

ACCREDITATION BOARD FOR SPECIALTY NURSING CERTIFICATION, INC.

POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL

**Revised 5-09;
Policy 23 added 10-09**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Policy 1	Definition, Vision, Mission, Purpose, Authority, Responsibility	3
Policy 2	Board of Directors: Composition, Eligibility, Resignation	4
	Vacancies	
Policy 3	Nominations/Elections/Appointment Processes	6
Policy 4	ABSNC Board Member Responsibilities	9
Policy 5	Role Description for Lead Volunteer Psychometrician and Other Volunteer Psychometricians in Review Team Pool	11
Policy 6	Role Description for Public Member	14
Policy 7	Termination of ABSNC Membership	16
Policy 8	Removal of Members of the ABSNC Board of Directors	17
Policy 9	Meetings/Quorum/Attendance at Meetings/Record Keeping	19
Policy 10	Voting	21
Policy 11	Review of and Changes to Bylaws, Policy, Procedures, and Accreditation Standards	22
Policy 12	Fees	23
Policy 13	Travel and Expense Reimbursement	24
Policy 14	Financial Policies	26
Policy 15	Duties and Responsibilities of Review Teams	28
Policy 16	Accreditation Application Process and Agreements	30
Policy 17	Reaccreditation Application Process	35
Policy 18	Reconsideration and Appeal of Accreditation Decisions	37
Policy 19	Annual Compliance Reporting and Reporting Major Certification Program Changes	40
Policy 20	Ethical Considerations, Confidentiality, Conflict of Interest, And Unauthorized Representation	42
Policy 21	Quality Improvement Program	46
Policy 22	Revocation of Accreditation Status Due to Misconduct/ Failure to Maintain Compliance with Accreditation Standards	47
Policy 23	Student(s) of Psychometricians Reviewing Accreditation Applications	50

ABSNC

POLICY 1 DEFINITION, VISION, MISSION, PURPOSE, AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

DATE APPROVED:

DATE REVIEWED: 5-09

DATE REVISED: 2-03; 10-08; 5-09

Policy

Section 1.1 Definition

The Accreditation Board for Specialty Nursing Certification (ABSNC) is an elected body that is responsible for decisions related to the accreditation of nursing and associated certification programs.

Section 1.2 Vision

The vision of ABSNC is *to benefit the public through the promotion of the highest standard of nursing practice.*

Section 1.3 Mission

The mission of ABSNC is *to seek and recognize quality specialty nursing and associated certification programs through accreditation.*

Section 1.4 Purpose

The purpose of ABSNC is *to provide a mechanism for accreditation of quality specialty nursing and associated certification programs.*

Section 1.5 Authority and Responsibility of the Board of Directors

The ABSNC Board of Directors shall:

- review accreditation applications;
- make decisions relating to the initial accreditation and reaccreditation of applicant organizations' certification programs;
- perform periodic reviews, maintain, and recommend revisions to the ABSNC Accreditation Standards;
- elect the President, Vice President, Secretary/Treasurer of the ABSNC;
- set policies and procedures related to the work of ABSNC;
- promote ABSNC accreditation of specialty nursing and associated certification programs.

ABSNC

POLICY 2 ABSNC BOARD OF DIRECTORS: COMPOSITION, ELIGIBILITY, RESIGNATION, VACANCIES

DATE APPROVED: **DATE REVIEWED: 5-09** **DATE REVISED: 9-05; 5-09**

Policy

Section 2.1 Composition

The Board of Directors of ABSNC shall be composed of the officers: President, Vice President, and Secretary/Treasurer; at least one Psychometrician; at least one Public Member; and not less than four Directors at Large. The Directors are elected from the body of ABSNC accredited organizations, and at least one of whom must represent an organization that offers an accredited advanced practice certification examination(s). The majority of the Board members, and the President, must be RNs. An accredited organization may have no more than one representative on the ABSNC at any given time.

ABNS President or Designee

The ABNS President or designee shall serve as an ex-officio member of the board without the power to vote. The ABNS President is not required to represent an ABNS member organization with an ABSNC accredited certification program.

Section 2.2 Eligibility for Board Positions

Directors

Only representatives of organizations with currently accredited certification programs are eligible for election to the ABSNC. ABSNC nominees for RN Director positions must meet the following criteria: (1) minimum of a baccalaureate in nursing, advanced degree in nursing preferred; (2) at least three years experience in certification; and (3) at least one of whom must represent an organization that offers an accredited advanced practice certification examination(s).

Non RN Director nominees must meet the following eligibility criteria: (1) minimum of a baccalaureate degree, advanced degree preferred; and (2) at least three years experience in certification.

In the event that the accreditation status of the organization represented by the board member lapses or is denied, the member must resign from the board.

Public Member

Individuals who are not registered nurses or employed/involved with any nursing credentialing body, but who are involved with consumer advocacy groups or issues, or have an interest in health care as it relates to protection of the public, shall be eligible for public representation on the ABSNC. A Public Member cannot concurrently serve on the board of an organization that is a Regular, Associate, or Affiliate member of ABNS or on the board of an accredited organization that is not a member of ABNS. In addition, the Public member may not concurrently serve on the Board of ABNS.

POLICY 2

**ABSNC BOARD OF DIRECTORS: COMPOSITION, ELIGIBILITY,
RESIGNATION, VACANCIES (CONTINUED)**

Lead Volunteer Psychometrician

The Lead Volunteer Psychometrician must meet the following eligibility criteria: (1) possess a masters degree or doctorate from a regionally accredited college or university in psychometrics, measurement psychology, testing and evaluation, research and statistical analysis, or the equivalent; (2) have experience with credentialing program development and analysis, accreditation procedures, governance and management of nonprofit organizations, and knowledge of trends in credentialing and psychometric evaluation. In addition, the Lead Volunteer Psychometrician may not be employed by a testing vendor during his/her term as Lead Volunteer Psychometrician or service as a volunteer psychometrician reviewer.

Section 2.3 Terms of Office

All members of the ABSNC shall serve a three-year term of office. Members of the board may serve two consecutive terms of office and with at least a one year break in service, may serve a maximum of two more terms of office.

Officers of the Board of Directors shall serve a two year term of office and may seek a second term. No officer may serve more than a total of four years in one office.

All Board members shall assume office on July 1 following their election. Terms end on June 30.

Section 2.4 Resignation

Any member of the ABSNC may resign at any time by giving written notice to the ABSNC President or, in the case of the resignation of the President, by the Secretary/Treasurer.

Section 2.5 ABSNC Vacancies

In the event of a vacancy within the ABSNC the board shall appoint a qualified individual to fulfill the unexpired term created by a resignation. In the event of a vacancy among the elected members of the ABSNC, the President may choose to leave the position unfilled provided the required minimum numbers on the ABSNC are maintained.

ABSNC

POLICY 3 NOMINATIONS/ELECTIONS/APPOINTMENT PROCESSES

DATE APPROVED: 5-09

DATE REVIEWED: 5-09

DATE REVISED:

Policy

Section 3.1 Elections of Directors

Elections for ABSNC director positions will be held annually, in conjunction with the Spring ABNS Assembly Meeting.

The Directors are elected by ABSNC accredited organizations. A representative from each accredited organizations shall be eligible to vote in the elections for ABSNC directors. Each accredited organization is entitled to cast one vote.

Voting by proxy is not permitted.

Section 3.2 Election of Officers

The President, Vice President, and Secretary/Treasurer of the ABSNC are elected from among the Board of Directors by the members of the board for a two-year term. All members of the Board of Directors, including the Lead Psychometrician and the Public Member, may vote in the election of officers. The Public Member may be elected to the office of Secretary/Treasurer.

Section 3.3 Appointment of Public Member

The ABSNC Board of Directors will seek candidates for the Public Member position and appoint he or she to serve on the ABSNC Board of Directors for a three year term of office as described in this policy and Policy 6.

Section 3.4 Appointment of Lead Volunteer Psychometrician

The ABSNC Board of Directors will seek and appoint candidates for the Lead Volunteer Psychometrician position and appoint him/her to serve on the ABSNC Board of Directors for a three year term of office as described in this policy and Policy 5.

Procedure

Elections of Directors

1. A Call for Nominations will be disseminated by the CEO to the members of ABSNC following the fall ABNS Assembly meeting.
2. The ABSNC Vice President is responsible for assembling a slate of candidates for the elected director positions on the ABSNC.

POLICY 3

NOMINATIONS/ELECTIONS/APPOINTMENT PROCESSES (CONTINUED)

- a. It is the responsibility of the individual ABSNC nominee to procure the assurances of their employer that they can be available for ABSNC meetings. In addition, the individual must ensure that they will continue to be sponsored by their accredited organization.
- b. The Vice President instructs nominees to email a complete bio form to the ABSNC CEO by the required deadline date.
3. The ABSNC CEO will prepare and distribute a slate of nominees and their biographical forms to the members of ABSNC no later than 30 days prior to the election.
4. Voting will occur by written ballot. Tellers appointed by the ABNS President at the beginning of the ABNS Assembly business meeting will also serve as Tellers for the ABSNC election process. Tellers will disseminate, collect, and count all ballots, and provide a verbal and written report on the election results to the ABSNC President. The ABSNC President will announce the results of the election to the Assembly.
5. Following the election the CEO will disseminate an email to the members of ABSNC announcing the election results.
6. The CEO will prepare and disseminate a press release for each individual elected.

Election of ABSNC Officers

1. Open officer positions of the ABSNC are elected annually by the Board of Directors prior to the beginning of the new fiscal year.
2. Board members elected to an officer position will have their term on the Board extended, if necessary, to allow them to serve the full term of the office to which they have been elected.
3. The ABSNC CEO will seek nominations for officer positions from the ABSNC Board of Directors following the previous spring meeting and prepare a slate of nominees.
4. Voting will occur by electronic ballot. The ABSNC President will appoint the Public Member and Lead Volunteer Psychometrician to serve as Tellers. The CEO will disseminate the electronic ballot and the Tellers will collect and count all ballots, and provide an electronic report on the election results to Board of Directors.
5. Following the election of officers, the CEO will disseminate an email to the members of ABSNC announcing the election results.
6. The CEO will prepare and disseminate a press release for each individual elected.

