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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 advance excellence in healthcare through specialty nursing and associated non-RN certification programs.

Section 1.3  Mission
The mission of ABSNC is to recognize quality specialty nursing and associated non-RN 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 non-RN 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.
Policy

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- promote ABSNC accreditation of specialty nursing and associated certification programs.
Policy

Section 2.1 Composition
The Board of Directors of ABSNC, Inc. shall be composed of no less than seven and no more than ten Directors, including the officers: the President, Vice President, and Secretary/Treasurer; at least one Psychometrician; at least one Public Member; and not less than two nor more than five 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
ABSNC assures genuine public input into accreditation policies and decisions. By “public input,” the ABSNC requires a public member who is not, or has ever been a: (1) nurse or other healthcare professional; (2) a current or past employee of a nursing certifying organization or the related specialty membership organization; (3) a non-nursing professional who works or worked closely with nurses in the nursing specialty environment; and (4) employee of a testing vendor. Public members who are
otherwise qualified and have previously served as public members of other boards, including nursing
certification boards are eligible to serve.

**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.
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 organization 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.
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 prior to the beginning of the new fiscal year (in May) and prepare a slate of nominees. If only one nominee has been identified for an office, he or she shall be acknowledged at the board meeting where elections would be held as filling the officer position without election by electronic ballot.
   a. Voting will occur by electronic ballot if more than one nominee for a given office is on the slate. 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.

4. Following the election of officers, the CEO will disseminate an email to the members of ABSNC announcing the election results.

5. 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.
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 appointed by the President will interview the nominees. After the interviews, they will provide a summary recommendation of 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 provides for the development and dissemination of 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.

4. The Vice President and two members of the Board of Directors appointed by the President will interview the nominees. After the interview, they will provide a summary recommendation of a 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 provides for the preparation and dissemination of a press release regarding the appointment of the Lead Volunteer Psychometrician.
Interview Process/Questions for Public Member Nominee(s)

1. Welcome nominee and introduce board members on the call. Describe purpose of the call, acknowledging that while a conference call can be awkward, we will do everything to make nominee feel comfortable.
2. Remind participants to state their name before speaking to help orient the nominee to whom he or she is talking to.
3. As you read about the role of the Public Member with ABSNC:
   a. Why are you interested in this position?
   b. What kind of related board or volunteer experience have you had that might be helpful to you in this role?
   c. What was the most rewarding experience you have had in that capacity?
4. What specific strength and/or vision would you bring to the board table?
5. What would make you feel that your time on the board was successful?
6. Tell us what you know about professional certification and how you believe it contributes to patient safety.
7. Describe what you believe the role of national accreditation of a certification program plays in the current healthcare climate.
8. What experience, both personal and professionally have you had with the healthcare system?
9. Our standard related to public input on our certification boards is stringent in terms of criteria for service. ABSNC believes that public input broadens the perspective of certifying organizations and helps focus attention on consumer concerns as they relate to quality, cost effectiveness and access to care. The public member’s lack of professional, career-related affiliation with a health care organization, related specialty, or vendor precludes actual or perceived conflict of interest.

The certifying organization assures genuine public input into certification policies and decisions. By “public input,” the certifying organization indicates that it requires at least one public member who is not, or has ever been a: (1) nurse or other healthcare professional; (2) a current or past employee of the certifying organization or the related specialty membership organization; (3) a non-nursing professional who works or worked closely with nurses in the nursing specialty environment; and (4) employee of a testing vendor. Public members who are otherwise qualified and have previously served as public members of the same or other boards are eligible to serve the same or other boards subject to the board’s own by-laws. Do you meet these criteria?

10. What does s/he think a public member has to offer in general to an accreditation board such as ABSNC and specifically how does s/he envision their role, skills and talents.
11. Are you able to meet the time commitment that serving on the ABNS Board requires?
12. Do you have any questions for us?

Confirm the next steps in the process.
Each committee member will take his or her own notes and after thanking and excusing the candidate the group will stay on the call after the interview is finished to review candidate strengths and weaknesses.

**Interview Process/Questions for Lead Volunteer Psychometrician Nominee**

1. Welcome candidates and introduce board members on the call. Describe purpose of the call, acknowledging that while a conference call can be awkward, we will do everything to make nominee feel comfortable.
2. Remind participants to state their name before speaking to help orient the nominee to whom he or she is talking to.
3. Have you ever served on a volunteer board? Tell me about that experience.
4. What was your proudest contribution?
5. Share your thoughts about emerging best practices in credentialing, in general, and nursing certification, specifically, and how you keep abreast of them.
6. Tell me about a time when you disagreed with a colleague publically, (i.e., in a meeting, on a board) and how did you/would you handle or disclose these situations?
7. Do you see any issue with time constraints or travel commitments with two meetings per year (October and March), conference calls, and reviews?
8. Do you have any questions for us?
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;
POLICY 4     ABSNC BOARD MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES (CONTINUED)

- 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;
- 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.
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 PSYCHOMETRICIAN 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 PSYCHOMETRICIAN 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 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.

   d. All board votes approved via email shall be ratified at the next board meeting and read into the minutes of that meeting.
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 (1) a nurse or other healthcare professional; (2) a current or past employee of a nursing certifying organization or the related specialty membership organization; (3) a non-nursing professional who works or worked closely with nurses in the nursing specialty environment; and (4) employee of a testing vendor.

