



**STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES  
American Board of Genetic Counseling  
2020**

## Table of Contents

Topic	Page
1. Mission	2
2. Bylaws	3
3. Disciplinary Review Policy and Procedure	12
4. Budget	25
5. Conflict of Interest Policy and Participation Agreement	25
6. Correspondence/Communications	29
7. Credential Verification	29
8. State Licensure	29
9. Record Retention Policy	29
10. Confidentiality Policy	31
11. Document Review	31
12. Eligibility Requirements	31
13. Examination Proctors	31
14. Financial Policy	32
15. Finance Committee Charge	32
16. Investment Policy	33
17. Honoraria	40
18. Liability Insurance	41
19. Meeting/Executive Sessions	41
20. Minutes & Financial Statement Review Protocol	41
21. Program Directors' Information	42
22. Recertification Policy	42
23. Online Recertification System	43
24. Practice Analysis Studies & Committee	44
25. Passing Point Study Committee	46
26. Travel Expense Policy	47
27. Fee Schedule	48
28. Certification Exam Committee Charge	49
29. Certification Exam Committee Member Confidentiality Agreement	51
27. Nominating Committee Policies & Procedures	52
28. Nominating Committee Schedule of Activities	55
29. Nominating Committee Charge	56
30. Whistleblower Policy	58
31. Policy on Creation of Taskforces, Workgroups and ad hoc Committees	60
32. Certification Exam Committee Chair Charge	61
33. Certification Exam Board Liaison Charge	63
34. Item Writer Charge	65
35. CEU Taskforce Charge & Guidance Document	67
36. Exam Eligibility Charge & Guidance Document	68
37. Continued Competence Taskforce Charge & Guidance Document	70
38. Trademark and CGC Designation Policy	73
39. Examination Administration Compliance Monitoring Policy	73
40. Policy Dealing with Errors	74
41. Policy Regarding Performance Standards	76

## **Mission**

The following information is posted on the ABGC Website to ensure board transparency in relation to the various stakeholder groups (e.g., public, Diplomates.) The statement can be found on [www.abgc.net](http://www.abgc.net).

### Mission statement, purpose and values

#### **Mission**

To protect the public by setting certification standards and providing leadership to promote the value of certified genetic counselors.

#### **Core Purpose**

Promote high standards in genetic counseling.

#### **Core Values**

- **Integrity:**  
Fair and objective decisions, transparency in interactions, and accountable stewardship.
- **Responsiveness:**  
Recognition of, and actions taken based on, emerging needs.
- **Excellence:**  
Delivering high value to the profession through rigorous evaluation standards.

## **Board Governing Authority**

The ABGC Board of Directors is the sole governing authority of the organization as defined in the organizational bylaws and articles of incorporation. The Board of Directors is responsible for approving all governing policies including but not limited to certification and recertification eligibility and requirements, approval of examination development and scoring processes as well as examination performance monitoring.

Board members will not be allowed to develop or teach a Board Review course during their board term or for two years post service.

**THE AMERICAN BOARD OF GENETIC COUNSELING, INC.  
BY LAWS**

ARTICLE I. NAME AND PURPOSE

**Section 1. Name.** The name of the Corporation is THE AMERICAN BOARD OF GENETIC COUNSELING, INC. (hereafter known as the American Board of Genetic Counseling).

**Section 2. Purpose.** The American Board of Genetic Counseling shall exist to serve the public and the field of genetic counseling through the establishment and maintenance of criteria and procedures for certification and recertification. More specifically, the purposes for which the American Board of Genetic Counseling is formed are:

- a. To promote the public welfare by contributing to the quality of care in the area of genetic counseling;
- b. To publish papers, documents, and reports in the furtherance of the purposes of the American Board of Genetic Counseling;
- c. To certify those individuals who have met established standards for professional practice through documentation of specialized training and who have received a passing score on the comprehensive certification examination administered by the American Board of Genetic Counseling as Diplomates of the American Board of Genetic Counseling;
- d. To receive and administer gifts and grants of money and property of every kind and nature in accordance with and in furtherance of the purposes of the American Board of Genetic Counseling;
- e. To purchase, receive, lease or otherwise acquire, own, hold, improve, use and otherwise deal in and with real and personal property, or any interest therein wherever situated;
- f. To do any other act or thing incidental to or connected with the foregoing purposes or in advancement thereof as permitted by the New York Not-For-Profit Law; and
- g. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in the Certificate of Incorporation or these bylaws, the American Board of Genetic Counseling is organized to ensure that genetic counselors meet and maintain a minimum standard of competence. It is not organized for profit and shall not engage in activities normally carried on for profit. Furthermore, no part of the net earnings of the American Board of Genetic Counseling shall inure to the benefit of any member, trustee, director, officer, or any other private individual except as for reasonable compensation for services rendered.

ARTICLE II. MEMBERS AND CERTIFICANTS

**Section 1. Membership.** The American Board of Genetic Counseling shall have two classes of members:

- a. Class A - The Class A members shall be the Diplomates of the American Board of Genetic Counseling who are certified or recertified by the American Board of Genetic Counseling and individuals certified in genetic counseling by the American Board of

Medical Genetics and who have become certificants of the American Board of Genetic Counseling (hereafter known as the “Diplomates”).

- b. Class B - The Class B members shall be the individuals who are elected as Directors of the American Board of Genetic Counseling.

## **Section 2. Diplomates.**

- a. A Diplomat may use the designation “Certified Genetic Counselor” or the acronym CGC® after the Diplomat’s name.
- b. Diplomates, upon payment of any and all fees due and owing, shall be eligible to serve as officers or directors of the American Board of Genetic Counseling, to serve on committees, and to receive information, notices and other mailings from the American Board of Genetic Counseling.
- c. Certification or recertification by the American Board of Genetic Counseling shall be available according to the requirements established by the American Board of Genetic Counseling and set forth in its rules and regulations on certification and recertification.
- d. Upon certification or recertification by the American Board of Genetic Counseling, and payment of any and all fees due and owing, the American Board of Genetic Counseling shall issue documentation of certification or recertification, which may be in the form of a certificate, a card, a letter, or other document which identifies the individual as a Diplomat. This document is and shall at all times remain the property of the American Board of Genetic Counseling.

**Section 3. Adverse Actions Affecting Certification or Recertification.** After due and thorough deliberation by the Disciplinary Review Committee, the American Board of Genetic Counseling may, at its discretion, revoke or suspend an individual’s examination eligibility, certification or recertification, or place the individual’s certification or recertification on probation for reasons outlined in the Policy and Procedures for Disciplinary Review and Appeal.

## ARTICLE III. MEETING OF THE MEMBERSHIP

**Section 1. Annual Meeting.** There shall be an annual meeting of the membership to be held at a time and place determined by the Board of Directors for the transaction of such business as may properly come before the meeting.

**Section 2. Special Meeting.** Special meetings may be called by the President or a majority of the Board of Directors. Only such business as was stated in the Notice of Special Meeting may be conducted at any special meeting.

**Section 3. Notice of Meeting.** At least thirty (30) days’ notice for each regular meeting and ten (10) days’ notice for each special meeting shall be given to every member of the American Board of Genetic Counseling, either personally, by mail or electronic means. In case of a special meeting, the purpose of the meeting shall be stated in the notice.

## **Section 4. Quorum.**

- a. Class A - At all meetings of the Class A members, there shall be present in person or by proxy that number of Class A members entitled to cast one hundred (100) votes or one-tenth (1/10) of the total number of votes entitled to be cast by the Class A members, whichever is lesser in order to constitute a quorum. Any number less than a quorum may adjourn a meeting at which a quorum is not present.

- b. Class B – At all meetings of the Class B members, there shall be present in person or by proxy that number of Class B members entitled to cast a majority of the total number of votes entitled to be cast by the Class B members in order to constitute a quorum. Any number less than a quorum may adjourn a meeting at which a quorum is not present.

**Section 5. Voting.** Each member shall be entitled to one vote on each matter submitted to a vote. Voting may be conducted by mail or electronic means in such manner as the Board of Directors determine and in which the member authorizes any officer of the American Board of Genetic Counseling to act on behalf of the member by proxy. Except as required by law, the Certificate of Incorporation or these Bylaws, action will be authorized by a majority of the members at a meeting of the members provided a quorum is present.

#### **Section 6. Votes of the Members.**

- a. Class A: The Class A members' voting rights shall be limited to the election of the Directors of the American Board of Genetic Counseling.
- b. Class B: The Class B members' shall have authority for voting on all matters to be decided by the members of a not-for-profit corporation, except for the election of the Directors.

### ARTICLE IV. BOARD OF DIRECTORS

#### **Section 1. Composition of the Board**

- a. The management of the affairs and assets of the American Board of Genetic Counseling shall be vested in a Board of Directors.
- b. The number of Directors shall be seven (7), including a Public Member. The Board of Directors may increase or decrease this number, except this number shall never be less than three. No decrease in number shall shorten the term of any incumbent Director.
- c. The Public Member shall serve a two-year term. The Public Member shall not be employed in a profession encompassed by the certification programs of the American Board of Genetic Counseling or the American Board of Medical Genetics. The Public Member's purpose is to provide guidance from an external perspective relative to all activities of the Corporation and represent the interests of potential consumers of genetic counseling services. The Public Member shall serve as a voting member of the Board of Directors. The Public Member is elected by a majority vote of the Board of Directors.
- d. Each Director, except the Public Member, must be a Diplomate of the American Board of Genetic Counseling in good standing.
- e. At no time may more than one (1) Director be employed in a leadership position, including but not limited to a Director, Co-Director, Associate Director, or Assistant Director, of a genetic counseling graduate program whose graduates are eligible to sit for the American Board of Genetic Counseling certification examination.

**Section 2. Election of Directors.** The Nominating Committee shall set forth a slate of candidates for election of Directors as is more specifically set forth below in Article VI and in the Nominating Committee Policies and Procedures. Such election may be conducted by mail or electronic means in such manner as the Board of Directors determine.

- a. Directors shall be elected by the Class A members and shall serve a four-year term, except for the Public Member who shall be elected by the Board of Directors and shall serve a two-year term.
- b. Upon election, each Director shall enter upon the performance of his or her duties as such on the first day of January following election and shall continue in office until his or her successor is duly elected and qualified.
- c. Vacancies in the Board of Directors occurring during the year shall be filled for the unexpired term by a majority vote of the remaining Directors at a regular meeting or any special meeting called for that purpose. The Director so elected shall hold office and serve the remainder of the term for that office, or until his/her successor has been duly elected.

### **Section 3. Meetings of the Board.**

- a. **Notice of Meetings:** An annual regular meeting of the Board of Directors shall be held for the election of officers and for the transaction of such other business as may properly come before it. Other regular meetings will take place as determined necessary by the Board of Directors. Special meetings of the Board of Directors may be called at any time by the President. Notice of regular meetings shall be given by mail or electronic notice at least thirty (30) days prior to any such meeting.
- b. **Notice of Special Meetings** shall be given by mail or electronic notice at least fifteen (15) days prior to any such meeting.
- c. **Quorum:** At all meetings of the Directors, there shall be present a majority of the Directors in order to constitute a quorum. The act of a majority of Directors present at a meeting of which a quorum is present shall be the act of the Board of Directors, except as otherwise provided by law or by the Bylaws.
- d. **Use of communications equipment:** Any one or more members of the Board of Directors or any Committee thereof may participate in a meeting of such Board of Directors or Committee by means of a conference telephone or similar communications equipment allowing all persons participating in the meeting to hear each other at the same time by such means shall constitute presence in person at the meeting.
- e. **Action in writing in lieu of a meeting:** Any action required or permitted to be taken by the Board of Directors or any Committee thereof may be taken without a meeting if all members of the Board or the Committee consent in writing or via electronic communication to the adoption of a resolution authorizing the action. The resolution and the written consents thereto of the Board of Directors or Committee shall be filed with the minutes of the proceedings of the Board of Directors or Committee.

### **Section 4. Powers of the Board.**

- a. **Corporate assets:** All of the property of the American Board of Genetic Counseling, real, personal and mixed, given to it or held by it for the purpose of its incorporation, shall be controlled and managed by the Board of Directors.
- b. **Contracts:** The Board of Directors may enter into contracts, including, but not limited to, the power to employ a staff, to employ office personnel, to employ consultants, to borrow money, to make, accept, endorse, execute and issue bonds, debentures, promissory notes, bills of exchange and other obligations of the American Board of Genetic Counseling for monies borrowed, or in payment for property acquired and to secure payment of any such obligations by mortgage, pledge, deed, indenture, agreement or other indenture of trust or by other lien upon, assignment of or agreement in regard to all

or any part of its property, rights and privileges, provided such action is consistent with the purposes and goals of the American Board of Genetic Counseling. The President shall be the contracting officer for the Board of Directors.

- c. **Funds:** The Board of Directors shall have charge of the funds of the American Board of Genetic Counseling and shall authorize investments and expenditures. The Board of Directors shall also formulate program policies, fill such vacancies among the officers and directors as may occur until the next election for that position, and conduct such other business as may be desirable. The Board of Directors may act for the American Board of Genetic Counseling between annual meetings on all matters.

#### **Section 5. Establishment of policies and procedures.**

- a. The Board of Directors shall have full authority to establish policies, rules, regulations, requirements, and procedures to further the objectives and assure the efficient operation of the American Board of Genetic Counseling.
- b. Proposed policies, rules, regulations, requirements and procedures and/or any changes thereto will be distributed to the Board of Directors at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting at which the Board will vote on them.
- c. The rules and regulations regarding certification and recertification shall be established by the Board of Directors. These rules and regulations shall include, but shall not be limited to, the requirements for eligibility for certification, for the examination process, for the re-examination of candidates, for the issuance of certificates, for the revocation of certificates, for the requirements for recertification and for the payment of assessment fees. The Board of Directors shall be responsible for determining the eligibility of individual applicants for certification and recertification. Upon approval of the Board of Directors, notice will be given to the Diplomates at least thirty (30) days prior to implementation regarding any changes in eligibility policy for certification or recertification.

**Section 6. Annual report.** Pursuant to Section 519 of the Not-For-Profit Law, the Board of Directors shall present at the annual meeting of the American Board of Genetic Counseling a report verified by the President and Secretary/Treasurer, or by a majority of the Board of Directors, or by an independent public or certified public accountant or a firm of such accountants selected by the board of Directors, showing in appropriate detail the following:

- a. The assets and liabilities, including the trust funds, of the American Board of Genetic Counseling as of the end of a twelve (12) month fiscal period terminating not more than six (6) months prior to said meeting.
- b. The principle changes in assets and liabilities, including trust funds, during said fiscal period.
- c. The revenue or receipts of the American Board of Genetic Counseling both unrestricted and restricted to particular purposes, during said fiscal period.
- d. The expenses or disbursements of the American Board of Genetic Counseling, for both general and restricted purposes, during said fiscal period.
- e. The number of members of the American Board of Genetic Counseling as of the date of the report, together with a statement of increase or decrease in such number during said fiscal period, and a statement of the place where the names and places of residence of the current members may be found. Such report shall be filed with the records of the American Board of Genetic Counseling, and an abstract thereof entered in the minutes of the proceedings of the annual meeting of the American Board of Genetic Counseling.



**Section 7. Compensation.** No Director shall receive compensation from the American Board of Genetic Counseling for services performed in his or her official capacity, but directors shall be entitled to reimbursement for reasonable and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their official duties. Directors performing services for the American Board of Genetic Counseling that are not within the scope of their official duties shall be entitled to reasonable compensation for services rendered. The American Board of Genetic Counseling shall not loan money to any Director of the American Board of Genetic Counseling.

**Section 8. Fees.** The Board of Directors shall establish and maintain fee structures for certification or recertification, and other such activities as may be relevant to the conduct of business. The Board of Directors shall establish policies regarding refund and waiver of fees.

**Section 9. Resignation and Removal.** Any Director may resign at any time by giving written notice of such resignation via mail or electronic means to any officer of the Board of Directors. One or more Directors may be removed, with or without cause.

- a. "Cause" shall include, but shall not be limited to, circumstances where the Director has had unexcused absences from two consecutive meetings or three out of six meetings of the Board of Directors; or the Director has neglected or acted in derogation of his or her duty as a Director, has engaged in conduct prejudicial to the interests of the organization, or has violated the Disciplinary Review and Appeal Policy, the Certificate of Incorporation or these Bylaws.
- b. A Director may be removed by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the currently seated Directors present at a properly convened meeting at which a quorum is present and for which written notice stating that a purpose of the meeting is to vote upon the removal of one or more Directors named in the notice is delivered via mail or electronic means to all Directors at least thirty (30) calendar days prior to such meeting. Only the named Director(s) may be removed at such meeting.

**Section 10. Directors not Liable for Corporate Debts.** The Directors of the American Board of Genetic Counseling shall not be individually or personally liable for the debts, liabilities or obligations of the corporation.

## ARTICLE V. OFFICERS

**Section 1. Officers.** The President, President Elect, and Secretary/Treasurer are the officers of the American Board of Genetic Counseling.

**Section 2. Compensation.** No officer shall receive compensation from the American Board of Genetic Counseling for services performed in his or her official capacity, but officers shall be entitled to reimbursement for reasonable and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their official duties. Officers performing services for the American Board of Genetic Counseling that are not within the scope of their official duties shall be entitled to reasonable compensation for services rendered.

**Section 3. President.** The President shall preside at all meetings of the Diplomates of the American Board of Genetic Counseling and of the Board of Directors. The President shall appoint such committees as directed by the Board of Directors or prescribed by the Bylaws of the American Board of Genetic Counseling. Other committees and representatives may be

appointed by the President with consent of the Board of Directors. The President shall be the contracting officer for the Board of Directors.

**Section 4. President Elect.** The President Elect shall succeed to the office of President upon the completion of the President's term of office or upon a vacancy. The President Elect shall assume all of the duties and responsibilities of the President in the President's absence or in the President's inability to fulfill the duties of office, such inability to be determined by the Board of Directors.

**Section 5. Secretary/Treasurer.**

The Secretary/Treasurer (or designee) is responsible for ensuring that ABGC complies with all corporate state and federal requirements. The Secretary/Treasurer (or designee) shall receive all fees and dues for the ABGC, make such investments and expenditures as authorized by the Board of Directors and report financial status quarterly to the Board of Directors. Specific details and tasks are outlined in the policies and procedures.

**Section 6. Election of Officers.**

- a. **Election of the President Elect and Secretary/ Treasurer.** At its annual meeting, the Board of Directors shall elect from among their number a President Elect and Secretary/Treasurer. Voting shall be done by secret ballot, which the executive director shall count. Nominees receiving the highest number of votes shall be declared elected. Elected officers shall take office on January 1 following their election and shall serve for one (1) calendar year. Each may be reelected provided such service does not extend tenure on the Board of Directors beyond the term to which that person was elected by the Diplomates.
- b. **Succession of Officers and Committee Chairs.** In the event the President cannot complete his or her term of office, the President Elect shall succeed to the Presidency as soon as such a situation is determined to exist by a majority of the Board of Directors, and the President Elect shall complete the term of the President. In such event, a new President Elect shall be elected by the Board of Directors to fill that office until the next regular election for President Elect.

