



**American Board of Forensic Odontology, Inc.**  
c/o Certification and Examination Committee  
[C&EChair@abfo.org](mailto:C&EChair@abfo.org)

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**APPLY**  
**QUALIFICATIONS AND APPLICATION**  
(Application information is at bottom of page)

**1. General Qualifications:**

- A. Applicants must be persons of good moral character, high integrity, good repute, and must possess high ethical and professional standards.
- B. Applicants must possess a DDS, DMD or equivalent dental degree from an accredited institution.

**2. Professional Education and Experience**

- A. Applicants must have:
  - 1. Attended a minimum of four (4) annual meetings of a national forensic/forensic dental organization. No more than one annual meeting can be claimed per year. Additional meetings attended can be claimed for extra point accumulation as described below.
  - 2. Participated in a minimum of two annual programs of a national forensic/forensic dental organization approved by the ABFO Examination and Certification (C&E) Committee. The participation may include presentation of papers, acting as a moderator, panelist on the program, or activities as a chairman or member of a committee of the AAFS, odontology section. Evidence of these achievements must be documented in a form acceptable to the C&E Committee.
- B. Applicants must be currently active and formally affiliated with a medical/legal agency such as a medical examiner/coroner's office, law enforcement agency, insurance agency, federal dental service or mass disaster team for a minimum period of two (2) years.
- C. Applicants must have observed a minimum of five (5) complete medico-legal autopsies attested to by the pathologist in charge.
- D. Applicants must perform a minimum of thirty-two (32) legitimate forensic dental cases. These cases must include the following:
  - 1. A minimum of twenty (20) human identification cases, fifteen (15) of which have resulted in positive dental identification. The applicant must have personally resected, or surgically exposed, the jaws in at least five (5) cases, and personally taken the post-

mortem radiographs in at least ten (10) of the cases. The ABFO Dental Identification Workshop may count for up to five (5) identifications.

- a. Jaw surgical exposures/resections or facial dissection performed in conjunction with a multiple fatality incident (i.e. DMORT, state or military ID team deployment) may qualify toward this requirement only if the required procedures were under the supervision of an ABFO Diplomate and/or the Medical Examiner/Coroner (ME) in charge and are confirmed in writing by this individual. Multiple Fatality Incident (MFI) cases may **not** be included to fulfill the human identification or postmortem radiographic case requirements listed above.
- b. *Note: Applicants whose Medical Examiner/Coroner's facility discourages jaw resections or completes jaw resections using non-dental personnel, should either personally seek permission to complete the required number of resections on appropriate cases, or request mentorship in another jurisdiction/facility where he/she might meet this requirement.*

2. Dental Age Estimation (DAE) cases

- a. A Candidate shall have been the primary investigator in five (5) DAE cases.
  - b. The five cases must include at least one case from each of the three categories below:
    - i. Infant/Child Dental Age Interval: That interval in human dental development that includes the postnatal presence of the developing and resorbing primary dentition including the period of mixed primary and secondary dentitions.
    - ii. Adolescent Dental Age Interval: That interval in human dental development that includes the presence of the developed and developing secondary dentition. Retained primary teeth may also be present as a special circumstance during this interval.
    - iii. Adult Dental Age Interval: That interval in human dental development where all teeth present have completed crown/root development and are therefore considered dentally mature.

The remaining two cases can be from any of the dental age categories.

- c. A minimum of one (1) of the five (5) cases shall be from the candidate's own casework.
- d. A minimum of one (1) of the five (5) cases shall be from the ABFO Age Estimation Workshop or from the ABFO Age Estimation Repository.\*\*
- e. DAE cases from ABFO Age Estimation Workshops (or other approved workshops) may be submitted toward the requirement.
  - i. No more than three (3) DAE cases from ABFO Workshops (or other approved workshops) shall be considered as counting toward the five (5) required DAE cases.

- ii. Only one workshop case from each of the age groups listed in 2.b. shall be considered.
- iii. The candidate must show proof that the case(s) submitted from workshops were completed to the satisfaction of the workshop faculty.
- f. DAE cases from the ABFO Age Estimation Repository may be submitted toward the requirement.
  - b. A maximum of two (2) repository cases may be used to meet the minimum case experience requirement in DAE.
  - c. A repository case may not be considered as a case from the candidate's own casework.
- 3. Persons applying for ABFO board certification must provide evidence that they have completed four (4) current or historical bitemark cases in which a minimum of one pattern or patterned injury was analyzed and determined to be a human bitemark with sufficient evidentiary value for comparison. For these four (4) cases each bitemark with sufficient evidentiary value was compared to the questioned dentition of a minimum of one (1) person of interest. One of those four (4) cases must have been an ABFO bitemark repository case that includes analysis of the pattern(s) and comparisons to the questioned dentitions of multiple persons of interest. Having taken and passed an ABFO Bitemark Workshop fulfills the requirements for having completed two (2) bitemark cases and fulfills the bitemark repository case requirement.
- 4. The remaining three (3) cases can be human identification, bitemark analysis, malpractice/personal injury, human abuse, peer review or age estimation cases.
- 5. The applicant must have provided sworn testimony in court or through sworn deposition in two (2) identification, bitemark or civil litigation cases involving forensic odontology. The applicant must provide copies of the transcripts. The ABFO Civil Litigation Workshop may count towards one (1) case of sworn testimony.

