; continually seek to enhance their professional capabilities; practice with fairness and honesty; and encourage others to act in a professional manner.

#### *Code of Ethics Pledge*

As an ABSA Surgical Assistant–Certified (SA-C),

- I pledge to pursue and uphold the highest attainable ethical standards.
- I will place the physical and psychological well-being of my patients above all else.
- I will continue to improve my medical knowledge and surgical skills.
- I will conduct myself in a manner that is honest and above reproach, always, especially when dealing with my patients, colleagues, and medical staff.
- I will assist my colleagues when requested and will seek their guidance when my own abilities are in doubt.
- I will support and strive to advance the objectives and goals of the surgical profession and specifically those of the American Board of Surgical Assistants



## **Awarding the SA-C Credential**

---

Policy Number: 203

Date Approved: September 28, 2022

Date Revised:

The ABSA does not consider the practice of awarding the credential to individuals who have not passed the SA-C examination to be desirable. All candidates must meet the established eligibility criteria and pass the certification exam in order to earn the credential.

ABSA does not offer reciprocal certification for individuals certified from another organization.

## Summary of Certification Activities

---

Policy Number: 204

Date Approved: September 28, 2022

Date Revised:

The COO will prepare a summary of certification activities at least annually. The certification data will:

- represent activities for a minimum of three consecutive years;
- represent activities for all programs and exam administration modalities;
- include the number of individuals who took the exam, the pass rates, the number currently certified, and other aggregate certification/recertification data as appropriate; and
- be available to the public on the ABSA website.

## **Fairness and Discrimination**

---

Policy Number: 205

Date Approved: September 28, 2022

Date Revised:

ABSA adheres to principles of fairness and due process and endorses the principles of equal opportunity. In administering the certification program, ABSA does not discriminate or deny opportunity to anyone on the basis of race, color, creed, age, gender, national origin, religion, disability, marital status, parental status, ancestry, sexual orientation, source of income, or any other status protected by applicable law. All candidates for certification will be judged solely on the published eligibility and recertification criteria determined by the Board of Directors.

## Accommodations for Candidates with Disabilities

---

Policy Number: 206

Date Approved: September 28, 2022

Date Revised:

ABSA and its test administration vendor will provide reasonable and appropriate testing accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended for individuals with documented disabilities who request and demonstrate the need for accommodation as required by law. ADA regulations define a person with a disability as someone with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. ABSA requires documentation to validate the type and severity of a disability to enable accommodations to be specifically matched with the identified functional limitation, in order to provide equal access to exam functions for all examinees.

The information provided by candidates and any documentation regarding such disability and special accommodation, will be treated with strict confidentiality and will not be shared with any source, with the exception of ABSA and its test administration vendor and proctors, without the candidate's express written permission.

Reasonable accommodations are decided based upon:

- the individual's specific request,
- the individual's specific disability,
- documentation submitted,
- the appropriateness of the request.

Reasonable accommodations do not include steps that fundamentally alter the purpose or nature of the examination. Reasonable accommodations generally are provided for candidates who:

- have a physical or learning impairment that substantially limits that person in one or more major life activities (e.g. walking, talking, hearing, performing manual tasks)
- have a record of such physical or learning impairment
- have been documented as having a physical or learning impairment

Requests for accommodations are reviewed by the COO who works in partnership with the test administration vendor to ensure appropriate arrangements for all approved requests and to ensure the request can be processed without jeopardizing the integrity or security of the examination. Special accommodations must be requested in advance by submitting the "Requests for Accommodations Form" located in the Candidate Handbook.

Request forms are due at least 45 days prior to the preferred examination date. ABSA will communicate with the candidate regarding approval of the requested accommodation and scheduling a testing appointment to accommodate their needs accordingly.

## Designation & Certificate

---

Policy Number: 207

Date Approved: September 28, 2022

Date Revised:

### Use of the Certification Mark

---

After receiving official notification of SA-C certification, the credential may be used only as long as certification remains valid and in good standing. Individuals may not use the credential until they have received specific written notification that they have successfully completed all requirements, including passing the examination and documenting the specified experience.

Certificants must comply with all recertification requirements to maintain use of the credential.

Certification is a non-transferable, revocable, limited, non-exclusive license to use the certification designation “SA-C” or “Surgical Assistant-Certified”, subject to compliance with the policies and procedures, as may be revised from time to time.

Except as permitted by this policy, any use or display of ABSA certification marks and/or logos without the prior written permission of the ABSA is prohibited. Any candidate or certificant who manufacturers, modifies, reproduces, distributes or uses a fraudulent or otherwise unauthorized ABSA certificate, ABSA designation or other credential may be subject to disciplinary action, including denial or revocation of eligibility or certification. Any individual who engages in such behavior also may be subject to legal action.

Education and training providers may not use the ABSA name, logos, or certification marks to state or imply any approval or endorsement by ABSA or any affiliation with ABSA.

### Proper Use of the Credential

---

After meeting all eligibility requirements and passing the examination, individuals may use their credential in all correspondence and professional relations and on promotional materials, such as stationery, websites, business cards, etc. The mark or logo may be used only on business cards, stationery, letterhead, and similar documents on which the name of the individual certified is prominently displayed.

Individuals who have met the certification standards established by the ABSA are authorized to use the following certification mark in communications and marketing materials:

- The credential may be used as SA-C or Surgical Assistant-Certified.
- The credential is typically used after the certificant's name following any academic degrees and licensure (e.g. Jane Smith, RN, SA-C).
- The mark must be clearly associated with the individual(s) certified by the ABSA.
  - Correct Use:
    - John Doe is a Surgical Assistant-Certified.
    - John Doe is a SA-C certificant.
  - Misuse:
    - ACME company employs three Surgical Assistant-Certified professionals.
- The mark should not be used in a plural or possessive manner.
  - Correct Use:
    - John Doe and Jane Smith are Surgical Assistant-Certified certifiants.
  - Misuse:
    - John Doe and Jane Smith are Surgical Assistants-Certified.
    - The Surgical Assistant's-Certified seminar was sold out.

