

# American Board Of Health Physics

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## AMERICAN BOARD OF HEALTH PHYSICS NEWSLETTER - AUGUST 1985

Dear Colleague:

The newsletter summarizes Board activities to August 1985, and includes items from the Board meeting held in Chicago in May 1985. The following items are discussed in this newsletter:

1. Formation of the American Academy of Health Physics
2. Election of ABHP Officers, Board Members and Panel Chairmen
3. The Continuing Education Program
4. Oral Exam Results
5. Vital Statistics of the Academy
6. Summary of 1985 Exam Applications
7. Input by CHPs
8. Highlights from the May 1985 Board Meeting
9. The Fall Board Meeting
10. Timeliness of Board Actions.

The Board has been busy with a variety of activities and with the changes wrought by the formation of the Academy, we can look forward to an active and challenging schedule. The Board is dedicated to maintaining the quality and integrity of the certification process. We certainly encourage the participation of all CHPs in this process. You can help by providing your ideas on improvements, generation of test questions, volunteering for Panel and Board assignments and other ways.

Sincerely,

R. Jerry Everett  
Secretary-Treasurer

1. Formation of the American Academy of Health Physics

You were notified by a special mailing that approval has been given to the formation of the American Academy of Health Physics. By a vote of 204-51, certified health physicists approved in a mail ballot the proposed by-laws developed by an ad hoc committee.

The Academy will officially form January 1, 1986. It is anticipated that the Executive Committee's early activities will focus on the development of committees and charters, budgets, and in establishing its working relationship with the ABHP.

A nominating committee was named to prepare the slate for the fall elections. All CHPs who were interested in being nominated for office were asked to contact any member of the committee listed below. Nominations closed on August 15, 1985. It is expected that the ballots will be mailed about November 1, 1985.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Wade Patterson, Chair  
Lester Aldrich  
Allen Brodsky  
Neil Gaeta  
James Hildebrand  
Tony LaMastra  
Chuck Roessler  
Dave Simpson  
Jack Youngblood

2. Election of ABHP Officers, Board Members and Panel Chairmen

The ABHP Officers elected for the 1986 calendar year are as follows:

Bob Casey, Chairman  
Jerry Everett, Vice-Chairman  
Frazier Bronson, Secretary-Treasurer  
Howard Dickson, Parliamentarian

Dick Bowers and Glenn Glasgow were elected to the ABHP to replace outgoing members Les Slaback and Ken Kase.

The elected Panel Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen are:

Dale Denham, Comprehensive Panel Chairman  
David Waite, Comprehensive Panel Vice-Chairman  
Dennis Quinn, Power Reactor Panel Chairman  
Bob Heublein, Continuing Education Panel Chairman

Joe Sayeg continues as the Professional Examination Services Coordinator and Chairman of the Part I Upgrade Committee.

### 3. The Continuing Education Program

The following comments were contributed by R. E. Alexander.

#### Keeping Up to Date

Health Physicists tend to think of ABHP certification as arriving at a professional plateau, which is then to be maintained by meeting minimum continuing education requirements throughout their careers. They should think of certification instead as the initial step in a life-long learning process where professional growth on the highest plane available is the objective rather than the maintenance of a plateau. They should enter the certification process with a commitment of that nature in mind. About 4% of the U.S. professional health physicists are certified by the ABHP, and they are considered by many to be the top technical echelon. People seeking information, advice or assistance on highly basic health physics issues, past and current, should feel confident that ABHP certification assures an authoritative, technically sound response, including reliable references where specialists should be involved. There are, however, many indications that all CHPs do not keep up-to-date with current basic developments despite present ABHP continuing education requirements. Additional encouragement from the ABHP would seem to be in order.

The Board is now considering modifications in the work of the Continuing Education Panel which would provide such encouragement. In accordance with their proposals, the Panel would:

- (1) Identify important new developments about which every CHP should become knowledgeable, let the CHPs know that they will need to be familiar with these topics, and provide a minimum reading list.
- (2) Take action to help assure that presentations or symposia on these topics are made readily available to most CHPs.

At the time of application for recertification, the CHPs, as in the past, would certify under the honor system that they have attended courses and meetings as necessary to require 16 continuing education units or more, and they would also certify in the same manner that they are familiar with the prescribed new documents, e.g., ICRP-26, ICRP-30, the BEIR-1980 Report, and other publications of great importance.

Your comments on this proposal, positive or negative, are requested. If you have an alternative proposal, please make it known.

NOTE: Although the Board welcomes comments and suggestions, your input on this topic would be best directed to the Continuing Education Panel and, once organized, the Executive Committee of the Academy.

. Your reaction to the following please - a proposal from Les Slaback.

I've often said that the problem with the 16 CEC requirement for continuing education is that there is not a similar requirement for the "professional activities" side of the ledger. The result of this imbalance is that everyone wants to get CE credits for items that are professional activities. So I would propose to remedy this by also requiring 16 PACs (Professional Activity Credits) for certification renewal. A partial list of such credits are:

1 PAC for each Part I or Part II question submitted with the renewal application.

1 PAC/yr. - ABHP, HPS, ANSI, etc., committee membership.

1 PAC - for each 1 HP course taught.

1 PAC/yr. - Additional credit for committee chairpersons, chapter officers, etc., (extra work).

5 PAC - Each published journal paper.

1 PAC - Each presented paper, etc., etc.

#### 4. Oral Exam Results

The 1985 oral exams were given on Sunday, May 26, by certain Board and Panel members who volunteered their time. We were able to certify 6 of the 11 persons who applied for comprehensive certification and 2 out of 3 in power reactor. Pass rates are comparable to the overall Part II pass rate.

It was interesting that one oral question was taken from an old Part II exam and not one candidate got it right -- makes you wonder about exam preparation.

