



## Recertification Policy

### **Purpose:**

The International Board of Heart Rhythm Examiners (IBHRE) competency certification examinations have long served as a benchmark for professional excellence and its recertification program promotes enhancement of the knowledge and skills essential to the delivery of optimal patient care through career-long learning and re-examination. Due to significant advances that continue to be made in cardiac pacing, defibrillation and electrophysiology, it is essential for physicians and allied professionals to maintain and demonstrate continued competency in their respective field to ensure a high standard in treatment of patients.

IBHRE recognizes continued competency of its certificants through evidence of the following activities:

- Ongoing participation in professional development activities (i.e. Completion of CME/CE credit)
- Maintaining good standing and involvement in the heart rhythm management field
- Successful re-examination every ten years

### **Requirements:**

Recertification is required every ten (10) years for all IBHRE designations.\* Five (5) years after passing the exam, certificants must attest to having completed 45 contact hours of professional development activities that are applicable to their IBHRE certification. Ten (10) years after passing the exam, certificants must re-certify by re-examination. Candidates must also attest that they are currently active and involved in the field of cardiac rhythm management and that they remain in good standing within the medical community. Candidates who do not meet these requirements will lapse in their certification.

### **Recertification Application Process:**

All IBHRE certificants will be required to file a professional development activities form and pay a processing fee by December 31 of the fifth year of their respective recertification period in order to maintain their credential. The professional development activities form will be available to all certificants on the IBHRE website.

### *Recertification Fees*

Certificants due to submit professional development activities must pay a processing fee upon filing their forms. The processing fees for filing professional development activities will be as follows:

|     | Physician | Allied Professional |
|-----|-----------|---------------------|
| Fee | \$100     | \$75                |

Certificants due to re-certify by way of re-examination shall only be required to pay the application fee to take the examination. Exam application forms must be filed by their respective registration deadlines.

*Recertification Requirements:*

Phase 1: Professional Development Requirement

Recertification candidates must complete a minimum of 45 contact hours of professional development activities five (5) years following initial certification. Contact hours must be directly applicable to the competencies listed in the certification exam content outline. Recertification candidates must complete professional development activities applicable to at least three (3) different exam competency areas in order to be approved. Recertification candidates may complete any combination of contact hours from the list of approved professional development activities provided below. Some options are limited in the number of contact hours that may be submitted toward recertification:

**SECTION A: Continuing Medical Education and Continuing Education Credit**

- *Continuing Medical Education (CME) or Continuing Education (CE)*—  
Recertification candidates may satisfy some or all of the required **45** contact hours by completing CME/CE educational activities given by an approved provider of continuing education credit. All CME/CE educational activities must be directly applicable to the candidate's certification specialty (cardiac device therapy or electrophysiology). Candidates who choose this option to satisfy the entire requirement must submit CME/CE educational activities that are drawn from a minimum of 3 different topic areas on the IBHRE exam content outline. **1 CME = 1 contact hour<sup>1</sup>, 0.1 Nursing Continuing Education Unit (CEU) = 1 contact hour.** Applicants may be asked to provide CME/CE certificates as proof of completion. Recertification candidates may also earn all of the required 45 contact hours by serving on an IBHRE Test Writing Committee. Refer to SECTION B for details.

Approved Providers of continuing education credit include (without being limited to):

- Heart Rhythm Society (HRS)
- American Council on Continuing Medical Education (ACCME)
- American Nurses Credentialing Commission (ANCC)
- American College of Cardiology (ACC)
- American College of Physicians (ACP)
- American Heart Association (AHA)
- American Medical Association (AMA)
- American Nurses Association (ANA)
- Society of Invasive Cardiovascular Professionals (SICP)
- Canadian Cardiovascular Society (CCS)
- Canadian Society of Cardiology Technologists (CSCT)
- Canadian Society of Respiratory Therapists (CSRT)
- Canadian Nurses Association (CNA)
- European Society of Cardiology (ESC)
- European Heart Rhythm Association (EHRA)

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<sup>1</sup> Except where otherwise defined, IBHRE recognizes one contact hour of continuing education credit as equivalent to 60 minutes of learning.

