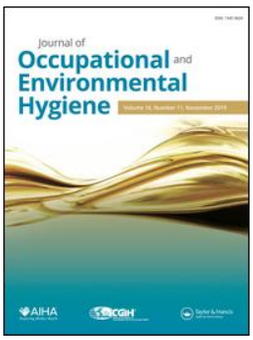

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COMMENTARY

The American Board of Industrial Hygiene: 60 years of progress

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KEYWORDS
Certified industrial hygienist; comprehensive practice; professional certification; professional credentialing

Sixty years have passed since the inaugural Board meeting in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and the incorporation of the American Board of Industrial Hygiene (ABIH) in 1960. During that time, changes have been made to the ABIH Board name, board structure, exam, and the base educational and certification requirements, including the addition of an ethics component. In 2019, the ABIH-Board changed the organization's name to the Board for Global EHS Credentialing (BGC) and the industrial hygiene (IH) credentialing division became known simply by the acronym "ABIH."

The first edition of Patty's (1948) *Industrial Hygiene and Toxicology* defined industrial hygiene (IH) as "the concept of anticipating and recognizing potentially harmful situations and applying engineering control measures before serious injury results." The core of IH remains true to this definition today but has expanded to include a number of allied practices. Environmental protection, sustainability, safety, public health (including community and human environmental health), health physics, product stewardship, and numerous other domains impact today's practicing industrial hygienist. Many of these aspects are concerned with a wide variety of health and safety issues outside of the workplace and not simply related to classical workplace "exposures." In addition, market pressures have led to industrial hygienists becoming generalists, filling roles historically reserved for allied professionals. One way that BGC is responding to these changes is that BGC will offer a product stewardship credential in 2020.

This article builds upon historic work that was conducted by Smyth (1966) and Anderson, O'Donnell, and Thornton (1990). This paper presents a brief historical update, discusses how policies have adapted to the evolving IH landscape, and focuses on changes in Board governance, the certification process, and the adoption of an ABIH Code of Ethics.

Board governance

ABIH, now known as BGC, was chartered as a nonprofit organization in 1960 and was created to improve the practice and educational standards of the IH profession. To achieve the intent of its charter, BGC administers a certification program that includes: (1) qualifying applicants; (2) certifying qualified applicants who pass the certification examinations and issuing certificates acknowledging a demonstrated competence in IH aspects; (3) maintaining certification; (4) maintaining a record of certificates granted; and (5) furnishing the public and interested parties or organizations a roster of those persons in good standing (American Board of Industrial Hygiene 1988).

The current BGC Board is composed of 12 volunteer directors (though the BGC Bylaws allow for a range of 6–14) and one public member who is a non-Diplomate, with the first public member elected to the Board in 1999. Directors are self-nominated. Once elected by the BGC directors, each Diplomate member serves for a 4-year term. The public member may serve up to two 2-year terms. The day-to-day activities of the BGC are administered by a Chief Executive Officer and office staff in Lansing, Michigan.

As reflected in its statement of purpose, the ABIH credentialing division is focused upon certifying individuals in the professional practice of IH. The credential Certified Industrial Hygienist (CIH) has become a recognized and valued professional designation. To maintain the quality of the CIH credential, the ABIH has been

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engaged in a number of important activities since 1990. These activities include increasing the rigor of educational requirements for exam qualification; developing a role delineation/task analysis (RD/TA), now referred to as a job analysis (JA), model to assist in structuring examinations; developing and implementing the ABIH Code of Ethics; and refining certification maintenance to reflect the evolution of the IH profession.

In 2014, ABIH revised its mission to include "public protection" as essential to its role as a credentialing body. More recently, its mission was modified to extend beyond traditional "industrial hygiene" practices to include health, safety, and the environment. The ABIH mission was modified in 2020 to include the word "evaluating" and is now: "The American Board of Industrial Hygiene is the premier credentialing organization for professions based on the science of evaluating, protecting, and enhancing the health, safety, and environment of people at work and in their communities. It serves its credentialed practitioners by establishing and administering a valid, reliable, and rigorous credentialing process to protect the public and meet the needs of employers" (American Board of Industrial Hygiene 2020d; Board for Global EHS Credentialing 2020b).

