

Dear Specialty Coding Professional:

If you spend part of your work day coding for physician reimbursement, I invite you to take your passion for caring, coding and your career to the next level and earn your ACS or SCP certification.

Specialty coding is not getting any easier. In fact, with all the changes in new CPT® codes and modifiers across all specialties — staying on top of coding changes to ensure accurate coding is even more critical. The increased number of coding possibilities will add new land mines to your job. If you're not up to speed, you could lose money for your physician office, instigate an audit, or worse.

There is no better way to ensure that you know the accurate codes and can navigate your way around complex specialty coding scenarios than preparing to sit for the ACS and SCP exam. Commitment to take the exam is the beginning, but it will take persistence, diligence and not taking the easy way out to succeed. But, as they say, nothing worth having comes easy.

To get started, go to www.medicalspecialtycoding.com and take the skills assessment test to gauge if you have the expertise to sit for the exam, or areas you need to focus on to prepare for the exam. You will also find a study outline and information on how to get certified. And, check out the BMSC bookstore for more resources to help you prepare with confidence for the ACS or SCP exam — including a new exam preparation study guide.

There is no better time to gear up for the exam and make sure you are prepared for the changes ahead. Make a commitment to yourself and your career. Get started on your ACS or SCP today!

Sincerely,



Tiffany Jones
Board of Medical Specialty Coding
1-800-897-4509

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Introduction

Congratulations on your decision to earn one of the Board of Medical Specialty Coding's certifications: the Advanced Coding Specialist (ACS) or the Specialty Coding Professional (SCP) credential. Specialty-specific certification can provide additional professional recognition and personal rewards.

This handbook is designed to help guide candidates through the Board of Medical Specialty Coding's (BMSC) certification process, which we've defined with the following steps:

1. Learning about the available specialties
2. Determining if you are ready to take the specialty-specific exam
3. Preparing for the exam, using appropriate study materials
4. Registering for the exam
5. Test day
6. After the examination
7. Maintaining your certification

Organization Mission and Philosophy

BMSC is an organization of coders, clinicians and compliance professionals dedicated to the evaluation, recognition and career advancement of professional medical coders within physician practice, facility and post-acute settings.

BMSC's mission is to provide specialty certification, networking and continuing education opportunities to professional medical coders. BMSC was created in response to increasing market demand for specialty credentials that focus on testing the skills of coders, not just book knowledge. BMSC provides the professional coder with new and unique opportunities for professional recognition and practice improvement.

Since being established in 2003, thousands of candidates have taken the BMSC exams across the United States and beyond.

Our exams are created by coders for coders. They are skills-based exams that focus on your ability to do the job. We gladly welcome these skilled coders into our certification circle.

A Quick Look at the Process

Specialty coders who feel they are advanced based on their daily work skills and have three years of coding experience or more should strongly consider taking an ACS exam. Our candidates must have a high school diploma and we recommend at least two years of specialty coding before trying for a SCP specialty certification. For more information on this subject, turn to Eligibility and Qualifications section of this handbook.

To apply

Download a form at www.medicalspecialtycoding.com

Call 1-800-897-4509 or 1-301-287-2660

Sign up at numerous conferences

Fax to 1-301-287-2914

Where can I take the exam?

At conferences: Visit www.medicalspecialtycoding.com for current offerings.

In your office: See our Individual Proctoring Protocol information in this handbook.

Online: BMSC exams are available online. Please check the BMSC website for more information.

Registration fees

The fee for an ACS certification exam is \$325 and the ACS recertification exam is \$199. The fee for the SCP certification exam is \$249 and the SCP recertification exam is \$129. Registration fees cover examination registration costs, administration and credential management. **The cost of the exam also includes a FREE retake of each exam if you do not pass on the first try.**

At the exam

Bring your books!!

- For the ACS and SCP exams, you must bring your **current CPT® manual, ICD-9 manual and HCPCS Level II book.**
- For the ACS-AN and SCP-AN exams, you should also bring your **ASA Crosswalk and ASA RVU guides.**
- ACS-EM candidates need only bring the **CPT® manual** and will be provided with an **audit tool.**

All exam takers (with the exception of ACS-EM candidates) will be given the 1995 and 1997 Guidelines at a testing site.

The passing grade is 80% correct for both the ACS certifying and recertification exam. The passing grade is 70% correct for both the SCP certifying and recertification exam.

