

**American Board of Forensic Anthropology, Inc.**  
**Policies and Procedures Manual**  
**Revised 7 January 2023**

**Important Links:**

- [ABFA Fee Schedule](#)
- [Application Guidelines](#)
- [Guidelines for Case File Submission](#)
- [Certification Examination Guidelines](#)

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

|  |             |
|--|-------------|
| <b>Section I</b>   | <b>Page</b> |
| <b><u>A. Background, Functions and Purposes of ABFA</u></b>      | <b>3</b>    |
| <b>Section II</b>  |             |
| <b><u>A. Bylaws</u></b>  | <b>4</b>    |
| <b><u>Article I Definitions</u></b>                              | <b>4</b>    |
| <b><u>Article II Name and Purposes</u></b>                       | <b>5</b>    |
| <b><u>Article III Sponsors</u></b>                               | <b>5</b>    |
| <b><u>Article IV Offices</u></b>                                 | <b>5</b>    |
| <b><u>Article V Officers</u></b>                                 | <b>5</b>    |
| <b><u>Article VI Board of Directors</u></b>                      | <b>6</b>    |
| <b><u>Article VII Executive Committee</u></b>                    | <b>7</b>    |
| <b><u>Article VIII Committees</u></b>                            | <b>7</b>    |
| <b><u>Article IX Elections and Terms of Office</u></b>           | <b>7</b>    |
| <b><u>Article X Indemnification and Surety</u></b>               | <b>8</b>    |
| <b><u>Article XI Meetings and Operations</u></b>                 | <b>9</b>    |
| <b><u>Article XII Finances</u></b>                               | <b>10</b>   |
| <b><u>Article XIII Certification</u></b>                         | <b>11</b>   |
| <b><u>Article XIV Parliamentary Authority</u></b>                | <b>12</b>   |
| <b><u>Article XV Seal and Insignia</u></b>                       | <b>12</b>   |
| <b><u>Article XVI Amendments</u></b>                             | <b>13</b>   |
| <b><u>Article XVII Effective Date of Bylaws</u></b>              | <b>13</b>   |
| <b><u>B. Code of Ethics and Conduct</u></b>                      | <b>14</b>   |
| <b><u>Section I The Code</u></b>                                 | <b>14</b>   |
| <b><u>Section II Grounds for Discipline</u></b>                  | <b>14</b>   |
| <b><u>Section III Investigative Body</u></b>                     | <b>15</b>   |
| <b><u>Section IV Investigation Initiating Action</u></b>         | <b>15</b>   |
| <b><u>Section V Judiciary Process</u></b>                        | <b>15</b>   |
| <b><u>Section VI Request For Reinstatement</u></b>               | <b>18</b>   |
| <b><u>Section VII Confidentiality, Rules, and Procedures</u></b> | <b>18</b>   |
| <b><u>Section III Policies and Procedures</u></b>                | <b>19</b>   |
| <b><u>A. Administrative Information</u></b>                      | <b>19</b>   |
| <b><u>a. Elected Officers</u></b>                                | <b>19</b>   |
| <b><u>a. President</u></b>                                       | <b>19</b>   |

|   |    |
|---|----|
| b. <u>Vice President</u>  | 20 |
| c. <u>Secretary</u>   | 20 |
| d. <u>Treasurer</u>   | 21 |
| B. <u>Board of Directors</u>  | 22 |
| C. <u>Committees</u>  | 22 |
| 1. <u>Standing Committees</u>   | 23 |
| a. <u>Executive Committee</u>   | 23 |
| b. <u>Ethics Committee</u>  | 24 |
| c. <u>Examination Committees</u>  | 24 |
| d. <u>Recertification Committee</u>   | 27 |
| e. <u>Nomination Committee</u>  | 28 |
| f. <u>Applications Committee</u>  | 28 |
| g. <u>FSAB Compliance Committee</u>   | 28 |
| h. <u>Exam Appeal Committee</u>   | 28 |
| 2. <u>Diplomates-at-Large</u>   | 28 |
| D. <u>ABFA Fees</u>   | 29 |
| E. <u>Application, Examination, and Certification Policies and Procedures</u> | 30 |
| 1. <u>Function</u>  | 30 |
| 2. <u>General Provisions Concerning Certification</u>                         | 30 |
| 3. <u>Maintaining Diplomat Status</u>   | 31 |
| 4. <u>Application to Sit for Certification Examination</u>                    | 32 |
| a. <u>Requirements of the Applicant</u>                                       | 32 |
| b. <u>The Application Process</u>   | 32 |
| c. <u>The Application</u>   | 33 |
| d. <u>Reapplication Procedure</u>   | 35 |
| 5. <u>The Certification Examination in Forensic Anthropology</u>              | 36 |
| a. <u>Examination Committees</u>  | 36 |
| b. <u>The Certification Examination</u>                                       | 36 |
| c. <u>Grading</u>   | 38 |
| d. <u>Re-examination</u>  | 38 |
| e. <u>Special Accommodations</u>  | 38 |
| f. <u>Examination Appeal Process</u>  | 39 |
| g. <u>Diplomate of the ABFA</u>   | 40 |
| 6. <u>Recertification</u>   | 41 |
| 1. <u>Purpose</u>   | 41 |
| 2. <u>Scope</u>   | 41 |
| 3. <u>Terms and Definitions</u>   | 41 |
| 4. <u>Recertification Requirements</u>  | 41 |
| 5. <u>Recertification Procedure</u>   | 41 |
| 6. <u>Lapse in Certification (Decertification)</u>                            | 42 |
| 7. <u>Retirement Status</u>   | 43 |

**American Board of Forensic Anthropology, Inc.**  
**Diplomate Manual**  
**Section I**

**Background, Function, and Purposes of the  
American Board of Forensic Anthropology**

The American Board of Forensic Anthropology (ABFA) was incorporated in 1977 to encourage the study and practice of, establish and enhance standards for, and generally advance the science of forensic anthropology. This Diplomate Manual was originally created in 2007 to codify past practices and procedures and to make policies known to Diplomates of the ABFA, those who have applied to become certified, those who wish to apply for certification, and to the general public. Since that time, the manual has undergone periodic updates.

The mission of the ABFA is:

- (a) To encourage the study of, improve the practice of, establish and enhance standards for, and advance the science of forensic anthropology;
- (b) To encourage and promote adherence to high standards of ethics, conduct, and professional practice in forensic anthropology;
- (c) To grant and issue certificates, and/or other recognition, in cognizance of special qualifications in forensic anthropology to voluntary applicants who conform to the standards established by the Board and who have established their fitness and competence therefore;
- (d) To maintain and furnish lists of individuals who have been granted certificates by the Board (hereinafter referred to as Diplomates);
- (e) To inform the appropriate branches of federal and state governments and private agencies and organizations of the existence and nature of the American Board of Forensic Anthropology and the professional quality of its Diplomates for the practice of forensic anthropology;
- (f) To engage in any activities, not prohibited by law or the Board's Articles of Incorporation, which may contribute to the above purposes or which are in furtherance of the objects and purposes enumerated in the Articles of Incorporation.

**American Board of Forensic Anthropology, Inc.**  
**Diplomate Manual**  
**Section II**

**BYLAWS**

Approved by the Board on 20 February 1990

Approved by legal counsel 16 May 1990

Revised 17 March 2007

Approved by the Board on 17 March 2007

Revised 22 January 2008

Approved by the Board on 23 January 2008

Revised 29 June 2012

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Revised 11 March 2013

Approved by the Board 11 March 2013

Revised 13 May 2014

Approved by the Active Members 19 June 2014

AMERICAN BOARD OF FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGY, INC.  
BYLAWS

Article I  
Definitions

Section 1. All definitions of terms and words herein, unless applicable law otherwise requires, shall be as defined by the Articles of Incorporation, the Bylaws, or the Board of Directors, in that order of precedence.

Section 2. Forensic anthropology shall be defined as the application of the science of physical anthropology and archaeology to the legal process.

Section 3. Unless otherwise specified a quorum shall consist of a majority of the Board of Directors.

Section 4. “Active Members” of the ABFA shall include all living individuals who hold a non-retired Certificate of Qualification in Forensic Anthropology as awarded by the Board of Directors and who are also in good standing as determined by the Board of Directors.

Article II  
Name and Purposes

Section 1. Name. The name of this organization shall be the AMERICAN BOARD OF FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGY, INC.; hereinafter referred to as the “ABFA”, or the “Corporation”.

Section 2. Purposes. The purposes of the ABFA, in the public interest, shall be:

- (a) to encourage the study of, improve the practice of, establish and enhance standards for, and advance the science of forensic anthropology;

- (b) to encourage and promote adherence to high standards of ethics, conduct, and professional practice in forensic anthropology;
- (c) to grant and issue certificates, and/or other recognition, in cognizance of special qualifications in forensic anthropology to voluntary applicants who conform to the standards established by the ABFA and who have established their fitness and competence therefore;
- (d) to inform the appropriate branches of federal and state governments and private agencies and organizations of the existence and nature of the ABFA and the professional quality of its members for the practice of forensic anthropology;
- (e) to maintain and furnish lists of individuals who have been granted certificates by the Board (hereinafter referred to as Diplomates);
- (f) to engage in any activities, not prohibited by law or the ABFA's Articles of Incorporation, which may contribute to the above purposes or which are in furtherance of the objects and purposes enumerated in the Articles of Incorporation.

### ARTICLE III Sponsors

Section 1. Initial Sponsors. The ABFA was initially sponsored by the American Academy of Forensic Sciences and The Forensic Sciences Foundation, Inc. The ABFA is currently an independent, self-sufficient organization with no sponsors.

Section 2. Other Sponsors. The Board of Directors may, by affirmative vote of the Directors, invite organizations having a legitimate interest in forensic anthropology to become sponsors of the ABFA.

Section 3. Termination of Sponsorship. A sponsoring organization may, in its discretion, terminate its sponsorship of the ABFA upon due notice to the ABFA. Such sponsorship may also be terminated by a two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote of the Directors.

Section 4. Responsibility of Sponsors. A sponsoring organization shall not have any obligations for financial support of the ABFA and shall not, by virtue of its sponsorship of the ABFA, have authority over or responsibility for any of the ABFA's operations or activities. The principal role of a sponsoring organization or organizations is to endorse and support the objectives of the ABFA and to give recognition to the ABFA's activities and programs.

### ARTICLE IV Offices

Section 1. Office of Record. The office of record of the ABFA shall be in the city of Washington, District of Columbia, at 910 17<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W., Suite 717, Washington, D.C. 20006.

Section 2. Other Offices. The ABFA may have such other offices at such locations, within or without the District of Columbia, as the Board of Directors may, from time to time, designate.

### ARTICLE V Officers

Section 1. Officers of the Corporation. The Officers of the Corporation shall be a President, a Vice President, a Secretary, and a Treasurer. They shall be elected by the Board of Directors from its membership.

Section 2. Officers of the Board of Directors. The Officers of the Corporation shall serve, in the same respective capacities, as Officers of the Board of Directors of the Corporation.

Section 3. Functions and Duties. The functions and duties of the President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer shall be such as usually and customarily pertain to their respective offices, and also such other functions and duties as may, from time to time, be delegated or designated by the Board of Directors or as are herein prescribed.