The ABIH vision statement was also updated in 2014 and the word "evaluating" was included in 2020. The ABIH vision statement is now, "ABIH-credentialed practitioners are globally recognized as the epitome of professional competence and ethics in professions based on the science of evaluating, protecting, and enhancing the health, safety, and environment of people at work and in their communities" (American Board of Industrial Hygiene 2020d; Board for Global EHS Credentialing 2020b).

In 2016, the ABIH Board and the Institute for Professional Environmental Practice (IPEP) signed a memorandum of understanding to initiate a long-term collaboration between organizations and passed a resolution to adopt the Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP) credentialing program under the direction of the ABIH Board. Those maintaining the QEP credential became eligible to serve on the ABIH Board (now BGC Board), and the current BGC Board makeup includes four QEP members, one of whom is also a CIH. In 2019, both ABIH and IPEP began operating as credentialing divisions of the BGC.

The ABIH certification process

The BGC Board requires that standards are met in four areas to become eligible for certification, which are known as the "4 Es": education, experience, ethics, and examination. Although all but the ethics requirement have existed since the formation of the ABIH, there have been modifications to enhance the certification process.

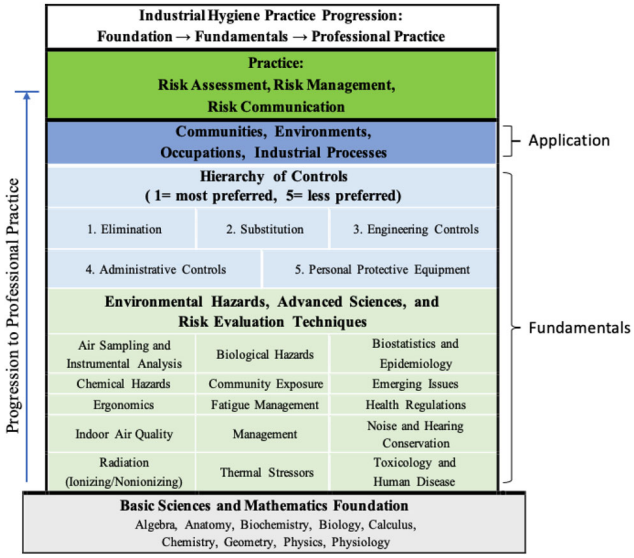

Figure 1. Industrial Hygiene Model of Practice Progression. Adapted from American Industrial Hygiene Association (2018).

To qualify for the exam, the candidate must develop knowledge across competency areas. Figure 1 shows how the industrial hygienist/occupational hygienist (IH/OH) starts with a foundation in the basic sciences and mathematics, progresses to courses in more in-depth fundamental scientific areas, and finally applies that knowledge and work experience to perform professional-level IH/OH practice to conduct, assess, manage, and communicate risk to protect and enhance the health, safety, and environment of people at work and in their communities (American Industrial Hygiene Association 2018).

Education

As described in the *ABIH Candidate Handbook*, each applicant for certification must have a bachelor's degree in biology, chemistry, physics, engineering, or degree from an ABET-accredited program in IH or safety within a regionally accredited college or university, or from another college that is acceptable to ABIH based on appropriate coursework (American Board of Industrial Hygiene 2017).

The June 1, 1988 ABIH Bulletin specified the acceptance of creditable content for degrees other than biology, chemistry, physics, or engineering, and this requirement remains in effect. Creditable content is appropriate coursework of at least 60 semester credit hours in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) courses with at least 15 hr at the

upper level (junior, senior, or graduate level). Candidates whose degrees do not satisfy the ABIH requirements must complete additional coursework to ensure that the candidate has a minimum of 60 semester credit hours in STEM subjects (American Board of Industrial Hygiene 2017; Anderson, O'Donnell, and Thornton 1990). ABIH additionally requires candidates to have completed 180 academic contact hours or 240 continuing education contact hours of IH-specific coursework (or a combination of the two), at least half of which must cover broad subjects of IH such as human toxicology, the fundamentals of IH (chemical, physical, biological, and ergonomic hazards), and the IH hierarchy of controls. The remaining half of the IH-specific coursework may be in IH subjects that are narrower in scope, which include asbestos, lead, mold, and confined spaces (American Board of Industrial Hygiene 2017). ABIH implemented the IH-specific coursework requirement with a phased-in approach in 2002 in an attempt to improve the pass rate of the challenging certification-by-exam process.