*Note: All claimed forensic cases must be submitted on the **ABFO Summary of Forensic Cases** form with all appropriate columns completed. The ABFO C&E Committee determines the acceptability of each case. Candidates are encouraged to submit cases in excess of the minimum number of thirty-two (32) in the event some cases are rejected by the C&E committee.*

- E. One (1) identification, one (1) dental age estimation and one (1) bitemark case in which the applicant was the primary investigator must be **electronically** submitted with complete documentation including forensic dental reports, copies of all comparative material (i.e. photographs, radiographs and other appropriate work products applicable to the case). **The stone study models used in the bitemark cases must also be submitted.** These should be significant and challenging cases that best demonstrate the applicant's knowledge, methodology and capabilities. **Cases undertaken as part of ABFO Workshops or the ABFO Test Cases are not acceptable for these three submissions.** All submitted materials become the property of the

ABFO and will not be returned. This requirement shall be subject to waiver by the ABFO only under unusual circumstances such as litigation in progress or military restrictions.

- F. Applicants must present additional evidence of forensic dental activity. The activities are calculated on the basis of a point system. A minimum of three hundred fifty (350) points is required. Activities and accomplishments in fulfillment of section A or B cannot be reclaimed for point credits in this section. It is the responsibility of each applicant to submit documentation of all accomplishments claimed for point credit. The acceptability and ultimate assignment of points will be at the discretion of the C&E Committee. It is advisable that the candidate submit at least enough material to accumulate three hundred fifty (350) points, as follows:
1. Twenty (20) points for each authentic forensic dental case in excess of the Thirty-five (35) obligatory cases. The maximum number of cases that will be considered for point credit in this area is five (5), for a maximum of one hundred (100) points.
  2. Twenty (20) points per additional court deposition or testimony. Transcripts must accompany the application. The maximum number of transcripts that will be considered for extra point credit in this category is five (5), for a maximum of one hundred (100) points.
  3. One (1) point per hour for attendance at a formal, institutional, elective or continuing education course in forensic dentistry; or a formal scientific session at an annual meeting of a nationally recognized forensic science organization. These points are accrued in addition to the mandatory four (4) meetings. Certificates or other verification of course attendance must be submitted. A maximum of one hundred (100) points can be claimed in this area.
  4. Twenty-five (25) points for presenting an original lecture or laboratory demonstration at a formal session of a recognized forensic science organization, dental association meeting, or institutional course in forensic dentistry. Abstracts, course brochures or other verification are to be supplied to the C&E Committee for point credit. A maximum of one hundred (100) points can be claimed in this area.
  5. Up to fifty (50) points for the acceptance or publication as principal author of a forensic dental article in a refereed scientific journal, electronic journal posting or textbook, with a reprint or copy sent to the C&E Committee. The determination of the point count will be made by the C&E Committee based upon the nature and content of the article and the journal in which it was published. A maximum of twenty-five (25) points will be awarded for a second article or for an article in which the candidate served as a collaborating author, both of which must be accepted or published in a refereed journal or textbook.
  6. Twenty (20) points per year for a formal affiliation with a recognized medical/legal agency beyond the mandatory two (2) years. An affidavit from the authorized agent must be included. A maximum of sixty (60) points may be claimed in this category.

7. Forty (40) points maximum for the organization of, or participation in a Mass Fatality Incident (MFI) training exercise or event, mass disaster team membership or symposium. The points are to be divided as follows: twenty-five (25) points for organizing and directing the exercise; one (1) point per hour for attending the exercise, (up to a maximum of fifteen (15) points).

Twenty-five (25) points for being the chairperson of an odontology committee, or ten (10) points for serving on an odontology committee of a recognized forensic organization or similar committee of a local, state or federal dental organization acceptable to the C&E Committee. Maximum point count of one hundred (100).

### 3. APPLICATION PROCESS FOR ABFO CERTIFICATION

An application may be obtained from the ABFO website ([www.abfo.org](http://www.abfo.org)) when a candidate believes that she/he has met all the requirements outlined in the *ABFO Diplomate's Reference Manual* to become "Examination Eligible". The completed application must be submitted to the ABFO Certification & Examination Committee Chair, [C&EChair@abfo.org](mailto:C&EChair@abfo.org). **All application information and supporting documents must be submitted in English.**

The C&E Committee will evaluate the application to determine if the requirements have been properly met and whether or not the candidate may proceed to challenge the Certification Examination.

