



# Guide to Maintaining Your Certification

Setting Standards  
Improving Outcomes  
Changing Lives

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Congratulations on earning your certification from ABC. You are now among an elite group of individuals who have met the rigorous demands of education, training and demonstrated competency. ABC is the leading nationally and internationally recognized standard-setting organization in the profession. We encourage you to maintain your hard-earned certification. The following information will provide you with the information you need to make sure you can succeed.

# Staying Certified— Three Things You MUST Do

## 1 Abide by the *Code of Professional Responsibility*

As an ABC certified individual you must abide by the *Code of Professional Responsibility* in order to maintain your certification. This includes abiding by the rules and policies of the board and conducting yourself in a manner that brings credit to the profession. If necessary, you must disclose any incidences of illegal, improper and/or unethical conduct of others in order to maintain the integrity of the profession. The Code is available on the ABCop.org website.

## 2 Pay Your Annual Renewal Fees

All certified individuals must pay an annual renewal fee to maintain their certification. Fees are due on December 1 for the following fiscal year and notices are sent in mid-September. If you earned your certification prior to November, your annual fee will be prorated for the first year's certification fee.

## Past-Due with your Annual Fee

**If you fail to renew your certification annually, by not paying your annual fee, you will no longer possess your ABC credential and you are not permitted to use the credential or the ABC logo in any circumstance.** You will no longer receive the *O&P Almanac, Mark of Merit* newsletter or be listed in the ABC online directory.

If you have let your certification lapse for up to two years due to non-payment but have continued to maintain your continuing education credits, you can reinstate your original certification by paying all past due and current renewal fees. All submitted fees will be applied to the oldest balance due.

If your certification has not been renewed for more than two years, you can only reinstate your revoked credential by passing the discipline specific certification exam(s) and paying the current year's annual fee. You are not required to meet the current educational and experiential requirements. Upon passing the exam(s), you will receive a new certification number, certification date and CE expiration date.