In 2010, ABIH instituted an ethics requirement in which both applicants and Diplomates must demonstrate the completion of at least two contact hours of ethics coursework. Acceptable ethics courses include academic courses dealing with ethics, company training on business conduct, other ethics-related subjects, or continuing education courses that include ethics as a component.

The STEM and IH-specific coursework requirement is typically satisfied by coursework taken in the pursuit of degrees such as IH/OH, safety, public health, environmental health sciences, and the like. Those with degrees in environmental sciences and engineering, chemical engineering, health physics, and other related degrees often pursue certification with the completion of limited additional IH-specific coursework.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the ABIH reviewed the issue of certifying individuals with degrees that did not meet the eligibility requirements for the exam. This review focused on whether 10 years of IH experience could completely substitute for adequate academic preparation required for exam eligibility. After considerable deliberation, the ABIH Board determined that the completion of an acceptable degree was required to become eligible for certification; 10 years' work experience in the field was not enough. The Board reported that the decision was necessary to ensure that industrial hygienists were able to effectively deal with the increasingly complex environments brought on by the rapid change of technology, and that the decision was consistent with the ABIH Board's purpose to "improve the practice and educational standards of the profession of industrial hygiene" (Anderson, O'Donnell, and Thornton 1990). This Board decision mostly remains in effect today with the exception that candidates whose degrees do not meet the criteria can become eligible for the exam by completion of the required STEM academic coursework and IH-related academic or professional development coursework.

Experience

The ABIH receives applications from applicants whose IH practice typically includes a broad spectrum of activities. The applicant must be able to demonstrate broad scope practice to become eligible for the exam. Acceptable broad scope practice ranges from individuals whose practice has included at least two stressor categories, to teaching, research, and full-service management of a comprehensive IH program. ABIH accepts a maximum of 12 months of narrow scope practice to become eligible for the exam. In 2006, the ABIH eliminated the requirement that an applicant be engaged in professional IH practice at least 50% of the time, reflecting the shift to a generalist tendency within the profession.

Also in 2006, ABIH reduced the experience requirement from a minimum of 5 years to 4 years of professional-level experience that includes the majority of the functions of the industrial hygienist (American Board of Industrial Hygiene 2020d). The applicant's experience must be "professional level," which is characterized by independence of actions, depth (data-gathering, analysis, and interpretation), level of interaction involving a broad spectrum of contacts (including decision-makers), and responsibility for work outcome. The applicant's experience also must be of broad scope: (1) demonstrating the continuum of the entire process of IH practice; encompassing anticipation, recognition, evaluation, control, and management of occupational health hazards; and (2) covering at least two of the four generic categories of occupational health stressors: chemical, physical, biological, and ergonomic (American Board of Industrial Hygiene 2017).

At one time, 1 year of experience equivalence was granted for a completed, cognate Master's degree and 2 years was granted for a completed, cognate doctoral degree. The spirit of experience equivalency for degrees continues today with some modifications: (a) ABIH awards 6 months and 1 year of experience

credit for Bachelor's- and Master's-level IH degrees accredited by ABET, respectively (and no credit if not from an ABET-accredited IH program); and (b) 1 year of experience equivalency may be granted for the completion of an acceptable IH doctoral degree.

A particularly important aspect of the process for eligibility is professional references, which are intended to demonstrate that the applicant's experience is professional level and that the applicant conducts IH work in accordance with the ABIH Code of Ethics. The professional reference questionnaire also asks candidates' references the following question: "Do you know of any reason why this Applicant should not be considered for certification?," providing references with the opportunity to inform ABIH of a candidate's potential lapses in character or professional judgment (American Board of Industrial Hygiene 2007, 2019). The applicant must provide a minimum of two professional references. At least one reference must be submitted from one or more supervisors covering the entire period for when the applicant requests experience credit and one from a CIH with firsthand experience of the applicant's work, also whom may be a supervisor. The Board provides alternative reference procedures for those applicants that may not have a direct supervisor and when there is no CIH available with firsthand knowledge of the applicant's IH work (American Board of Industrial Hygiene 2017).

