

American Board of Forensic Anthropology, Inc.
Certificant Manual
Revised 11 February 2025

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American Board of Forensic Anthropology, Inc.
Certificant 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 manual was created in 2007 to codify practices and procedures and to make policies known to those who are certified by 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:

1. To encourage the study of, improve the practice of, establish and enhance standards for, and advance the science of forensic anthropology;
2. To encourage and promote adherence to high standards of ethics, conduct, and professional practice in forensic anthropology;
3. 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;
4. To maintain and furnish lists of individuals who have been granted certificates by the Board;
5. 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 Certificants for the practice of forensic anthropology;
6. 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.

Certificant Manual

Section II

CODE OF ETHICS AND CONDUCT

Proposed February 16, 1999

Approved by the Board February 20, 2001

Revisions in 2008, 2012, 2016, 2021, 2023

ARTICLE 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 Certificants of the American Board of Forensic Anthropology (ABFA). This code only pertains to ABFA Analysts and Diplomates. In all instances in which written documents are required, these shall be electronic, provided a valid signature is contained within them.

Certificants of the American Board of Forensic Anthropology shall:

1. refrain from exercising professional or personal conduct adverse to the best interests and purposes of the ABFA;
2. refrain from providing any material misrepresentation of education, training, experience, level of certification, or area of expertise. Misrepresentation of one or more criteria for certification shall constitute a violation of this section of the code;
3. refrain from providing any material misrepresentation of data upon which an expert opinion or conclusion is based. Certificants shall render opinions and conclusions within the scope of their certification strictly in accordance with the evidence in the case (hypothetical or real) and only to the extent justified by the evidence;
4. 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.
5. 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;
6. set a reasonable fee for services if it is appropriate to do so; however, no services shall be rendered on a contingency fee basis;
7. treat all information from an agency or client with the confidentiality required;
8. refrain from issuing public statements that appear to represent the position of the ABFA without specific authority first obtained from the Board of Directors;
9. 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;
10. treat others with dignity and respect and adhere to zero tolerance against all forms of discrimination and harassment;
11. treat all decedents and next of kin with dignity and respect;
12. intervene or report unethical behavior, if witnessed.

ARTICLE II: Grounds for Discipline

Any Certificant 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:

1. 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);
2. 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;
3. 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;
4. violations of the Code of Ethics and Conduct (see above) of the ABFA by a holder of a certificate of this Board;
5. official censure or suspension by another body, including a university or other place of employment.

ARTICLE III: Investigative Body

There shall be constituted a standing Ethics Committee, the primary composition and function of which will be:

1. Two (2) members of the Board of Directors, one (1) member from the Certificants-at-Large, and one non-voting attorney member (if needed).
 - a. 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 (1)-year term. The Ethics Committee shall elect a Chairperson and co-Chairperson from its membership annually
 - b. 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 ABFA may Chair the Ethics Committee or appoint a designee.
2. The standing Ethics Committee shall serve as the investigative body to which the Chairperson of the Ethics Committee shall refer all cases for consideration;
3. 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.

ARTICLE IV: Investigation Initiating Action

Written allegations against a Certificant 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. The submission, investigation and decision on complaints shall not result in any discriminatory actions against the complainant.

ARTICLE V: Judiciary Process

1. 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.
2. The Ethics Committee may contact any individual or entity (whether certified by the ABFA or not) in its investigations of written allegations against a Certificant submitted under the guidelines in Article IV.
 - a. 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.
 - b. The witness shall be informed that they shall not confer with others regarding their statement, nor shall they discuss the investigation with anyone other than the Ethics Committee.
3. 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.
 - a. 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).
 - b. The Respondent shall receive a copy of the written complaint. They are 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 their intention to provide a written, electronic, or oral defense against the charges.
 - c. 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.
 - d. 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.

- e. 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:
 - i. 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.);
 - ii. Suspension: Suspension is the removal of a Certificant's association with the Board and their certification status for one (1) 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.
 - iii. Decertification: This is used to remove certification. This action is appropriate in situations where it is not reasonable to expect that the Certificant will be able to correct the problem(s) or when a Certificant would severely damage the reputation of the ABFA if they were associated with the ABFA.
4. The Ethics Committee and the Board of Directors shall be authorized and empowered, in their sole discretion, to adopt new or modified procedures as may be necessary or desirable in order to respond to complaints in the most fair and reasonable manner in the best interests of the ABFA, its Certificants, and the Complainant in the circumstances.
 - a. Upon a vote of a simple majority of the members of the Board of Directors present and voting, the Respondent may be issued sanctions as described in Article V.3.e.
 - b. 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
 - i. the member witnessed the actions of the Respondent in the events leading to the complaint
 - ii. is a supervisor of the Complainant(s) or Respondent, or
 - iii. believes they cannot be impartial in the deliberations or vote.
 - c. The Respondent will be notified within ten (10) days of the vote by the ABFA Board of Directors.
 - d. 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 they may wish to submit on 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.
 - i. 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. The Respondent will receive

- communication indicating the implementation of the sanction and the effective date. If the sanction involves suspension of certification or recertification, the Respondent must destroy any current ABFA digital certificate indicating active Analyst or Diplomate status.
- ii. 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.
 - iii. Within thirty (30) days of receipt of the statement from the Executive Committee, the Board of Directors shall choose four (4) Certificants-at-Large (not on the Board of Directors), and the Appellant shall choose four (4) Certificants-at-Large (not on the Board of Directors) to populate an Appeal Committee to hear the appeal.
 - iv. 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.
 - v. 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.
 - vi. 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 above.
 - vii. The Board will not refund any annual dues for the current year, in whole or in part. A Certificant who has been suspended but reinstated after a successful appeal can resume active status without reapplying for certification. They must, however, express an interest to resume active status in writing to the President of the Board.