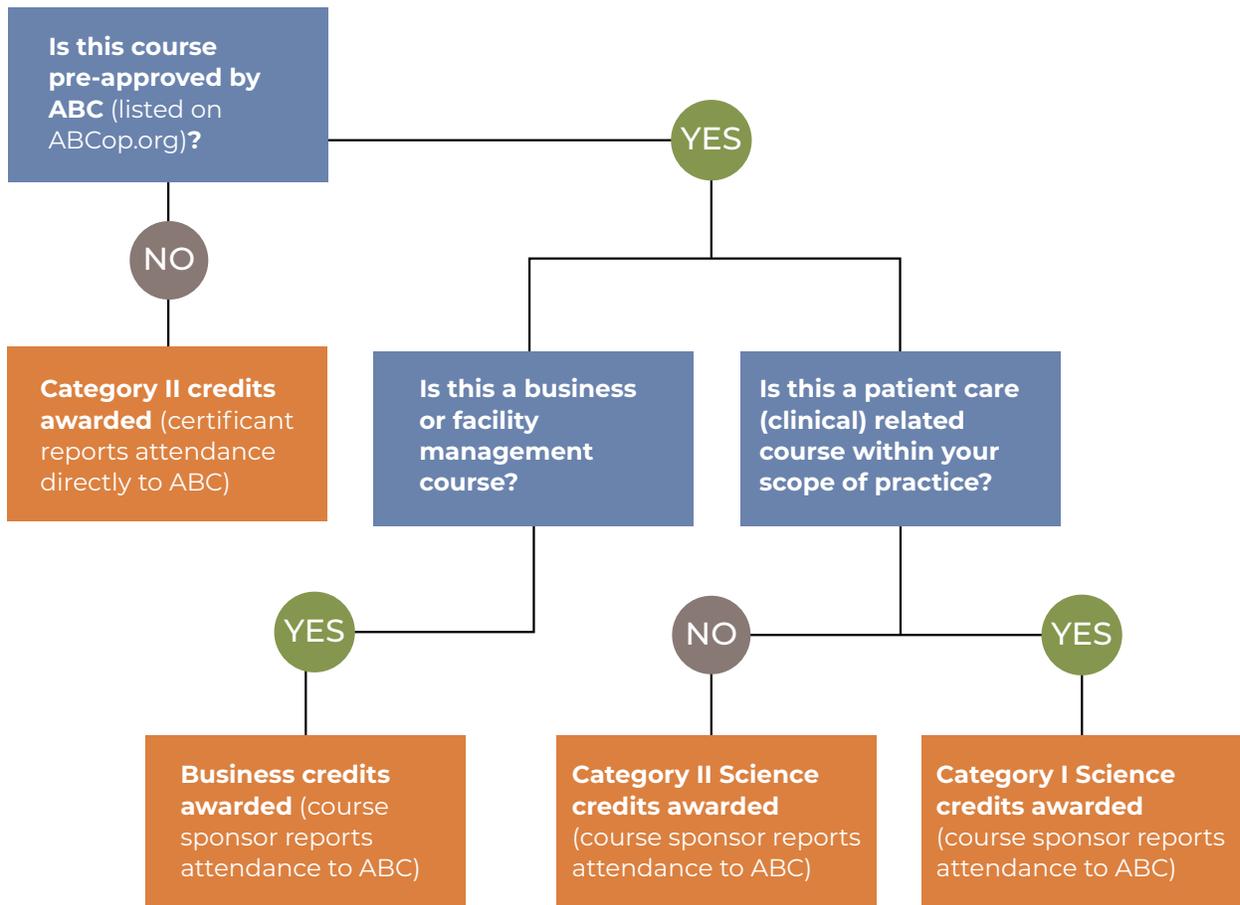
## 3 Continue Your Education

You must earn a specific number of credits during your five-year certification cycle with the intent that you keep current with new technology, techniques and advanced knowledge required to deliver the highest level of patient care.

# Earning Continuing Education Credits

Your certification is time-limited and expires every five years. During that five-year period, you must earn the required number of credits for your discipline in order to maintain your certification.

- Only credits obtained after your official ABC certification date will be counted toward satisfying the continuing education requirement in your discipline(s). Your exam date is not your certification date. Certification dates are set after the exam paperwork has been processed and approved. Your certification and expiration dates are on your certificate.



- Credits earned in your five-year cycle that exceed the minimum amount required **cannot** be applied toward future continuing education cycles. **However, if you earn the minimum required credits before the end of your five-year cycle, you can request to start your next five-year cycle early.** From that point, all credits earned will be applied in your new cycle. Applications to start a new cycle early can be found at [ABCop.org](http://ABCop.org). There is an administrative charge of \$50.
- You may not attend the same course, either live or eLearning, more than once per calendar year or more than twice during your five-year cycle and receive multiple credits.
- Organizational activities such as serving on boards, committees or councils are not eligible for continuing education credits.

- Activities related to doing your job are also not eligible for continuing education credits (e.g. managing your facility, etc.)
- Failure to satisfy your continuing education requirements within your five-year cycle will result in suspension. You will be subject to penalty credits in addition to earning the deficient credits within the following calendar year.

## Credit Types

Since ABC grants certification in orthotics, prosthetics, pedorthics and mastectomy, only educational programs specifically related to the practice of those disciplines will be granted continuing education credits.

- **Science** credits are awarded to activities that are clinically or technically based
- **Business** credits are awarded to activities designed to improve various aspects of facility management

In order to help you identify appropriate and applicable continuing education opportunities, ABC created Category I and Category II credit designations.

## Category I Credits

Category I continuing education opportunities are education opportunities that have been pre-approved by ABC for **relevance to your specific credential** (i.e. within your scope of practice). The programs must have qualified presenters or instructors and provide clear and concise learning outcomes.

- **Only approved education providers can apply for credit for this category.**
- **Education providers are required to submit proof of attendance to ABC** at the conclusion of their course or program and must do so within 30 days of the course.
- Once ABC receives the program sign-in sheets, we post the credits directly to your continuing education record within one to two weeks after the information is received.
- For programs containing both morning and afternoon sessions, credits are awarded per session. It is **your responsibility** to sign both the morning and afternoon sign-in sheets to ensure that you receive the maximum credits available for the program and to provide the sponsor with your certification number.

How can you be sure that a course is Category I for your credential?

The only way to be certain that a course is Category I and relevant to your credential is to view the courses on [ABCop.org](http://ABCop.org). Make certain that you select your discipline (e.g. orthotic fitter). The courses in that search will be Category I for you.

## Category II Credits

There are two types of Category II credit opportunities – *pre-approved Category I* courses that are OUTSIDE of your scope of practice or *NOT pre-approved*. For example, a C.Ped. attending a pre-approved ABC course that falls within the scope of practice of a CP will receive Category II credit, while the CP will receive Category I credits. In this scenario, the education provider is responsible for reporting the names of all participants to ABC, both Category I and II.