Selection and Appointment of Public Member

1. The Vice President shall oversee the process for selecting and appointing the Public Member.

**POLICY 3
(CONTINUED)**

NOMINATIONS/ELECTIONS/APPOINTMENT PROCESSES

2. Three months prior to the end of the current Public Member's term of office, the CEO will disseminate a Call for Nominations to the members of ABSNC.
3. When possible, a minimum of two nominees will be presented to the Board of Directors for consideration and interview. The Vice President and two members of the Board of Directors will interview the nominees. After the interviews, they will recommend a candidate for consideration and approval by the Board of Directors.
4. The CEO will notify the nominees, in writing, of the board's decision.
5. Following the appointment of the Public Member, the CEO will disseminate an email to the members of ABSNC announcing the selection of the Public Member.
6. The CEO will prepare and disseminate a press release regarding the appointment of the Public Member.

Selection and Appointment of Lead Volunteer Psychometrician

1. The current Lead Volunteer Psychometrician shall oversee the process for selecting and appointing a new Lead Volunteer Psychometrician.
2. The process for selection shall occur at least 3 months prior to the end of the fiscal year.
3. The current Lead Volunteer Psychometrician will identify individuals from the current pool of volunteer psychometricians who serve on Review teams to determine their interest in serving as the Lead Volunteer Psychometrician. The current Lead Volunteer Psychometrician will provide a recommendation to the Board of Directors.
4. The Vice President and two members of the Board of Directors will interview the nominee. After the interview, they will recommend the nominee for consideration and approval by the Board of Directors.
5. The current Lead Volunteer Psychometrician will notify the nominee of the board's decision.
6. Following the appointment of the Lead Volunteer Psychometrician, the CEO will disseminate an email to the members of ABSNC announcing the selection of the Lead Volunteer Psychometrician.
7. The CEO will prepare and disseminate a press release regarding the appointment of the Lead Volunteer Psychometrician.

ABSNC

POLICY 4 ABSNC BOARD MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

DATE APPROVED: 5-09

DATE REVIEWED: 5-09

DATE REVISED:

Policy

Section 4.1 ABSNC Members

ABSNC board members shall be available for meetings called by the President and will perform those duties assigned to them in a professional, ethical, and timely manner. It is the responsibility of the ABSNC member to identify personal conflicts of interest in the evaluation of applications and to make these known to the ABSNC President.

Section 4.2 President

The President of the ABSNC shall:

- Serve as its spokesperson on matters of accreditation;
- Call and preside over meetings of the ABSNC;
- Organize and supervise ABSNC business, including appointing teams to review accreditation applications and ad hoc committees to perform other work of the ABSNC;
- Serve as an ex-officio member of the ABNS Board of Directors without vote;
- Provide a report of ABSNC activities to the ABNS Board at each board meeting and to the Spring and Fall ABNS Assembly Meetings;
- Preside over the election of the incoming ABSNC President;
- Appoint a Vice President, if needed, in the event the position becomes vacant between meetings.

Section 4.3 Vice President

The Vice President of the ABSNC shall:

- Preside over meetings and perform other duties of the President in the event of a vacancy in the position of President until a new President is elected;
- Act as President in issues relating to the elected President of the ABSNC or the organization represented by the President;
- Assemble a slate of nominees for the election of ABSNC Directors;
- Oversee the selection of the Public Member and Volunteer Lead Psychometrician.

Section 4.4 Secretary/Treasurer

The Secretary/Treasurer shall:

- Ensure that records of meetings of the ABNS Assembly and the Board of Directors are maintained;
- Provide oversight of for distribution of: meeting minutes to member representatives within 30 days of approval; notification of meetings; copies of minutes, the roster, financial statements, and a list of officers to the registered agent of ABSNC;

POLICY 4

ABSNC BOARD MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES (CONTINUED)

- Ensure that all monies and fiscal records are maintained;
- Provide oversight for the fiscal affairs of ABSNC, including receipt and disbursement of funds;
- Ensure that an annual audit or review is performed, and that relevant tax and other reports are filed;
- Ensure that a Directors and Officers liability insurance policy is maintained;
- Sign checks payable to the CEO, sign checks in the absence of the CEO, and countersign checks over the designated limit;
- Provide reports and interpretations of the financial condition of ABSNC to the Board of Directors and ABSNC members;
- Serve as Chair of the Finance Committee;
- Develop and recommend an annual operating budget to the Board of Directors, in collaboration with the CEO and Finance Committee.

Section 4.5 Public Member

The Public Member shall:

- Act as an advocate for the public;
- Be available for travel to Assembly Meetings;
- Serve on Review Teams for the accreditation of certification examination programs;
- Serve on the Appeals Board;
- Perform duties as described in the Public Member Role Description.

Section 4.6 Lead Volunteer Psychometrician

The Lead Volunteer Psychometrician shall:

- Serve on Review Teams for the accreditation of certification examinations;
- Be available for travel to ABSNC Meetings;
- Advise the ABSNC in matters related to psychometric issues;
- Assist the ABSNC in identifying and recruiting qualified psychometric consultants to serve on Review Teams;
- Nominate qualified individuals for consideration as the Lead Volunteer Psychometrician;
- Perform duties as described in the Lead Volunteer Psychometrician Role Description.

ABSNC

POLICY 5 ROLE DESCRIPTION FOR LEAD VOLUNTEER PSYCHOMETRICIAN AND OTHER VOLUNTEER PSYCHOMETRICIANS IN REVIEW TEAM POOL

DATE APPROVED: 5-09

DATE REVIEWED: 5-09

DATE REVISED:

Policy

Lead Volunteer Psychometrician

Section 5.1 Appointment

The Lead Volunteer Psychometrician is appointed by the Board of Directors from among those individuals recommended by the current Lead Volunteer Psychometrician and interviewed by the Vice President and two board members.

Section 5.2 Term of Office

The Lead Volunteer Psychometrician shall serve a three-year term of office. He or she may serve two consecutive terms of office and, with at least a one year break in service, may serve a maximum of two more terms of office.

Section 5.3 Voting Rights

The Lead Volunteer Psychometric is a voting member of the ABSNC Board of Directors.

Section 5.4 Qualifications

1. Must have a willingness to serve, and ability to communicate effectively, including listening and considering others input;
2. Must be able to attend meetings of ABSNC Board of Directors and Review Teams;
3. Must be able to review accreditation applications and report findings in a timely and succinct manner;
4. Must be able to identify and report any personal or professional conflicts of interest regarding accreditation applications or other issues within the scope of ABSNC;
5. Must possess a masters degree or doctorate from a regionally accredited college or university in psychometrics, measurement psychology, testing and evaluation, research and statistical analysis, or the equivalent;
6. Must have experience with credentialing program development and analysis, accreditation procedures, governance and management of nonprofit organizations, and knowledge of trends in credentialing and psychometric evaluation;
7. May not be currently employed by a testing vendor.

Section 5.5 Responsibilities

1. Provide advice and direction on matters of certification and accreditation, trends and developments in certification, accreditation, and psychometric evaluation to ABSNC as requested;
2. Become thoroughly familiar with ABSNC bylaws, policies, procedures, and Standards and processes;
3. Apply the Standards and Policies and Procedures in an impartial manner;

**POLICY 5 ROLE DESCRIPTION FOR LEAD VOLUNTEER PSYCHOMETRICAN AND
OTHER VOLUNTEER PSYCHOMETRICIANS IN REVIEW TEAM POOL
(CONTINUED)**

4. Review accreditation applications and participate in discussions related to them;
5. Read, understand, and sign a *Confidentiality, Conflict of Interest and Unauthorized Representation Statement* form;
6. Behave in a manner consistent with the role description and the ABSNC Bylaws, Policies and Procedures;
7. Review and respond to all correspondence in a timely manner;
8. Attend and participate in meetings, teleconferences, and assigned committee and ABSNC meetings as requested by the Board;
9. Become knowledgeable about accreditation Standards and rationales;
10. Effectively and appropriately represent the organization to others;
11. Provide an orientation to newly appointed volunteer psychometricians;
12. Serve as an interface between ABSNC and other volunteer psychometric consultants;
13. Oversee the identification and recruitment of volunteer psychometricians;
14. Provide education, orientation, and training, as necessary to improve the understanding of ABSNC members and ultimately the quality of decisions and processes;
15. Designate an alternate Psychometrician to attend meetings if unable to do so personally.

Other Volunteer Psychometric Consultants - Review Team Pool

Section 5.6 Appointment

The Lead Volunteer Psychometrician identifies potential volunteer psychometricians to serve on the Review Team Pool and recommends their appointment to the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors is responsible for appointing these volunteers.

Section 5.7 Term of Office

Volunteer Psychometricians serving in the Review Team Pool may serve indefinitely.

Section 5.8 Qualifications

1. Must have a willingness to serve, and ability to communicate effectively, including listening and considering others input;
2. Must be able to attend teleconference meetings of Review Teams;
3. Must be able to review accreditation applications and report findings in a timely and succinct manner;
4. Must be able to identify and report any personal or professional conflicts of interest regarding accreditation applications or other issues within the scope of ABSNC;
5. Must possess a masters degree or doctorate from a regionally accredited college or university in psychometrics, measurement psychology, testing and evaluation, research and statistical analysis, or the equivalent;

POLICY 5

**ROLE DESCRIPTION FOR LEAD VOLUNTEER PSYCHOMETRICAN
AND OTHER VOLUNTEER PSYCHOMETRICIANS IN REVIEW TEAM
POOL (CONTINUED)**

6. Must have experience with credentialing program development and analysis, accreditation procedures, governance and management of nonprofit organizations, and knowledge of trends in credentialing and psychometric evaluation.
7. May not be currently employed by a testing vendor.