6. Public members who are otherwise qualified and have previously served as public members of other boards, including nursing certification boards are eligible to serve.

7. 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.

8. May have any non-healthcare related professional qualifications, but will be especially qualified with a background in law, marketing, or finance.
POLICY 6  ROLE DESCRIPTION FOR PUBLIC MEMBER (CONTINUED)

Section 6.5  Responsibilities

1. Advocates for the interests of the general public, especially in areas where public protection and safety are involved;

2. Advocates for the views of the users of members’ services;

3. Advocates for the value of certification to the public;

4. Becomes thoroughly familiar with ABSNC bylaws, policies, procedures, Standards and processes;

5. Serves on the Appeals Board;

6. Reviews accreditation applications as assigned and participate in discussions related to them;

7. Applies the Standards and Policies and Procedures in an impartial manner;

8. Reads, understands, and signs a Confidentiality, Conflict of Interest and Unauthorized Representations Statement form;

9. Behaves in a manner consistent with the role description and the ABSNC Bylaws and Policies and Procedures;

10. Attends and participates 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 ABSNC Board of Directors 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).
POLICY 8       REMOVAL OF MEMBERS OF THE ABSNC BOARD OF DIRECTORS (CONTINUED)

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.

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 ABNS 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;
POLICY 9 MEETINGS/QUORUM (cont.)

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

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 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.
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 the ABSNC master account 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 checking 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.
2. Travel
   a. Economical coach service will be used for all domestic travel. Reservations should be made at least 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. 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.
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 annually 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. A Review Team member may not be assigned to review an accreditation application of an organization with a competing certification program.

Section 15.3 Composition of Review Teams

Review Team members may be ABSNC board members, former ABSNC board members, volunteer psychometricians, and non board member appointees from accredited organizations. As determined by the President, each member organization of ABSNC may 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 President, in collaboration with the CEO.

Section 15.4 Review of APRN Certification Programs

When reviewing an application for initial accreditation or reaccreditation of an APRN certification program, one member of the Review Team must represent an APRN certification program accredited by ABSNC and possess a Master’s degree in nursing.
DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF REVIEW TEAMS (CONTINUED)

Section 15.6 Meetings

Meetings (usually held as teleconferences) of the Review Team are called at the discretion of the Team Leader. The CEO provides consultation and facilitates the business of the Review Team and 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. The Review Team Leader and other experienced team members will serve as mentors and mentor the new Review Team members through the review process. The Team Leader should contact new members soon after the application has been sent to the Team and prior to the Review Team conference call. The Team Leader will describe the process of the application review, review member expectations and responsibilities and provide suggestions about the process for thoroughly reviewing the application.

Procedure

1. Accreditation applications are distributed to Review Team members by ABSNC office staff. Staff will include a memo with the application that (1) identifies the date application received in the office; (2) the contact information of all Review Team members; and (3) shipping labels to be used to return the flash drives to the office. In addition, staff will notify Review Team members via email and/or phone message when the applications are mailed to them, including delivery date and by what carrier. 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.

2. All reviewers of a given application are to review all portions of the application.

3. The Review Team members review the application independently, then participate in a conference call to reach consensus related to the information provided to document the achievement of each Standard.

4. The Team Leader will contact the Review Team members to determine a date and time for the conference call to review the application. The date must allow a timely response to the applicant organization within the sixty business days response required in Policy 16 (if initial application) or Policy 17 (if reaccreditation application).

5. All correspondence, including requests for additional information, will be sent to the applicant organization by the national office. Within 5 days of a Review Team decision, the Review Team Leader will (1) compile the Review Team’s comments and requests for additional information (if applicable); (2) disseminate to the Review team for review and editing as needed; and (3) email a draft letter (using the attached letter template) to the CEO. Following the CEO’s review of the letter and any clarification needed, the CEO will disseminate the letter to the applicant organization via email and hard copy within the required timeframe. Letters to applicant organizations will be sent under the signature of the ABSNC President.
6. The initial review of an application should be completed within sixty (60) business 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 (if an initial application) or Policy 17 (if a reaccreditation application) must be followed.

7. When the review is completed, the Review Team Leader directs the CEO to prepare a written recommendation that reflects the consensus of the reviewers (to either approve or not approve the certification program(s) for initial accreditation or reaccreditation) 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.

8. Review Team Members will retain all application materials, including Flash Drives, until instructed to return them to the ABSNC office by the Review Team Leader. All flash drives are returned to the ABSNC office for return to the applicant organization or destruction in a secure manner, as requested by the applicant organization. Review Team members will destroy any personal notes or materials created in relation to the application review process at this time.

9. The organization making application is responsible for all expenses related to shipping of ABSNC materials (including those for the original application).
template letter requesting additional information

<Date>

<Name of Contact who submitted application>
>Title
>Name of organization>
<Street Address>
<City/State/Zip>

Dear Name:

Thank you for submitting the <XYZ> certification programs for <initial accreditation> or <reaccreditation>. First and foremost, the Review Team would like to commend <say something positive about application, i.e., well organized, detailed, etc.> <If there are issues on how the application is formatted, may also describe here and how it could be improved to facilitate the review>. However, there is additional information and/or clarification that is needed and listed below:

Standard < x > *(Note which standard)*
<1.1> *(Note the specific number)* Identify what is missing or needs clarification for each element.