ARTICLE VI: Request for Reinstatement

A Certificant who has been decertified may reapply for certification at the Analyst level five (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.

ARTICLE VII: Confidentiality, Rules, and Procedures

1. 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.

2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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) without approval of the Board of Directors.

American Board of Forensic Anthropology, Inc.
Certificant Manual
Section III

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
Revised 11 February 2025

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

1. 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 during an ABFA Directors meeting or through an email ballot. Each officer must have the following documents on file for each year of their term: Current CV, Ethics Attestation, Confidentiality Agreement, and Conflict of Interest form. Each officer must also be current on their dues payment. Officers, upon relinquishing their office, must hand off digital materials in accordance with the Archival and Retention Policy.

a. President

1-year term; nominated and elected by majority vote of the Board of Directors from its members. The duties of the ABFA President can be found in the ABFA Board of Directors Standard Operating Procedure (Section 1.1).

b. Vice President

1-year term; 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 their term in office. The duties of the ABFA Vice President can be found in the ABFA Board of Directors Standard Operating Procedure (Section 1.2).

c. Secretary

1-year term; nominated and elected by majority vote of the Board of Directors from its members. The duties of the ABFA Secretary can be found in the ABFA Board of Directors Standard Operating Procedure (Section 1.3).

d. Treasurer

1-year term; nominated and elected by majority vote of the Board of Directors from its members. The duties of the ABFA Treasurer can be found in the ABFA Board of Directors Standard Operating Procedure (Section 1.4).

2. Board of Directors

Each term on the Board of Directors is three (3) years in duration. Diplomates may serve on the Board of Directors for two (2) consecutive terms. After a break in service of at least one (1) year, Diplomates are eligible again for election to the Board of Directors. Members of the Board of Directors are nominated by the Certificants-at-Large and elected by majority vote of the Certificants-at-Large (see Nomination Committee). The number of BoD members from one medicolegal entity or academic institution shall be limited to 1/3 of the BoD population to ensure

multiple entities have the opportunity to contribute to ABFA work and policies and to avoid the perception that one entity can influence the direction of the overall board.

The duties of the ABFA Directors can be found in the ABFA Board of Directors Standard Operating Procedure (Section 1.5).

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.

3. Certificants-at-Large

A Certificant-at-Large (CAL) can be a Diplomate-at-Large (DAL) or an Analyst-at-Large (AAL) that is not serving on the ABFA BoD that is appointed to assist with the work of an ABFA BoD Committee. A CAL is appointed by the ABFA President to serve a 1-year term on a specific committee. Note that a CAL can be appointed for a longer term of service at the discretion of the ABFA President. The duties of the ABFA Directors can be found in the ABFA Board of Directors Standard Operating Procedure (Section 1.6).

4. 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, Analysts-at-Large (as appropriate and indicated for each committee) or other qualified persons. The President is an *ex officio* member of all committees. Unless otherwise provided herein, the President, 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.

Directors and Certificants-at-Large who serve on committees must submit an attestation in which they agree to adhere to the duties listed in the SOPs. If they fail to meet these expectations, they shall receive a written warning that they are in violation of the signed BoD Attestation and have 30 days to rectify the situation. This written warning will be emailed to the email address on file with the ABFA Secretary.

A Director or Certificant-at-Large serving on a committee who fails to rectify the issue satisfactorily within the time allotted is subject to removal from the ABFA Board of Directors

5. Standing Committees:

Details of the ABFA's standing Committees charges, committee memberships, responsibilities of the chairperson, and responsibilities of committee members can be found in ABFA Board of Directors Standard Operating Procedure (Sections 2.1- 2.8).

a. 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

b. Ethics Committee

This committee shall consist of at least two (2) members of the Board of Directors, at least one (1) member from the Certificants-at-Large, and a non-voting attorney member (as needed). The Ethics Committee will investigate allegations against Certificants 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 Code of Ethics and Conduct.

c. Examination Committees

The examination committees shall consist of the Examination Logistics Committee, Examination Development Committee, Examination Validation Committee, and the Examination Grading Committee. Each examination 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.