## ARTICLE VI Board of Directors

Section 1. Authority. The governing body of the Corporation shall be a Board of Directors, which shall be empowered to have, hold, control, manage and administer all of the property, funds, business, affairs and operations of the ABFA pursuant to its Articles of Incorporation, with authority to do everything necessary and desirable in the conduct of the affairs and business of the ABFA and in accordance with these Bylaws.

Section 2. Composition. The Board of Directors shall consist of at least five (5) and not more than fifteen (15) Directors. Directors shall be nominated and elected by the active Members of the ABFA via majority affirmative vote.

Section 3. Qualifications of Directors.

- (a) Directors shall be chosen and elected with due regard for their general attainments and their professional qualifications and experience in forensic anthropology and/or closely related fields;
- (b) every person elected as a Director shall be an active Member of the ABFA; provided, however, that one (1) position on the Board of Directors may be held by a duly qualified attorney-at-law who shall not be required to be an active Member of the ABFA;
- (c) any active Member of the ABFA may be elected as a member of the Board of Directors whenever an eligible vacancy exists, except as noted in Article IX Section 5 below.

Section 4. Duties and Functions. The duties and functions of the Board of Directors shall be as follows:

- (a) the Board of Directors shall exercise overall control over the affairs and operations of the ABFA;
- (b) the Board of Directors shall be charged with establishing standards for the profession of forensic anthropology, in accordance with the Articles of Incorporation and these Bylaws. These standards shall apply to all persons applying for certification;
- (c) the Board of Directors shall hold at least one (1) meeting annually and may hold additional meetings on reasonable notice upon the call of the President of the Board or upon the written request of a majority of the Directors;
- (d) the Board of Directors may, from time to time, designate qualified persons (who need not be Directors) or organizations to act on behalf of the ABFA in performing such duties and functions as the Board of Directors may require. Such persons and organizations may be compensated for their services and reimbursed for the actual and necessary expenses incurred in the discharge of such duties and functions, and shall serve at the pleasure of the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE VII  
Executive Committee

Section 1.     Composition. An Executive Committee of the Board of Directors shall be elected by the Board of Directors and shall consist of the following officers: the President, who shall serve as chairperson, the Vice President, the Secretary, and the Treasurer. A quorum of the Executive Committee shall consist of a majority of its Officers, and its formal actions shall require a majority vote unless otherwise provided herein.

Section 2.     Authority. The Executive Committee shall have full authority and power to act for and on behalf of the Board of Directors between meetings of said Board, except as herein otherwise provided. Actions taken by the Executive Committee on behalf of the Board of Directors shall be reported to the Board of Directors as soon as practical.

ARTICLE VIII  
Committees

Section 1.     General. The Board of Directors, by majority vote, may designate, establish, and determine the scope of authority, functions and duties of standing and special committees as it deems necessary.

Section 2.     Composition. Each standing or special committee shall consist of two (2) or more persons, as designated by the Board of Directors. The chairperson of each committee shall be a member of the Board of Directors; other members of a committee may be members of the Board of Directors or other qualified persons. The President shall be an *ex-officio* member of all committees.

Section 3.     Appointment and Authority. The chairperson and other members of each standing or special committee, unless otherwise provided herein, shall be appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Board of Directors. The President may appoint interim *ad hoc* committees pending approval of the Board of Directors. Every committee may, unless otherwise provided herein, exercise the authority of the Board of Directors in the manner and to the extent provided for in the resolution establishing the committee. Recommendations made by appointed committees shall not be binding upon the Board of Directors.

Section 4.     Term of Office. Unless otherwise provided herein or in the resolution of the Board of Directors establishing a standing or special committee, the chairperson and other members of every standing or special committee shall serve one (1) year terms and be eligible for reappointment. At the end of the term, individual committee members will cease participation unless asked by the President to remain on a specific committee for the sake of continuity or expertise.

ARTICLE IX  
Elections and Terms of Office

Section 1.     Election of Officers. The election of Executive Committee Officers shall be by ballot (electronic or written) or voice vote of the Board of Directors, and a majority of votes cast shall be required to elect an Officer.

Section 2.     Terms of Office of Executive Committee Members. The Officers shall take office on July 1 following their election, and each shall hold office for one (1) year, or until his or her successor has been duly elected and qualified.

Section 3. Vacancies Among Officers. The current Vice President shall fill any vacancy in the office of President that occurs mid-term. Vacancies in other Officer positions shall be filled by election within the Board of Directors. Such election shall be conducted by ballot (electronic or written) or voice vote.

Section 4. Election of Directors. Directors shall be nominated and elected by the active Members of the ABFA. The election of Directors shall be by ballot (electronic or written) occurring prior to July 1 of each year. A plurality of votes cast shall be required to elect a Director. When two (2) or more vacancies for Directors are being filled, the nominees with the most votes shall be elected.

Section 5. Term of Office of Directors. The terms of all Directors shall be three (3) years, unless otherwise specified herein. A nominated Director may serve not more than two (2) consecutive full terms without an intervening period of one (1) year, unless otherwise specified herein. Each Director's term of office shall commence on July 1 following election and shall end on June 30 of his or her final year in that office, or when his or her successor has been duly elected and qualified.

Section 6. Vacancies Among Directors. Should a Director be unable or unwilling to complete his or her elected term, the President shall be empowered to appoint a temporary Director from among the active Members of the ABFA for the remainder of the current term, for a period not to exceed one (1) year. At the next scheduled election cycle, the position shall be filled via a regular election. A duly-elected replacement Director shall serve for a term of three (3) years as described in Article IX Section 5 above.

## ARTICLE X Indemnification and Surety

Section 1. Indemnification. The Corporation shall indemnify any person made a party to any action, suit or proceeding, by reason of the fact that he/she, his/her testator or intestate, is or was a Director, Officer or employee of the Corporation, or of any corporation which he/she served as such at the request of the Corporation, against the reasonable expenses, including attorneys' fees actually and necessarily incurred by him or her in connection with the defense of such action, suit or proceeding, or in connection with any appeal therein, except in relation to matters as to which it shall be adjudged in such action, suit or proceeding that such Officer, Director or employee is liable for negligence or misconduct in the performance of his or her duties. The Corporation may also reimburse to any such Director, Officer, or employee the reasonable costs of settlement of any such action, suit or proceeding, if it shall be found by a majority of a committee composed of the Directors not involved in the matter in controversy (whether or not a quorum) that it was in the interests of the Corporation that such settlement be made and that such Director, Officer, or employee was not guilty of negligence or misconduct. Such rights of indemnification and reimbursement shall not be deemed exclusive of any other rights to which such Director, Officer or employee may be entitled apart from the provisions of this section.

Section 2. Surety. The Board of Directors shall, in their discretion, procure or cause to be procured, at the ABFA's expense, appropriate liability insurance coverage for the ABFA's Officers, Directors, agents and employees.

Section 3. Fidelity Bonds. The Board of Directors may require the Treasurer of the Board to furnish, at the expense of the ABFA, an appropriate fidelity bond approved by the Board of Directors. At the end of the term of the Treasurer of the ABFA an independent audit prepared by a CPA shall be provided to the Board, at the expense of the ABFA.



ARTICLE XI  
Meetings and Operations

Section 1.     Annual Meeting. The annual meeting of the Board of Directors shall be held at the call of the President, at a location designated by the President within or without the District of Columbia. Notice of the annual meeting shall be provided to each Director at least thirty (30) days before the meeting date. An annual meeting may be conducted by mail or email or by conference upon the written consent of two-thirds (2/3) of the Directors in office.

Section 2.     Special Meetings. Special meetings of the Board of Directors may be called by the President, or upon the written request of a majority of the Directors in office, on a date and at a time and location to be designated by the President, within or without the District of Columbia. Notice of a special meeting shall be given to each Director at least fifteen (15) days before the meeting date, with information regarding the subject(s) to be considered.

Section 3.     Quorum. A quorum for all purposes herein, unless otherwise provided, shall consist of a majority of the Directors. In the event less than this number is present at a meeting, the President may adjourn the meeting not longer than thirty (30) days under the same call for a meeting. No Director shall be entitled to vote through use of a proxy.

Section 4.     Conduct of Board Business.

- (a) ABFA business including that of an annual meeting may be conducted by mail, or email, by conference, or by a committee comprised of not less than two (2) persons when authorized by a majority of the Directors in office.
- (b) When such business conducted by mail or email calls for a vote of the Board of Directors, a two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote of those responding shall be required to carry a motion.
- (c) ABFA business carried on by conference or by standing or special committees shall be conducted in such manner as the Board of Directors may direct.

Section 5.     Territory. The operations of the ABFA are to be conducted in the United States of America and its territories and possessions, and in such other place(s) as the Board of Directors may, from time to time, authorize and direct.

## ARTICLE XII

### Finances

Section 1.     Fiscal Year. The fiscal year of the ABFA shall be from July 1 through June 30, inclusive.

Section 2.     Income. The income of the ABFA shall be derived from application fees and other fees and charges, from gifts, grants and contributions, and from such other sources and activities as may be approved by the Board of Directors. All monies accruing to the Board shall be collected by such person(s) as the Board of Directors may designate.

Section 3.     Compensation and Reimbursements. No member of the Board of Directors shall be paid any salary or fee for his or her services as a Director or an Officer. Subject to the availability of funds, a Director or an Officer may be reimbursed for actual and necessary expenses incurred by him or her in attending meetings of the Board of Directors or in performing other duties or functions on behalf of the ABFA. The Board of Directors shall determine the compensation and reimbursements to be paid to parties, other than Officers and Directors of the Board of Directors, for services performed or for activities carried out on behalf of the ABFA.

ARTICLE XIII  
Certification

Section 1. Standards. The Board of Directors shall establish, maintain, and revise as necessary, standards and qualifications for the granting, issuing, and renewing of certificates and/or other forms of recognition in cognizance of special qualifications in forensic anthropology.

Section 2. Professional. Applicants must possess an earned doctoral degree in anthropology with an emphasis in physical/biological anthropology at the time of application. Doctoral degrees with a different emphasis must be approved by the Board of Directors.

Section 3. Evaluation of Applicants. The Board of Directors shall evaluate the fitness, competence, and qualifications of persons seeking certification by the ABFA. This function may be carried out, in part, by an Applications Committee whose membership shall include at least two (2) Directors. Approval for an applicant to sit for the ABFA examination requires a majority vote of the Board of Directors.

Further details on the examination process are contained within the current ABFA guidelines for certification procedure.

Section 4. Certificates. The Board of Directors shall have authority to issue or cause to be issued Certificates of Qualification in Forensic Anthropology to persons who have met the standards of the ABFA and have fully complied with all applicable requirements. Certificates of Qualification shall be issued in such form and at a date as approved by the Board of Directors. A person holding a valid, un-revoked Certificate of Qualification issued by the ABFA shall be entitled to use the designation “Diplomate of the American Board of Forensic Anthropology”, and shall be known as “certified” by the ABFA.

Section 5. Fees. The Board of Directors shall establish the fees and other charges incident to application for and granting, issuing, and renewing of Certificates of Qualification and/or other forms of recognition.

