

PROSPECTUS FOR THE AMERICAN BOARD OF HEALTH PHYSICS



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Information regarding requirements for certification, examination procedures and fees, and application materials are available on the ABHP website listed below.

Additional information is available from:

ABHP (American Board of Health Physics)

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AMERICAN BOARD OF HEALTH PHYSICS

History

Shortly after its organization in 1955, the Health Physics Society established a 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 (ABHP or, i.e., the Board) be established to develop standards and procedures, to examine candidates, and to issue proof of certification to individuals who have satisfied the requirements established by the Board. The Board of Directors of the Society decided that these recommendations had merit and appointed a temporary American Board of Health Physics on 8 November 1958.

The temporary ABHP developed a set of minimum requirements for certification after carefully reviewing the professional background of 100 selected individuals believed to be representative of those recognized as competent health physicists and submitted them to the membership of the Society for comment. At the Annual Meeting of the Society in June 1959, the matter was discussed in an open meeting and there was general support for the plan. The Board of Directors of the Society formally established the ABHP as an independent organization by approving an amendment to the By-Laws of the Society on 29 October 1959.

The ABHP was incorporated in the State of New York in December 1960 as a non-profit educational body. The Board has eight members, with each member serving a five-year term.

A certification renewal program was established by the Board in 1977 to ensure the continued professional development of Certified Health Physicists (CHPs). In 1978 the Board offered a specialty certification in power reactor health physics which was discontinued in 1993.

In 1985, the American Academy of Health Physics (AAHP) was formed and incorporated as a separate entity in 1988. The primary purpose of the Academy is to establish an organization which permits the direct input of Certified Health Physicists

into the selection of Board members and to the ongoing program of the Board. In 1994, the corporate structures of the ABHP and the AAHP were consolidated under the AAHP.

Purpose of the Board

The purpose of the ABHP is to:

1. Elevate the standards and advance the profession of health physics by encouraging its study and improving its practice.
2. Encourage and insist on the highest standards of professional ethics and integrity in the practice of health physics.
3. Determine the competence of professional health physicists and arrange, control, and conduct investigations and examinations to evaluate the qualifications of voluntary candidates for certification by the Board.
4. Grant and issue certificates in the field of health physics to qualified applicants and maintain a registry of holders of such certificates.
5. Sponsor a Certification Renewal Program, including issuance of “recertified” seals to qualified CHPs who have demonstrated their continued professional involvement in health physics.

Meaning of Certification

Certification indicates that the recipient has completed certain requirements of study and professional experience, which the Board considers to constitute an adequate foundation in health physics and has passed an examination designed to test competence in this field. Holders of ABHP certification may identify themselves as either Certified Health Physicists (CHP) or Diplomates of the American Board of Health Physics (DABHP). It should be recognized that the certificate awarded by the Board is not a license and, therefore, does not confer a legal qualification to practice health physics.

Professional Responsibilities of Certified Health Physicists

In achieving certification, the CHP recognizes and assumes the responsibilities due to the profession of health physics. To uphold the professional integrity of health physics implied by certification, the relations of the CHP with other individuals and groups, including clients, colleagues, governmental agencies, and the public, will always be based upon and reflect the highest standards of professional ethics and integrity. Each CHP has a professional and ethical

obligation to practice only in those areas in which they are competent. To maintain technical competence, the CHP has a commitment to remain professionally active in the field of health physics and knowledgeable of scientific, technical, and regulatory developments in the field.

Professional Health Physics Experience

Professional HP experience must be clearly documented by applicants and must clearly show how it meets the criteria below:

- establishing and/or evaluating a radiation protection program
- designing and/or evaluating the design of a facility's radiation safety program
- designing and implementing a health physics training course or program
- designing an experimental and/or measurement program to answer a health physics question
- evaluating and then applying radiation protection/ health physics principles from measured data
- providing a comprehensive solution to a given problem in health physics
- preparing and implementing radiation protection regulations at a facility

Applicants must ensure that their experience is distinguishable from technician level experience. For example, the act of taking a measurement, but not evaluating the results of that measurement and implementing the appropriate actions for that measurement is considered technician level experience, which does not count toward the professional experience requirements for health physics certification. Supervisory experience can count as professional health physics experience if the candidate was required to exert judgment in radiation protection program implementation and guide technicians who complete surveys, job coverage and routine technician work.