In the event the President Elect or Secretary/Treasurer cannot complete his or her term of office, the Board of Directors shall designate one of their numbers to fill that office until a successor can be elected at the next annual meeting of the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE VI. STANDING COMMITTEES

**Section 1. Standing Committees.** The five standing committees of the Board of Directors shall be (1) the Nominating Committee, (2) the Certification Examination Committee, (3) the Finance Committee, (4) the Disciplinary Review Committee and (5) the Executive Committee. The members of the committees, except for the Executive Committee as defined below, shall be appointed by the President with the consent of the Board of Directors.

**Section 2. Nominating Committee.**

- a. The Nominating Committee shall submit to the Administrative Office a slate consisting of at least two (2) candidates for each Director position to be filled. Members of the Nominating Committee may not be candidates.

- b. The businesses of the Nominating Committee will be completed as outlined in the Nominating Committee Policy and Procedures. The terms, composition and duties are specified in the Nominating Committee charge.

### **Section 3. The Certification Examination Committee (CEC).**

- a. The CEC shall have sole responsibility for the development and review of the examination content and scoring.
- b. The businesses of the CEC will be completed as outlined in the CEC Policy and Procedures. Terms, composition and duties are specified in the CEC charge and the Standard Operating Procedure manual.

### **Section 4. The Finance Committee.**

- a. The Finance Committee shall review the investment and financial audit documents of ABGC and provide guidance to the Board of Directors with regard to fiscal policies.
- b. The businesses of the Finance Committee will be completed as outlined in the Finance Committee Policy and Procedures. Terms, composition and duties are specified in the Finance Committee charge and the Standard Operating Procedure manual.

### **Section 5. The Disciplinary Review Committee.**

- a. The Disciplinary Review Committee will be responsible for review of matters stemming from improper behavior, fraudulent credentials, and/or legal, regulatory and credentialing actions as described in the Policy and Procedures for Disciplinary Review and Appeal.
- b. The businesses of the Disciplinary Review Committee will be completed as outlined in the Disciplinary Review Committee Policy and Procedures. The terms, composition and duties are specified in the Disciplinary Review Committee charge.

### **Section 6. The Executive Committee.**

- a. The Executive Committee shall consist of the President, President Elect, and the Secretary/Treasurer.
- b. The Executive Committee shall make all necessary decisions, between Board meetings, to insure the continuous functioning of the organization subject to final approval of the Board of Directors.

## **ARTICLE VII. FISCAL YEAR**

**Section 1. Fiscal Year.** The fiscal year of the American Board of Genetic Counseling shall be the calendar year.

## **ARTICLE VIII. AMENDMENTS TO THE BY-LAWS**

**Section 1. Amendments.** These bylaws may be amended by the members of the Board of Directors at any regular meeting or at any special meeting called for that purpose, provided that a copy of the proposed amendment has been sent via mail or electronic means to each Director at least thirty (30) days prior to the date of such meeting.

## ARTICLE IX. INDEMNIFICATION

The Board of Directors shall maintain a Directors and Officers Liability insurance policy with errors and omissions rider at all times.

Each Director or former Director shall be indemnified by ABGC against liabilities, expenses, counsel fees and costs reasonably incurred by him/her or his/her estate in connection with or arising out of any action, suit, proceeding or claim in which he/she is made a party by reason of his/her being or having been a Director. The corporation shall not indemnify a Director with respect to any matters which he/she shall be finally judged in any such action, suit or proceeding to have been liable for negligence or misconduct on the performance of his/her duties as a Director. However, the indemnification provided for herein shall also apply in respect of any amount paid in compromise of any such Director including expenses, counsel fees and reasonable costs incurred in connection therewith, provided the Board shall have first approved such a proposed compromise settlement and determined that the Director involved was not guilty of negligence or misconduct. In taking such action, any Director involved shall not be qualified to vote thereon.

In determining whether or not a Director was guilty of negligence or misconduct in relation to any such matters, the Board may rely conclusively upon an opinion of independent legal counsel selected by the Board. Unless otherwise provided by law, any compromise settlement authorized herein shall be effective without the approval of any court. The right to indemnification provided herein shall not be exclusive of any other rights to which a Director may be lawfully entitled.

## ARTICLE X. DISSOLUTION

The Corporation may be dissolved upon a four-fifths (4/5) vote of the members of the Board of Directors. Upon dissolution, distribution of the funds, income and property of the Corporation may be made to the National Society of Genetic Counselors, the Accreditation Council for Genetic Counseling, or to any charitable, educational, or scientific, organization, corporation, foundation, or community chest, or to other kindred institutions maintained and created for one or more of the foregoing purposes, provided that at the time of distribution, the payees or distributees are exempt from income taxation, and provided that gifts or transfers to the payees or distributees are then exempt from taxation under the provisions of Sections 501, 2055, and 2522 of the Internal Revenue Code or any later or other sections of the Internal Revenue Code which amend or supersede the said sections

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*Revised and approved by the Board of Directors 11/02/00*  
*Revised and approved by the Board of Directors 9/13/03*  
*Revised and approved by the Board of Directors 11/3/03*  
*Revised and approved by the Board of Directors 10/08/04*  
*Revised and approved by the Board of Directors 3/15/05*  
*Revised and approved by the Board of Directors 3/23/2010*  
*Revised and accepted by the Board of Directors 2/16/12*  
*Revised and accepted by the Board of Directors January 24, 2013*  
*Revised and accepted by the Board of Directors June 20, 2013*  
*Revised and accepted by the Board of Directors August 28, 2015*

## **Disciplinary Review Policy and Procedures**

### **POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR DISCIPLINARY REVIEW AND APPEAL**

#### **ABGC's DISCIPLINARY POLICY**

ABGC Diplomates (those certified by ABGC), ABGC examination applicants, and ABGC examination candidates (when used collectively, "ABGC Individuals") may be subject to disciplinary review for matters stemming from improper behavior, fraudulent credentials, and/or legal, regulatory and credentialing actions as described below. Individuals who misuse ABGC trademarks, compromise the security of ABGC exams, or assist others in such behavior may also be subject to legal action by ABGC. Those who are the subject of disciplinary review under this policy are hereby referred to as "Respondents."

In addition, NO APPEAL may be taken from an adverse decision based on an individual's receipt of a failing grade on the Certification Examination.

#### **I. ABGC VIOLATIONS**

##### **A. Improper Behavior**

###### **1. Improper Behavior in Connection with an ABGC Examination**

Any ABGC Individual may be subject to disciplinary action if ABGC determines that he or she has participated in any of the following actions:

- (a) attempts to circumvent any ABGC requirement, procedure, or fee related to the examination, including but not limited to submitting to ABGC any document which is falsified or fraudulent or which contains a material misstatement of fact or omits to state a material fact,
- (b) cheats or engages in other dishonest or improper behavior,
- (c) copies test questions or answers,
- (d) removes or attempts to remove examination-related materials from the test center,
- (e) possesses, reproduces, distributes, displays or otherwise misuses a test question, or any part of a test question from an examination,
- (f) engages in discussion of specific examination content,
- (g) assists another individual to do any of the above, or
- (h) otherwise violates the security of or disrupts of an examination.

The performance of all candidates taking an examination will be monitored. Test center personnel will notify ABGC of any candidate who appears to give or receive assistance, or otherwise engages in dishonest, disruptive or other improper behavior during the examination. The individual may or may not be removed from the examination.

###### **2. Failure to Meet Obligations to ABGC**

Any ABGC Individual may be subject to disciplinary action if ABGC determines that he or she has participated in any of the following actions:

- (a) obtains, or attempts to obtain certification, recertification, or a certificate of competency, or attempts to circumvent any ABGC requirement, procedure, or fee, by deceptive means including, but not limited to, submitting to ABGC any document which is falsified or fraudulent or that contains a material misstatement of fact or omits to state a material fact,
- (b) commits any act that infringes on ABGC's intellectual property rights, including but not limited to trademark and copyright violations,
- (c) fails to replace a check that was returned to ABGC for nonsufficient funds within forty-five (45) days of notification by ABGC, or by the date of his/her examination, whichever comes first,
- (d) reverses a credit card charge, stops payment on a check, or otherwise revokes payment for services provided by ABGC after such services have been rendered,
- (e) fails to cooperate reasonably with an ABGC disciplinary review,
- (f) otherwise fails to meet an obligation to ABGC, or,
- (g) assists another individual to do any of the above.

**B. Fraudulent Credentials Use**

Any ABGC individual may be subject to disciplinary action if ABGC determines that he or she has participated in any of the following actions:

- 1) manufactures, modifies, reproduces, distributes or uses a fraudulent or otherwise unauthorized ABGC certificate, ABGC designation, or any other document or designation conferred by ABGC by virtue of a contract with a state or other third-party agency or organization,
- 2) otherwise falsely claims to be certified by ABGC or to possess credentials or certificates conferred by ABGC, or
- 3) assists another individual to do any of the above.

**C. Legal Action and/or Professional Misconduct**

At the time of application for the ABGC certification examination, or at application for recertification (whether through continuing education or examination), ABGC individuals are required to indicate whether they are the subject of any of the following. Providing incorrect or incomplete information may lead to disciplinary action by ABGC. Documentation of any of the following by an ABGC individual may lead to disciplinary action by ABGC.

- 1) adjudication by a court that the individual is mentally incompetent,

- 2) adjudication by a court or governmental regulatory body that the individual has violated a federal or state law, rule, or regulation,
- 3) conviction of or pleading no contest to a felony,
- 4) loss, suspension, or voluntary surrender of the individual's state or other professional registration, license, or other state or professionally recognized credential, or authorization to practice as an employee of the federal government or in a state or jurisdiction not requiring registration, licensure, or other recognized professional employment credential.
- 5) evidence of professional misconduct, incompetence, unethical behavior, or moral turpitude documented to the satisfaction of ABGC by a current or prior employer of an ABGC individual. Examples include, but are not limited to, unauthorized disclosure of patient information; improper alteration of a patient record; inappropriate or unlawful use of drugs or alcohol; assault, battery, or abuse of a patient; sexual contact with a patient; gross or repeated malpractice or negligence; or improper professional financial dealings.
- 6) failure to report to ABGC in a timely manner adverse legal, regulatory or credentialing action(s).

**The sanctions that ABGC may impose against any individual who is the subject of the foregoing include, but are not limited to, cancellation of examination scores, and temporary or permanent denial or revocation of examination eligibility, ABGC certification, or ABGC recertification. Any individual who engages in such improper behavior also may be subject to legal action. Disciplinary actions are discussed further in Section III.**

## **II. ABGC's DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES**

Disciplinary review of individuals who have violated or are accused of violating a provision of ABGC's Disciplinary Policy (Section I) shall be conducted according to the procedures described below.

### **A. Notification and Review of Possible Disciplinary Matter**

If it comes to the attention of ABGC that an individual who is subject to review under this policy (the "Respondent") may have engaged in any of the behaviors, or was subject to the penalties or actions, described in Section I of ABGC's *Disciplinary Policy*, ABGC will review the matter. If ABGC determines that no action should be taken based on the available documentation, the matter shall be closed. If ABGC determines that the documentation substantiates an offense outlined in the *Disciplinary Policy*, ABGC shall take such actions as are described below in Sections B through E.

### **B. Disciplinary Review Process and Action**

#### **1) Determination if the case is eligible for review by the Disciplinary Review Committee**

Executive Director in consultation with the Chair of the Disciplinary Review Committee shall determine if the alleged behavior is a violation outlined in the *Disciplinary Policy*, and whether there is sufficient evidence to substantiate the offense. If they determine that no action should be taken, the matter shall be closed. If they determine that the alleged behavior constitutes a violation outlined in the Policy, and there is sufficient evidence to substantiate the offense, the respondent will be contacted and allowed to provide an explanation of the circumstances surrounding the offense. This will be factored into the discussion about their alleged violation. If it is decided that the explanation does not mitigate the situation, the disciplinary review process will proceed. The case will be referred to the full Disciplinary Review Committee for review and decision; unless the grievance is solely focused on the use of fraudulent credentials (see II.B.7). A Disciplinary Review Committee meeting will be scheduled on a date to provide at least 60 days' notice of the meeting to the Respondent.

#### **2) Written Notice of Review to initiate the process**

A written Notice of Review (Attachment B) will be sent to the Respondent to initiate the process at least sixty (60) days in advance of the Disciplinary Review Committee meeting. The Notice of Review shall include:

- (i) a summary of the allegations;
- (ii) a copy of the documentation substantiating the offense; and
- (iii) instructions and deadlines for a response by the Respondent, which may include a written statement and supporting documentation.
- (iv) the date and time of the Disciplinary Review Committee meeting and a copy of the *ABGC's Policy and Procedures for Disciplinary Review and Appeal*.



**3) The right to present written and/or oral testimony and to be represented by legal counsel.**

The Respondent has the right to present written and/or oral testimony and to be represented by legal counsel. Oral testimony to the Disciplinary Review Committee can be provided by teleconference. A request for an oral testimony must be received at least 30 days in advance of the scheduled Disciplinary Review Committee meeting.

All expenses incurred by the Respondent and his or her legal counsel in connection with the appearance shall be borne by the Respondent. In lieu of a telephone appearance, the Respondent may provide written testimony to be received by ABGC at least 30 days prior to the scheduled meeting.

**4) Rules pertaining to the proceedings of the appearance by the Respondent and legal counsel:**

- a) The Respondent shall be given the opportunity to make a statement summarizing his or her position. At the discretion of the Disciplinary Review Committee, the Respondent's legal counsel may make an opening or closing statement.
- b) At the conclusion of the Respondent's statement, members of the Disciplinary Review Committee and ABGC's legal counsel may ask the Respondent to respond to questions.
- c) The Disciplinary Review Committee shall not be bound by technical rules of evidence usually employed in legal proceedings, but may consider any evidence it deems appropriate.
- d) If the Respondent requests a telephone appearance, and is subsequently unable to attend due to good cause (as resolved by the Chair of the ABGC Disciplinary Review Committee), at the discretion of the Disciplinary Review Committee he/she can either petition to have the meeting rescheduled, or submit a written statement, in lieu of an appearance. If the Respondent fails to notify the ABGC in advance of the meeting via registered mail or courier that they are not able to attend for good cause, the Disciplinary Review Committee may, at its discretion, notify the Respondent that no further opportunity for an appearance shall be provided, and that the Disciplinary Review Committee will make its determination based upon the available written materials.

**5.) Review Record**

The Review Record will be comprised of the Notice of Review, the Respondent's response to the Notice, and/or any other information submitted to the Disciplinary Review Committee. The Disciplinary Review Committee will be given the Review Record at least fifteen (15) calendar days before their meeting to discuss the grievance.

**6.) The Decision of the Disciplinary Review Committee**

After due and thorough deliberation of the Review Record and the testimony/statement of the Respondent, and upon the affirmative vote of the majority of the Disciplinary

Review Committee, the Disciplinary Review Committee shall determine whether grounds for disciplinary action exist and, if so, what disciplinary action should be taken.

## **7). Procedures for Use of Fraudulent Credentials**

If the violation pertains only to the use of fraudulent credentials, the following procedure will be followed first:

- a. Based on the available facts, ABGC's Executive Director in consultation with the Chair of the Disciplinary Review Committee shall determine if the alleged *fraudulent use of credentials* is a violation outlined in this policy, and whether there is sufficient evidence to substantiate the offense.
- b. If ABGC's Executive Director in consultation with the chair of the Disciplinary Review Committee determines that no action should be taken, the matter shall be closed.
- c. If ABGC's Executive Director in consultation with the chair of the Disciplinary Review Committee determines that disciplinary action should be taken, a written notice shall be issued to the Respondent describing (a) the allegations, (b) the evidence to support such allegations, and (c) the disciplinary action to be taken. The notice shall also inform the respondent that he or she may accept the disciplinary action or, within thirty (30) calendar days after the date of the written notice, may submit a written request for formal review by the entire Disciplinary Review Committee in accordance with the procedures set forth in the ABGC's *Policy and Procedures for Disciplinary Review and Appeal*. In addition, the Executive Director and Disciplinary Review Committee Chair may also make the determination that the case needs to be reviewed by the entire Disciplinary Review Committee.

## **8.) Procedures for cases involving alleged legal action and/or professional misconduct**

If the violation pertains only to issues of legal action against an ABGC individual or alleged professional misconduct, decisions regarding disciplinary actions will be based upon the categories described below.

### **a. General denial**

ABGC individuals convicted of certain crimes present an unreasonable risk to public health and safety. Thus, in all cases, ABGC individuals convicted of the following crimes will have their certification revoked, denied or their application for ACS will be denied, as appropriate.

- i) Felonies involving sexual misconduct where the victim's failure to affirmatively consent is an element of the crime, such as forcible rape.
- ii) Felonies involving the sexual or physical abuse of children, the elderly or the infirm, such as sexual misconduct with a child, making or distributing child pornography or using a child in a sexual display, incest involving a child, assault on an elderly or infirm person.
- iii) Any crime in which the victim is an out-of-hospital patient or a patient or resident of a health care facility including abuse, neglect, theft from, or financial

exploitation of a person entrusted to the care or protection of the ABGC individual.

**b. Presumptive denial**

ABGC individuals in the following categories will have their certification revoked, denied or their application for ACS will be denied, as appropriate. Exceptions may be granted in extraordinary circumstances, and then only if the Respondent establishes by clear and convincing evidence that certification will not jeopardize public health and safety.

- i) Individuals who have been convicted of any crime and who are currently incarcerated, on work release, on probation or on parole.
- ii) Individuals convicted of crimes in the following categories unless at least five years have passed since the conviction OR five years have passed since release from custodial confinement whichever occurs later:
  - (1) Serious crimes of violence against persons, such as assault or battery with a dangerous weapon, aggravated assault and battery, murder or attempted murder, manslaughter except involuntary manslaughter, kidnapping, robbery of any degree; or arson.
  - (2) Crimes involving controlled substances or synthetics, including unlawful possession or distribution, or intent to distribute unlawfully, Schedule I through V drugs as defined by the Uniform Controlled Dangerous Substances Act.
  - (3) Serious crimes against property, such as grand larceny, burglary, embezzlement or insurance fraud.
  - (4) Any other crime involving sexual misconduct.
- iii) Individuals whose license has been revoked by a state licensing agency.