Ethics

Beginning in 2006, a Joint Ethics Task Force was established and consisted of representatives of the four original chartering organizations: the American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA®), the American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists (ACGIH®), the Academy of Industrial Hygiene (AIH), and the ABIH Board in cooperation with the Joint Industrial Hygiene Ethics Education Committee. The primary goal of this task force was to revise and renew the current Code of Ethics, with a special emphasis placed upon enforcement.

Overall, two new codes were approved and presented to the general membership at the June 2007 American Industrial Hygiene Conference and Exposition in Philadelphia. The membership-based organizations (AIHA, ACGIH, and AIH) moved away from enforcement and toward education (American Industrial Hygiene Association 2007; American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists 2020), delegating the role of enforcement to ABIH (American Board of Industrial Hygiene 2007). The general set of guidelines adopted by AIHA, ACGIH, and AIH were intended to help all association members understand their ethical responsibilities.

Both the ABIH Code of Ethics and the membership-based organizations' Ethical Principles are meant to serve as a standard for the profession—a guideline that uplifts the profession in a consistent and uniform manner. The overall expectation associated with the new codes is that priority will be given to health and safety interests related to the protection of people. Much like the Hippocratic Oath associated with the medical field, industrial hygienists should strive to "first, do no harm" (primum non nocere) and to hold the people we protect in the highest regard.

With the renaming of the ABIH to the BGC in 2019, a new unified code was developed to encompass all certifications (i.e., CIH, QEP, EPI, and CPPS) offered under the BGC umbrella. This new unified code will become effective on July 1, 2020 (Leibowitz 2020).

Examinations

The elements of the certification process that draw the most attention are the certification examinations. Previously, ABIH administered the Core, Comprehensive Practice, and Aspects examinations. The Core exam was the qualifying exam that led to an applicant becoming an Industrial Hygienist in Training followed by the Comprehensive Practice or Aspects examination in a two-exam process for achieving the CIH certification. The first Core and Comprehensive Practice or one of six Aspects examinations (acoustical, air pollution, chemical, engineering, radiological, and toxicological) were first administered in 1963.

The first certificates for the Comprehensive Practice, Chemical Aspects, and Engineering Aspects by written examination were issued in 1963 followed by certificates for Air Pollution, Radiological, and Toxicological Aspects in 1964. The Radiological Aspects examination was last administered in 1971, the Toxicology Aspects examination was last administered in 1988, and the Acoustical, Air Pollution, Engineering, and Radiological Aspects exams were eliminated in 1992. The Chemistry Aspects exam and Core exam were discontinued in 2001. As such, the path to certification as a CIH by written examination became the demonstration of (a) the required minimum educational preparation, (b) professional-level IH practice for a minimum number of years of

experience, and (c) the successful completion of a single comprehensive exam followed by certification maintenance for continuing certification.

Beginning in 1993, ABIH offered subspecialty examinations in Indoor Environmental Quality (IEQ) and Hazardous Material Response and Remediation (HMRR). The HMRR subspecialty examination was discontinued in 1994 and the IEQ subspecialty exam was discontinued in 2001, along with the Core exam. In 1999, the Board established a permanent associate-level credential titled the Certified Associate Industrial Hygienist (CAIH), effective with the 2001 spring/fall examination cycle.

In 2004, computer-based testing (CBT) for the Comprehensive and CAIH examinations began in North America, and the written pen-and-pencil examinations were discontinued. International exams followed in 2008. The CAIH was discontinued in 2006; ABIH continues to administer the certification maintenance of the existing CAIH credential holders, those who certified through the Aspects exams, and those with the IEQ Sub-Specialty Certificate (American Board of Industrial Hygiene 2020d). Today, the CBT Comprehensive (CIH) examination is offered by a global testing company, Prometric (2020), during two exam windows (April–May and October–November) in over 180 countries. IPEP's Environmental Professional In-Training (EPI) and QEP exams are also CBT and require a QEP proctor. These are scheduled individually on an as-needed basis (Institute of Professional Environmental Practice 2007).