Section 5.9 Responsibilities

1. Provide advice and direction on matters of certification and accreditation, trends and developments in certification, accreditation, and psychometric evaluation to ABSNC as requested;
2. Become thoroughly familiar with ABSNC policies, procedures, and Standards and processes;
3. Apply the Standards and Policies and Procedures in an impartial manner;
4. Review accreditation applications and participate in discussions related to them;
5. Read, understand, and sign a *Confidentiality, Conflict of Interest and Unauthorized Representation Statement* form;
6. Behave in a manner consistent with the role description and the ABSNC Bylaws, Policy and Procedure;
7. Review and respond to all correspondence in a timely manner;
8. Become knowledgeable about accreditation Standards and rationales;
9. Effectively and appropriately represent the organization to others;
10. Psychometric Consultants receive no compensation for their work, but are reimbursed for reasonable, authorized expenses related to carrying out ABSC business.

ABSNC

POLICY 6 ROLE DESCRIPTION FOR PUBLIC MEMBER

DATE APPROVED: 5-09

DATE REVIEWED

DATE REVISED:

Policy

Section 6.1 Appointment

The Public Member is appointed by the Board of Directors from among individuals recommended by Board or other members and interviews by the Vice President and two other board members.

Section 6.2 Term of Office

The Public Member shall serve a three-year term of office. He or she may serve two consecutive terms of office and, with at least a one-year break in service, may serve a maximum of two more terms of office.

Section 6.3 Voting Rights

The Public Member is a voting member of the ABSNC Board of Directors.

Section 6.4 Qualifications

1. Must have a willingness to serve, and an ability to communicate effectively, including listening and considering others' input;
2. Must be able to attend meetings of ABSNC Board of Directors and Review Teams;
3. Must be able to review accreditation applications and report findings in a timely and succinct manner;
4. Represents the best interests of the public and, therefore, may not be a current or past employee of or consultant to any member organization or of a testing vendor;
5. Is not a nurse or other healthcare professional;
6. Must be able to identify and report any personal or professional conflicts of interest regarding accreditation applications or other issues within the scope of ABSNC.
7. May have any non-healthcare related professional qualifications, but will be especially qualified with a background in law, marketing, or finance.

Section 6.5 Responsibilities

1. Advocate for the interests of the general public, especially in areas where public protection and safety are involved;
2. Advocate for the views of the users of members' services;
3. Advocate for the value of certification to the public;
4. Become thoroughly familiar with ABSNC bylaws, policies, procedures, Standards and processes;

POLICY 6 ROLE DESCRIPTION FOR PUBLIC MEMBER (CONTINUED)

5. Serve on the Appeals Board;
6. Review accreditation applications as assigned and participate in discussions related to them;
7. Apply the Standards and Policies and Procedures in an impartial manner;
8. Read, understand, and sign a *Confidentiality, Conflict of Interest and Unauthorized Representations Statement* form;
9. Behave in a manner consistent with the role description and the ABSNC Bylaws and Policies and Procedures;
10. Attend and participate in meetings, teleconferences, and assigned committee and ABSNC meetings as assigned by the Board;

ABSNC

POLICY 7 TERMINATION OF ABSNC MEMBERSHIP

DATE APPROVED: 5-09

DATE REVIEWED

DATE REVISED:

Section 7.1 Termination

The membership of any member of ABSNC shall terminate at the same time as such member ceases to be accredited by ABSNC.

Section 7.2 Notification

1. When a member organization's certification program(s) ceases to be accredited by ABSNC, the CEO will notify the member organization's chief staff officer in writing that the organization is no longer a member.
2. The CEO shall ensure that the member's listing on the website is removed.
3. The ABSNC CEO shall inform the members of ABSNC when a member organization's certification program(s) ceases to be accredited.

ABSNC

POLICY 8 REMOVAL OF MEMBERS OF THE ABSNC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DATE APPROVED: 5-09

DATE REVIEWED

DATE REVISED:

Policy

Section 8.1 Removal of ABSNC Board Members

The Board works diligently to make sure that organizations applying for accreditation are treated equally and fairly. Reports of misconduct by any member of the Board of Directors may be reported to the Board by a member organization, by an organization applying for accreditation, or by another board member. If this occurs, the Board of Directors will undertake an investigation of the behavior as described in this policy. If substantiated, the complaint may lead to disciplinary action as described in this policy.

Members of the ABSNC Board of Directors may remove themselves or be removed for any of the following reasons: inability to fulfill responsibilities; loss of sponsoring organization's ABSNC accreditation(s) during representative's term on the ABSNC; failure to comply with ethical Standards required of a ABSNC board member; failure to disclose a potential or actual conflict of interest; and/or failure to complete duties assigned in a professional, ethical, and timely manner.

A board member who is removed from office pursuant to this policy shall be ineligible to serve as a Director or Officer in the future.

A decision to remove the board member occurs upon a 2/3 vote of the board, exclusive of the charged member.

During any period in which an ABSNC board member has been requested to resign or in which removal is pending, the member will not be included in meetings or work of the board.

ABSNC decisions made after consideration of the member's written response are final.

Procedure

1. Reports of misconduct by any member of the Board of Directors may be reported to the Board by a member organization, by an organization applying for accreditation, or by another board member. Such complaints shall be sent, in writing, (sent by traceable carrier, signature required, or certified mail) to the ABSNC President, or in the event the complaint is against the President, to the Vice President.
2. The President will notify the board member of the charges, in writing (sent by traceable carrier, signature required, or certified mail).
3. The board member against whom the complaint has been filed will have 30 days to provide a response to the charges, in writing, (sent by traceable carrier, signature required, or certified mail) to the President (or Vice President as required).
4. If the board member does not respond to charges within 30 days, the Board of Directors may remove the member by a 2/3 vote exclusive of the charged member.

**POLICY 8 REMOVAL OF MEMBERS OF THE ABSNC BOARD OF DIRECTORS
(CONTINUED)**

5. The President (or Vice President, if required) will investigate the charges and following the investigation notify the Board of Directors of the charges and the findings of the investigation.
6. The President will schedule a meeting to discuss the complaint, board member's response, and findings of the investigation with the Board of Directors in a manner and at a time when all members of the board can participate.
7. The board member against whom the complaint has been filed shall be offered the opportunity to appear in person. The Board of Directors may act on the complaint without the appearance of the board member against whom a complaint has been filed.
8. The President will notify the board member of the decision relative to the complaint received, (sent by traceable carrier, signature required, or certified mail) within ten business days following the meeting of the Board of Directors.
9. The decision of the Board of Directors is final.

ABSNC

POLICY 9 MEETINGS/QUORUM/ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS/RECORD KEEPING

DATE APPROVED: 5-09

DATE REVIEWED

DATE REVISED:

Policy

Section 9.1 Meetings

ABSNC is an autonomous, separately incorporated body with the authority and responsibility to conduct its business as described in its Articles of Incorporation and bylaws.

ABSNC conducts business through formal meetings at least once a year in the Spring, and may meet in conjunction with the Fall ABSNC Assembly meeting. Additional meetings may be called at any time with appropriate notification of ABSNC members. All meetings are called and presided over by the President and are conducted according to common principles of parliamentary procedure designed to promote fairness and participation. ABSNC business may be conducted by conference call or other electronic means.

Regular meetings of the ABSNC may be held upon no less than thirty (30) days written notice, which shall include the date, time, and place of the meeting. The President of ABSNC shall request agenda items from ABSNC members at least one month prior to meetings.

The ABSNC President may call special meetings of the ABSNC with at least 2 days notice prior to the meeting. Only business designated in the call to meeting shall be conducted during a special meeting.

The meeting agenda, and the date, time, and location or mode of the meeting, will be sent to members via mail or electronic means at least five (5) days prior to meetings.

Meetings held by conference call are considered official meetings.

Section 9.2 Quorum

A quorum must be present to conduct ABSNC business. A quorum is defined for the purposes of ABSNC as a simple majority of ABSNC board members, so long as either the President or Vice President is present.

Section 9.3 Attendance at Meetings –Open versus Closed Meetings

ABSNC will hold open board meetings using the following guidelines:

- Only representatives from member organizations may attend/audit a board meeting;
- Requests to attend a meeting must be submitted, in writing, to the CEO at least 30 days prior to the meeting. Permission to approve such requests will be granted by the President.
- Representatives may speak only after they are recognized by the President;

The ABSNC will close its meetings when the information discussed by the board is related to accreditation decisions or when designated an executive session.

POLICY 9 MEETINGS/QUORUM (cont.)

Section 9.4 Record Keeping

Official business meetings will be recorded as minutes, which will be sent to ABSNC board members within 30 days of an ABSNC meeting. Records of discussions and decisions relative to accreditation applications will be made on the *Review of Application Form for ABSNC Accreditation*. In addition, all letters to applicant organizations will be disseminated and retained by the national office.

ABSNC

POLICY 10 VOTING

DATE APPROVED:

DATE REVIEWED: 5-09

DATE REVISED: 6-03; 5-09

Policy

Section 10.1 Voting

Voting may be by voice, written ballot, mail, fax, or electronic, as determined by the Board of Directors.

All board members of the ABSNC, including the Public Member and Lead Psychometric Consultant, are eligible to vote.

Section 10.2 Ballots

At the discretion of the President, or by the request of any member of the ABSNC Board of Directors, a written, faxed or mail ballot will be used. Decisions made by fax or email ballot must be unanimous, excluding the board member whose own organization's accreditation/reaccreditation is being considered.

Procedure

1. If a written ballot is to be used during face-to-face meetings, the CEO will make ballots available for voting as needed.

If a written ballot is requested during a conference call or other electronic meeting, the following procedure will be followed:

- a. A ballot will be prepared by the CEO and mailed, faxed, or emailed (as determined by the Board of Directors) to board members.
- b. The ballot will be returned to the ABSNC office, by mail, fax, or email as decided upon by the board, for tally.
- c. Office staff will prepare and disseminate a teller's report via mail or email (as determined by the Board of Directors), notifying the board members of the outcome of the vote, which will be recorded as an addendum to the last minutes of the ABSNC.