The certification mark(s) may be used only as long as certification is valid. Should the certification be suspended or withdrawn for any reason, the individual must immediately cease the use of the certification designation and acronym on stationery, websites, business cards, and any and all promotional materials.

### **Ownership of the Mark and Logo**

---

The certification marks and logo are the property of the ABSA. Permission to use the certification mark or logo is granted to credentialed persons at the discretion of the ABSA Board of Directors, for permissible uses only.

The SA-C marks and logo may not be revised or altered in any way. They must be displayed in the same form as produced by ABSA and cannot be reproduced unless such reproduction is identical to the mark provided by ABSA.

The mark or logo may not be used in any manner which could bring ABSA into disrepute or in any way is considered misleading or unauthorized. This includes any use of the mark or logo that the public might construe as an endorsement, approval or sponsorship by ABSA of a certificant's business or any product thereof.

### **Certificates**

---

Candidates who complete their SA-C candidacy will receive a non-transferable certificate specifying that the SA-C designation has been awarded. Certificants will receive a certificate that includes their name, credential awarded, certification number, issue date, and expiration date. The certificate may only be displayed during the period for which the credential is valid. Certificates remain the property of ABSA and must be returned to ABSA upon request.

## Recertification Requirements

---

Policy Number: 208

Date Approved: September 28, 2022

Date Revised:

### Purpose and Rationale

---

ABSA supports the ongoing professional development of its certificants. The mandatory recertification process provides is designed to ensure that the Surgical Assistant – Certified continues their education and experience in health science and medicine by reinforcing and expanding their knowledge and skills and retaining knowledge of current practice.

Recertification encourages and acknowledges professional development participation. To support this purpose, the recertification requirements include attainment of recertification points through completion of professional development activities such as continuing medical education, ACLS/PALS/CPR certification, and relevant work experience or recertification by passing the current certification exam. These activities support ongoing professional development, encourage opportunities for new learning, and provide a process for utilizing updated skills/knowledge through relevant work experience.

The two-year period established for recertification is based on ABSA's assessment that new practices, research, and information are introduced in the field with enough frequency that professional development activities should be conducted routinely so that certificants remain up to date with both current best practices and emerging knowledge.

### Requirements

---

Certification is valid for a two-year period, and the certification expiration date is indicated on each individual's certificate. Certification expires on June 30 of the expiration year.

To maintain an active SA-C certification status all certificants must complete the online SA-C Recertification Application and submit all required documentation and fees for their selected recertification method by the applicable deadline to document compliance with the following recertification requirements:

#### *Recertification by Professional Development and Experience*

Candidates recertifying by completion of professional development and experience must meet each of the following requirement:

1. **Professional Development:** Complete eighty (80) recertification points during the 2-year certification period. Forty (40) points must be obtained each year of the certification period.
  - a) Eleven (11) points per year are awarded for completion of Continuing Medical Education. Any continuing medical education is acceptable for recertification.
  - b) Four (4) points per year are awarded for ACLS, PALS, or CPR active certification which is a required professional development activity.
2. **Experience:** Complete a minimum of 400 clinical surgical procedures or 1,500 clinical surgical hours in the role of a surgical assistant - certified (SA-C) (first assistant) during the 2-year certification period.
  - a) Twenty-five (25) points per year are awarded for completion of the required surgical assisting experience activity.

#### *Recertification by Examination*

Candidates recertifying by exam must take and successfully pass the exam prior to their expiration date. Re-examination procedures apply.

*All Recertification Candidates*

All recertification candidates must complete the following requirement.

1. **Code of Ethics and Application Accuracy Attestation and Application Acknowledgements:** Agree to comply with the ABSA Code of Ethics and accuracy of the information reported in the recertification application and attest to the application acknowledgements.

Recertification requirements will be published on the website and easily accessible to applicants and certificants.

**Recertification Requirements Rationale**

Frequent changes in the operating theater necessitate ongoing and frequent assessment of continuing competence of the ABSA Surgical Assistant-Certified (SA-C).

Medical/surgical standards prescribe that certificants should acquire new surgical knowledge on a continuing basis. The ABSA has determined that a two-year re-certification cycle is appropriate in assessing the medical and surgical competence of the Surgical Assistant-Certified (SA-C).

All candidates successfully acquiring certification as Surgical Assistant-Certified (SA-C) through the ABSA will be required to document their surgical skills and continuing medical education, by renewing their certification every two years.

Renewal may be accomplished by submission of an application for renewal along with the appropriate documentation or by re-examination through the ABSA.

*Recertification by Professional Development and Experience*

1. **Professional Development:** The recertification points requirement ensures certificants participate in or lead professional development activities that contribute to maintaining knowledge and skills and supplementing knowledge and skills with updates to current practice.
  - a) Allocating points for the required surgical assisting experience recognizes that practice in the specialty contributes to maintenance of surgical assisting knowledge and skills.
  - b) Allocating points for ACLS, PALS, or CPR active certification recognizes that maintenance of basic life-saving knowledge and skills are necessary attributes to the safe performance of surgical assisting services.
2. **Experience:** The experience requirement ensures certificants are actively practicing their surgical assisting skills and able to apply the knowledge gained through ongoing professional development in the practice setting.

*Recertification by Examination*

Passing the current certification exam demonstrates recertification candidates have maintained advanced specialty knowledge of the professional domains that encompass the tasks and knowledge required of a surgical assistant working under the guidance of a surgeon.

*All Recertification Candidates*

1. **Code of Ethics and Application Accuracy Attestation and Application Acknowledgements:** The requirement for adherence to the Code of Ethics provides increased awareness of expected ethical behaviors as well as increased public protection through a process that provides a reporting and investigation mechanism for Code of Ethics violations. Candidates acknowledge the accuracy of their application and agreement to adhere to ABSA policies related to certification.

