



American Board of
Wound Management

CWCA CWS CWSP

Policy & Procedures Manual

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I. Overview

A. ABWM Purpose

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

B. Policy & Procedures Manual Purpose

This Policy & Procedures Manual of the American Board of Wound Management is intended to supplement and complement the ABWM Bylaws by documenting the broad policies, key principles and traditional and/or typical practices pertaining to the nature, activities and Policy & Procedures of the Board. The manual's purposes are to inform and provide a reference guide for present and future ABWM CWCAs[®]/CWSs[®]/CWSPs[®], Officers, Board Members and staff for consistent and efficient ABWM Policy & Procedures. In that context, this document is subject to additions and amendments as future circumstances warrant.

II. Board of Directors

A. Responsibilities

The Board of Directors is the elected leadership of the ABWM. The function of the board is to facilitate the advancement and day-to-day Policy & Procedures of the ABWM and the Certification Examinations. Directors have a fiduciary obligation to the ABWM and should annually review and sign the Fiduciary Obligations of ABWM Directors document.

B. Elections

The election of Board CWCAs/CWSs/CWSPs takes place amongst the ABWM Board of Directors. Candidates are nominated by current ABWM Board Members. Voting either takes place during one of the two ABWM Board of Directors Meetings, or is spearheaded by the Executive Committee in between meetings.

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

ABWM Officers and Directors may not serve concurrently on any other certification board.

ABWM Board Members submit their ballot via email, fax or U.S. mail. Board candidates with the highest majority are elected. Terms are three years, unless a director is filling the seat of an open seat from a previous director.

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

C. Meetings

The Board of Directors of the ABWM meets twice per year at rotating locations throughout the country. ABWM Officers and Executive Committee are elected by the ABWM Board of Directors to serve and represent the ABWM and are expected to participate fully in Executive Committee and Board meetings and other activities. ABWM's Executive Director should be in attendance at each board meeting. Legal Counsel and additional staff should also be in attendance when appropriate. ABWM staff provides formal notices and details of all board meetings sufficiently in advance to enable participants to make economical travel plans. About four to six weeks in advance of each Board meeting, all Committee Chairs are asked to submit written reports in time for reproduction and inclusion in the agenda mailing to the directors.

Working with staff, the President establishes a written agenda for each meeting. This agenda, together with Committee reports, is mailed to all directors about one to two weeks in advance of the meeting. Staff is responsible for providing, at each Board meeting, extra copies of Committee reports, Committee reports submitted after the agenda mailing, and the current financial report. Staff shall also report on headquarters activities.

D. Term of Office

Each member of the board may serve no more than two, three (3) year terms (for a total of six years).

It is the practice of ABWM to acknowledge outgoing CWSs, CWSPs and CWCA's of the Board of Directors with plaques commemorating and thanking them for their service to ABWM at the Annual Business Meeting each fall.

D. Public Member

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

The Public Member will meet the criteria established for public members by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA), including the following criteria:

The Public Member:

- is not a part of the wound care profession
- is not and has not ever been a nurse or other health care professional
- has no professional, career-related affiliation with a health care organization, specialty, or related vendor(s).
- is not a current or past employee of ABWM or a wound care service provider
- does not employ wound care service providers
- is not a vendor to ABWM or any health care organization
- is not employed by any certification organization

III. Executive Committee

A. Responsibilities

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

B. Election and Term of Office

The President of the ABWM shall succeed from the office of President-elect, and shall hold office for one term of two years.

The President of the ABWM shall be a Certified Wound Specialist or a Certified Wound Specialist Physician.

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

The term of office of the President and President-Elect of the ABWM may extend beyond that individual's term of service on the Board of Directors. In such circumstances, the individual may complete his/her term as President and/or President-Elect and his/her term on the Board shall be extended to coincide with the remaining term as President and/or President-Elect. Such circumstances shall not change the number of voting members on the Board.

The Secretary and Treasurer of the ABWM each shall be elected by and from among the Board of Directors of the ABWM at the first Board meeting following the election of directors, shall take office thereupon, shall hold office for a term of two years, and may be elected to one additional two-year term so long as their tenure on the Board does not exceed six consecutive years.

IV. Staff/Consultants

A. Management Firm

Since 2006, ABWM has contracted for professional full-service management of the Board, to include physical headquarters, staffing and management of all ABWM activities with Navista, Inc. ABWM's management Letter of Agreement is reviewed and is renewable by signature of the President of ABWM and the management firm on an annual calendar-year basis.