ABSNC

POLICY 11 REVIEW OF AND CHANGES TO BYLAWS, POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

DATE APPROVED:

DATE REVIEWED: 5-09

DATE REVISED: 6-03; 5-09

Policy

Section 11.1 Timetable for Review of Documents

ABSNC Bylaws and Policies and Procedures will be reviewed in even –numbered years.

ABSNC Accreditation Standards will be reviewed in odd numbered years.

The ABSNC Secretary/Treasurer is responsible for ensuring review of these documents within the stated timetable.

Section 11.2 Approval of Changes to Bylaws

Amendments to ABSNC Bylaws must be approved by the ABSNC members (accredited organizations).

Proposed Bylaws amendments are made by the Board of Directors and sent to the members at least 30 days prior to a meeting where members are asked to vote on the amendments.

The method of voting by the ABSNC members shall be determined by the Board of Directors. If the vote takes place at a meeting of the members, then at least two-thirds (2/3) of the members present in person must vote in the affirmative for the proposed amendment to be approved. If the vote is conducted via mail, fax, or email ballot, then for approval at least two-thirds (2/3) of the entire membership must vote in the affirmative.

Section 11.3 Approval of Changes to Policies and Procedures

All policies and procedures will be approved by the ABSNC Board of Directors.

Section 11.4 Approval of New or Changes to the Accreditation Standards

All substantive changes to the Rationale, Criteria, and Required Documentation of the Accreditation Standards shall be posted for a 30 day period of public comment by ABSNC members, ABSNC pool of volunteer psychometricians and the ABNS membership.

New and revised changes to existing accreditation Standards will be approved by the ABSNC Board of Directors after reviewing comments received during the period of public comment.

The date of implementation of new or revised Standards will be determined by the ABSNC Board of Directors.

Procedure

1. The President may appoint an ad-hoc committee to review and make suggestions for revision to the ABSNC Policy and Procedure Manual and the Accreditation Standards.

ABSNC

POLICY 12 FEES

DATE APPROVED: 5-09

DATE REVIEWED

DATE REVISED:

Policy

Section 12.1 Determination of Fees

All fees are determined by the ABSNC Board of Directors and are periodically reviewed and revised as necessary.

Section 12.2 Nonpayment of Fees

Nonpayment of dues or fees occurring 60 days following a final notice will result in loss of ABSNC membership and accreditation status.

Procedures

1. Invoices for fees are disseminated by the national office staff.

2. Timeline:
 - May 1: First fees invoice sent to chief staff officer of ABSNC member organization, or volunteer representative, if appropriate.
 - June 1: Second fees invoice sent to chief staff officer of ABSNC member organization, or volunteer representative, if appropriate.
 - July 1: Fees to be received at national office.
 - August 1: Fees received August 1 or after must be accompanied by a \$250 late fee.
 - Sept 1: Final fees invoice sent.
 - November 1: If fees are not received by national office, accreditation status is terminated.

ABSNC

POLICY 13 TRAVEL AND EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT

DATE APPROVED: 5-09

DATE REVIEWED

DATE REVISED:

Policy

Section 13.1 Reimbursement of Expenses

ABSNC Board members, except for the President, Lead Volunteer Psychometrician and Public Member, are financially supported, in full, by their organization.

The ABSNC President, Lead Volunteer Psychometrician, Public Member, CEO, and other designated individuals (i.e., meeting planner) will be reimbursed for travel and approved expenses that relate to ABSNC business.

Receipts are required for any expenditure of \$20 or more and are requested for items less than \$20 whenever possible.

The ABSNC Board of Directors will determine the daily spending limit for meals, which will be reflected on the Expense Report Form instructions.

Any expense related to changing travel plans (i.e., an airline ticket, early hotel departure, etc.) will be the responsibility of the traveler unless approved by the President.

Procedure:

1. Lodging
 - a. Lodging expenses for approved travelers will be paid for via a master account whenever possible.
 - b. Hotel reservations will be made by the national office for all meetings at pre-approved hotels whose rates have been negotiated by the national office staff.
 - c. Incidental charges, i.e., room service, telephone charges, etc. are not charged directly to ABSNC and must be paid by the individual upon checking out of the hotel. Any requests for reimbursement of expenses should be submitted on the expense report form.
 - d. Upon check out of a hotel, verify that the correct number of nights has been billed. Request a copy of the hotel bill and include it with the expense report if possible.
 - e. ABSNC will pay for lodging as follows: night before meeting, meetings days and night of final meeting day, if satisfactory departure arrangements are not feasible.

POLICY 13

TRAVEL AND EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT (CONTINUED)

3. Travel

- a. Economical coach service will be used for all domestic travel. Reservations should be made 30 days prior to traveling, whenever possible to ensure the most cost-effective fare. If it is more economical to provide for an additional night's hotel stay than a higher airfare, ABSNC will pay for the additional hotel night.
- b. If driving to ABSNC-related activities, mileage will be reimbursed at a rate consistent with IRS guidelines as approved by the Board of Directors. The total amount must not exceed the amount of an economy airline ticket.
- c. Any airfare over \$450 will need pre-approval by the CEO.

3. Expense Reimbursement

- a. Expense reports must be submitted to the national office within two weeks following incurrence of an expense or attendance at a meeting. Receipts shall be attached to the expense report.
- b. All expense reports must be approved by the CEO prior to reimbursement. Expense reports submitted by the CEO will be approved by the Treasurer prior to reimbursement.

ABSNC

POLICY 14 FINANCIAL POLICIES

DATE APPROVED:

DATE REVIEWED: 5-09

DATE REVISED: 6-03| 10-08; 5-09

Policy

Section 14.1 Approval of Policies

All financial policies and procedures will be approved by the ABSNC Board of Directors.

Section 14.2 Oversight of Policies

The Secretary/Treasurer of ABSNC shall be responsible for ensuring the implementation of all financial policies and procedures and shall review and report the financial status of ABSNC to the Board of Directors at board meetings

Section 14.3 Approval of Budget

The annual budget, developed by the Secretary/Treasurer and CEO is presented to the Board of Directors by August 1 of each year and approved (or revised) by the Board of Directors.

Section 14.4 Responsibility of CEO

The CEO shall (1) maintain the operating funds of ABSNC in federally insured accounts; (2) sign and disperse checks; and (3) transfer funds between accounts as deemed beneficial to the organization.

Section 14.5 Checks/Authorization of Check Signers

All checks written to the CEO and checks for amounts in excess of \$5,000 will be countersigned by the Secretary/Treasurer or President. In the absence of the CEO, checks will be signed by both the Secretary/Treasurer and President.

The Board of Directors will approve check signers on an annual basis.

Section 14.6 Reporting financial status to the Board of Directors

The ABSNC checking account reconciliation and checks, Profit and Loss Statement, and Balance Sheet will be sent to the Secretary/Treasurer on a monthly basis. The Profit and Loss Statement and Balance Sheet will be sent to the Board of Directors on a monthly basis. The Board of Directors will review the most current Profit and Loss Statement and Balance Sheet at each board meeting.

Section 14.7 Selection of Accounting Firm

The CEO will select an accounting firm located in the vicinity of the national office. This firm may be the same accounting firm used by ABNS.

POLICY 14 FINANCIAL POLICIES (CONTINUED)

On an annual basis, the ABSNC Board of Directors will approve the accounting firm to conduct the current year-end audit or review and prepare the tax return.

ABSNC

POLICY 15 DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF REVIEW TEAMS

DATE APPROVED:

DATE REVIEWED: 5-09

DATE REVISED: 6-03; 5-09

Policy

Section 15.1 Responsibility of Review Teams

ABSNC Review Teams are responsible for: (1) conducting reviews of organizational applications for initial accreditation and reaccreditation; and (2) recommending that the ABSNC Board of Directors approve or not approve initial accreditation and reaccreditation.

Section 15.2 Maintaining Confidentiality/Avoiding Conflict of Interest/Unauthorized Representation

It is expected that Review Teams and team members conduct reviews conscientiously, fairly, and impartially, recusing themselves from said review in the event that a conflict of interest is identified. All Review Team members must sign the ABSNC Confidentiality, Conflict of Interest, and Unauthorized Representation Statement as found in Policy 20 and adhere to commonly accepted standards of ethical behavior.

Section 15.3 Composition of Review Teams

Review Team members may be ABSNC board members, volunteer psychometricians, and non board member appointees from accredited organizations. Each member organization of ABSNC will be asked to provide a representative to serve in the Review Team pool of non board review team members. The qualifications to serve in this pool are the same as the qualifications to serve as an ABSNC board member.

Each ABSNC Review Team will be composed of: (1) a volunteer psychometrician; one member of the ABSNC board of directors; and one other member. At least one member of the Review Team must be an RN.

No more than one individual from the same accredited organization may serve on a Review Team.

Review teams and the Review Team Leader will be appointed by the CEO, in consultation with the President.

Section 15.4 Review of Advanced Practice Examinations

When reviewing an application for initial accreditation or reaccreditation of an Advanced Practice certification program, one member of the Review Team must represent an Advanced Practice certification program accredited by ABSNC.

Section 15.6 Meetings

Meetings (usually held as teleconferences) of the Review Team are called at the discretion of the Team Leader.

Section 15.7 Orientation of New Review Team Members

The President of ABSNC will ensure that an orientation is provided to new Review Team Members. Upon their first review experience, the Review Team Leader will serve as a mentor and mentor them through the process.