**c. Discretionary denial**

ABGC individuals convicted of any crimes not previously described (not including minor traffic violations) may be subject to the one or more of the disciplinary actions described in Section III. The following factors will be considered in determining the appropriate disciplinary action:

- i) The seriousness of the crime.
- ii) Whether the crime is substantially related to the qualifications, functions or duties of a genetic counselor or the delivery of patient care.
- iii) How much time has elapsed since the crime was committed.
- iv) Whether the crime involved violence to, or abuse of, another person.
- v) Whether the crime involved a minor or a person of diminished capacity.
- vi) Whether the applicant's actions and conduct since the crime occurred are consistent with the holding of a position of public trust.

**C. Composition and Role of the Disciplinary Review Committee**

The Disciplinary Review Committee is a standing committee of ABGC's Board of Directors appointed each year by the President of the Board. The Disciplinary Review Committee shall be composed of five members and the ABGC Executive Director, acting as an *ex-officio* member. Three members shall constitute a quorum. Composition will include 1 former ABGC

board member, two current board members (1 of whom must be the public representative; the other cannot be the President or the President-elect) and two Diplomates who will be appointed by the President. Those members of the committee who are not current active members of the Board of Directors will serve 2-year terms. These individuals may serve on this committee more than once but not consecutively. The Board of Directors members of the committee will also be appointed by the President and their term length is not limited other than the limitations imposed by their membership on the Board of Directors. The chair of the Disciplinary Review Committee will be selected by the ABGC president and must be an active member or past member of the Board of Directors.

The chair of the Disciplinary Review Committee will be responsible for ensuring that a written Grievance Report is created for the historical record that details the final decision. If an adverse disciplinary action occurs, this record must detail the grounds for the disciplinary action, the sanction(s) imposed, and the rationale for these sanctions. This document must be created irrespective of the final committee decision.

**D. Notification of Disciplinary Review Committee's Determination**

The Respondent shall be sent a Notice of Decision containing the Disciplinary Review Committee's action and the reasons therefore, within thirty (30) calendar days after the Disciplinary Review Committee reaches its decision.

If the Disciplinary Review Committee determines that disciplinary action should be taken, the Notice shall advise the Respondent of the right to request an Appeal by submitting a written Request for Appeal by Registered Mail/overnight courier to the Executive Director within thirty (30) calendar days after the date of the Notice of Decision.

If a Request for Appeal is not received within thirty (30) calendar days after the date of the Notice of Decision, the Disciplinary Review Committee's determination will be deemed final action by ABGC. Details regarding the appeal process are found in Section IV.

### III. POSSIBLE DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

One or more of the following disciplinary actions may be taken, at the discretion of the Disciplinary Review Committee:

*For ABGC examinees and eligible candidates of the ABGC exam:*

- a. order the Respondent to retake the ABGC certification examination at a time and place and in a format to be determined by ABGC;
- b. invalidate the examination score(s) of the Respondent;
- c. refuse to release a score report and/or certificate permanently or until conditions imposed by ABGC are met;
- d. require the Respondent to wait a specified period of time before reapplying to take any ABGC examination;
- e. temporarily or permanently revoke the Respondent's eligibility to sit for future examinations;
- f. take a combination of any of the above actions or such other action that may be deemed appropriate in the particular circumstances.

*For ABGC Diplomates:*

- a. require the Respondent to engage in remedial education and/or training,
- b. require the Respondent to participate in a mandatory audit of continuing education for a period of time; publish findings and sanctions on ABGC's Internet website;
- c. legal action against the Respondent;
- d. issue a non-reportable Advisory Letter;
- e. issue a reportable Letter of Censure;
- f. suspend or revoke the Respondent's certification;
- g. assess a disciplinary fine; or
- h. take a combination of any of the above actions or such other action that may be deemed appropriate in the particular circumstances.

#### **IV. ABGC's APPEAL PROCESS FOR DISCIPLINARY DECISIONS**

##### **A. Request for an Appeal**

A Respondent who has received Notice of Decision of Adverse Action by the Disciplinary Review Committee may request an appeal by submitting a written Request for Appeal to ABGC, along with a payment of the Appeal Administrative Fee in the form of a check or money order for \$350.00 made payable to ABGC with "appeal" in the subject line. To be valid, the Request for Appeal must be received within thirty (30) calendar days after the date of the Notice of Decision via registered mail/or overnight courier. If the original decision of the Disciplinary Review Committee is reversed or modified, the Appeal Administrative Fee will be refunded.

**If a Request for Appeal is not received within thirty (30) calendar days of the date of the notice of the decision, the decision of the Disciplinary Review Committee shall constitute the final decision of ABGC on the matter and shall not be subject to appeal absent of extraordinary circumstances, as determined solely by ABGC.**

##### **B. Acceptable Grounds for Appeal**

The following will be the only grounds considered for granting an Appeal:

- i. The Respondent provides evidence that the Disciplinary Review Committee committed a procedural error that materially affected the outcome of the disciplinary review process.
- ii. The Respondent provides evidence that the sanctions imposed by the Disciplinary Review Committee are arbitrary and capricious.

##### **C. Appeals Committee Composition**

The Appeals Committee shall consist of ABGC's Board of Directors, excluding those individuals who are currently serving as active members of the Disciplinary Review Committee, and the ABGC Executive Director, acting as an *ex-officio* member. The President will serve as the chair of the Appeals Committee. If any other member of the Board of Directors participated in a prior review of the matter under appeal, that individual shall not participate in consideration of the appeal. If the President participated in prior consideration of the matter under appeal, ABGC's President Elect will chair the Appeals Committee.

##### **D. Appeal Procedures**

###### **1. Granting or Denial of Appeal Request**

A Request for Appeal received within thirty (30) calendar days after the date of the Notice of Decision shall be considered by the Chair of the Appeals Committee. If the Chair, in his or her discretion, determines that the Disciplinary Review Committee may have committed a procedural error that materially affected the outcome of the disciplinary review process, or that the sanctions imposed by the Disciplinary Review Committee may have been arbitrary and capricious, he or she will grant the Request for

Appeal. In such case, the Appeal will be heard by the Appeals Committee at a meeting occurring at the next regularly scheduled meeting of ABGC's Board of Directors or, at ABGC's discretion, at a special meeting of the Appeals Committee convened for such purpose. If the Chair of the Appeals Committee denies the Respondent's Request for Appeal, the Appeal Administrative Fee shall be refunded to the Respondent in its entirety within thirty (30) calendar days of the notification of decision.

## **2. Appeal Process**

- a. The Appeals Committee shall consider the Review Record, the Notice of Decision, the Grievance Report, and the Respondent's written Request for Appeal. The foregoing shall constitute the Appeal Record. There shall be no appearance of the Respondent before the Appeals Committee.
- b. The Respondent may request consideration of evidence, documentation, or written testimony not previously submitted to the Disciplinary Review Committee only if he or she can demonstrate that such evidence, documentation, or written testimony was not available at the time that the Disciplinary Review Committee considered the matter. If the Appeals Committee grants the Respondent's request to submit new evidence, the matter will be referred back to the Disciplinary Review Committee for reconsideration. In this instance, the Disciplinary Review Committee will have thirty (30) days to investigate and respond. If the original decision is overturned, the Appeal Administrative Fee will be refunded to the Respondent and the case will be closed. If the Disciplinary Review Committee does not overturn its original decision, the case will be referred back to the Appeals Committee with an updated Grievance Report. The Appeals Committee will have thirty (30) days to review and respond.
- c. If the appeal is being considered due to an alleged procedural error made by the Disciplinary Review Committee, the appeal will be sent back to the Disciplinary Review Committee to correct the procedural error and reconsider the claim. New evidence submitted by the Respondent and approved for consideration by the Appeals Committee will also be considered at the time the Disciplinary Review Committee reconsiders the claim. The Disciplinary Review Committee will have thirty (30) days to review and respond. If the original Disciplinary Review Committee decision is overturned, the Appeal Administrative Fee will be refunded to the Respondent and the case will be closed. If the Disciplinary Review Committee does not overturn their original decision, the case will be referred back to the Appeals Committee with an updated Grievance Report. The Appeals Committee will have thirty (30) days to review and respond.
- d. The Appeals Committee shall carefully consider all of the information presented in the Appeal Record. After due and thorough deliberation and upon the affirmative vote of a majority of the Appeals Committee, the Appeals Committee shall determine whether to ratify, reverse, or modify the Disciplinary Review Committee's decision.

- e. If the Appeals Committee reverses or modifies the decision of the Disciplinary Review Committee, the Appeals Committee will refund the Appeal Administrative Fee to the Respondent.
- f. A record of the Appeals Committee meeting shall be kept. A copy of the Appeals Committee meeting record shall be made available to the Respondent upon payment of the cost of reproduction.

### **3. Notification of Appeals Committee's Determination**

The Respondent shall be notified in writing of the Appeals Committee's Determination, including the reasons thereof, within thirty (30) calendar days after the Appeals Committee reaches its decision.

**A DECISION BY THE APPEALS COMMITTEE TO RATIFY, REVERSE OR MODIFY AN ADVERSE DECISION SHALL CONSTITUTE THE FINAL DECISION OF ABGC ON THE MATTER AND SHALL NOT BE SUBJECT TO FURTHER APPEAL BARRING EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES AS DETERMINED SOLELY BY ABGC.**

## **V. ACTION ON FINAL DECISIONS**

### **A. Public Notice of Final Decisions**

After a final adverse disciplinary decision has been reached, and appeal request period has passed, ABGC may choose to publish the findings and disciplinary action taken on ABGC's Internet website or in any other relevant publications. In addition, ABGC may notify interested parties of the adverse disciplinary decision and the underlying facts thereof as deemed appropriate by ABGC. Such notification may be given to state regulatory boards, genetic counseling associations, the Respondent's employer, the federal government, and other interested parties, as determined by ABGC.

### **B. Application for Restoration of Eligibility, Certification, or Recertification Following Disciplinary Action**

1. A Respondent whose status is conditional, or whose eligibility, certification, or recertification has been non-permanently denied or revoked by ABGC based on a legal, regulatory or credentialing action may reapply to ABGC when the situation underlying ABGC's decision has been remedied. Unless the Disciplinary Review Committee grants an exception, if the decision was based on conviction of or pleading no contest to a felony, the individual may not apply for examination or certification until all sentences have been served and all judgments have been satisfied. If the decision was based on revocation of licensure or authorization to practice, the individual may not apply for examination or certification until the situation underlying the licensure or authorization revocation has been remedied to ABGC's satisfaction, and the license or authorization is eligible for restoration unless this requirement is waived by the Disciplinary Review Committee.
2. A Respondent whose eligibility, certification, or recertification has been denied or revoked by ABGC for a specified time period for reasons other than legal, regulatory,



or credentialing action, may reapply to ABGC following expiration of such time period. At the time of reapplication, the Respondent will be required to demonstrate that the terms of all sanctions imposed by ABGC have been fulfilled, including but not limited to payment of any fines and completion of any remedial education course imposed or required by the Disciplinary Review Committee.

3. Applications following denial or revocation of eligibility, certification, or recertification shall be considered and acted upon at the sole discretion of ABGC.

**C. Responsibility for Notification of Address Change**

ABGC candidates and Diplomates are solely responsible for providing timely notification to ABGC of changes of mailing address and e-mail address. If a Respondent does not receive notice(s) from ABGC related to disciplinary review or action due to his or her failure to timely notify ABGC of a change of address, that lack of notification may not be considered as the basis for an appeal or reconsideration of any decision in the matter.

**VI. SUBMISSIONS TO ABGC**

Whenever there is a requirement for a written notice, request or other writing to be submitted to ABGC, such writing shall be addressed to the following:

*US Postal Service:*

ABGC Executive Director  
4400 College Blvd., Suite 220  
Overland Park, KS 66211  
Phone: 913.222.8640

All such written notices must be sent by a traceable delivery method, such as FedEx Express delivery or Registered Mail with Return Receipt. Failure of delivery of written communications caused by improper addressing or delivery method may not be considered as the basis for appeal or reconsideration of any decision or the extension of any time period provided for Respondent's reply to a notice from ABGC in connection with any disciplinary proceeding.

## Budget

The proposed annual budget is to be presented to the Board of Directors no later than the fall Board of Directors meeting along with all documents and data necessary to provide adequate information for a complete understanding of the budget. An explanation of the derivation of the line item figures is also to be included. The final budget should be approved no later than December 31<sup>st</sup>. The ABGC fiscal year is January 1 through December 31.

### Conflict of Interest Policy and Participation Agreement for All Volunteers & Staff

This Policy and Participation Agreement contains the requirements for participation by officers, directors, committee members, project participants, employees, consultants and agents of the ABGC in official ABGC projects and activities ("ABGC activities"). Those requirements include avoidance of Conflicts of Interest, including the ongoing duty to disclose financial interests and association relationships. If a conflict cannot be avoided, the individual should recuse h/herself from discussion and voting if applicable.

LAST NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ FIRST NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ MIDDLE INITIAL: \_\_\_\_\_

INSTITUTION: \_\_\_\_\_

ABGC PROJECT/ ACTIVITY/COMMITTEE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

Directors and volunteers of the American Board of Genetic Counseling (ABGC) are expected to have the Mission of the Board as their primary interest when contributing to the work of the ABGC. In addition, it is important to manage conflicts of interest among those who contribute to ABGC activities, including executive staff members, consultants, and volunteers.

To maintain confidence in the integrity of the ABGC, it is important for those doing its work to disclose personal and professional investments and activities that could create an actual or perceived conflict of interest. A potential conflict of interest exists whenever personal, professional, commercial, or financial interests or activities outside of the ABGC have the possibility (either in actuality or in appearance) of (1) compromising a board member or volunteer's judgment; (2) biasing the nature or direction of their ABGC related activities; (3) influencing a board member or volunteer's decision or behavior with respect to certification, recertification, uses of ABGC resources, interactions with Diplomates, examinees, or potential examinees, or other matters of interest to the ABGC; or (4) resulting in a personal or family member's gain or advancement at the expense of ABGC. For purposes of subsection (4), family members include spouse, domestic partners and dependents.

A potential conflict of commitment exists when non-ABGC related relationships or activities have the possibility (either in actuality or in appearance) of interfering or competing with the mission or activities of the ABGC, or with that individual's ability or willingness to perform the full range of responsibilities associated with his or her Board position or role within the ABGC.

This policy is intended to maintain the integrity of the ABGC and, thereby, maintain the confidence of the genetic counseling profession and the public in ABGC's standards and judgments. It is the responsibility of Board directors, consultants, volunteers to the ABGC, and

executive staff members to identify and disclose potential and actual sources of conflict of interest and conflicts of commitment described below and to comply with established policy. In engaging in any activities on behalf of or in the name of the ABGC, no individuals subject to this policy shall base their actions or decisions on their personal, family, or professional interests (financial, professional, or otherwise) at the expense of the ABGC's interest, nor should they participate in activities that have the possibility of (either in actuality or in appearance) to provide unfair advantage, or undermine the work or reputation of ABGC.

This form will be completed annually, or at the time of the re-appointment by all Board directors, consultants, volunteers to the ABGC, and executive staff members of the Board. Additionally, should commitments or conflicts change (e.g., change in employment or position), individuals should execute a new form. Individuals who are uncertain about these policies should seek the advice of the President of the Board.

### Financial Conflict of Interest

#### *Rationale*

Judgment may be influenced by bias resulting from financial conflicts such as investments, employment, consulting, and advising, among others. Two principal criteria will be employed to evaluate potential financial conflicts of interest to affect the work of ABGC: (1) the likelihood that professional judgment would be influenced by bias introduced by the potential financial conflicts of interest, and (2) the seriousness of both the direct and indirect potential harm caused by such bias. Likelihood increases when the value of the gain to the individual is large – particularly relative to income – and when there is long-term dependence on the outside relationship.

#### *Policy*

Board directors, consultants, volunteers to ABGC, and executive staff members of the Board will be required to disclose whether they or their spouses or dependent children have financial conflicts.

Potential financial conflicts include but are not limited to:

1. Direct holdings (whether in the form of equity, debt, or any other type of investment) in pharmaceutical, biotechnologic, medical service companies, or other medical health care related companies in excess of \$10,000 per company;
2. Compensation from ongoing consulting or advising arrangements or honoraria from a single institution in excess of \$2,500 per year;
3. Direct grant support as the principal investigator from a pharmaceutical company, or other granting organization in excess of \$5,000 per year;
4. Affiliations with other health related or professional organizations as a trustee, officer, a director or in another capacity; or
5. Employment by companies in the health care industry such as pharmaceutical, biotechnology, and medical instrument companies, or health maintenance organizations.
6. Other financial conflicts of interest not listed above that may result in a real or perceived conflict of interest.

Please describe any financial interests/holdings that could create an actual or perceived conflict of interest:

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Academic Conflict of Interest

*Rationale*

Officers, directors, committee members, project participants, employees, consultants and agents of the ABGC with an in-depth exposure to the ABGC certification/recertification examination questions must not contribute to activities that prepare individuals for this examination because it may (either in actuality or in appearance) give an unfair advantage to users. Application of the following guidelines will protect the integrity of the ABGC's examinations and avoid the perception of and opportunity for unfair advantage.

*Policy*

Officers, directors, committee members, project participants, employees, consultants and agents of the ABGC who have significant knowledge about questions on the certification examinations or the recertification examinations should be mindful of activities that may result in a real or perceived opportunity for unfair advantage on the certification examination.

Potential academic conflicts include but are not limited to:

1. Participation in or identification with educational resources or programs designed and/or advertised to prepare registrants for Board certification or recertification examinations, including but not limited to, publications, courses, audiovisual material, non-ABGC derived practice examinations, or computer-based programs. This does not include single lectures, disease specific publications, seminars, or workshops that are limited to current developments in a single field of genetic counseling or single disease area and do not address preparation for or the substance of any ABGC examination;
2. Participation in the preparation of non-ABGC derived self-assessment programs or examinations;
3. Participation in broad and comprehensive reviews, updates, perspectives, etc., that is scheduled six months or fewer before the ABGC certifying examinations. This does not include single lectures, disease specific publications, seminars, or workshops that are limited to current developments in a single field of genetic counseling or single disease area and do not address preparation for or the substance of any ABGC examination;
4. Use of materials in single lectures, seminars, or workshops that may give the impression of an unfair advantage to any participants who might be contemplating ABGC certification in the near future;
5. Participation in the development of comprehensive examinations or other examinations that may give the impression of an unfair advantage to users who might be contemplating ABGC certification in the near future;
6. Use of their ABGC affiliation for the advertising of non-Board sponsored educational programs or publications.

