American Board for Certification in Orthotics, Prosthetics & Pedorthics, Inc.

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RE: Educational Requirements and Testing Parameters - Orthotics and Prosthetics

The following is the American Board for Certification in Orthotics, Prosthetics and Pedorthics (ABC) response to your request for information concerning our educational requirements and examination parameters. We have formatted our response to match the four questions you sent.

1. *Can you identify and document a date when ABC adopted NCOPE educational standards as the benchmark for its Orthotic and Prosthetic programs?*

The National Commission on Orthotic and Prosthetic Education (NCOPE) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. In 1972, ABC created the Educational Accreditation Commission (EAC) to meet the O&P profession's need for an institutional accreditation program. That same year the EAC set out to establish criteria to assess and compare orthotic and prosthetic (O&P) curricula.

In 1991, the EAC was reorganized and became an independent organization. In December 1999 NCOPE became an incorporated accreditation agency and totally independent from any other O&P organizations. The Corporation is organized and operated for scientific, educational and charitable purposes.

Enclosed are two documents. The first is an Educational Timeline (Appendix A) that shows the transition over time of the educational requirements for the orthotist and prosthetist credentials. As noted above, until 1991 the approval process for O&P educational requirements was a part of ABC's purview. Since that time NCOPE has overseen the accreditation and approval of educational programs. ABC has always required an accredited O&P educational program as a part of its eligibility criteria. The second document is a section of the minutes from a 1993 ABC Board of Directors meeting (Appendix B). In these minutes you will see the vote to approve the requirement of completing an NCOPE accredited residency in lieu of the existing 1900 hours requirement.

2. *Can you identify and document the date when the current ABC testing regimen for certification in Orthotics and Prosthetics was adopted?*

The ABC certification examinations for orthotist and prosthetist have included some form of written and practical tests since the 1950's. In 1992 the Written Simulation examination was added as a requirement for certification. In 2006 the Written and Written Simulation exams transitioned to being administered via a computer based testing (CBT) format. Currently the CBT exams are offered four times each year at approximately 250 testing centers across the country. There are eight testing centers in Ohio that offer the exams. The Clinical Patient Management (CPM) examination is an in-person practical examination that is currently offered twice a year at specific testing sites.

Beginning in 2013 the CBT exams will be offered six times per year and the CPM exam will be offered three times annually. We would be happy to provide references to the administration of our examinations. These would most likely be in the form of Board minutes or copies of ABC publications in the past.

3. *Can you identify and document the Practice Analysis or Job Analysis that was performed from which the current tests were developed?*

The current test specifications for ABC's orthotist and prosthetist certification exams are derived from the *Practice Analysis of Certified Practitioners in the Disciplines of Orthotics and Prosthetics* (Appendix C). This analysis was completed in 2006 and published in 2007. ABC conducts a practical analysis every five to seven years for each credential we offer. The report can be found at:
http://www.abcop.org/certification/OrthotistsProsthetists/Pages/Default.aspx

4. *Is there an entity external to ABC that reviews the ABC O&P exams and determines whether they are appropriate instruments to test for the learning expected to be derived from the NCOPE educational requirements?*

The National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA) is the external agency that accredits ABC's credentialing programs. NCCA's criteria for the accreditation of credentialing programs relates to standards for examination administration consistency and validity. The focus of the NCCA standards is to ensure the appropriateness of each examination – in terms of content coverage and testing emphasis. In point of fact, within the disciplines of both orthotics and prosthetics, the examination content outlines and the NCOPE standards for educational outlines are both guided by large-scale investigations known as practice analysis studies. These studies are routinely performed by ABC and are used to drive the development of examination content outlines. At the same time, educational curricula are evaluated against the descriptions of practice validated by the practice analysis study. As a third party accrediting body, NCCA looks for evidence that ABC's examinations consistently reflect the results of these practice analysis studies.

ABC contracts with Professional Examination Service (PES) for psychometric and test validation services. Their website is, http://www.proexam.org/ PES assists the subject matter experts that sit on our examination committees with statistical analysis, validation activities, individual exam item analysis and standard setting for establishing the passing points for all of our exams. The exam committees meet twice a year to approve the new form of the Written and Written Simulation exams, approve any new questions or modules for the CPM exams, review statistical data from candidate performance on individual exam items, develop new exam items for all of the exams and perform any revisions on existing items based on data from candidate performance.

The *Core Curriculum for Orthotists and Prosthetists* details the requirements for orthotic and prosthetic educational institutions as referenced above. That document can be found at, http://www.ncope.org/assets/pdfs/core_guide_for_masters.pdf

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this information. We believe that ABC's examinations comprehensively assess the knowledge, skills and competencies of orthotic and prosthetic practitioners. We believe our didactic, analytical problem solving and psychomotor testing assessments achieve the ultimate goal of protecting the patients served by orthotic and prosthetic professionals. Please do not hesitate to contact ABC if you have any further questions that we can assist with.

Regards,

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