

American Board of Comprehensive Care Certification Examination Policies and Procedures Regarding Irregular Behavior

Introduction

The American Board of Comprehensive Care (ABCC) Certification Examination provides a common evaluation system for candidates who hold the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree, are certified as Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRN) in the United States, and seek certification in comprehensive care.

This is a voluntary examination and currently does not affect scope of practice in any state. The following policies and procedures regarding irregular behavior are intended to assure the validity of reported scores.

The following policies and procedures regarding irregular behavior are intended to assure the integrity of the examination system. Policies and procedures for indeterminate scores are described in another document, entitled *ABCC Policies and Procedures Regarding Indeterminate Scores*.

A. Policies

1. *Irregular behavior* includes all actions or attempted actions on the part of candidates, examinees, potential candidates, or others when solicited by a candidate and/or examinee, which would or could subvert the examination process. Examples of irregular behavior include, but are not limited to: failing to comply with any ABCC policy, procedure, and/or rule; seeking and/or obtaining unauthorized access to examination materials; providing false information; impersonating an examinee or engaging a proxy to take the examination; giving assistance to or receiving or obtaining assistance from another individual in answering test items; possessing unauthorized items, equipment or materials during an examination; altering or misrepresenting examination scores; engaging in disruptive or unprofessional behavior at a test center; theft of examination materials; unauthorized reproduction by any means and/or dissemination of copyrighted materials, recording or disclosing any information, including that related to examination content, that may give or attempt to give advantage to individuals who may be taking the examination, etc.
2. If the Examination Committee is advised that an irregular behavior has occurred, they will refer the matter to the Appeals Committee. An annotation to the effect will be entered in the ABCC record of the examinee, and this annotation will appear on applicable score reports and on transcripts for that examinee. Information regarding the decision of the Appeals Committee and the basis for such decision will be provided with ABCC score reports and transcripts and may also be provided to legitimately interested entities.
3. If the Appeals Committee determines that an individual engaged in irregular behavior, the individual may be barred from future administrations of the ABCC certification

examination in the event the irregular behavior is deemed to be egregious and/or deemed to threaten the integrity of the examination system.

B. Procedures

1. After receipt of a report or other information suggesting irregular behavior on the part of an individual, or after acquiring information from statistical analysis, fact investigation, or otherwise, Appeals Committee will evaluate the information and will assess whether there is sufficient evidence of irregular behavior. When indicated and feasible, Appeals Committee will conduct a follow up investigation to gather additional information, including the conduct of additional statistical analyses that are appropriate. If the individual is an examinee, Appeals Committee will also assess whether the suggested irregular behavior would affect the validity of scores.
2. If the follow up analysis and/or follow up investigation referenced above will not be concluded until after the typical period for the reporting of scores, the examinee, and the entity to which scores would normally be reported, will be notified that the reporting of the scores in question is being delayed pending further review and/or analysis.
3. If, at the conclusion of such investigation and analysis of available information, Appeals Committee finds that suggested irregular behavior raises concerns about the validity of scores or that a clearly reasonable and satisfactory explanation for the aberrancy(ies) in performance has not been disclosed, appropriate measures will also be taken in accordance with the *ABCC Procedures Regarding Indeterminate Scores*.
4. If, at the conclusion of such investigation and analysis of available information, Appeals Committee finds that there exists a reasonable basis to conclude that an individual has engaged in irregular behavior, the matter will be referred to the Executive Committee. The scores will be withheld unless and until the Executive Committee decides to release such scores.
5. Evidence relating to the suggested irregular behavior is referred to the Appeals Committee, if the evidence provides a reasonable basis to suspect that any action has been taken or attempted that would or could subvert any part of the examination process. Using the individual's last known address, the individual involved will be advised of the nature of such irregular behavior and will be provided with a copy of the applicable ABCC policies and procedures. The individual will be advised of the information which initiated the investigation and relevant findings of the investigation. The individual will be given an opportunity to provide an explanation for the findings that have been obtained and/or to present other relevant information. The individual may request the opportunity to appear personally before the Appeals Committee. In instances in which the individual involved appears personally before the Appeals Committee, an audio recording may be made of that portion of the proceedings during which the individual is in attendance.
6. All pertinent information, including a description of any statistical analyses employed

and any explanation or other information that the individual may provide, will be presented to the Appeals Committee. The Appeals Committee is authorized to decide whether an irregular behavior has occurred. The Appeals Committee will make a determination based on the information available and the individual will then be notified of the decision. Unless the Appeals Committee decides to conduct a score validity investigation, the individual's score will be released.

If it is determined that irregular behavior has occurred, an annotation to that effect, indicating the nature of the irregular behavior will be entered in the individual's ABCC record. This annotation will appear on the applicable score report and transcripts for the individual. Information regarding a decision of the Appeals Committee and the basis for such decision will be provided when scores for the individual are reported.

7. In instances involving suspected irregular behavior which raise concerns about the validity of the score, the Appeals Committee will follow the *ABCC Procedures Regarding Indeterminate Scores*, and may consider evidence regarding irregular behavior and indeterminate scores jointly.
8. In the event of irregular behavior that is egregious and/or deemed to threaten the integrity of the examination system in the present or at some point in the future, the Appeals Committee may implement special administrative procedures for future examinations and/or may recommend to the ABCC that the individual be barred from future examinations.
9. A decision of the Appeals Committee may be appealed to the Executive Committee if the individual involved has a reasonable basis to believe the Appeals Committee did not act in compliance with applicable ABCC policies and/or procedures or that the decision of such Committee was clearly contrary to the weight of the evidence before it. The request for such an appeal must be received within 30 days of the date on which the notification advising the individual of the Appeals Committee's decision was mailed to the individual. Notice that the matter is the subject of an appeal will be included when the score for the examinee is reported during the pendency of such appeal. A written record, including information available to the Appeals Committee, a transcript of the recording made during the individual's appearance before the Appeals Committee (if there was such an appearance), and the basis for appeal set forth by the individual, will be reviewed by the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors. If the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors determines that the Appeals Committee did not act in compliance with applicable ABCC policies and procedures and/or that the decision of the Appeals Committee was clearly contrary to the weight of the evidence, the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors may reverse the decision of the Appeals Committee or remand the matter to the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors for further consideration. If the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors reverses the decision of the Appeals Committee to annotate the individual's ABCC record, the examinee will be notified of the decision of the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors and provided with an updated transcript. Otherwise, the determination of the Appeals Committee will stand.