The current BGC Board examination administration activities were originally developed in consultation with a professional examination service followed by a long-term exam administration process managed by a third-party certification and licensure testing company. ABIH continues administering the role delineation model to identify the current knowledge and skills required for the professional practice of IH within each major domain (area of responsibility) of practice. The domains of practice and knowledge/skill statements defined by the JA are used as the ABIH test specification and as a model for developing the questions used to construct the examinations. The JA that serves as the basis for exam development (test blueprint) must be updated periodically. This JA update was last conducted by a sample of Diplomates led in 2014. The updated test blueprint, which became effective in the spring exam cycle in 2015, is available on the BGC website.

In order to obtain a QEP credential administered by IPEP, an applicant must meet eligibility requirements, and pass the two-part exam. Part 1 is a "General Environmental Science Examination." For Part 2, the applicant must take an exam in one of 4 specialized areas: (a) Environmental Science, Management, and Policy, (b) Air Quality, (c) Water Quality, or (d) Waste Management. The documents that IPEP considers blueprints for exam content are referred to as a "Body of Knowledge". The five IPEP examinations (Part 1 and Part 2 examinations) each have a Body of Knowledge that are available on the IPEP website. (Institute of Professional Environmental Practice 2020).

The quality process established for the comprehensive examinations has been directed toward meeting the requirement that the examinations contain valid questions covering current knowledge and skills essential to the practicing industrial hygienist. In addition, this effort had to ensure that the method for assigning a passing score to each exam was reliable and based on a generally accepted protocol. The computer-based examinations are scored as soon as the candidate has completed the examination. Examination questions are selected for use based on the latest survey of the practice of IH, in both rubrics and areas of practice to achieve a set of questions that represents the broad scope and comprehensive practice of IH. Examination questions are selected carefully and a portion is updated annually. All questions are evaluated by a group of practicing Diplomates to ensure correctness and relevance to the practice of IH. Each question is third-party reviewed using psychometric principles to ensure its validity as an examination question. After each examination period, questions are again analyzed for accuracy and discrimination using third-party psychometric principles (American Board of Industrial Hygiene 2020c).

Each examination question is subjected to a rigorous validation procedure under the guidance of a third-party certification and licensure testing company. As part of this validation process, the documentation for each question is reviewed to ensure it is adequately referenced in the published IH literature. These steps ensure that the ABIH comprehensive examinations reflect the current practice of IH and are valid using currently acceptable scientific criteria.

In order to establish a passing score for the examinations, a modified Angoff method was utilized. The modified Angoff method is based upon the concept of minimally competent examinees. To determine a passing score for an examination, each question is

considered independently by a panel of scorers, each of whom—using specific criteria—makes a judgment regarding the percentage of all minimally qualified examinees who will answer the question correctly. Items for which there is disagreement among the panel are reviewed by the panel as a whole and a consensus score for that question is assigned. The passing score for an examination is the composite percentage of consensus scores for all items and all scorers. This process, referred to as standard setting, was last updated in 2012, and is conducted approximately every 10 years.

In one other examination-related development, the ABIH sold its joint interest in the Health and Safety Technologist Examination to the Board of Certified Safety Professionals (BCSP). BCSP continues to administer technologist-level certifications such as the Occupational Hygiene and Safety Technician and Construction Health and Safety Technician (Board of Certified Safety Professionals 2020a, 2020b).

Certification maintenance

The purpose of the certification maintenance (CM) program, which began in 1979, is to ensure that Diplomates continue to develop and enhance their professional IH knowledge and skills for the duration of an active career. The CM cycle was changed from a 6-year cycle to a 5-year cycle in 1998 to meet third party accreditation requirements. Truncating the CM cycle length to 5 years rather than a shorter cycle was based on the premise that the knowledge and skills to be a professional-level industrial hygienist evolve over time but do not change radically from year-to-year. At the time the recertification cycle was reduced to 5 years, the Board's position was, and continues to be, the following:

