



Board of Pharmacy Specialties **bps**[®]

2019 Candidate's Guide

Specialty Certification in:

- Ambulatory Care Pharmacy
- Cardiology Pharmacy
- Compounded Sterile Preparations Pharmacy (Fall 2019)
- Critical Care Pharmacy
- Geriatric Pharmacy
- Infectious Diseases Pharmacy
- Nuclear Pharmacy
- Nutrition Support Pharmacy
- Oncology Pharmacy
- Pediatric Pharmacy
- Pharmacotherapy
- Psychiatric Pharmacy

Spring Application Deadline: March 15, 2019

Spring Test Dates: April 22 – May 12, 2019

Fall Application Deadline: August 1, 2019

Fall Test Dates: September 20, 2019 – October 13, 2019



Thank you for your interest in becoming certified in your chosen field of specialty practice. As the delivery of health care becomes more sophisticated and complex, health care providers and the systems where they work will be asked to become even more accountable for the care they deliver. Most importantly, your pursuit of board certification indicates your commitment to your patients and the care that you provide.

For over 40 years, the Board of Pharmacy Specialties has administered board certification examinations for pharmacist specialists. The founding of BPS by APhA in 1976 was the result of a five-year effort, during which the entire profession studied and deliberated specialization in pharmacy practice. Ambulatory Care Pharmacy, Cardiology Pharmacy, Compounded Sterile Preparations Pharmacy, Critical Care Pharmacy, Geriatric Pharmacy, Infectious Diseases Pharmacy, Nuclear Pharmacy, Nutrition Support Pharmacy, Oncology Pharmacy, Pediatric Pharmacy, Pharmacotherapy, and Psychiatric Pharmacy, exist today as pharmacy practice specialties as a direct result of BPS' ongoing collaboration with all segments of the profession.

The Board, with assistance from several professional organizations and their members, has continued to provide vital leadership and support for the recognition of specialties and certification of pharmacist specialists. As a result, BPS and its Specialty Councils are now the principal entities through which these activities are carried out for the pharmacy profession. Each of the Specialty Councils works diligently with our Examination Development and Psychometrics team to ensure that the process is psychometrically sound and defensible. BPS also collaborates with other national organizations and professional societies to promote specialty recognition and board certification to the profession, other health care professionals, employers, and the public.

Through the rigorous standards mandated by BPS board certification and recertification, the Board-certified pharmacist specialist stands out as the most qualified individual to meet today's expanding professional expectations. BPS salutes your commitment to quality patient care.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William M. Ellis".

William M. Ellis, RPh, MS
Executive Director



Board of Pharmacy Specialties • 2215 Constitution Ave., NW • Washington, DC 20037-2985
(202) 429-7591 • FAX: (202) 429-6304 • www.bpsweb.org

BPS Specialty Certification Programs in Ambulatory Care, Geriatric Pharmacy, Nuclear Pharmacy, Nutrition Support Pharmacy, Oncology Pharmacy, Pharmacotherapy and Psychiatric Pharmacy are recognized as accredited certification programs by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA).

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GENERAL INFORMATION

BPS is an independent, non-governmental certification body that develops and administers board-certification examinations in recognized pharmacy practice specialties. BPS was created on January 5, 1976 by the American Pharmaceutical Association (now the American Pharmacists Association, APhA), and exists today as an autonomous division of APhA.

The Board is composed of 12 voting members, including nine pharmacists, six of whom represent BPS specialty practices and three of whom are not board certified. The Board also includes two health care professionals other than pharmacists and one public member. The BPS Executive Director and one member of the APhA Board of Trustees are non-voting Board members, *ex officio*. For a current list of Board of Director members, click [here](#).

BPS has established a Specialty Council for each recognized specialty. Specialty Councils work with the Board to develop and administer psychometrically-sound and legally defensible certification examinations, consistent with public policy regarding the credentialing of health care professionals. A Specialty Council is composed of seven pharmacists certified in the specialty area and two other pharmacists not certified in the specialty area. For a current list of Specialty Council members, click [here](#).

The principal responsibilities of BPS include:

1. To enhance public / consumer protection by developing effective certification programs for specialty practices in pharmacy.
2. To grant recognition of appropriate pharmacy practice specialties based on criteria established by the Board of Pharmacy Specialties.
3. To establish standards for certification and recertification of pharmacist specialists in recognized pharmacy practice specialties.
4. To grant eligible pharmacists certification and recertification in recognized pharmacy practice specialties.
5. To serve as a coordinating agency and informational clearing house for organizations and pharmacists in recognized pharmacy specialties.

Importance of Certification

The primary purpose of specialization in any health care profession is to improve the quality of care individual patients receive, to promote positive treatment outcomes, and ultimately, to improve the patient's quality of life. Specialties evolve in response to the development of new knowledge or technology that can affect patient care. The rapid, dramatic advancement of drug therapy in recent

decades has created a clear need for pharmacy practitioners who specialize in specific kinds of treatment and aspects of care. Specialty certification is a responsible, progressive initiative from the profession to try to ensure the best possible patient care.

Board certification has allowed more pharmacists to participate in collaborative drug therapy management, which is a significant value to patients. Pharmacists certified in a specialty are frequently sought for professional consultations. As the contributions of pharmacists become more recognized, we anticipate greater recognition from public and private payers. Employers and patients can feel secure in knowing that a board-certified pharmacist has taken the initiative to seek advanced specialized training that sets them apart. Certification can also provide a personal reward for pharmacist specialists. Preparing for the certification exam offers an opportunity to increase advanced, specialized knowledge in a practice area. Specialty certification is a means of informing other professionals of the individual's educational and practice accomplishments, setting the specialist apart from colleagues. It is one way to demonstrate advanced knowledge and skills independent of, and in addition to a degree program, license or residency.