B. Legal Counsel

The Board contracts for General Counsel representation with a lawyer that specializes in certifying bodies. The Executive Director serves as the primary ABWM liaison with the legal counsel.

C. Certified Public Accountant

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

V. Committees

There are five committees: Examination Committee, Finance Committee, Executive Committee, and Nominating Committee, and Bylaws Committee. Although ABWM Committees meet at the direction of their respective Chair persons, the Board encourages Committees to meet by

telephone conference to maximize the proportion of their budgets available to fund work products.

A. Examination Committee

The Examination Committee is responsible for the administration of the board certification examination. The committee coordinates with ABWM Staff, ABWM's testing organization, and committee members on a variety of committee functions. The committee is comprised of CWSs, CWSPs and CWCAs from all disciplines to provide fair representation for all levels of certification. The committee usually meets twice per year to review the examination and to review new items (questions) for the exam. All members of the Examination Committee (and Item and Exam Reviews) need to sign a Participation Agreement to protect the privacy of the exam and the exam questions.

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

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

B. Finance Committee

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

C. Executive Committee

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

D. Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee is responsible for developing or reviewing the "job descriptions" for each of the Directors and each of the Officers, including sets of characteristics, skills, and experience for each position. The key duties are identifying individuals whom the ABWM would like to get to know and getting them involved with ABWM as a possible prelude to consideration for the Board, recruiting candidates for membership on the Board and Officers, evaluating all nominees and making recommendations to the Board for individuals to serve as Officers, and recommending changes to the Bylaws as needed.

E. Bylaws Committee

The Committee on Bylaws shall advise the Board of Directors on the interpretation of the ABWM's Bylaws, as well as recommend changes from counsel or the certificants (but the Board of Directors shall have final authority to interpret the Bylaws with the advice of legal counsel).

VI. Financial

Oversight of the day-to-day financial management and Policy & Procedures of the Board is provided by the Treasurer. Actual day-to-day management of the Board's financial affairs is the responsibility of the Executive Director and accounting staff. A balance sheet and financial statement are produced monthly for review with the Treasurer. The Treasurer and Executive Director provide comprehensive financial reports to the Executive Committee once per month. Financial reports also are provided to the Board of Directors at each of its meetings and several times throughout the year. The Board's finances are reviewed and an audit is done annually by an independent CPA firm, which provides a formal report to the Executive Committee and the Board of Directors. The audit is reviewed by the Treasurer and Executive Director and distributed to the Board of Directors prior to its May meeting.

A. Operating Policies & Practices

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

B. Renewals

Renewals are sent to CWCAs, CWSs and CWSPs on an annual basis in the fall that are due at the end of January of each year. Newly certified CWCAs, CWSs, CWSPs, who became certified on or after July 1 of the calendar year do not have to pay their renewal until the following year. CWCAs, CWSs, CWSPs who are due to complete their 10-year recertification in the following year will not be invoiced for the renewal fee for that year; however, they will still be required to document their continuing education. CWCAs, CWSs, and CWSP have more than two months to pay their renewal fees of \$150, and submit 6 CEUs in wound care obtained during the calendar year. Renewals received after January 31 will be subject to a \$75 processing fee. Renewals received after February 28 will be subject to a \$150 processing fee.

Upon paying their fees, CWCAs, CWSs, and CWSPs will be able to print an updated Identification Card that corresponds with their certification from the My Certification Portal, noting their next renewal date and their recertification date.

C. Budget Development & Approval

Staff develops an initial draft of the annual ABWM Operating Budget for the coming year for the Executive Committee in the fall. The Executive Committee then submits a final proposed Operating Budget for review and approval before the end of the calendar year to the Board of Directors.

D. Reimbursement of Board Member Expenses

The Board will pay or reimburse the reasonable travel and accommodations expenses of CWCAs, CWSs, and CWSPs of the Executive Committee and Board of Directors that are directly related to their role as officers/directors of the ABWM.

Staff will provide CWCAs, CWSs, and CWSPs with Expense Reimbursement Forms, which must be completed and returned to Headquarters within 30 days of incurring the expense. Original receipts must be attached to the form for expenses of more than \$25. Covered expenses include round-trip coach-class transportation, mileage reimbursable at the existing IRS reimbursement rate and other reasonable expenses.

Spouses or guests are welcome to join their Board/Executive Committee Members, but at the expense of the member with whom they are attending.

