

# PROFESSIONAL ISSUES



## BCIA in 2014: What's New?

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*The Biofeedback Certification International Alliance (BCIA) has revised its recertification requirements and fees to reduce certificant costs. BCIA has expanded options for earning inexpensive and accessible continuing education, including Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). BCIA continues to promote ethics education to protect clients, professionals, and the credibility of our field. More educators teach BCIA's HRV Biofeedback Certificate of Completion didactic course to students and professionals. BCIA's Job Board has helped employers recruit our skilled certificants. Finally, there is a need for infection prevention standards in private practice.*

The Biofeedback Certification International Alliance (BCIA) is the certification body for the clinical practice of biofeedback and neurofeedback, including pelvic floor muscle dysfunction biofeedback (PMDB). BCIA is the standard bearer for these fields. The BCIA mission statement is quite simple:

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BCIA certifies individuals who meet education and training standards in biofeedback and neurofeedback, and progressively recertifies those who advance their knowledge through continuing education.

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Because our policies must serve a wide variety of backgrounds and needs, we've carefully listened to the questions you've raised and developed answers that make sense across the boundaries of professions and geography. This article highlights our efforts to update our certification and recertification processes and streamline our policies to better serve you.

### What Are the Basics of Recertification?

For biofeedback and neurofeedback, recertification is every 4 years and is accomplished by documenting blueprint-

relevant, accredited, continuing education or successfully completing our certification exam, agreeing to follow the Professional Standards and Ethical Principles (PSEP) of BCIA and paying your recertification fee. If you file your application prior to June 30, the fee remains at \$225 and goes up in increments after that. For recertification in PMDB, your cycle is 3 years, and you are required to complete 36 hours of accredited continuing education with a base fee of \$150.

### How Has Recertification Changed?

There are no changes in PMDB recertification. However, starting with the biofeedback and neurofeedback recertification classes of 2014, we've reduced our continuing education (CE) requirements from 55 hours to 48 hours (which includes 3 hours of ethics) for certificants who have recertified up to the Senior Fellow level. We've reduced CE requirements for Senior Fellows to 30 hours (which includes 3 hours of ethics).

### Why Did BCIA Make This Decision?

The BCIA Board researched state CE requirements for health care professionals and aligned our standards with those of leading states. Because many of you are required to complete CE to maintain your health care license, we hope that you will select coursework that can satisfy both purposes. This change means that you will have to pay for fewer CE courses.

### Why Does BCIA Feel That Ethics Education Is So Important?

Because biofeedback and neurofeedback are used in diverse settings, no single national regulatory agency protects the public by setting standards in professional behavior and client care. BCIA's PSEP provides a framework for ethical

practice for both our licensed and unlicensed professionals. Licensed certificants may satisfy our 3-hour ethics requirement by taking courses provided by their state or national organizations. BCIA-sponsored ethics webinars and workshops provide unlicensed certificants with the inexpensive coverage of professional issues that they need. Understanding and sensitivity to ethical issues can protect your clients and your own practice.

### **What About Recertification Fees?**

In 15 years, we have raised recertification fees only once, from \$195 to \$225. We continue to offer a \$225 rate for certificants who complete their CE requirements and file their application before the June 30th deadline. This timetable helps our staff provide the high level of customer service you have enjoyed and allows us to freeze recertification fees. Starting with the class of 2014, we will reduce the cost of a second certification to \$175. We hope that the reduction of CE hours and this lower cost will encourage dual certificants to keep both certifications current.

### **If I Am Dual Certified, Do I Need to Complete Separate CE Requirements?**

No. Although BCIA requires a specific amount of accredited, blueprint-relevant CE, we will accept the same courses for any recertification, provided the work was completed within the appropriate time frame.

### **Can I Use Supervision as Part of My CE Requirement?**

Yes, you can! This is new, starting with the class of 2013. You may use up to 20 hours of formal mentoring as partial fulfillment of your CE requirement. Log the time you spend with your mentor, just as you did for your original certification. We want to encourage you to seek professional clinical guidance as your practice and skills grow. Please use the form found online in the Recertification area in the Certificants section of our Web site.