**Recertification Acceptance**

ABSA will issue a renewal notice to the certificant once all recertification requirements have been met. New



certificates will be mailed to ABSA certificants.

Recertification applications will not be accepted from individuals whose certification is in a state of suspension or has been revoked.

All continuing education activities are subject to review and approval by ABSA. Credit is only granted after the activity has been completed and documented. Credit is not granted for time spent networking, in social functions, or for breaks.

### **Recertification Application Verification Process**

---

To maintain the credibility and integrity of the certification process, ABSA reserves the right to verify any information provided on recertification applications. Only complete recertification applications will be accepted. Incomplete applications will be returned to the certificant who may address the deficiencies and resubmit the application for review, adhering to established application deadlines.

Recertification applications and fees are accepted beginning January 1 of the expiration year and due by June 30 of the expiration year. Certificants will receive a courtesy recertification reminder to the email on file; however, it is the responsibility of the certificant to submit a timely recertification application and retain appropriate documentation of their professional development activities.

ABSA will review all recertification applications for adherence to the recertification requirement. In addition, annually, 5% of recertification applications are selected for audit. Verification of each recertification requirement will be conducted by certification staff as follows:

#### **1. Professional Development:**

- a) Completion of required CME is verified through submission of the Continuing Medical Education Tracking Form.
- b) Points for applicable experience are verified through the experience requirement (see #2).
- c) ACLS, PALS, or CPR active certification is verified through submission and review of the active certification card.
- d) If selected for audit, certificants are required to submit additional documentation to validate the claimed activities, such as CME certificates of completion or transcripts.

#### **2. Experience:**

- a) If employed by a hospital, surgicenter, SA group, or physician, a work verification form must be completed by the supervisor attesting to the caseload experience.
- b) If self-employed, completion of the case log form and attestation by the certificant is required.
- c) All completed forms must be uploaded to the application at the time of submission.
- d) If selected for audit, certificants must submit documentation verifying the case count submitted in the case log.

**3. Exam:** Staff will verify the certification exam is passed prior to the expiration date.

**4. Code of Ethics and Application Accuracy Attestation and Application Acknowledgements:** System rules will ensure completion of the required attestations and acknowledgements and will not allow submission of the application without completion.

If any areas of non-compliance are identified during the verification and review process, the individual will have 30 days to submit any required information. If the required information is not provided the individual's certification will expire at the end of the 30 days or on the normal expiration date (whichever comes last).

### **Failure to Recertify**

---

Recertification is mandatory for all certificants. If certification is not renewed it will expire on June 30 two years after the certification was last earned. Individuals whose certification has expired or been suspended or revoked may not represent him/herself as an ABSA certificant and may not use the credential until he/she receives official notice that the recertification requirements have been satisfied or that certification status has been reinstated.

Certificants who fail to recertify in accordance with ABSA policy will be changed from an active to inactive status in the online registry of certificants and the verification letter.

Certificants who fail to recertify in accordance with ABSA policy will receive an official notification. Notifications address the expiration of the SA-C certification, status change from active to inactive in the ABSA online registry, and policies and procedures for reinstatement.

### **Reinstatement of Certification**

---

If certification is not renewed by June 30, the certification is in inactive status. The credential may not be used in any way while the credential is inactive and recertification requirements have not been met.

Inactive credential holders are allowed a one-month grace period to complete the recertification process and submit the required fee by July 31. No late fee applies during the grace period; however, the credential is inactive until recertification is satisfactorily completed.

Following the grace period, if certification has been expired for two years or less, an individual may recertify by meeting all recertification requirements, submitting a complete recertification application, and paying any associated late fees.

Certificants who meet the eligibility requirements of the reinstatement policy will be moved from inactive to active status in the ABSA online verification registry.

If certification has been expired for more than two years, the certification is considered to be lapsed. Individuals who want to reinstate their SA-C credential from a lapsed status must complete and submit a reinstatement application, submit the application fee, meet all eligibility requirements in effect at the time of reapplication, and pass the ABSA Certification Examination.

### **Recertification Appeal**

---

Individuals who are notified that they do not meet the recertification requirements may appeal this decision by sending a written notice of the appeal to the ABSA COO within 30 days of receipt of the adverse recertification decision. The COO will forward the notice to the Board of Directors for review.

The Board will review the information and will make a final decision regarding eligibility. No new or additional information may be submitted with the appeal request. The recertification appeal will be reviewed within 45 days of receipt. Written notice of the final decision will be emailed to the applicant within 30 days of the review.

The Board may appoint a sub-committee or appeal review committee for the purpose of reviewing recertification appeals and making final determinations.

## Disciplinary Policy

---

Policy Number: 209

Date Approved: September 28, 2022

Date Revised:

To maintain and enhance the credibility of the ABSA certification program, the ABSA has adopted the following procedures to allow individuals to bring complaints concerning the conduct of individuals who are candidates or certificants of the ABSA certification program.

In the event an individual candidate or certificant violates the ABSA Code of Ethics, certification rules, or ABSA policies the Board of Directors may reprimand or suspend the individual or may revoke certification.

The grounds for sanctions under these procedures may include, but are not necessarily limited to:

1. Violation of the ABSA Code of Ethics.
2. Violation of established ABSA policies, rules and requirements.
3. Conviction of a felony or other crime of moral turpitude under federal or state/provincial law in a matter related to the practice of, or qualifications for surgical assisting.
4. Found guilty of independent performance of any medical or surgical procedure (i.e., practicing medicine without a license).
5. Failure to maintain professional licensure
6. Gross negligence, willful misconduct, or other unethical conduct in the performance of services for which the individual has achieved certification from ABSA.
7. Fraud or misrepresentation in an initial application or renewal application for certification.