- Heart Failure Society of America (HFS)
- Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE)
- Asia Pacific Heart Rhythm Society (APHRS)
- Japanese Heart Rhythm Society (JHRS)
- Society of Thoracic Surgeons (STS)
- Cardiac Electrophysiology Institute of Australia (CEPIA)
- Arrhythmia Technologies Institute (ATI)
- American Board of Internal Medicine (ABIM)
- Any state, provincial, local or national medical or nursing board/association at the discretion of IBHRE

## **SECTION B: Professional Development Contact Hours**

- **Option 1: *Test Writing Committee Service***—Recertification candidates may earn all of the required contact hours by serving on an IBHRE Test Writing Committee or participating in IBHRE sponsored Item Writing activities. **1 year of active service on a Test Writing Committee = 10 contact hours.** Applicants may submit an unlimited number of hours of Exam/ Item Development activities toward meeting the certification requirements. Only service on an IBHRE Test Writing Committee may be applied for credit.
- **Option 2: *Lecture/Presentation***—Recertification candidates may earn some of the required contact hours by giving an original lecture or presentation on a subject directly applicable to their certification specialty. Presentations must be given in an academic institution or have been approved for CME or CE credit by an approved provider of continuing education. Original lecture/presentation may only be submitted once for recertification credit; repeated lectures will not be counted for additional credit. Lectures/presentations must be extra-professional and may not be a requirement of the applicant’s employment. **1 hour of lecture/presentation = 5 contact hours.** Applicants may submit up to 10 hours of Lecture/ Presentation toward meeting the recertification requirement. Applicants may be asked to provide a presentation outline and written verification of the date and time of the presentation as proof of completion.
- **Option 3: *Publication***—Recertification candidates may earn some of the required contact hours by authoring or co-authoring an accepted abstract, white-paper, scholarly article, book or chapter of a book applicable to their certification specialty and publishing it in a peer- reviewed academic journal, text-book or reputable web site. **1 abstract = 5 contact hours, 1 article, white-paper, or chapter in a book = 10 contact hours, 1 authored text book = 20 contact hours and 1 co-authored text book = 10 contact hours.** Applicants may submit up to 20 hours of publication credit toward the recertification requirement. Applicants may be asked to provide verification of the publication.
- **Option 4: *College or University Credit***—Recertification candidates may earn some or all of the required contact hours by completing relevant coursework provided by an accredited college or university. Course work must be applicable to the competencies of the exam. Candidates who choose this option to satisfy the entire requirement must submit academic credit that is applicable to the field of cardiac pacing and electrophysiology and must represent a minimum of 3 different topic areas on the IBHRE exam content outline. **1 semester credit = 15 contact hours.** Applicants may be asked to provide an official transcript and syllabus as proof of completion.

- **Option 5: *Industry Training***—Recertification candidates who are employed within industry may earn all of the required contact hours by completing industry education and training activities given by an approved provider of industry training. All education and training activities must be directly applicable to the candidate's certification specialty and pre-approved by IBHRE. To satisfy this requirement, education and training activities should draw from a minimum of 3 different topic areas on the IBHRE exam content outline. **60 minutes of industry training=1 contact hour of continuing education.** Applicants may be asked to provide relevant documentation as proof of completion.
- **Option 6: *Industry Sponsored Education Presentation***—Recertification candidates may earn some of the required contact hours by giving an industry sponsored education presentation on a subject directly applicable to their certification specialty. Original presentation may only be submitted once for recertification credit; repeated lectures will not be counted for additional credit. Presentations must be extra-professional and may not be a requirement of the applicant's employment. **1 hour of industry sponsored education presentation = 2 contact hours.** Applicants may submit up to 10 hours of Presentation toward meeting the recertification requirement. Applicants may be asked to provide a presentation outline and written verification of the date and time of the presentation as proof of completion.
- **Option 7: *Online Education and Educational Seminars***—Recertification candidates may earn some of the required contact hours by completing relevant CME/CEU approved online coursework/webcasts or educational seminars applicable to their certification specialty. **1 unit of CME/CE credit = 1 contact hour.**

## Phase 2: Re-examination Requirement

Ten years after achieving initial certification, certificants must achieve re-certification by re-taking and passing the respective examination associated with their certification. Recertification candidates must complete the exam by the year they are due to recertify. Upon applying for the exam, candidates must indicate on their exam application that they are taking the exam to recertify. Candidates who take the examination to re-certify must submit the applicable exam fees and provide all necessary documentation to meet the stated exam eligibility requirements in order to qualify for the exam.