Section 6. Denial and Revocation of Certificates. The right to deny certification and to suspend or revoke Certificates of Qualification shall reside with the Board of Directors. Certificates issued by the ABFA are subject to revocation only for one or more of the following reasons:

- (a) a misstatement or misrepresentation, or concealment or omission, of a material fact or facts in an application or any other communication to the ABFA or its representative(s);
- (b) conviction of an applicant for certification or holder of a certificate of the ABFA by a court of competent jurisdiction of a felony or of any crime involving, in the opinion of the Board of Directors, moral turpitude;
- (c) issuance of a certificate contrary to or in violation of any of the laws, standards, rules, or regulations governing the ABFA and its certification programs at the time of its issuance; or determination that the person certified was not in fact eligible to receive such certificate at the time of its issuance;
- (d) non-payment of annual renewal fees after the second notice by the Treasurer. Reinstatement may be granted in that fiscal year upon payment of the outstanding fees plus a reinstatement charge equal to the current application fee;
- (e) failure to complete recertification updates as required;
- (f) or if the following two conditions apply:
  - a. upon the recommendation of any two active Members of the ABFA, the qualifications of any active Member may be reviewed by the Ethics Committee to determine whether the Certificate of Qualification issued by the ABFA should be revoked. The candidate shall have the right to present

- his or her case to the Ethics Committee;
- b. upon recommendation of the Ethics Committee and approval by 2/3 of the Board of Directors, action to suspend or revoke certification may only be taken after at least thirty (30) days advance notice of the nature of the charges or reasons for such action has been given to the individual concerned and a reasonable opportunity for such person to be heard has been provided by the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE XIV  
Parliamentary Authority

Section 1. Parliamentary Authority. Unless otherwise provided in its Articles of Incorporation or Bylaws, the conduct of meetings of the ABFA shall be governed by rules promulgated by the Board of Directors or, in the absence of such rules, by the rules contained in Sturgis' "Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure", latest edition available. Any question as to priority of business shall be decided by a Parliamentarian designated by the President, or in the absence of a Parliamentarian, by the President.

Section 2. Suspension of Rules. The rules governing the conduct of meetings may be suspended at any meeting by a 2/3 vote of the Directors present, if and as allowed by a standard parliamentary procedure.

ARTICLE XV  
Seal and Insignia

Section 1. The Board shall have a corporate seal and may have other devices and insignia, of such design as the Board of Directors adopt.

ARTICLE XVI  
Amendments

Section 1. Any active Member of the ABFA may propose amendments by submitting a proposal for consideration by the Board of Directors. It is the duty of the Board of Directors to publicize proposed amendments to the active Members of the ABFA as soon as possible after receipt.

Section 2. These Bylaws may be amended, altered, or repealed, in whole or in part, in the following ways:

- (a) upon two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote of the active Members of the ABFA present at a meeting of the ABFA at which a quorum is present, provided that a copy of the proposed change(s) has been submitted to all active ABFA Members at least thirty (30) days prior to such meeting at which final action is to be taken;
- (b) upon two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote by electronic communication of the active members of the ABFA who respond within thirty (30) days after a copy of the proposed change(s) has been submitted to all active Members of the ABFA.

ARTICLE XVII  
Effective Date of Bylaws

Section 1. These Bylaws shall become effective following approval by the active Members as specified in Article XVI Section 2 above.

**American Board of Forensic Anthropology, Inc.**  
**CODE OF ETHICS AND CONDUCT**

Proposed February 16, 1999

Approved by the Board February 20, 2001

Revisions in 2008, 2012, 2016, 2021

**SECTION I - THE CODE:** As a means to promote the highest quality of professional and personal conduct of its members, the following constitutes the Code of Ethics and Conduct, which is endorsed and adhered to by all Diplomates of the American Board of Forensic Anthropology (ABFA). This code pertains to ABFA Diplomates only. In all instances in which written documents are required, these shall be electronic, provided a valid signature is contained within them.

Diplomates of the American Board of Forensic Anthropology shall:

- a) refrain from exercising professional or personal conduct adverse to the best interests and purposes of the ABFA;
- b) refrain from providing any material misrepresentation of education, training, experience, or area of expertise. Misrepresentation of one or more criteria for certification shall constitute a violation of this section of the code;
- c) refrain from providing any material misrepresentation of data upon which an expert opinion or conclusion is based. Diplomates shall render opinions and conclusions strictly in accordance with the evidence in the case (hypothetical or real) and only to the extent justified by the evidence;
- d) refrain from making statements that are not technically correct and scientifically based, including, but not limited to those in written reports, public addresses, or testimony.
- e) act at all times in an impartial manner by employing scientific methodology to reach logical, unbiased conclusions and by reporting all findings in a clear, concise manner;
- f) set a reasonable fee for services if it is appropriate to do so; however, no services shall be rendered on a contingency fee basis;
- g) treat all information from an agency or client with the confidentiality required;
- h) refrain from issuing public statements that appear to represent the position of the ABFA without specific authority first obtained from the Board of Directors;
- i) respect the individual and collective rights of others and not discriminate on the basis of age, race, color, ethnicity, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression, marital status, place of birth, physical or mental disabilities, and/or professional standing;
- j) treat others with dignity and respect and adhere to zero tolerance against all forms of discrimination and harassment;
- k) treat all decedents and next of kin with dignity and respect;
- l) intervene or report unethical behavior, if witnessed.

**SECTION II - GROUNDS FOR DISCIPLINE:** Any Diplomate whose professional conduct becomes adverse to the best interests and purposes of the ABFA shall be sanctioned. Investigative action may be initiated due to alleged violations of professional or personal malfeasance including, but not limited to, any of the following provisions:

- a) an intentional misstatement, misrepresentation, concealment, or omission of a material fact or facts in an application or any other communication to the Board or its representative(s);
- b) conviction of a holder of a certificate by this Board by a court of competent jurisdiction of a felony or of any crime involving moral turpitude;
- c) issuance of a certificate contrary to or in violation of any of the laws, standard rules, or regulations governing the Board and its certification programs either at the time of its issuance or subsequently; or determination that the person certified was not in fact eligible to receive such certificate either at the time of its issuance or subsequently;
- d) violations of the Code of Ethics and Conduct (see above) of the ABFA by a holder of a certificate of this Board;
- e) official censure or suspension by another body, including a university or other place of employment;

**SECTION III - INVESTIGATIVE BODY:** There shall be constituted a standing Ethics Committee, the primary composition and function of which will be:

- a) Five members of the Board of Directors, one member from the Diplomates-at-Large, and one non-voting attorney member (if needed).
  - the members of the Ethics Committee shall be appointed by the President of the Board with the advice and consent of the Board of Directors. Each committee member, with the exception of the non-voting attorney member, if present, will serve a one-year term. The Ethics Committee shall elect a chairperson and co-chairperson from its membership annually;
  - if the chairperson is under investigation, has a conflict of interest in that particular case, or for other valid reasons is unable to participate, the co-chairperson will serve as the chairperson. If the chairperson and co-chairperson are unable to chair the ethics investigation, the President of the of the ABFA may chair the Ethics Committee or appoint a designee.
- b) The standing Ethics Committee shall serve as the investigative body to which the chairperson of the Ethics Committee shall refer all cases for consideration;
- c) The Ethics Committee can order investigations and serve as a hearing agency concerning past or present conduct of individual members of the ABFA which may constitute a violation of the provisions of the Code of Ethics and Conduct.

**SECTION IV - INVESTIGATION INITIATING ACTION:** Written allegations against a Diplomat shall be submitted to the ABFA Secretary and will immediately be transmitted to the chairperson of the Ethics Committee. The Ethics Committee may institute an inquiry based on any evidence brought to its attention that indicates the need for further query or positive action under the provisions of the Bylaws, whether or not that evidence was brought to the attention of the Ethics Committee by a complainant.

### **SECTION V - JUDICIARY PROCESS**

- a) The Ethics Committee shall compile data which will permit the Ethics Committee to arrive at a preliminary determination as to whether the complaint is well founded and requires further investigation. The Complainant(s) can choose to remain anonymous until the Ethics Committee determines that there is a need for further investigation and/or hearing. If further investigation is deemed necessary, the Ethics Committee will give notice of the filing of a complaint, the nature of the complaint and provide the identity of the Complainant to the Respondent within thirty (30) days of receipt of the original complaint. If the Ethics Committee finds that the complaint is unfounded, they may dismiss the complaint and notify the Complainant(s) in writing.
- b) The Ethics Committee may contact any individual or entity (whether an ABFA Diplomat or not) in its investigations of written allegations against a Diplomat that are submitted under the guidelines in Section IV.
  - (1) Letters of informed consent shall be provided to each witness when witness statements are requested, and that witness shall be provided with a copy of this Code. The consent form will include information about who will see the witness's statement and if/how it will be shared. If, after being advised thus, witnesses are willing to provide a statement, the signed consent form shall accompany the statement, and both shall be received by the Ethics Committee within seven (7) days of the witness being notified that the Ethics Committee requests a statement.
  - (2) The witness shall be informed that he/she/they shall not confer with others regarding their statement, nor shall they discuss the investigation with anyone other than the Ethics Committee.
- c) If the Ethics Committee finds enough evidence during the preliminary investigation to suggest that a complaint may be substantiated, a hearing will be convened. The Complainant(s) or Respondent may request that there be no hearing, but the final decision resides with the Ethics Committee. If a hearing is convened, the Ethics Committee shall give both the Respondent and the Complainant(s) a reasonable opportunity to be heard and

address each other. As circumstances vary, the format of the hearing is set at the discretion of the Ethics Committee and may be asynchronous/via electronic communications, a synchronous virtual meeting, or an in-person meeting.

- (1) For the purpose of setting up a formal hearing, official notice shall be sent by certified mail with return receipt requested, or by electronic mail with receipt acknowledged by the recipient to both the Respondent and Complainant(s).
- (2) The Respondent shall receive a copy of the written complaint. He/she/they is entitled to see the document in its entire form. The Respondent will be given thirty (30) days from receipt of the hearing request to advise the Ethics Committee of his/her/their intention to provide a written, electronic, or oral defense against the charges.
- (3) After receipt of the notice from the Respondent (by certified mail with return receipt or by electronic mail with receipt acknowledged by the recipient), and if the Ethics Committee decides to proceed with the investigation and adjudication, a formal hearing date will be mutually agreed upon by the Complainant(s), the Respondent, and the Ethics Committee. This date will be at least ninety (90) days from said receipt of official notice in order to give both parties adequate time to prepare for the hearing.
- (4) At this hearing no legal counsel for either the Respondent or Complainant(s) may be present. The non-voting attorney member of the Ethics Committee will be present for the purpose of assuring that propriety, protocol, and adherence to proper procedures is maintained during the hearing. The attorney member shall act in an advisory position to the committee only and shall not be involved in the presentation of the case for either party.
- (5) The Ethics Committee shall make a report, which will include a recommendation to the ABFA Board of Directors at the conclusion of the hearing(s). Recommendations can include, but are not limited to the following forms of discipline, which are determined at the discretion of the Ethics Committee in consultation with the Board of Directors:
  - (a) Private or public written reprimand(s), probation, formal apologies, and/or any other rectifications deemed appropriate by the Ethics Committee (sensitivity training, ethics training, workshops, community service, etc.);
  - (b) Suspension: Suspension is the removal of a Diplomat's association with the Board and his/her/their certification status for one year from the date of the notification. The duration of suspension may be reduced if certain conditions are met or at the discretion of the Ethics Committee in consultation with the ABFA Board of Directors. If, however, there are additional violations of the Code of Ethics, modifications to the duration of suspension or decertification may be imposed at the discretion of the Ethics Committee in consultation with the ABFA Board of Directors.
  - (c) Decertification: This is used to remove a Diplomat's certification. This action is appropriate in situations where it is not reasonable to expect that the Diplomat will be able to correct the problem(s) or when a Diplomat would severely damage the reputation of the ABFA if he/she/they were associated with the ABFA.
- d) Upon a vote of three-fourths (3/4) of the members of the Board of Directors present and voting, the Respondent may be issued sanctions as described in Section V(c)(5). No Board of Director member or member of the Ethics Committee who has a conflict of interest shall sit in deliberation on any manner concerning ethics. A conflict of interest exists if (1) the member witnessed the actions of the Respondent in the events leading to the complaint, (2) is a supervisor of the Complainant(s) or Respondent, or (3) believes he/she/they cannot be impartial in the deliberations or vote. The Respondent will be notified within ten (10) days of the vote by the ABFA Board of Directors.
- e) The Respondent has the right to appeal the action of the Board of Directors. In effecting an appeal, the Appellant must file a brief written notice of the appeal, together with any written statement he/she/they may wish to submit on his/her/their behalf, with the ABFA Secretary not more than thirty (30) days after receiving notice of the action of the Board. Electronic submission of these documents to the ABFA Secretary is preferred. Upon receipt, the Secretary shall immediately advise each member of the Board of Directors of the appeal and shall forward to each a copy of the supporting documents submitted by the Appellant.
  - (1) If no appeal is received by the Secretary within thirty (30) days, the actions of the Board shall be implemented and may no longer be appealed.
  - (2) If an appeal is received within thirty (30) days, the Executive Committee shall prepare a written statement of