Information regarding the complaint process will be available to the public via the ABSA web site or other published documents. A complete copy of this policy will be publicly available.

Actions taken under this policy do not constitute enforcement of the law, although referral to appropriate federal, state/provincial, or local government agencies may be made about the conduct of the candidate or 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 actions taken.

### Complaints

---

Complaints may be submitted by any individual or entity. Complaints should be reported to ABSA in writing and should include the name of the person submitting the complaint, the name of the person the complaint is regarding along with other relevant identifying information, a detailed description of factual allegations supporting the charges, and any relevant supporting documentation. Information submitted during the complaint and investigation process is considered confidential and will be handled in accordance with ABSA's Confidentiality policy. Inquiries or submissions other than complaints may be reviewed and handled by the ABSA or its staff members at its discretion.

Upon receipt and preliminary review of a complaint involving the certification program the ABSA COO in consultation with the President of the Board of Directors may conclude, in their sole discretion, that the submission:

1. contains unreliable or insufficient information, or
2. is patently frivolous or inconsequential.

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

Preliminary review will be conducted within 30 calendar days of receipt of the complaint.

If a submission is deemed by the President to be a valid and actionable complaint, the President shall see that written notice is provided to the candidate/certificant whose conduct has been called into question. The candidate/certificant whose conduct is at issue shall also be given the opportunity to respond to the complaint. The President also shall ensure that the individual submitting the complaint receives notice that the complaint is being reviewed by the ABSA Board of Directors.

### **Complaint Review**

---

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

The President appoints a Review Committee of three or more individuals, who may or may not be members of the ABSA Board of Directors 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 President. 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 and investigation will be completed in an appropriate amount of time, not to exceed 6 months, unless there are extenuating circumstances that require an extended period. The Review Committee may be assisted in the conduct of its investigation by other members of the ABSA or by ABSA staff or legal counsel. The President exercises general supervision over all investigations.

Both the individual submitting the complaint and the candidate/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 ABSA Board of Directors 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 ABSA are conducted in confidence, with all written communications sealed and marked "Personal and Confidential," and they are conducted objectively, without any indication of prejudgment. 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 ABSA 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 ABSA should decide that there has been a violation of ABSA policies and rules. When the Review Committee recommends that the Board of Directors 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 under the supervision of the President and is presented by a representative of the Review Committee to the ABSA 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 candidate/certificant, the individual's employer (if applicable), and the individual or entity who submitted the complaint; a summary report is also made to the Board of Directors.

The ABSA reviews the recommendation of the Review Committee based upon the record of the investigation. The ABSA 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 ABSA determines that a

violation has occurred, this determination and the imposition of a sanction are promulgated by written notice to the candidate/certificant, 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 ABSA.

In certain circumstances, the ABSA may consider a recommendation from the Review Committee that the candidate/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 ABSA to accept it are within their respective discretionary powers. If such an offer is extended, the candidate/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 ABSA. If the ABSA accepts the assurance, notice is given to the individual'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 by the ABSA upon a candidate/certificant whom the ABSA has determined to have violated the policies and rules of its 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:

1. written reprimand to the candidate/certificant; or
2. suspension of the certificant for a designated period; or
3. suspension of the candidate's application eligibility for a designated period; or
4. termination of the certificant's certification from the ABSA; or
5. termination of the candidate's application eligibility for a designated period.

For sanctions that include suspension or termination, a summary of the final determination and the sanction with the individual's name and date is published by the ABSA. This information will be published only after any appeal has either been considered or the appeal period has passed.

Reprimand in the form of a written notice from the President normally is sent to a candidate/certificant who has received his or her first substantiated complaint. Suspension normally is imposed on a candidate/certificant who has received two substantiated complaints. Termination normally is imposed on a candidate/certificant who has received two substantiated complaints within a two-year period, or three or more substantiated complaints. The ABSA may at its discretion, however, impose any of the sanctions, if warranted, in specific cases.

Anyone found guilty of "Practicing Medicine Without a License," in the United States of America or its territories, either by court trial or plea agreement, will lose their ABSA certification and will be ineligible to certify with the ABSA at any future date.

Certificants who have been terminated shall have their certification revoked and may not be considered for ABSA certification in the future. If certification is revoked, all certificates or other materials requested by the ABSA must be returned promptly to the ABSA.

## **Appeal**

---

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

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

The Appeal Committee may only review whether the determination by the ABSA 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 ABSA to conform to published criteria, policies, or procedures.

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

The Appeal Committee conducts and completes the appeal within ninety days after receipt of the request for an appeal. Written appellate submissions and any replies may be made by authorized representatives of the appellant and of the ABSA. Submissions are made according to whatever schedule is reasonably established by the Appeal Committee. The decision of the Appeal Committee either affirms or overrules the determination of the ABSA but does not address a sanction imposed by the ABSA.

The Appeal Committee decision is binding upon the ABSA, the candidate/certificant who is subject to the termination, and all other persons.

### **Resignation**

---

If a certificant who is the subject of a complaint voluntarily surrenders his or her ABSA certification at any time during the pendency of a complaint under these Procedures, the complaint is dismissed without any further action by the Review Committee, the ABSA, or an Appeal Committee established after an appeal. The entire record is sealed, and the individual may not reapply for certification by the ABSA. However, the ABSA may authorize the President to communicate the fact and date of resignation, and the fact and general nature of the complaint, which was pending at the time of the resignation, to or at the request of a government entity engaged in the administration of law. Similarly, in the event of such resignation, the individual's employer and the person or entity who submitted the complaint are notified of the fact and date of resignation and that ABSA has dismissed the complaint as a result.

## Examination Development & Ongoing Maintenance

---

Policy Number: 300

Date Approved: September 28, 2022

Date Revised:

The ABSA participates in and provides oversight for the development and ongoing maintenance of the certification examination(s). The Board of Directors and COO work in partnership with the ABSA psychometrician to ensure the examination is developed and maintained in a manner consistent with generally accepted psychometric, education testing practices, and national accreditation standards for certification programs.