POLICY 15 DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF REVIEW TEAMS (CONTINUED)

Procedure

1. Accreditation applications are distributed to Review Team members by staff.
2. All reviewers of a given application are to review all portions of the application.
3. All correspondence, including requests for additional information, will be sent to the applicant organization by the national office. The Review Team Leader will draft the letter and send to the national office for dissemination.
4. The review process should be completed within sixty (60) working days of receipt of the application provided no additional information is requested by the Review Team. If additional information is required, the review timelines outlined in Policy 16 must be followed.
5. After completing the application review, the Review Team members will complete *the Review Summary and Recommendation Form* and submit the form to the Team Leader.
6. Review Team Members will retain all application materials until instructed to return them to the applicant organization by the Review Team Leader. A FedEx or UPS label will be included with the application so that the Review team member can return it to the applicant organization. In the event that the application has been submitted on CD, the CD may be returned or destroyed, as requested by the applicant organization.
7. The organization making application is responsible for all expenses related to shipping of ABSNC materials (including those for the original application).
8. If a 4th member is assigned to a Review Team for purposes of orientation, the office copy of the application materials will be sent to that Review Team member. Upon completion of the review, the Review Team Leader will return his/her copy of the application materials to the ABSNC office.

ABSNC

POLICY 16 ACCREDITATION APPLICATION PROCESS AND AGREEMENTS

DATE APPROVED: **DATE REVIEWED: 5-09** **DATE REVISED: 6-03; 3-06; 10-06; 5-09**

Policy

Section 16.1 Agreement to Abide by Policies and Procedures

Organizations making application to ABSNC agree to abide by all policies and procedures of ABSNC and to facilitate any on-site visits ABSNC may deem necessary to the process of verifying information related to accreditation.

Section 16.2 Eligibility to Submit an Accreditation Application

Specialty nursing certification boards seeking accreditation of a certification program(s) must submit an accreditation application. Membership in ABNS is not a requirement.

Section 16.3 Approval of Accreditation/Reaccreditation

Approval from two-thirds of the ABSNC Board of Directors is required for approval of an application during an official business meeting, or a unanimous vote if voting by email or fax ballot.

Section 16.4 Accreditation Period

Accreditation Period: Application organizations seeking initial accreditation will be granted accreditation for a 5 year period, retroactive to the date of approval of the application.

Section 16.5 Renewal of Accreditation

Accreditation may be renewed each year contingent upon continuing compliance with Standards, completion of the annual report, and payment of annual fees, for a total of five years, after which time the organization must reapply for accreditation. A renewal notice is sent to accredited organizations 15 months and 12 months prior to the expiration of accreditation status. Applications must be submitted six month prior to the expiration date.

Section 16.6 Confidentiality of Accreditation Application

All application materials will be treated confidentially. Applicant information is shared among ABSNC members and Review Team members only. No reviewer may disclose or release information contained in an application. After an application review is completed, one copy of the application will be retained by ABSNC and all other copies will be returned to the applicant organization. If the application has been submitted on CD, the CD may be returned or destroyed as requested by the applicant organization. Notes in the possession of individual reviewers must be destroyed.

Section 16.7 Basis for Accreditation

ABSNC shall award accreditation only when all accreditation Standards have been met.

**POLICY 16 ACCREDITATION APPLICATION PROCESS AND AGREEMENTS
(CONTINUED)**

To be eligible for accreditation, certifying organizations must provide evidence that each criterion is met or provide acceptable rationale for an exception.

Section 16.8 Timeframe for Submitting an Application

Applications seeking initial accreditation may be submitted at any time throughout the year. Each application will be individually evaluated by an ABSNC Review Team. Refer to the attached timeline for information about review timelines and the timeline for resubmitting additional documentation.

Section 16.9 Request for Additional Information

The applicant organization may be contacted for additional information or clarification. If it is necessary to request additional material more than two times, the organization must reapply and application fees paid again.

Section 16.10 Denial of Accreditation

In instances in which accreditation is not awarded, the applicant organization will be given specific reasons for the denial of accreditation. A copy of ABSNC “Reconsideration and Appeal of Accreditation Decision” Policy and Procedure will accompany notice of denial of accreditation.

Procedure

1. Instructions are detailed in the document *Accreditation Process – Instructions and Required Documentation*, available on the ABSNC website. This document and other helpful information for submitting an application will also be sent to applicant organizations upon request.
2. Four copies of the application and supporting documentation must be submitted to the ABSNC office. One copy is retained by the office and the other three copies are disseminated to Review Team members. If a 4th member is assigned to a Review Team for purposes of orientation, the office copy of the application materials will be sent to that Review Team member. Upon completion of the review, the 4th Review Team member will return his/her copy of the application materials to the ABSNC office.
3. The applicant organization is responsible for all expenses related to shipping of materials, including those for the original application. The applicant organization will receive email notification of receipt of the application by the office.
4. The application and all supporting documentation must be submitted to the office. It is recommended that ABSNC office be notified prior to sending an application and that a carrier with tracking capabilities be used.
5. A non-refundable application fee must accompany any application. Checks should be made payable to ABNS. Once ABSNC is incorporated and a bank account opened in their name, checks will be made payable to ABSNC.
6. The application Cover Sheet must be submitted as page 1 of **each** copy of the application.

POLICY 16

ACCREDITATION APPLICATION PROCESS AND AGREEMENTS (CONTINUED)

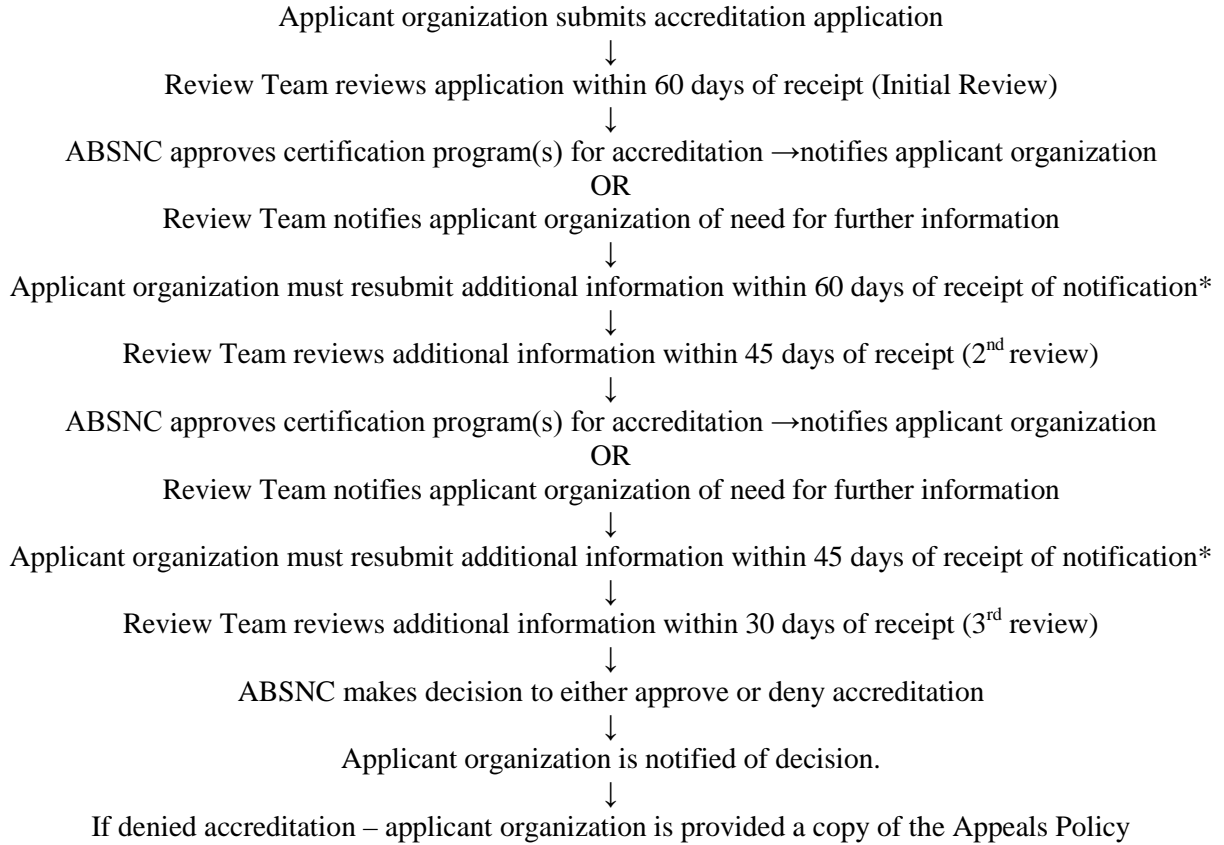
7. The application and all supporting documentation **must** be submitted as described in *Accreditation Process – Instructions and Required Documentation*.
8. A non-refundable application fee, made payable to ABNS, must be submitted along with the application and documentation. Applications submitted without the application fee will not be processed and will not be returned. Regular member organizations benefit from reduced accreditation application fees. The application fee for non-members is \$500 per examination submitted. The fee for members is \$250 for 1 – 2 examinations, and \$500 for 3 – 5 examinations.
9. Multiple examinations must be submitted at the same time to obtain the reduced fees. No more than 5 examinations from the same organization will be reviewed in any three-month period.
10. The applicant organization must provide three Fed-Ex or UPS shipping slips, and include the organization's Fed Ex or UPS account number. ABSNC will complete the slips in order to send the applications to the three Review Team members.
11. Upon notification of approval, the applicant organization will pay annual accreditation fees within 60 days of receipt of notification of approval. An invoice will be sent to the organization by the office.
12. Annual renewal fees are based upon a formula using per candidate numbers at year-end. The fees are \$0.25 for each of the first 25,000 certificants and \$0.10 for each certificant over 25,000. The accreditation fees are capped at \$10,000 per year. Fees are prorated depending on the time of year an application is submitted. The ABSNC fiscal year begins July 1.
13. The application is reviewed using the current, published edition of the Standards at the time of application. The review process and discussion therein is confidential.
14. Reviewers will complete the Review Form independently, and submit their findings to the Team Leader who will forward the information to the CEO in writing.
15. Additional information may be requested from the applicant organization, if there are deficiencies in or questions about the application. All requests for additional information will be made via email and in writing.
16. When the review is completed, the Review Team Leader directs the CEO to prepare a written recommendation that reflects the consensus of the reviewers for presentation to the full ABSNC. The CEO issues a request for approval via email ballot to the ABSNC, excluding any individual who may sit on ABSNC and who has submitted the application or is a representative of the applicant organization. Email ballots are returned to the CEO. A vote taken by an email ballot must be unanimous in its approval. If not unanimous, a conference call will be held.
17. Within 5 days of a Review Team decision, the ABSNC Review Team Leader will notify the CEO of the accreditation decision. The Team Leader will draft a summary of the application review findings to be included in the notification letter, to be mailed and emailed to the applicant organization by the office. The notification letter will be sent under the signature of the President.