Recognition of BPS Certification

BPS-certified pharmacist specialists are recognized for their advanced level of knowledge, skills, and achievement by many government agencies and educational organizations. The following are examples of specific benefits that may be realized by BPS-certified pharmacist specialists:

- U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission: specialists may be recognized as Authorized Nuclear Pharmacists.
- U.S. Department of Defense: specialists may receive bonus pay.
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs: specialists may serve at a higher pay step.
- U.S. Public Health Service: specialists may receive bonus pay.
- California, New Mexico and North Carolina State Boards of Pharmacy: specialists may apply for advanced privileges.
- Increasing numbers of employers are recognizing BPS certified specialists with monetary rewards, promotions or hiring preferences.

OVERVIEW

This Candidate's Guide is intended for use by pharmacists who are interested in being certified as specialists by BPS in any of the BPS-recognized specialty practice areas. This Guide provides information on BPS certification processes: eligibility requirements, application procedures, examination administration, annual certification maintenance, and recertification.

This document is ONLY A GUIDE. The information, procedures, and fees detailed in this publication may be amended, revised, or otherwise altered at any time and without advance notice from BPS. The provision of this Guide does not confer any rights upon an applicant. The information contained in this Guide supersedes information contained in all previous editions of the BPS Candidate's Guide.

All correspondence and requests for information concerning the administration of BPS specialty certification examinations should be directed to:

Board of Pharmacy Specialties
2215 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20037-2985
TEL 202-429-7591 • FAX 202-429-6304
www.bpsweb.org

Non-discrimination Policy

BPS endorses the principles of equal opportunity and non-discrimination. BPS does not discriminate with regard to age, gender, ethnic origin, race, religion, disability, marital status, veteran status, sexual orientation, or any other category protected by federal or state law.

Impartiality Statement

BPS provides objective and balanced certification activities for all applicants, candidates and certified persons. Impartiality is a key component of our business ethics. We adhere to transparent procedures based on ISO 17024, which requires us to monitor our certification activities to avoid any potential threats to impartiality.

Statement of Confidentiality

BPS is committed to protecting confidential or proprietary information related to applicants and certificants, as well as the examination development, maintenance, and administration process. BPS will not disclose any confidential applicant / certificant information outside of the course of BPS business unless authorized in writing by the individual or as required by law.

Examination Results: Individual examination results are considered confidential. Scores are released only to the individual candidate, unless a signed release is provided in advance. Results are not released by phone, fax or e-mail. All personal information submitted by applicants and certificants with their application is considered confidential.

Application Status: An applicant's status is considered confidential. We do not disclose information regarding whether or not an individual has applied for certification (except when verifying practice experience via employment) or has taken the examination. Current certification status is published and verifiable as noted in the Credential Verification section (below).

Credential Verification: The names of currently certified pharmacist specialists are not considered confidential and may be published by BPS. Published information may include name, city, state, country, certification(s) held, and certification status.

BPS Database: Personal information retained within the application/certificant database and/or applicant/certificant files will be kept confidential. This includes information and any documentation regarding a disability and the need for accommodation in testing. With the applicant's/certificant's written permission, BPS shares nonpersonal information with third parties. This information is not considered confidential and may include name, city, state, country, certification(s) held, and certification status.

Record Retention Policy

BPS retains examination results (scores), summary reports from examination administrations, and active applicant data indefinitely. We retain submitted paper documentation for one (1) year. After one (1) year, BPS will shred those documents. Applicants/certificants should retain their own copies of all documentation sent to BPS.

APPLICATION INFORMATION

General Information

All questions pertaining to BPS certification should be directed to BPS staff at info@bpsweb.org or dial 202-429-7591. BPS office hours are Monday through Friday, 8:30am-5:00pm (Eastern Time). The BPS offices are closed on all U.S. Federal holidays.

All applicants must submit their applications online via the BPS website (www.bpsweb.org). A valid credit card is required for payment for online applications. The online application process uses a secure server.

Important Dates

Spring 2019 Examination

Application window:

Monday, January 7th – Friday, March 15th

Testing window:

Monday, April 22nd – Friday, May 12th

Fall 2019 Examination

Application window:

Monday, May 13th – Thursday, August 1st

Testing window:

Friday, September 20th – Sunday, October 13th

Please note the following:

- Candidates can only apply for the testing window during the established application dates.
- The Compounded Sterile Preparations Pharmacy Specialty will be offered for the first time in Fall 2019.

It is the individual's responsibility to submit a complete and accurate application by the [application deadline](#). Incomplete applications will not be processed. All applications are processed within 20 business days of receipt.

Name and/or Address Changes

All applicants are responsible for immediately notifying BPS of any address change (including e-mail) or legal name change.

Notification for admission to the examination, communication of test results, maintenance of certified status and renewal of certification depend on the Board having current information. Any applicant or certificant who legally changes his or her name should immediately notify BPS. Please be advised, that the name you submit with your application must match your current copy of government-issued photo identification with signature (e.g., driver's license, passport, or government-issued identification card). Failure to provide BPS with a name matching your identification may result in a denial to enter the testing center on your scheduled examination date and forfeiture of all application fees.

Please update your [MyBPS](#) profile immediately with changes in information (e.g., mailing address, e-mail address, etc.) to ensure timely communication. Address and name changes made after the mailing of certificates will result in a \$50 USD charge for a duplicate certificate. Name changes that occur after submission of the application must be requested and received no later than 30 days after the [application deadline](#), in order to be updated in time for your examination appointment.

Examination Dates

- The Spring 2019 Testing window is between April 22 – May 12, 2019
- The Fall 2019 Testing window is between September 20– October 13, 2019.