Committees associated with the certification examination include:

i. Examination Logistics Committee

The Examination Logistics Committee shall consist of a Chair (ABFA Vice President) and at least three (3) 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 (1) year.

ii. Examination Development Committee

The Examination Development Committee shall consist of a Chair and at least three (3) 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 (1) year. The purpose of this committee is to develop 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 Examination Development Committee also writes the exam and prepares the materials for validation at the exam site prior to administration of the exam. The committee, under the direction of the Chair, may contact the Certificants or authors from pertinent research articles to request exam questions or skeletal material for exam questions. Certificants and non-Certificant and authors must submit a confidentiality agreement prior to submitting questions.

iii. Examination Validation Committee

The Examination Validation Committee consists of a Chair (appointed by the ABFA Vice President) and at least three (3) 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 (1) year

iv. Examination Grading Committee

The Examination Grading Committee is composed of members of the Board of Directors and Diplomates-at-Large, and the Chair will be a member of the ABFA BoD. 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 to grade the exams. The Examination Grading Committee members cannot be members of any other exam-related committee.

d. 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 Certificants consistent with procedures, standards, rules, and regulations established by the Board of Directors and specified in the PPM

e. Nomination Committee

This committee shall consist of at least four (4) individuals including one Chair and one co-Chair who are appointed from the Board of Directors by the President. Additionally, the committee shall consist of one Diplomate-at-Large, one Analyst-at-Large, and when available, one previous award winner. The Nomination Committee shall oversee the election of Diplomates to the Board of Directors and selections of winner for all ABFA Awards consistent with procedures, standards, rules and regulations established by the Board of Directors.

f. Applications Committee

This committee shall consist of at least one (1) individual appointed from the Board of Directors by the President to serve as Chair, at least three (3) members chosen from the Board of Directors, and at least three (3) additional members from the ABFA Diplomates-at-Large. The Applications Committee shall oversee the exam application process consistent with procedures, standards, rules and regulations established by the Board of Directors.

g. FSAB Compliance Committee

This committee shall consist of at least one (1) member of the Board of Directors and the past president of the ABFA, if available; if not available, another member of the Board of Directors or another past officer of the Board of Directors of the ABFA will serve. The Forensic Specialties Accreditation Board (FSAB) Compliance Committee is responsible for completing and submitting the annual ABFA report and re-accreditation documents as well as 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.

h. Examination Appeal Committee

The Examination Appeal Committee will address any appeals filed about the certification exam. The Examination Appeal Committee shall consist of at least three (3) individuals. The President will appoint the Chairperson of the Examination 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 Examination Appeal Committee from the ABFA Board of Directors membership and/or ABFA Diplomates-at-Large. The appellant will select a Diplomat-at-Large who shall serve as a voting member of the Examination Appeal Committee. No person serving on the Examination 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 Examination Appeal Committee to provide information only, but these individuals shall not vote in the appeal process.

i. Outreach and Engagement Committee

This committee shall consist of at least two (2) individuals appointed from the Board of Directors by the President and at least two (2) Certificants-at-Large. The Outreach and Engagement Committee shall oversee outreach to stakeholders in the larger forensic science community and interested parties (e.g., forensic anthropology students, and practitioners, related stakeholders, etc.). The committee shall foster engagement and dialogue with the medicolegal community, provide mentorship and peer review opportunities, and increase the visibility of forensic anthropology. Committee activities promote awareness, diversity, equity, and inclusion within the ABFA.

The Outreach and Engagement Committee works with the Board of Directors to maintain public-facing content for the ABFA, including the website and social media platforms. No content shall be published on the ABFA website or any of its social media platforms without prior approval from the Board. This ensures all information disseminated is accurate, reflects the organization's values and objectives, and complies with applicable laws and regulations.

j. Bylaws and Policies and Procedures Review Committee

This committee shall consist of at least two (2) individuals appointed from the Board of Directors by the President and one (1) Certificant-at-Large. The Bylaws and Policies and Procedures Review Committee shall review the ABFA Bylaws and PPM to verify compatibility between ABFA policy and practice, identify nonconformities, and formulate preventative and corrective actions.

k. Ad Hoc Committees:

The ABFA President can develop ad hoc or temporary committees as the need arises. The Charge, committee membership, Chairperson responsibilities, and committee responsibilities can be found in the ABFA Standard Operating Procedure Manual (Section 3.0)

6. ABFA Fees

See the ABFA Website for a list of current ABFA Fees including Application, Examination, Annual Dues, Reinstatement and Recertification Late Fees.

APPLICATION, EXAMINATION, AND CERTIFICATION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
Revised 11 February 2025

Applications are reviewed by the Applications Committee. The results of their review and recommendations are presented to the Board of Directors for voting. The Board of Directors votes to approve/reject the applications.

Examinations are executed and graded as pass or fail by the Examination Committees.

1. Function

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

- a. 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.
- b. 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.
- c. 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.
- d. 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 Certificants.

2. General Provisions Concerning Certification

- a. The Board reserves the right to deny certification.
- b. 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:
 - i. Non-payment of annual dues.
 - ii. Failure to submit a signed annual Endorsement of Professional and Ethical Standards statement.
 - iii. Failure to submit recertification documents in accordance with relevant cycle and timelines.
- c. Persons holding a valid, un-revoked Certificate of Qualification issued by the Board are entitled to use the following designations: "Analyst of the American Board of Forensic Anthropology", "A-ABFA", or "Analyst, ABFA"; or "Diplomate of the American Board of Forensic Anthropology", "D-ABFA", or "Diplomate, ABFA", as is appropriate for the level of certification.
- d. 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 Certification" below).