### Subject Matter Experts

---

#### *SME Selection*

The Board of Directors, with assistance from the COO, selects diverse groups of qualified subject matter experts (SMEs) to participate in exam development activities throughout the exam development process.

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

An open call for volunteers is utilized to solicit SMEs for the certification program. The COO develops an application (e.g., item writer/item reviewer application form) and a commitment to serve form.

Prior to the call for volunteers, the COO will establish:

- The minimum number of SMEs required for the certification task;
- Any candidates recommended by Board members; and
- Any candidates with current/previous experience on SA-C exam development committees

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

- A range of professional disciplines including physician, dentist, physician assistant, nurse practitioner, registered nurse, licensed practical nurse, surgical technologist, and surgical assistant
- A range of surgical assisting experience, including a range of years of experience
- A range of practice settings/specialty areas
- A range of geographical areas throughout the United States

Non physician/dentist SMEs must hold the SA-C credential.

SMEs will be appointed on an ad-hoc basis to working groups and committees. Appointments will be made by the Board President. Members of the ABSA, except for the public member, may serve as SMEs. The public member is invited to participate in all examination development activities as an observer.

As noted below, SMEs will participate throughout the test development process. Some overlap among groups of SMEs is acceptable; however, the same SMEs will not be used across multiple committees. SMEs may be reappointed to ad-hoc committees; however, the Board will ensure that committee composition varies from task to task and over time to ensure diversity in representation.

#### *SME Training*

SMEs will receive sufficient training, specific to their assigned roles, prior to participating in examination development. Training will be conducted by ABSA's psychometrician.

SME item writers and reviewers will:

- Complete mandatory training on item writing/review for certification examinations;
- Submit a signed confidentiality and conflict of interest form prior to participating in any exam development activity;
- Have an item writing/review guide available for reference; and,
- Have an item style guide available for reference.

## **Job Analysis Studies**

---

Job Analysis Studies will be conducted to identify and validate the knowledge and skills which will be measured by the examination. The results of the Job Analysis will serve as the basis for the examination.

The ABSA has determined that a Job Analysis will be conducted every two years. This determination is based on the frequency of substantive changes in the field and compliance with standards for professional certification programs.

## **Examination Specifications**

---

The content for the examination will be determined based on the recommended content outline and content area weights developed following each job analysis. The final content outline and corresponding content weights will be approved by the Board of Directors. The SA-C examination is developed in the United States, and content is based on practice within the United States.

Examination time limits will be developed by the Board in consultation with the psychometrician. Time limits will allow sufficient time for completing the examination without providing unnecessary additional time that could enable security breaches by test takers.

## **Item Writing and Review**

---

Item writing and review activities are typically conducted annually. Item writers and reviewers are required to complete item development training prior to writing and/or reviewing exam items. Following the training session, item developers will be granted access to the online item development portal. All item development activities will be facilitated and monitored by the ABSA psychometrician.

The development of all items for the exam will be directly linked to the approved content outline.

Once items have been written by trained SMEs, they will be reviewed by at least one SME who did not write the item and the Psychometrician. Once an item has satisfactorily completed this initial review it will be added to the item bank. Items are reviewed again when they are included on a test form (see Examination Assembly below). Newly written items will be pretested as unscored items before being included as scored (operational) items on a test form.

## **Item Bank**

---

An item bank will be maintained which includes all items developed for the examination(s). The item bank will be maintained securely with the ABSA vendor, Caveon.

Data for each item stored in the item bank includes current status (e.g. draft/pretest, active, retired), correct answer key, content outline linkage, references, and performance statistics.

## **Examination Assembly**

---

Forms are assembled by random selection of items so that the form meets the SA-C content specifications and to ensure equivalence of the exam forms. Active items are reviewed annually, or as needed, by SMEs to identify any corrections needed.

## **Establishing a Passing Point**

---

The passing point for the exam will be established using a criterion-reference technique. Qualified and trained SMEs will participate in determining the passing point working with the psychometric consultant. The process used to determine the passing point will be documented as part of a cut score study report.



The final passing point resulting from this process will be approved by the Board of Directors. Any modifications to the recommended passing point will be documented in the final passing point study report along with the rationale for those changes.

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

A standard setting study will be conducted following completion of each job analysis study, at a minimum, but can be conducted more frequently to support programmatic requirements.

### **Equating**

---

All forms will be assembled to adhere to the current content outline. Following the cut score study which establishes the passing score for the base form, the passing score for subsequent forms will be established through statistical equating to ensure equivalence of difficulty and score reliability.

The equating methodology and procedures will be documented in an appropriate technical report.

### **Test Analysis / Technical Reports**

---

Performance statistics will be calculated and retained for each exam item.

At least annually a test analysis or technical report will be produced by the psychometrician and reviewed by the ABSA 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 administrations, the number of exam takers, passing point, number of exam items, measures of average performance, measures of performance variability, reliability indices, pass-fail percentages, and recommendations from the psychometrician.

### **Documentation**

---

All examination development activities (including job analysis, item development, test form assembly, cut score studies, equating, and test/item analysis) will be documented in formal exam development reports by the psychometrician and delivered to the Board in a timely manner.

## Examination Administration

---

Policy Number: 301

Date Approved: September 28, 2022

Date Revised:

The SA-C examination contains 150 multiple-choice items, of which 140 are scored items and 10 are pretest items that do not count toward the candidate's score. The examination is delivered via the Caveon Scorpion platform and monitored via live-remote proctoring. Candidates have three (3) hours to complete the exam. Candidates may take their exam from a home or office location so long as the hardware, software, and room requirements are met. Instructions for accessing the examination application, fees, deadlines, and other instructions are published in the candidate handbook and on the website. Application deadlines are enforced to ensure ABSA adequate time to process applications prior to the candidate's preferred testing date.

