



## IBHRE Verification of Continuing Education and Recertification Policy

### **Purpose:**

The International Board of Heart Rhythm Examiners (IBHRE) competency certification examinations have long served as a benchmark for professional excellence. Its Verification of Continuing Education (VCE) criteria 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 the treatment of patients.

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

- Ongoing participation in professional development activities (Verification of Continuing Education)
- Maintaining good standing and involvement in the heart rhythm management field
- Successful re-examination every ten years (Recertification)

### **The IBHRE certified professional must meet the following requirements:**

#### Verification of Continuing Education

Five (5) years after passing an exam, certified professionals must attest to having completed 45 contact hours of professional activities that are applicable to their IBHRE certification.

#### Recertification

Ten (10) years after passing an exam, certified professionals 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 healthcare community. **Individuals who do not meet VCE criteria will be identified in IBHRE's online certification directory and in their IBHRE record. Individuals not meeting recertification requirements will lapse in their certification and consequently lose their credentials.**

### **Verification of Continuing Education Process:**

All IBHRE certified professionals are required to file a Verification of Continuing Education (VCE) submission form and pay a processing fee by December 1 of the fifth year of their respective recertification period in order to maintain their credential. This form is available to all certified professionals on the IBHRE website.

#### *Verification of Continuing Education Fees*

Certified professionals due to submit VCE activities must pay a processing fee when submitting their forms. The processing fees for filing certification maintenance activities are as follows:

	Physician	Allied Professional
Fee	\$75	\$75

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

**Phase 1: Verification of Continuing Education – 5 Year Mark**

VCE candidates must complete a minimum of 45 contact hours of VCE activities five (5) years following their most recent exam certification. Contact hours must be directly applicable to the competencies listed in the certification exam content outline. Candidates must complete VCE activities applicable to at least three (3) different exam content outline areas in order to be approved.

VCE candidates may complete any combination of contact hours from the list provided below. Some options are limited in the number of contact hours that may be submitted toward recertification.

**Applicable VCE activities fall under the following categories:**

- I. Continuing Medical Education (CME) or Continuing Education (CE)**
- II. IBHRE Committee Service**
- III. Lecture/Presentation**
- IV. Publications**
- V. College or University Credit**
- VI. Industry Training**
- VII. Industry Sponsored Education Presentation**

- I. **Continuing Medical Education (CME) or Continuing Education (CE)** Certified professionals may satisfy some or all required contact hours by completing live or online CME/CE educational activities given by an approved provider of continuing education credit. Contact hours are quantified as follows: **1 CME/CE = 1 contact hour.**

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

- Heart Rhythm Society (HRS)
- American Board of Internal Medicine (ABIM)
- American College of Cardiology (ACC)
- American College of Physicians (ACP)
- American Council on Continuing Medical Education (ACCME)
- American Heart Association (AHA)
- American Medical Association (AMA)
- American Nurses Association (ANA)
- American Nurses Credentialing Commission (ANCC)
- Arrhythmia Technologies Institute (ATI)
- Asia Pacific Heart Rhythm Society (APHR)
- Canadian Cardiovascular Society (CCS)
- Canadian Nurses Association (CNA)
- Canadian Society of Cardiology Technologists (CSCT)
- Canadian Society of Respiratory Therapists (CSRT)
- Cardiac Electrophysiology Institute of Australia (CEPIA)
- European Heart Rhythm Association (EHRA)
- European Society of Cardiology (ESC)
- Heart Failure Society of America (HFS)
- Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE)
- Japanese Heart Rhythm Society (JHRS)
- Society of Invasive Cardiovascular Professionals (SICP)
- Society of Thoracic Surgeons (STS)
- Any state, provincial, local or national medical or nursing board/association at the discretion of IBHRE

- II. **IBHRE Committee Service** - Certified professionals may earn all of the required contact hours by serving on an IBHRE committee or participating in IBHRE sponsored item writing activities. **1 year of active service on a Test Writing Committee or Content Experts Committee = 10 contact hours.** Applicants may submit an unlimited number of hours of committee activities toward meeting the certification requirements. Only service on the IBHRE Test Writing or Content Experts Committee may be applied for credit.
- III. **Lecture/Presentation** - Certified professionals 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.
- IV. **Publication** - Certified professionals 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.
- V. **College or University Credit** - Certified professionals 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 submit an unlimited number of hours of College or University credit toward meeting the certification requirements. Applicants may be asked to provide an official transcript and syllabus as proof of completion.
- VI. **Industry Training** - Certified professionals 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. **1 hour of industry training= 1 contact hour of continuing education.** Applicants may submit an unlimited number of hours of industry training toward meeting the certification requirements. Applicants may be asked to provide relevant documentation as proof of completion.

- VII. **Industry Sponsored Education Presentation** - Certified professionals 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 professional. **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.

## **Phase 2: Re-examination – 10 Year Mark**

Ten years after achieving initial certification, certified professionals must re-certify by re-taking and passing the respective examination associated with their certification. 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.

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

### **IBHRE Clauses and Exemptions**

#### *Incomplete Applications*

Filing forms that do not meet the required number of contact hours will be considered incomplete until the certified professional 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. If a candidate has not yet filed a Verification of Continuing Education form or re-taken the exam when the extension expires, the candidate will lose their credential indefinitely.

#### *Extension*

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 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 Verification of Continuing Education form or re-taken the exam when the extension expires, the candidate will lose their credential indefinitely.

#### *Consequences for Not Meeting VCE and Recertification Requirements*

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 will be notified in writing that they may no longer use their IBHRE designation. Any former certified professionals 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*

Certified professionals 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 Verification of Continuing Education form and pay a reinstatement fee of \$100 in addition to their regular form submission fees. 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 IBHRE Test Writing Committee Members*

This exemption only applies to Test Writing Committee members due to their direct involvement in the development of the exams. 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 Verification of Continuing Education activity in lieu of taking the exam. Former committee members who have not served on a committee for more than five years shall not be exempt from taking the exam if they wish to maintain their credential.

**Five years into a new certification cycle, Test Writing Committee members still need to submit VCE forms in order to maintain their credential.** 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.

#### *Audit*

All Verification of Continuing Education 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 incoming forms for auditing. Upon selection, the certified professional 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 Verification of Continuing Education forms subject to audit on a random or objective basis at the discretion of the reviewers.

## **Transition Timeframe for All Certified Professionals**

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:

Certified professionals who passed the exam before 2010: 10-Year Certified professionals 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 certified professionals 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 Verification of Continuing Education requirement going forward.

Certified professionals from 2010 to Present: Certified professionals who pass the exam in 2010 or later will be required to submit proof of 45 contact hours of Verification of Continuing Education activities after five (5) years and re-take the exam after ten (10) years.

'Testamurs' / Opt-in Candidates: IBHRE 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 at the time, these individuals shall not be required to complete the current recertification requirements. While IBHRE strongly encourages all certified professionals to opt-in to the current recertification standards, individuals 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 certified professionals who choose not to recertify in the future. In addition, the use of the CCDS or CEPS designation is not allowed unless the Testamur chooses to recertify by examination.

Testamurs may choose to opt-in to the new certification cycle by submitting 45 contact hours of Verification of Continuing Education activities from within the last five (5) years. Upon initially renewing their certification, these individuals will be issued new certificates that are valid until December 31, 2016. These certified professionals must recertify by re-examination by their new expiration date or risk lapsing in their certification.

Testamurs 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 is listed on the IBHRE website. IBHRE 'Testamur' status will only be applicable to certified professionals 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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