- e. 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.

3. Maintaining Certification

To maintain certification, Certificants must:

- a. Pay annual dues by January 1 each year. Payment must be made electronically via an invoice sent by the ABFA Treasurer.
- b. Submit a signed Endorsement of **Professional and Ethical Standards** statement to the ABFA President each year. This statement can be accessed through the **Policies and Procedures** page of the ABFA website and will be distributed for electronic signature.
- c. 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.

See the ABFA Standard Operating Procedure (Section 5.0) for additional information about maintaining certification.

4. Application to Sit for the Certification Examination in Forensic Anthropology

- a. 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 citizen or permanent resident of the United States, Canada, or their territories;
 - 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.
 - All correspondence and any associated documents must be in English.
- 3. Possess the minimum required graduate degree (as indicated in SOP 4.1) in Anthropology with an emphasis in biological anthropology from a United States accredited institution at the time of application. Transcripts must indicate that the degree conferred is in Anthropology. Degrees in related fields (e.g., Forensic Science or Interdisciplinary Studies), including those with concentrations in Anthropology, must petition for a waiver.
 - Individuals who possess a graduate degree in a discipline other than anthropology, or who hold a graduate degree from a foreign accredited or 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.
 - When considering waivers regarding degrees from a non-accredited or foreign accredited Institution, applicants should provide an evaluation from a member organization of one of the two national associations of credential evaluation services: National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES) or Association of International Credentials Evaluators (AICE). The applicant is responsible for costs

associated with a NACES or AICE evaluation.

- Additional documentation regarding coursework, training, or other information to fully assess the degree granting program/curriculum may also be requested.
4. Demonstrate appropriate levels of education, training, and experience in forensic anthropology. Applicants must be involved in the forensic anthropology discipline and evidence of forensic anthropology case involvement will be required for recertification.
- b. 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 refer to the application requirements, procedures, and forms posted on the ABFA's website.
 - c. The Application
Applicants shall follow the detailed ABFA Application Packet Instructions provided on the ABFA website when compiling their Application Packet. This information can also be found in the ABFA's Standard Operating Procedure (Section 4.1).
 - d. 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. Please see the ABFA's Standard Operating Procedure (Section 4.1) for re-application procedures.
 4. 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 (1) 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 (3) 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.

5. The Certification Examination in Forensic Anthropology

- a. 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. All members of the Examination Committees 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 composition and functions of these committees are described under "Standing Committees" above.

- b. The Certification Examination
 1. The ABFA examination is designed to test the examinee's competence, breadth, and depth of knowledge in forensic anthropology. Examinees must be familiar with the forensic anthropology literature and know best practices outlined in standards documents. The ABFA Analyst and Diplomate competencies provide details about the knowledge, technical, and analytical skills assessed by the ABFA certification examinations
 2. Detailed information regarding the Certification Examination can be found in the ABFA's Standard Operating Procedure (Section 4.2).
- c. 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 (1) month after the exam is taken.
- d. Re-examination
 1. If the examinee fails one or both section(s) of the examination, the examinee must reapply to sit for the Analyst exam the following year.
 2. Examinees wishing to take the certification exam beyond two (2) attempts must petition the Board of Directors in writing for consideration. The petition letter must be submitted to the ABFA Secretary by the deadline posted on the ABFA website. The Board may request additional application materials, and the examinee will pay the full examination fee.
- e. 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 February 1 of the year of 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.
- f. 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. The submission, investigation and decision on appeals shall not result in any discriminatory actions against the appellant. Additional details can be found in the ABFA's Standard Operating Procedure (Section 4.3)

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 an email to the ABFA President within thirty (30) days of the notification of a failed examination. Appeals timestamped 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 Examination Appeal Committee.
- c. Upon receipt of the email, the President will promptly notify the ABFA Board of Directors of the appeal request. The Appeal will also be added to the ABFA's Corrective and Preventative Actions log.

3. Decision of Appeal

- a. The Examination 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 Examination Appeal Committee.
- c. The Examination Appeal Committee Chair will notify the ABFA President of the outcome. The ABFA President will review the Examination 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 Examination 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 Examination Appeal Committee are final and are not subject to further appeals.

g. Analyst or Diplomate of the ABFA

Successful completion of the Analyst certification examination will qualify the individual as an Analyst of the ABFA and entitle the use of the initials A-ABFA. Successful completion of the Diplomate certification examination will qualify the individual as a Diplomate of the ABFA and entitle the use of the initials D-ABFA. Certificants are issued a unique certificate number, issued in numerical order and occur in random order (i.e., not alphabetical by surname). Certificate numbers are never reused. New Certificants are required to submit a code of ethics endorsement prior to receiving their electronic certificate. New Certificant names and contact information will be added to the ABFA website after the appeals process is completed. Hard copies of certificates will be distributed at the next annual ABFA meeting in February or mailed if the Certificant is not in attendance. New Certificants will not be eligible to be nominated for or hold a BoD position until one year after 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 Certificants will be eligible to serve as a Certificant-at-Large on BoD committees beginning after their certificate is granted. New Certificants do not pay dues for the calendar year in which they are awarded their certification. The first dues payment is due the December following the granting of their certificate. More information on maintaining Certificant status can be found in the ABFA's Standard Operating Procedure (Section 5.0).