The Certification Examination

The certification examination consists of two Parts: Part I and Part II. The Part I Panel of Examiners is responsible for the Part I exam and the Part II Panel of Examiners is responsible for the Part II exam. The overall certification process is the responsibility of the ABHP. It is the candidate's responsibility to *clearly* document how they meet all the requirements to sit for each exam in their application.

An applicant may not be approved to take Part II of the exam unless they have taken and passed Part I of the exam, or they are applying to take both parts of the exam in the same exam year.

After passing one part of the examination, the applicant must pass the other part **within a period of seven years**, or retake both parts. For example, a candidate passing one part of the examination in 2025 must pass the second part of the examination no later than 2032.

Anyone who meets the education and experience requirements and is practicing health physics in a competent and ethical manner is strongly urged to apply to the Board for admission to the examination. Although satisfactory performance on the examination is not the only requirement for certification, people who are admitted to and who perform well on the examination usually receive certification by the Board. Detailed requirements for candidate applications and application approvals by the ABHP for each exam part are given below.

Requirements to Take Part I of the Certification Examination

Purpose: Part I of the examination is constructed to test the knowledge of the fundamental aspects of health physics expected of a well-prepared and knowledgeable early career health physicist. Academic preparation alone may not be adequate to answer these questions, however, a well-prepared candidate without direct practical experience should still be capable of successfully passing Part I of the certification examination.

Exam Preparation: Each exam is carefully prepared and reviewed by the Part I Panel to ensure that it covers the five domains of practice presented in the Examination Preparation Guide (located on the AAHP-ABHP website).

Availability of Accommodations: The amount of time available to the candidates for taking the Part I examination will be three (3) hours unless additional time is allowed for candidates approved for reasonable accommodations that are appropriate given the purpose of the test. A disabled candidate for the Part I exam who desires a reasonable accommodation for exam-taking has the responsibility to make the request by completing the ABHP Application for Exam Accommodations Form (on the AAHP-ABHP website) and providing the specified documentation. After ABHP's review of this request, the candidate will receive a letter with ABHP's specifying awarded accommodations. All candidates will receive a determination no later than two weeks prior to the exam.

Academic Requirements: As a minimum, the applicant must submit evidence in their application (for example, official college transcripts or certified translations of official transcripts directly from the educational institution(s)) of earning a bachelor's or graduate degree from an accredited* college or university in physical science or engineering or in a biological science with a minimum of 20 semester hours in physical science**.

Except for applicants for early admission to the Part I exam (see paragraph below), applicants will satisfy and document all requirements for degrees claimed by the time application is made to take the Part I exam.

*An accredited college is considered to be a post-secondary institution recognized by an authorized, independent agency for meeting specific, high-quality educational standards. It ensures that the school's faculty, curriculum, and services meet rigorous academic benchmarks, validating the institution's credibility and facilitating student credit transfers, employment eligibility, and access to federal financial aid.

**Physical Sciences are considered to be sciences encompassing the study of non-living systems and include key branches such as physics, chemistry, astronomy and Earth Sciences. Other sciences may be included in this definition including materials and computer sciences.

Early Admission to the Part I Exam: Applicants for early admission to the Part I exam who have not received their degree at the time of application, but who are scheduled to be granted their qualifying degree by 30 June of the exam year, may sit for the examination by providing an official transcript showing current degree progress by the application deadline. However, an official transcript demonstrating that the qualifying degree was granted no later than June 30 of the year of the exam must be received by the Secretariat no later than two weeks after taking the exam to ensure receipt before the ABHP exam validation process begins. Should confirmatory transcripts not be received in this time frame, the candidate's examination score will be voided, and the candidate's exam fees will not be refunded.

The purpose of early admission to Part I of the examination is twofold: (1) to give recent graduates an opportunity to demonstrate competence in the fundamentals of health physics at the beginning of their careers, and (2) to encourage younger health physicists to proceed toward certification.