the reasons for the Board of Directors' actions and file the same with the ABFA Secretary not more than thirty (30) days from receipt of the appeal.

(3) Within thirty (30) days of receipt of the statement from the Executive Committee, the Board of Directors shall choose four (4) Diplomates-at-Large (not on the Board of Directors), and the Appellant shall choose four (4) Diplomates-at-Large (not on the Board of Directors) to populate an Appeal Committee to hear the appeal.

(4) The Secretary of the Board shall send the statements from the Appellant and the Executive Committee to each of the members of this Appeal Committee within fourteen (14) days after the Board is convened.

(5) The members of this Appeal Committee shall arrange a closed virtual meeting. The meeting(s) shall be strictly confidential. The Respondent, the Complainant(s), and any member of the Board of Directors shall not be part of the meeting(s). The non-voting attorney member of the Ethics Committee shall be part of the meeting(s) to assure propriety, protocol, and adherence to procedures. The attorney shall not represent either party involved in the hearing.

(6) Decisions of the Appeal Committee in the closed hearing will be based upon the written information provided by the Appellant, Executive Committee's written statements, and the Ethics Committee convened to oversee the original complaint. A written vote of three-fourths (3/4) of the Appeal Committee present and voting at the closed meeting shall be required to overrule the action of the Board of Directors in regard to issuing sanctions as described in Section V(c)(5).

(7) The Board will not refund any annual dues for the current year, in whole or in part. A Diplomat who has been suspended but reinstated after a successful appeal can resume active status without reapplying for certification. He/she/they must, however, express an interest to resume active status in writing to the President of the Board.

**SECTION VI: REQUEST FOR REINSTATEMENT:** A Diplomate who has been decertified may reapply for certification 5 years after the date of decertification. The individual is subject to the same application requirements as any other applicant, including taking the certifying examination. The individual must provide a detailed description of the circumstances of decertification along with any applicable remedies that have been undertaken by the individual since the decertification took effect.

**SECTION VII - CONFIDENTIALITY, RULES, AND PROCEDURES**

- (a) Any member of the Ethics Committee, Board of Directors, or Appeal Committee divulging information on matters previously considered or currently being considered could be in violation of the Code of Ethics and Conduct and is subject to charges of same being filed. This does not apply to written statements made and worded by the Board of Directors concerning ethical matters or about the case(s) being considered which may be distributed to the Appeals Committee by said person after Executive Committee approval.
- (b) The Ethics Committee shall formulate internal Rules and Procedures, and from time to time propose changes to such Rules and Procedures, designed to facilitate the expeditious, fair, discreet, and impartial handling of all complaints or matters brought before the Ethics Committee. The Rules and Procedures, and any subsequent deletions, additions, or amendments thereto, shall be subject to the approval of the Board of Directors.
- (c) The Ethics Committee and the ABFA Board of Directors shall not attempt to interfere with the Respondent's employment, conference attendance, or other professional activities outside of the ABFA.
- (d). The Ethics Committee and the ABFA Board of Directors shall not share activities relating to Ethics Complaints with other organizations (e.g., the American Academy of Forensic Sciences).

**American Board of Forensic Anthropology  
Diplomate Manual  
Section III Policies and Procedures Revised 20 October 2022**

**ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION**

**Elected Officers:**

Officers shall take office on July 1 following their election and each shall hold office for one (1) year or until a successor has been duly elected and qualified. Vacancies among officers (with the exception of the office of President who shall be succeeded by the sitting Vice President) shall be filled through election, specifically by majority vote, from among the membership of the Board of Directors. Such election may be conducted by mail or email ballot.

**The President** (1 year term) is nominated and elected by majority vote of the Board of Directors from its members.

The President shall:

- 1) Preside over meetings of the Executive Committee, Board of Directors, and Diplomates.
- 2) Develop meeting agendas in consultation with the other members of the Executive Committee.
- 3) Prepare an annual report for the Board of Directors Meeting.
- 4) Serve as an *ex officio* member of all committees.
- 5) Maintain an up-to-date list of all committee memberships.
- 6) Assist Executive Committee members in making decisions when/if issues arise throughout the year.
- 7) Appoint officers and chairpersons of standing and special committees as directed by the Bylaws.
- 8) Notify chairpersons of their committee membership and charges within one week after the annual meeting.
- 9) Maintain copies of critical documents and/or correspondence in a secure location.
- 10) Transfer all pertinent ABFA Presidential material to the incoming President within thirty (30) days of the new President assuming office.
- 11) Schedules rooms for the annual Board of Directors meeting, examination, and annual Diplomates' meeting in coordination with the appropriate American Academy of Forensic Sciences staff member.
- 12) Review and approve final minutes from the annual meeting.
- 13) Communicate a synopsis of decisions made at the semi-annual and annual Board of Directors' meeting at the annual Diplomates' meeting immediately following the Board of Directors' meeting.
- 14) Approve and disseminate minutes from the Diplomates' meeting within 14 days of receipt from the Secretary.
- 15) Advise Diplomates of new policies and procedures.
- 16) Present Certificates of Qualification to and welcome new Diplomates at the annual Diplomates' meeting.

- 17) Collect and maintain signed Endorsement of Professional and Ethical Standards statements from Diplomates.
- 18) Oversee the maintenance of the ABFA website.
- 19) Maintain contact information for the ABFA attorney.
- 20) Maintain contact information for the ABFA insurance company.
- 21) Maintain liaison with the Forensic Specialties Accreditation Board and ensure annual and 5-year reports are submitted on a timely basis.
- 22) Serve as a point of contact for the appeals process (see ABFA Examination Appeal Process).
- 23) Represent the ABFA Diplomates and Board of Directors to outside agencies as required and appropriate.

The **Vice President** (1 year term) is nominated and elected by majority vote of the Board of Directors from its members. The Vice President shall fill any vacancy in the office of President if such occurs during his/her term in office.

The Vice President shall:

- 1) Attend all meetings of the Executive Committee, Board of Directors, and Diplomates-at-Large.
- 2) Prepare an annual report for the Board of Directors Meeting.
- 3) Support the ABFA president with administrative duties, as necessary
- 4) Be familiar with the duties of President and be willing to assume the President's position if necessary.
- 5) Serve as Ex Officio member on each of the examination committees (Examination Development, Examination Validation, Examination Grading, and Examination Logistics Committees).
- 6) Communicate regularly with the examination committee chairs and oversee that each committee is fulfilling their stated charge and objectives with respect to the development, validation, execution, and grading of the examination
- 7) Communicate with the examinees prior to and after the examination, including notifying all examinees of the results of the examination no later than 45 days following the examination.
- 8) Review and approve final minutes from the annual meetings.”

The **Secretary** (1 year term) is nominated and elected by majority vote of the Board of Directors from its members.

The Secretary shall:

- 1) Attend all meetings of the Executive Committee, Board of Directors, and Diplomates-at-Large.
- 2) Produce the minutes of the meetings of the Board of Directors within thirty (30) days and send to the Board of Directors for approval.
- 3) Produce the minutes of the annual meeting of the Diplomates-at-Large within thirty (30) days.
- 4) Notify the AAFS staff of changes in the ABFA officers within 30 days after the annual business meeting.
- 5) Maintain the corporate seal/embosser.
- 6) Maintain copies of all critical documents and/or correspondence in a secure location.
- 7) Package and ship all ABFA Secretary material and equipment to the incoming Secretary within thirty (30) days of the new Secretary assuming office.

- 8) Maintain permanent archives of original application forms.
- 9) Maintain a list of past officers.
- 10) Notify the Webmaster of necessary changes to the ABFA web site.
- 11) Notify the Chairperson of the Ethics Committee of the AAFS of censure, suspension, or expulsion of a Diplomat by the ABFA due to ethics violations (in accordance with Section 5, Paragraph c of the ABFA Code of Ethics and Conduct).
- 12) Create Certificates of Qualification and ensure that each is signed by all members of the Executive Committee prior to presentation to new Diplomates at the annual Diplomates' meeting.

The **Treasurer** (1 year term) is nominated and elected by majority vote of the Board of Directors from its members.

The Treasurer shall:

- 1) Attend all meetings of the Executive Committee, Board of Directors, and Diplomates-at-Large.
- 2) Prepare a report for the prior fiscal year, a mid-year report for the current fiscal year, and a report of current financial status for the annual Board of Directors meeting.
- 3) Maintain the financial records of the ABFA using accepted accounting practices.
- 4) Retain financial documents using an accepted accounting retention schedule.
- 5) Oversee ABFA budgets and notify the Executive Committee when expenditures will exceed assets.
- 6) Estimate proposed budget changes as needed and present budget proposals to the Board of Directors for consideration.
- 7) Send to all active Diplomates the first notice of the January 1 dues deadline by December 1 of the year prior to the deadline.
  - a) If needed, send a second notice of the January 1 deadline by February 1.
  - b) If the January deadline is still not met, send a **delinquent** dues notice by March 1 through certified mail (return receipt requested). This third notice shall state that action to revoke certification has been initiated and will automatically occur if dues are not received by April 1. This third statement shall also include the following sentence: "The Treasurer must receive written notification through certified mail by March 15 of circumstances beyond your control that prevent your payment of outstanding dues by the extended deadline of April 1. The Board of Directors will review these circumstances and, at their discretion, may extend the deadline."
- 8) Ensure application and examination fees are collected in a timely fashion and notify the Vice President of the status of all application and exam fees no later than seven (7) days after the due date(s).
- 9) Receive insurance premium statement and, in consultation with the President, be responsible for annual payment of insurance premiums.
- 10) Collect annual dues payments and notify the Recertification Committee of the dues status of Diplomates no later than March 1.
- 11) Reimburse expenses for members of the Board of Directors in accordance with ABFA policies.
- 12) Pay appropriate expenses incurred for ABFA business.
- 13) Notify insurance company of Treasurer's contact information when new officer takes office.
- 14) Notify CT Corporation of Treasurer's contact information when new officer takes office.
- 15) On even-numbered years, pay biennial report fee to the District of Columbia.