> Industrial Hygiene is a mature profession, having been established in the 1930's. As an applied science profession, it uses an amalgam of many different pure sciences and core disciplines, e.g. chemistry, biology, anatomy, mathematics, toxicology, engineering. Advancements in those sciences and disciplines are integrated into the IH profession, usually in an adaptive, gradual manner. Thus, since the level of IH knowledge and skills to be a practicing, professional-level Industrial Hygienist does not change radically each year, a more frequent recertification period does not appear to be warranted. (American Board of Industrial Hygiene 2020e)

The 5-year CM cycle is supported by the CIH Job Analysis, which is administered every 5–7 years and identifies the current knowledge and skills possessed by a professional-level industrial hygienist with 3–4 years of broad-scope professional-level practice. If the Job Analysis indicates a fundamental change in the IH Rubrics, Domains, or Tasks, the CM program would be evaluated for both the recertification frequency and methodologies (i.e., CM Categories and approved activities). There were no significant changes between the 2008 and 2014 Job Analysis (American Board of Industrial Hygiene 2020e).

Recertification requires the completion of 40 and 35 CM points of continuing education credit for the CIH and CAIH, respectively. CIHs may automatically recertify by successfully passing the CIH exam, which credits the Diplomate with 40 hr of continuing education and completing 2 hr of ethics coursework during the CM cycle. Since the Aspects (Air Pollution, Acoustical, Radiological, Toxicological, Chemical, and Engineering), Indoor Environmental Quality (IEQ), and Hazardous Material Response and Remediation (HMRR) sub-specialties and CAIH examinations were discontinued due to low demand, the option to recertify by examination no longer exists for Diplomates maintaining those credentials.

If not recertifying by exam, CM points can be accumulated by participating in a number of different activities as shown in Table 1 (American Board of Industrial Hygiene 2015a). Diplomates are required to submit the required CM record via the online BGC Computer Application and Portfolio System (CAPS) by the applicable deadline. At least 5% of all those recertifying in a given year will be selected for a detailed records audit, and if selected, the Diplomate must successfully pass the audit to maintain their certification (American Board of Industrial Hygiene 2020e).

In addition to this update, one may also find it useful to refer to the ABIH website (www.abih.org) for detailed information regarding certification maintenance. Of note, the ABIH maintains a process for inclusion for recertification— by automatic 6-month cycle extension or leave of absence—if a Diplomate does not or is not able to recertify due to medical, military, or family hardship (American Board of Industrial Hygiene 2020e).

While the requirement of 40 CM points over 5 years averages to 8 points/year, in some years a Diplomate may obtain fewer than 8 points, while in others they may obtain more. Previously, Diplomates were limited to the completion of no more than 20 CM points in a single year, and this is no longer the case.

Professional society membership can no longer be claimed for CM credit. Attendance at IH-specific

Table 1. CM Category and Point Scheme. Adapted from American Board of Industrial Hygiene (2015b).

CM Category	CM Category Description	Min CM Points Req. (Contact Hr.)	Rate of CM Point Accrual	Max CM Points Awarded
1	Active IH Practice	0	For CIH: awarded on a sliding scale at maximum 3 CM points per 12 months of professional practice with minimum 50% IH Practice in job role; For CAIH: 2 CM points per 12 months with a minimum of 20% active practice in IH. No points awarded otherwise.	15
2	Technical / Professional IH Committee Service	0	1 point/year as chair or local section president; $^1/_2$ point/year as a member or local section committee member, elected director or officer	5
3	Publication of IH Materials	0	2 points will be given for the primary author of a publication of an original paper in a peer-reviewed professional journal or book; 1 point will be given for coauthors. 0.5 point for the primary author of non-peer reviewed publications with no points awarded to coauthors. 0.5 point/review for editor or reviewer of a peer-reviewed journal article, column, or book chapter	No Max.
4A	Education (IH-specific)	10 (60)	0.167 point per technical contact hour*	No Max.
4B	Education (Ethics)	0.33 (2)	0.167 point per technical contact hour	1
4C	Education (General Management)	0	0.167 point per technical contact hour	5
4D	Education (Safety)	0	0.167 point per technical contact hour	No Max.
5	Teaching/ Presenting of IH	0	1 CM point for primary presenter, 0.5 point for coauthor for peer-reviewed presentations at national or international conferences $\geq$20 minutes. 0.5 point/static displays (posters) for primary author. 0.33 points/hr for live teaching/presenting and asynchronous teaching $\geq$20 min.	20
6	Recertification by Examination	40 (NA)	40/exam	40
7	Other Approved Activities (such as pro-bono activity, mentoring, successfully passing approved professional exams, etc.)	0	1 point/5 acceptable questions submitted for CIH exam. 1 point/40 hr of pro-bono work. Mentor to other IH professionals = 1 point/yr for each Mentee (6 hr minimum)	No Max.

