

First Annual Report of American Board of Health Physics

Historical

Shortly after its organization, the Health Physics Society established a Certification Committee to study the need for certification of Health Physicists and to develop plans for certification if this appeared to be desirable. After an intensive study, the Committee recommended that an American Board of Health Physics be established to develop standards and procedures for certification, to examine candidates for certification, and to issue written proof of certification to individuals having the professional qualifications required. The Board of Directors of the Society decided these recommendations had merit and appointed a temporary American Board of Health Physics on November 8, 1958. The members of the Board and the expiration of their terms on the Board (selected by lot) were as follows:

E. E. Anderson -	1961
J. S. Laughlin -	1963
W. A. McAdams -	1960
C. M. Patterson -	1959
L. S. Taylor -	1962

The temporary American Board of Health Physics developed a set of minimum qualifications for certification, after carefully reviewing the professional background of 100 selected individuals believed to be representative of those recognized as competent Health Physicists. These minimum standards were submitted to the membership of the Society for comment. Later, at the 1959 annual meeting, the whole matter of certification was discussed in an open meeting and there was general support for the whole plan.

The Board of Directors of the Society formally established the American Board of Health Physics by approving an amendment to the By-laws of the Society on October 29, 1959. Anderson, Laughlin, McAdams and Taylor were reappointed for the terms indicated above, and J. W. Healy was named to fill the vacancy left by C. M. Patterson. In December 1959, McAdams was named temporary Chairman of the Board. The members of the Society were informed of the actions and given instructions as to how to apply for certification.

Incorporation

It was evident from the start that incorporation of the American Board of Health Physics was essential and had to be accomplished before any

certification could be made. A lawyer was consulted and details for incorporation in New York State were worked out and approved by the Board. The actual incorporation proved more difficult than expected, because the New York Department of State refused to take action on the matter until the charter had been approved by the Department of Education which administers all professional licensing activities in the state. After an investigation of its own, the Department of Education issued a certificate granting the American Board of Health Physics permission to carry on its proposed work. * Final incorporation was then approved by the Department of State, effective December 1, 1960.

Organization

The Board held three business meetings in 1960. The first meeting was held in New York on March 11, the second, in Boston on June 30 and the third, in New York on December 16. A conference was held by telephone on October 14.

At its first meeting the Board elected McAdams president and chairman, Taylor, vice president, and Healy, secretary-treasurer. It was agreed that the terms of office should be for the years previously specified by the Health Physics Society, but that they should expire at the end of the calendar year, instead of at the time of the Society meeting.

A set of by-laws was drafted at the first meeting and revised at subsequent meetings. These by-laws have been submitted to the Society for comment, and have not yet been approved.

At its first meeting, the Board developed procedures for evaluating applications and continued to use these procedures throughout the year. Details of these procedures will be covered in another section of this report.

Because the Board members were so widely separated geographically, most of the business was transacted by correspondence and telephone.

During 1960, the office of the Board was located at Schenectady, New York.

* The Board has been informed unofficially that the Department of Education had never before granted permission to a private group to license or certify professional people.

Evanuation of Applications

At its first meeting, the Board gave considerable attention to the methods to be used in appraisal of applicants for certification. It was agreed that especially well qualified individuals who applied by December 31, 1960 could be certified without examination if they received the unanimous approval of the Board, but the selection of these individuals was most difficult. Prior to the meeting, the Board had agreed unanimously to certify without examination the group of 100 individuals who were used as "guinea pigs" to develop the requirements for certification. To simplify the appraisal of other candidates, the Board adopted a point system to be used as a guide in evaluating the education and experience qualifications of the candidates. This point system proved effective and was used during the remainder of the year.

The Board made it a standard practice to contact the supervisor and references of each applicant. In addition, the Board requested supplementary information from many candidates before making a decision on their cases.

In processing the applications, each Board member made an independent appraisal of the file on each applicant. When differences of opinion occurred, they were resolved by correspondence, reappraisal, or discussion at the Board meetings.

In a special action at its June meeting, the Board approved certification without investigation, examination or fees, for six well known senior authorities in the Health Physics field. These were

- G. Failla
- L. D. Marinelli
- K. Z. Morgan
- H. M. Parker
- J. E. Rose
- L. S. Taylor

Report on Applications Received

The Board began receiving applications shortly after the first of the year and about 40 per month throughout the year. A total of 395 applications were received, including several postmarked after December 31, 1960. The disposition of these applications was as follows

As of 3/17/61	1/1/61	
112	79	100 Certified without exam
160	151	Examination required
13	5	Rejected (exam not permitted)
1	1	Withdrawn (before appraisal)
45	31	Action pending
61	108	Awaiting appraisal (including 65 received in late December)
395	375	

In addition, ⁵⁰39 of the "100 guinea pigs" applied for certification paid the required fees and were certified. Five others of this group were certified as senior authorities (see above) and four more have applied and are awaiting action.

Altogether, 196 persons were certified in 1960.

Examinations

The Board selected an Examination Panel at its first meeting and this Panel was organized a few weeks later under the chairmanship of F. P. Cowan. The panel members are

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| W. D. Claus | W. E. Nolan |
| M. Fair | W. C. Reing |
| R. O. Gorson | L. S. Scaggs |
| W. T. Ham | J. M. Smith, Jr. |
| W. H. Langham | J. F. Sommers |
| L. H. Lanzl | R. Wallace |

The Panel prepared its first examination and had it approved by the Board in time to give a four hour written examination to 15 candidates on June 28, 1960 at the time of the Health Physics Society meeting. Copies of this examination were later distributed to all applicants who were notified that they would have to take an examination to become certified.

The panel prepared a second examination in the fall and held the examination simultaneously at Chicago, Atlanta, and Berkeley on December 10, 1960. A total of ²⁴26 candidates took these examinations.

It is too early to evaluate the effectiveness of the examinations held to date. Some obvious faults were noted in the first exam and attempts were made to correct these in the second. It is evident that the written examinations need to be supplemented with oral examinations and the Panel is working on such plans.

Eleven of the 15 candidates passed the first exam, the results are not yet available for the second exam.

Certificates

Prior to the end of 1960, 114 certificates in plaque form were mailed to certified Health Physicists. A change in seal will delay the preparation of additional certificates about two months.

The Board intends to issue wallet cards to give verification of certification, but no arrangements for this had been made by the end of the year.