



E. Qualifications and Requirements for Certification

1. General Qualifications

- 1.1 Applicants must be persons of good moral character, high integrity, and good repute, and must possess high ethical and professional standing.
- 1.2 Certification is limited to permanent residents of the United States of America, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and other such places as the Board of Directors may, from time to time, authorize and direct.

2. Educational Qualifications

Applicants must possess at least an earned baccalaureate degree from an accredited academic institution or from an institution or higher education program whose degrees would be considered the equivalent of an earned baccalaureate degree.

3. Professional Experience Qualifications

- 3.1 Applicants are required to complete and document a full-time training period of at least two years in duration, in a forensic laboratory recognized by the ABFDE.
 - 3.1.1 “Recognized” means that the applicant’s training program met the basic requirements for a training program described in SWGDOC (Standard for Minimum Training Requirements for Forensic Document Examiners). The key requirements are outlined below; please refer to the above Standard (www.swgdoc.org) for full details.
 - 3.1.2 The ABFDE Credentialing Committee will consider whether the applicant’s training curriculum includes the following basic requirements.
 - 3.1.2.1 Full-time training for a minimum of 24 months under the supervision of a principal trainer. The maximum period of training should not exceed four years.
 - 3.1.2.3 Training that includes the topics addressed in the ABFDE Study Guide.
 - 3.1.2.4 Training from a principal trainer who must also meet these requirements and have a minimum of five years of full-time experience following his/her training as a forensic document examiner.
- 3.2 Applicants should submit as references the names and addresses of three (3) forensic document examiners certified by the ABFDE and attesting to his/her qualifications for certification and high ethical character. (References from persons other than



ABFDE-certified forensic document examiners will be evaluated on an individual basis.)

- 3.3 Applicants must be actively engaged in the practice of forensic document examination at the time they apply for certification.
- 3.4 Each applicant will be required to demonstrate a record of appropriate professional activity in forensic document examination in keeping with the following definitions:
 - 3.4.1 Forensic document examination is the practice of the application of document examination to the purposes of the law.
 - 3.4.2 Forensic document examination relates to the examination of handwriting, typewriting, the authenticity of signatures, alterations in documents, the significance of inks and papers, photocopying processes, printing processes, writing instruments, sequence of writing, and other elements of a document relative to its authenticity or spuriousness.
 - 3.4.3 Forensic document examination does not involve the employment of calligraphic or engrossing skills, nor does it involve a study of handwriting in an attempt to create a personality profile or otherwise analyze or judge the writer's personality or character.

4. Examinations

- 4.1 In addition to meeting the requirements in paragraphs 3.4.1, 3.4.2, and 3.4.3 above, applicants will be required to successfully complete comprehensive written, practical, and oral examinations based upon the broad range of problems frequently encountered in document examination. These problems may include questions concerning the authorship of handwriting; the authenticity or spuriousness of a signature; the source of typewritten material; the presence or absence of alterations, additions, or deletions on documents; the comparison of inks, papers, and writing instruments; or similar questions as promulgated by the Board.
- 4.2 An applicant must complete all testing phases within two and one-half (2 ½) years after his/her application is approved. Limited exceptions for minimal extensions may be permitted on a case by case basis (e.g., illness), as determined by the Testing Chair.
- 4.3 Upon successful completion of the testing program, the candidate will be recognized as a Diplomate of the ABFDE.
- 4.4 A candidate who fails to complete the testing program within the requisite amount of allotted time will be terminated from the program. If this terminated candidate re-applies to the program, s/he must re-apply as an applicant to become a candidate again, pay the then current application fee, and will begin the process at the Credentials Phase (beginning).