The Accreditation Review Team thanks you in advance for your submission of the requested information. This information may be emailed to abns@nursingcertification.org, or if the file is too large to email (more than 9 MB) please mail 5 flash drives. Please submit the additional information requested postmarked no later than <number of business days will be inserted by staff depending on the timeline in Policies 16 or 17> from the date of this letter to the ABSNC office at 610 Thornhill Lane, Aurora, OH, 44202. Upon receiving this information, it will be disseminated to the Review Team assigned to your application. If no further information is needed following this review, the Review Team will discuss your application with the ABSNC Board of Directors and you will be notified shortly thereafter of their decision. The timeline describing the resubmission of additional information is found in <Policy 16 if an initial application> or <Policy 17 if a reaccreditation>. The ABSNC Policy and Procedure Manual is found on the ABNS website under the ABSNC tab.

If you have any questions either email me at abns@nursingcertification.org or call me at 330-995-9172. I will direct your questions to the Review Team. Thank you for resubmitting the requested material.

Sincerely,

ABSNC President
<Date>

Template Letter granting initial accreditation (will be modified for reaccreditation)

<Date>

<Name of Contact who submitted application>
>Title
<Name of organization>
<Street Address>
<City/State/Zip>

Dear <First name>:

Thank you for the additional information that was submitted in response to the ABSNC Review Team request regarding accreditation of the <full name of program> (<credential>) certification program <or programs>. I am pleased to tell you the program has been granted initial accreditation. Accreditation expires as of <month/date/year>. Renewal notices will be sent to <Organization acronym> fifteen months and twelve months in advance of the expiration date and the application seeking reaccreditation is due six months in advance of expiration – <month/day/year>. Staff will provide the information for this paragraph.

Accreditation status is renewable each year for a period of five years upon payment of annual fees and the submission of the required report to ABSNC, assuming no major changes are made to the program that would materially affect its congruence with ABSNC standards. An annual compliance report will be sent to you with your annual dues statement next year.

Accreditation fees are due for the newly accredited program(s). Please send a check for the accreditation fees, payable to ABSNC, within the next 30 days. An invoice is enclosed and a copy should be included with your payment.

<Acronym of organization> and its newly accredited program will be added to the ABNS website under Accreditation. In addition, <Acronym of organization> is encouraged to include a statement about its new accreditation status on relevant material such as your stationary, promotional materials, handbooks, certificates and your website. Examples of language are attached. Many organizations also clip the ABSNC logo from the webpage for use on their own websites with a statement about having an accredited examination programs. A framed certificate describing this achievement is also enclosed.

Thank you for seeking accreditation of your certification program(s) from ABSNC. We recognize that the accreditation process is a stringent one, but one that recognizes the value that an organization like yours places on providing for high quality nursing certification programs.

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Bonnie Niebuhr

Bonnie Niebuhr, MS, RN, CAE
Chief Executive Officer
ABSNC
ABSNC ACCREDITATION FEES INVOICE
(Submit a copy of this invoice along with check)

To calculate the fees due:

Fill in the following:
Total number of certificants = ___________________________

X

30 CENTS PER CERTIFICANT FOR THE 1ST 25,000

= $____________AND

10 CENTS FOR EACH CERTIFICANT OVER 25,000 TO A CAP OF $12,000.

Please submit a check, made payable to ABSNC and mail to:

ABSNC
610 Thornhill Lane
Aurora, OH 44202
Examples of Language Regarding ABSNC Accreditation

For certificates, stationary, etc.:

The (insert your credentials) certification program is accredited by the Accreditation Board for Specialty Nursing Certification, Inc.

For use in your handbooks, the following example may be used. Insert your program’s name and credentials where applicable.

ABSNC ACCREDITATION

The (insert your credentials) certification program was granted accreditation by the Accreditation Board for Specialty Nursing Certification, Inc. (ABSNC) in (insert date). Accreditation status is granted for five years.

ABSNC is the standard setting body for specialty nursing certification programs and offers a very stringent and comprehensive accreditation process. ABPANC provided extensive documentation demonstrating that it has met the 18 ABNS standards of quality.

What does ABSNC accreditation mean for those interested in becoming (insert your credentials) certified or those already certified? It means that a nationally recognized accrediting body has determined that the (insert your credentials) credential[s] are based on a valid and reliable testing process and that the structures in place to administer the examinations meet and even exceed the standards of the certification industry from a legal, regulatory and association management perspective.

For further information about ABNS and the ABSNC accreditation process and standards, visit their website at www.nursingcertification.org.
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 onsite visits deemed necessary by ABSNC to verify information related to accreditation.

Section 16.2 Confidentiality of Accreditation Application
All application materials will be treated confidentially. Applicant information is shared among ABSNC Board of Directors, the Accreditation Manager, and Review Team members only. No information in an application may be released without the expressed consent of the applicant. After an application review is completed, one copy of the application and all related correspondence will be retained by ABSNC. One copy of the application will be returned to the applicant if requested; otherwise, it will be destroyed in a secure manner. Any other related documents or notes used by Review Team members, the Accreditation Manager, or other ABSNC staff also must be destroyed in a secure manner.