Examination Administration

BPS certification examinations are administered by Prometric, through its affiliated test sites. Candidates may test within scheduled examination administration windows domestically or internationally.

Overview of Steps in Applying for the Examination

Five basic steps are required to apply for the 2019 BPS Certification Examination (International candidates, please refer to the "[Helpful Tips Guide](#)" for detailed information on requirements).

1. Create an online [MyBPS](#) profile on the BPS website. A unique candidate number (IND-XXXXXX) is assigned once the profile is created.
2. Once your profile has been created, click on the "Apply for New Certification" link found on your [MyBPS](#) profile home page. Please review the eligibility criteria for your specialty before applying.

At the time of application, you will be required to upload a PDF or JPG version of your current pharmacist license. Candidates will also be required to upload a letter verifying the practice experience that you claim on your application, on official letterhead, from the supervisor during that period of employment. Applicants intending to confirm eligibility via an ASHP-accredited residency program are required to upload a PDF or JPG copy of a certificate of completion, residency certificate, or a letter from their preceptor. Please note all residency programs provided for eligibility must have a completion date within the last 7 years.

FOR INTERNATIONAL APPLICANTS: Please be advised that international applicants (those licensed outside of the United States or Canada) must request a hard copy of their transcripts or certificate of graduation with an official seal to be sent directly to BPS from the University where they received their pharmacy degree in addition to submitting the online application. (see page 10 for further details)

After completing your application, please submit the [Education Documentation Request Form](#) to your University. This form must be returned to BPS along with your transcript.

If you graduated from a university outside of the United States but are currently licensed in the U.S or Canada, and hold a current U.S. or Canadian license, you will not be required to submit hard copy official graduation documents. However, if you claim practice experience outside the U.S. or Canada, you will be required to upload a copy of your license for that time frame as a part of your online application. Additionally, all fees must be paid at the time of application submission.

3. Your application will be reviewed by BPS. You will receive a decision regarding your eligibility to sit for the examination within 20 business days. Please be advised that the initial eligibility decision may be revised if the candidate is later found to be ineligible.
4. All approved candidates will receive an approval e-mail as well as an Authorization to Test (ATT) e-mail including a BPS examination ID and a link to the Prometric scheduling portal.
5. Candidates must schedule the date, time, and location of their examination within the scheduled test administration window. For Spring 2019, the window runs from April 22-May 12, 2019. For Fall 2019, the window runs from September 20–October 13, 2019.

Candidates may schedule only one examination in the Spring or Fall 2019 windows.

Eligibility Requirements

Complete eligibility requirements for each specialty can be found on the BPS website (www.bpsweb.org). All practice and educational eligibility requirements must be met prior to the candidate sitting for the examination.

Effective January 1, 2019: All applicants intending to demonstrate eligibility for any BPS certification examination with practice experience must provide an attestation from their employer, on company letterhead, that verifies this experience accurately represents 50% of time spent in some or all of the activities defined by the applicable certification content outline. In addition, this practice experience must have occurred within the seven years immediately preceding the application. All practice experience claimed outside of residency training to meet eligibility requirements will need to be met prior to the candidate sitting for the examination.

A sample employer verification letter is available here: [Employer Verification Letter](#)

Processing Applications

All applicants will be notified by BPS via e-mail of their eligibility to sit for the examination within 20 business days of the receipt of their application and fee. Candidates should keep a record of their unique candidate eligibility ID number and use it in all correspondence with BPS. For the steps following application approval please see the section titled Scheduling (page 6).

If an application is denied, the entire fee will be refunded to the credit card on file. Applicants will receive an e-mail with an explanation as to why the application was denied. Applicants will also be notified by e-mail if their application is incomplete.

Examination Sites

Through an arrangement with Prometric, BPS candidates may schedule their examinations at more than 275 sites within the United States and more than 275 sites outside of the U.S. Test site locations can be found on the [Prometric website](#).

Candidates will be able to begin scheduling examination appointments after receiving an application approval e-mail from BPS including a link to the Prometric scheduling portal.

The Prometric network available to candidates has ample seats to meet demand for the BPS examinations. Prometric will employ reasonable efforts to secure the site and date requested by the candidate; however, BPS cannot guarantee availability of an examination session at a specific location within the designated period. Seats are filled on a first-come, first-served basis, based on site availability. It is recommended that you schedule your examination as soon as possible.

BPS does not provide information on hotel or travel arrangements. Candidates are encouraged to use their own

travel agent or one of the online search engines to locate hotel accommodations near a test site as well as maps and driving directions.

DANTES Program

For all information regarding the DANTES Program please [click here](#).

Scheduling

In order to help assure the greatest probability that candidates receive their preferred site and date, BPS recommends registering as early as possible.

** Domestic candidates must submit their scheduling request at least four (4) days prior to their preferred testing date during the scheduled test administration window. Non-U.S. candidates must submit their scheduling request at least ten (10) business days prior to their preferred testing date.*

Prometric will provide telephone and e-mail support to candidates on matters related to scheduling an examination appointment. Voice-mail will accept candidate inquiries outside of normal U.S. business hours.

Once an examination appointment is scheduled, the candidate will receive a confirmation e-mail from Prometric outlining the appointment details.

The candidate must bring a current, government-issued photo identification with signature to the test site. Acceptable forms of identification include driver's licenses, passports, and government-issued identification cards.

The candidate's first and last name as it appears on the confirmation e-mail must match that which appears on the government-issued photo identification. **Candidates are responsible for contacting BPS with any name changes that occur after the submission of their application.**

Candidates can request a name change through their MyBPS profile and will be required to upload a PDF or JPG copy of government-issued identification showing their new name as part of that request. All name change requests must be received no later than 30 days after the [application window deadline](#).