For non-pre-approved courses, such as courses and activities that do not appear on the [ABCop.org](http://ABCop.org) website, you may submit a Category II application (along with the appropriate documentation) to receive Category II credits for that activity.

Documentation includes:

- A copy of the detailed program, brochure or agenda indicating the session titles, names and qualifications of the speakers and the duration of each session.
- Proof of attendance – either a certificate of attendance, cancelled check or receipt for your registration payment or a letter of verification from the education provider.

You must submit your Category II applications within 60 days of completion of the continuing education program or activity. The Category II application is available at [ABCop.org](http://ABCop.org) and can be emailed to [mce@abcop.org](mailto:mce@abcop.org) or faxed to 703-836-0838. Processing can take between four to six weeks.

Please review your continuing education statement online to verify that your credits have been processed. This can be done by logging on to your MY ABC account with your Login ID and password.

The maximum number of Category II Science and/or Business credits allowable toward the renewal of your credential can be found in the discipline specific section of this publication.

## Category II Examples

### TEACHING/PRESENTING

If you are a lecturer or presenter at a Category I approved seminar or conference, you will receive two credits for each hour of presentation. For presentations made at non-Category I approved seminars or conferences, you will receive one credit per hour of presentation.

**Lecturers cannot sign-in for their own courses and be awarded attendee credits.** You can earn a maximum of four credits per year for lecturing.

**Teaching college level courses** can earn you one credit per semester credit, one-third credit per trimester credit and one-quarter credit per quarter credit. You can earn a maximum of four credits per year for teaching college courses.

### COLLEGE COURSES

Credits for college courses are based on the relevance to the profession and you must receive a passing grade in order to be awarded credits. Upon completion of the course, submit a copy of your transcript and the number of credits awarded will correspond to the number of college credits earned. This applies to both graduate and undergraduate courses.

### ALLIED HEALTH OR MEDICAL SEMINARS

The number of credits awarded will correspond to the number of hours of course content (excluding breaks).

### HOSPITAL TEACHING CLINICS

You can receive one credit for each hour that you attend a hospital teaching clinic. Credits can only be earned for this activity as a student, not as a lecturer or for providing patient care. You can earn a maximum of three credits per year for this activity.

### PUBLISHED ARTICLES

You will receive one credit for each full page of text, excluding references, appendices, etc., for a published article. Your article must be published in a peer-reviewed journal but is not limited to

orthotic, prosthetic or pedorthic publications. A copy of the published article must accompany your credit request. You can earn a maximum of five credits per year for this activity.

### MEDICAL TRAINING

You can receive credit for Basic Life Support, HIPAA Policy updates and other courses related to medical compliance. Credits correspond to the number of content hours.

### HUMANITARIAN WORK

You can receive recognition for your humanitarian work either in the United States or abroad. In order to apply for credits, you must document your clinical, educational or technical involvement. You can earn a maximum of five credits per year.

### RESIDENT SUPERVISION

You can receive credits for training, evaluating and mentoring residents as recognition for your promotion and enhancement of the profession. Eligibility is dependent on completing an online form with NCOPE. You can earn a maximum of four credits per year for this activity.

### EXHIBIT HALL CREDITS

You can earn credits for exhibit hall attendance if the meeting or conference has been pre-approved for Category I credits and there is a minimum of 15 exhibitors. Credits are earned as follows:

- Large Conferences – 100+ exhibitors = 3 credits
- Medium Conferences – 50-100 exhibitors = 2 credits
- Small Conferences – 15-49 exhibitors = 1 credit

In order to receive these credits, you must submit a Category II Exhibit Hall Attendance application or participate in a conference sponsored Passbook activity. **You can only earn three Category II Exhibit Hall Attendance credits per year.** Forms are available at the ABC booth (if we are exhibiting) and at [ABCop.org](http://ABCop.org).

### PRODUCT DEMONSTRATIONS

If you participate in a product demonstration by a manufacturer representative, you are eligible to receive one credit per hour. The company represen-

tative must provide you with a document verifying the date, location and duration of the event. This document must be submitted to ABC along with your Category II Application. A maximum of two credits can be earned per year for product demonstrations by an in-house vendor.

## Failure to Meet the Requirements

### Suspension

If you fail to earn your required continuing education credits by the end of your five-year CE cycle, your credential will be suspended for up to one year. While suspended, your credential is not in good standing and you cannot use your certification title and number, you will not receive any complimentary publications nor will you be included in the ABC online directory.

