

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Recertification

Q. If a professional development course is approved by another professional organization, is it automatically approved by ABSA for certification points?

A. No, unless the professional development course is offered by ABSA or an ABSA-affiliate. Sponsors or attendees of non-ABSA courses must apply to ABSA before CM points will be granted. The CMC will determine whether points will be awarded based on relevance of the course content to the biosafety field.

Q. If I attend a multi-day Hazardous Material Shipping course or HAZWOPER course, can I claim one CM point for each day of training?

A. You can claim only the part of the course that applies to shipping biological materials -- usually about 1/2 day or less (or 0.5 CM point). If this course is not previously approved (i.e., ABSA sponsored course or another course on the approved list) you will still need to submit for CM approval. If you have a description of the course that shows there was significantly more coverage of biosafety issues, it could be approved for additional points, as long as the documentation is clear as to the biosafety related content.

Q. If I teach a biosafety course as part of my job responsibilities, can I list and count it for CM points?

A. No, CM points are given for professional biosafety practice based on your employment status and would include those activities that are performed as part of your job (Category 1). Certification maintenance (CM) points for teaching will be given when courses are biosafety-related, are performed outside of your job responsibilities, and are approved by the CMC when offered by a non-ABSA organization.

Q. If I serve on an IBC, IACUC, or IRB committee at my place of employment, can I claim those committee memberships for CM points?

A. No, you cannot -- if they are part of your regular job responsibilities, they are covered in the basic points awarded for serving as a biosafety professional (Category 1).

Q. If I produce a handbook, video, or other instructional presentation or publication as part of my normal job duties, can I claim CM points for this activity?

A. Normally, if you are preparing educational materials as part of your job, you cannot claim them as Professional Publications and Presentations (Category 4). These activities are covered as part of your Category 1 biosafety professional points. However, if other biosafety professionals will be taking that course, or watching that video, you can submit those for CM approval for the attendees.

Q. If I have problems accumulating enough points for my appointed cycle, can I request to be switched to another recertification cycle?

A. Individuals up for recertification will not be moved to another recertification cycle. If there are extraordinary circumstances that prevented you from acting as a biosafety professional for some period of time, you can request that the CMC consider altering your cycle. This will be done on a case-by-case basis.

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Q. Is there an emeritus status for CBSP or another similar option for retirees?

A. No.

Q. Why did my application for CM credits for a course get turned down?

A. One reason might be that the course material was not sufficiently related to biosafety to merit CM points. More than likely you have provided an insufficient amount of information on criteria such as the length of the course or the actual course time spent on biosafety related topics, or more details are needed showing the course's relevance to biosafety. It would be helpful if you also submitted a course agenda with a description of topics covered, etc.

Q. Why does the certification maintenance program describe CBSP cycles as 5-years and my cycle is 3-years?

A. Initially, when the program was implemented the entire population of CBSPs had to be spread out over five years to facilitate an orderly recertification process. Consequently, CBSPs were assigned 1-, 2-, 3-, 4-, or 5-year cycles. This was a onetime event and as CBSPs recertify, they will all be assigned 5-year cycles

Q. How do I know whether a non-ABSA course has been approved for CM points?

A. The information on approved courses is on the ABSA website with the Certification Program material. Each approved course is assigned an approval number and information covering the course name, location, date, and number of points awarded. **Remember to include the course approval number in your recertification worksheet.**

Q. I know the American Board of Industrial Hygiene (ABIH) approves the entire annual ABSA Biosafety Conference for credit for their certified professionals. Does ABSA do the same thing for the annual Industrial Hygiene conference?

A. No, the CMC will only approve material relevant to the field of biosafety for CM points. Biosafety is one of the specifically-approved specialty (rubric) areas for industrial hygienists; consequently, such an approval is warranted. If you attend the IH conference, you need to submit information on the specific biosafety-related session(s) or course(s) you attended along with information on the content and duration. This is also true for other conferences, such as CHEMA, that offer broad environmental health and safety content.

Q. If I successfully recertify with the National Registry of Microbiologists (NRM), will I automatically receive my ABSA CBSP recertification?

A. No, these recertifying bodies are completely separate and the recertification criteria for each differ. The ABSA certification focuses heavily on activities associated with the practice of biological safety, while the criteria for the NRM emphasize the microbiology.