### **Are There Any New Online CE Options?**

Online courses and Webinars have become far more accessible, affordable, and available. We agree that they can be a great way to learn. BCIA offers Webinars and records each one just in case you missed the original presentation. The price is the same—\$25 for the live or recorded Webinar. We charge \$15 for the online CE exam and certificate. We are also pleased to let you know about MOOCs.

### **What Are MOOCs?**

MOOCs are Massive Open Online Courses offered for free by many renowned professors from a wide variety of universities. Free? What's the catch? We haven't found the downside yet, but as with everything, buyer beware. We ask that you do some Internet research and locate courses you believe will suit your educational goals. Email us with the link to that course for review to ensure that we believe the content will be blueprint relevant, and we'll provide a quick answer as to the suitability of your selection. The day the board voted to allow the use of MOOCs as a way to earn both CE for recertification and to fulfill the human A&P requirement for certification, several of the board members were so intrigued with the concept that they signed up for a course during their coffee break! To date, we have heard positive feedback, but we'll keep you posted as we learn more.

### **What Is the Status of the Heart Rate Variability Biofeedback Certificate of Completion?**

The Heart Rate Variability (HRV) Biofeedback Certificate program started slowly, but we are encouraged by its growing numbers. The increase is due to the availability of blueprint-specific courses, such as those offered as pre-conference workshops at both Association for Applied Psychophysiology and Biofeedback (AAPB) and International Society for Neurofeedback & Research, and the list of accredited didactic training programs found on our Web site.

### **May I Use HRV Didactics Toward Recertification?**

Yes. You may use the 15 hours of HRV didactics toward any BCIA recertification, including PMDB. Many clinicians have told us that this HRV modality is easy to add to their practice and for their clients to master. The recent special HRV biofeedback issue of *Biofeedback* documented its diverse applications and promising efficacy.

### **What Is the BCIA Job Board I've Been Hearing About?**

Glad you asked! As recognition of our credential grows, more and more employers have reached out to BCIA because we help them connect with a group of talented professionals with unique training and skills. We provide this service for free and believe that it benefits certificants seeking employment in our field and employers who want to expand the services they offer by hiring the best and the brightest—those who carry the BCIA credential.

### How Does the Job Board Work?

If you want to post an ad, simply email it to BCIA, and we'll review it, reformat it if necessary, and post it to the Job Board area under the Certificants section of our Web site. Next, we will build an e-blast that reaches all of our certificants. We do not charge for this service because we want to deliver value and because it is our mission to promote you and your special skills.

### What Are the Standards for Preventing the Transmission of Infection by Sensors?

Biofeedback and neurofeedback professionals risk the transmission of infection whenever they touch a client's skin, abrade the scalp, or attach sensors and their cables to a client's body. Although medical settings may set standards for infection control and prevention, precautions appear to be extremely variable in private practice. This is an area where the main membership organizations, the AAPB and the ISNR, can exercise needed leadership. In the meantime, several precautions make sense. Clinicians need to wash their hands before touching a client. Clients may need to wash their hands to mid-forearm when sensors for blood volume pulse, skin conductance, and skin temperature are applied to the digits with cables taped to the wrist and forearm. All sensors should be disinfected after each use with nonallergenic products.

Our colleagues at ASET—The Neurodiagnostic Society suggested a free Webinar recording on this topic, which you may access at their Website, [www.aset.org](http://www.aset.org). Click on the “shop” button. When the list of available categories

appears, scroll all the way down to the last item, “Lecture recordings—Free.” Click on this category, and you will see the title “Infection Control.” When you click on it to purchase and put it in your cart, you will be able to access this recording without a financial transaction. ASET has also written articles about infection control for their journal. We thank them for their help on this topic.

This is an increasingly important topic, and BCIA hopes to collaborate with AAPB and ISNR to develop best practice guidelines based on current medical findings. In the meantime, we encourage you to consult with your medical colleagues for the latest information on infection prevention.



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