Failure to maintain your certification may also have serious effects on your facility's accreditation. **You cannot independently provide direct patient care and/or supervise others in the provision of care if your certification is suspended.** If you continue to work while suspended, you would be considered a Support Personnel staff member. The definition of Support Personnel can be found in the ABC *Scope of Practice*.

We will notify you of the deficient credits and the impending suspension. We also impose penalty credits if you fail to earn the minimum credits during your five-year CE cycle. Penalty credits are added to any delinquent credits and the total must be earned before suspension will be lifted.

Please refer to the credit requirements for your discipline to determine the number of penalty credits that will be applied. Your cycle will restart when your fees are paid and you have met your credits. Your next cycle will be shortened by the amount of time it takes you to satisfy the credits. The deficient and penalty credits you earn while on suspension will not be applied to your next five-year cycle.

## Reinstatement

Once you've satisfied both the penalty and deficient credits, you must remit any delinquent and current year's annual renewal fees in order to regain all rights and benefits to your ABC certification title and number. Complimentary publication subscriptions will be renewed as well. You will receive a notice acknowledging your reinstatement along with a new time-limited certificate.

## Revocation

In accordance with ABC's reinstatement policies, if you fail to earn the required credits during the one-year suspension period, your certification will be revoked.

## Appeals

If your certification has been suspended or revoked for failure to satisfy the continuing education requirements, you may appeal to the Continuing Education Committee. Appeals must be in writing, received within 30 calendar days from the date of the notification and include:

- Specific reason(s) for the appeal
- Evidence or other pertinent information refuting the original action
- Your signature if via mail or your email address of record if via email

Mail or email appeals correspondence to:

**ABC**  
**Continuing Education Appeal**  
**330 John Carlyle St., Suite 210**  
**Alexandria, VA 22314**  
**Email: [mce@abcop.org](mailto:mce@abcop.org)**

## Appeal Decisions

The committee will notify you of their decision within 45 days of receipt of request. If you are not satisfied with the committee's decision, you may submit a written appeal to the ABC Board of Directors within 14 days. You will be notified of the board's decision within 45 days of receipt of your request. The Board of Director's decision is final.

## Revocation Reinstatement Policy

If your credential was revoked after the one-year suspension for failure to satisfy the continuing education requirements, **your certification may only be reinstated by passing your discipline specific certification exam(s)**. You will not be required to meet the current educational and experiential requirements.

Once you pass the exam(s), you will receive a new certification number, certification date and CE expiration date.

## Leave of Absence

All leave of absence requests are approved by the Continuing Education Committee according to the following criteria:

- **You cannot request a leave of absence if you are currently on suspension or otherwise not considered in good standing.**
- A leave of absence will not be granted for more than two years. If you wish to recertify after a leave of absence of more than two years, you must fulfill the ABC reinstatement requirements in effect at the time you return to direct patient care activities.
- **During a leave of absence, you cannot use your credential for the purpose of direct patient care or facility management.** If you are found to be using your credential for either of these purposes, you will be subject to disciplinary action set forth by the *Code of Professional Responsibility*.
- You must continue to pay annual renewal fees. Your name will appear in the online directory with the modifier (L) designating that you are on a leave of absence.
- Your five-year CE cycle will be extended by the equivalent length of time that you are on leave of absence.

It is your responsibility to notify ABC that you wish to reactivate your credential *before* the two years has expired.

## Retiring Your Credential

You may retire your credential if you are no longer providing patient care but are not eligible for Emeritus status or if you wish to retire a credential you are no longer using. You cannot use your retired credential for professional compensation or for the benefit of an ABC accredited facility. You may use your credential with an (RET) designation following your credential if you are providing patient care for humanitarian or charitable purposes. Retired individuals are not listed in the online directory, do not receive the complimentary publications and do not pay an annual renewal fee.

## Emeritus Status

Emeritus is an inactive/retired status reserved for certified individuals who satisfy the following requirements:

- Officially retired from patient care and not engaged in any employment arrangement using the ABC credential
- Credentialed by ABC/BCP for at least 25 years
- In good standing

Once granted Emeritus status, you cannot use the ABC credential to provide patient care for professional compensation or for the benefit of an orthotic, prosthetic, pedorthic or mastectomy facility. You may use your credential with an (E) designation following your credential if you are providing patient care for humanitarian or charitable purposes.