- 16) Maintain copies of critical documents and/or correspondence in a secure location.
- 17) Package and ship all ABFA Treasurer materials, equipment, and bank assets to the incoming Treasurer within thirty (30) days of the new Treasurer assuming office.
- 18) Make arrangements for a complete outside audit of the ABFA financial records every three years or at the time a new Treasurer is elected.

**Board of Directors:** Each term on the Board of Directors will last 3 years. Diplomates may only serve on the Board of Directors for two consecutive terms. After a break in service of at least one year, Diplomates are again eligible for election to the Board of Directors. Members of the Board of Directors are nominated by the Diplomates-at-Large and elected by majority vote of the Diplomates-at-Large (see Nomination Committee).

*Any Officer or Director shall be subject to removal from office or from the Board of Directors for failure to complete duties in a timely manner by majority vote of the members of the Board of Directors.*

**Directors shall:**

- 1) Maintain active Diplomate status in accordance with the responsibilities outlined in the PPM.
- 2) Submit an annual written attestation of adherence to the duties of an ABFA Director as outlined in the PPM on or before June 30.
- 3) Serve as an active member of the ABFA Board of Directors.
  - a) Read and respond to correspondence from the ABFA Executive Board as applicable.
  - b) Attend and actively participate in at least 50% of the ABFA BoD quarterly meetings.
  - c) Actively participate in at least two ABFA BoD Committees.
- 4) Serve as an active member of the ABFA BoD Committees as assigned:
  - a) Read and respond to correspondence from the committee chairs, as applicable.
  - b) Attend and actively participate in at least 75% of the committee meetings.
  - c) Actively participate in the work of the committee outside of scheduled meetings.

**Additional Responsibilities for Committee Chairs/Co-Chairs:**

In addition to the Director responsibilities above, Committee Charis/Co-Chairs shall:

- 1) Communicate updates on committee activities to the ABFA President prior to each quarterly BoD meeting, or more frequently as necessary.
- 2) For Standing Committees, ensure that the committee is working to achieve the goals of the committee as outlined in the PPM and the committee information documents.
- 3) For Ad Hoc Committees, ensure that the committee is working to achieve the goals set out in the scope, purpose, and duties document.
- 4) Bring pertinent issues to the ABFA President in a timely manner.
  - a) Review and propose updates to the committee information or scope/duties documents, as needed.
  - b) Communicate with the President regarding committee members that are not in compliance with the committee duties as outlined in this document.

**Diplomates-at-Large that serve on ABFA BoD Committees shall:**

- 1) Be familiar with the Bylaws, Articles of Incorporation, Code of Ethics and Conduct, and this manual.
- 2) Maintain active Diplomate status in accordance with the responsibilities outlined in the PPM.

- 3) Submit a written attestation of adherence to the duties of the ABFA Diplomates-at-Large who serve on ABFA BoD Committees as outlined in the PPM within 20 days of appointment to the BoD Committee, and annually on or before 30 June, if applicable.
- 4) Serve as an active member of the ABFA BoD Committees as assigned.
  - a) Read and respond to correspondence from the committee chairs, as applicable.
  - b) Attend and participate in a least 75% of the committee meetings.
  - c) Actively participate in the work of the committee outside of scheduled meetings.

**Implementation:**

Directors and Diplomates-at-Large who serve on BoD committees will be required to submit an attestation in which they agree to adhere to the duties listed above. This attestation must be submitted by the due date provided. If a Director fails to meet the expectations outlined above, the Director shall receive a written warning that they are in violation of the signed BoD Attestation and has 30 days to rectify the situation. This written warning will be emailed to the email address on file with the ABFA Secretary.

If a Director fails to rectify the issue satisfactorily within the time allotted, that Director is subject to removal from the ABFA BoD in accordance with the PPM procedures outlined on page 22 of the PPM. If a Diplomate-at-Large serving on a BoD committee fails to meet the expectations outlined above, the Diplomate-at-Large shall receive a written warning that they are in violation of the signed BoD Attestation and have 30 days to rectify the situation and/or meet with the committee chair to review expectations. This written warning will be emailed to the email address on file with the ABFA Secretary.

If a Diplomate-at-Large fails to rectify the issue satisfactorily within the time allotted, that Diplomate-at-Large is subject to removal from the BoD Committee in accordance with the PPM procedures outlined on page 22 of the PPM.

**Committees:** Each committee shall consist of two (2) or more persons. The chairperson of each committee shall be a member of the Board of Directors, while other members of a committee may be members of the Board of Directors, Diplomates-at-Large, or other qualified persons. The President is an *ex officio* member of all committees. Unless otherwise provided herein, the President of the Board, with the advice of the Board of Directors, shall appoint the chairperson and other members of each Standing or Special Committee.

The chairperson and other members of every Standing or Special Committee shall serve one (1) year terms and, unless otherwise provided within the Bylaws or resolved by the Board of Directors, are eligible for reappointment. At the end of the term, committee participation will cease unless asked by the President to remain on a specific committee for the sake of continuity or expertise.

**Standing Committees:**

- 1) **Executive Committee:** This committee shall consist of the sitting President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. The President is the Chairperson of the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall have full authority and power to act for and on behalf of the Board of Directors between meetings of said Board, except as provided in the Bylaws. Actions taken by the Executive Committee on behalf of the Board of Directors shall be reported to the Board of Directors as soon as practicable.

- 2) **Ethics Committee:** This committee shall consist of at least two (2) members of the Board of Directors and at least one (1) member from the Diplomates-at-Large. The Ethics Committee will investigate allegations against Diplomates for violations of Rules of Ethics and Conduct and will recommend action to the Board of Directors consistent with the procedures, standards, rules, and regulations established by the Board.
- 3) **Examination Committees:** The examination committees shall consist of the Examination Logistics Committee, Examination Development Committee, Examination Validation Committee, and the Examination Grading Committee. Each examinations committee Chair will communicate directly with the ABFA Vice President regarding activities of the committee. The examination committees are charged with administering the ABFA certification examination, including creating, validating, proctoring, and grading as well as communicating with examinees prior to, during and after the examination. Subcommittees associated with the certification examination include:
  - a) **Examination Logistics Committee:** The Examination Logistics Committee shall consist of a Chair (ABFA Vice President) and at least three other members chosen from the Board of Directors and the ABFA Diplomates-at-Large. The committee shall be established during the annual Board of Directors meeting and committee members shall serve a minimum of one year. The purpose of this committee is to develop and execute the certification examination. This committee is responsible for the aspects of the examination and examinee communication as outlined below.
  - b) **As Examination Logistics Char, the Vice President shall:**
    - (1) ensure the at the examination logistics Committee is fulfilling all duties stated below
    - (2) be responsible for all communication with examinees including:
      - (a) dissemination of reading lists, practical station lists, proctoring and other exam-related information. And, if housed on the website, makes examinees aware of where to find this information
      - (b) dissemination and collection of Non-Disclosure Agreements
      - (c) detailed information on written examination testing center/remote proctoring options
      - (d) detailed information on examination dates and location
      - (e) dissemination of examination results letters to each examinee
    - (3) communicating with the Treasurer for examination fee billing purposes (e.g., which applicants are planning to sit for the examination, outstanding exam fees)
    - (4) receive examination results from the Examination Development Committee Chair
    - (5) destroy all completed examinations consistent with the examination policies
    - (6) maintain copies of all critical documents and/or correspondence in a secure location
  - c) Exam Logistics Committee shall:
    - (1) Create exam-related informational materials to be posted on the website for examinee access
    - (2) Organize logistics of the examination: This includes exam date, location, coordination with outside testing entities, proctoring, and other exam logistics
    - (3) Manage all examinee information (who has taken which parts of the exam previously, how many times individuals sat for or deferred the exam, etc.)
    - (4) Assign and track unique anonymized test IDs for each examinee
    - (5) Ensure that each examinee's identity is verified prior to sitting for the examination
    - (6) Manage and performance check all testing materials (calipers, reference materials, etc.) and ensuring that they are appropriately transported to/housed at the testing location
    - (7) Work with the Examination Grading Committee Chair to ensure that the Examination Grading Committee is ready to grade the examination when completed
    - (8) Providing examination results letters to the Vice President within 45 days of the examination for dispersal to examinees



- d) **Examination Development Committee:** The Examination Development Committee shall consist of a Chair and at least three other members chosen from the Board of Directors and the ABFA Diplomates-at-Large. The committee shall be established during the annual Board of Directors meeting and committee members shall serve a minimum of one year. The purpose of this committee is to develop and execute the certification examination. This committee is responsible for soliciting and/or creating new examination questions, maintaining databases of exam questions, and updating/curating a list of the scholarly sources which serve as the basis for exam questions. The committee, under the direction of the Chair, may contact the Diplomates-at-Large or authors from pertinent research articles to request exam questions as well as skeletal material for exam questions. Diplomates-at-large and non-Diplomate authors must submit a confidentiality agreement prior to submitting questions.
- (1) The Chair of the Examination Development Committee is responsible for submitting written questions to the Examination Validation Committee and updating the database appropriately with the questions that have been validated or rejected by the Examination Validation Committee.
  - (2) The Chair of the Examination Development Committee shall store each validated question in a master test bank, and each question shall be marked with its validation date.
  - (3) The Examination Development Committee shall construct the written exam by drawing only from validated questions in the master test bank. The master test bank of validated question should be divided into categories based on question content and the written examination should be drawn from the various categories.
  - (4) The Examination Development Committee will maintain a database to include the number of missed answers for each question so that the Examination Validation Committee can use these data to assess the reliability and validity of the questions.
  - (5) The Examination Development Committee also writes the exam and prepares the materials for validation at the exam site prior to administration of the exam. The Examination Development Committee is responsible for digitally documenting the specimen at each practical station once validation has been completed.
  - (6) The Chair of this committee will assist with the grading of the examination.
  - (7) The Chair will work with the VP to review grading of examinations for consistency (bringing any discrepancies to the Vice President and President for review).
  - (8) The Chair will turn over all completed examinations to the VP for destruction in accordance with exam destruction policies.
- e) **Examination Validation Committee:** The Examination Validation Committee consists of a Chair (appointed by the ABFA Vice President) and at least three other members chosen from the Board of Directors and the ABFA Diplomates-at-Large. The committee shall be established during the annual Board of Directors meeting, and committee members shall serve a minimum of one year. The purpose of the Examination Validation Committee is to review the examination questions the ABFA certification examinations to ensure that the questions are clear, concise, and appropriate (in terms of both content and structure), as well as assist with proctoring the examinations.
- i) All questions obtained by the Examination-Development Committee shall be reviewed by the Examination Validation Committee prior to their first intended use in an exam. Each Examination Validation Committee member shall independently assess whether a question and provided answers are acceptable as is, needs minor or major editing for clarity or accuracy, or should be discarded due to irredeemable flaws. Additionally, questions and associated answers may be rejected due to their trivial nature regarding information considered important knowledge in the practice of forensic anthropology or if it is determined that they are outside the typical scope of forensic anthropology.