Please describe any academic positions or responsibilities that could create an actual or perceived conflict of interest:

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Other Conflicts of Interest

Financial conflicts of interest and those related to examination preparation are described in detail as the most likely to impact those serving the interests of the ABGC. However, this policy is intended to manage all conflicts of interest. As such, it is the duty of those acting for or on behalf of the ABGC to be aware of the possibility of other real or perceived conflicts of interest between their responsibilities to the ABGC and to another entity. Those involved in ABGC activities have a fundamental responsibility to refrain from participating in ABGC related decision-making when a competing interest precludes or inhibits the exercise of his/her independent professional judgment on behalf of the ABGC, or when the nature of the competing interest is such that the volunteer's continued participation would unreasonably jeopardize the integrity of the decision-making process. In addition, those involved in ABGC activities should disclose, minimize and manage those activities that use their ABGC title or use confidential ABGC information in ways that could lead to, or appear to lead to, unfair personal or institutional gain or advantage, and/or undermine the work of or reputation of the ABGC.

Please describe any other actual or perceived conflict of interest:

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No Conflicts of Interest of Any Kind

If you have no conflicts of interest as described above, please check box below. Do not check the box below if you have completed any of the above sections.

I attest that I have no conflict of interest at this time.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Correspondence/Communications

1. All official correspondence of Officers regarding organizational policy will be shared through photocopies or email to other officers and will be provided to the office for filing. All correspondence generated by staff will likewise be shared with the officers of the organization.
2. All correspondence between members of the Certification Examination Committee and the office or the testing service will be copied to the CEC Co-Chairs as specified in these policies.
3. An annual newsletter shall be distributed to each Diplomate and posted to the website effective May 2014. The newsletter will include examination performance statistics and other relevant information for the Diplomates regarding ABGC policies and operations. Additionally, the newsletter will be posted and archived on the organization's website. The board shall allocate appropriate funding in the budget.
4. The organization must continually keep the constituency informed relative to changes in the certification/recertification process. Copies of the Examination Bulletin and other announcements regarding these policies will be made available on the organization's website.

## Credential Verification

Professional certification is the voluntary process by which a non-governmental agency grants time-limited recognition and use of a credential to individuals who have met predetermined and standardized criteria. Certification by the American Board of Genetic Counseling (ABGC) indicates that individual practitioners have met the standards necessary to provide competent genetic counseling services.

A certified genetic counselor or employer can request credential verification from the ABGC by completing the online request form. The organization will send a formal letter of verification to the requestor. There is a \$40 fee per counselor verified for:

- Third Party Requests
- Employer Requests
- Requests made by Diplomates not in good standing. The fee is waived for Diplomates in good standing with all current CMF payments.

## State Licensure

The Executive Office will collaborate with state licensure bodies regarding requests for verifications and information regarding certified genetic counselors during regulation, rulemaking and implementation phases.

## Record Retention Policy

### Executive File

#### Board of Directors

Minutes	Permanent
Meeting planning	3 years
Newsletters	3 years
Nomination records	Permanent

## Examinations

Bulletin of information	Permanent
Item writing workshop handbook	Permanent
List of certified Diplomates	Permanent
NBME (testing agency) contracts	Permanent
NBME correspondence	Permanent
Test books (one sample prior to CBT)	Permanent
PSI contracts	Permanent
Test analysis reports	Permanent
Examination summary statistics	Permanent
Program reports	Permanent
Practice Analysis Reports	Permanent

## Financial

Audits	Permanent
Bank statements, deposits, reconciliation	7 years
Canceled checks	7 years
Financial journals/ledgers	7 years
Government forms: 990, 1090	7 years
Insurance	7 years
Investments	7 years
Paid invoices	7 years
Space contracts	7 years
Tax returns	Permanent

## Executive/Legal

Articles of incorporation and amendments	Permanent
Bylaws and amendments	Permanent
Contracts	Permanent
IRS exemption letter	Permanent
General correspondence	5 years
Policies and procedures	Permanent
Conflict of interest and disclosure form	7 years

## Personnel

Job descriptions	7 years
Time reports	1 year
Performance appraisals	7 years

## Individual's File – Certification

The ABGC retains documents pertaining to an individual's training, application for certification, and examination results for the sole purpose of determining that its requirements for admission to examination and for certification are fulfilled.

## Certification

ADA requests	Destroy if applicant passed exam Hold for 1 cycle if applicant failed exam
Correspondence	Destroy after 1 exam cycle
Pass/fail score	Permanent

Recertification application	Hold for 1 certification cycle
Verification requests	Destroy after 1 year
Test analysis reports	Permanent
Practice Analysis reports	Permanent
Cut Score report	Permanent
Detailed Content Outlines	Permanent
Score report samples	Permanent

### **Confidentiality Policy**

All application, certification and recertification materials are confidential. ABGC will not discuss or disclose any portion of these materials with a third party without written consent from the individual. Consent for sharing of examination results with programs and state licensure boards is collected on the application agreement. Certification expiration date is available for all certificants through the ABGC website and the Find a Certified Genetic Counselor directory.

### **Document Review**

All brochures, exam bulletins, printed materials and other organizational materials are to be reviewed by staff and/or appropriate volunteers on an annual basis as are the Bylaws and Standard Operating Procedures and Policies of the organization.

All official ABGC forms and publications will include the date of the most recent revisions or copyright.

### **Eligibility Requirements and Appeals**

ABGC considers as eligible those candidates who apply and meet the requirements as outlined in the most current Examination Bulletin and according to the processes and procedures for examination application review. PSI Examination Services Department will provide application processing services as outlined in the specific Testing Services agreement and utilizing current eligibility information as listed in the most current Examination Bulletin.

Applicants may appeal to the Board of Directors regarding eligibility to sit for the examination by submitting a request letter including documentation and rationale for why the individual believes s/he meets the requirements.

### **Examination Proctors**

Examination proctors are retained and provided by the testing service as outlined in the testing contract. The testing services partner must have in place security and confidentiality agreements including training and orientation on processes and procedures for proctoring computer based examinations.



## **Financial Policy**

1. All non-budgeted expenses must be approved in advance of payment by an officer of the organization.
2. The President, Secretary/Treasurer, and organization's Executive Director shall be the authorized signatories for the organization's bank accounts unless otherwise denoted in the management contract.
3. Expenses incurred in the fulfillment of organizational business are reimbursed upon submission of receipts to the organization's office.
4. All dues and fees of the organization are to be reviewed on an annual basis.
5. Monthly Financial Statements shall be provided to the Board for approval.
6. Incoming bills are stamped with the date received, processed for payment through Kellen Finance Department, and paid once a month. Bills are itemized and charged to a class:
  - a. General Administration/Management
  - b. Board of Directors
  - c. Exhibits
  - d. Committees
  - e. Certification/Recertification
  - f. Representation at Other Meetings

## **Finance Committee Charge**

The Finance Committee provides guidance to the board to help ensure the financial health of the organization, informed by strong fiscal policies. The committee shall periodically review and revise the investment guidelines, financial audit documents, and fiscal policies of ABGC, and make other financial-related recommendations as requested by the board.

### **Membership**

The Finance Committee is one of the five standing committees as mandated in the ABGC Bylaws. Members of the Finance Committee shall be appointed by the President, and at the minimum include the Secretary/Treasurer (chair), the President, one former Treasurer or Secretary/Treasurer, the American Board of Genetic Counseling Executive Director (ex officio), one Diplomate at large and one other member of the Board of Directors.

### **Term**

- President, Secretary/Treasurer serve during their terms of office
- Other committee members are appointed by the President with the consent of the Board of Directors
- The non-board of director members of the committee will be appointed and shall serve for a 3 year term, running January 1 – December 31. The term limit is two consecutive terms.
- The BOD may extend a Finance Committee member's term as needed for continuity.

All members must be ABGC Diplomates in good standing. Individuals interested in serving on the committee should submit a volunteer application to the Executive Office, which will be shared with the chairperson of the Finance Committee for review. The committee should use a standard rating tool to review all submissions. The Finance Chair (the current Secretary/Treasurer) will recommend to the President and the Board of Directors those individuals who should be appointed to serve on the committee.

## Responsibilities

The members of the Finance Committee will have the following responsibilities, in conjunction with the Executive Office:

- Development of financial policy looking at historic information and toward future financial planning.
- Review annual ABGC financial audit conducted by an independent CPA firm
- Review annual tax report
- Review investment allocation to ensure compliance with the investment policy
- Chair/Treasurer presents summary of financial activities at Board meetings
- Chair/Treasurer presents monthly expenditure reports and financial statements to the board

Make recommendations to the Board of Directors with regard to fiscal and investment policies

## Meeting Schedule

The Finance Committee will meet quarterly or as needed by conference call or in real-time communication methods such as video or WebEx. There should be no in-person meetings needed.

## Reporting Structure

The Secretary/Treasurer will provide the Board with regular updates regarding the activities of the Finance Committee.

## Budget and Required Resources

The Secretary/Treasurer and the Executive Director will prepare an organizational budget including the needs of the finance committee for review and approval by the board. As needed the Finance Committee may be requested by either the Secretary/Treasurer or President to provide input on the organizational budget.

*Approved on July 22, 2009 by the ABGC Board of Directors  
Revised on February 28, 2013, May 25, 2017*

## **Investment Policy Statement**

Approved June 2010

### Introduction

This statement of investment policy has been adopted by the Board of Directors of the American Board of Genetic Counseling ("ABGC") to provide guidelines for the investment of funds held by the organization.

For the purposes of managing investment risk and to optimize investment returns within acceptable risk parameters, the funds held will be divided into two separate investment pools. The process for determining the dollar amount in each pool is set forth in the "Procedures" section of this section. The two investment pools shall be called the "Operating Fund and the "Long-Term Fund."

### Assignment of Responsibility

#### Responsibility of the Finance Committee on behalf of the Board of Directors

The Board of Directors is charged by law with the responsibility of managing ABGC's assets.

The Board of Directors has delegated this authority to the Finance Committee, which shall discharge its duties solely in the interest of ABGC, with the care, skill, prudence and due diligence under the circumstances then prevailing, that a prudent person, acting in a like capacity and familiar with such matters, would use in the conduct of an enterprise of like character with like aims. The specific responsibilities of the Finance Committee relating to the investment management of assets include:

1. Reviewing the financial needs of ABGC and communicating such needs to the Investment Consultant on a timely basis;
2. Determining the risk tolerance and investment time horizon and communicating these to the appropriate parties;
3. Establishing reasonable and consistent investment objectives, policies and guidelines that will direct the investment of the assets;
4. Prudently and diligently selecting qualified investment professionals, including any Investment Manager(s), Investment Consultant(s), and Custodian(s);
5. Quarterly evaluation of the performance of the Investment Managers to assure adherence to policy guidelines and monitor investment objective progress;
6. Developing and enacting proper controls and procedures.

#### Responsibility of the Investment Consultant

The role of the Investment Consultant is that of a non-discretionary advisor to the Finance Committee. Investment advice concerning the investment management of the assets will be offered by the Investment Consultant and will be consistent with the investment objectives, policies, guidelines and constraints as established in this IPS. Specific responsibilities of the Investment Consultant include:

1. Assisting in the development and periodic review of the Investment Policy Statement (IPS);
2. Conducting Investment Manager searches;
3. Providing “due diligence” on the Investment Managers;
4. Providing recommendations to hire and/or terminate any Investment Manager(s);
5. Acting on behalf of, and at the direction of, the Finance Committee in connection with the hiring or termination of Investment Managers or the selection of mutual funds;
6. Monitoring the performance of the Investment Managers to provide the Finance Committee with the ability to determine their progress toward the investment objectives;
7. Communicating matters of policy, manager research, and manager performance to the Finance Committee;
8. Reviewing investment history, historical capital markets performance and the contents of this IPS to any newly appointed members of the Finance Committee; and
9. Monitoring the asset allocation of the Long Term Fund and providing the Finance Committee with recommendations for changing asset allocation within the guidelines set forth in this IPS.

#### Responsibilities of the Investment Managers

Each Investment Manager will have full discretion to make all investment decisions for the assets placed under its jurisdiction, while observing and operating within all policies, guidelines, and constraints, as outlined in this IPS. Specific responsibilities of the Investment Managers include:

1. Discretionary investment management, including decisions to buy, sell, or hold individual securities, and to alter asset allocation within guidelines established in this IPS and

- approved by the Finance Committee;
2. Communicating any major changes to economic outlook, investment strategy, or any other factors that affect implementation of the investment process;
  3. Informing the Investment Consultant of any material change to the investment management organization. Examples include material changes in portfolio management personnel, ownership structure, investment philosophy, etc; and
  4. Voting proxies on behalf of the ABGC, and, when requested, communicating information concerning such voting to the Finance Committee on a timely basis.

#### Responsibilities of the Custodian

The Custodian will physically (or through agreement with a sub-custodian) maintain possession of securities owned by the ABGC, collect dividend and interest payments, redeem maturing securities, and effect receipt and delivery following purchases and sales. The Custodian will also perform regular accounting of all assets owned, purchased or sold, as well as movement of assets within fund accounts.

#### Procedures

1. The following procedures will be followed to ensure the investment policy statement is consistent with the current mission of ABGC and accurately reflects the current financial condition:
  - a. This investment policy shall be reviewed annually by the Finance Committee for any necessary revisions.
  - b. Recommendations for any revisions or modifications will be made by the Finance Committee to the Board of Directors for approval.
2. The following procedures will be used to determine the dollar amounts to be placed in the Long-Term Fund. Dollars not specifically designated for the Long-Term Funds will be restricted to investments designated in the "Investment Guidelines" for the Operating Fund.
  - a. The Finance Committee will recommend the dollar amounts to be placed in the Long-Term Funds.
  - b. The Board of Directors will have final approval of the dollar amounts placed in specific funds.
3. The services of an Investment Consultant will be sought to manage portions of ABGC funds. The following procedure shall be followed to engage a new or replace a current Investment Consultant.
  - a. The Executive Director will recommend the hiring or replacing of an investment consultant to the Finance Committee.
  - b. The Finance Committee will review the candidate(s) and make a recommendation to the Board of Directors, who shall have final approval.
4. It is anticipated that from time to time the services of an Investment Manager(s) may be sought to manage portions of the ABGC's funds. The engagement or termination of an Investment Manager will be authorized by the Finance Committee, acting with the advice of the Investment Consultant. The same procedure shall apply for both individually-managed accounts, exchange traded funds and mutual funds (with the exception of money market mutual funds).

#### ABGC Operating Fund

##### Purpose

The purpose of the Operating Fund is to provide sufficient cash to meet the financial obligations of the ABGC in a timely manner.

##### Investment Objectives

The investment objectives of the Operating Fund are:

1. Providing liquidity;
2. Preserving capital; and
3. Optimizing investment return within the constraints of this IPS.

### Investment Guidelines

#### Allowable Investments

The Executive Director shall be authorized to invest the ABGC Operating Fund as follows:

1. Checking accounts in U.S. federally insured banks and savings and loans not to exceed federally insured amounts;
2. Money market funds that invest in U.S. Government backed securities;
3. Federally-insured certificates of deposit not to exceed the insurable limit per institution;
4. Direct obligations of the U.S. Government, its agencies and instrumentalities;
5. Repurchase agreements in conjunction with bank sweep accounts collateralized by U.S. Government obligations ;
6. Commercial paper rated A-1/P1 by Standard & Poor's and Moody's and
7. Corporate notes with a minimum rating of investment grade by one rating service.

#### Maturity

The maturities on investments for the Operating Fund shall be limited to three years or less. The Finance Committee, with assistance from the Executive Director, will be responsible for scheduling maturities.

### ABGC Long-Term Fund

#### Purpose

The purpose of the ABGC Long-Term Fund is to enhance the purchasing power of funds held for future expenditure, to maintain the financial stability of the association, and to provide cash to be used during the current budget cycle.

#### Investment Objectives

The objectives of the portfolio represent a long-term goal of maximizing returns without exposure to undue risk, as defined herein. It is understood that fluctuating rates of return are characteristic of the securities markets. The primary concern should be long-term appreciation of the assets and consistency of total return on the portfolio. Recognizing that short-term market fluctuations may cause variations in the account performance, the portfolio is expected to achieve the following objectives over a five-year moving time period:

1. The Long Term Fund's total return is expected to exceed the Consumer Price Index by 4-5%. On a quarter to quarter basis, the actual returns will fluctuate and can be expected to exceed the target about half the time.
2. The Long Term Fund's total return is expected to exceed the 90-Day Treasury bill Index by 7-8%. On a quarter to quarter basis, the actual returns will fluctuate and can be expected to exceed the target about half the time.

Understanding that a long-term positive correlation exists between performance volatility (risk) and statistical returns in the securities markets, we have established the following short-term objective:

The portfolio should be invested to minimize the probability of low negative total returns, defined as a one-year return worse than 10%. It is anticipated that a loss greater than this will occur no more than one out of twenty years.

The investment policies and restrictions presented in this statement serve as a framework to achieve the investment objectives at the level of risk deemed acceptable. These policies and restrictions are designed to minimize interference with efforts to attain overall objectives, and to minimize the probability of excluding appropriate investment opportunities.

#### Prohibited Investments

The following investments and investment activities are prohibited:

1. Private placements;
2. Letter stock;
3. Derivatives. However, to the extent that mutual funds are used by ABGC the mutual funds may buy or sell derivatives for the purposes of managing portfolio risk;
4. Direct ownership of commodities or commodity contracts;
5. Short sales;
6. Margin transactions

#### Diversification

Investment of the Long Term Fund shall be so diversified so that the portfolio will, on average, yield higher returns and pose a lower risk than any individual investment found within the portfolio, unless under the circumstances it is clearly prudent not to do so.

#### Long-Term Fund Target Asset Mix

The long-term component of the Reserve Fund shall be comprised of the asset classes listed in the table below. The target weight is the desired weight for each asset class. The minimum weights and maximum weights are to allow for normal market fluctuations and to allow for temporary over/under weight allocations that are believed to be desirable by either the Finance Committee or the Investment Consultant.

The Finance Committee will monitor the asset allocation of the Long Term Fund based on quarterly reports provided by the Investment Consultant. It is the responsibility of the Investment Consultant to monitor the fund on an on-going basis and to make recommendations for portfolio rebalancing to ensure that the funds remain within Investment Policy guidelines.

<b>ASSET CLASS</b>	<b>MINIMUM WEIGHT (%)</b>	<b>TARGET WEIGHT (%)</b>	<b>MAXIMUM WEIGHT (%)</b>
<b>EQUITY</b>			
U.S. Large Capitalization Stocks	13	19	25
U.S. Mid-Capitalization Stocks	3	5	7
U.S. Small Capitalization Stocks	3	5	7
International Stocks	8	11	14
Emerging Markets	1	2	5
	<b>28</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>58</b>

<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>			
<b>FIXED INCOME</b>			
U.S. Government/Corporate	22	32	42
High Yield Bonds	2	4	6
International Bonds	6	9	12
<b>TOTAL FIXED INCOME</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>ALTERNATIVES</b>	9	13	17

### Equities

The equity asset classes should be maintained at risk levels roughly equivalent to the sectors of the market represented, with the objective of exceeding a nationally recognized index measuring the performance of the designated sector over a five-year moving time period net of fees and commissions. Mutual funds conforming to the policy guidelines may be used to implement the investment program.