Some member expenses that are related to attendance at meetings of other Committees might be reimbursable - e.g., Exam Committee Participants, etc. In such circumstances, the Executive Director must approve the CWCAs, CWSs, and CWSPs attendance and the Committee's budget must allow for such expense.

E. Checks

The Executive Director must approve all checks. Staff is responsible for filling out a check order form, which must be approved and signed by the Executive Director before the check can be cut. Once the check is cut and signed by the Executive Director, it is copied and filed in the payable book.

All checks are sent directly to the Board office, they are entered into the ABWM database and given to the accounting department within 24 hours of receipt. A copy of each check, the transmittal, and the invoices sent with the payment are all filed in the invoice book. In addition, "paid" is stamped, with the date received, on the file copy of the original invoice. The transmittal, along with copies of the checks and deposit slip, is filed.

VII. Examinations

A. Applications

Staff is responsible for responding to all exam information inquiries; corresponding with applicants during the application process; updating the candidate database; processing payments; and forwarding testing materials to Applied Measurement Professionals.

All applicants must submit their materials to headquarters at least fifteen (15) business days prior to their desired examination date.

B. Retesting

Candidates who do not pass the examination on the first attempt may reapply for the examination by submitting the Re-Test Application and fee. Candidates are eligible to submit a Re-Test Application 90 days after the date of their last exam, and up to two years from the date of their first exam. Candidates wishing to re-test more than two years since their first exam must submit a new application in its entirety.

C. Testing Administration

Applied Measurement Professionals (AMP) is an official testing corporation hired to administer the ABWM examinations. Staff provides the testing application forms for all approved candidates to AMP within fifteen (15) business days of receiving their completed application. AMP provides all official notifications of location as well as pass/fail notifications to the candidates. AMP keeps all items (questions) for the exam in its database. AMP facilitates the exam committee meetings (exam and item reviews), and provides summary information on ABWM's exam statistics.

D. Cancellations

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

E. Special Cases

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

Candidates needing other special requests (i.e. a reader) must request these conditions in writing 45 days prior to the exam by completing the Request for Special Needs Accommodations form to AMP.

F. Passed Candidates

All passed candidates are sent a welcome letter, and customized pin, patch, and certificate (mailed at a later date). They are immediately transferred into the ABWM database and can begin using the designation upon passing the examination.

G. Failed Candidates

Failed candidates are given notification from AMP. These individuals' files are then held up to two years, or until the candidate applies to re-test.

Score Verification

If desired, failed candidates may request to have their score verified. The results of the verification will be final. Candidates must contact AMP directly at 888.519.9901. There is a \$25 fee for score verification, which will be collected directly by AMP.

Exam Appeals

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

VIII. Legal

A. Revocation

Any CWCA/CWS/CWSP that has been revoked, (according to the guidelines outlined in this policy manual) will be sent a certified letter from ABWM Headquarters or Legal Counsel depending on the reason for revocation. The individual will be required to cease use of the credential and to return their certificate immediately upon revocation.

B. Trademark Infringement

Legal counsel will contact any individual or organization that is inappropriately using the ABWM logo CWCA/CWS/CWSP mark.

C. Confidentiality

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

Information about applicants/certificants and their examination results is considered confidential. Exam scores will be released only to the individual candidate unless a signed release is provided. Personal information submitted by applicant/certificants with an application or renewal/recertification application is considered confidential. Personal information retained within the applicant/certificant database will be kept confidential.

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

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

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

The names of certified individuals are not considered confidential and may be published by the ABWM.

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

Verification Requests

ABWM will respond to requests for verification with information regarding the status of an individual's certification only, withholding information regarding scores or if an individual took the exam.

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

Confidentiality Agreements

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 and non-disclosure forms prior to having access to any confidential examination materials.

Confidential Materials

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

Access to Confidential Information

Access to confidential information will be limited to those individuals who require access in order to perform necessary work related to the certification program. Access will be granted in compliance with the provisions of the security policy.

IX. CWCAs/CWSs/CWSPs

A. Renewals

Certificants must renew each year by paying the annual renewal fee. Each certificant must also document six hours of continuing education in wound care. Renewals must be made by January 31, or the certificant's status may be revoked.

B. Lifetime/Retired Status

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

C. Recertification

CWCA[®]/CWS[®]/CWSP will need to recertify every ten year, which entails retaking the corresponding credentialing exam before their ten year expiration.