- ii) The Examination Validation Committee Chair shall collate the comments provided by the committee members, providing direction on any that require revision. A final report shall be submitted to the Chair of the Examination Development Committee.
  - iii) For the practical stations, at least 3 Examination Validation Committee members shall complete independently, these stations at least one day prior to its implementation, preferably in the exam room using the instruments that will be provided to the examinees. Afterwards, the committee shall compare each answer to the answer key proposed by the Examination Development Committee, and the appropriateness of the test materials and the proposed answers shall be assessed. Then, in consultation with the Examination Development Committee Chair, the Examination Validation Committee provides guidance on the grading rubric that the Grading Committee will use in grading the exam and modifies the answer key or practical stations as it deems necessary. A majority vote by the Examination Validation Committee members present shall constitute sufficient authority to remove any item or station from the exam in its entirety, or reword/replace examination materials as needed.
  - iv) Members of this committee shall assist the Examination Logistics Committee members with proctoring the examination as needed.
  - v) Members of the Examination Validation Committee shall not serve on the Examination Grading Committee. Members of the Examination Validation Committee shall not serve on the Exam Appeal Committee related to the exam; however, they can be consulted whenever the Exam Appeal Committee finds it necessary to assess the validity, appropriateness, or veracity of any exam questions.
- f) **Examination Grading Committee:** The Examination Grading Committee is composed of members of the Board of Director and Diplomates-at-Large. The size of the committee depends on the number of examinees, and the members are appointed by the Examination Development Committee. The role of the committee is primarily to grade the exams.
- i) The Chair of the Examination Grading Committee will be a member of the ABFA BoD. The Examination Grading Committee members cannot be members of any of the other exam-related committees.
  - ii) The Chair of this committee will communicate directly with the Chair of the Examination Logistics Committee to ensure that members of the committee are available to grade the examination upon completion of the testing session.
  - iii) The Chair of the Examination Development Committee will assist with exam grading. The Vice President is present during the grading to oversee the process but does not grade the examinations. The Chair of the Examination Development Committee and the Vice President are responsible for tallying grades and adjudicating any grading errors as necessary.
- 5) **Recertification Committee:** This committee shall consist of at least two (2) individuals in addition to the Treasurer, appointed from the Board of Directors by the President. The Recertification Committee shall oversee recertification of Diplomates consistent with procedures, standards, rules, and regulations established by the Board of Directors. The Chairperson of the Recertification Committee is responsible for providing timely reports to the Executive Committee during the course of the year. The Chairperson of the Recertification Committee also presents an annual report of committee activities and actions to the Board of Directors at the annual Diplomates meeting of the American Board of Forensic Anthropology. See specific information concerning recertification under “Recertification Procedure” below.
- 6) **Nomination Committee:** This committee shall consist of at least two (2) individuals appointed from the Board of Directors by the President. The Nomination Committee shall oversee the election of Diplomates to the Board of Directors consistent with procedures, standards, rules and regulations established by the Board of Directors. The Chairperson of the Nomination Committee will call for

nominations from the Diplomates-at-Large starting March 1 of each year a vacancy exists on the Board of Directors. The Chairperson of the Nomination Committee will close nominations on March 30 and conduct voting via an anonymous online survey between April 1 and April 15 of the election year. Following certification of the voting results, the Chair will notify the new member(s) of the Board of Directors via email within a week after voting closes.

- 7) **Applications Committee:** This committee shall consist of at least two (2) individuals appointed from the Board of Directors by the President. The Applications Committee shall oversee the exam application process consistent with procedures, standards, rules and regulations established by the Board of Directors. The responsibility of the Chairperson of the Applications Committee is to:
- (a) Send all necessary application materials to prospective applicants upon request and answer questions regarding the application process.
  - (b) Receive and review application materials from applicants and ensure that the application is properly notarized and contains all required elements. In concert with the Treasurer, ensure that application fees have been received by the application deadline.
  - (c) Notify applicants approximately one week prior to the application deadline as to the status of the application (including the status of letters of recommendation received), provided the Applications Chairperson is aware of the forthcoming application. Send pending applications to members of the Board of Directors for further review.
  - (d) Inform each applicant in writing of the Board's decisions concerning the application within 5 months of the application deadline and provide written feedback supporting the decision.
- 8) **FSAB Compliance Committee:** The Forensic Specialties Accreditation Board (FSAB) Compliance Committee is responsible for completing and submitting the annual ABFA report and all documents related to examination appeals. The Committee is also responsible for contacting the FSAB for guidance on ethical issues, requests for information, and accreditation standards. The President shall serve as the Chairperson of the FSAB Compliance Committee and will appoint at least two (2) additional directors to serve on the committee.
- 9) **Exam Appeal Committee:** The Exam Appeal Committee will address any appeals filed about the certification exam. The Exam Appeal Committee shall consist of at least three (3) individuals. The President will appoint the Chairperson of the Exam Appeal Committee who shall be a current ABFA Board of Directors member and who shall serve as the facilitator of the appeal process. The President will select a minimum of one (1) additional member of the Exam Appeal Committee from the ABFA Board of Directors membership and/or ABFA Diplomates-at-Large. The appellant will select a Diplomate-at-Large who shall serve as a voting member of the Exam Appeal Committee. No person serving on the Exam Appeal Committee shall have been a member of the standing Examination Committees in place during the appellant's examination. Members of the Examination Committees may be called upon by the Exam Appeal Committee to provide information only, but these individuals shall not vote in the appeal process.

**Diplomates-at-Large shall:**

- 1) Be familiar with the Bylaws, the Code of Ethics and Conduct, and this Manual.
- 2) Notify the Secretary of changes in contact information as soon as practicable.
- 3) Annually, submit a signed Endorsement of Professional and Ethical Standards statement by January 1.
- 4) Comply with recertification procedures.
- 5) Read and respond to correspondence from the Board of Directors and/or committee chairs, as applicable.
- 6) Bring concerns about the ABFA to the Board of Directors.
- 7) Pay their dues on or before January 1.

## **ABFA Fees:**

- **Application Fee:** \$275.00 non-refundable fee to be submitted within two weeks of the application deadline.
- **Examination Fee:** \$305.00 non-refundable fee to be submitted 2 months prior to the examination date.
- **Re-Examination Fee:** \$200.00 to re-take one portion of the examination; \$300.00 to re-take both portions of the examination. This is a non-refundable fee to be submitted by 2 months prior to the examination date.
- **Annual Dues:** \$200.00 per year due January 1 of each year.
- **Reinstatement Fee:** A penalty reinstatement fee (equal to the application fee of \$275.00) will be levied if the Board of Directors grants reinstatement after non-payment of annual renewal fees, non-compliance with submission of recertification documents, or failure to submit the **Endorsement of Professional and Ethical Standards** statement. This statement can be accessed through the **Policies and Procedures** page of the ABFA website.

# APPLICATION, EXAMINATION, AND CERTIFICATION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Revised 2 February 2021

Applications are reviewed and approved or rejected by the Board of Directors. Examinations are executed and graded as pass or fail by the Examination Committees.

**Function:** The certification process (including the application and examination portions of the process) encompasses the following functions for the ABFA:

- 1) Review of credentials and required documents of individuals who wish to sit for the examination for a Certificate of Qualification in Forensic Anthropology and approve those who meet the required qualifications. Members of the Board of Directors of the ABFA perform this function.
- 2) Creation, scheduling, administration, and grading of examinations, which must be successfully completed for the examinee to be granted the Certificate of Qualification in Forensic Anthropology awarded by the ABFA. This function is performed by multiple committees and is overseen by the Board of Directors of the ABFA.
- 3) Establishment and maintenance of the application and recertification forms, together with instructions, so that they reflect current information and requirements of the ABFA. All members of the Board of Directors of the ABFA perform this function.
- 4) Establishment of a policy on continuing forensic anthropological education. All members of the Board of Directors of the ABFA perform this function with input from the Diplomates-at-Large.

## General Provisions Concerning Certification:

- 1) The Board reserves the right to deny certification.
- 2) Certificates granted and issued by the Board may be suspended or revoked for violations of the Code of Ethics and Conduct as provided in the Bylaws. Additionally, certificates may be revoked for any of the following administrative reasons:
  - (a) Non-payment of annual dues by April 1.
  - (b) Failure to submit a signed annual Endorsement of Professional and Ethical Standards statement by April 1.
  - (c) Failure to submit recertification documents in accordance with relevant cycle and timelines.
- 3) Persons holding a valid, un-revoked Certificate of Qualification issued by the Board are entitled to use the following designations: “Diplomate of the American Board of Forensic Anthropology,” “D-ABFA” or “Diplomate, ABFA”.
- 4) A Certificate of Qualification in forensic anthropology is valid for a period of three (3) consecutive years and may be renewed in accordance with the recertification program, procedures, standards, rules, and regulations established by the Board (see “Maintaining Diplomate Status” below).
- 5) Certificates issued by the Board are not transferable and remain the property of the Board. Every person to whom a certificate has been properly issued shall be entitled to its continued possession unless and until such certificate is revoked.

## **Maintaining Diplomate Status:**

To maintain Diplomate status, Diplomates must:

- 1) Pay annual dues by January 1 each year. Payment must be made electronically via an invoice sent by the ABFA Treasurer.
- 2) Submit a signed Endorsement of **Professional and Ethical Standards** statement to the ABFA President by January 1 each year. This statement can be accessed through the **Policies and Procedures** page of the ABFA website.
- 3) Apply once each three (3) years for recertification by submitting documentation of forensic anthropology and professional development activities over the preceding thirty-six (36) months. The instructions accompanying the Application for Recertification must be followed to avoid delay in recertification.

**Application to Sit for the Certification Examination in Forensic Anthropology**  
**Revised 20 October 2022**

**Requirements of the Applicant:**

The applicant must:

- 1) Be a person of good moral character, high integrity, good repute, and must possess high ethical and professional standards;
- 2) Be a permanent resident of the United States, Canada, or their territories;
  - (a) Individuals, who are not permanent residents of the United States, Canada, or their territories, may petition the Board of Directors for a waiver to be considered to apply to sit for the board certification examination. The decision to consider this waiver is at the discretion of the Board of Directors.
  - (b) All correspondence and any associated documents must be in English.
- 3) Possess an earned doctoral degree in anthropology with an emphasis in physical/biological anthropology from an accredited institution at the time of application.
  - (a) Individuals who possess a doctoral degree in a discipline other than anthropology, or who hold a doctoral degree from a non-accredited institution may petition the Board of Directors for a waiver to be considered to apply to sit for the board certification examination. The decision to consider this waiver is at the discretion of the Board of Directors.
  - (b) When considering waivers regarding degrees from non-accredited institutions, the Board of Directors may request that the applicant provide an evaluation of equivalency from a third party (at the applicant's expense), as well as additional documentation regarding coursework, training, or other information to fully assess the degree granting program/curriculum

**The Application Process:**

Individuals wishing to establish eligibility to sit for the examination for a Certificate of Qualification in Forensic Anthropology granted by the American Board of Forensic Anthropology should contact the current Applications Committee Chairperson of the ABFA.