Section 16.3 Eligibility to Submit an Accreditation Application
Specialty nursing certification boards seeking accreditation of a certification program must submit an accreditation application. Membership in ABNS is not a requirement. To be eligible for accreditation, certifying organizations must provide evidence of compliance with each standard. In addition, each applicant must report examination statistics for at least 1 year of testing or a minimum of 200 candidates (whichever occurs first).

Section 16.4 Timeframe for Submitting an Application
Certifying organizations seeking initial program accreditation may submit at any time throughout the year. The application must be based on the most current edition of the Standards posted on the ABNS/ABSNC website at the time of submission. The ABSNC office should be notified via email of an organization’s intent to submit an initial application at least 90 calendar days before submission. Each application will be evaluated individually by an ABSNC Review Team. Refer to the attached timeline for additional information about application management.

Section 16.5 Request for Additional Information
During the application review process, the applicant organization may be contacted for additional information or clarification. Organizations are expected to respond to the request for additional information or clarification within the requested time frame. Failure to do so may result in a delay in accreditation decision or a lapse in accreditation. If accreditation cannot be recommended by the Review Team after the third review, the organization must reapply (including payment of additional application fees).

Section 16.6 Approval of Accreditation/Reaccreditation
The Review Team makes its accreditation recommendation to the ABSNC Board of Directors, and the Board has sole authority in rendering a final decision. Approval from two-thirds of the ABSNC Board of Directors is required for approval of an application during an official business meeting, or unanimous approval if voting by email or fax ballot.

Section 16.7 Denial of Accreditation
If accreditation is denied, the applicant organization will be given specific reasons. A copy of ABSNC Policy and Procedure “Reconsideration and Appeal of Accreditation Decision” will accompany notice of denial of accreditation.

Section 16.8 Accreditation Period
Initial certification program accreditation will be granted for a 5-year period beginning on the date of application approval.
Section 16.9 Accreditation Compliance
Organizations granted an ABSNC 5-year accreditation status are required to submit an annual report with payment of annual fees in order to demonstrate continued compliance with ABSNC accreditation standards. Failure to demonstrate annual compliance may result in withdrawal or revocation of accreditation status for the organization’s program. Annual compliance for years 2-4 of the 5-year accreditation period is required in order to renew ABSNC accreditation status.

Section 16.10 Renewal of Accreditation
Accreditation may be renewed for years 2-4 of the accreditation period based on completion of the annual report demonstrating continued compliance with ABSNC standards and payment of annual fees. Before accreditation expiration, the organization must apply for reaccreditation. A renewal notice is sent to accredited organizations 24 months, 15 months, and 12 months before the expiration of accreditation. Applications must be submitted 6 months before the expiration date.

General Procedures
1. Instructions for submitting an initial application and reaccreditation application are detailed in the document Accreditation Process – Instructions and Required Documentation (available on the ABNS/ABSNC website).

2. Accreditation applications and all supporting documentation must be submitted to the ABSNC office on two USB drives. Paper applications and documentation are not accepted. The applicant organization will receive email notification of receipt of the application by the office. ABSNC recommends the applicant organization notify the ABSNC office before sending an application and use a carrier with tracking capability.

3. The applicant organization is responsible for all expenses related to shipping of materials, including those for the original application.

4. The application Cover Sheet must be submitted as page 1 of each copy of the application.

5. The application and all supporting documentation must be submitted as a single, bookmarked PDF file. Hyperlinks also must be added to the application to assist reviewers in locating specific referenced information. Refer to Accreditation Process – Instructions and Required Documentation (available on the ABNS/ABSNC website) for specific instructions.

6. A check payable to ABSNC for the non-refundable application fee must be submitted 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 $1000 per each certification program submitted. The fee for members is $750 for 1 – 2 certification programs, and $1000 for 3 – 5 certification programs.

7. Multiple certification programs must be submitted at the same time to obtain the reduced fees. However, no more than five certification programs from the same organization will be reviewed in any 3-month period.

8. The applicant organization will pay initial accreditation fees within 30 days of receipt of notification of accreditation approval. An invoice will be sent to the organization by ABSNC. Initial accreditation fees are not prorated based on the time of year accreditation is granted.

9. Accreditation fees are based upon a formula using per candidate numbers at the time of initial accreditation application. The fees are $0.35 for each of the first 25,000 certificants and $0.15 for each certificant over 25,000. The accreditation fees are capped at $15,000 per year. The application must be based on the most current edition of the Standards posted on the ABNS/ABSNC website at the time of application.
POLICY 16 ACCREDITATION APPLICATION PROCESS AND AGREEMENTS (CONTINUED)

10. 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. Refer to the attached timeline for additional information about application management.

11. If accreditation is denied, the applicant organization will be given specific reasons. A copy of ABSNC Policy and Procedure “Reconsideration and Appeal of Accreditation Decision” will accompany notice of denial of accreditation. All notices, letters and communications related to non-approval will be sent by email and registered mail, return receipt requested, or by other traceable methods that require a signature.

12. Applicants with programs not approved by ABSNC may pursue appeal according to ABSNC policy or may reapply for accreditation. If the organization elects to reapply for accreditation, a new application must be resubmitted and all application fees must be paid again.