The SA-C exam is offered on-demand for approved candidates.

### Re-Examination

---

Candidates who fail the examination may test up to four times in a calendar year. Failing candidates must wait a minimum of 30 days from the previous testing attempt to submit a retest application. A retake application and retest fee must be submitted for each retake attempt.

Candidates who fail more than four times in a calendar year must complete additional formal training in surgical assisting prior to re-applying for certification.

The rationale for this waiting period includes:

- Ensuring candidates have adequate time to prepare for the examination and receive additional training in the field after four unsuccessful attempts, and
- Increasing the security of the exam administration process by limiting candidate exposure to items in the item bank which contains over 500 active items.

### Examination Rules

---

Hardware and software requirements to take the exam include:

- Laptop or personal computer
- Private internet connection (i.e., may not use public internet such as at a library)
- Internet Explorer browser is not compatible
- Integrated or external computer web camera
  - If video feed fails for any reason exam is terminated.
- Cell phone with camera and audio connection
  - Candidate will use the phone to scan the room prior to exam launch as instructed by the proctor.
  - Proctor will instruct the candidate where to place the phone to monitor the applicant's computer screen
  - If any connection between video connection is lost (phone battery dies, internet connection is interrupted, etc.), the exam is automatically stopped, and the test taker cannot proceed until the video connection is re-established and the proctor secures the exam area again.
- Audio connection so that the candidate may hear and be heard throughout the administration

Candidates may not use any form of aid (notes, phones, other persons, books, etc.) during the examination. The testing vendor's platform will restrict access to navigating from the browser and tracks browser events (i.e., suspicious key strokes). Any suspicious events trigger an alert to the proctor.

No breaks are allowed during the administration.

## Examination Admission

---

Candidates are required to present a valid, government issued, photo identification and approval letter from the ABSA to gain admission to the examination session. The identification is checked against the approval letter which includes the candidate's photo and the person presenting to the examination to ensure all align.

The proctor will verify the workspace meets requirements (no materials, etc.) prior to allowing access to the exam.

## Proctors

---

All exam administrations will be monitored by qualified proctors who are trained by the proctoring vendor, MonitorEDU. To ensure that proctors are familiar with test security measures, ABSA produces a Proctor Manual that proctors must also use for administration of the SA-C exam.

Proctors receive directions and are accountable for checking candidate identification, verifying the candidate's workspace, security of test materials, proctoring, and dealing with candidate misconduct.

A 1:1 candidate to proctor ratio is utilized.

Proctors must complete an agreement attesting to confidentiality and conflict of interest provisions and to enforce the exam administration procedures as intended.

## Monitoring of Examination Administrations

---

The ABSA COO monitors examination administrations on an ongoing basis. This includes review of any candidate feedback, secret shop of the test administration, review of video/audio recordings, and any irregularities reported by the testing vendor and/or candidates. Irregularities may include, but are not limited to, security concerns, power outages, connectivity issues, technical issues, and candidate illness.

Any identified issues are reported to the test vendor and the Board. The COO follows up on reported issues, as needed, to ensure they are adequately addressed. This includes, but is not limited to, requesting and reviewing the results of vendor investigations of reported irregularities.

## Score Report Notifications

---

Preliminary results are provided on screen immediately following the examination, and candidates may email the results to themselves at that time. Within one week of the exam, ABSA will email a pass/fail notification to the candidate.

Passing score notifications include a decision outcome ("pass"), and percent correct in each content domain, information about official notification of certification (e.g. certificate) and recertification requirements.

Failing score reports include a decision outcome ("fail"), the candidate total score, the passing score, performance in each content domain, the type of score reported (e.g. raw), appropriate uses and potential misuses of reported score information and reexamination information.

### *Interpretation*

The following explanation of the score report information will be publicly available in the candidate handbook and included on each score report:

*The SA-C examination is designed to measure a candidate's overall performance. Examination content area scores are not used to determine pass/fail status but are provided to offer a general indication of a candidate's performance and may be used to assist in evaluating relative areas of strengths and weakness in each content area.*

*Scores are reported as raw scores. Each item is worth one point, so the sum of correct responses is a raw score. A candidate's total score determines whether he/she has passed or failed the examination after a comparison to the cut score. The cut score for a multiple-choice examination is the result of a study that is intended to define the minimum acceptable performance level and link this level to an examination score by relying on data collected from a panel of surgical assistant subject-matter experts.*

## Exam Appeals

Candidates who fail the exam and believe irregular testing conditions were a contributing factor may file an appeal to the ABSA. Examples of irregular testing conditions include a medical or personal emergency during the testing session, exam vendor technical issues, and other significant testing disruptions. All appeal requests must be made in writing and emailed no later than seven (7) days after the receipt of the exam score report. All appeals must describe the suspected error or problem and the requested remedy. The Board will review the information and make a final decision within 30 days of receipt. The decision of the Board shall be final.

## **Verification of Examination Results**

---

Because of the sophistication of computerized online scoring, errors in scoring are virtually nonexistent.

Due to the secure nature of the examination, ABSA will not disclose examination questions or a candidate's response to individual questions nor provide any exam preparation feedback. Examinees who question or dispute their test score can request, in writing, to have their score verified. The request must be emailed to ABSA no later than seven (7) days after receipt of the exam score report. ABSA verifies scoring by calculating the number of questions the examinee answered correctly and confirming that the number matches what was reported on the score report.

## Security

---

Policy Number: 302

Date Approved: September 28, 2022

Date Revised:

The ABSA is responsible for monitoring compliance with the Security policy and for reviewing and updating the Security policy periodically, in compliance with the Quality Improvement policy.

### Confidential Documents

---

Confidential information is defined in the confidentiality policy. All confidential information will be retained in a secure manner as required by this policy.