Your annual renewal fee is no longer required once you are granted Emeritus status. You may retain your original certificate but you are no longer actively credentialed with ABC. You will receive a new certificate verifying your Emeritus status. You will continue to receive a complimentary subscription to the *O&P Almanac* and *Mark of Merit* newsletter.

## Reinstating Retired or Emeritus Credentials

If you have been granted Retired or Emeritus status and wish to reinstate your credential, you are subject to the following reinstatement policies:

- To return to active practice **within two years**, submit a request to ABC. All previous and current renewal fees must be paid at the time of reinstatement. **All outstanding continuing education credits must be completed before the two years are complete.**
- To return to active practice **after two or more years**, you must pass your discipline specific certification exam(s) as well as pay the current year's annual fee. You will not be required to meet the current educational and experiential requirements.

After passing the exam(s), you will receive a new certification number, certification date and CE expiration date.

## Continuing Education (CE) Statement

ABC assists you in tracking your continuing education credits by recording the credits that have been submitted on your behalf. Your statement summarizes your continuing education activity during your current five-year CE cycle. This information is accessible in your MY ABC account on the ABC website. If you maintain multiple credentials, CE statements for each credential are available in your account.

You must be current with your annual fees and in good standing to access this information.

- It is your responsibility to verify the accuracy of your CE Statement and monitor your progress toward completing the required credits.
- If an omission has been made, you have two years from the course date to notify us in writing. You must include the name of the education provider, course title, date and location.
- We reserve the right to remove credits that have been awarded in error and are under no obligation to honor credits that appear on your CE Statement in error.

## Continuing Education Activities Report (CEAR statement)

A CEAR statement allows you to designate a specific date range to generate a report of your continuing education credits. This could be necessary for license renewal documentation, contract applications, hospital privileges, etc.

# Continuing Education Requirements

## CERTIFIED ORTHOTIST/ PROSTHETIST

### SINGLE DISCIPLINE ORTHOTIST OR PROSTHETIST—CO OR CP

- A total of 80 credits must be earned during your five-year cycle. **All credits may be earned in Category I Science.**
- A minimum of 40 credits must be Category I Science.
- A maximum of 40 credits may be Category I or II Business and/or Category II Science.

### Failure to Satisfy CE

Certified Orthotists and/or Prosthetists who fail to satisfy the continuing education requirement within the five-year cycle must complete 16 penalty credits *in addition* to the number of credits they are deficient. These credits must be earned within the following calendar year. Of the 16 penalty credits, a minimum of 8 must be Category I Science.

### DUAL DISCIPLINE ORTHOTIST PROSTHETIST—CPO

- A total of 100 credits must be earned during your five-year cycle. **All credits may be earned in Category I Science.**
- A minimum of 50 credits must be Category I Science.
- A maximum of 50 credits may be Category I or II Business or Category II Science.
- When extending your credential from CO or CP to CPO, the certification date of your most recent credential will determine your five-year continuing education cycle. For example, if your orthotic certification was awarded in 2019 and your prosthetic certification was awarded in 2020, the effective date for your five-year cycle will be 2020.

### Failure to Satisfy CE

Certified Orthotist Prosthetists who fail to satisfy the continuing education requirement within their five-year cycle must complete 20 penalty credits *in addition* to the number of credits they are deficient. These credits must be earned within the following calendar year. Of the 20 penalty credits, a minimum of 10 must be Category I Science.

## CERTIFIED PEDORTHIST

- A total of 50 credits must be earned during your five-year cycle. **All credits may be earned in Category I Science.**
- A minimum of 25 credits must be Category I Science.
- A maximum of 25 credits may be Category I or II Business or Category II Science.

### Failure to Satisfy CE

Certified Pedorthists who fail to satisfy the continuing education requirement within the five-year cycle must complete 10 penalty credits in addition to the number of credits they are deficient. These credits must be earned within the following calendar year. Of the 10 penalty credits, a minimum of 5 must be Category I Science.

## CERTIFIED ASSISTANT

### SINGLE DISCIPLINE ASSISTANT— COA OR CPA

- A total of 50 credits must be earned during your five-year cycle. **All credits may be earned in Category I Science.**
- A minimum of 25 credits must be Category I Science.
- A maximum of 25 credits may be Category I or II Business or Category II Science.

### Failure to Satisfy CE

Certified single discipline assistants who fail to satisfy the continuing education requirement within the five-year cycle must complete 10 penalty

credits in addition to the number of credits they are deficient. These credits must be earned within the following calendar year. Of the 10 penalty credits, a minimum of 5 must be Category I Science.