There are annual documentation deadlines and fees associated with the certification process. The current deadlines and fees are listed below; however, they are subject to change and the official and final list can be found in the *DRM* as well as on the ABFO Website (<http://www.ABFO.org>) within the document entitled 4. Procedure for Application and Certification under "application documents" of the "apply" tab.

The ABFO Certification Examination consists of three (3) parts. **All aspects of the examination are written or spoken in English. All responses are required to be in English.** Part I is a written computer examination. This timed exam consists of over 200 multiple-choice and true-false questions drawn from a large pool of ABFO approved questions. There are ten subject areas of forensic odontology science and practice that are tested in Part I of the Certification Exam. A test subject legend for Part I can be found on the ABFO website. The candidate must attain a passing score of 70% or better in *each* one of the ten subject categories. If one or more of the sections is not passed in the first attempt, the candidate may retake the failed section(s) two times. If the candidate does not successfully pass all sections after the third attempts, she/he will be required to start the examination process over and repeat the Part I examination in its entirety. The Part I examination must be taken at a local testing center that provides proctoring. Testing arrangements are made through ORA, Inc. There is a short "sample test" available on the ORA website (<http://www.ORAInc.com>).

Once the candidate has passed Part I, she/he is considered to be "test eligible" (note: *NOT* "board-eligible"), and may apply to take the remainder of the ABFO Certification Examination. This section of the examination consists of three sub-parts: Part II-A: a written exam covering dental identification, Part II-B: a written exam covering bitemark analysis, and Part III: a case based oral examination of each

candidate on materials provided to the candidate on the day of the examination by the ABFO Certification and Examination Committee. The candidate must successfully attain a passing score of 70% in each sub-section, Parts II-A and II-B of this phase of the Certification Examination. Parts II-A and II-B are timed computer examinations taken at a local testing center that provides proctoring. Both Part 2A and II-B must be taken prior a minimum of one week prior to the AAFS Annual Meeting. Part III, the oral examination, will examine the working knowledge of a forensic odontologist and will consist of approximately 30% identification cases, 30% bitemark cases, 15% human abuse cases, 15% age estimation cases, and 10% miscellaneous forensic cases. Part III is administered on the beginning weekend of the AAFS Annual Meeting and awarded only a pass/fail designation. If any one part is not passed, the candidate is allowed up to two attempts at retaking the failed portion(s) of the examination. If all parts are not passed after three attempts, the candidate will be required to start the application process over and must meet any new requirements set forth by the ABFO to become “Examination Eligible”. All testing materials are the property of the ABFO, Inc., and are considered to be confidential intellectual property. Candidates certainly may and are encouraged to study with each other - or with an ABFO Diplomate--but it is expected the Candidate will complete all portions of the examination without inappropriate assistance of any sort and no part of the examination shall be disclosed to anyone in any way.

**Summary of deadlines and fees:**

Dates		Fees (USD)
June 1	<u>Deadline for receipt</u> of COMPLETED application by the ABFO C&E Committee to include supporting documentation	\$400.00
July 1	<u>Deadline for correction</u> of any deficiencies in application documentation	
August 1	Notification to applicant(s) by ABFO of <u>Examination Eligible</u> status	
November 1 ORA <sup>1</sup>	<u>Deadline to successfully pass written examination</u> section in order to take Practical Examination (Parts II-A,II-B and III)	See ORA fees listed below this table
December 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Deadline for receipt of payment for Practical Exam</u> (non-refundable except for medical or catastrophic reasons, in which case \$900 will be refunded pending Certification Examination Committee review)</li> <li>• <u>Deadline for receipt of payment for re-examination of either Part 2A (ID) or Part 2B (Bitemark) Practical</u></li> <li>• <u>Deadline for receipt of payment for re-examination of Part 3, Oral Examination</u></li> <li>• <u>Deadline for receipt of payment for re-examination of Part II-A (ID), Part II-B (Bitemark) and Part III (Oral).</u></li> </ul>	\$1000  \$250 (each)  \$500  \$1000
Feb	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practical Examination Sections II-A and II-B must have been taken by the Friday preceding the AAFS Annual Meeting.</li> <li>• Practical Examination Section III will be administered prior to the AAFS Annual Meeting.</li> </ul>	

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**ORA (Occupational Research and Assessment, Inc.)**

- Original test fee \$150.00 US funds
  - Service fee (initial test) \$20.00
  - Retest fees (on-line if needed, per section) \$50.00 per section
  - Retest fees (hard copy if needed, per section) \$75.00 per section
  - Late registration fee \$75.00 per section
  - Local testing center approx. \$75.00 (estimated)
    - Retest fees are per session required approx. \$75.00 (estimated)
- Arrangements are made by candidate at testing center of their choice*

**ABFO CONTACT**

If a certification candidate encounters difficulties or has questions regarding board certification not covered specifically in this Study Guide they may direct their questions to the ABFO Certification and Education Committee, Chair. [C&EChair@abfo.org](mailto:C&EChair@abfo.org)