The following definitions shall apply for the purposes of this policy:

**U.S. Large Capitalization Stocks:** A portfolio of stocks composed primarily of US-based companies having a market capitalization, on average, exceeding \$10.0 billion and whose primary shares trade on a major US exchange. (Market Capitalization = Market Price × Number of Shares Outstanding) The generally accepted, nationally recognized index for this asset class is the Standard & Poor's 500 Stock Index (S&P 500).

**U.S. Mid-Capitalization Stocks:** A portfolio of stocks composed primarily of US-based companies having a market capitalization, on average, between \$2.0 billion and \$10 billion and whose primary shares trade on a major US exchange. The generally accepted, nationally recognized index for this asset class is the Russell Midcap Index.

**U.S. Small Capitalization Stocks:** A portfolio of stocks composed primarily of US-based companies having a market capitalization, on average, of less than \$2.0 billion. The generally accepted, nationally recognized index for this asset class is the Russell 2000 Index.

**International Stocks:** A portfolio comprised primarily of stocks of non-U.S. based companies, the primary shares of which are traded on exchanges outside the U.S. American Depository Receipts are considered International Stocks. The generally accepted, nationally-recognized index for this asset class is the Morgan Stanley Capital International Europe-Australasia-Far East Index (EAFE).

**Emerging Markets:** A portfolio of stocks comprised primarily of companies in the global emerging markets of Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America. The generally accepted, nationally, recognized index for this asset class is the MSCI Emerging Markets Index (MSCI Em).

### Fixed Income

Investments in fixed income securities will be managed actively to pursue opportunities presented by changes in interest rates, credit ratings, and maturity premiums. Mutual funds

conforming to the policy guidelines may be used to implement the investment program. The Following definitions shall apply for the purposes of this policy:

**U.S. Government/Corporate Intermediate Bonds:** A portfolio consisting primarily of fixed income securities denominated in U.S. dollars issued by the U.S. Government or U.S. corporations having a weighted average maturity of less than 10 years. The generally accepted, nationally recognized index for this asset class is the Barclays Capital Government/Corporate Intermediate-term Bond Index

**High Yield Corporate Bonds:** A portfolio consisting primarily of bonds issued by U.S. corporations and the majority of the bonds are rated below BBB/Baa. The generally accepted, nationally recognized index for this asset class is the Barclays Capital High Yield Index.

**International Bonds:** A portfolio consisting primarily of fixed income securities denominated in currencies other than U.S. dollars. Issuers may be both governments and corporations. The generally accepted, nationally recognized index for this asset class is the Citigroup Non-US Dollar World Government Bond Index.

#### Alternative Investments

Investment in alternatives may be considered by this organization within the context of an overall investment plan. The objective of such investments will be to seek to diversify the portfolio, complementing traditional equity and fixed-income investments and improving the overall performance consistency of the portfolio. It is acknowledged that there is no guarantee that this objective will be realized.

Alternative investments, including for example hedge funds, managed futures, commodities and other non-traditional investments, shall be utilized through mutual funds or professionally managed pools of such investments to provide for a prudent level of diversification.

#### Investment Manager Selection and Evaluation Criterion

##### Investment Manager Selection

In selecting the Investment Managers for the Long Term Fund, the Finance Committee working with the Investment Consultant will consider a variety of statistical and non-statistical factors. These factors, measured over a multi-year period, may include the Investment Manager's investment objectives, performance relative to its index and peer group, risk characteristics, return characteristics, investment style, fees, manager tenure and turnover, style consistency and the degree of correlation with other Investment Managers employed by ABGC.

##### Investment Manager Monitoring and Review

The on-going monitoring of investment options must be a regular and disciplined process. It is the mechanism for revisiting the Investment Manager Selection process and confirming that the criteria originally satisfied remain so, and that an Investment Manager continues to be a valid selection. While frequent change is neither expected nor desirable, the process of monitoring investment performance relative to specified guidelines is an on-going process.

The Finance Committee working with the Investment Consultant will monitor, on a periodic basis, the same factors identified above under "Investment Manager Selection". The placement of a manager on a "watch list" may be required if an Investment Manager:

1. has a change in manager or analytical staff;
2. has experienced style drift;
3. has performed unfavorably on an absolute basis relative to its index or peer group over



- rolling five year periods;
4. has performed unfavorably on a risk adjusted basis relative to its index or peer group over rolling five year periods;
  5. has violated the ABGC's investment policy guidelines;
  6. has material litigation filed against the firm;
  7. has material changes in firm ownership structure; or
  8. has exhibited any other unfavorable factors that the Finance Committee or the Investment Consultant deem material since the initial selection of the Investment Manager.

Watch list status is expected to last no longer than one quarter and will be used to evaluate the factors that led to the watch list designation. If, at the conclusion of the watch list evaluation, the Finance Committee has overall satisfaction with the Investment Manager, no further action is required. If areas of dissatisfaction exist, it is the responsibility of the Finance Committee, working with the Investment Consultant, to consider taking steps to remedy the deficiency, including the removal of the Investment Manager.

#### Investment Manager Removal

The Finance Committee, working with the Investment Consultant, may remove an Investment Manager when it believes such removal is in the best interest of the Long Term fund, taking into account all relevant factors including, and without limitation, a lack of confidence in the Investment Manager's ability to:

1. Achieve performance and risk objectives;
2. Comply with investment guidelines; or
3. Maintain a stable organization and retain key relevant investment professionals.

The watch list is not the only route for removing an existing manager. The aforementioned events or conditions, or any other events or conditions of concern identified by the Finance Committee or the Investment Consultant, may prompt the immediate removal of an Investment Manager without it being watch listed. Any decision to remove an Investment Manager will be made on an individual basis, and will be made based on quantitative and qualitative review.

#### Performance Reporting

The Long-Term Fund will be evaluated quarterly on a total return basis. Returns will be compared to:

1. Consumer Price Index plus 4%
2. Three-month Treasury Bill Index plus 3%
3. Nationally recognized indices measuring the performance of the classes specified in the target asset mix.

Comparisons will show results for the latest quarter, year to date and since inception. The report will be prepared by the Investment Consultant and will be presented to the Finance Committee on a quarterly basis.

#### Honoraria

Individuals acting as official representatives of the organization at meetings, workshops, consultations, etc. are prohibited from personally accepting honoraria for their services. However, contributions may be made to the organization if appropriate.

## **Liability Insurance**

### **Business Owners Package Policy**

Policy Number 37SBABE3000  
Agent: BPM Insurance  
Micah Nance – 913-744-2211  
8717 W 110th St, Ste. 420, Overland Park, KS 66210  
Effective 3/13/19 to 3/13/20

### **Directors & Officers Liability including E&O**

Policy Number: 6803-1630  
Agent: BPM Insurance  
Micah Nance  
913-744-2211  
mnance@ggins.net  
Term: annual policy renewed July 7

Liability Insurance will be provided by and at the expense of the organization for those persons acting on behalf of the organization. The organization will also provide Directors and Officers Insurance with an Errors and Omissions rider covering all certification activities. The Insurance policy shall be reviewed annually by the Executive Director or Board of Directors to assure adequate coverage.

## **Meeting/Executive Sessions**

The ABGC Board of Directors typically meets in person two times a year: one spring meeting and one fall meeting. Monthly conference calls are also held to continue organizational business between in person meetings. Board members from the ABGC conduct an annual business meeting for the Diplomates in the fall at the NSGC Annual Conference.

All meetings of the Board of Directors shall be open to all individuals certified by the organization and others with a legitimate interest in organization deliberations. However, the Board retains the right to hold executive sessions for the purpose of discussing confidential items.

The Board of Directors of the organization may invite a representative from other organizations including, but not limited to, NSGC and ACGC to provide a report to the Board of Directors.

## **Minutes & Financial Statement Review Protocol**

Discussion agenda items, consent reports, and action item minutes defining the decisions of the Board will be kept. The minutes are to reflect a summary for the actions taken, including the Board consent agenda reports. All minutes are to be prepared and reviewed by the Board with the following protocol prior to acceptance at the next meeting of the Board.

1. Association Manager or Associate Executive Director writes minutes during all Board meetings, both in-person and conference calls.
2. Association Manager/AED sends to Executive Director for review.
3. Upon approval by Executive Director, Association Manager/AED posts to SharePoint the editable Word document in Review-Track Changes version. Association Manager/AED posts a Link to the document in the Board of Directors (BOD) Tab and notifies BOD minutes

are ready for review. The BOD is asked to review and make any changes within one business week.

4. After one business week and all Board of Directors review, Association Manager/AED reviews the changes and finalizes the Minutes; all external links are deactivated.
5. Minutes are placed on the next board meeting consent agenda for final approval.
6. Final Minutes are filed in the SharePoint document folders (BOD tab > Shared Documents > Meetings folder > Minutes Final folder).
7. Final Minutes are also filed on the Executive Office Q-Drive > MS > ABGC > Board > Year > Monthly Calls or Meetings > Month.
8. Final Minutes are also filed on the Executive Office Q-Drive > MS > ABGC > Board > Minutes > Year.

Financial statements are prepared, shared, reviewed, and approved with the Board on a monthly basis with the following protocol prior to acceptance at the next meeting of the Board.

1. Finance Associate at the Executive office prepares monthly financial statements.
2. Monthly financial statements are distributed for internal review at the Executive office to the Executive Director and Association Manager and on a quarterly basis by the Kellen Senior Vice President and the Kellen Chief Financial Officer.
3. Once internally approved, sent to AM/AED for posting.
4. AM/AED posts monthly financial statements for Board approval.
5. AM/AED posts link to statement on SharePoint Board Tab-Links Section.
6. AM/AED notifies Treasurer for comments and review.
7. Treasurer comments and posts approval. Then, Treasurer notifies Board the statements are ready for final approval.
8. Financial statements are placed on the next board meeting consent agenda for approval.
9. Final and approved financial statements are filed in SharePoint. (Finance > Financial Statements). Previous months are filed in "Archive."

### **Program Directors' Information**

The ABGC and PSI will provide access to each ACGC accredited training program's report of graduate performance on the examination no more than 6-8 weeks following administration. Access will be granted through the password protected PSI school portal. No program will have access to any other program's confidential performance information. ABGC will keep on file a current list of all program directors for the ACGC accredited training programs.

Additionally, ABGC will provide PSI a list of ACGC accredited programs at least annually for processing candidate applications.

### **Recertification Policy**

Mechanisms for recertification have been established by professional organizations to assess an individual's ongoing professional knowledge and skills. ABGC implemented a mandatory recertification requirement for any Diplomate certified in 1996 or later. Recertification demonstrates a commitment to maintaining the standards of ethical and competent practice set by the profession.

Diplomates may recertify by examination or by participation in appropriate continuing education activities. If a Diplomate chooses to recertify by examination, s/he will follow the application guidelines and eligibility requirements required in the Examination Bulletin.

ABGC recertification can be submitted through December 31 of the year the CGC is required to recertify (year of expiration). Once recertified, Diplomates will receive a letter containing the date recertification completed, new date of expiration and a statement indicating the new certificate is active as of January 1 of the following year. Diplomates who fail to recertify by the December 31 deadline in the recertification year will be sent a letter indicating their CGC credential is expired and that they may no longer use the CGC designation.

Diplomates recertifying through continuing education must collect the required number of Continuing Education Units (CEUs) during their certification period and login and record these credits in the online recertification system accessible from the website. Those in a five year cycle must collect 12.5 CEUs/Professional Activity Credits (PAC) and those in a ten year cycle must collect 25 CEUs/PACs. *After 2019, all Diplomates will be on a five year cycle.*

#### Documentation of Recertification Status

Upon successful recertification, the new certificate will be dated January 1st of the year following certification expiration. For certificates awarded to Diplomates achieving recertification by the examination pathway or the continuing education pathway as of January 1, 2010 or later, certification will extend until December 31st, five years later. For example, a Diplomate whose time-limited certification expires December 31, 2010 and who has met all of the recertification requirements for the pathway selected will receive a new certificate effective January 1, 2011, and expiring five years later on December 31, 2015.

### **Online Recertification System**

The Online Recertification System allows Diplomates to:

1. Enter and track online continuing education activity
2. Complete the entire recertification process online including felony attestation
3. Receive notice of acceptance or audit status with appropriate instructions for submission of documentation.

#### **Operations of the Online Recertification System**

To access the Online Recertification System, Diplomates click on the ABGC Portal button on the ABGC website to logon and renew certification. Diplomates use their Member ID # as the LOGON and a current password.

Once they have logged in, the Diplomate clicks "Recertify" in the upper right corner to begin entering continuing education credits earned. The "My CEUs/PACs Summary" page will appear. The Diplomate may enter CEUs/PACs at any time prior to the certification expiration date and the system will save and store the information. After they have entered the CEU information, it will be visible on the "CEUs/PACs Summary Table" at the bottom of the screen. Diplomates

may enter information into the system, save the CEU information and come back at a later time to complete the process.

As Diplomates enter h/her continuing education activity, the accumulation of credits will be updated automatically. Once the required minimum 25 CEUs are met, the "Recertify" button will be activated and Diplomates can click it to submit information for recertification. If a Diplomate owes CMF fees for previous years or the current year, s/he will be prompted to pay the outstanding CMF fees online before s/he can recertify. Although Diplomates may enter CEU/PAC activity at any time, s/he may ONLY recertify in the year that the current certification is set to expire.

After the system processes the recertification information, the Diplomate will receive a confirmation online and via email that the recertification process is complete and they have not been selected for an audit or s/he will be notified that they have been selected for audit\*. If recertification is complete, the electronic account will automatically be updated with the new certification expiration date. ABGC will mail the new certificate reflecting the new expiration date within 30 days of recertifying. All new certificates will be issued for a five-year period ending on December 31st.

\*A random sample of recertification applications will be selected for audit to confirm the validity of all CEUs/PAC information submitted. When a Diplomate is selected for an audit they will be required to submit all documentation of attendance and activity to support the claimed CEU/PAC credits.

### Resources

The ABGC website has current information flyers on each portion of the recertification process. Documents are updated annually and include:

1. PAC Table of Approved Activities (and activities sunset after 12/31/2019)
2. Time-Limited Certification Flyer
3. Voluntary Recertification Flyer

### Certification Maintenance Fee (CMF)

ABGC assesses an annual Certification Maintenance Fee (CMF). This fee is determined by the board generally at its fall board meeting. The CMF will be assessed to newly certified Diplomates beginning January 1 of the year after they originally certify (pass the exam). Invoices will be distributed the last week in January of the year due to all current Diplomates.

## **Practice Analysis Studies & Committee**

It has been determined to be appropriate for the organization to support independent studies undertaken approximately every five years, or sooner if professional advancements require, conducting a Practice Analysis study of the profession. Provision for the use of the organization's data or materials for any study shall be at the discretion of the Board following review of written application for such materials. A Practice Analysis Advisory Committee (PAAC) will be appointed by the Board when appropriate.

## **Practice Analysis Advisory Committee Charge**

### Charge

Perform a practice analysis in order to create a detailed content outline and test specifications for use when developing the ABGC board certification examination.

A practice analysis (PA) is critical for credentialing organizations like ABGC because it provides the basis for identifying and validating elements of current practice that allows for the development of an examination that is comprised of content reflective of that practice. By ascertaining the tasks performed by a professional, and the necessary knowledge and/or skills associated with these tasks, a PA allows for the construction of a relevant and valid certification examination.

### Membership

- The committee will be comprised of 10 to 12 people appointed to the Practice Analysis Advisory Committee (PAAC).
- The committee will include one board liaison and the CEC Chair.
- The PAAC will be chaired either by the board liaison or by a committee member who will be appointed by the president.

Membership of this committee should reflect the membership of the National Society of Genetic Counselors as closely as possible for the following parameters: gender, years of experience, geographic region, practice setting, specialty, ethnicity/race, and training program. This should be done by using the results of the most recent NSGC Professional Status Survey (e.g. if 40% of the membership has 0-5 years of experience then 4 members of the 10 member committee should have 0-5 years' experience). See Appendix A for notes from the 2008 Practice Analysis Advisory Committee.

### Term

- PAAC member, board liaison, and chair term is one year. Previous committee members can serve on the following committee provided that these individuals still meet one or more of the composition criteria that is reflective of current practice.

### Criteria and Restrictions

- Must be an ABGC Diplomate in good standing.
- Program Directors are eligible to serve on the PAAC
- The PAAC Chair should have prior experience serving on either the Certification Examination Committee or the PAAC.

### Responsibilities

The members of the Practice Analysis Advisory Committee will have the following responsibilities:

- Attend Practice Analysis development session (either in person or by virtual/electronic means)
- Conduct review and revision of all items used on the most recently used practice analysis survey
  - Review skills to ensure appropriateness, completeness, and the ability to write exam items for the skill.
- Approve final items for the practice analysis survey and wording for the survey introduction and e-mail invitation
- Pilot an on-line version of the practice analysis survey: review all items for wording, content appropriateness; submit comments electronically.
- Distribute Practice Analysis survey to all NSGC members via email invitation
- Encourage all genetic counselors to complete the practice analysis by stressing the importance of the process to friends and colleagues.

- Review the results report prepared by the ABGC Practice Analysis vendor in preparation for the in person meeting.
- Oversee and review construction of the detailed content outline and test specifications for the ABGC certification examination based on the results of the practice analysis.
  - Vendor will help Committee to determine reasonable thresholds to use when deciding which tasks stay on the detailed content outline and which tasks will be removed from the detailed content outline.
  - Vendor will help Committee determine the proportion of items in each area of the content outline should be comprised of recall, application and analysis type questions.
- Assist in preparing, revising, and submitting a manuscript describing the practice analysis process and results for the Journal of Genetic Counseling as directed by the Board.

#### Meeting Schedule

The PAAC will meet at a face-to-face committee meeting one to two times during their year term (usually at the beginning and end of the practice analysis over a 6 months period) and will meet on an as needed basis throughout the year via webcast or conference call to complete the remaining committee responsibilities. The time commitment for committee members will be approximately 50 hours a year. Each PAAC member is eligible for one (1.0) PAC (professional activity credit) for each year of service on this committee.

#### Reporting Structure

The ABGC Board liaison to the PAAC will submit reports for regularly scheduled ABGC board meetings regarding the status of the practice analysis.

#### Budget and Required Resources

Financial resources will be budgeted based upon the amounts indicated in the practice analysis contract with AMP. Additionally funding will be requested based on the number of meetings required to complete annual test development work.