To foster impartiality in reviewing the Case File Submission portion of the application, the names and affiliations of applicants will not be associated with those documents when they are under review. Each applicant will be assigned a random identifier when they contact the Applications Committee Chairperson. The applicant should use that random identifier on each page of the redacted case reports and any supporting documents in place of their name.



## The Application:

- 1) Applicants shall follow the detailed ABFA Application Packet Instructions provided by the Applications Chair when compiling their Application Packet.
  - a. A completed Application Packet shall include the following:
    - i. Named Application
      - A completed **notarized** application form;
      - A photograph/scan of the applicant's doctoral diploma or official transcripts indicating the conferral of a doctoral degree (or equivalent);
      - A copy of the applicant's current *curriculum vitae*;
      - A copy of the applicant's training/case log (a record of the case work performed during training and professional career);
      - Three (3) letters of recommendation;
        - At least one recommender must be a Diplomate of the ABFA, and the recommenders must be from at least two different institutions;
        - Each recommender must send a letter of recommendation directly to the Applications Committee Chair of the ABFA. Email correspondence is preferred.
    - ii. Case File Submission
      - Three (3) redacted forensic anthropology case files, complete with case reports and supporting documents/bench notes;
      - Detailed instructions for submitting the redacted case files as well as the ABFA Case File Submission Evaluation Rubric are provided by the Applications Chair;
      - Note that the submitted cases should reflect the work done solely (or primarily) by the applicant. Cases must be recent (completed within last 5 years) and of medicolegal significance. Mock cases (completed blindly) are acceptable and encouraged.
  - b. The following item is recommended to include in the Application Packet, but is not mandatory:
    - i. A copy of the applicant's proficiency testing log (a record of the successful proficiency tests that the applicant has taken during training).
- 2) An individual who wishes to be considered for the examination must submit electronic versions of the entire Application Packet via email to the Applications Committee Chair.
- 3) The entire Application Packet, including letters of recommendation, must be received by July 1.
  - a. It is in the applicant's best interest to turn in the Application Packet as early as possible.
  - b. If the Application Packet fails to meet the standards of the initial administrative review (outlined in the ABFA Case File Submission Evaluation Rubric), this may result in an automatic rejection. Application fees will not be refunded.
- 4) Payment of the non-refundable application fee must be made via an electronic invoice sent to each applicant by the ABFA Treasurer.
  - a. Applicants who do not pay the application fee in full prior to July 15 must defer their application until the following year.
- 5) The Applications Committee Chair(s) will review all application packets for the presence of all required material. The Applications Committee/Board of Directors review all redacted case files using the ABFA Case File Submission Evaluation Rubric to assess whether the submitted materials meet acceptable standards for eligibility. The Applications Committee Chair will distribute a copy of

this rubric along with the detailed ABFA Application Packet Instructions. The Applications Committee Chair will advise each applicant of the Board's decision by December 1 in the year that the application is received.

- 6) The Board of Directors, at its discretion, may request additional information from the applicants or referees.
- 7) The original application form and copies of any denial letters sent to unsuccessful applicants will be retained indefinitely in the ABFA archive in accordance with the ABFA archiving policy. All associated Named Application materials such as the *curriculum vitae*, copy of the doctoral diploma, and letters of recommendation will be destroyed after three (3) years. The Case File Submission materials will also be destroyed after three (3) years.
- 8) Information in the application will remain strictly confidential. All Directors will destroy their paper copies or/delete electronic versions of the application materials used for application valuation purposes within thirty (30) days after the vote to accept or reject an applicant.

**Reapplication Procedure:**

- 1) The decision of the Board of Directors to accept or reject an applicant is based on a majority vote and is final.
- 2) If denied, in order to reapply, the applicant must submit a new Application Packet and pay the application fee.
- 3) Reuse of any material(s) in a reapplication is allowed only through written permission by the Applications Committee Chair and only within a three-year period.
- 4) In most circumstances, new letters of recommendation must be submitted. However, if the Applications Committee Chair receives a written request from the re-applicant, existing letters of recommendation may be reused at the discretion of the Applications Committee Chair.
- 5) New Case File Submissions will be required for review as part of the reapplication process. Exceptions may be granted if (a) the only criticism from the Board involved the lack of supporting documentation, and (b) the reapplication occurs in the year following the original denial.
- 6) If an applicant is denied a second time, they may not submit a third application for the following year. The applicant is encouraged to gain additional mentorship and training in the interim. After at least one full year has elapsed since notification of the second denial, the applicant will be allowed to submit a third application. If, after a total of three attempts, the applicant is still not approved to sit for the certification exam, they may not reapply without petitioning the ABFA Board of Directors for permission. In the petition the applicant must clearly demonstrate that substantive measures have been taken to rectify any deficiencies, including but not limited to additional formal training, coursework, and supervision and mentoring by a board-certified forensic anthropologist.

## **The Certification Examination in Forensic Anthropology** **Revised 20 October 2022**

### **Examination Committees:**

The ABFA Examination Committees consist of the Examination Development Committee, Examination Validation Committee, Examination Logistics Committee, and the Examination Grading Committee. The Examination Committees are charged with administering the examinations, including creating, proctoring, and grading.

The Examination Development Committee is responsible for creating examinations and examination keys. The Examination Development committee will be responsible for soliciting new examination questions or creating new questions as needed. The Examination Development Committee will submit all new exam questions to the Examination Validation Committee. The Examination Development Committee will develop the exam. The Examination Validation Committee shall review the entire examination prior to its finalization. Members of the Examination Development and Examination Validation Committees will be responsible for proctoring the examinations.

The Chair of the Examination Logistics Committee (ABFA Vice-President) will communicate the location and time of examinations to all examinees and respond to all examinee questions regarding the content or administration of examinations. The Chair of the Examination Logistics Committee will also communicate exam results to examinees.

Members of the Examination Grading Committee will not be involved in creating or proctoring exams. Also, they will not be involved in communications with the examinees prior to or following the exam. The only task assigned to the Examination Grading Committee members is the grading of the examinations following the established examination key (after its validation by the Examination Validation Committee).

All members of the Examination Committees will sign a Confidentiality Agreement prohibiting them from discussing the examination content, examinees, or examination results outside the Examination Committees or ABFA Board of Directors.

### **The Certification Examination:**

- 1) The ABFA examination consists of a multiple-choice test and a practical test. It is designed to test the examinee's breadth and depth of knowledge in the field of forensic anthropology. For the multiple-choice examination, the examinee must be familiar with the forensic anthropology literature. This literature includes, but is not limited to, pertinent forensic journals and texts that are applicable to the practicing forensic anthropologist. While the examinee must be well-versed in current literature, seminal works should not be ignored.
  - a. In general, the multiple-choice questions cover, but are not limited to, the following areas:
    - i. Methods to establish the biological profile
    - ii. Trauma interpretation and biomechanical principles
    - iii. Anatomy, bone growth and development, osteology and bone histology
    - iv. Pathological conditions
    - v. Postmortem alterations
    - vi. Individualizing skeletal characteristics

- vii. Taphonomy and postmortem interval
  - viii. Scene processing
  - ix. Evidence handling, court procedures and legal concerns
  - x. History of forensic anthropology
  - xi. Identification
  - xii. Statistical analyses
  - xiii. Human/nonhuman classification and medicolegal significance
  - xiv. Standards and guidelines related to the practice of forensic anthropology (e.g., SWGANTH and OSAC)
- b. The practical portion of the examination consists of hands-on stations. Each station will provide the necessary equipment, standards, and guidance to complete the station. Also, magnifying glasses and penlights are available to the examinees during the practical examination. Examinees should read each station's instructions carefully and be sure to address all components, but do only what each station asks.
- i. The examination will assess the examinee's ability to apply a specific body of knowledge and skills to actual skeletal and dental material and, in some instances, radiographs.
  - ii. The examinee will demonstrate critical reasoning abilities and appropriate methods and experience to reach an organized, substantive answer to each question.
  - iii. The stations will test the examinee's competence in areas such as the determination of age, ancestry, sex, and stature, craniometrics, dental development, dental charting, minimum number of individuals, trauma recognition and interpretation, pathological conditions (providing a differential diagnosis), human versus nonhuman, analytical programs (e.g., *FORDISC*), taphonomy and radiographic assessment. The test may involve these examples, but is not limited to them.
- 2) The exam is typically scheduled by the Vice President prior to the examination.
  - 3) The examination will be administered in an area that provides an appropriate environment for the written and practical portions.
  - 4) An examinee must notify the Vice President of their intent to take the examination by May 1 of the calendar year that precedes the examination date.
  - 5) An examinee may choose to postpone the examination without reapplying or paying for the examination that year. The examinee must notify the Vice President of their intent to postpone by May 1 every year the choice to postpone is made. After three years of consecutive postponements, the examinee must reapply. The examinee may also be required to reapply if the Vice President is not notified of their intent.
  - 6) The examination fee must be remitted by May 1 of the year prior to taking the exam. Payment must be made electronically through the ABFA website. If the examinee fails to remit the examination fee by the deadline, they will not be allowed to take the examination the following year.
  - 7) Examinees are not permitted to bring reference materials or analytical aids (such as hand lenses, calipers, or lights) to the examination. During the examination, examinees will have access to appropriate standards and other materials. A list of standards and materials is available from the Vice President upon request.

**Grading:**

- 1) To foster impartiality in grading, the names of the examinees will not be associated with their answers until all the exams are graded.
- 2) An 80% grade is required on each section of the examination (80% or higher on the practical and 80% or higher on the multiple choice) in order to obtain ABFA certification.
- 3) The Vice President will notify the examinees of examination results no later than one month after the exam is taken.

**Re-examination:**

- 1) If the examinee fails one or both section(s) of the examination, the failed section(s) can be retaken a total of three times. The re-examination fee must be paid prior to every attempt.
- 2) The examinee must retake all failed sections of the examination during the following attempt.
- 3) The examinee may retake the examination the following year or may postpone for one year. The examinee must notify the Vice President of their intent to retake the examination or to postpone by May 1 of the calendar year prior to the exam. The examinee may be required to reapply if the Vice President is not notified.
- 4) Examinees wishing to retake failed sections of the examination beyond three attempts must petition the Board of Directors in writing for consideration. The petition letter must be submitted to the ABFA Secretary prior to May 1.

**Special Accommodations:**

- 1) In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, the ABFA will provide reasonable accommodations for applicants with disabilities. Applicants should refer to these laws for more information regarding protected disabilities and applicable accommodations.
- 2) Documentation of an applicant's disability must be in writing and must be signed by a licensed or otherwise credentialed and appropriately qualified medical, psychological, or learning professional. Documentation should provide a specific diagnosis and description of the desired accommodation; it must also be dated and include the name, title, professional credentials, address, phone number, and signature of the person making the diagnosis and recommendation. The ABFA will protect such information in accordance with established law but reserves the right to verify the disability and to request additional information if necessary. Requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- 3) The disability documentation, description of the desired accommodation, and specific request for such accommodation must be provided to the ABFA Vice President no later than May 1 of the year prior to taking the exam. The ABFA Board of Directors will consider and approve or deny all requests for accommodation and will issue a decision within 60 calendar days of receipt of the request. The ABFA will strive to make accommodations at no cost to the applicant; however, applicants may be asked to bear some or all of the cost of accommodation and/or to make the necessary arrangements, depending on the specific service(s) or modification(s) requested.
- 4) The ABFA will make every effort to honor requests for testing accommodations. However, if requests for accommodation are incompletely documented or received after the deadline, the applicant may be asked to take the test without the requested accommodation or defer the examination to a later date. Furthermore, accommodation requests will not be granted if they present an undue burden on the ABFA, provide an advantage over other candidates, or alter the ABFA's ability to measure fundamental skills or knowledge that the examination is designed to

test.