D. CEU Audit

Each spring, ABWM will randomly audit 5% of renewals to verify that their continuing education has been completed. Certificants will be required to submit supporting documentation (i.e. copies of certificate of attendance or transcripts). Those failing to pass the audit will have their CWCA/CWS/CWSP revoked.

E. Benefits of CWCA/CWS/CWSP

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

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

F. Retention of Records Policy

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

Documents Retained Indefinitely >>

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

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

Documents Retained for Seven Years >>

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

Documents Retained for Three Years >>

- Inactive personnel files
- Inactive candidate files
- General correspondence

G. Security

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

Confidential information (see Confidentiality policy p.13) will be maintained in a secure manner with restricted access, as outlined in this policy.

Access to confidential materials (both printed and electronic) will be limited to only those staff and volunteers (including Board members and subject matter experts) who require access to the information. These individuals will sign a nondisclosure agreement before being granted access to any confidential examination information.

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

Examination Administration

The security of the ABWM certification examinations is of the utmost importance. Security policies, procedures, and practices will be periodically monitored to ensure that the exam is adequately protected (see Quality Improvement Policy p 32).

Physical Security

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

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

Electronic Security

Routine backups will be performed for all electronic data.

If confidential documents are transmitted via email the electronic files will be encrypted and/or secured with a password before being sent.

Confidential materials stored electronically will be encrypted and/or password protected.

Confidential materials stored on ABWM servers and hard drives will have limited access for authorized personnel. Personal computers/laptops will be password protected.

Passwords will be communicated separately from data transmission.

Violations

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

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

H. Disciplinary Policy

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

The grounds for sanctions under these procedures are as follows:

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

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

Actions taken under this policy do not constitute enforcement of the law, although referral to appropriate federal, state, or local government agencies may be made about the conduct of the applicant/certificant in appropriate situations. Individuals initially bringing complaints are not entitled to any relief or damages by virtue of this process, although they will receive notice of the actions taken.

Complaints

Complaints may be submitted in writing by any individual or entity. Upon receipt and preliminary review of a complaint the ABWM Board President may conclude, in the President's sole discretion, that the submission:

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

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

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 applicant/certificant whose

conduct has been called into question and to that individual's employer, if applicable. The certificant whose conduct is at issue shall also be given the opportunity to respond to the complaint. The President also shall ensure that the individual submitting the complaint receives notice that the complaint is being reviewed by the Board.

Complaint Review

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

The President appoints a Review Committee of three or more individuals, who may or may not be members of the Board to investigate and make an appropriate determination with respect to each such valid and actionable complaint; the Review Committee may review one or more such complaints as determined by the 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 Committee may be assisted in the conduct of its investigation by other members of the Board or by staff or legal counsel. The President exercises general supervision over all investigations.

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

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

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

Determination of Violation

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

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

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

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

acceptable to the Board. If the Board accepts the assurance, notice is given to the certificant's employer and to the submitter of the complaint, if the submitter agrees in advance and in writing to maintain the information in confidence.

Sanctions

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

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

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

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

I. Disciplinary Appeals Policy

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

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

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

1. material errors of fact, or

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

Only facts and conditions up to and including the time of the Board's determination as represented by facts known to the ABWM are considered during an appeal. The appeal shall not include 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 Board and the Appeal Board. The Board and Appeal Board may consult ABWM legal counsel.

The Appeal Board conducts and completes the appeal within ninety (90) days after receipt of the request for an appeal. Submissions are made according to whatever schedule is reasonably established by the Appeal Board. The decision of the Appeal Board either affirms or overrules the determination of the ABWM Board, but does not address a sanction imposed by the Board. The decision of the Appeal Board, including a statement of the reasons for the decision, is reported to the Board. The Appeal Board decision is binding upon the ABWM Board, the applicant/certificant who is subject to the disciplinary action, and all other persons.

X. Examination Development

A. Volunteer Agreements

Confidentiality Agreements

Individuals who participate in examination development activities (including, but not limited to, item writing, item review, exam form assembly, exam form review) will sign additional confidentiality and non-disclosure agreements prior to having access to any confidential examination materials.

Conflict of Interest Agreements

Committees, task forces and their members who participate in examination development activities (including, but not limited to, job analysis, item writing, item review, exam form assembly, exam form review) will sign conflict of interest agreements prior to having access to any confidential examination materials.

B. Examination Development

Examination Development & Maintenance

The Board participates in and provides oversight for the development and ongoing maintenance of the ABWM examinations. The Board and ABWM Executive Director work in partnership with a testing vendor to ensure the examination is developed and maintained in a

manner consistent with generally accepted psychometric principles, educational testing practices, and national accreditation standards for certification programs.