Rescheduling

Candidates may reschedule an examination session at no charge up to 29 days in advance of the scheduled appointment through Prometric's scheduling system. An examination session may be rescheduled up to two (2) calendar days in advance of the scheduled appointment.

BPS staff will not process change requests. A \$45 (USD) nonrefundable fee, payable to Prometric, will apply if

the appointment is rescheduled within 29 calendar days prior to the original appointment date.

NOTE: All dollar amounts expressed in this Candidate's Guide are provided in U.S. dollars (USD).

Examination Date	Appointment Must Be Rescheduled/ Canceled By:
Monday	Saturday of the previous week
Tuesday	Sunday of the current week
Wednesday	Monday of the current week
Thursday	Tuesday of the current week
Friday	Wednesday of the current week
Saturday/Sunday	Thursday of the current week
Sunday	Friday of the previous week

Withdrawals/Deferrals

Candidates may withdraw/defer from the application process prior to the close of the [application deadline](#). (NOTE: BPS does not defer applications from the Fall to the Spring application window.) Candidates must inform BPS of their intent to withdraw/defer in writing, by no later than the close of the application window, at which point they will be sent a link to an online form to make an official request. Candidates who withdraw from the application process will be refunded the fee paid, less an administrative charge of \$200 USD (\$250 USD if the exam has been scheduled with Prometric). Refunds will be processed within 14 days of the close of the application window.

After the [application deadline](#), BPS will review requests for withdrawals with decisions made on a case-by-case basis. Acceptable withdrawal requests, with appropriate documentation (e.g., physician's letter, police report, etc.), will be considered under the following situations:

- Serious illness (either the candidate or an immediate family member)
- Death in the immediate family
- Disabling accident
- Court appearance
- Jury duty
- Unexpected military call-up

Supporting documentation must be submitted to BPS within seven (7) days after the last date in the examination window. Candidates who receive a denial of their withdrawal request will forfeit all fees. If the withdrawal request is approved, all administrative fees will apply.

Spring examination candidates also have the option of having their application deferred to the Fall examination cycle of the

same calendar year. Candidates who defer to the Fall exam cycle and do not test will forfeit all fees. All deferral request must be submitted by no later than the [application deadline](#). NOTE: BPS does not defer applications from the Fall to the Spring application window.

No Shows

Failure to appear, schedule, or reschedule an examination session less than four (4) business days before a testing appointment (outside of the special circumstances listed above) will count as the candidate's testing examination. The candidate will be marked as a no-show candidate and all testing fees will be forfeited. No-show candidates will have the option to apply for a future examination at full price. If the candidate is marked as a no-show for an examination using the reduced retake rate, the exam status will be required to pay the full \$600 fee.

Americans with Disabilities Act

BPS complies with the relevant provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If a candidate has a disability and requires accommodations under this Act during the certification examination, he/she should select "Special Accommodations" as part of their application form and then submit the "ADA Accommodations Request Form" as part of their application. All application forms with requests for accommodations must be submitted by the [application window deadline](#).

Qualified Individual with a Disability

A disabled candidate is one who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits that person in one or more major life activities (e.g., walking, talking, hearing, performing manual tasks), has a record of such physical or mental impairment, or is regarded as having such a physical or mental impairment.

A "qualified individual with a disability" is one who has a disability and satisfies the requisite skill, experience, education, and other requirements of the service, program, or activity of which he or she is being measured; and, with or without accommodations, can perform the essential functions of the service, program, or activity. An essential function is one that individuals are required to perform, and removing that function would fundamentally change the service, program, or activity.

A person must be a "qualified individual with a disability" to be protected under the ADA.

Reasonable accommodations provide candidates with disabilities a fair and equal opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and skill in the essential functions being measured by the examination. Reasonable

accommodations are decided based on the individual's specific request, disability, documentation submitted, and appropriateness of the request. Reasonable accommodations do not include steps that fundamentally alter the purpose or nature of the examination.

Reasonable accommodations generally are provided for candidates who have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits that person in one or more major life activities (e.g., walking, talking, hearing, and performing manual tasks), have a record of such physical or mental impairment, or are regarded as having a physical or mental impairment.

To apply for reasonable accommodations and ensure appropriate accommodations can be provided, candidates must submit their completed ADA Request Form and all additional documentation as part of the application process.

The information and any documentation regarding the candidate's disability and need for accommodation during the examination will be considered strictly confidential and will be used solely to determine the candidate's eligibility for accommodations. Supporting documentation must be supplied as part of the application process. Professionals submitting documentation in support of a candidate's request for accommodation may be contacted by BPS or Prometric for clarification of any information provided concerning the requested accommodations.

Failure to notify BPS of needed accommodations by the [application window deadline](#), may result in the accommodations not being available at the time of the testing appointment.

Fee Payments

Payments are made in U.S. dollars or by credit card (VISA, MasterCard, American Express, Discover). Purchase orders will **NOT** be accepted.

All fees are subject to change at the sole discretion of the Board.

Application Fee

The application fee payment must accompany each completed application. The fee for **first-time** applicants for specialty certification is \$600 USD. Candidates who have failed an initial certification examination within the past year have the option to take the examination during this period for a reduced fee of \$300 USD.

Declined Credit Cards

When a credit card transaction is declined, for any reason, an alternate valid credit card number must be provided.

Please note, if you submit a payment and receive an "Error 12" message, this is due to submitting a different billing address from the one your financial institution has on file. Please contact your financial institution to confirm the correct billing address before reattempting the payment.

