

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Recertification

Q. If I successfully recertify with the National Registry of Certified Microbiologists (NRCM), 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 NRCM emphasize the microbiology.

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 CMB consider altering your cycle. This will be done on a case-by-case basis.

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

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

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

A. Yes. If you are a CBSP/RBP in good standing, are retired, and no longer gainfully employed in professional biosafety work you may apply for emeritus status. If you choose to request re-instatement as a CBSP or RBP, you will be required to submit documentation showing continued CM point accumulation.

Q. Are IACET points equivalent to Certification Maintenance (CM) points?

A. No, CM points are based on hours of involvement, which may not agree with the number of IACET points awarded. The scale for CM points is: 0.5 points for 4 hours of class or meeting attendance, and 1 CM point for a full day of attendance. Therefore, attendance at the 3 full day ABSA Conference is worth 3 CM points. For classes/meetings that are less than half a day, equivalent CM points will be awarded. The complete explanation of the point system can be found in the "CBSP Certification Maintenance Program" document on the ABSA website.

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 CMB will determine whether points will be awarded based on relevance of the course content to the biosafety field.

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 CMB 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 CSHEMA, that offer broad environmental health and safety content.

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. Can I list my membership in NRCM as an affiliate membership?

A. No. NRCM, ASM, CSHEMA, etc. are not ABSA affiliates.

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 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 CMB when offered by a non-ABSA organization.

Q. I am a consultant, and all of the training I deliver and courses I teach could be considered "part of my job" and not allowable for points. Is there any way around this?

A. In this case, it may be advisable for you to claim all of your lectures/training, etc. for points, and forgo claiming the 2 points/year under Category 1 (Professional Biosafety

Practice). If you do not claim the Category 1 points, all of your training and lecture activities will count individually in Categories 4, 6, 7, and 9.

Q. I am a university professor, and manage a BSL-3 facility. However, I am not the BSO, and I do teach several courses in microbiology. How can I maintain my certification, if teaching the courses is "part of my job"?

A. If you do not claim the Category 1 points for Professional Biosafety Practice, you can list all of the courses you teach each year for points, based on the number of credit hours (2.0 CMs/semester hour). A specific course can only be claimed once/year, however.

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. Will my Master's or PhD work apply to my recertification?

A. If the courses or dissertation apply to biosafety they will be considered for CM points under Category 9, College/ University Courses.

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 or working with 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 take a course several times during a recertification cycle, do I get credit each time? For example, a shipping class which I must take every few years, or a dissertation course for my graduate work?

A. If it's the same course you take several times during that cycle, you may only get credit for it once during the cycle. If it is different courses on the same topic, you can get credit for each of them.

Q. If I teach the same course multiple times per year, do I get credit each time?

A. You can only get credit for teaching a course once per year.