13. One USB drive with the application and associated information remains the property of the ABSNC and will be archived in a secure manner in the ABSNC office with copies of any correspondence. The remaining USB drive will be returned to the applicant organization as requested at its cost or destroyed in a secure manner.

14. While the most recently approved accreditation application for each certification is retained by the office, ABSNC reserves the right to retain older applications in archives.
POLICY 16 ACCREDITATION APPLICATION PROCESS AND AGREEMENTS (CONTINUED)

Timeline

Applicant organization submits accreditation application
↓
Review Team reviews application within 45 business days* of receipt *(Initial Review)*
↓
Review Team recommends ABSNC approval of accreditation → ABSNC Board of Directors approves accreditation
→ Accreditation Manager notifies applicant of approval

OR

Team Leader drafts letter to identify need for further information from applicant → Accreditation Manager finalizes and forwards letter within timeline
↓
Applicant organization must resubmit additional information within 45 business days of date of notification**
↓
Review Team evaluates additional information within 30 business days* of receipt *(2nd review)*
↓
Review Team recommends ABSNC approval of accreditation → ABSNC Board of Directors approves accreditation
→ Accreditation Manager notifies applicant of approval

OR

Team Leader drafts letter to identify need for further information from applicant → Accreditation Manager finalizes and forwards letter within timeline
↓
Applicant organization must resubmit additional information within 30 business days of receipt of notification**
↓
Review Team evaluates additional information within 21 business days* of receipt *(3rd review)*
↓
Review Teams recommends ABSNC either approve or deny accreditation → ABSNC Board of Directors determines approval or denial by vote
↓
Accreditation Manager notifies applicant organization of ABSNC decision
↓
If denied accreditation, applicant organization is provided a copy of the ABSNC Policy and Procedure “Reconsideration and Appeal of Accreditation Decision”

* Excludes Federal holidays
** Applicant organization may submit a letter to the ABSNC to describe special circumstances that may warrant reconsideration of deadlines.
POLICY 17 REACCREDITATION APPLICATION PROCESS

DATE APPROVED: DATE REVIEWED: 5-09
DATE REVISED: 6-03; 9-05; 10-06; 10-08; 5-09; 6-11; 3-12; 3-14; 9-14

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 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. At 24 months, 15 months and 12 months prior to the expiration of a certification program’s accreditation, office staff will email organizations a renewal notice.

2. Six Flash Drives 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.
   a. While reaccreditation applications are to be received in the ABSNC office by the first of the month in which the reaccreditation application is due, ABSNC’s standard practice is to accept applications anytime during the month in which the application is due. If an organization needs to request an extension of the deadline for submission, the process for doing so is described in Policy 27.

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. Refer to the attached timeline for the timeline related to review of materials and resubmission of requested information.
5. When it is determined that an organization seeking reaccreditation is non compliant with a Standard(s) after all opportunities to submit additional information as described in the Timeline below, the organizations’ expiration date will be extended by 120 days. The ABSNC website will list the status of accreditation as “In Review” after the expiration date listed in the column labeled Accreditation Expiration Date. Of the organization does not demonstrate compliance at the end of 120 days, reaccreditation is denied and the program’s name will be removed from the listing of accredited programs found on the website. The organization will have the option of Appealing the decision as described in Policy 18. If the issue is resolved and the certification program(s) is reaccredited, the expiration date will be retroactive to its original date plus five years.

6. One copy of the application and associated information remains the property of the ABSNC and will be archived in a secure manner in the ABSNC office along with copies of any correspondence. Remaining applications will be returned to the applicant organization or destroyed as requested by the applicant organization.
**Timeline**

Applicant organization submits reaccreditation application

Review Team reviews application within 60 business days* of receipt (Initial Review)

↓

ABSNC approves certification program(s) for reaccreditation → notifies applicant organization

OR

Review Team notifies applicant organization of need for further information

↓

Applicant organization must resubmit additional information within 60 business days of receipt of notification**

↓

Review Team reviews additional information within 45 business days* of receipt (2nd review)

↓

ABSNC approves certification program(s) for reaccreditation → notifies applicant organization

OR

Review Team notifies applicant organization of need for further information

↓

Applicant organization must resubmit additional information within 45 business days of receipt of notification**

↓

Review Team reviews additional information within 30 business days* of receipt (3rd review)

↓

ABSNC makes decision to either approve reaccreditation OR if it is determined that an organization is non compliant with a Standard(s) and all opportunities to submit additional information as described in this timeline have been exhausted, the organization’s expiration date will be extended by 120 days.

↓

Applicant organization is notified of decision.

↓

If the organization does not demonstrate compliance at the end of 120 days, reaccreditation is denied and the program’s name will be removed from the listing of accredited programs found on the ABSNC website.

↓

The organization is provided a copy of the Appeals Policy found in Policy 18.

* If a federally recognized holiday occurs during this period, the review time is extended.

** Applicant organization may submit a written letter to the ABSNC for special consideration of deadlines.
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 program, an applicant organization 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. As soon as the ABSNC receives a request to reconsider its decision not to accredit a certification examination, ABSNC will notify its legal counsel that the request has been made. Legal counsel shall advise the ABSNC during the process of reconsideration as needed.

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.

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 Task Force.