#### Appendices

Appendix A	PAAC composition for 2008 with notes
Appendix B	Letter Inviting PAAC members to serve on the Committee – sent after phone call invitation by the ABGC president
Appendix C	2008 Practice Analysis Instructions
Appendix D	Practice Analysis U.S. cover letter
Appendix E	Practice Analysis Canadian cover letter (must get approval from CAGC President and then they will send this out via their listserv)
Appendix F	Practice Analysis thank you e-mail sent to all genetic counselors (note that five \$50 Amazon.com gift cards were awarded based on random selection.)

### **Passing Point Study Committee**

The ABGC Board of Directors will appoint a passing point study committee following the completion of a practice analysis and derivative detailed content outline as recommended by the directing psychometrician.

The directing psychometrician will provide orientation, direction and instruction on the requirements of the committee once appointed. The committee will meet in person and finalize recommendations of a criterion referenced passing point to the Board of Directors for approval.

Membership of this committee should reflect the membership of the National Society of Genetic Counselors as closely as possible for the following parameters: gender, years of experience, geographic region, practice setting, specialty, ethnicity/race, and training program. This should be done by using the results of the most recent NSGC Professional Status Survey (e.g. if 40% of the membership has 0-5 years of experience then 4 members of the 10 member committee should have 0-5 years' experience).

### **Travel Expense Policy**

Approved March 2013

The ABGC will pay for the airfare, hotel costs, and all other transportation and food costs associated with coming to all ABGC meetings for all members of the Board of Directors (BOD), CEC or other working group. This reimbursement includes meetings associated with the development and evaluation of the examination, BOD meetings and other-related committee meetings. Additionally, when appropriate and agreed upon by the BOD the ABGC will attempt to schedule meetings to be held in conjunction with the other professional genetics meetings such as the American Society of Human Genetics (ASHG) or American College of Medical Genetics and Genomics (ACMG) whenever possible. Anyone wishing to attend these professional genetics meetings will be responsible for paying for the meeting registration fees, any additional hotel costs, food, and any other transportation costs associated with attending the professional meetings that are external to the ABGC business.

The ABGC may schedule a full board meeting, a meeting with the program directors and the ABGC annual business meeting during the annual NSGC meeting and expects members of the BOD to be present at these meetings if possible.

#### **Airfare**

The ABGC requires pre-approval by the Executive Director or Association Manager of any airfare that exceeds \$500 roundtrip. Individuals may contact the Executive Office if this becomes an issue when investigating travel arrangements.

The ABGC will not be responsible for paying late fees or fees associated with changing flights or canceling hotel reservations unless preapproved by the Board president or Executive Director.

#### **Ground Transportation to/from Airport**

Individuals are expected to arrange transportation to/from home to the originating airport. ABGC will reimburse you for these costs including parking at the airport and public transportation or mileage at the current IRS standard mileage rate.

#### **Ground Transportation at Destination**

Reimbursement will be provided for transportation from the destination airport to your hotel, as well as travel necessary to conduct business at the destination. Reasonable reimbursement will be provided for transportation to meals outside the hotel. When possible, BOD members are expected to share such transportation. While private car service is a reimbursable expense, BOD members are asked to use reasonable judgment in using either a taxi or private car service.



### Hotel/Lodging

For board and committee meetings outside of annual meetings of the ACMG, ASHG and NSGC, the ABGC Executive Office will contract with a hotel and provide a rooming list for all board meetings. Committee meeting room arrangements will be dependent on the number of rooms required.

If possible and discussed in advance, the Executive Office may make hotel arrangements for Board members during the ACMG, ASHG, and NSGC meetings so long as there is an ABGC meeting in conjunction with the conference and staff is attending.

### Meals and Other Expenses

The ABGC will reimburse for actual expenses incurred (with appropriate documentation) for all meals and expenses associated with attendance at the meeting such as ground transportation to and from restaurants, meals that are not already sponsored for and paid for by ABGC and minor meeting related incidental expenses (e.g., copies, internet access).

### Reimbursement Requests

To assist the Executive Office in maintaining accurate financial records, we request that all expense statements requesting reimbursement for BOD related activities be submitted to the Executive Office with original receipts within 30 days following the conclusion of the meeting and/or trip. Non-compliance may delay prompt reimbursement.

## **Fee Schedule**

The most current examination fees are available in the Examination Bulletin. All CMF fees are updated on the ABGC website. All necessary forms are available on the ABGC website.

<b>Fee Type</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Information</b>
Certification Examination:		
First time applicants	\$900	
Repeat applicants	\$800	
Certification Maintenance Fee (CMF)	\$85	Per year; calendar basis
Practice Exam		Optional to purchase
Genetic counselors	\$55	
Non-genetic counselors	\$75	
Credential Verification	\$40/counselor	The fee is per counselor verified for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Third Party Requests</li><li>• Employer Requests</li><li>• Requests made by Diplomates not in good standing. The fee is waived for Diplomates in good standing with all current CMF payments.</li></ul>

# Certification Exam Committee

## Charge

Develop the board certification examination based on the current content outline and a practice examination (when necessary), using questions submitted by item writers.

## Membership

The committee will be comprised of 8 to 12 people appointed by the BOD to the Certification Exam Committee (CEC). The committee will be chaired jointly by the board liaison who is a member of the BOD (Board Co-Chair) and a CEC member. Both of these individuals will be appointed by the ABGC President.

## Term

- CEC member term is three years, running January 1 – December 31. The term limit is two consecutive terms.
  - The BOD may extend a CEC member's term as needed for continuity.
- The CEC Co-Chair term is one year running January 1 – December 31. The term limit is two consecutive terms.
- The Board liaison term is one year running January 1 – December 31; this individual may serve additional terms.

## Criteria and Restrictions

- Must be an ABGC Diplomate in good standing.
- CEC members will not be allowed to recertify by exam for the 5 calendar years after the completion of their committee tenure.
- CEC members will not be allowed to develop or teach a Board Review course for the 2 calendar years after the completion of their committee tenure.
- CEC members will not be allowed to develop or edit a comprehensive/competency exam for a period of 2 years following the end of their CEC term.
- CEC members will be required to sign a confidentiality statement, a conflict of interest form, and an agreement which will define and detail the committee member's responsibilities.
- Program Directors, Associate Program Directors and Assistant Program Directors are not eligible to serve on the CEC.
- The CEC Co-Chair must have been on the committee for at least 1 year.

## Responsibilities

The members of the Certification Exam Committee have the following responsibilities:

- Attend item writing training session (either in person or by web) if not previously attended
- Mentor assigned item writers through their writing process by reviewing their drafts, suggesting revisions, and submitting their final items for committee review
  - Work with item writers to ensure items match exam specifications, grammar, stem appropriateness, key (correct answer) discrepancies, presence and appropriateness of references.
  - Submit items to management company
- Collectively review and revise draft items (e.g. those submitted by item writers )
- After revision process is complete, approve final items for the current exam, for the item bank, and for practice examinations (when necessary)

- Evaluate item bank to assure items exist proportionally for all areas of the exam specifications/content outline
  - Act as back-up item writer if there remain gaps in the item bank that can be filled by CEC member expertise.
- Oversee and review exam construction for 2 forms of the exam and 4 pre-exam sets (constructed by vendor,)
  - Vendor will assure that items exist proportionally for all areas of the exam specifications/content outline for both forms of the exam
  - CEC will review vendor exam construction to verify accuracy and balance
- Assign a difficulty rating to each approved item.
- Pilot an on-line version of the draft exam forms: review all items for wording, content appropriateness and key (correct answer) discrepancies; submit comments electronically. The vendor will finalize the 2 exam forms based on CEC comments.
- Review new exam form and pre-test items to ensure they are keyed correctly.
- Review all comments submitted by examinees, and item statistics to identify any poor performing items and/or items that warrant double keying.
- Determine passing score based on criteria presented by exam vendor.

#### Meeting Schedule

The CEC will meet at a face-to-face committee meeting two to three times a year (usually in January and April) and then meet throughout the year via webcast or conference call to complete the remaining committee responsibilities. The time commitment for committee members will be approximately 100 hours a year. Each CEC member is eligible for one (1.0) PAC (professional activity credit) for each year of service on this committee through 12/31/19. Effective January 1, 2020, CEC members will have their certification maintenance fee waived annually providing they participate in the above activities.

#### Reporting Structure

The CEC Board Co-Chair will provide the Board with regular updates regarding the status of certification and practice examination development. Regular updates will be provided verbally with a formal written report provided to the BOD annually.

#### Budget and Required Resources

Financial resources will be budgeted based upon the contracted exam development amounts in the exam services contract with AMP. Additionally funding will be requested based on the number of meetings required to complete annual exam development work.

*Approved on July 22, 2009 by the ABGC Board of Directors  
Revised and Approved on March 1, 2013 by the ABGC Board of Directors  
Revised and Approved on February 26, 2016 by the ABGC Board of Directors*

Effective January 1, 2020:

The Board approved waiving the certification maintenance fee for the certification examination committee members and item writers who have successfully completed their assignments in gratitude for their service. The waiver will apply for the year following successful completion and will be determined on an annual basis.

### **Certification Exam Committee (CEC) Member Confidentiality Agreement**

Please read the following statements carefully and indicate your understanding and agreement by signing below:

1. I affirm that I have been certified as a genetic counselor by the American Board of Genetic Counseling (ABGC) or the American Board of Medical Genetics and Genomics (ABMGG). I also affirm that I have been employed for a minimum of two years as a genetic counselor.
2. I hereby agree to work with the ABGC on the development of the yearly ABGC Certification Examination and the maintenance of the ABGC item bank. I understand this agreement includes:
  - a. Attendance at one or two face-to-face meetings per year with approved travel related expenses to be covered by the ABGC;
  - b. Interval conference calls and/or webcasts in order to complete the work of the committee; and
  - c. Mentoring of one to three item writers through their writing process.
3. I understand that I am eligible to receive one Professional Activity Credit (PAC) for each year of service on the Certification Examination Committee (CEC) through 12/31/2019.
4. I understand that as an ABGC CEC member, I may not participate in the planning or implementation of any exam review course that is designed to prepare individuals for the ABGC (and/or ABMGG) Certification Examinations during my tenure on this committee and for three years after the end of my term on the CEC. I understand that I must refrain from any activity that would result in a potential conflict of interest, be it real or perceived, such as developing course review materials, offering course review tutorial services, developing proposed study outlines or any software not directly sponsored by the ABGC that in any way would potentially enhance the certification examination taker's knowledge skills or abilities.
5. I understand that any information or material received or generated by ABGC for the purpose of certification, including but not limited to any examination or part thereof or any examination question (the "Confidential Information") must be kept strictly confidential. I agree not to make copies of, discuss, disclose, or otherwise disseminate, either directly or indirectly, any part of the Confidential Information, and not to use the Confidential Information for any purpose whatsoever except directly in connection with my service to the ABGC as a CEC member. Further, I understand and agree that this promise of confidentiality will be in effect during my tenure of service as a CEC member and at all times thereafter, and it is enforceable by law.
6. I understand and agree that any and all original material contributed by me pursuant to my service as a CEC member shall be deemed to be the property of the ABGC. I hereby assign to the ABGC all right, title, and interest in such contribution, including the right to sue for infringement.

I have read and understand the above statements and I agree to be legally bound by them.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

Agreed to: American Board of Genetic Counseling

By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

## **Nominating Committee Policies & Procedures**

Approved June 13, 2014

The information contained in this document and an updated timeline constitute the Policies and Procedures materials for the ABGC Nominating Committee. All tasks and proceedings of the Nominating Committee are to be undertaken with the highest degree of confidentiality.

Goal: The goal of the ABGC Nominating Committee is to identify a slate of candidates for election to the Board of Directors (*Article IV, Section 2 of the Bylaws*)

### Section 2. Nominating Committee.

- a. On an annual basis, the President shall appoint a Nominating Committee consisting of one (1) member of the Board of Directors and at least four (4) certified members at large. One (1), who shall serve as chairperson, and shall have served on the Nominating Committee within the past three (3) years. The remaining members cannot have served on the Nominating Committee within the previous six (6) years. The Nominating Committee shall take office immediately upon appointment.
- b. The Board of Directors will instruct the Nominating Committee as to the number of vacancies.
- c. Committee members should identify and nominate well qualified candidates to insure a sufficient number of high quality applications are received.
- d. The Committee shall conduct telephone interviews as part of the evaluation process to help assess each candidate's qualifications. Candidates will be questioned about their skills and experiences to determine how well suited they are to serve as a Director.
- e. The Committee shall submit to the Executive Office (EO) a slate consisting of at least two (2) candidates per open position. Members of the Nominating Committee may not be candidates and shall be identified in communications about the election for their service on the Committee.
- f. Ballots shall be sent to each Diplomate from the EO. To be counted, a ballot must be returned to the EO by the date indicated on the ballot. The candidate(s) receiving the highest number of votes shall be elected and shall assume office the following January 1, for a term of four (4) calendar years. The Executive Staff shall provide the results to the President and Nominating Chair. The Nominating Chair shall notify all candidates and report back to the Executive Director when this has been completed.

### Overview: Board Member Service

Individuals are elected to the Board of Directors for four (4) years to conduct the business of ABGC, which is to:

1. Create a fair and defensible certification examination.
2. Set policy to certify and recertify individuals.
3. Monitor trends in the field of genetic counseling and in the area of allied health care credentialing to adjust ABGC guidelines and programs as needed.
4. Promote the value of the ABGC credential.
5. Monitor the interests and concerns of Diplomates, active candidates, genetic counseling trainees, and program directors with respect to certification and the ABGC credential.
6. Represent the board with dignity, respect and credibility.
7. Manage the financial obligations of ABGC.
8. Assess and address professional misconduct or illegal activity by individuals holding or applying for the ABGC credential.

Individuals selected by the Nominating Committee to appear on the ballot should demonstrate trustworthiness in all these areas.

ABGC is a deliberative Board that deals with standard setting in genetic counseling practice. It is not a representative Board, meaning it does not strive to have representation from all geographic areas, practice areas, duration of experience or other demographic characteristics.

It is important that the employers of potential Board members support the candidate's service on the ABGC Board of Directors. Business hours are required to carry out some ABGC responsibilities. In addition, while financial support to attend the in-person ABGC Board meetings (approximately two per year) is provided by ABGC, job flexibility is required to attend. Additionally, regular access to email is critical.

#### Selecting Qualified Candidates for the Ballot

The qualities of individuals who serve on the ABGC Board will generally include the following:

Has experience and integrity:

- Has solid experience in the field of genetic counseling, which may be in-depth or broad. Ideally s/he will have a good sense of the history and development of the profession.
- Has general leadership experience. Having held Board positions or a committee chair in genetics organizations (e.g., ACGC, ABGC, ACMGG, ABMGG, and/or NSGC) adds expertise that is especially important when policy issues arise.
- Holds membership in relevant professional organization(s) (e.g. ASHG, NSGC, and/or ACMG). Such memberships provide Board members with exposure to advances in the field and changes in professional trends.
- Has a strong working knowledge of the genetics literature including genetic counseling, research, and clinical genetics.

Values service to others:

A candidate who is open to growing through this kind of service experience, with the ability to work thoughtfully, creatively and conscientiously for the provision of quality genetic counseling services that will have credibility now and in the future.

Enjoys learning:

A candidate who values learning experiences is important. Board members will need to:

- become well versed in the aspects of certification;
- be comfortable speaking with a Diplomate, active candidate or trainee about all ABGC services, as well as emerging issues;
- be willing to learn about and explore alternative ways to conduct certification, structure policy, and incorporate changes in clinical care, knowledge base, information technology, etc. into a certifying process that is responsive, visionary, and trusted by the Diplomates and protects the public.

Possesses good communication skills:

A candidate who can take the time to understand what's behind different positions and look at issues from different perspectives: the ability to look beyond one's own world-view, and one's own experience, to try and walk through an issue in the shoes of others; the capacity to speak comfortably and effectively with individuals or with groups; the capability to look openly and honestly at issues, both their benefits and their consequences.

Has a track record of working successfully within a group:

A candidate who can respect and work with the diverse interests, opinions, and agendas of Diplomates, program directors, trainees and other Board members. A Board member should be more than a solid, capable practitioner, but, in addition, be someone experienced with group processes, consensus building and supporting a group decision that may at times be different than his/her own personal point of view. Working in a group also means problem solving in a group. Plenty of problems and controversies come to the board and each member needs to take responsibility and work collaboratively toward resolution.

Can prioritize and manage multiple projects and is self-directed:

A candidate is good at managing multiple tasks. Board members will take on a significant amount of work with a Board position, but must also continue to meet their existing professional and personal commitments. Good organizational skills are essential.

Other:

No more than one (1) director, co-director, associate director, or assistant director of a genetic counseling training program shall serve on the Board of Directors concurrently. As such, this must be considered when choosing candidates for the ballot. In addition, in years when there is a potential opening that could be filled by such an individual, no more than one (1) can be included on the ballot.

#### Nominating Committee Process

The Committee has at least two major conference calls. The first is used to orient the Committee and identify highly qualified individuals to nominate. The second is to discuss applicants and select individuals who will appear on the ballot for election to the Board. The timeline for the ABGC nominating process is attached. This timeline is updated annually.

#### Ranking

Committee members will review all completed applications for interested candidates. After reviewing his or her qualifications, each member independently ranks as follows:

4 = ideal candidate; candidate is well qualified to run for a Board position

3 = good candidate; few questions about the candidate's qualifications

2 = possible candidate; candidate has limited qualifications

1 = reject candidate; candidate unfit to serve on the Board based on his/her qualifications

Rankings are submitted to the EO prior to selecting nominees to invite for interviews. The committee will come together again following interviews for the ballot selection conference call. EO will collate each member's rankings into a spreadsheet and distribute to the Nominating Committee for discussion during the conference call. This system allows Committee members to prioritize their discussion.

Nominating Committee members should keep the credibility and future of the ABGC in mind.

- Committee members should be fully engaged in the process and the discussion. They should feel free to speak openly and honestly about the candidates. All conversations of the Nominating Committee are private and unrecorded. Only scheduling issues, the list of nominees, the final slate of candidates, and any recommendations to the board are recorded.
- Committee members should refrain from discussing any specific nominee via e-mail.

The Committee Chair contacts all nominated candidates to inform them of the outcome of the process. Following the election, the Chair contacts all individuals who appeared on the ballot to inform them of the results.

### **Nominating Committee Schedule of Activities (approximate timeline)**

#### January

EO reminds President to set up a nominating committee

#### February/March

President appoints Nominating Committee members and informs Executive Office (EO) of committee members and chair

#### Late March/Early April

EO sends Nominating Committee chair and members schedule and Policy and Procedures via email. Nominating Chair shares necessary information with the committee regarding timeline, etc. and starts setting up required conference calls.

#### Early April

Committee Chair reviews Call for Nominations, works with committee to start encouraging individuals to apply and finalizes call schedules

#### Early-mid May

Once EO has been notified that the NSGC Nominations and slate are closed sends out the Call for Nominations is distributed to the Diplomates via blast e-mail.