Note: Ethics CM points can also be counted as IH-specific CM points.

"*A **technical contact hour** is the time spent in technical sessions. It includes technical presentations, lectures, break outs, Q&A, exams, event overview, event recaps, and discussions. It does not include the non-technical activities, e.g., meals, breaks, exhibitor time, networking, participant introductions, social tours, generic welcome speeches."

meetings and education programs is no longer limited to a maximum of 5 points/year, with the exception that CM credit for IH Ethics courses is capped at 1 point (prior to November 2018, the cap was 5 points) per recertification cycle. As of 2018, not only IH-related management topics but also general management and leadership training can be claimed for CM credit.

ABIH no longer approves continuing education courses in advance and meetings are not required to be approved prior to points being granted.

Number of ABIH diplomates

There are 6,940 ABIH Diplomates in 37 countries as of the end of 2019. Following the United States, Canada has the most Diplomates (448) followed by China (92), Singapore (37), Hong Kong (34), India and Australia (30 each), South Korea (15), Malaysia (13), and Taiwan and Saudi Arabia (8 each). More than 97% of the Diplomates maintain certification in the Comprehensive Practice (6,828); the remaining are certified in Aspects/Sub-Specialty certificates or as CAIHs as follows: Chemical (95), Engineering (13), Air Pollution (11), Radiation (6), Toxicology (5), and Acoustics (2) Aspects; IEQ Subspecialty Certificates (45); and CAIHs (9). The cumulative total of CIH certificates issued as of the end of 2019 was 12,039 (Board for Global EHS Credentialing 2020a).

The upward trend of new Diplomates has been consistent since 2011. Prior to that time, there were fewer than 200 new Diplomates annually; since 2011, the numbers grew to well over 200 per year, including a total of 282, 268, and 288 new Diplomates in 2017, 2018, and 2019, respectively (Board for Global EHS Credentialing 2020a).

ABIH awards

In 2015, ABIH began to administer two ABIH Awards, which are awarded yearly at the American Industrial Hygiene Conference and Exposition. The Lynn C. O'Donnell Lifetime Achievement Award, named after long-serving Executive Director Lynn C. O'Donnell, became the highest honor awarded by ABIH and is awarded to Diplomates who have made exemplary contributions to the practice of industrial, occupational, and environmental hygiene that have culminated over a lifetime of work (American Board of Industrial Hygiene 2020d, 2020b). The ABIH IMPACT Award is awarded to a Diplomate that has made a significant contribution to the practice of industrial, occupational, and environmental hygiene; the Diplomate must not have been a Diplomate for longer than 20 years (American Board of Industrial Hygiene 2020a). Award winners are listed on the ABIH website.

Call to action

As ABIH (now part of BGC) marks its 60th anniversary, we ask all industrial hygienists to give back to the profession. There are several ways to do so and earn CM points if you are a Diplomate. You can work pro bono; mentor students and young or early career professionals; serve on the AIHA, ACGIH, or BGC Boards; serve on committees (including those of your local section); and/or conduct a review for a peer-reviewed journal such as the esteemed *JOEH*! The authors wish to extend a challenge to all readers and especially to those certified as industrial hygienists. Many can identify individuals who have assisted on their respective paths to success. It is incumbent upon each of us to follow their lead and mentor the next generation of professionals. Volunteer your time and talents toward mentoring and encouraging students to pursue degrees in industrial/occupational hygiene and early (or even mid) career professionals to become certified, and nominate an outstanding mentor, peer, or employee for an ABIH Award.

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