8. The Appeals Task Force will consist of two former 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 Task Force. If the issue is psychometric in nature, one of the volunteer psychometricians not involved in the initial review, would be asked to also serve. One of the task force members will be appointed by the ABSNC President to serve as the Chair of the Appeals Task Force.

9. Once the Appeals Task Force Chair is appointed, all communication related to the appeal from the appellant will be sent to the Appeals Task Force Chair by the Chief Executive Officer.

10. Hearings will be held at a time and place decided by the Appeals Task Force Chair 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. 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.

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 Task Force 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 Task Force Chair will notify the appellant of their decision.
18. The Appeals Task Force may overturn the Review Team’s decision to deny accreditation by a two-thirds vote of the voting members of the Appeals Task Force. The Appeals Task Force Chair communicates the findings and recommendation of the Appeals Task Force to the ABSNC Board of Directors.

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.

   a. The ABSNC Appeals Task Force 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.
Policy 19
ANNUAL COMPLIANCE REPORTING AND REPORTING MAJOR CERTIFICATION PROGRAM CHANGES

DATE APPROVED:  
DATE REVIEWED: 5-09  
DATE REVISED: 6-03; 5-09; 3-12

Policy

19.1 Remaining in Compliance with ABSNC Standards

Accredited certification programs must remain in compliance with the ABSNC Standards for the full 5-year accreditation term. Organizations with accredited programs will demonstrate ongoing adherence to accreditation standards through the annual compliance report.

Section 19.2 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 19.3 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.

Section 19.4 Making major program changes

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.

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.

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.

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)

19.5 Late Fees/Incomplete Compliance Reports

ABSNC will charge an accredited organization a $500 fee if the compliance report is submitted late (after October 31) or the application is incomplete when submitted.

Procedure

1. All organizations with accredited certification programs(s) will be emailed an annual compliance report relative to the status of their accredited certification programs – specific to RN, non-RN, APRN, and Portfolio certification programs – in July of each year. Each report details the specific information required to be reported. The annual report must be submitted to the ABSNC office postmarked electronically no later than October 31.

2. The CEO will email the annual reports received to the ABSNC President and Lead Psychometrician for review.

3. Representatives from programs not demonstrating compliance will receive notification of deficits no later than January 15 following the annual report due date of October 31. The organizations will have 30 days to submit an action plan to ABSNC that will correct deficiencies to regain compliance with the standards. The plan must be completed no later than October 31 of the year of notification, in other words by the due date for the next compliance report. Programs not in compliance at that point will lose accreditation.

4. 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, 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.
POLICY 20  ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS, CONFIDENTIALITY, CONFLICT OF INTEREST, and UNAUTHORIZED REPRESENTATION (CONTINUED)

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.

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.
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 nonboard 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.

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 even years 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 staff will send the applicant organization a link to a Survey Monkey to evaluate 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  REVOCATION OF ACCREDITATION STATUS DUE TO MISCONDUCT / FAILURE TO MAINTAIN COMPLIANCE WITH ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

DATE APPROVED:  DATE REVIEWED: 5-09; 7/13  DATE REVISED: 6-03; 5-09; 7/13

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 suspended or revoked if continued compliance with Standards does not occur.

Section 22.2  Misconduct

Accreditation status may be suspended or revoked if an 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;

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 is specifically authorized to share the complainant’s information, including his or her name and all the documentation regarding the complaint, with the accredited organization involved in the complaint in order to complete its investigation.

Procedure

The following procedures describe the process that ABSNC will use to consider all complaints and take appropriate disciplinary action, including suspension or revocation of accreditation.
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. and, to the extent necessary, to fully investigate the complaint, to the board about which the complaint has been made.

   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.

   c. All supporting documentation must accompany the written request.

   d. 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.

   e. The accredited organization may submit a written response and supporting documentation within thirty (30) days of receiving the notification by ABSNC.

   f. 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 either at a regularly scheduled meeting or by telephone conference. ABSNC will review the written record of the complaint and all supporting documentation. 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. The ABSNC Board will investigate complaints that an accredited organization has not complied with ABSNC standards when making a decision to grant or deny an individual its certification credential. However, the ABSNC Board may not, and will not, review
whether or not the accredited organization properly denied any individual certification so long as the accredited organization followed its ABSNC approved, accredited process.

d. 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.

e. If found to be noncompliant, the accredited organization will be given 90 days to bring the certification program(s) into compliance.

f. If found to have engaged in misconduct, ABSNC will determine whether the organization’s accreditation status should be 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 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.
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 abnsceo@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.
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: ____________________________
ABSNC

POLICY 24 CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER (CEO) PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

DATE APPROVED: 6-1-11 DATE REVIEWED: DATE REVISED:

Policy

Section 24.1 The ABSNC Chief Executive Officer’s (CEO) performance is evaluated by the Board of Directors annually in conjunction with the Fall ABNS Assembly meeting.

Section 24.2 The CEO completes a self evaluation annually.

Section 24.3 The Performance Evaluation (attached) includes the following areas:

a. Interpersonal Communication
b. Leadership and Management Ability
c. Relationship with Board of Directors
d. Customer Service Focus
e. Fiscal Management
f. Specific recommendations to improve or enhance CEO performance
g. Priorities for the CEO over the next year
h. The most impressive performance of the CEO during the current year

Procedure

The following procedures describe the process that ABSNC uses to evaluate the Chief Executive Officer (CEO):

1. The ABSNC President:
   a. distributes the CEO Performance Evaluation Form to all members of the Board of Directors for their input with a due date for return;
   b. distributes the CEO Performance Evaluation Form to the CEO for the purpose of a Self-Evaluation with a due date for return.