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

6. Recertification

a. 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.

b. Scope

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

c. Terms and Definitions

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 Certificant of the ABFA.
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 7).
3. Recertification: the process of maintaining active ABFA certification.

d. Recertification Requirements

1. 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):
 - a. Pay annual dues by January 1 each year.
 - b. Submit a signed Adherence to Ethical and Professional Standards attestation annually.
 - c. Submit a Recertification Form by April 1 during the recertification year that meets recertification requirements as listed in SOP 2.5 and 5.2.
 - d. Upon initial certification, each new Certificant 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, etc.; Cycle B includes Certificate conferral years 2011, 2014, 2017, 2020, etc.; Cycle C includes Certificate conferral years 2012, 2015, 2018, 2021, etc.

e. 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. Additional information regarding recertification can be found in ABFA Standard Operating Procedure (Section 5.2).

7. Lapse in Certification (Decertification)

A lapse in certification may occur under the following conditions:

- a. 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.
- b. Failure to submit the signed Adherence to Ethical and Professional Standards attestation 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.
- c. 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 and the late fee within thirty (30) days may result in a

lapse in certification. Recertification applicants may petition the Board for a waiver in the event of extenuating circumstances.

- d. The Recertification Committee, at its discretion, may grant an extension to the above deadlines.
- e. Upon a lapse in certification, the active ABFA Certificate becomes invalid.
 - i. A letter of certification lapse will be sent via certified mail to Certificant indicating the effective date of decertification, and a copy of the letter will be retained in the Certificant's digital archive file in the ABFA archives.
 - ii. Any active Certificant whose certification has lapsed must destroy any current ABFA digital certificate that indicates active Certificant status.
 - iii. The Certificant will be listed on the website as inactive with a decertification date.
- f. If the lapse in certification is under 1 year, certification may be reinstated when all of the following conditions are met:
 - i. Annual dues are paid;
 - ii. The Adherence to Ethical and Professional Standards attestation is submitted;
 - iii. The Recertification Form is submitted, and the requirements are met;
 - iv. A reinstatement fee equal to the current application fee is submitted; and
 - v. The Recertification Committee recommends recertification, which is then approved by the Board of Directors.
- g. A lapse of certification over 1 year may result in the Board of Directors requiring the individual to re-apply to sit for the Analyst certification exam and submit the associated fees.
- h. Certificants with a lapse in certification who misrepresent themselves as actively certified will be subject to permanent decertification.
- i. More information regarding retirement can be found in ABFA Standard operating Procedures (section 5.3).

8. Retirement Status

- a. Retirement status may be requested by a Certificant who:
 - i. Has held a Certificate for at least ten years, and
 - ii. Is in good standing at the time of the request for retirement status.
- b. Medical retirement may be granted to a Certificant who:
 - i. Has a medical condition that inhibits or prohibits the activities required for recertification; and
 - ii. Who does not meet the retirement status requirements described in 8(a) above.
- c. Retirement requests must be submitted to the Secretary and/or the President of the Board of Directors in writing.
- d. 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. Once retirement status is granted, The Board of Directors will send the requesting Certificant a letter stating the effective date of retirement and outlining the information detailed in the PPM. Included with this letter will be a new certificate indicating retired status and effective date.

The following apply to ABFA retirement status:

1. The retiree must destroy any digital ABFA Certificates indicating active status that they have in

their possession, as this certificate will be rendered invalid with the issuance of a retired certificate.

2. The retiree may cease payment of annual dues.
 3. The retiree may cease recertification procedures.
 4. The retiree may use the designation "A-ABFA (retired)" or "D-ABFA (retired)", whichever is appropriate for their attained certification.
 5. The retiree may continue to attend annual ABFA meetings.
 6. The retiree may not sit on the Board of Directors.
 7. The retiree may not vote on any matter before the Board or Certificants.
 8. The retiree may not state that they are currently Board Certified or that they currently hold a Certificate of Qualification from the ABFA.
 9. Retirement status cannot be applied retroactively (i.e., granted for some previous date).
 10. Retirement is irrevocable except by a subsequent finding by the Board of Directors that the Certificant was not in good standing at the time of retirement.
 11. If an action taken or not taken by the Certificant 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 Certificant may be decertified.
 12. If a retiree wishes to be reinstated as "active", they must reapply to take the Analyst certification exam and submit associated fees.
 13. Retirees who misrepresent themselves as actively certified will be subject to permanent decertification and possible ethics inquiry.
- Information regarding retirement can be found in ABFA Standard operating Procedures (section 5.4).

ABFA General Complaints Procedure

Updated 11 February 2025

The American Board of Forensic Anthropology is committed to ensuring that individuals from within or outside of the ABFA may bring concerns about information provided on the website, social media, or business conducted by the Board of Directors to our attention. The submission, investigation, and decision of the complaint shall not result in any discriminatory actions against the complainant.