- 5) If a request for special accommodation is denied either in part or full, an applicant may appeal the decision. A letter describing the applicant's objection along with additional medical documentation (if appropriate) must be received by the Vice President within 60 calendar days after receipt of notification. A final decision will be made by the Board of Directors within 60 calendar days of receipt of the appeal.

### **Examination Appeal Process**

The American Board of Forensic Anthropology is committed to ensuring that candidates for certification have access to an appeal concerning the certification examinations. If an examinee chooses to appeal the ABFA Examination Committee decision (i.e., due to failure of an examination), the examinee must appeal in writing and clearly delineate each area of contention.

#### 1) Scope of Appeal

- (a) **Appealable Issues:** Candidates may appeal to the ABFA to raise concerns relative to the examination's administration (e.g., alleged bias/prejudice of a member of an examination committee or failure to follow established examination procedures) or to raise concerns of inappropriate conduct during the examination (e.g., use of unauthorized information or aids). Candidates may also request that examination grades be recalculated to confirm accuracy of the overall score.
- (b) **Non-Appealable Issues:** The ABFA validates all test questions. As such, the ABFA will not consider appeals based on examination content or the sufficiency or accuracy of answers given to examination questions.

#### 2) Procedure for Appeal

- (a) In order to appeal the examination outcome, a candidate must set forth the basis for appeal by submitting a letter via certified mail with return receipt requested to the ABFA President within thirty (30) days of the notification of a failed examination. Appeals postmarked after the thirty (30) day period will not be considered.
- (b) The appellant must select a Diplomate-at-Large to represent them throughout the appeal process. A Diplomate-at-Large is any ABFA Diplomate in good standing who is not currently serving on the Board of Directors. The name of the Diplomate-at-Large must be included in the appeal letter. If the appellant does not choose a representative from the Diplomates-at-Large, one will be appointed by the Chair of the Exam Appeal Committee.
- (c) Upon receipt of the letter, the President will promptly notify the ABFA Board of Directors of the appeal request.

#### 3) Decision of Appeal

- (a) The Exam Appeal Committee will review the appellant's letter and make a decision about the validity of the claim(s) and the appropriate course of action. Discussions regarding the appeal by the committee will normally be handled via a conference call.
- (b) Decisions regarding the appeal will be determined by a majority vote of the Exam Appeal Committee.
- (c) The Exam Appeal Committee Chair will notify the ABFA President of the outcome. The ABFA President will review the Exam Appeal Committee's decision to ensure compliance with the ABFA's appeal policies and procedures and will notify the Board of

Directors of the outcome. After approval by the ABFA President, the Exam Appeal Committee Chair will also respond to the appellant in writing via a certified letter within ninety (90) days of the date of receipt of the appeal. The response to the appellant will address each point raised in the appeal.

- (d) The decisions of the Exam Appeal Committee are final and are not subject to further appeals.

**Diplomate of the ABFA:**

Successful completion of the examination will qualify the individual as a Diplomate of the American Board of Forensic Anthropology and entitle use of the initials D-ABFA. Diplomates are issued a unique certificate number, issued in numerical order and occur in random order. Certificate numbers are never reused. New Diplomates will be required to submit a code of ethics endorsement prior to receiving their electronic D-ABFA certificate. New Diplomate names and contact information will be added to the ABFA website after the appeals process is completed. Hard copies of Diplomate certificates will be awarded at the next annual ABFA meeting in February. New Diplomates will not be eligible to be nominated for or hold a BoD position until after the ABFA Business meeting following their certification. This will allow new Diplomates time to learn about the ABFA and Board activities from the minutes of the annual meeting and other meetings throughout the year. New Diplomates will be eligible to serve as a Diplomate-at-large on BoD committees beginning after their certificate is granted. New Diplomates do not pay dues for the calendar year in which they are awarded their certification. The first dues payment will be due the December after the granting of their certificate.

The President of the Board has the pleasure of presenting the Certificate of Qualification in Forensic Anthropology to successful examinees at the next annual meeting of the Diplomates.

A list of Diplomates (current, deceased, retired, suspended) is on the ABFA website.



## Recertification Revised 29 March 2020

# American Board of Forensic Anthropology Recertification Procedure

## 1 Purpose

Recertification (i.e., maintenance of certification) is required by the American Board of Forensic Anthropology (ABFA) as a means of demonstrating continued education and maintenance of skills in forensic anthropology and related forensic sciences. This document describes the procedures for ABFA recertification.

## 2 Scope

This procedure applies to all Active Members of the ABFA seeking recertification or retirement status.

## 3 Terms and Definitions

**3.1 Certificate of Qualification (also called a Certificate):** a certificate awarded upon successful completion of the ABFA Examination, signifying that the recipient is a qualified Diplomate of the ABFA.

**3.2 Decertification (also called Lapse in Certification):** the invalidation of a Certificate due to failure to comply with recertification procedures or annual requirements (see section 4.1).

**3.3 Recertification:** the process of maintaining active ABFA certification.

## 4 Recertification Requirements

**4.1 A Certificate of Qualification (“Certificate”)** issued by the ABFA remains valid for three (3) years. The following are required for recertification (i.e., to maintain active certification status):

4.1.1 Pay annual dues by January 1 each year.

4.1.2 Submit a signed Adherence to Ethical and Professional Standards attestation by March 1 each year.

4.1.3 Submit a Recertification Form by April 1 during the recertification year, achieving a point total of 100 or greater.

## 5 Recertification Procedure

Initial certification and recertification are valid for three (3) years and expire on July 1 of the third year of the certification. To maintain active certification status, recertification is required in three-year increments from the current certification or recertification. Upon initial certification, each new diplomate is placed in a recertification cycle, designated as Cycle A, B, or C. Therefore, the recertification cycle is determined based on the year a Certificate was first conferred. For example, Cycle A includes Certificate conferral years 2010,

2013, 2016, 2019; Cycle B includes Certificate conferral years 2011, 2014, 2017, 2020; Cycle C includes Certificate conferral years 2012, 2015, 2018, 2021.

**5.1** A Recertification Form must be submitted by April 1 for the appropriate recertification cycle.

5.1.1 A late fee will be imposed on Recertification Forms received after April 1. Additional late fees will be imposed on Recertification Forms received after May 1 and June 1 unless an extension is granted.

5.1.2 The Chairperson of the Recertification Committee will send a reminder by email by February 1 each year to all Diplomates requiring recertification that year to maintain active status.

**5.2** The Recertification Form will document forensic anthropological activity for the three calendar years prior to the expiration of the current certificate. For example, for a Certificate expiring in 2019, a Recertification Form submitted April 1 of 2019 documents activity for calendar years 2016, 2017, and 2018.

5.2.1 For the first recertification following initial certification, the Recertification Form will document activity for the three calendar years prior to the expiration of the certification, which may include activity prior to initial certification. Activity prior to initial certification may be applied toward the first recertification.

**5.3** The Recertification Form will document involvement in forensic anthropological activity in the following areas:

5.3.1 Employment

5.3.2 Professional Involvement

5.3.3 Professional Development Activities

5.3.4 Publications

**5.4** The Recertification Form will be evaluated by the Recertification Committee to determine eligibility for recertification.

5.4.1 The evaluation of the Recertification Form will be based on appropriateness of documented forensic anthropological activity and achieving a point total of 100 or greater.

5.4.2 The Recertification Committee will recommend to the Board of Directors whether recertification is accepted or rejected.

**5.5** Upon approval by the Board of Directors, the Diplomate will be considered recertified, and a new Certificate will be issued. The new Certificate will be valid for three (3) years.

## **6 Lapse in Certification (Decertification)**

**6.1** A lapse in certification may occur under the following conditions:

- 6.1.1 Failure to submit annual dues by January 1 of each year will result in notification from the Treasurer of the Board of noncompliance with recertification requirements. Following notification, failure to submit annual dues within thirty (30) days will result in a lapse in certification.
- 6.1.2 Failure to submit the signed Adherence to Ethical and Professional Standards attestation by March 1 of each year will result in notification from the President of the Board of noncompliance with recertification requirements. Following notification, failure to submit the attestation within thirty (30) days will result in a lapse in certification.
- 6.1.3 Failure to submit the Recertification Form by April 1 of the appropriate cycle year will result in notification from the Chairperson of the Recertification Committee of noncompliance with recertification requirements. Following notification, failure to submit the Recertification Form within sixty (60) days will result in a lapse in certification.

**6.2** The Recertification Committee, at its discretion, may grant an extension to the above deadlines.

**6.3** Upon a lapse in certification (under 1 year), the Certificate becomes invalid. Certification may be reinstated when all of the following conditions are met:

- 6.3.1 annual dues are paid;
- 6.3.2 the Adherence to Ethical and Professional Standards attestation is submitted;
- 6.3.3 the Recertification Form is submitted, with a total of 100 points or greater;
- 6.3.4 a reinstatement fee equal to the current application fee is submitted; and
- 6.3.5 the Recertification Committee recommends recertification, which is then approved by the Board of Directors.

**6.4** A lapse of certification over 1 year may result in the Board of Directors requiring the individual to re-apply to sit for the certification exam and submit the associated fees.

## **7 Retirement Status**

**7.1** Retirement status may be requested by a Diplomate who:

- 7.1.1 has held a Certificate for at least ten years, and
- 7.1.2 is in good standing at the time of the request for retirement status.

**7.2** Medical retirement may be granted to a Diplomate who:

- 7.2.1 has a medical condition that inhibits or prohibits the activities required for recertification; and

7.2.2 who does not meet the retirement status requirements described in 7.1.

**7.3** Retirement requests must be submitted to the Secretary and/or the President of the Board of Directors in writing.

**7.4** Retirement status is granted by a majority vote of the Board of Directors. Retirement requests may be voted upon by The Board of Directors at any time during the year.

**7.5** The following apply to ABFA retirement status:

7.5.1 The retiree may cease payment of annual dues.

7.5.2 The retiree may cease recertification procedures.

7.5.3 The retiree may use the designation “D-ABFA (retired).”

7.5.4 The retiree may continue to attend Diplomate meetings.

7.5.5 The retiree may not sit on the Board of Directors.

7.5.6 The retiree may not vote on any matter before the Board or Diplomates.

7.5.7 The retiree may not state that they are currently Board Certified or that they currently hold a Certificate of Qualification from the ABFA.

7.5.8 Retirement status cannot be applied retroactively (i.e., granted for some previous date).

7.5.9 Retirement is irrevocable except by a subsequent finding by the Board of Directors that the Diplomate was not in good standing at the time of retirement.

7.5.10 If an action taken or not taken by the Diplomate prior to retirement is adjudicated after retirement and exposes ethical violations or other violations of Codes of Conduct, retirement status may be revoked and, at the discretion of the Board, the Diplomate may be decertified.

7.5.11 If a retired Diplomate decides wishes to be reinstated as an “active” Diplomate, they must reapply to take the certification exam and submit associated fees.