2. The CEO Performance Evaluation ratings and comments from the Board are reviewed as well as the CEO Self Evaluation and a Summary Evaluation is compiled by the ABSNC President.

3. The Summary Evaluation is emailed to the CEO and either a conference call or a time to meet at the Fall ABNS Assembly meeting is scheduled between the CEO and ABSNC President to discuss the Evaluation.

4. Signed copies of the Evaluation are retained by the ABSNC President and the CEO.
PERFORMANCE EVALUATION
FOR
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, ABSNC

RATING SCALE:

5   outstanding
4   good, is better than what is expected
3   adequate, no less, no more than what is expected
2   poor, less than expected
1   unsatisfactory
NA  not observed or applicable

I. INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

RATING_______

- Respects and values differences of personal style, opinion and culture and facilitates resolution of differences between others.
- Able to hear and understand others.
- Looks for ways to support and enhance others strengths.
- Congruent in words and actions.
- Speaks and writes clearly.
- Gives constructive criticism in a positive way.
- Skillfully builds consensus and resolves conflict.

Comments:

II. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT ABILITY

RATING_____

- Oriented toward a can-do approach in meeting the needs of others.
- Works to create a positive environment.
- Looks for ways to support and enhance others strengths.
- Able to build the confidence and acceptance of others who may be fearful and resistant.
- Ensures a strategic planning process that is outcome focused.
- Role models a spirit of collegiality and team to accomplish organizational goals.
- Provides for appropriate day to day management of ABSNC in order to achieve organizational outcomes.
- Knowledgeable of trends impacting certification/accreditation and ABSNC and communicates them to the volunteer leadership appropriately.
- Plans and implements programs and activities that facilitate organizational outcomes.
- Represents the organization in a positive and professional manner.
III. RELATIONSHIP WITH BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Keeps the president and board informed of organization activities, progress and problems.
- Is receptive to board member ideas and suggestions.
- Makes sound recommendations for board action.
- Facilitates the decision-making process for the board.
- Accepts board criticism as a constructive suggestion for improvement.
- Follows up on all problems and issues brought to her attention.
- Is knowledgeable about association management and can implement that knowledge.
- Is knowledgeable about the legal and regulatory standards relating to certification and governance.
- Carries out the policies of ABSNC appropriately.

Comments:

IV. CUSTOMER SERVICE FOCUS

- Is focused on serving the needs of key stakeholders.
- Provides for office operations that meet customer service expectations while achieving organizational outcomes.

Comments:

V. FISCAL MANAGEMENT

- Manages fiscal resources appropriately.
- Achieves budget projections or exceeds budget projections for excess revenue.

Comments:

WHAT SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS DO YOU HAVE FOR YOUR CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER TO IMPROVE OR ENHANCE PERFORMANCE?
WHAT SHOULD BE THE PRIORITIES FOR YOUR CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OVER THE NEXT YEAR?

WHAT IMPRESSED YOU THE *MOST* ABOUT THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER’S PERFORMANCE THIS YEAR?

_________________________________________  ______________________
President                               Date

_________________________________________  ______________________
Chief Executive Officer                Date
Position

The CEO provides for fulfillment of the ABSNC organizational mission by: (1) demonstrating executive and administrative leadership; (2) recommending and implementing organizational policy, procedures and programs; (3) implementing and maintaining effective office operations to assure attainment of organizational goals and services to key stakeholders; (4) working in partnership with the Board of Directors to ensure that ABSNC is positioned to respond to changing environment and key stakeholder needs; (5) representing ABSNC at meetings and conferences and (6) providing for sound financial management.

The ABSNC Board of Directors has the authority to hire and terminate the CEO and/or management firm.

Qualifications

- Minimum of a Master’s degree required; minimum of a Master’s Degree in Nursing preferred.
- CAE certification preferred.
- Registered Nurse required.
- Association management experience as CEO or Senior Management Staff required.
- Strong conceptual, administrative and interpersonal skills essential.
- Visionary leadership style, including creative problem-solving and leadership in the midst of a changing health care arena necessary.
- General knowledge of certification/credentialing and specific knowledge of nursing certification/credentialing required.
- Experience in financial management of a nonprofit organization, including budgeting and forecasting, essential.
- Strong oral and written communication and presentation skills essential.
- Clinical inquiry experience required, e.g., Research, Evaluation/Measurement, QI.
- Knowledge of the ABSNC accreditation standards and accreditation process.

Specific Duties and Responsibilities

1. Works in partnership with the ABSNC President, Board of Directors, and member organizations.
   A. Promotes nursing certification and the vision and mission of ABSNC.
   B. In conjunction with Board of Directors, develops and facilitates implementation of the Strategic Plan.
   C. Ensures the necessary support that enables organizational representatives and groups to perform their roles effectively and efficiently.
   D. Provides the tools and information needed by the Board of Directors to fulfill its fiduciary duties.
   E. Provides for the appropriate orientation of volunteer leaders and new members.