Experience Requirements: Except for the case of early admission to the Part I exam as stated above, applicants are admitted to Part I of the examination if they (1) have fulfilled the academic requirements for the master's degree in health physics or a closely related field (e.g. radiation science, nuclear engineering, medical physics, industrial hygiene, etc.) with no experience required or (2) have received a bachelor's degree in health physics and have one year of professional health physics experience at the time of the examination, or (3) have another acceptable bachelor's degree and two years of professional health physics experience at the time of the examination. An acceptable bachelor's degree includes physical science, engineering, or biological sciences with at least 20 semester hours in physical science.

Application for Certification Form, College Transcripts, and Immediate Supervisor Form:

To be eligible to sit for Part I examination, candidates must apply for Certification, original college transcripts and one Immediate Supervisor form. In addition to the academic and experience documentation described above, applications for the Part I exam will also include an Immediate Supervisor Form. The supervisor form should augment the description of professional HP experience as described by the applicant. The supervisor does not have to be a certified health physicist. An immediate family member may be listed as the applicant's supervisor for the Part I exam. The Part I examination must be taken during the calendar year of notification of eligibility, or a new application must be submitted. Applicable fees are shown below. Candidates, please note the Part I exam requires an additional site examination fee which is not included in the application fee nor the examination registration fee. The deadline to submit a complete application will be the third Friday of January of the exam year. A complete application means all required information has been provided including transcripts and the Immediate Supervisor form.

Exam Administration: The Part I exam is computer based and consists of 150 multiple choice questions given over three hours. The exam is administered at testing centers worldwide over a week-long period prior to the Annual Meeting of the Health Physics Society.

Part I candidates will be sent information early in the calendar year to schedule an appointment at a convenient testing center location. These Part I testing centers will typically provide a calculator program on the testing center computer. As such, candidates may not bring their own calculators to Part I. Candidates should confirm this with their testing center prior to taking the exam. To pass Part I, the candidate must typically answer at least 95 questions correctly.

An applicant may not be approved to take Part II of the exam unless they have taken and passed Part I of the exam, or they are applying to take both parts of the exam in the same exam year.

Part I Exam Grading and Question Review Process

The Part I exam is taken on and graded by computer to obtain a candidate's raw score. No official pass/fail results will be given to the candidates at this time, however a preliminary pass/fail report may be printed by the test center and handed to the candidate at the end of their exam. Review of exam results for all candidates and notification of official grades will take place, thereafter, as described below.

After the exam testing period, exam statistics are reviewed by the Panel and question performance is assessed. The Panel, at their discretion, may remove a question from the exam. Once this review is complete, the Panel decides on the exam's passing grade (typically around 95 correct questions out of 150) and submits their exam evaluation to the Board. The Board then reviews these results and Secretariat sends out letters to the candidates with the official score and informing them if they passed the exam. For candidates who did not pass the exam, the letter will inform them of their total exam score and their overall score in each of the five domains of practice.

Requirements to Take Part II of the Certification Examination

Purpose: The Part II exam is the second certification exam and is designed to evaluate the applicant's professional competence in applied health physics topics.

Availability of Accommodations: A disabled candidate who desires a reasonable accommodation for exam-taking has the responsibility to make the request by completing the ABHP Application for Exam Accommodations Form (on the AAHP-ABHP website) and providing the specified documentation. After ABHP's review of this request, you will receive a letter with ABHP's specifying awarded accommodation. Accommodation may be based on time (e.g. candidate given 50% longer to take the exam; in this case the accommodation factor would be 1.5). All candidates will receive a determination no later than two weeks prior to the exam.

For candidates with ADA accommodations that include extended examination time, the Part II Exam will be administered over two days. The first day will consist of the Core Exam and the second day will consist of the Specialty Exam, with time limits adjusted according to the candidate's approved accommodation.

Academic Requirements: Applicants for the Part II exam must have a bachelor's degree in an acceptable field; or a master's degree in health physics or a closely related field; or a doctoral degree in health physics or a closely related field. Acceptable and closely related fields are described above in the section on "Requirements to Take Part I Examination".