1. Procedure

- a. Complaints must be in writing and signed by the Complainant. Please reference the “Timeline” section below for pertinent deadlines.
 - i. A complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction where a response is expected. Appeals concerning the ABFA examination or ethics complaints should be directed to the Appeals and Ethics Committees, respectively.
 - ii. Complaints may originate from sources internal or external to the ABFA. The Complainant may be a Diplomate or Analyst of the ABFA, a member of the Board of Directors, or any other person, and may be based upon public information from the news media, court records, or other sources.
 - iii. The complaint must clearly describe the expression of dissatisfaction and be accompanied by supporting evidence.
 - iv. The subject or subjects of the complaint shall be referred to as the Respondent collectively.
- b. The complaint shall be sent to the ABFA Secretary.
 - i. The Secretary shall acknowledge receipt of the complaint to the Complainant and provide notice of the complaint to the Respondent. Such notice shall include the name of the Complainant and a copy of the complaint.
 - ii. The Secretary shall forward the complaint and accompanying material to the Executive Board.
 - iii. A complaint shall be assigned a case number by the Secretary. The numbering system shall start with C and use the last two numbers of the current calendar year followed by the number of the complaint for that year (i.e., C21-001).
- c. The President shall appoint a Complaint Review Committee (CRC) of at least two (2) Directors and one (1) Certificant-at-Large. The President will appoint one (1) Director to serve as Chair.
 - i. The CRC Chair shall handle all complaint documentation. All received complaints shall be tracked in the Corrective and Preventive Action Log and will include the name of the Complainant, date of complaint, Complainant’s reasoning for the complaint, and the committee vote and date of final decision by the CRC.
 - ii. The CRC Chair shall inquire of the Respondent if they are a testifying or consulting expert in a trial ongoing at the time. No action shall be taken until the trial has concluded.
 - iii. The CRC shall first review whether there is probable cause to believe that a complaint may have merit and shall report its finding to the full Board. Part of this review shall include:
 1. whether the same or a similar complaint concerning the ABFA or its personnel

- has been addressed previously by the ABFA complaint process.
2. if not, the CRC shall assess the complaint in consideration of the ABFA's current standards, to include its Bylaws, Policy and Procedures, Code of Ethics, any national standards to which it complies, and other relevant documents the ABFA cites as its guidance documents, as well as FSAB applicable standards and procedures
- iv. The CRC may dismiss outright complaints deemed to lack probable cause.
 - v. Alternatively, the CRC may make a recommendation to the Board for dismissal. If the Board does not dismiss the complaint, it shall be returned to the CRC for further proceedings.
 - vi. Dismissal shall be documented, and notice shall be made to the Board (if not otherwise consulted), Complainant, and Respondent with appropriate acknowledgement by the recipients.
- d. The CRC, upon a majority vote, shall have authority to solicit assistance from non-Board members (lawyers, investigators, former directors, etc.) in the event such provides a better investigative body and/or is better suited geographically.
 - i. Such outside assistance must be subject to a signed Ethics Endorsement, Confidentiality Agreement, and Conflict of Interest Disclosure. Each outside individual assisting the committee must sign such documents and return signed copies to the CRC Chair before work begins.
 - ii. The outside individual shall not have a vote on any CRC decisions.
 - e. The CRC shall provide all documentation pertinent to the complaint and any other relevant documentation or information in its possession to the Respondent.
 - f. The CRC shall request that the Respondent provide a written response to the allegations contained in the complaint.
 - g. The CRC shall provide the Respondent the opportunity to appear on a virtual platform to present evidence in their favor at a hearing before the CRC, at the Respondent's own expense. The Respondent may be accompanied by a legal or other representative.
 - i. A hearing shall be held after the response from the Respondent is received by the CRC. If a response is not received within 30 days, the CRC shall proceed to its deliberation of the complaint on its merits.
 - ii. The Respondent may call witnesses at their own expense.
 - iii. The Respondent shall have the right to examine the Complainant.
 - iv. The hearing on the complaint shall be recorded. A transcript of the proceeding may be prepared at the expense of the party requesting it.
 - h. The CRC may find deficiencies, violations of policy, or conduct violations. The CRC shall document those issues in a written report to the Board along with recommendations as to remediation or sanctions. The full Board shall decide at a special meeting or quarterly meeting if any action is to be taken based upon CRC recommendations.
 - i. Any action by the Board must be by a simple majority vote with quorum present.
 - ii. The Board may refer the CRC's decision or recommendations back to the CRC for further action. The CRC shall review its recommendations, conduct further investigation if necessary and report back to the full Board.
 - iii. The Respondent may appear before the Board for the purpose of discussing potential

sanctions.

- iv. Notice of any action taken by the Board shall be documented and shall be made to the Complainant and Respondent with appropriate acknowledgement by the recipients.

2. Record Keeping

Records of all complaints and actions taken shall be archived by the ABFA Administrative Assistant. All materials related to any complaint shall be maintained in confidence. The CRC Chair shall handle all complaint documentation. All received complaints shall be tracked in the Corrective and Preventive Action Log and will include the name of the Complainant, date of complaint, Complainant's reasoning for the complaint, and the committee vote and date of final decision by the CRC.

