



INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR BIOLOGICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL REPOSITORIES

The ISBER/ASCP BOC Qualification in Biorepository Science (QBRS) Examination is now Online

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Abstract

Background: Well-trained repository staff are essential for assuring high-quality research specimens. The International Society for Biological and Environmental Repositories (ISBER), the leading international repository society, and ASCP BOC (American Society for Clinical Pathology Board of Certification), an organization providing excellence in global medical laboratory professional certification, have developed a shared qualification category through which individuals may earn a biorepository qualification credential, the Qualification in Biorepository Science (QBRS).

Methods: A Qualification in Biorepository Science (QBRS) Workgroup (WG) was established as a standing committee of the ASCP BOC. The WG's task was to develop, review and update the biorepository qualification examination itself, perform job task analyses, develop the examination content guidelines, eligibility requirements, and candidate professional experience documentation forms needed for the QBRS credential. All QBRS credentials awarded will be time-limited. Individual qualification must be revalidated every three years with documentation of continuing education or other educational activities as defined by ASCP BOC. ISBER and ASCP BOC responsibilities have been established, and an annual review by each will be performed.

Results: A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was developed and signed. The QBRS document development is completed and the QBRS credential program application process was available for applicants in January 2020.

Conclusion: ISBER has joined forces with ASCP BOC to develop a QBRS credential program. ASCP BOC is an experienced, well-recognized organization for certifying professional competency among individuals worldwide, while ISBER Workgroup participants provide content knowledge and biobanking expertise. This agreement has allowed ISBER to fully participate in the development of a global QBRS credential program, requirements of which are essential for the future of sustainable quality biobanking.

Introduction

Without high-quality specimens the goals of precision medicine might be at risk. Modern biobanking has become a complex activity including multiple institutions on a world-wide basis. The professional requirements for people working in the biobanking field have steadily increased and it is well acknowledged that well-trained repository staff are essential for assuring high quality research specimens. However no formal repository qualification program had been developed in the past.

Therefore ISBER, the leading international repository society, and ASCP BOC, an organization providing excellence in global medical laboratory professional certification joined forces to establish a shared qualification category through which individuals may earn a QBRS credential. The MoU was signed on November 2, 2017.

Process

Date	History
Summer 2015	Job analysis completed to determine the tasks performed by those in the profession
Fall 2015	ASCP BOC Board of Governors (BOG) reaches out to ISBER to determine if there is interest in developing a Qualification in Biorepository Science (QBRS) program
Spring 2016	ISBER is interested in discussing the development of a qualification in biorepository science program

Qualification Development Steps MoU Development (6 – 15 Months)

Spring 2016	ASCP BOC BOG approves concept of new credential and authorizes development contingent on MoU development Motion: <i>The Board of Governors approves the development of a qualification for Repository Technicians/Technologists provided a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is completed with ISBER that specifies the amount of financial support, marketing, and a specific timeline for reconsideration of this credential</i>
Spring 2016 – Fall 2017	MoU development and signing
Fall 2017	Announcement of new credential

In accordance with the ASCP BOC Policy Manual (Policy No. 36) and other established policies, a QBRS Workgroup ("the Workgroup") was established as a standing committee of the ASCP BOC. This Workgroup has 8 members.

All individuals considered for Workgroup appointment had to be one of the following: an experienced practicing biobanker; or an individual with expertise in the principles and practice of biobanking,

documented by prior relevant contribution to scholarship, leadership, or other relevant aspects of biobanking.

The initial members of the Workgroup were mutually agreed upon by the parties. All future potential appointees to the Workgroup must first serve as a guest on the Workgroup for at least one meeting before they are nominated for formal appointment. All nominees for appointment to the Workgroup must be approved by the Board of Governors of the ASCP BOC. The Workgroup will report to the ASCP BOC Board of Governors annually. Annually, the ASCP BOC will submit a report regarding the QBRS program to the ISBER Board of Directors.

Members of the Workgroup are responsible for developing, reviewing, and updating the biobanking item bank; performing job task analyses; and updating the examination content guidelines, eligibility requirements, and any candidate experience documentation forms that would be needed for the QBRS Program.

Results

The QBRS examination and eligibility document development began in December 2018 with the first meeting of the workgroup. The QBRS certificate program was completed and made available for application by January 2020. The exam itself became available to write online in April 2020.

Qualification Examination and Eligibility Document Development

There were several steps to exam administration that were accomplished between December 2018 and December 2019. These included establishing the final membership of the QBRS Committee/Workgroup. The workgroup then developed eligibility requirements, established name and initials for the credential, and reviewed the job task analysis, the content outline, the Introduction to item banking, and the reading list. The committee then began development of exam items as they finalized the content outline. The workgroup had follow-up meetings as they wrote and selected exam questions and set the exam standard. Applications were accepted beginning in January 2020 and the exam became available online for qualified applicants in April 2020.

Following examination, the score reports and certificates will be sent to applicants.

Discussion / Outlook

The 50 question, multiple choice timed test is self-administered on the applicant's computer on the date and time of choice within the 60 day examination period indicated on the admission notification. The examination may be attempted up to three times if initially unsuccessful. The cost is \$240. All qualification certificates awarded for the QBRS credential will be time-limited. Every three years, these QBRS certificate holders will be required to revalidate their qualification by documentation of required continuing education or other educational activities in the area of the qualification as defined by the ASCP BOC.

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