Experience Requirements. An applicant must have at least six years of responsible professional health physics experience as of 1 July of the year in which the examination is to be taken. At least three years of the experience must be in applied health physics. At the discretion of the Board, advanced degrees in health physics or a closely related area of study may be substituted

in total for a maximum of two years of the required experience. A master's degree may be substituted for one year of experience OR a doctoral degree may be substituted for two years of the required experience. With respect to military service, only commissioned officer and warrant officer grades can meet the Part II professional health physics experience.

An applicant may claim professional health physics experience for an advanced degree and work experience for the same period, however, that candidate can only claim a maximum of one year of total experience in any single calendar year. Work experience that occurs during academic study may count if the work is not part of the degree program (e.g., a required internship or research would not count for work experience). These stipulations limit the substitution of an academic degree for the required professional health physics experience to no more than the maximum of two years as stated in the above paragraph. Counting both an advanced degree and work performed as part of that degree program as required professional health physics experience is not allowed.

It is incumbent upon the applicant to demonstrate that they have met the criteria for professional health physics experience stated above. Professional health physics experience is generally considered to be acquired after earning a qualifying degree. However, the ABHP recognizes there may be cases where individuals are working at a professional level prior to completing the requirements for a qualifying degree.

Reference Requirements. References are required from the applicant's supervisor and from at least two other individuals who are professionally qualified to evaluate the applicant's ability in health physics. Your supervisor may not be used as a professional reference. Professional references are required to state that they have reviewed the entire application. All three references must be different individuals.

With respect to your professional references, at least one of the two professional references, or your supervisor, must be certified by ABHP and a member in good standing of the AAHP, although at the discretion of the ABHP Chair, a professional reference, or your supervisor, certified by another, related, certifying board, may be acceptable. If you wish to have a professional reference certified by an alternative, but related, board, it is suggested that you first contact the ABHP Chair. If a professional reference does not provide a recommendation for having the candidate take the exam (suggests the candidate is not qualified or otherwise not recommended), the application will be forwarded to the ABHP Chair for a decision.

Please note that immediate family members may be listed as the candidate's supervisor, but they may not be used as professional references.

Written Radiation Protection Report Requirements. Candidates applying for Part II of the ABHP exam are required to submit a written report demonstrating that they have produced professional level work in health physics. To meet this requirement, this professional report must address each of the following four criteria:

- 1) It must be a report on a health physics topic, such as those included in the CHP exam.
- 2) The report must demonstrate an in-depth knowledge of health physics.
- 3) The report must demonstrate either:
 - a. ability to independently develop acceptable judgements in health physics and to apply appropriate decision making based on those judgements, or
 - b. ability to independently develop an acceptable health physics program and to apply the appropriate knowledge and decision making to properly enact that program, or
 - c. ability to design a health physics project and collect and analyze its relevant data (including appropriate statistical analyses) and determine if the project's goal or hypothesis is met.
- 4) The report must be performed and written solely or principally by the candidate.

In short, an acceptable professional report will answer each of the following questions:

- What health physics related problem is the candidate trying to solve?
- What health physics knowledge is required to solve it?
- What is the health physics goal or hypothesis of this work?
- What information or health physics data was collected to help solve that problem?
- Did the candidate either:
 - o Use that information/data to develop an appropriate set of actions to solve that problem?
 - o Use that information/data to develop a new health physics program?
 - o Perform a comprehensive study to collect, analyze and develop conclusions based on the information/data?
- Is the candidate the primary or sole author of this work in its entirety*?