Subject Matter Experts (SMEs)

The Board and ABWM Executive Director select diverse groups of qualified subject matter experts (SMEs) to participate in exam development activities throughout the exam development process.

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

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

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

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

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

Job Analysis Studies

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

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

To ensure the examination programs continue to test knowledge and skills germane to current practice, the Board will generally conduct a job analysis study every 5 years. If the SMEs

conducting examination development activities indicate that the examination specifications remain current, a job analysis may be conducted somewhat less frequently, but in no instance more than every 8 years.

Examination Specifications

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

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

Item Writing and Review

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

SMEs trained by the testing vendor will write and review items for the examinations.

SME item writers and reviewers will:

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

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

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

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

Item Bank

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

An item bank will be maintained to include all items developed for the ABWM certification examinations.

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

To maintain security and continuity within ABWM, the Executive Director will oversee all certification item bank procedures.

The Examination Committee will oversee the maintenance of the certification item bank(s).

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

Exam Form Assembly and Approval

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

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

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

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

Establishing a Passing Point

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

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

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

Test Analysis | Technical Reports

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

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

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

C. Exam Administration

Exam Administration

The 3-hour, 120 multiple-choice question CWCA exam, 3.5-hour, 150 multiple-choice question CWS exam, and 4-hour, 180 multiple-choice question CWSP exam are computer administered

at over 170 Applied Measurement Professional Centers (AMP) located throughout the United States.

As of February 2013, the number of items and time limits are:

1. The CWCA examination will consist of 100 scored and 20 pretest items with a 3-hour examination period.
2. The CWS examination will consist of 125 scored and 25 pretest items with a 3.5-hour examination period.
3. The CWSP examination will consists of 150 scored and 30 pretest items with a 4-hour examination period.

Site Selection

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

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

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

Identification Requirements

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

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

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

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

Testing Irregularities

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

Score Reporting

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

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

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

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

Reexamination

Candidates who do not pass the examination are eligible to re-take the exam 90 days after the date of their last examination, and up to two years after the date of their first examination. Candidates must file an ABWM Re-test Application and pay the corresponding re-application fee per examination, per re-test. Those who do not re-test within two (2) years of their first examination must re-submit the application in full. Any candidate who does not achieve a passing score after three (3) attempts must submit documentation of 20 hours of continuing education in wound management to the ABWM office prior to re-taking the examination a fourth time.

D. Testing Vendor Supervisors

AMP Supervisors

Applied Measurement Professionals (AMP) provide secure, user-friendly, high quality computerized examination delivery services to credentialing bodies, and the candidates which they examine, at available secure and monitored locations around the world.

In addition to AMP's strict examination design procedures, a vital part of ensuring defensible examination results is to ensure that all examinations administered in any AMP Assessment Center across the country are given under standardized and impartial conditions.

Supervisors at each site will:

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

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

Selection & Training of Supervisors

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

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

Testing vendor supervisors administering the ABWM examinations at AMP testing sites are required to read and acknowledge the AMP Supervisor's Manual which includes (but is not limited to):

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

Administration Security

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

The following security procedures apply during the examination:

- Examinations are proprietary. No cameras, notes, tape recorders, Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs), pagers or cellular phones are allowed in the testing room. Possession of a cellular phone or other electronic devices is strictly prohibited and will result in dismissal from the examination.

- Only silent, non-programmable calculators without alpha keys or printing capabilities are allowed in the testing room.
- No guests, visitors or family members are allowed in the testing room or reception areas.

AMP Monitoring of Candidates

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

XI. Other

A. Internet

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

B. Database

ABWM will maintain a database for CWCA/CWS/CWSP and candidates. This database will also contain renewal information for CWCA/CWS/CWSP and exam application status for candidates.

Database information is updated at least annually when CWCA/CWS/CWSP renews.

C. Minutes

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

D. Mailing/E-Mail List Use

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

E. Verification of CWCA/CWS/CWSP Certification

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

F. Miscellaneous

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

G. Quality Improvement

Policy & Procedures Review

The Board will review all key policies and procedures at least every two years to ensure that the policies continue to reflect the needs of the certification program, are consistent with current practices, and are compliant with national accreditation standards.

Staff will review all published candidate information at least annually to ensure that it remains accurate, up-to-date, and consistent with the ABWM's policies and procedures.

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

Board Review and Oversight

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

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

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