POLICY 16

**ACCREDITATION APPLICATION PROCESS AND AGREEMENTS
(CONTINUED)**

18. In instances in which accreditation is not awarded, the applicant will be given specific reasons for the denial of accreditation. A copy of ABSNC “Reconsideration and Appeal of Accreditation Decisions” Policy and Procedure will accompany notice of denial of accreditation. All notices, letters and communications related to non-approval will be sent by registered mail, return receipt requested, or by other traceable methods that require a signature.
19. Applicants not approved by ABSNC may use the Reconsideration and Appeal process or may reapply for accreditation. If the organization elects to reapply for accreditation, all fees must be paid again.
20. The applicant organization will be sent a certificate recognizing compliance with Standards. The organization will be recognized for achieving accreditation of its certification program(s) at the next scheduled ABNS Assembly meeting.
21. One copy of the application and associated information remains the property of the ABSNC and will be stored in the office archives along with copies of any correspondence. Remaining copies will be returned to the applicant organization. If the application has been submitted on CD, the remaining copies of the CDs will be returned or destroyed by Review Team members, as requested by the applicant organization.
22. While the most recently approved accreditation application for each certification is retained by the office, ABSNC reserves the right to retain older applications for the purpose of archiving material for research purposes.

Timeline



Applicant organization is given the opportunity of resubmitting additional materials up to 2 times. After that, they must either appeal, or start again, including payment of application fees.

*Applicant organization may submit a written letter to the ABSNC for special consideration of deadline.

ABSNC

POLICY 17 REACCREDITATION APPLICATION PROCESS

DATE APPROVED: DATE REVIEWED: 5-09 DATE REVISED: 6-03; 9-05; 10-06; 10-08; 5-09

Policy

Section 17.1

Reaccreditation of nursing specialty certification programs is granted for five (5) years after the initial approval, following review and approval of submitted evidence of continued compliance with current Standards and criterion on an annual basis.

Accreditation Period: Applicant organizations seeking reaccreditation of certification programs will be granted reaccreditation for a 5 year period, beginning retroactively to the date of expiration.

Section 17.2

Reaccreditation follows the same process and applies the Standards/criteria as described for initial recognition (See Policy 16), in addition to the procedures described below. Organizations seeking reaccreditation are held to the Standards in place at the time the renewal notice is sent.

Section 17.3

As with any application, all materials are treated confidentially. No ABSNC reviewer may disclose or release information contained in an application.

Procedure

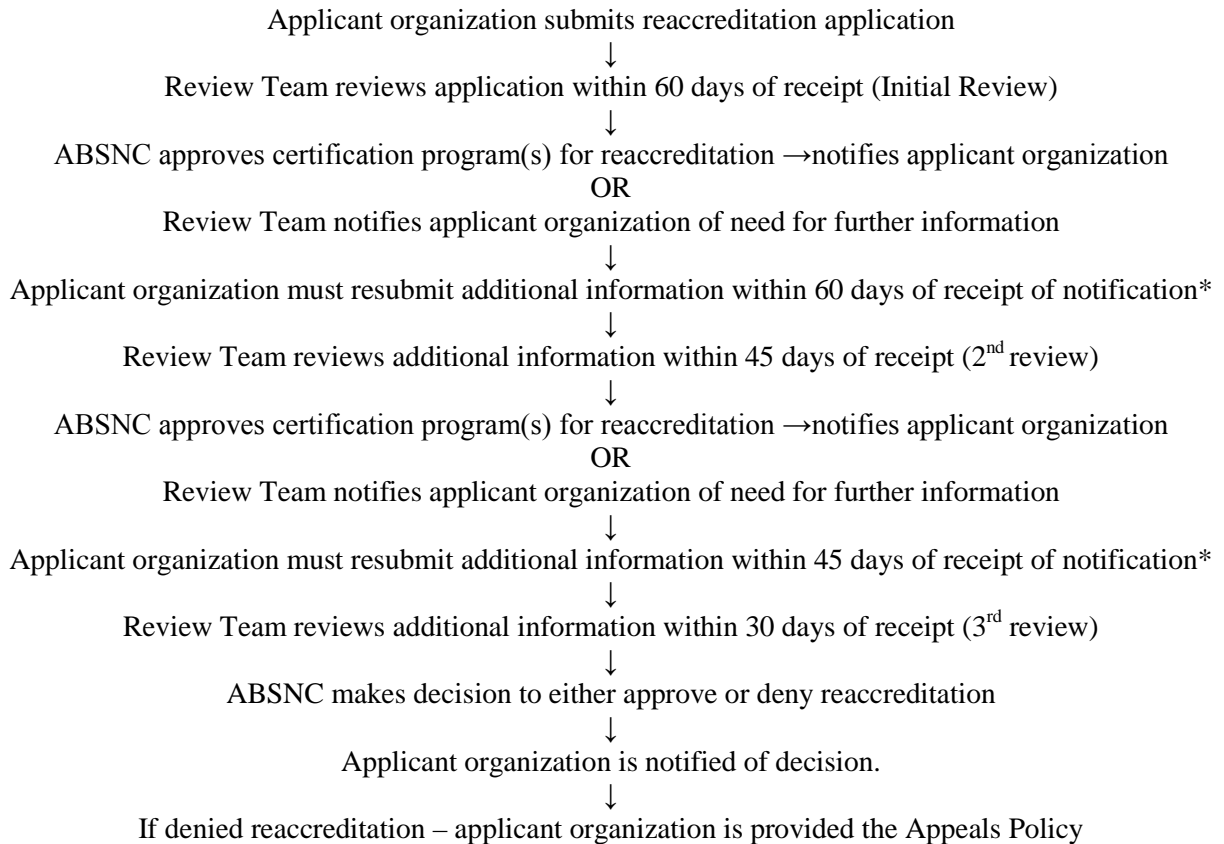
1. Fifteen months prior to the expiration of the current accreditation, office staff will email organizations a renewal notice including written notification of requirements, Standards, criteria, and forms for Reaccreditation of their certification programs. A second renewal notice is emailed 12 months prior to expiration.
2. Four copies of the accreditation application must be submitted to the office no later than six (6) months prior to the date of expiration of the current accreditation. No extensions will be given.
3. All ABSNC Standards must be addressed in the Reaccreditation application. The application will be reviewed using the current, published edition of the Standards at the time of application.
4. If additional materials are requested of applicant organizations more than two times, the organization must reapply and application fees must be paid again.
5. Refer to the attached timeline for the timeline related to review of materials and resubmission of requested information.

POLICY 17

REACCREDITATION APPLICATION PROCESS (CONTINUED)

- 6. One copy of the Reaccreditation application and associated information remains the property of the ABSNC and will be stored in the ABSNC archives. ABSNC reserves the right to retain older applications for the purpose of archiving material for research purposes. Reviewers will return applications to the applicant organization when instructed to do so by the ABSNC Review Team leader. If the application has been submitted on CD, reviewers may destroy the CD.

Timeline



Applicant organization is given the opportunity of resubmitting additional materials up to 2 times. After that, they must either appeal, or start again, including payment of application fees.

*Applicant organization may submit a written letter to the ABSNC for special consideration of deadline.

ABSNC

POLICY 18 RECONSIDERATION AND APPEAL OF ACCREDITATION DECISIONS

DATE APPROVED:

DATE REVIEWED: 5-09

DATE REVISED: 6-03; 5-09

Policy

Section 18.1 Requests for Reconsideration and Appeal

Applicant organizations may request reconsideration of a decision made by ABSNC to deny initial accreditation or reaccreditation. If reconsideration is denied or unsuccessful, applicant organizations may request an appeal.

Section 18.2 Record Keeping and Confidentiality

Notes and records made during consideration of the application or during the reconsideration and appeals processes are confidential. Appellant organizations may not have access to confidential notes and records made by ABSNC.

Section 18.3 Correspondence

All communication related to a request for reconsideration and a subsequent appeal must be in writing and sent to the ABSNC national office as described below.

Procedure

1. Within 30 days following the postmark of written notification by the ABSNC regarding their decision not to accredit a certification examination(s), applicant organizations may request reconsideration of the decision.
2. In the request for reconsideration, the organization may present only written information and data relevant to the Standards that the ABSNC cited as the reason(s) for the decision not to accredit.
3. A copy of any communication related to a request for reconsideration and a subsequent appeal will be forwarded to the ABSNC President by staff.
4. The request for reconsideration must be sent by registered mail, return receipt requested or by traceable carrier, signature required, to the ABSNC Office as follows:

ABSNC
610 Thornhill Lane
Aurora, OH 44202
Attn: President

5. The CEO will forward a copy of the request to the ABSNC President and original Review Team members.
6. The original review team will discuss the information and data contained in the request for reconsideration and will render a decision within 60 days of the receipt of the request for reconsideration.