## DUAL DISCIPLINE ASSISTANT—CPOA

- A total of 60 credits must be earned during your five-year cycle. **All credits may be earned in Category I Science.**
- A minimum of 30 credits must be Category I Science.
- A maximum of 30 credits may be Category I or II Business or Category II Science.

When extending your credential from COA or CPA to CPOA, the certification date of your most recent credential will determine your five-year continuing education cycle. For example, if your orthotic assistant certification was awarded in 2019 and your prosthetic assistant certification was awarded in 2020, the effective date for your five-year cycle will be 2020.

## Failure to Satisfy CE

Certified dual discipline assistants who fail to satisfy the continuing education requirement within the five-year cycle must complete 12 penalty credits in addition to the number of credits they are deficient. These credits must be earned within the following calendar year. Of the 12 penalty credits, a minimum of 6 must be Category I Science.

## CERTIFIED TECHNICIAN

### SINGLE DISCIPLINE TECHNICIAN—CTO OR CTP

- A total of 30 credits must be earned during your five-year cycle. **All credits may be earned in Category I Science.**
- A minimum of 15 credits must be Category I Science.
- A maximum of 15 credits may be Category I or II Business or Category II Science.

## Failure to Satisfy CE

Certified single discipline Technicians who fail to satisfy the continuing education requirement within the five-year cycle must complete 6 penalty credits in addition to the number of credits they are deficient. These credits must be earned within the following calendar year. Of the 6 penalty credits, a minimum of 3 must be Category I Science.

### DUAL DISCIPLINE TECHNICIAN—CTPO

- A total of 40 credits must be earned during your five-year cycle. **All credits may be earned in Category I Science.**
- A minimum of 20 credits must be Category I Science.
- A maximum of 20 credits may be Category I or II Business or Category II Science.

When extending your credential from CTO or CTP to CTPO, the certification date of your most recent credential will determine your five-year continuing education cycle. For example, if your orthotic technician certification was awarded in 2019 and your prosthetic technician certification was awarded in 2020, the effective date for your five-year cycle will be 2020.

## Failure to Satisfy CE

Certified Technicians who fail to satisfy the continuing education requirement within the five-year cycle must complete 8 penalty credits in addition to the number of credits they are deficient. These credits must be earned within the following calendar year. Of the 8 penalty credits, a minimum of 4 must be Category I Science.

## CERTIFIED FITTER

### ORTHOTIC FITTER—CFo

- A total of 50 credits must be earned during your five-year cycle. **All credits may be earned in Category I Science.**
- A minimum of 25 credits must be Category I Science.
- A maximum of 25 credits may be Category I or II Business or Category II Science.

### MASTECTOMY FITTER—CFm

- A total of 10 credits must be earned during your five-year cycle. **All credits may be earned in Category I or II Science.**
- A minimum of 5 credits must be Category I or II Science.
- A maximum of 5 credits can be Category I or II Business.

### THERAPEUTIC SHOE FITTER—CFts

- A total of 20 credits must be earned during your five-year cycle. **All credits may be earned in Category I Science.**
- A minimum of 10 credits must be Category I Science.
- A maximum of 10 credits may be Category I or II Business or Category II Science.

## Failure to Satisfy CE

Certified fitters who fail to satisfy the continuing education requirement within the five-year cycle must complete penalty credits in addition to the number of credits they are deficient. These credits must be earned within the following calendar year.

The penalty credits are as follows:

- **Orthotic Fitter**—10 penalty credits, 5 of which must be Category I Science.
- **Mastectomy Fitter**—2 penalty credits, 1 of which must be Science.
- **Therapeutic Shoe Fitter**— 4 penalty credits, 2 of which must be Category I Science.

## Utilizing the ABC Website

The ABC website offers a wealth of resources. You can verify your continuing education credit history, pay your annual fees, update your contact information, apply for a new credential, apply for facility accreditation, stay up-to-date on ABC news and events, access information on state licensure and other information related to the orthotic, prosthetic and pedorthic profession.

To access your personal account information from the ABC website, login to your MY ABC account on the home page.

For additional information, or if you have any questions about maintaining your certification, please contact us at 703-836-7114 or [mce@abcop.org](mailto:mce@abcop.org).



330 John Carlyle Street, Suite 210

Alexandria, VA 22314-5760

703.836.7114

[ABCop.org](http://ABCop.org)