Oral exams continue to be a time consuming process for the Board. We have had several discussions in the past on the merits of having or not having an oral format, but at this time the Board is committed to providing an oral format.

#### 5. Vital Statistics of the Academy

Prior to the May 1985 meeting of the Board, the number of CHPs in the following categories were:

566 - Active (comprehensive)

20 - Active (dual)

30 - Active (power reactor)

25 - Emeritus

208 - Inactive

The financial status of the Board is best described as stable. Income is slightly in excess of outgo. The reserve is currently about 60 percent of the annual budget. Projections as to the number of candidates taking the exams beyond the next 2-3 years is somewhat worrisome. It is unlikely the Board will make any changes in the fee structure this year, but the Academy which assumes responsibility on January 1, 1986, will have to face some hard decision on the means to finance their various activities.

6. Summary of 1985 Examination Applications

	<u>Part I Only</u>	<u>Part II Only</u>	<u>Parts I, II</u>
Number of Applications:	113	100	50
Number Accepted:	97	90	48
Number Who Took Exam:*	119	101	

\*Includes those candidates who were approved in prior years and those who made application for both Part I and II.

7. Input by CHPs

Newsletter items are welcomed from any CHP, subject to the normal constraints of appropriateness and space. Note, however, that the primary purpose of the ABHP newsletter is to get specific information to CHPs on a timely basis. There is no plan to expand the frequency or to compete with the HPS newsletter.

8. Highlights from the May 1985 Board Meeting

- . The result of the role delineation survey was reviewed by the Board and a meeting scheduled for September 1985, to discuss the proposal by the Professional Examination Service (PES) to change the Part II exam to be consistent with the role delineation survey.
- . The Board reaffirmed the policy of limiting the types of programmable calculators to be used in taking the exams. Specifically, the HP-41 is not allowed.
- . After discussing two proposals submitted by a previous candidate, the Board reaffirmed the policy for the exam to be closed book, the current method of establishing the passing mark rather than "grading on the curve," and the present length of time allowed. A questionnaire was distributed to this year's candidates which will provide feedback to the Board.
- . Several appeals of application denials were received. One was approved; two were denied.

- Several proposals relating to the continuing education panel were received. The request relating to approval of credits for videotapes is very similar to past requests for credits for reading books, articles, etc. The panel may approve such in certain circumstances, e.g., a seminar, but the Board did not choose to make a blanket approval.

Also, given the current process for reviewing and approving courses, the advertised 4-6 week turnaround time is very unrealistic. Until such time that a fundamental change is made in the program, CHPs should be aware that this process takes 2-3 months. Keep in mind this is a wholly volunteer effort. Your suggestions are welcomed.

A suggestion that the ABHP make available a "seal or stamp" for use by CHPs was tabled for discussion by the Academy. Your comments, directed to the Academy Executive Committee, are welcomed. One aspect of this should be kept in mind. The ABHP certification is not a licensure exam so that such a stamp or seal could not be used in the same manner as that of a notary public or licensed engineer.

- The following policy issues were decided or changed from previous practice:

- Each candidate will be sent an admission card and notified of the location where he/she should appear to take the exam at least 45 days prior to the exam. Each proctor will be sent a list of approved candidates. Only persons on the proctor's list will be admitted to the exam.
- Persons with dual certifications need only acquire 16 credits total to renew both certifications. However, those individuals certified in power reactors, must be active in the field of power reactor health physics.
- Follow-up inquiries due to insufficient information from candidates for applications received after December 15, will likely postpone approval for the exam in the following year. All applications must be received in their entirety by January 15 of the year of the exam.

- The following position on written reports from candidates was reaffirmed:

- Each applicant for Part II shall submit with the application for certification a written document authored by the applicant reflecting a professional level health physics effort. The sole criteria in ABHP acceptance of this report is that (1) it be in an area or on a topic for which the ABHP tests and certifies expertise; (2) the report contains elements of professional level judgement or application of non-regulatory

protection guidance; and (3) the report be authored solely or principally by the candidate. The Board, after examination of the application for certification, may request additional such reports to insure the above criteria have been met.

#### 9. The Fall Board Meeting

The fall meeting will be held on September 23-25 at McLean, Virginia.

Some of the subjects to be discussed at the meeting are:

- . Discussions of the methods by which candidates can demonstrate equivalence to certain eligibility requirements, e.g., a physical science minor when possessing a degree in the life sciences or the possible equivalence of a physical science or engineering major when possessing a non-science degree.
- . Policy on the candidate's option to postpone exam retakes.
- . Proposal by PES that Part II of the exam be a multiple choice or other similar exam format. One major advantage of such an exam is that it would be machine gradeable which would greatly relieve the exam panel of its grading effort. With the dramatic increase in the number of Part II applicants (up a factor of 2 in 2 years) this time burden on the individual panel members is already excessive. A major drawback of the PES proposal is that the exam cost would have to be doubled, or more.

#### 10. Timeliness of Board Action

The Board receives many comments, complaints, queries, etc., regarding delays, response times, lost applications, etc. Some of this is simply caused by the multiple handling of such requests and the nature of this volunteer effort. Expected turnaround time for some items will be at least 2-3 months. Items that must be addressed by the Board as a whole must wait for the next meeting.

In the case of renewal applications this year, the applications are accumulated in the Secretariat offices for 4-6 weeks, are pre-processed by Nancy Johnson, and then are forwarded to the Vice Chairman for review. Once they are returned, the individual letters with the renewal seal have to be generated. We expect this turnaround time will be on the order of 4 months. This batch mode of processing is primarily for efficiency, i.e., economy.

The Secretariat is instituting a procedure of acknowledging receipt of all applications. If, in the future, you do not receive such an acknowledgement in several weeks, please make a followup query.