#### Mid May – Mid June

EO compiles and posts to SharePoint a list of all nominees. EO emails Nominating Committee chair and members with link to the CVs, personal statements, and Nominating Committee Policies (containing instructions for ranking). Call is held to discuss rankings and invite selected nominees for interviews.

#### June

Committee members review all candidate data in relation to the ranking guidelines provided in the Policy. During the conference call, the committee will determine the Board of Directors slate and alternate(s).

#### Immediately following conference call

If staff doesn't attend conference call, Nominating Committee chair contacts EO to inform of final slate and alternatives. The chair or board liaison contacts all individuals under consideration not chosen for the slate to thank them for participating.

#### Late June – early July

EO prepares the ballot system; compiles candidate statement and links the Personal Statement to each candidate's name on the ballot. The slate of candidates and their Personal Statements are emailed to Campus Vote/Vote Now for election set up.

#### July

Email election link (materials and ballot) electronically to ABGC Diplomates/members. Postcards with a URL link will be mailed to all Diplomates without an email address – election is open for ~4 weeks.



### July - August

Email reminders to vote sent weekly to Diplomates/members.

### Mid-August

Election is closed. All ballots will be cast online and results will be available to the EO, ABGC President and Committee Chair(s). Committee Chair contacts all candidates, notifying them of the election status (win or lose). EO follows up with letter to those elected / not elected. Those elected are invited to the fall Board of Directors Meeting as observers; they receive the Board of Directors travel memo. EO emails full Board announcing those elected and prepares blast email announcement.

### October (or when NSGC Annual Conference is held)

Winners are introduced at the annual meeting of the membership held during the NSGC Annual Conference.

## **Nominating Committee Charge**

Approved on June 13, 2014

The charge of the Nominating Committee is to identify a slate of qualified candidates for election to the ABGC Board of Directors.

### Membership

On an annual basis, the President shall appoint a Nominating Committee consisting of one (1) member of the Board of Directors and at least four (4) certified members at large. One (1), who shall serve as chairperson, and shall have served on the Nominating Committee within the past three (3) years. The remaining members cannot have served on the Nominating Committee within the previous six (6) years. The Nominating Committee shall take office immediately upon appointment.

### Term

The typical term will be for approximately 6 months, i.e. one election cycle.

### Criteria and Restrictions

Members of the Nominating Committee may not be candidates for election and shall be identified as members of the Nominating Committee in communications about the election.

### Responsibilities & Meeting Schedule

The Board of Directors will instruct the Nominating Committee as to the number of vacancies.

The Nominating Committee will have at least two major conference calls for the purpose of orientation and reviewing the compiled rankings, and selecting the final ballot. A face-to-face meeting is not expected to be necessary and additional conference calls or e-mail communication can be used to address any other issues that might arise.

The Committee shall conduct telephone interviews as part of the evaluation process to help assess each candidate's qualifications. Candidates will be questioned about their skills and experiences to determine how well suited they are to serve as a Director.

Committee members will review all completed applications for interested candidates. After reviewing his or her qualifications, each member independently ranks as follows:

- 4 = ideal candidate; candidate is well qualified to run for a Board position
- 3 = good candidate; few questions about the candidate's qualifications
- 2 = possible candidate; candidate has limited qualifications
- 1 = reject candidate; candidate unfit to serve on the Board based on his/her qualifications

Rankings are submitted to the Executive Office (EO) at least one (1) week prior to the ballot selection conference call. EO will collate each member's rankings into a spreadsheet and distribute to the Nominating Committee for discussion during the conference call. This system allows Committee members to prioritize their discussion.

Nominating Committee members should keep the credibility and future of the ABGC in mind.

- Committee members should be fully engaged in the process and the discussion. They should feel free to speak openly and honestly about the candidates. All conversations of the Nominating Committee are private and unrecorded. Only scheduling issues, the list of nominees, the final slate of candidates, and any recommendations to the Board are recorded.
- Committee members should refrain from discussing any specific nominee via e-mail.

The Committee Chair contacts all nominated candidates to inform them of the outcome of the process. Following the election, the Chair contacts all individuals who appeared on the ballot to inform them of the results.

#### Responsibility Timeline

1. Approximately six (6) months prior to each election, the President shall appoint a Nominating Committee.
2. The Committee shall conduct telephone interviews as part of the evaluation process to help assess each candidate's qualifications. Candidates will be questioned about their skills and experiences to determine how well suited they are to serve as a Director.
3. Approximately two (2) months prior to the annual meeting of the membership (i.e., the Annual Business Meeting at the NSGC AEC), the Nominating Committee shall submit to the EO a slate consisting of at least two (2) candidates per open position.
4. Ballots shall be sent to each Diplomat from the EO. To be counted, a ballot must be returned to the EO by the date indicated on the ballot. The candidate(s) receiving the highest number of votes shall be elected and shall assume office the following January 1, for a term of four (4) calendar years as instructed by the Board of Directors. The Executive Staff shall provide the results to the President and Nominating Chair. The Nominating Chair shall notify all candidates and report back to the Executive Director when this has been completed.

#### Reporting Structure

The Executive Director and/or the Association Manager will work with the Nominating Committee Chair to facilitate the process of establishing a ballot.

#### Budget and Required Resources

1. Conference Call
2. Electronic Voting System
3. Postage/Shipping
4. Printing/Copies
5. E-blasts

## **ABGC Whistleblower Policy**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this whistleblower policy is to provide direction to all current and former directors, Diplomates, employees, contractors, subcontractors, agents, volunteers, vendors, donors, and partners of the American Board of Genetic Counseling (ABGC) regarding the communication of concerns on questionable financial or operational matters.

### **Defined Terms**

For the purpose of this policy the American Board of Genetic Counseling is meant to be ABGC and includes all of its locations.

### **The Whistleblower**

For the purpose of this policy the "Whistleblower" is meant to be any director, Diplomat, employee, contractor, subcontractor, agent, volunteer, vendor, donor, reporter, member of the general public or partner of the ABGC who has reported a whistleblower incident.

### **Whistleblower Incident**

A "whistleblower incident" is defined as a concern or possible wrongdoing related to the ABGC financial or operational matters. For greater clarity, whistleblower incidents are intended to include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Changing work from one project to other projects to stay on budget;
- "Side deals" or "under the table" dealings with contractors for personal benefit;
- Receiving personal kickbacks or significant gifts (over \$100) from contractors or vendors which could create bias in the tendering process;
- Inappropriate recording or reporting of revenues, or lack thereof;
- Inappropriate classification of assets and/or liabilities;
- A deliberate disregard or circumvention of Agency policies;
- Embezzlement of ABGC assets by an individual or group of individuals;
- Inappropriate occurrences at an ABGC event; and
- Inappropriate projects for the benefit of a Diplomat, volunteer or business, and not necessarily in the ABGC's interest.

### **Policy Statements**

It is the policy of the ABGC that the Whistleblower must immediately communicate *whistleblower incidents* as soon as the Whistleblower becomes aware of such situations.

*Whistleblower incidents* shall be communicated using the ABGC prescribed procedures for the submission of *whistleblower incidents*. It is the policy of the ABGC that the Whistleblower will not be discharged, removed, or in any other manner discriminated against as a result of communicating a *whistleblower incident*. In the event the Whistleblower is a reporter, s/he will not be subjected to any Retaliatory Actions if s/he files, causes to be filed, testifies in, participates in, or otherwise assists in any proceeding that is filed or about to be filed relating to such possible wrongdoing or concern. Any ABGC volunteer or management firm staff member found to be in violation of this policy will face disciplinary action. Further, ABGC will use all reasonable means at its disposal to investigate the claim.

Continued violation of this policy by volunteers and/or management firm staff (i.e., continued harassment of the Whistleblower) may result in removal or contract termination. The ABGC will

not protect a Whistleblower who intentionally makes false accusations in reporting of a *whistleblower incident*. It is the policy of the ABGC to treat all *reported whistleblower incidents* in a confidential and sensitive manner. In addition, the Whistleblower shall be provided the opportunity to remain anonymous.

**Applicability**

This policy applies to all current and former directors, employees, contractors, subcontractors, agents, volunteers, vendors, donors, and partners of the ABGC.

**Available Resources**

Procedures to enable the communication of *whistleblower incidents* can be accessed on the ABGC website at: [www.ABGC.net](http://www.ABGC.net).

Questions relating to the whistleblower policy should be directed to:

Sheila O’Neal  
Executive Director  
American Board of Genetic Counseling  
913.222.8661  
soneal@abgc.net  
4400 College Blvd., Ste. 220  
Overland Park, KS 66211

## **American Board of Genetic Counseling Policy on Creation of Taskforces, Workgroups and *ad hoc* Committees**

### **Introduction**

At times, the ABGC Board of Directors (BOD) will require the formation of new taskforces, workgroups or committees. The goals of such a group may be:

- to assist ABGC in meeting objective set forth in its strategic plan or advancing its mission
- to assist ABGC in addressing issues that may affect any aspect of genetic counselor certification and recertification
- to assist ABGC in reviewing issues that currently affect the genetic counseling profession or are expected to do so in the future.
- to develop recommendations on the basis of their research and share these with the ABGC BOD.

### **Development of new taskforces/workgroups/*ad hoc* committees**

The most important criterion to determine whether a taskforce, workgroup or *ad hoc* committee (henceforth referred to as a TF) is necessary is how the TF's work will fit within ABGC's strategic plan. Many issues may be important to the profession and equally many may fit within ABGC's mission and vision. For ABGC to develop a TF around an issue:

- the issue must be directly linked to a specific goal and at least one objective in ABGC's strategic plan
- ABGC must have sufficient resources to consider the issue at that time (e.g. a member of the BOD, EO staff, budget, etc.)

### **What initiates the development of a TF?**

A TF may be considered in response to the recommendation of the BOD, another genetics organization, a Diplomate or the EO. For the BOD to consider developing a TF, a member of the BOD will develop a brief proposal for the BOD to consider that includes a rationale explaining:

- why this issue is important now
- how the issue is related to the organizational mission
- if applicable, historical context—both external to the organization (e.g. are there external forces that have shifted?) and internal (has ABGC considered this issue before? If so, what decisions did the organization make?)

Review of this proposal may lead the BOD to develop a TF at that time, defer a decision until a later date, and/or suggest that another organization address the issue or other response.

### **TF Guidance document**

If the BOD decides to develop a TF, the President of the BOD will identify a member to serve as liaison to the TF. The Liaison will draft the TF Guidance document (see attached). Finalizing the document may require the input of individuals who are expected to serve on the TF, another member of the BOD or the EO. The goal is that the guidance document be one page. The BOD must approve the TF guidance document before the TF starts its work.

The BOD may also develop an internal document that provides key points for the TF to consider. At the initiation of the TF's work, this may be shared with the TF in written or oral form, as appropriate.

## **Membership**

At least one member of any TF should be an ABGC Director. Depending on the degree of ownership that ABGC needs over the outcome of the TF, the ABGC Director may serve as the TF's Chair or as the BOD Liaison. ABGC may ask for representatives of related organizations (e.g. NSGC, ACGC) or Diplomates at large with specific background, experience or expertise to join the TF. Although the needs of the TF should dictate its composition, it is anticipated that most TFs will have 5-7 members. The BOD will approve the membership of a TF.

## **Process**

As outlined in the guidance document, it is expected that each TF will provide regular updates to the BOD as well as final recommendations to the BOD for approval. At the completion of the TF's work, the BOD liaison and TF Chair (jointly or independently, as appropriate) will provide the BOD with a final report for internal use. This should include the TF's recommendations, evaluation of the process, recommendations for next steps, etc.

*Approved on May 22, 2015 by the ABGC Board of Directors*

## **Certification Exam Committee (CEC) Chair Charge**

### Rationale:

The CEC chair plays a vital role in helping the CEC achieve its mission of reviewing, editing and approving items within the item bank for the certification exam. With the support of the BOD liaison, this individual provides leadership to CEC members and helps streamline the CEC meetings to ensure that the committee completes its tasks in a coordinated and timely fashion.

### Charge:

Provide leadership and guidance to the CEC throughout the year via email communication, conference calls and at in person meetings.

### Membership

The BOD liaison, with input from the PSI exam development staff and the ABGC BOD, annually invites one CEC member to serve as the CEC chair.

### Term

The CEC Chair term is one year running January 1 – December 31. The term limit is two consecutive terms.

### Criteria and Restrictions

The CEC Chair will have the same Criteria and Restrictions as CEC members as defined in the CEC Charge.

### Responsibilities

CEC chair is expected to fulfill the responsibilities outlined for all CEC members in the CEC Charge and may have the following additional responsibilities:

- Collaborate with PSI exam development staff and BOD liaison to determine location (city and hotel) and dates for both two-day in-person meetings
- Determine which item writers will be invited back by contacting their mentors, and contact item writers to gauge their interest in returning.
- Recruit new item writers, review item writer applications, select new item writers based on gaps identified (e.g. specialty area), and contact new item writers.

- Determine timeline for assignments to be distributed/due.
- Draft and distribute item writer/mentor assignments.
- Mentor assigned item writers through their writing process by reviewing their drafts, suggesting revisions, and submitting their final items for committee review
- Check in with mentors/item writers on status of items
- Identify potential new CEC members
- Participate in item writing session/mentorship session at NSGC or virtual session (as needed)

### Timeline

#### *September-October, year prior to term as Chair*

Initiate scheduling of the two day meetings (January and April) so that bids for hotels in different locations can be made.

#### *February – early March*

Item writer mentors should be contacted to determine whether their mentee's should be asked back. Those who are invited back should be contacted to determine their interest in writing future items.

#### *April*

Identify specialty area gaps among item writers to determine specialty areas for item writer recruitment.

Select new item writers from applications submitted through call for volunteers or other means.

#### *May*

In collaboration with ABGC exam development staff, determine timeline for distribution of item assignments and due dates.

#### *June*

Assign mentors to item writer.

#### *July/August*

Mentor item writers. Check in with CEC members on status of their mentees items.

#### *August/September*

In collaboration with the BOD liaison, identify potential new CEC members. Selection criteria for new CEC members should include area of expertise, year of graduation/certification and training program.

Contact CEC members regarding their item writer mentees to identify potential CEC members.

### Meeting Schedule

The time commitment for CEC Chair will include 2 two-day in-person meetings, piloting and reviewing two exam forms via web, and additional monthly communication with ABGC exam development staff and BOD liaison that may require an additional 1-2 hours per month. The chair is eligible for 1.0 PAC (professional activity credit) for their year of service and will receive a letter documenting this at the end of a successful year of service through 12/31/19.

### Reporting Structure

The CEC chair will report to BOD liaison and ABGC exam development staff. The CEC Chair will provide the BOD Liaison with regular updates regarding the status of their responsibilities and timeline, so that the BOD liaison can report to the ABGC board with regular updates.

*Approved on March 27, 2015 by the ABGC Board of Directors*

## **Certification Exam Committee (CEC) Board Liaison Charge**

### Rationale:

The CEC Board Liaison plays a vital role in helping the CEC achieve its mission of reviewing, editing and approving items within the item bank for the certification exam while ensuring that there is an open line of communication between the BOD and the CEC. With the support of the CEC Chair, this individual provides leadership to CEC members through communication of issues from the BOD to the CEC.

### Charge:

Provide leadership and guidance to the CEC throughout the year via email communication, conference calls and at in person meetings. Act as a conduit for information and questions between CEC, BOD, EO and test development staff.

### Membership

The BOD president annually appoints one BOD member to serve as the CEC Board Liaison.

### Term

The CEC Board Liaison term is one year running January 1 – December 31. There is no term limit.

### Criteria and Restrictions

The CEC Board Liaison may not be a director, assistant director, associate director or co-director of a genetic counseling training program.

### Responsibilities

CEC Board Liaison is expected to fulfill the responsibilities outlined for all CEC members in the CEC Charge and may have the following additional responsibilities:

- Contact returning Item Writers to request:
  - Confidentiality statement
  - Detailed content outline preferences (indicate that if you do not receive a response, Item Writer will be assigned same preferences as previous year)
- Contact new Item Writers to request: (Work with EO.)
  - Request confidentiality statement
  - Request detailed content outline preferences
- Request that EO grant access to SharePoint site for new and returning Item Writers so that they can access training materials
- Draft item writer/mentor assignments
- Final revision of exam (both Chair, Liaison and select CEC members)
  - Identify potential new CEC members (both Chair and Liaison)
    - Look to fill gaps in CEC
      - area of expertise
      - years since graduation or boards
    - training program
  - solicit suggestions from CEC and ABGC BOD
    - Request that CEC member/chair discussion be placed on BOD agenda
  - Present short list of CEC members to BoD for approval
  - Make offer to new CEC members
  - On years with a new practice analysis - work with PSI staff to finish the crosswalk between old and new detailed content outlines



- Thank committee members and remind everyone to delete any content related to item or exam development or any other information deemed confidential by CEC policy
- Mentorship session at NSGC (if needed), (Chair, Liaison, CEC and BOD members)

### Timeline

#### *April*

Contact item writers to obtain confidentiality statements and detailed content outline preferences

#### *May*

In collaboration with ABGC exam development staff and Chair, determine timeline for distribution of item assignments and due dates.

#### *June*

Assign mentors to item writer.

#### *July/August*

Mentor item writers. Check in with CEC members on status of their mentees items.

#### *August/September*

In collaboration with the Chair, identify potential new CEC members. Selection criteria for new CEC members should include area of expertise, year of graduation/certification and training program.

Request that CEC member/chair discussion be placed on September BOD agenda

### Meeting Schedule

The time commitment for BOD Liaison will include 2 two-day in-person meetings, piloting and reviewing two exam forms via web, and additional monthly communication with ABGC exam development staff and Chair that may require an additional 1-2 hours per month.

### Reporting Structure

The BOD liaison will report to the ABGC exam development staff and the BOD. The BOD Liaison will provide regular updates regarding the status of their responsibilities, and that of the Chair, and timeline, to the BOD.

*Approved on April 24, 2015 by the ABGC Board of Directors*

## Item Writer Charge

### Rationale:

Item writers have a critical role in helping ABGC achieve its mission. With the support of a mentor, these Diplomates develop questions (items) for use on the ABGC Certification Examination or practice exam. Items are needed by an assigned date in order to be adequately reviewed by the writer's mentor, placed into the item bank and available for Certification Examination Committee (CEC) review and revision.

### Charge:

Develop items to be used on the ABGC certification exam (or practice exam). Item writers will be assigned to write items that assess competence in specified parts of the ABGC Detailed Content Outline.

### Membership

The CEC Chair, with input from CEC members, ABGC exam development staff and the BOD liaison, will annually invite 20 – 25 Diplomates to write items for the ABGC Certification Examination.