3. Timeline

The following timeline may be adjusted if reasonably required:

1. The Secretary shall acknowledge the receipt of the complaint to the Complainant and provide appropriate notices to Respondent within 10 days after receipt of a complaint.
2. The Secretary shall forward the complaint and accompanying material to the Executive Board within 10 days after the receipt of the complaint.
3. The President shall appoint the CRC, and the Secretary shall assign a complaint number within 10 days after receiving the complaint.
4. The CRC shall make a probable cause determination and forward it to the President within 15 days after the CRC is appointed.
5. The CRC shall request a response from the Respondent within 15 days after the CRC receives the complaint.
6. The Respondent shall have 30 days from the CRC request to provide their response to the complaint.
7. A hearing shall be held within 30 days after receipt of the Respondent's timely response.
8. The investigation of a complaint is to be completed within 120 days after a determination that probable cause exists, if possible.
9. The Board shall make its decision on the CRC recommendations at a meeting of the Board within 30 days of the receipt of the CRC report.
10. The Respondent must file any appeal within 60 days of the Board's final adjudication of the complaint.

CONFIDENTIALITY, IMPARTIALITY, AND SECURITY POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Updated 11 February 2025

Section I: Confidentiality and Impartiality Policies and Procedures

1. Maintaining Confidentiality

- a. Confidentiality Agreements: Each ABFA BoD member and any Certificant-at-Large who serve on ABFA BoD Committees shall complete an annual confidentiality agreement to protect against the threat of breaches of confidentiality with BoD business.
- b. Certification Procedures Confidentiality Agreements: Applications, Exam Development, Validation, and Grading committee members shall sign Confidentiality Agreements. Any person that assists with access to practical specimens from documented skeletal collections shall sign a Confidentiality Agreement. All Examinees shall sign Confidentiality Agreements regarding examination content and the identity of other examinees.
- c. Protection of BoD and Certificant's personal information: The ABFA Executive Board shall limit access to online shared folders to only those who require access to the files to complete their work. All ABFA Executive Board and BoD members shall relinquish online folder access upon vacating their position. Folder sharing and handover are detailed in the ABFA Archives Folder Sharing Guidelines.

2. Maintaining Impartiality

The ABFA is organized and managed to minimize risks to the impartiality of its activities through the following means:

- a. The ABFA Policies and Procedures are non-discriminatory and administered objectively and impartially. The ABFA makes certification available to all applicants who satisfy the criteria defined by its application policies and procedures. The ABFA treats everyone equally regardless of race, sex, gender identification, sexual orientation, national origin, native language, religion, age, disability, marital status, citizenship, genetic information, pregnancy, or any other characteristic protected by law.
- b. The ABFA's certification program is set up to ensure fairness, objectivity, and impartiality in all aspects of certification (application, examination, and recertification), as described by the committee descriptions and procedures herein.
- c. The ABFA management structure provides opportunity for involvement by all interested members. The Board of Directors is elected by the Certificants-at-Large, and any Diplomat may be nominated or self-nominated to serve on the Board. The ABFA holds regular meetings to update its members on Board activities and policy changes.
- d. Conflict of Interest Form: The ABFA Board of Directors, committee members, and personnel must complete a conflict of interest form annually. The ABFA uses this form to identify, mitigate, and eliminate impartiality to its certification and management activities.
- e. Complaints and Appeals Processes: Any examinee or Member of the ABFA who perceives bias, error, or wrong-doing may file a complaint or appeal a decision made by the ABFA Board of Directors per the policies outlined herein. The submission, investigation and decision on complaints and appeals shall not result in any discriminatory actions against

the complainant or appellant.

3. Subcontractors

- a. The ABFA BoD may elect to utilize external subcontractors to assist with specific board tasks. These subcontractors shall enter into an agreement with the ABFA to complete the specified tasks.
- b. Subcontractors shall disclose actual or potential conflicts of interest prior to working with the ABFA and sign a confidentiality agreement when appropriate.
- c. The ABFA shall not utilize subcontractors to develop or validate examination questions. Grading of the practical portion of the examination shall not be completed by subcontractors. Grading of the written portion of the examination may be completed by external electronic testing software utilizing a rubric supplied by the Examination Committees.
- d. The decisions on certification of examinees shall not be subcontracted and will remain with the ABFA BoD and Examination Committees.

4. Retention of an Attorney

The ABFA BoD shall retain a qualified attorney to sit, as needed, as a non-voting member on the Ethics Committee. This individual shall ensure all complaints are handled fairly, ethically, and in a manner that limits threats to the confidentiality of complainants and respondents. The attorney will disclose any actual or potential conflicts of interest and recuse themselves if a COI is identified. Attorneys are bound to confidentiality by attorney-client privilege.