Forfeiture of Fees

Candidates will forfeit their examination fees if they:

- Fail to schedule an examination appointment; OR
- Fail to arrive at the site at the date and time they are scheduled for examination, unless they have an approved withdrawal.

Candidates who forfeit examination fees must apply at the full price if they wish to re-register for a future examination.

Late Arrivals

Candidates who arrive at the examination site 30 minutes after the scheduled examination appointment time will be denied admission and forfeit all examination fees. Refunds will not be issued for forfeited appointments. If an appointment is forfeited, there is no refund of the examination fee.

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES TRAINED/ LICENSED OUTSIDE OF THE U.S. AND CANADA

Information Sources

BPS certification is oriented primarily toward pharmacists licensed and practicing in the U.S.; however, we encourage international applicants to apply. Pharmacists licensed outside of the U.S. and Canada must request official graduation documents from the university where they obtained their pharmacy program degree. Pharmacists who obtained their pharmacy degree outside the U.S. and Canada, but are currently licensed in either of those countries, only need to provide a copy of their current state board of pharmacy license to accompany their application.

Applicants who graduated from a pharmacy program outside the U.S. and Canada and who are not licensed to practice pharmacy in the U.S. and Canada should refer to the [Helpful Tips for International Candidates guide](#) before submitting their application.

International candidates must provide the Board with the following by the [application deadline](#):

- An official electronic copy of a graduation transcript and/or an official graduation certificate (translated into English) as a part of the online application process indicating that the individual has completed an educational program preparing him/her for basic pharmacy practice (as part of the online application process):
- Electronic documentation of current active legal authorization to practice pharmacy in their country of origin or residence.

AND

- Sealed hard copy of transcripts or certificate of graduation with seal sent directly from the college or university where they received their pharmacy degree. It is preferred that the school send English translations of documentation. Please submit a [Graduation Documentation Request Form](#) to request education documentation from your University (Candidates must submit an application online prior to having this documentation sent to BPS). Please instruct your university to send sealed copies of your transcripts or certificate directly to:

Board of Pharmacy Specialties

2215 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20037-2985

Your application will not be considered complete until BPS has received this documentation directly from your school.

Throughout all BPS specialty certification examinations, all measurements from laboratory test results are expressed in traditional U.S. units. A conversion chart will **NOT** be offered as part of the examination. A reference table of normal lab values is **NOT** provided. Candidates should take this into consideration when preparing for the examination.

The Board is aware that examination questions dealing with procedures or regulatory issues in the U.S. are not necessarily pertinent to candidates who practice in other countries. However, all candidates are given the same examination and are held to the same standard of achievement, regardless of the country in which they practice and the regulations under which they practice.

Please note BPS certification does not confer the privilege to practice pharmacy in the U.S. or in any other country.

PREPARING FOR THE EXAMINATION

Suggested preparation for the examination might include:

- Residency or other formal training
- The study of Journal articles, textbooks, or other publications related to the content outline
- Continuing education programs and courses in specialized pharmacy practice
- Study groups and examination preparation courses
- Sample examination questions are provided on the BPS website in order for candidates to familiarize themselves with the various item formats which are presented on the exam. Sample question performance should not be interpreted as an indicator of exam performance.

Potential applicants may contact the organizations noted [here](#), which offer courses and materials for the specialty or specialties listed. The listing is provided as a convenience for candidates; BPS and its Specialty Councils neither sponsor nor endorse training or educational opportunities in specialized practice areas or preparatory courses for any of the BPS examinations. BPS does not have any official agents outside of the U.S.

This is not intended to be a comprehensive list of sources. Please note: candidates using any preparatory resources agree to abide by all U.S. copyright laws in the use of examination preparation materials.

Content Outlines

The Board publishes the content outline specific to each examination and strongly encourages candidates to become thoroughly familiar with this document. Content outlines are periodically updated to reflect changes in practice. Candidates should ensure that they are using the current outline for their specialty.

A content outline, listing the domains, tasks, and knowledge statements specific to each specialty practice, is provided for the information of prospective candidates on the BPS website. The content outline also notes the percentage of items per domain. Examination content outlines are developed through a nationwide study of the work pharmacy specialists perform in a variety of practice settings.

Examinations are not structured domain by domain. Instead, examination questions for each domain are distributed randomly throughout the total examination. While BPS examinations test the stated domains of each specialty, candidates are advised that the examinations sample content represented in each certification content outline.

Eligibility Requirements and Content Outlines for each specialty can be found here:

- [Ambulatory Care Pharmacy](#)
- [Cardiology Pharmacy](#)
- [Compounded Sterile Preparations Pharmacy](#)
- [Critical Care Pharmacy](#)
- [Geriatric Pharmacy](#)
- [Infectious Diseases Pharmacy](#)
- [Nuclear Pharmacy](#)
- [Nutrition Support Pharmacy](#)
- [Oncology Pharmacy](#)
- [Pediatric Pharmacy](#)
- [Pharmacotherapy](#)
- [Psychiatric Pharmacy](#)

New regulations, drugs, and therapies are incorporated into the examinations. All BPS specialty certification examinations reflect current, best practices, at the time they are constructed – practice guidelines used for the Spring examination are those that are current as of January 1 of the testing year. Practice guidelines for the Fall examination are those that are current as of July 1 of the testing year. Official United States Adopted Name (USAN) generic names are used on all BPS examinations for all drug products, when possible.

Sample Exam Questions

BPS has provided sample multiple choice questions to provide candidates with an opportunity to review the FORMAT of questions used on BPS specialty certification examinations. They are used strictly for illustrative purposes and not indicative of actual content on the examinations. BPS may also utilize alternate question types on some examinations including but not limited to matching, drag and drop, images and videos.