POLICY 18**RECONSIDERATION AND APPEAL OF ACCREDITATION DECISIONS
(CONTINUED)**

7. Within 30 days of receipt of communication from ABSNC that reconsideration is denied or the decision not overturned, the organization denied accreditation may request a hearing with the Appeals Committee.
8. The Appeals Committee will consist of two (2) elected members of the ABSNC Board of Directors, who were not involved in the initial review of the application, and the Public Member. A Psychometrician will be available for consultation to the Appeals Committee. One of the elected members of the ABSNC will be appointed by the ABSNC President to serve as the Chair of the Appeals Committee.
9. Once the Appeals Committee Chair is appointed, all communication related to the appeal from the appellant will be sent to the Chief Executive Officer who will forward a copy to the Appeals Committee Chair.
10. Hearings will be held at a time and place decided by the Chair of the Appeals Committee and may be scheduled at the next face-to-face meeting of ABSNC. If the appellant wishes to have an earlier hearing, the hearing will be held by electronic means.
11. The appellant organization may have its own representative and two additional persons present at the hearing.
12. The ABSNC may have an attorney present for consultation at the hearing.
13. A record of the proceedings will be made.
14. Only information presented in the request for reconsideration may be discussed at the hearing.
15. Prior to opening the appeal process, the appellant organization must pay a fee of \$10,000, which will be returned to the organization in full if the organization is successful in its appeal. In the event the organization is unsuccessful in its appeal, all ABSNC expenses related to the appeal, including attorney fees, will be deducted from the guarantee and the remainder, if any, will be returned to the organization.
16. The Chair of the Appeals Committee may contact the appellant for any additional clarification required to make a decision. All verbal communications will be followed up with written confirmation.
17. Within sixty (60) days of receipt of all information considered in the appeal, the Appeals Committee Chair will notify the appellant of their decision.
18. The Appeals Committee may overturn the Review Team's decision to deny accreditation by a two-thirds vote of the voting members of the Appeals Committee. The Appeals Committee Chair communicates the findings and recommendation of the Appeals Committee to the ABSNC Board of Directors. The ABSNC Board of Directors makes the final decision.
19. The appellant will receive notification of the outcome of the Appeals process by registered mail or traceable carrier, signature required.
20. Within 30 days of withdrawal of accreditation status, the certifying organization and any other relevant organization (e.g. membership organization) must remove all references to accreditation by ABSNC from any published materials, including websites.

POLICY 18

**RECONSIDERATION AND APPEAL OF ACCREDITATION DECISIONS
(CONTINUED)**

- a. The ABSNC Appeals Committee is responsible for ensuring this is done.
- b. If all references to accreditation by ABSNC from any published materials, including websites, are not removed, the CEO will send a follow up letter to the certifying organization by registered mail or traceable carrier, signature required. If the requested action is not taken in response to this letter, the ABSNC attorney will be contacted regarding next steps.

ABSNC

POLICY 19

ANNUAL COMPLIANCE REPORTING AND REPORTING MAJOR CERTIFICATION PROGRAM CHANGES

DATE APPROVED:

DATE REVIEWED: 5-09

DATE REVISED: 6-03; 5-09

Policy

Section 19.1 Reporting Changes

ABSNC is to be informed in writing of any changes to an accredited certification program(s) that may affect compliance with Accreditation Standards. The ABSNC CEO will receive, copy, and forward the program change reports to the ABSNC President and Lead Psychometrician. If the report poses concerns relative to an organization's continuing compliance with Standards, the report may be sent to the full ABSNC Board of Directors for review and possible action.

Section 19.2 Failure to Submit Annual Compliance Report/Failure to Demonstrate Continued Compliance

ABSNC reserves the right to withdraw accreditation in the event that organizations do not respond to requests for information within 30 days or when changes to certifications prevent the certification from meeting accreditation Standards.

Procedure

1. All organizations with accredited certification programs(s) will provide an annual compliance report relative to the status of their accredited certification programs. The annual report must be submitted to the ABSNC office postmarked (either by mail or electronically) by September 30. The annual reports will be sent to the ABSNC President and Lead Psychometrician for review.
2. In addition, when organizations with accredited certification programs are planning a major program change, such as in program structure, eligibility, bylaws, or other changes that relate directly to the Accreditation Standards, and those affecting public membership on the board, written notice is to be given to the ABSNC within 30 days of the change.
3. Notice must be in writing and should consist of a general description of the changes and any anticipated effect on compliance with the Standards. ABSNC will determine if further evaluation is necessary.
4. It is the responsibility of the ABSNC to give constructive feedback about criteria to the organization proposing a change and how the proposed changes may affect accreditation status.
5. If further evaluation is necessary, the originating organization will present the following information to ABSNC:
 - a. A description of the certification changes and planned implementation dates;
 - b. An assessment of how the changes will affect the current certification candidates; and
 - c. An evaluation of how a new product affects compliance with accreditation Standards.

POLICY 19

**ANNUAL COMPLIANCE REPORTING AND REPORTING MAJOR
CERTIFICATION PROGRAM CHANGES (CONTINUED)**

7. At the completion of the review of compliance reports, the ABSNC President will send an email report summarizing any issues raised in the annual compliance reports to the ABSNC Board of Directors.

ABSNC

POLICY 20 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS, CONFIDENTIALITY, CONFLICT OF INTEREST, AND UNAUTHORIZED REPRESENTATION

DATE APPROVED:

DATE REVIEWED: 5-09

DATE REVISED: 6-03; 5-09

Policy

Section 20.1 Conduct

Members of the ABSNC Board of Directors and non Board Review Teams must conduct themselves in a manner that justifies the trust of the public and those organizations that make application to the ABSNC.

Members of the ABSNC Board of Directors and non Board Review Teams are held to a standard of conduct consistent with professionalism, and as described in this Policy and Procedure and the ABSNC *Confidentiality, and Conflict of Interest and Unauthorized Representation* form. Failure to maintain these Standards of conduct may result in removal from the ABSNC Board of Directors and non Board Review Team pool.

Section 20.2 Confidentiality, Conflict of Interest and Unauthorized Representation Form

Newly elected ABSNC board members and appointed non board Review Team members are required to sign the *ABSNC Confidentiality, Conflict of Interest and Unauthorized Representation* form prior to their first ABSNC board meeting or first review.

Procedure

1. Application information will remain confidential and will be discussed only in the context of ABSNC reviews among the ABSNC Board of Directors or non Board Review Team members. No reviewer may disclose or release information contained in an application or the names of the members of a Review Team.
2. The application review process and discussion between Review Team members is confidential. The Review Team will share only pertinent data and recommendations with the full ABSNC Board of Directors and applications will not be discussed outside the ABSNC.
3. ABSNC members or non Board Review Team members will not be assigned to take part in the review of applications from their own organization or organizations for which any cause for questions of conflict of interest might arise. Because only individual ABSNC board members and non Board Review Team members have full knowledge of their relationships, it is the responsibility of the individual member to recuse themselves from the review of any application in which there is potential for conflict of interest and to notify the ABSNC President in the event their circumstances change relative to their eligibility to remain a member of the ABSNC Board of Directors or non Board Review Team members or to review specific applications.
4. Members of the ABSNC Board of Directors and non Board Review Teams have a responsibility to destroy all notes and related materials in a manner that protects the organization making application. After an application review is completed, one application will be retained by ABNS and all others returned to the applicant organization. All notes held by individual reviewers will be destroyed.
5. Members may be removed from the ABSNC Board of Directors or non Board Review Teams for substandard performance, ethical breaches, or for any fundamental conflict of interest with the purposes of ABSNC.

POLICY 20 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS, CONFIDENTIALITY, CONFLICT OF INTEREST, and UNAUTHORIZED REPRESENTATION (CONTINUED)

6. An individual ABSNC board member or non Board Review Team member who possesses information that might affect the response of ABSNC to a current applicant organization, is honor bound to disclose this information in writing to the ABSNC President. The President, in turn, will determine whether or not an investigation should take place. If an applicant organization is denied accreditation based on the investigation, the applicant organization may employ the Reconsideration and Appeal of Accreditation Decisions Policy and Procedure process.

**ABSNC
CONFIDENTIALITY, CONFLICT OF INTEREST, AND UNAUTHORIZED REPRESENTATION
STATEMENT**

As a member of ABSNC Board of Directors or non board Review Team, individuals may be subjected to three situations that are of particular concern and which are addressed in this document. These situations include (1) coming in contact with information regarding other organizations' certification programs, tests, or circumstances, or information about individuals that must be kept confidential; (2) occasions in which their personal interests, or the interests of other organizations with which they are involved may appear to be in conflict with the best interests of the ABSNC and/or the American Board of Nursing Specialties; and (3) acting outside their authority. The purpose of this statement is to clarify and establish an agreement regarding the individual's responsibility in these matters and to avoid any assumption or appearance of conflict of interest, unauthorized representation, or breach of confidentiality.

Therefore, as a condition of being elected to serve on the ABSNS Board of Directors or appointed as a non board Review Team member, you agree to the following:

1. **Confidentiality** - Confidentiality refers to the responsibility not to divulge information given in the belief that it will be kept secret (not be disclosed). Information must be kept confidential and not disclosed at any time and under any circumstances, other than as directed by the Board of Directors.
 - a. You will not disclose or cause to be disclosed to anyone outside of the ABSNC Board of Directors, non Board Review Team, or staff, any confidential information related to any certification program, unless otherwise directed by the ABSNC Board of Directors
 - b. Upon expiration of ABSNC board member or non board Review Team terms, all confidential materials that have been acquired during the course of the your term must be promptly destroyed.
 - c. Information related to accreditation applications, such as test items, scoring decisions, pass rates, etc. will not be discussed or disclosed outside of the ABSNC Board of Directors and non board Review Teams.
 - d. Documents obtained as part of an accreditation application or reaccreditation application must be stored in a secure location while in the possession of the ABSNC board member or non board Review Team member and must be returned to the applicant organization as directed by the Review Team Leader when action on the application is completed.
2. **Conflict of Interest** - A conflict of interest refers to an incompatibility between one's obligation to the good of the organization and one's self-interest.
 - a. Members of ABSNC Board of Directors or non board member Review Team members will not engage in actions that may constitute an actual, apparent, or potential conflict of interest with the mission and activities of the ABSNC or American Board of Nursing Specialties.
 - b. Duality of interest, or possible conflict of interest on the part of any member of the ABSNC Board of Directors or non board Review Team members shall be fully disclosed to the President, prior to engaging in any discussion, taking part in any decision making, or entering into any formal relationship that involves a potential or actual conflict.