** **NOTE:** If you are not the sole author of this work, then you will be required to obtain your coauthor's signatures endorsing your role as a primary author.*

Given the information above, here are examples of report topics that would NOT meet the ABHP requirement for professional level health physics work:

- A radiation survey, contamination, or radiological sample analysis record (it doesn't demonstrate your ability to analyze data and develop appropriate health physics conclusions or actions based on that analysis).
- A radiation work permit created using a set of existing work instructions or template (it doesn't demonstrate your ability to develop appropriate health physics judgement and apply reasonable decisions based on that judgment)

- A license application or ALARA review designed based on a regulatory guide (it doesn't demonstrate your ability to develop a professional program in health physics and apply your health physics knowledge to enact that program)
- A radiation worker training program that restates definitions and basic safety requirements (it doesn't demonstrate in-depth knowledge of health physics)
- The creation of a database or program to record health physics related information (it doesn't demonstrate your ability to evaluate information and develop appropriate health physics actions based on it.)
- The creation of a program to calculate health physics related data (it doesn't demonstrate your ability to analyze the resulting data and develop appropriate conclusions based on that analysis)
- A thesis or dissertation that is a topic chosen by your advisor, is a continuation of your advisor's work, and the experiment methodology already is in place or is primarily based on pre-existing procedures (you are not the primary author of this work, and this work doesn't demonstrate your ability to design a health physics project)

Detailed guidance and requirements for an acceptable Radiation Protection Report are given in the Part II exam application form in Prolydian.

Your submitted Radiation Protection Report must be unclassified and approved for public release; it may be redacted, if necessary, to achieve this. If the report is excessively redacted and cannot be assessed for compliance with requirements, ABHP may request a new report.

After examining the radiation protection report and if there is enough time before the submittal deadline, the Board may request an additional report if the submitted report was judged to not meet these criteria. If a professional report is rejected, a new or revised report must be submitted to be considered for the current exam year. Resubmissions must be received within 30 days of the request, or by the application deadline, whichever is later. All reports will be treated as confidential material. All reports submitted in fulfillment of this requirement will be reviewed by an ABHP member. Third-party review of written reports is typically not acceptable but is allowed under extraordinary circumstances. The Chair, and other board members as appointed by the chair, will make determinations in this regard.

To be eligible to sit for the Part II examination, candidates must apply for Certification, and submit original college transcripts, one Immediate Supervisor form, two Confidential Professional Reference forms, and a Radiation Protection Report and cover sheet. The deadline to submit a complete application will be the third Friday of January of the exam year. A complete application means all required information has been provided including transcripts and references. The Part II examination must be taken during the calendar year of notification of eligibility, or a new application must be submitted.

Exam Administration: Part II examinations are given on one day only each year. Part II examinations are conducted at the location of the Society's meeting and may also be given at other selected locations if demand warrants. All approved Part II candidates will be sent a site selection survey in early April listing the tentative examination sites. Part II candidates should indicate their first and second choices of location and will be assigned to their first choice unless that site does not have enough candidates to warrant the examination being given at that location. All Part II candidates will be notified of their definite examination site approximately 45 days prior to the examination date and will be given an admission slip to the examination room. No reference materials may be brought into the examination room.

This exam is held over 6 hours and calculators may be brought to the test site and used during the Part II exam. No recording or transmitting devices are permitted, and all calculators with "constant" memories must be demonstrated to contain no stored constants (other than pi or e) or stored programs.

Candidates must score at least 469 points out of a possible 700 points (or typically about 67%) to pass Part II exam. However, any candidate who fails to receive a minimum of 300 points weighted (out of 700 available points) on the Part II examination will have to wait one year before being allowed to sit again for the Part II examination. For example, a candidate who is in the 5th year of eligibility and receives < 300 points must wait until the 7th year of eligibility to retake the exam. This requirement does not apply to candidates in their final year of eligibility, seven years post passing the Part I examination*. Each attempt at the exam requires a new application with the application fee and the examination registration fee both paid.

**After passing one part of the examination, the applicant must pass the other part within a period of seven years, or retake both parts.*

Part II Exam Grading Process

Grading of the Part II exam is based on meticulous protocols. A team of three graders is assigned to independently grade all parts of each question. Each grader follows the same detailed grading criteria and a stock solution to the question, both designed to ensure consistency.

The Grading Group Leader reviews grading results and arranges for a meeting among the graders to resolve any significant differences. Results for the three graders for each question for each candidate are reviewed and reconciled where the standard deviation is greater than 10 points.