Sample Questions can be found here:

<https://www.bpsweb.org/sample-questions/>

ON THE DAY OF THE EXAMINATION

Checking-In on Examination Day

All candidates should arrive at the test site 15 minutes prior to the scheduled examination appointment. Candidates who arrive 30 minutes after their scheduled appointment may be refused admission. Refunds will not be issued in the event of a forfeited appointment.

The candidate must present a valid government-issued photo identification with signature. Candidates will be required to sign-in and will be instructed on where to store personal items and where to keep identification. The candidate's identity will be verified every time he/she enters or leaves the testing room.

Once the candidate has been checked-in, he/she will be escorted by examination staff to a workstation. The candidate must remain at the workstation unless authorized to leave by test site staff. Candidates may not leave the room without site staff permission. If the candidate leaves the room without permission prior to completing his/her examination, he/she will forfeit the examination appointment and there will be no refund of applicable fees.

Onsite staff will provide the candidate with an erasable note board which may be replaced as needed during the examination. The candidate may not remove the note boards and candidates are not allowed to use their own scratch paper or writing tools. Additionally, candidates taking the computer-based examination will be provided with a [scientific calculator](#) available on their computer screen for use during the examination.

The examination room temperature can be unpredictable; therefore, we suggest that you bring appropriate clothing with you (e.g., sweater, sweatshirt without hood) to help you adapt to a cooler or warmer climate in the examination room. Bring earplugs if you are sensitive to noise. If you choose to bring earplugs, they will be subject to inspection by the onsite staff.

Examination Rules

BPS and Prometric follow industry standard examination rules as outlined below.

Prohibited Items

Candidates are expressly prohibited from bringing the following items to the examination site:

- Cameras, cell phones or other mobile devices, optical readers, or other electronic devices that include the ability to photograph, photocopy, or otherwise copy test materials
- Notes, books, dictionaries, or language dictionaries
- Book bags or luggage
- iPods, MP3 players, headphones, or pagers
- Computers, PDAs, i-Pads, or other electronic devices
- Personal writing utensils (i.e., pencils, pens, and highlighters)
- Watches
- Food and beverage (i.e., in the examination room)
- Hats, hoods, or other headwear, unless required for religious purposes
- Candidates taking the examination will not be allowed to bring calculators to the test site.

All items are subject to inspection by the proctor. If onsite staff determines that a candidate has brought any of the items listed above to the examination site, they may request that candidates surrender them for safekeeping for an indefinite period. BPS and Prometric reserve the right to review the memory of any electronic device that may be in the candidate's possession at the examination site to determine whether any examination materials have been photographed or otherwise reproduced.

If the review determines that any examination materials are in the memory of any such device, BPS and Prometric reserve the right to delete materials and/or retain them for subsequent disciplinary or legal action. Upon completion of the review and any applicable deletions, BPS and Prometric will return the device to the candidate but will not be responsible for the deletion of any materials that may result from the review, whether or not such materials are examination materials.

By bringing any such device into the test site in contravention of BPS and Prometric policies, the candidate expressly waives any confidentiality or other similar rights with respect to the device, BPS and Prometric review of the memory of the device and/or the deletion of any materials. BPS, Prometric, the examination site, and the test site staff are not liable for lost or damaged items brought to the examination site.

Inclement Weather and Cancellations

Prometric will attempt to contact candidates in the event of a test site closure due to inclement weather to reschedule their appointment. As sites close, e-mails are issued to the candidates impacted notifying them of the closures, and Prometric's website is also updated with this information.

However, because closures can occur at any time during inclement weather, it is the responsibility of the candidate to contact Prometric to receive the most up-to-date information regarding whether a center is open or to reschedule the examination appointment. If a test site is officially closed, candidates will not be charged a rescheduling fee. If a site is open and the candidate does not keep his or her appointment, the candidate forfeits all fees.

Examination Format and Administration

Four-option multiple-choice questions constitute the majority of examination items; however, most of the specialty examinations also use alternate item types such as multiple response, drag and drop, and hotspot.

During the examination, if a candidate experiences difficulty with the computer, he/she should notify the proctor immediately and await further instruction. Most technical issues are resolved quickly with a simple refresh of the screen or by the proctor logging you back into the examination.

BPS specialty certification examinations are delivered via computer. While it is not the norm, technology issues can occasionally occur, as there could be software loading, keyboard or other workstation issues. These types of issues may require the proctor to log you back into your examination. If this happens, inform the proctor that you have a computer issue.

If a technical issue lasts longer than 30 minutes and prevents you from continuing with the examination, you may choose to stop and reschedule to another day, or you may continue to wait for the resolution. Again, most technical issues are resolved quickly.

Candidates will be provided with a scientific calculator app available on their computer screen for use during the examination. A sample calculator is available on the [BPS website](#).

Candidates will have the option to add comments to each examination item (question). Please specify any issues with an item in the comment section of the item and not at the end of the examination session. The comments will be collected and shared in aggregate for review by BPS staff

and the applicable BPS Specialty Council. Comments will not be used in the scoring of the examination.

Instructions will be provided to candidates on their computer screen. Only answers submitted via computer will be scored. Answers written on whiteboards will not be scored.

Examination Schedule

The examination day schedule is provided below.

Initial certification candidates will be provided timed examination periods, outlined here:

Examination Part 1 (100 items): 2.5-hour testing period

Break (optional): Up to 30 minutes

Examination Part 2 (75 items): 1 hour, 53-minute testing period

Recertification candidates will be allowed a 2.5-hour examination period to complete the 100-item recertification examination. Recertification candidates will have the option of a morning or afternoon administration.

Candidates are reminded that they should arrive at the examination site 15 minutes in advance of their scheduled appointment time.