Certification exams, job analysis studies, cut score reports, item banks, answer keys, and all other exam development documents are confidential and the sole property of ABSA.

### Database

---

The COO maintains a database with candidate and certificant confidential information. ABSA utilizes an online credentialing management platform which requires a username and password for access. ABSA retains information including, but not limited to, initial certification applications, recertification applications, supporting documentation, and examination results. Only the COO, or staff designee, have administrative access to the database.

### Access

---

Access to confidential/secure materials (both printed and electronic) will be limited to only those staff, Board members, and subject matter experts who need to view the information. These individuals will sign a confidentiality agreement before being granted access to any confidential information.

Any outside companies, vendors, consultants or contractors given access to confidential information will be required to maintain strict security of all confidential materials.

ABSA maintains all confidential examination content including exam forms, items, and item banks. To prevent unauthorized access, confidential examination content is stored in Caveon's secure exam development platform which requires multi-factor login credentials, project-specific access, and change logs that record changes, timestamps, and user.

### Physical Security

---

When shipping is required, confidential materials are shipped using a traceable shipping method and delivery is confirmed. Tamper evident packaging will be used.

Confidential materials will be stored in locked file cabinets at all times. Office areas containing confidential files will be secured when not occupied by authorized personnel.

Confidential materials include but are not limited to an individual's application status, personal applicant/certificant information, exam development documentation (including job analysis study reports, technical reports, and cut score studies), exam items and answers, exam forms, item banks, and individual exam scores.

### Electronic Security

---

Routine backups will be performed at least weekly for all electronic data and backup data will be stored in a separate off-site location.

If confidential documents are transmitted via email, or other electronic means, the electronic files will be secured with a password before being sent. Confidential materials stored on digital media will be password protected.

Confidential materials stored on ABSA servers and hard drives will have limited, password protected access for authorized certification program personnel only. Personal computers/laptops will be password protected.

### **Exam Administration**

---

The Board will ensure secure and standardized examination administration to ensure a fair and consistent testing experience for all candidates. Exam administration rules and parameters will be established in these policies and communicated to candidates.

### **Security Violations**

---

The continued security of the certification exam is an essential component of all phases of the exam development, maintenance, and administration process. Any possible/suspected security violations will be reported promptly to the Board for investigation and/or correction as needed.

Exam administration irregularities include but are not limited to: refusal to follow exam administration rules, giving or receiving unauthorized information or aid to or from other persons, or attempting to copy or remove test content from the administration. Irregularities may be sufficient cause to terminate candidate participation in the examination administration or to invalidate scores. Irregularities may also be evidenced by subsequent statistical analysis of testing materials.

## Records Retention

---

Policy Number: 400

Date Approved: September 28, 2022

Date Revised:

### Purpose

---

The purpose of this document management policy is to ensure a full and accurate record of activities and decisions for all documents created, implemented, received, and retained for the SA-C certification program. All documents created, implemented or received by the ABSA will be retained according to the following schedule. The ABSA retains and destroys records in accordance with these policies as well as federal and state laws governing record retention.

### Documents

---

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

### Disposal

---

When scheduled for destruction as indicated below, confidential paper documents are securely shredded, and electronic documents are deleted from all computers, databases, networks, and back-up storage. When disposing of confidential documents, ABSA takes all reasonable steps to dispose, or arrange for the secure disposal, of documents containing confidential, personal, or other protected data by: (a) shredding, (b) erasing or (c) otherwise modifying any confidential, personal, or other protected data in those documents to make it unusable, unreadable or indecipherable.

### Documents Retained Indefinitely

---

- Active applicant/candidate data
- Active contracts
- Audit reports and financial statements
- Examination development documentation including, but not limited to, job analysis surveys and reports, test specifications (content outline), records of item writing activities, cut-score studies, and technical reports.
- Examination items (item bank)
- Examination results (scores)
- Examinations (at least one copy of each examination form)
- Files of certificants, active and inactive
- Legal correspondence and documents
- Meeting minutes of all Board and committee meetings
- Records of disciplinary actions and investigations

### **Documents Retained for 7 Years**

---

- Accounting/bookkeeping records
- Expense reports
- Expired/terminated contracts

### **Documents Retained for 3 Years**

---

- Confidentiality and conflict of interest agreements
- General correspondence
- Inactive candidate files
- Inactive personnel files



## APPENDIX A: Board of Directors Commitment to Serve Form

---

*Last updated: September 28, 2022*

I, \_\_\_\_\_, recognizing the important responsibility I am undertaking in serving as a member of the American Board for Surgical Assistants (ABSA) Board of Directors, hereby personally pledge to carry out in a trustworthy and diligent manner all the duties and obligations inherent in my role as a Board Director.

I understand that ABSA has the authority to develop, oversee, and administer the certification program for surgical assistants. ABSA Directors, as individuals, have no authority over the certification program or other organizational matters, except as authorized by action of the ABSA Board or the ABSA bylaws.

I understand that I am accepting a 3-year commitment to serve on the ABSA Board of Directors which involves at a minimum, my active participation in Board meetings, examination development activities, and Board communications. I understand that I may be eligible to seek a second three-year term.

### *My Role*

I acknowledge that I will: (1) contribute to the Board's role in establishing and implementing policies and procedures for the certification program and to oversee the development of the certification examination(s); (2) carry out the functions assigned to me; and (3) contribute to the development and oversight of the certification program within the ABSA policies and procedures.

### *Qualifications*

I acknowledge that as an ABSA Board Director I must continue to meet qualifications and agree to restrictions as defined in the ABSA Policies and Procedures including, but not limited to:

- Meeting the qualifications for the Board Director position to which I have been selected.
- Commitment that I am not and will not be, during my term of service and for two years following the end of my service, directly involved in the development or delivery of any educational program designed or intended to prepare individuals to take the ABSA certification examination.
- Not taking the certification examination during, or for two years following my term of service on the Board.
- Having notified my employer regarding my role, responsibilities, and the associated time commitment involved in my service as a Board Director and have my employer's support to participate in this role.