It is estimated that a total of about 2,000 hours of effort is required to develop, review, administer, grade, and analyze results of the Part II exam. For this reason, only one Part II exam can be given each year.

Unsuccessful candidates may appeal their score by contacting the Executive Director within six months of notification of results. The Appeals Committee will review the appeal to determine whether the ABHP followed its policies and procedures.

Requests For Additional Information

In addition to the Radiation Protection Report discussed above, the ABHP member reviewing the application may request additional or clarifying information from the applicant during the review process. For the information to be considered for the current exam year, it must be received within 30 days of the request, or by the application deadline, whichever is later. The request for additional information will not be made after March 15 of the exam year.

Application Process and Fees

The Application for Certification process is web-based and can be found at <https://app.prolydian.com/organizations/abhp>. On this web page, candidates should establish an account in Prolydian to begin the exam/certification application process. Even though applications are completed online, original college transcripts must be mailed to the Secretariat and postmarked by the application deadline. All applicants are expected to use the web-based application process. Limited exceptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis; contact the Executive Director for further information.

Applications are only valid for one year. Thereafter, a new application, including reference and report forms, must be submitted. Current Part I and Part II application fees, exam registration fees, CHP Annual Maintenance and Certification Replacement fees, and the Part I site examination fee are as follows:

Application Fee – Part I Exam	\$100.00
Registration Fee – Part I Exam	\$150.00
Application Fee – Part II Exam	\$250.00
Registration Fee – Part II Exam	\$500.00
Annual Maintenance Fee for CHPs	\$175.00
Site Examination Fee – Part I Exam	Variable
CHP Replacement Certificate	\$75.00

Examination fees are non-refundable, and examinations must be taken within one year of submitting fees.

NOTE: Re-examination fees following failure of the examination will be in accordance with the fee schedule in effect at the time reapplication is made.

Final Action of the Board on Application for Certification

The final action of the Board regarding application for Certification is based on its evaluation of the total professional record of the applicant, i.e., education and experience, the achievements attained in health physics and related fields, maturity of judgment, the ethical nature of their professional conduct as indicated by associates and peers, and the examination. Any applicant denied certification may appeal the action of the Board by contacting the Executive Director within six months of notification of results. The Appeals Committee will review the appeal to determine whether the ABHP followed its policies and procedures.

Re-Examinations and Postponements

A candidate who fails or elects to postpone an examination must re-apply for eligibility for any future attempts. Exam applications are only valid for the year they are approved. Each attempt at the exam requires a new application with the application fee and the examination registration fee both paid.

Certification Renewal

A Certification Renewal Program is sponsored by the Board in an effort to ensure that CHPs are fulfilling their professional responsibilities and to encourage continued professional development. To remain on the list of active CHPs, diplomats must renew their certification every four years. The requirements for continued active certification are: (1) to be engaged substantially and currently in professional health physics practice and/or the management of those in professional health physics; (2) to have earned during the preceding four-year period sufficient continuing education credits by participation in approved courses, meetings, and other activities; and (3) to have met such other requirements, including payment of fees or assessments, as may generally be imposed. The Continuing Education Committee of the AAHP reviews courses in advanced health physics and related subjects that are submitted to it by the

course organizers, or by a CHP who attended the course, and determines the number of continuing education credits to be awarded to participants.

Revocation of Certificate

Certificates may be revoked for actions considered by the Board to be in violation of the statement “Standards of Professional Responsibility for CHPs.” Any person for whom such action is contemplated has the right of appearance before the Board.

Changes in Requirements

Current requirements, procedures, and fees of the ABHP are described in this Prospectus. These are subject to change without notice; however, changes will be published before their effective date whenever practical. No changes will be retroactive.

ABHP Administration

The ABHP retains the services of an Executive Director who maintains the national ABHP office. The Executive Director performs administrative functions including normal correspondence, accounting, bookkeeping, financial reporting, recordkeeping, and application processing for examinations and Certification Renewals.

Current Officers, Board Members and Panel Members are listed on the website of the American Board of Health Physics. This site (www.aahp-abhp.org) has additional information including an examination preparation guide.