If a candidate takes an unscheduled break outside of the optional break time between Part 1 and Part 2 or during a recertification examination, that time is deducted from their examination period.

On the day of the examination, all candidates **MUST** present a print out of their scheduling confirmation e-mail **AND** valid government-issued photo identification with signature (e.g., driver's license, passport) in order to be admitted to the testing room. Candidates who arrive 30 minutes after their scheduled examination time and candidates without valid photo identification will not be admitted to the examination. If that occurs, their fees will be forfeited.

Candidates will not be permitted to enter the exam room unless proper identification as described above is presented.

Examination Content

A BPS specialty certification examination samples the knowledge required to perform the tasks in each of the major areas of responsibility of the specialty as defined through a role delineation study. The examination does not attempt to test knowledge at all levels or settings in the

specialized practice area. Mastery of the knowledge and skills involved in the defined scope of specialized practice is necessary for board certification, regardless of the particular practice in which an applicant is currently involved.

BPS specialty certification examinations are constructed according to test specifications derived from role delineation studies. BPS conducts these studies with qualified subject matter experts to establish the test specifications used to and construct examinations.

Security

BPS examinations are the confidential property of BPS and are protected by trade secret law, copyright law, and other applicable state and federal laws and regulations. BPS and its testing agency maintain examination administration and security standards that are designed to assure that all candidates are provided the same opportunity to demonstrate their abilities.

Before beginning the examination, candidates will be asked to read and sign a *Statement of Confidentiality*. This statement restricts candidates from sharing any information about the examination with other individuals, including discussions with any colleagues who might be planning to take the examination in the near future.

Proctors are authorized by BPS and its examination administrator to maintain a secure and proper examination administration environment.

Candidates will be allowed to leave the room during the test administration to use the restroom facilities if they follow the test site procedures. If a candidate takes an unscheduled break outside of the optional break time (between Part 1 and Part 2 of the initial certification examination) or during a recertification examination, that time is deducted from their examination period. Candidates will be inspected for devices such as hand-held scanners, cameras, tape recorders, or other electronic equipment. Areas around the testing room (e.g., hallways, restrooms, telephone stalls) are monitored throughout the examination for security purposes. Be aware that you will be observed at all times while taking the examination. Observation may include direct observation by center staff, as well as video and audio recording of your examination session.

Candidates may not communicate with other candidates during the examination. Anyone who provides or receives assistance during the examination will be dismissed from the examination room. Candidates may not photograph, record, or memorize any examination material. Other

causes for dismissal include, but are not limited to using notes, references, or any test aids; using unauthorized calculators; causing a disruption to the environment; and removing any examination material from the testing site. Candidates who are dismissed from the examination room forfeit all fees.

Personnel authorized and trained by Prometric will proctor the examination. No other individuals are permitted in the room during the examination except for the candidates and persons authorized by BPS and/or the examination administrator.

Statement of Confidentiality for BPS Examinations:

1. This examination and the test questions contained herein are the exclusive property of BPS.
2. This examination and the questions contained herein are protected by copyright law. No part of this examination may be copied or reproduced in part or whole by any means whatsoever, including memorization.
3. The theft or attempted theft of any examination materials is punishable as a felony.
4. My participation in any irregularity occurring during this examination, such as giving or obtaining unauthorized information or aid, as evidenced by observation or subsequent analysis, may result in termination of my participation, invalidation of the results of my examination or other appropriate action.
5. Further discussion or disclosure of the contents of the examination orally, in writing or by any other means is prohibited.

My electronic signature on my application indicates that I have read, understood and agree to be bound by the statement of confidentiality and that I have read and understood the BPS Candidate's Guide. Failure to comply can result in termination of my participation, invalidation of the results of my examination or other appropriate action.

FOLLOWING THE EXAMINATION

Examination Scoring

During the computer-based examinations, candidate responses are stored in real time as candidates progress through an examination. Scoring for all candidates takes place after the examination administration window closes. The candidate's response for each question are recorded and scored against the answer key. It is to the candidate's

advantage to answer every question on the examination. There is no penalty in the scoring formula for guessing.

The individual score report will indicate whether the candidate passed or failed the examination.

Candidates will receive their score reports electronically approximately 60 days following the close of the scheduled examination administration window by logging in to their MyBPS accounts.

A complimentary certificate suitable for framing and a BPS lapel pin are sent to newly certified specialists approximately 90 days after notification of certification.

For reasons of privacy and confidentiality, examination results are released to the candidate only. Examination results will not be given via telephone or fax. Access to a candidate's score report is limited to those staff at BPS and Prometric who are involved in the processing of these reports. BPS will not release personal information (other than the name of certified individuals under established policy) without written authorization.

In order to protect the security and integrity of the specialty certification examinations, neither BPS nor its examination administrator release examination questions, individual answer strings, or the answer key to any individual or organization. Efforts are made by BPS, its Specialty Councils, and its examination administrator to produce completely accurate examinations; however, if a candidate believes there is an error in an examination question, the concern should be noted in the candidate comments of the exam and the candidate should contact BPS immediately after the examination.

Passing Standard

The passing standards, or cut scores, used in BPS examinations were established using criterion-referenced procedures that are widely used in certification. Criterion-referenced passing standards link the score required to pass an examination to the minimum level of knowledge required for specialty certification. Each BPS specialty certification program establishes its own passing standard.

Equating and Scaled Scores

BPS creates new versions, or forms, of all of its examinations on a regular basis. In assembling the new forms, BPS and its consultants follow best practices in certification testing so that all forms of an examination are comparable.

A statistical procedure called equating is used to take into account any differences in relative difficulty of the test

forms and to ensure that candidates are measured against an equitable and consistent passing standard. Test scores are then transformed onto a score scale between 200 and 800, with 500 representing the passing point. The process of scaling accommodates score interpretation and ensures that all candidate scores are reported on a common scale.