**ABSNC
CONFIDENTIALITY, CONFLICT OF INTEREST, AND UNAUTHORIZED REPRESENTATION
STATEMENT**

- c. No member of the ABSNC Board of Directors or non board Review Team will take part in any decision or action of ABSNC or the American Board of Nursing Specialties in which he/she may have a financial or other material interest except when authorized by the Board after full disclosure of the facts.
 - d. All right, title and interest in any information or material developed, conceived, or created relating to any component of the ABSNC will be assigned to ABSNC, including any and all copyrighted information, unless a specific written agreement exists prior to its development.
3. ***Unauthorized Representation*** - Unauthorized representation refers to presenting oneself, or allowing another to present you, as having authority to represent ABSNC in a manner that exceeds that set forth in the Bylaws, Policy and Procedure, or job descriptions of the ABSNC or the ABSNC that is specifically approved by the Board of Directors, or the CEO of ABSNC, acting in their behalf.
- a. No individual may act, or speak on behalf of ABSNC except as specifically authorized or approved by the Board of Directors, or CEO. Public communication regarding ABSNC is the exclusive prerogative of the Board of Directors and CEO.
 - b. Members of ABSNC or non board Review Team members will not reference their participation with respect to ABSNC in a false, misleading, or deceptive manner.
 - c. No individual may use the logo or any terminology that implies sponsorship, endorsement, or approval of ABSNC without prior approval of the Board of Directors or CEO.

Your signature on this document confirms understanding and acceptance of these conditions. I have read, understand, and agree to comply with the above conditions.

Signature

Date

ABSNC

POLICY 21 QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

DATE APPROVED:

DATE REVIEWED: 5-09

DATE REVISED: 6-03; 5-09

Policy

Section 21.1

The ABSNC will maintain a quality improvement program (QIP).

Procedure

1. The QIP will consist of the following three components: (a) processes focused on education of ABSNC board members and non board Review Team members; (b) processes intended to improve and/or measure inter-rater reliability, and (c) attention to improving elements of ABSNC's work, particularly those from which any issue has arisen.
2. All members of the ABSNC Board of Directors and non board Review Team members who have not had previous experience in reviewing accreditation applications will receive a formal orientation, conducted by a board member(s) appointed by the President, the CEO, and the Lead Volunteer Psychometrician, as appropriate.
3. Consistency of Review Team decisions will be evaluated by the Board of Directors every two years in the even year to assess the congruence of various assessors' evaluations of applications to Standards. If remediation or improvement in standard clarity is indicated, action will be taken by the next meeting to begin correction.
4. As issues arise that indicate a potential for improving the quality of the ABSNC's processes, the issue will be studied and corrective action taken when indicated.
5. Following the completion of an accreditation and reaccreditation process, the CEO will send the applicant organization an evaluation form to complete regarding the accreditation process.
6. The ABSNC President and CEO will review the evaluation feedback to determine if a potential for improvement of the accreditation process is indicated. The CEO will summarize the feedback received between each ABSNC meeting and disseminate to the Board of Directors.

ABSNC

POLICY 22

REVOCAION OF ACCREDITATION STATUS DUE TO MISCONDUCT / FAILURE TO MAINTAIN COMPLIANCE WITH ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

DATE APPROVED:

DATE REVIEWED: 5-09

DATE REVISED: 6-03; 5-09

Policy

Section 22.1 Maintaining Compliance

Organizations accredited through the ABSNC are required to continue to meet all the applicable requirements from one accreditation period to the next. Accreditation status may be sanctioned, suspended or revoked if continued compliance with Standards does not occur.

Section 22.2 Misconduct

Accreditation status may be sanctioned, suspended or revoked if the accredited organization is found to have engaged in the following types of misconduct:

1. Falsification of information on the initial accreditation and/or reaccreditation application;
2. Failure to maintain compliance with any of the accreditation Standards;
3. Nonpayment of fees;
4. Failure to submit the required annual compliance report;
5. Falsification of any information requested by ABSNC;
6. Misrepresentation of ABSNC accreditation status.

Section 22.3 Submitting a Complaint

Any individual or organization may submit information to ABSNC alleging noncompliance with any one of the Standards or misconduct.

ABSNC may also initiate an investigation if it suspects that noncompliance or misconduct has occurred.

Section 22.4 Confidentiality

ABSNC will take all reasonable measures to ensure that all materials regarding a complaint are kept confidential.

Procedure

The following procedures describe the process that ABSNC will use to consider all complaints and take appropriate disciplinary action, including sanctions, suspension, or revocation of accreditation.

POLICY 22

REVOCAION OF ACCREDITATION STATUS DUE TO MISCONDUCT / FAILURE TO MAINTAIN COMPLIANCE WITH ACCREDITATION STANDARDS (CONTINUED)

1. Complaint

- a. Complaints must be submitted in writing to ABSNC at the following address: ABSNC, c/o Bonnie Niebuhr, CEO, 610 Thornhill Lane, Aurora, OH 44202. Only written, signed complaints will be considered. The complainant's name will not be disclosed to anyone other than ABSNC board members.
- b. A complaint should include the following:
 - (1) The name and contact information of the person initiating the complaint;
 - (2) A statement of the alleged misconduct or noncompliance;
 - (3) Reasons why misconduct or noncompliance warrants disciplinary action;
 - (4) Supporting documentation, if available, should accompany the written request.
- c. Upon receipt of a complaint, the organization accused of noncompliance or misconduct will be notified that a complaint has been filed against them. The notice will include the basic facts of the complaint, identify the alleged violation, provide a copy of the procedures to be followed regarding the complaint, and request any specific information that should be provided.
- d. The accredited organization may submit a written response and supporting documentation within thirty (30) days of receiving the notification by ABSNC.
- e. The accredited organization may request the opportunity to appear in person or by teleconference before the ABSNC Board of Directors.

2. Investigation and Decision:

- a. The ABSNC Board of Directors will investigate the complaint and may seek additional information. If the written response from the accredited organization is considered satisfactory by the ABSNC Board of Directors, the matter will be considered closed and the organization and complainant will be so notified.
- b. The ABSNC Board of Directors will consider complaints against an accredited organization at regularly scheduled meetings. Review of the matter will not be a trial-type proceeding; instead, ABSNC will review the written record, and the organization against whom the complaint has been made will have an opportunity to appear in person or by telephone to make a presentation and allow ABSNC to ask questions.
- c. Written notification stating the decision of the ABSNC Board of Directors will be sent to the organization within thirty (30) days following the meeting at which the complaint and any investigative results are heard. Notice will also be sent to the individual who initiated the complaint stating only that appropriate action has been taken.
- d. If found to be noncompliant, the accredited organization will be given 90 days to bring the certification program(s) into compliance.

POLICY 22

**REVOCAATION OF ACCREDITATION STATUS DUE TO MISCONDUCT /
FAILURE TO MAINTAIN COMPLIANCE WITH ACCREDITATION
STANDARDS (CONTINUED)**

- e. If found to have engaged in misconduct, ABSNC will determine whether the organization should be sanctioned or accreditation status suspended or revoked.
- 3. Requesting a Hearing with Appeals Board
 - a. Within 30 days of receipt of communication from ABSNC that the ABSNC Board of Directors upholds the decision to withdraw accreditation status for failure to maintain compliance, or to reprimand, sanction, suspend or revoke accreditation status, the certifying organization may request an Appeal as described in Policy 18.
- 4. Staff will post on the ABSNC website the names of organizations who have had accreditation status revoked due to misconduct or who have failed to maintain compliance with accreditation status.

ABSNC

POLICY 23

**STUDENT(S) OF PSYCHOMETRICIANS REVIEWING
ACCREDITATION APPLICATIONS**

DATE APPROVED: 10-10-09

DATE REVIEWED:

DATE REVISED:

Policy/Procedure

1. Requests by volunteer psychometricians to allow their student(s) to review accreditation applications as an educational experience will be handled on a case-by-case basis.
2. The volunteer psychometrician must submit a written (electronic) request to the ABSNC Chief Executive Officer at absnceo@aol.com.
3. ABSNC staff will email a request to the staff of the applicant organization asking permission, using the attached form.
4. If the applicant organization denies the request, the ABSNC staff will inform the psychometrician via email.
5. If the applicant organization grants permission, the ABSNC staff will inform the psychometrician via email and include the ABSNC Policy 20 *Ethical Considerations, Confidentiality, Conflict of Interest and Unauthorized Representation*. The student(s) must sign the enclosed form and return it to the ABSNC office no later than 10 business days from the date of the email.
6. ABSNC staff will notify the Board of Directors of any action taken.



Formerly the ABNS Accreditation Council

<DATE>

TO: <Name of Staff of Applicant Organization>
<Name of Applicant Organization>

FR: Bonnie Niebuhr, MS, RN, CAE
Chief Executive Officer

RE: Permission to allow student review of accreditation application

The volunteer psychometrician assigned to the review of your recently submitted accreditation application is seeking permission to allow <his/her> graduate student(s) to review the application as part of an educational experience for <his/her> class in < >. If you grant permission for this activity, the student will be required to read and sign ABSNC's *Ethical Considerations, Confidentiality, Conflict of Interest and Unauthorized Representation* policy, as attached.

Please return this form to me, via email at your earliest convenience. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

- <Name of Applicant Organization> does not grant permission for a student review of our ABSNC accreditation application.
- <Name of Applicant Organization> grants permission for a student review of our ABSNC accreditation application.

Name of Individual granting permission: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____

610 Thornhill Lane · Aurora, OH 44202
Phone: 330-995-9172 · Fax: 330-995-9743 · E-mail: ABNSCEO@aol.com
www.nursingcertification.org