Prior to the exam, Recertification candidates must file a separate form confirming their intentions to recertify by re-examination and asserting their adherence to IBHRE policies and procedures pertaining to recertification. Upon successful completion of the exam, recertification candidates will be automatically re-certified in the IBHRE database.

Re-certification candidates who need to recertify by re-examination may only register for the exam administered during their year of recertification or one year prior. Recertification candidates who do not pass the exam must take the examination again to re-instate their credential.

### *Application Deadlines*

Candidates due to file completion of professional development activities must submit the *Professional Development Activities Submission Form* documenting their professional development activities and submit it with appropriate fees by December 31 of the fifth year of

their certification period. Applicants will not be required to attach certificates, letters of completion or other supporting documentation from their professional development activities to their submission form.

In the tenth year, candidates must take the exam in order to re-certify. Certificants who do not meet the five-year filing deadline shall not be permitted to re-take the examination until the professional development requirement has been met and all appropriate fees have been paid. Certificants who submit professional development filing forms after the deadline shall be required to pay a late fee of \$75.

#### *Incomplete Applications*

Filing forms that do not meet the required number of contact hours will be considered incomplete until the certificant addresses the deficiency by completing or providing additional contact hours. Candidates will be duly notified of deficiencies on their applications. Applicants must address the deficiency by the application due date. Applications that remain incomplete by the application due date will be considered 'Not Approved' until corrective action is taken by the applicant.

#### *Audit*

All professional development forms will be reviewed and approved based upon the criterion stated above. Although supporting documentation is not required upon submission of the forms, IBHRE will randomly select professional development forms for audit. Upon selection, the certificant will be notified by letter and asked to mail or fax copies of all certificates, letters of verification or other documents confirming the completion of all professional development activities on their application. Candidates who do not respond to the audit within 30 days will risk failing the audit. Candidates who do fail the audit may request a one-year extension to correct the deficiency on their form. IBHRE reserves the right to hold all professional development forms subject to audit on a random or objective basis at the discretion of the reviewers.

#### *Extension*

Recertification candidates who notify IBHRE of any reasonable circumstances which may prevent them from meeting their re-certification filing deadline may request one (1) one-year extension of their re-certification. Candidates seeking an extension must make this request in writing (by mail, fax or e-mail) at least 30 days prior to the deadline. Candidates with extensions may continue to use their IBHRE credential until their extension due-date. If a candidate has not yet filed a professional development activities form or re-taken the exam when the extension expires, the candidate will lose their credential indefinitely.

#### *Consequences for Not Meeting Requirements*

Subject to the provisions set forth below regarding Testamurs, Candidates who choose not to recertify or do not pass the examination will no longer be permitted to use the IBHRE credential or designation. The names of candidates who lapse in their certification will be removed from the IBHRE website.

Thirty (30) days following the final recertification deadline, any candidate who has not met the requirements and submitted their recertification form will be notified in writing that they may no longer use their IBHRE designation. Any former certificants found to be inappropriately utilizing the IBHRE credential may be prevented from re-instating their credential in the future at the discretion of the Board.

### *Reinstatement*

Certificants who wish to reinstate their credential after lapsing must retake the examination to reinstate their certification. Candidates who seek re-instatement after lapsing must still file a professional development activities form and pay a reinstatement fee of \$100 in addition to passing the exam. Candidates who successfully re-instate their credential within 1 year of being lapsed will be required to recertify 10 years from the date their former certification lapsed. Candidates who successfully re-instate their credential after one year will be issued a new recertification due date ten years from the date of their reinstatement.