Scores will range from a minimum of 200 to a maximum of 800. The minimum passing score on BPS examinations is 500. Pass/fail decisions are based on the total score indicated on the score report, not on the performance in the domains.

If You Do Not Pass the Examination: Retaking the Examination

If a candidate fails to achieve a passing score on the examination, retaking the examination is permitted. The fee for retaking the examination is \$300 USD. If the candidate does not retake the examination within a one-year period, re-submission of the complete application will be required, along with re-payment of the full fee in effect at that time.

An individual who fails one specialty examination may NOT apply for another specialty examination as a retake candidate.

Retake candidates who withdraw from taking the examination are processed as described in the section "Withdrawals".

Comparative Review and Hand Scoring

A comparative review verifies that the candidate's answers were scored against the correct examination answer key in order to confirm the candidate's examination was scored properly. Please note that the computer-based examination scoring process is accurate and that the BPS scoring process already includes several quality assurance steps.

To request a Comparative Review/Hand Scoring of a BPS examination, the request form, found on the BPS website, must be completed and submitted along with a \$50 USD fee. Requests must be received within 60 days of the candidate receiving the score report. Please allow 30 days to process requests.

Appeals Process

An appeals process is available to any individual who has applied for or received a BPS certification and wishes to contest any adverse decision or proposed action affecting their application for certification or recertification status other than a failed examination score.

BPS provides a two-step appeals process for resolution of any questions or complaints concerning an action or decision by the BPS Board of Directors. The first step of the process includes a reconsideration review procedure which is handled by BPS. The second step of the process is an appeals procedure which is handled by a specially appointed Appeals Committee. The individual must first file the request for reconsideration before filing an appeal.

A reconsideration and appeal process “[Appeals Policy and Procedures](#)”.

If you experience an examination administration issue and wish to file a complaint, the complaint must be received by BPS within five (5) days of your examination date.

Revocation of Certification

The certification of an individual may be revoked by BPS for any of the following reasons:

- Failure to complete or fulfill the requirements for certification or recertification
- Failure to maintain professional licensure
- Determination that certification or recertification was improperly granted
- Misrepresentation or misstatement of facts submitted upon application for certification or recertification
- Violation of Conflict of Interest and/or confidentiality/ non-disclosure attestations to BPS

Annual Certification Maintenance

All BPS-certified pharmacists are required to register annually with the Board and pay a \$125 USD annual certification maintenance fee. An invoice will be sent to each certificant via e-mail in May of every year of the certification cycle including the first year. The \$125 USD annual fee is not required in the last year of a certification cycle. Payment is due within 45 days of that e-mail notification. Pharmacists holding more than one BPS certification are assessed only one annual fee but are required to submit the \$400 recertification fee with their recertification application for each specialty.

Failure to pay the annual fee results in removal of the individual’s name from BPS’ official list of certified pharmacists. This list of BPS-certified specialists “in good standing” is published on the BPS website. Upon applying for recertification, all outstanding annual fees and a \$5 penalty fee for each late payment will be due. Failure to pay the annual certification maintenance fees may result in suspension of the certification.

Recertification

To maintain “active” board certification status, recertification is required every seven (7) years. **Please note that once initially credentialed, certificants may not begin accumulating continuing education hours towards recertification until January 1st of the following year. For example, if a candidate passes their certification exam in the Spring 2019 examination window, their credential starts on July 1, 2019, however accumulation of BPS approved recertification CEs for that specialty can only be obtained after the accrual period start date of January 1, 2020.**

Certificants are expected to keep their certification current. If requirements are not completed at the end of the seven year cycle, certification lapses. Once certification has lapsed, individuals must meet all current initial eligibility requirements, including passing the full-length, 175 question initial certification examination. Please see Recertification Guide for more information.

USE OF THE BPS MARK AND LOGO

The BPS certification mark and logo are the property of BPS. Permission to use the certification mark or logo is granted to certified persons at the discretion of BPS, for permissible uses only. A candidate who passes the examination will receive a certificate suitable for framing and will have the right to claim the mark of a Board-Certified Pharmacist in the specific pharmacy specialty. Use of BPS marks and logos is limited to those pharmacist specialists in good standing, who have been granted the pharmacy specialty designation by BPS and who satisfy all maintenance and recertification requirements established by BPS.

Use of the Designation

To use letters in one’s title, individuals must: (1) meet and continue to meet BPS certification and recertification standards; (2) demonstrate the requisite experience requirements. Successful individuals are authorized to use the following certification marks or designations in communications and marketing materials, once they have earned the specific designation: BCACP®, BCCP®, BCSCP®, BCCCP™, BCGP®, BCIDP®, BCNP®, BCNSP®, BCOP®, BCPPS®, BCPS® and BCPP®

MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission of the Board of Pharmacy Specialties is to improve patient care by promoting the recognition and value of specialized training, knowledge, and skills in pharmacy and specialty board certification of pharmacists.

We will accomplish this mission by:

- *Providing leadership for the profession of pharmacy in the discussion, evolution, direction and recognition of specialty board certification of pharmacists;*
- *Establishing and promoting, in collaboration with stakeholders, the value of pharmacy specialization and board certification;*
- *Establishing the standards for identification and recognition of pharmacy specialties;*
- *Establishing standards of eligibility, knowledge, and skills as the basis for board certification;*
- *Developing and administering a valid process to evaluate the knowledge and skills for recognition of board-certified pharmacists;*
- *Assessing and recognizing the continued eligibility, knowledge, and skills of board-certified pharmacist specialists through a valid recertification process.*



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