### Term

- There are no term limits for item writers.
  - Individual item writers may be invited to write items in subsequent years. Such an invitation is made at the discretion of the CEC and is based on the quality of a writer's items and ability to adhere to deadlines.
- Experienced item writers may be asked to join the CEC.

### Criteria and Restrictions

- Must be an ABGC Diplomate in good standing.
- Must have 3 or more years of paid employment as a genetic counselor.
- Must annually sign a confidentiality statement and declare any conflicts of interest.
- Cannot be involved in planning, teaching or administering any board review course or practice examination during that exam cycle.

### Responsibilities

Item writers may have the following responsibilities:

- attend item writing training session (either in person or online).
- complete the practice exam to become familiar with the format and wording of items.
- work, with the mentorship of a CEC member, to complete a total of 8-10 items within a two month period. Items may be completed in batches or all at once, as agreed upon by the item writer and his/her mentor.
- adhere to deadlines and communicate with their mentors if there are issues that make the deadlines difficult.
- delete *all* electronic and hard copies of all items provided to ABGC

### Timeline

1. Item writer training will be provided (either in person or online) to help writers understand the dos and don'ts of item writing. When an in-person training is offered, it most often occurs at the NSGC AEC. Online training can be completed as the writer's schedule permits.

2. Handouts and practice exams will be provided to help writers understand the format of items. These are typically distributed May – June.
3. Item writers receive assignments from ABGC exam development staff. This varies, but assignments are usually distributed in July. They are typically due within 2 months of distribution. Specific deadlines are provided at time of distribution.
4. The time commitment for item writers will be approximately 25 hours a year. Each item writer is eligible for 0.5 PAC (professional activity credit) for each year of service and will receive a letter documenting this at the end of a successful year of service.

#### Reporting Structure

Item writers will report to a CEC mentor. CEC mentors will provide the CEC Chair and/or Board Liaison with regular updates regarding the status of exam items. Individuals not completing their items on time will receive regular reminders about their due date and requests to complete the items.

*Approved on March 27, 2015 by the ABGC Board of Directors*

## **Genetic Counseling CEU Task Force Charge & Guidance Document**

Approved by the Board on May 22, 2015

### **Mission:**

To explore options for improving the continuing education (CE) process for recertification of genetic counselors certified by the American Board of Genetic Counseling (ABGC) as well as to propose robust and appropriate CE requirements (i.e. the application and review processes) that reflect the profession's current needs and promote high quality genetic counseling services.

### **Rationale:**

The current CE review and approval processes reflect those established by the International Association for Continuing Education and Training (IACET). National Society of Genetic Counselors (NSGC), with approval from ABGC, decided to discontinue their role as an IACET-accredited Authorized Provider. This was done because IACET requirements became too stringent to be practical for professionals that most frequently earn CEUs through in-person educational conferences. It was agreed not to replace IACET with another accrediting body, as none were found to meet the profession's unique needs at that time. In response to this situation, the Board of Directors of the ABGC and the NSGC agreed to recognize ABGC as the temporary CE accrediting body. In light of these changes, ABGC has decided to evaluate the requirements and processes for awarding CEUs for the purpose of making improvements specific to the needs of the genetic counseling profession.

### **Objectives:**

1. Determine the genetic counseling profession's current continuing education needs with regards to the mode of delivery of educational events, how CEUs are awarded to each type of event, and the demonstration of achieving educational events' objectives in order to earn CEUs
2. Establish criteria for evaluating the application and review processes to meet these needs
3. Identify and evaluate any CE accrediting bodies that meet these CE needs
4. If none are found, review and evaluate current CEU activity requirements and evaluation/approval process for awarding CEUs
5. Recommend any improvements to the ABGC BOD

### **Expectations:**

It is expected that this Task Force will report back to the ABGC at the completion of each objective. The final report should recommend at least one CE accrediting body as well as include recommendations for any next steps to take regarding the CE application and reviewing process and justification for any recommendations.

### **Members:**

Members of this task force will include representation from key stakeholder genetic counseling organizations (ABGC, ACGC, and NSGC) that have varied perspectives and experiences with the CEU application and evaluation processes.

### **Term:**

It is expected that the work of this task force should take approximately 18 months and include monthly conference calls and at least one in-person meeting, location TBD.

## Genetic Counseling Exam Eligibility Charge & Guidance Document

Approved by the Board March 27, 2015

### Rationale:

Recommendations from the Institute for Credentialing Excellence (ICE) include that sponsoring organizations, such as ABGC, must document the process and rationale used in setting or reviewing eligibility criteria for certification.

With the separation of the genetic counseling accreditation and certification bodies in 2013 into ABGC and ACGC, ABGC now recognizes the need for a defined mechanism for evaluating bodies that accredit genetic counseling training programs in order to ensure that applicants for the certification exam have met established standards of knowledge, skills and practice for the genetic counseling profession. As such, ABGC needs to establish a set of criteria to ensure an appropriate level of rigor/quality is employed in the accreditation of genetic counseling training programs whose graduates would be eligible for certification by ABGC. These criteria and the process for their evaluation should be such that they can be used to evaluate both ACGC, the current accrediting body recognized by ABGC, and other genetic counseling accrediting bodies, such as international ones.

The motivations for addressing these issues at this time are ABGC's responsibility to periodically review eligibility criteria for the examination based on current environment and requests for certification from graduates of genetic counseling training programs accredited by international accrediting bodies.

### Charge:

Propose robust eligibility criteria for certification by ABGC that ensures that candidates who sit the exam are competent to do so and in turn promote high quality genetic counseling services. Propose a set of criteria in order to evaluate the process of accreditation or an accreditation body both nationally and internationally.

**Term:** The work of the taskforce should be completed within 18 months.

### Points to consider and key questions:

1. There is more than just a passing score that confers minimal competence. The ICE Eligibility Criteria Report Task Force describes these as the four E's – Education, Experience, Ethics and Examination. In general, the non-examination requirements are those that are needed in order to be eligible to take the exam. **Are the current minimum standards adequate? What is the process for evaluating these? Should other minimum standards for the non-examination requirements be proposed? What are the criteria of the other 3 Es?**
2. Given the recent split of ACGC and ABGC, the current ABGC board is familiar with the process and procedures of accreditation. However, with this split ABGC needs to be able to define minimum standards that an accrediting body must meet and then be able to evaluate whether those standards are met. **What is it about the ACGC Accreditation process that ensures that program graduates possess the education and experience to be eligible to take the ABGC certification exam? What are the specific areas that an accreditation body needs to assess or require from training programs?**

3. The task force is not being charged with the question of reciprocity with international certification or registration bodies but rather whether an internationally registered or certified genetic counselor has sufficient education and experience to take the ABGC examination. The task force may wish to consider the Genetic Counsellor Registration Board of the UK or the European Board of Medical Genetics genetic counselor registration in ascertaining whether international credentialing (registration) bodies can be assessed with the same criteria as ACGC.
4. Provide recommendations to the ABGC board for ongoing review of genetic counseling certification eligibility. Consider issues such as the frequency of review or evaluation, and whether there is a need for a standing committee. What are key components for the evaluation of the accreditation process including a reporting mechanism for accrediting bodies?
5. Are there alternative mechanisms that should be considered to achieve eligibility to sit for the certification exam? Proposing criteria for evaluating this may be beyond the scope of this task force.

## Guidance Document for the Continued Competence for Genetic Counselors Taskforce

### Rationale:

ABGC's strategic plan states that 1) ABGC will regularly monitor and adapt the certification and recertification process to reflect changes in genetic counseling practice, and 2) All continuing education offerings accepted by ABGC will maintain or enhance a certified genetic counselor's competence. To help achieve these goals, ABGC is evaluating the current recertification process for certified genetic counselors (CGC) as well as continuing to evaluate what opportunities best maintain and/or enhance competency to remain current with advancements in the field. Additionally, NCCA accreditation requires a periodic evaluation of programs and requirements.

Continuing education in genetic counseling is an ongoing process consisting of formal learning activities that are:

- Relevant to genetic counseling practice, education, and science
- Enable genetic counselors to keep pace with the most current scientific evidence regarding clinical practice and education as well as important legal, professional, or regulatory issues
- Allow genetic counselors to maintain, develop, and increase competencies in order to improve services to the public and enhance contributions to the profession (ABGC CEU Standards, 2016)

The Institute of Medicine published a report on Redesigning Continuing Education in the Health Care Professions in May 2009. The introduction to this report states:

*“Continuing education (CE) is the process by which health professionals keep up to date with the latest knowledge and advances in health care. However, the CE “system,” as it is structured today, is so deeply flawed that it cannot properly support the development of health professionals. CE has become structured around health professional participation instead of performance improvement. This has left health professionals unprepared to perform at the highest levels consistently, putting into question whether the public is receiving care of the highest possible quality and safety.”*

Recertification programs should provide a meaningful and relevant process that demonstrates certificants remain current in their field. Otherwise, the knowledge and skill determined at the time of initial certification would become outdated and, therefore, diminish the value of the certification to the public, employers, and certificants.

The Board began discussing the issues and concerns around the recertification process at its fall 2015 board meeting. From that discussion, the CEU Task Force was formed to create the standards for continuing education activities that ABGC will accept for recertification. The next step in evaluating the recertification process was then to examine the ABGC's requirements for recertification. This began with a 2018 Roundtable on Continuing Competence for Genetic Counselors which involved an examination of current recertification requirements and whether these requirements ensure that continuing education for certified genetic counselors is meaningful, appropriate, and enhances knowledge, skills and abilities. A library of recertification resources was started as part of this process. The Roundtable was held November 12-13, 2018 where Diplomate attendees participated in discussions and presentations from a variety of health professional organizations. It was decided during the Roundtable that, further examination is necessary. There was general agreement that changes would be likely, but further examination would be needed prior to approval or implementation.

The goal of this task force is to gather information and make a recommendation to the ABGC BOD about any needed changes to the current and future recertification process.

**Task Force's Mission/Charge:**

1. To continue investigating requirements and processes around recertification and maintenance of certification to ensure continued competence of certified genetic counselors.
2. If it is determined that changes to current processes and requirements are needed to ensure continued competence, a draft proposal will be presented to the ABGC Board of Directors containing a detailed summary of the suggested changes and recommendations on how to transition to a process that reflects those changes. If the task force recommends no changes to the current process, a rationale for this must be provided in the final report.

**Questions to Consider:**

The task force participants will be expected to review the library of resources to help frame the discussion of the following points:

- What does continued competence mean for certified genetic counselors?
- Does our process for recertification (submitting CEUs or taking the exam) ensure that genetic counselors remain current in the field? Do our current Standards and recertification practices and processes measure continued competence?
- If not, what should we require to ensure continued competence?
- Are there other activities or learning modalities that the Board should consider including as requirements for recertification (e.g., Assessments?)
- Should additional input from stakeholders be gathered and if so what and from whom?
- Given the size and scope of our field as well as the potential burdens on Diplomates, are there other modalities for recertification that could better ensure that recertified genetic counselors have maintained their competence in genetic counseling?

**Expectations:**

Attend at least one in-person meeting expected to last two days. There is the possibility that additional in-person meetings may be required. ABGC expects that there will be additional work that will need to be completed via electronic methods as well as likely monthly conference calls. Task Force members will need to review materials already compiled as well as any other related materials identified through individual research. The library of materials compiled for the Roundtable as well as the materials presented during the meeting will be made available to all Task Force members for review. These include, but are not limited to,

- The Institute of Medicine published a report on Redesigning Continuing Education in the Health Care Professions in May 2009 (review of summary is all that is required)
- Institute of Credentialing Excellence Continuing Competence Framework
- Data compiled from CE records entered into the online recertification system re: frequency of use
- CEU Standards and Guidelines
- Approved Professional Activity Credits
- Roundtable presentations

**Deliverable(s):**

Final report with recommendations delivered within 18-24 months.



**Members:**

The following perspectives at a minimum should be represented on the task force:

Chair

ABGC Board Liaison

NSGC Leadership representative

ACGC Leadership representative

Individual who is part of a graduate program with educational experience

CGC working in Industry

Recently recertified CGC (has recertified no more than 2x)

Mid-career CGC

**Term:** The TF's objectives should be accomplishable within 18-24 months.

**Other information:**

*Approved on February 8, 2019 by the ABGC Board of Directors*

**Trademark Policy**  
Approved August 28, 2015

The American Board of Genetic Counseling (ABGC) has the responsibility to protect its federal trademarks from infringement by unauthorized parties. The federal trademark registrations owned by the ABGC include its corporate logo and the designation CGC®. ABGC works with patent and trademark attorneys to ensure that only those who have passed the ABGC examination have the right to use the trademark designations, adding to the meaning and value of the CGC® designation. Certificants who meet ABGC's requirements for recertification are authorized to continue to use the credential. Individuals who allow their ABGC certification to expire may not use the CGC credential nor may they hold themselves out to be an ABGC certified genetic counselor.

**Standard for the designation of Certified Genetic Counselor (CGC)**

ABGC is issuing guidance on how to list one's certification in response to requests from Diplomates and to allow our clients to clearly and quickly identify the individuals who have achieved certification. ABGC seeks to ensure the continued value and meaning of its registered certification mark.

Individuals who have successfully completed the ABGC certification examination may call themselves a Certified Genetic Counselor and are required to designate this certification as CGC unless otherwise mandated by state legislation. Any variation of the mark is a deviation from this standard.

ABGC values and supports the client and title protection provided by state licensure. Should you need to indicate certification and licensure in your signature, ABGC recommends that you do so as follows:

Jane Doe, MS, CGC  
Licensed, Certified Genetic Counselor

**Examination Administration Compliance: Monitoring and Security**

ABGC will monitor performance of its testing vendor to ensure procedures are followed to eliminate cause of errors during testing administration and scoring. The following procedures address compliance and error complaints:

- ABGC selected members and/or staff will conduct periodic site visits to randomly selected assessment centers to observe administration procedures, test facilities, and security checklist monitoring. A follow-up report regarding the site visit will be sent to or produced by ABGC executive offices.
- ABGC provides avenues for examination candidates to file a complaint or comment regarding their testing experience. Candidates are instructed by the testing vendor to contact ABGC directly regarding any irregular occurrences during the testing experience.
- Should ABGC find noncompliance of examination procedures or find merit in a candidate's complaint while testing, ABGC will initiate an investigation with the testing vendor to determine if the testing environment affected candidate performance. As a result of the investigation, ABGC will decide appropriate action such as retesting or refund to the testing candidate.

## **ABGC Policy on dealing with errors**

Types of errors – The potential for errors exists in three broad categories:

- Eligibility determination
- Examination content
- Administration conditions
- Recertification

For each potential source, mechanisms are in place to help identify those errors as well as to remediate any situation while maintaining fairness to applicants, candidates, and certificants as well as upholding the integrity of the ABGC credential.

### Eligibility determination

Identification of errors – the primary potential error would be a denial of an applicant who indeed should have been determined to be eligible. In such cases, identification would normally involve an inquiry by the applicant. Less common could be the reverse situation in which an applicant is granted eligibility without meeting the requirements, and in this case, identification could come from a fellow applicant or some other party.

Remediation – ABGC is committed to ensuring the potential eligibility of every applicant is carefully reviewed, and the primary remediation is therefore avoidance of such errors. If either of these situation occurs, ABGC staff will promptly follow up with the applicant to ensure an accurate determination of eligibility.

### Examination content

Identification of errors – working with our examination services provider (PSI), ABGC has numerous processes in place to avoid errors of examination content. These processes include careful review and unanimous approval of new examination items by our Certification Examination Committee (CEC), verification of references, and inclusion of unscored items for pretesting. Following pretesting, PSI's psychometric staff review item analyses and candidate comments to identify items that may not be suitable for transition to active status for future use as a scored item. The ABGC CEC approves all examination forms prior to delivery to candidates. Upon first administration of a form, PSI staff will generate an item analysis and candidate comments following administration and bring any items with aberrant performance characteristics to the attention of ABGC.

Remediation – In consultation with PSI psychometric staff, ABGC will take appropriate action to maintain fairness to the candidates, as well as to uphold the integrity of the ABGC credential. These actions could include rescoring candidates' responses and issuing new score reports, if appropriate.

### Administration conditions

Identification of errors – there are two primary mechanisms that could help identify potential errors with conditions during the administration of the examination:

1. Notification by our examination services provider (PSI),
2. Notification by candidates.

Regarding the first method of identification, ABGC has confidence in PSI's procedures for administration, but recognizes that events beyond the control of PSI can occur. If a candidate identifies a potential error, the first action by ABGC will be to contact PSI and collect full

information about the situation. When full information is available, ABGC will work with PSI to put an appropriate remediation into effect.

Remediation - Upon notification of any examination administration irregularity, ABGC will work with PSI to promote fairness to the candidates, while upholding the integrity of the ABGC credential.

#### Recertification

Identification of errors - To maintain certification status, the candidate seeking recertification from the American Board of Genetic Counseling (ABGC) must accumulate 12.5 Continuing Education Units (120.5 contact hours) within the five year certification period. Certifications are valid based on a calendar year and all certifications expire on December 31st of the year of expiration. Recertification materials can be submitted from January 1 through December 31st of the year of expiration through an online program.

\*A minimum of 7.5 CEUs must be submitted in Category 1. The primary potential error would be a denial of an applicant who may have actually met the recertification requirements. In such cases, identification would normally involve an inquiry by the renewing certificant. Less common could be the reverse situation in which an applicant is granted renewal of certification without appropriately meeting the requirements.

Remediation - If a certificant's recertification documentation is in question as to whether or not they have met all of the criteria for recertification criteria, it will first be revisited by the executive office staff, and if warranted, by the Executive Committee within a reasonable time once a complaint is made. Certificants will be notified accordingly.

*\*2009 was the last year in which any ABGC Diplomate was issued a 10 year certification period. Therefore, in 2019, there will be a pool of individuals that will need to submit 25 CEUs for recertification vs, 12.5. In 2010, ABGC shifted to a five year certification period. In 2020, all certificants will have only a five year certification period.*

### **ABGC Policy on Establishing and Monitoring Performance Standards**

ABGC establishes cut scores (passing points) using a criterion-referenced method (e.g., Angoff) following any change in examination specifications, and preserves that cut score through pre-equating of subsequent examination forms, with support from the testing vendor (PSI).

ABGC monitors on an administration basis the testing outcomes portal provided by its testing vendor, PSI. Passing rates are reviewed and monitored after each administration to evaluate the extent to which the ABGC examinations meet expectations. ABGC recognizes that candidate testing volumes are sometimes small and fluctuate each administration, and pass rates can differ accordingly, however, by monitoring the rates, ABGC can work with its testing vendor, PSI, to identify any fluctuations in passing rates that might be indicative of a situation in which an ABGC examination is not serving its intended purpose. In such situations, ABGC will investigate and follow up as indicated.