### *Exemption of Test Writing Committee Members*

Certified professionals who currently serve on an IBHRE test writing committee or have recently served on a committee within the last five years shall not be required to re-take the IBHRE certification exam. The purpose for this exemption is to protect the integrity and reliability of the exam and to prevent skew in the scoring process. Committee members who currently serve or have served on a committee within the last five years may submit their test writing experience as a professional development activity in lieu of taking the exam. Former committee members, who have been removed from the committee for a cumulative minimum of five (5) years during any ten (10) year recertification period, shall not be exempt from taking the exam to re-certify.

Even though test writing committee members are not permitted to take the exam, all members who were previously grandfathered should plan to opt-in to a time-limited status by submitting a Professional Development Activity Form attesting to 45 contact hours of continuing education activity from within the past five years. After submitting a professional development form these members shall be granted a new certificate that is good for 5 years. In the event that a member is still exempt from the exam upon their recertification due date, the member will be automatically rolled over to a new certification cycle.

Five years into a new certification cycle, test writing committee members still need to meet the 45 contact hour requirement in order to qualify for recertification. If a committee member's term ends, that member will remain exempt for five years following his or her term of service. After this time, the former committee member shall resume the requirement to re-take the exam in order to recertify.

### **Reinstatement of 'Testamur' Designation**

The International Board of Heart Rhythm Examiners acknowledges previous policies which guaranteed perpetual recognition to those who passed the Physician Pacing exam prior to 1997, the Allied Professional Pacing exam prior to 1998 and the Allied Professional Electrophysiology exam prior to 1999. In recognition of the commitments made by NASPEXAM, Inc. for periods prior to 1997, 1998 and 1999 with respect to the tests administered at that time, these individuals shall not be required to complete the aforementioned recertification requirements. While IBHRE strongly encourages all certificants to opt-in to the new recertification standards, professionals who choose not to recertify may maintain their recognition of having passed the exam by keeping the designation 'IBHRE Testamur.' This is consistent with the commitment made by NASPEXAM, Inc. during that period. This designation will apply only to those who were granted perpetual recognition under the previous policy and will not apply to other certificants who choose not to recertify in the future. In addition, the use of the CCDS or CEPS designation is not allowed unless the certificant chooses to recertify by examination.

### **Transition Timeframe**

If you hold (or expect to hold) one or more IBHRE certification credential(s) you must adhere to one of the following time-frames as it applies to you:

10 Year Certificants: 10-Year Certificants are those who passed the Physician's CCDS exam between 1997 and 2009, the Allied Professional CCDS exam between 1998 and 2009 or the Allied Professional CEPS exam between 1999 and 2009 and were assigned an expiry date ten years following their initial examination. These certificants may proceed to recertify during the year originally assigned to them under the previous policy. All subsequent recertification cycles shall require these candidates to meet the five (5) year professional development activities requirement going forward.

New Certificants: Certificants who pass the exam in 2010 or later will be required to submit proof of 45 contact hours of professional development activity after five (5) years and re-take the exam after ten (10) years.

'Testamurs' / Opt-in Candidates: Those persons who were granted perpetual recognition under the previous policy are those who passed the Physician Pacing exam prior to 1997, the Allied Professional Pacing exam prior to 1998 and the Allied Professional Electrophysiology exam prior to 1999. Those persons who fall under this category may choose to opt-in to the new certification cycle by submitting 45 contact hours of professional development activities from within the last five (5) years. These persons will have until December 31, 2011 to bring their certifications up-to-date by submitting professional development activities. Upon initially renewing their certification, these certificants will be issued new certificates that are valid for five years. These certificants must recertify by re-examination by the new expiration date or risk lapsing in their certification.

Persons who choose not to opt-in to the new certification cycle will retain the designation 'IBHRE Testamur' in recognition of their achievement of having passed the applicable exam prior to 1997, 1998 or 1999, as applicable. A list of all IBHRE Testamurs will post to the IBHRE website. IBHRE 'Testamur' status will only be applicable to certificants who were previously granted perpetual recognition under the previous policy and will not apply to other future candidates whose certifications shall be subject to the requirements of this policy as it may be amended from time to time by the Board of Directors of IBHRE.

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