2. Represents ABSNC at meetings and conferences in a positive, informed and professional manner.
A. Promotes the role and work of ABSNC within the nursing and health care community and enhances the organizations’ image and visibility.
B. Cultivates and sustains key relationships with strategic partners, policy makers, funders, and other stakeholders important to the achievement of the mission and goals of ABSNC.
C. Promotes accreditation of nursing certification programs and non RN team member certification programs.

3. Directs and manages all operational activities of the organizations within the guidelines established by Board approved bylaws, policies and procedures.
   A. Maintains consistent and timely communication with the ABSNC President and Board of Directors regarding the status of the organization, resources, contracts, member relations and general operations.
   B. Directs activities of any subcontracted vendors and employees.
   C. Assures compliance with appropriate laws, regulations and standards of professional conduct.
   D. Establishes and implements communication procedures that ensure that Board of Directors, members, volunteers and other key stakeholders receive timely and accurate information.
   E. Provides oversight for the appropriate staff support of volunteer activities.
   F. Answers all routine correspondence and drafts correspondence for volunteer leaders as appropriate.
   G. Prepares records such as notices, minutes of meetings, resolutions and other official documentation for the Board of Directors.
   H. Routinely evaluates and revises, as needed, office operations to ensure effectiveness and efficiency.
   I. Maintains official minutes of the Board of Directors and other official meetings, provides security for all files, maintains appropriate database(s); and maintains all information in accordance with policies.

4. Provides for successful meeting planning.
   A. Coordinates the services of a meeting planner, as needed.
   B. Determines meeting sites in collaboration with ABNS.
   C. Negotiates and contracts the most cost-effective hotel and other related rates for all meetings, within budget constraints.
   D. Develops meeting agendas in collaboration with the ABSNC President.
   E. Coordinates the distribution of agendas and any related meeting materials to identified individuals.
   F. Assists the ABSNC President in planning and conducting meetings.

5. Provides for sound financial management.
   A. Recommends and implements policies and procedures related to financial activities.
   B. In collaboration with the Treasurer, prepares a yearly budget for approval by the ABSNC Board of Directors.
   C. Disseminates monthly financial statements and any other financial information as requested by the Board of Directors to the Treasurer and a quarterly financial report to the Board of Directors.
   D. Provides for the preparation of an annual tax return and financial audit or review, using the services of an independent CPA firm approved by the Board of Directors.
   E. Appropriately manages the fiscal resources of ABSNC.
   F. Collects accreditation fees as determined by policy and procedure.

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Policy

Section 26.1
If a nursing certifying organization sells an ABSNC-accredited RN or non-RN certification program, accreditation is not portable.

Section 26.2
So certificants are not unduly penalized, ABSNC will grant a 6-month grace period of accreditation to the purchasing organization. To avoid the lapse of accreditation, the purchasing organization must submit an initial accreditation application for the program within 3 months of the purchase.

Section 26.3
Compliance with all ABSNC Standards must be demonstrated by the organization purchasing a certification program. The narrative and supporting documents must reflect the purchaser’s practices, policies, and procedures, as well as those of the testing vendor.

Section 26.4
If the accredited certification program was jointly owned and one organization has gained sole ownership, the new owner must submit its policies and procedures in all areas of the previous accreditation application in which jointly held policies and procedures were submitted. In addition, the new owner must submit its policies and procedures to address any functions performed solely by the previous owner. A table can be used to cross-walk the relevant standards with the new owner’s policies and procedures. The timeline described in section 26.2 must be followed. This process applies only to jointly owned programs for which one organization relinquishes its co-ownership.

Section 26.5
Because the purchasing organization may not have examination data to report for at least 1 year of testing or a minimum of 200 candidates, the purchasing organization may use applicable data from the organization selling the program.

Section 26.6
The purchasing organization and seller should create a plan to notify certificants of the change and provide a point of contact at the purchasing organization.
ABSNC

POLICY 27  REQUESTS BY ACCREDITED ORGANIZATIONS FOR EXTENSION TO SUBMIT REACCREDITATION APPLICATION

DATE APPROVED:  9/2014   DATE REVIEWED:   DATE REVISED:

General Policies

1. While reaccreditation applications are to be received in the ABSNC office by the first of the month in which the reaccreditation application is due, ABSNC's standard practice is to accept applications anytime during the month in which the application is due.

2. Applicant organizations may ask for an extension of the deadline for submission of a reaccreditation application. Such requests must be made at least two weeks prior to the first day of the month in which the reaccreditation application is due, and in writing as described below. Such an extension may not extend past six weeks from the last day of the month in which the application was originally due. In other words, ABSNC will grant a maximum of a six week extension.

   a. Fee for extension - The fee for an extension is $500 and must be submitted by check payable to “ABSNC.”

   b. The request for an extension must be sent in writing to the attention of the CEO at the current ABSNC address with payment as described above.

   c. The ABSNC President will be notified of such requests, as will the Review Team assigned to review the reaccreditation application.

      (1) If an organization requests an extension longer than six weeks, the ABSNC President will review the circumstances and determine if the additional time will be granted.

   d. If the Review Team’s reviews of a submitted reaccreditation application leads to subsequent requests for further information that result in the review exceeding the expiration date of an organization’s accreditation, the website listing of Approved Programs will be changed to reflect the status of this accreditation as Pending.