Section II: Security Policies and Procedures

1. Maintaining security

The ABFA uses the following mechanisms to minimize security risks to its management, members, data, and certification activities:

- a. Liability Insurance: ABFA BoD shall maintain insurance policies to protect the ABFA and the BoD from liabilities associated with their professional duties within the organization
- b. Subcontractor agreements: The ABFA Bod shall require all subcontractors to enter into an Independent Contractor Agreement or provide a similar agreement prior to undertaking any work on behalf of the ABFA.
- c. Conflict of Interest (COI) Forms: ABFA BoD members, Certificants-at-Large serving on ABFA BoD Committees, and subcontractors shall complete an annual conflict of interest form to disclose any actual or potential COIs to protect against the threat of conflicting interests.
- d. Financial Security: The ABFA BoD shall follow the procedures outlined in the Treasurer's responsibilities to ensure an independent financial audit is completed every three (3) years or when the office changes hands to protect the ABFA's financial interests against fraud or misuse. The ABFA BoD shall reduce the risk of fraud in dues payments by utilizing an online payment portal link generated by QuickBooks.
- e. Website Security: The ABFA BoD Outreach Committee and any subcontractor with web design skills shall monitor the website for cyber breaches and notify the Board of Directors of any breaches so appropriate action may be taken. No personal or financial information is stored on the website.
- f. Examination Security

- i. Online Testing Software: The online portion of the ABFA certification examination shall utilize password protected testing software to develop and administer the board examination and limit access to the question bank to members of the Examination Development Committee and the Vice President.
 - ii. Proctoring: The ABFA shall monitor the examinees during the certification examination utilizing one of the following methods of proctoring: ABFA proctors present during in-person examinations, online remote proctoring software, or testing center staff as proctors for the online portion of the examination.
 - iii. Subcontracted Documented Skeletal Collection Curators: The ABFA may utilize physical specimens from documented skeletal collections. The collection curator will enter an MOU with the ABFA and may be paid a usage fee for the laboratory space to house the specimens or host the practical examination. Individuals who assist with access to the specimens shall sign the appropriate confidentiality agreements to ensure security of the specimens or examination questions. Only individuals on ABFA Examination Committees shall assist with the development, validation, or grading of practical examination questions derived from these specimens.
 - iv. Skeletal Specimens: The ABFA Examination Committees shall ensure that skeletal specimens used for examination purposes are ethically obtained, secured from public study, and known only to the pertinent Examination Committees members. Additional specimens validated for future practical use shall not be available to the public for study. Any reference to validated specimens stored in digital files shall have limited access as described in the ABFA Archives Folder Sharing Guidelines.
 - v. Repeated Use of Questions: As there may be retakes of the examination in consecutive exam years, the Exam Committees shall limit the use of repeated questions to no more than 10% of the total examination questions.
 - vi. Subcontractor access to examination questions: The ABFA shall not utilize external subcontractors to develop certification exam questions. The ABFA may utilize online testing software to house and secure validated examination questions. The ABFA will ensure the online testing software has appropriate security measures in place to maintain examination integrity. The software company is not allowed to export or share ABFA examination materials.
- g. Third Party Vendors:
The ABFA is committed to ensuring the security of its information assets, especially when relying on external vendors. In the event of a security breach, ABFA will promptly take appropriate corrective actions to address and mitigate any potential impact. External vendors must comply with ABFA's security requirements and cooperate fully in the investigation and resolution of any security breach. Vendors are required to notify ABFA immediately upon discovering any security incidents affecting ABFA's data or services.
- h. Procedures for Security Breach Management.
- i. Detection and Reporting: Any suspected or confirmed security breach involving external vendors must be immediately reported to the ABFA President
 - ii. Initial Assessment: The ABFA Board of Directors, in collaboration with the relevant external vendor, will conduct an initial assessment to determine the scope and

- impact of the breach.
- iii. Containment: Immediate steps will be taken to contain the breach and prevent further unauthorized access or damage. This may involve temporarily suspending the affected service or access rights.
 - iv. Investigation: A thorough investigation will be conducted to identify the cause of the breach, with a focus on understanding how the breach occurred and which information or systems were affected.
 - v. Notification: Relevant stakeholders, including affected parties and regulatory authorities (if required by law), will be notified about the breach in a timely and transparent manner.
 - vi. Corrective Actions: Based on the investigation findings, the ABFA will develop and implement a corrective action plan to address the root cause of the breach and prevent recurrence. This may include revising security policies, enhancing security measures, or changing vendor agreements.
 - vii. Recovery: Steps will be taken to recover any lost data and restore affected services to full functionality.
 - viii. Documentation: All aspects of the security breach, from detection to recovery, will be documented in detail for future reference and compliance auditing.
 - i. Additional security threats: Unforeseen security threats not addressed by these policies shall be documented and brought to the ABFA Executive Committee and BoD as expeditiously as possible to determine next steps.
 - j. Management Reviews, Internal Audits, and Corrective and Preventive Actions Logs are used by the ABFA to assess procedures and ensure issues are documented. These detailed procedures can be found in the ABFA Standard Operating Procedures Sections 7.0 and 8.0. The ABFA Board of Directors employs the following annual processes and procedures to ensure the management system is functioning properly in accordance with the PPM and Standard Operating Procedures: management review, internal audit, and a Corrective and Preventive Actions log. These detailed procedures can be found in the ABFA Standard Operating Procedures Sections 7.0 and 8.0.