### *My Pledge*

- To exercise the duties and responsibilities of this appointment with integrity, collegiality, and due care.
- To establish as a high priority my attendance at all meetings of the Board and any committees or work groups on which I serve.
- To come prepared to contribute to the discussions of issues and business to be addressed at scheduled meetings, having read the agenda and all background support materials relevant to the meeting.
- To complete all assignments within established time frames.
- To notify the Board President promptly of any circumstance that would cause me to be ineligible to continue as a Board Director.
- To always act for the good of the certification program.
- To represent ABSA in a positive and supportive manner at all times and in all places.
- To abide by the ABSA bylaws, Code of Ethics, and policies and procedures of ABSA.

- To support the operational, administrative, and examination related policies that are free from actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest.
  - To avoid conflicts of interest between my position as a Board Director and my personal and professional life in compliance with the ABSA Conflicts of Interest policy. This includes using my position for the advantage of myself, my friends, family and/or business associates. If such a conflict does arise, I will declare that conflict before the ABSA Board and refrain from voting on matters in which I have a conflict.
  - To disclose any other Boards of which I am a member and any changes of employment during my service on the ABSA.
- To keep all confidential information confidential in compliance with the ABSA Confidentiality policy including my pledge to:
  - Not disclose confidential information related to or verbally discussed during Board meetings, examination development meetings, or other verbal or written information identified as confidential.
  - Not disclose any written or oral information that has been identified as confidential.
  - Not disclose any examination content, including but not limited to examination items.

*Acknowledgement*

- I understand that the names of Board Directors and their company/organization will be published by ABSA.
- I further understand and agree that my signature constitutes binding acceptance of these pledges and conditions.
- I understand that all Board of Directors are required to sign the commitment to serve form annually.
- Exceptions to this agreement can only be granted upon prior approval by the ABSA Board of Directors.
- If for any reason I find myself unable to meet these commitments and agreements, carry out the above duties or become ineligible to continue to serve, I agree to promptly resign.
- I further understand that review within ABSA will be the final determination of any matter arising between me and ABSA. I agree that any disagreements will be settled by arbitration in the state of Wisconsin.

X  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name

X  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signature

X  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date

## APPENDIX B: Subject Matter Expert Commitment to Serve Form

---

*Last updated: September 28, 2022*

I, \_\_\_\_\_, recognizing the important responsibility I am undertaking in serving as an examination development participant for the American Board of Surgical Assistants (ABSA), hereby personally pledge to carry out in a trustworthy and diligent manner all the duties and obligations inherent in my role as a subject matter expert (SME) for the SA-C examination.

I understand that I am accepting a commitment to serve on an ABSA Committee/Working Group which involves at a minimum, my active participation in committee meetings, examination development activities and related communications.

### *My Role*

I acknowledge that I will (1) contribute to the committee's role; (2) carry out the functions assigned to me; and (3) contribute to the development of the certification program as defined within the ABSA policies and procedures.

### *Qualifications*

I attest that as an ABSA SA-C SME, I shall continue to meet the following qualifications:

1. am not and will not be, during my term of service and for two years following the end of my service, directly involved in the creation, accreditation, approval, endorsement or delivery of examination review courses, preparatory materials, educational programs, or training programs/products that prepare candidates for the SA-C certification examination and/or that would give any students an unfair advantage in preparing for the examination.
2. am not and will not be during my term of service and for two years following my service, directly involved in the development or delivery of any competing certification program.
3. will not take the SA-C examination during, or for two years following my term of service as a subject matter expert.
4. have notified my employer regarding my role, responsibilities, and the associated time commitment involved in my service as a subject matter expert and have my employer's support to participate in this role.

### *My Commitment*

In exercising the duties and responsibilities of this appointment with integrity, collegiality, and due care, I pledge:

1. To establish as a high priority my attendance at all committee meetings.
2. To come prepared to contribute to the discussions of issues and business to be addressed at scheduled meetings, having read the agenda and all background support materials relevant to the meeting.
3. To complete all assignments within established time frames.
4. To notify the ABSA promptly of any circumstance that would cause me to be ineligible to continue as a committee member.
5. To always act for the good of the certification program and to represent the ABSA in a positive and supportive manner.
6. To abide by the ABSA Bylaws and the ABSA Policy and Procedure Manual.
7. To support examination related policies that are free from actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest.
  - To avoid conflicts of interest between my position as a committee member and my

personal and professional life in compliance with the ABSA Conflicts of Interest policy. This includes using my position for the advantage of myself, my friends, family and/or business associates. If such a conflict does arise, I will declare that conflict before the committee chair and refrain from voting on matters in which I have a conflict.

8. To keep all confidential information confidential in compliance with the ABSA Confidentiality policy. This agreement of confidentiality shall include my pledge to:
  - Not disclose confidential information related to or verbally discussed during Committee meetings, examination development meetings, or other verbal or written information identified as confidential.
  - Not disclose any written or oral information that has been identified as confidential.
  - Not disclose any examination content, including but not limited to examination items.
  - Keep all draft and working materials secure while in my possession and return any confidential materials following my assignment(s). I will not retain or copy any materials.

*Acknowledgement*

1. All examination items that I submit are original and, to the best of my knowledge, have not been used or displayed previously for any purpose.
2. All examination items that I submit will become the sole property of ABSA.
3. The names of committee members and their company/organization may be published by ABSA.
4. My signature constitutes binding acceptance of these pledges and conditions.
5. If for any reason I find myself unable to meet these commitments and agreements, carry out the above duties or become ineligible to continue to serve, I agree to promptly resign.
6. Review within ABSA will be the final determination of any matter arising between me and ABSA. I agree that any disagreements will be settled by arbitration.

X

---

Name

X

---

Signature

X

---

Date