ACS Candidates who pass the exam

Congratulations!! You are an Advanced Coding Specialist. To maintain certification, you will need to:

1. Complete 12 CEUs within 12 months of taking your exam. For information on BMSC CEUs or how to submit and request CEU approval, go to page 17 of this handbook.
2. In the second year of your certification, you will sit for a recertification exam that tests code changes in the 18-24 months since you first took your exam. This exam is much shorter than the certification exam, is taken over 90 minutes and is an objective test.

Maintenance of the credential continues in this fashion on an alternating yearly basis.

SCP Candidates who pass the exam

Congratulations!! You are a Specialty Coding Professional. To maintain certification, you will need to:

1. Complete 10 CEUs within 12 months of taking your exam. For information on BMSC CEUs or how to submit and request CEU approval, go to page 29 of this handbook.
2. In the second year of your certification, you will sit for a recertification exam that tests code changes in the 18-24 months since you first took your exam. This exam is much shorter than the certification exam, is taken over 90 minutes and is an objective test.

Candidates who don't pass on their first attempt are allowed to retake the exam again for free.

Relax! You have a FREE retake.

Interested in learning more?

Email: info@medicalspecialtycoding.com

Phone: 1-800-897-4509
1-301-287-2660

Fax: 1-301-287-2914

Mail: Two Washingtonian Center
9737 Washingtonian Blvd., Ste. 100
Gaithersburg, MD 20878-7364

Web: www.medicalspecialtycoding.com

Questions? Want to become involved or offer advice on improving BMSC?
Contact the Assistant Director:

Tiffany Jones
1-301-287-2283
tjones@medicalspecialtycoding.com

1 About ACS Certification

The Specialties

Physician and facility coders who successfully pass the certification examination will be certified by BMSC and will earn their Advanced Coding Specialist (ACS) in their specialty area.

Certified coders are in high demand for their ability to ensure appropriate reimbursement while reducing risk of liability. Earning the ACS certification indicates specialty-specific coding knowledge and experience. The following ACS credentials are available:

- Anesthesia (ACS-AN)
- Cardiology (ACS-CA)
- Emergency Medicine (ACS-ED)
- Evaluation & Management Auditing (ACS-EM)
- Family Practice/Pediatrics (ACS-FP)
- Gastroenterology (ACS-GI)
- General Surgery (ACS-GS)
- Obstetrics/Gynecology (ACS-OB)
- Orthopedics (ACS-OR)
- Pain Management (ACS-PM)
- Radiology (ACS-RA)
- Urology (ACS-UR)

More credentials are being considered for development. Please email us at info@medicalspecialtycoding.com with your recommendations.

Benefits

Your specialty physicians seek board certification when they desire to be recognized as proficient in their practice area. Now you can be board certified too!

This exam is the first and only to be developed for coders by coders. It tests skills and shows your proficiency. In a June 2006 survey by BMSC, we discovered that 1 in 5 of our surveyed certified coders had received a raise or bonus after certification!!

ACS-certified coders are considered leaders in the industry because they:

- Utilize their specialty knowledge and experience to better interact with physicians and providers
- Understand both basic and complex coding principles and guidelines
- Ensure their providers receive appropriate reimbursement
- Provide direction and instruction to less experienced coders in the workplace
- Demonstrate their coding skills daily

Your coding credential is a demonstration of your coding proficiency. As you become more experienced in the practical requirements of specialty coding, advanced specialty-specific certification can provide additional professional and personal recognition and reward.

Many coders feel that certification makes them more effective when working with both clinicians and payers. Certified coders are generally better compensated and receive greater advancement opportunities. For job applicants, certification can provide a competitive advantage, and providers are increasingly requiring coding certification as a condition of employment.

2 Determining if you are ready to take the ACS Specialty-Specific Exam

Eligibility and Qualifications

The ACS exam assesses your proficiency in coding specifically for your specialty.

To be eligible to sit for any Advanced Coding Specialist (ACS) certification, candidates must have earned a high school diploma from a United States high school, or have an equivalent background.

Advanced coders are not necessarily defined by years of experience, education or other credentials, therefore BMSC does not put a number on the years of experience a coder must have in order to sit for our exams.

Our most successful candidates usually have *at least* three years coding in their specialty.

If you believe that your combination of education, experience and expertise qualifies you as an advanced coder in your specialty, then we invite you to sit for the relevant advanced specialty certification examination.

As a candidate, you should possess a clear understanding of the following, as it pertains to your specialty:

- CPT®, HCPCS Level II and ICD-9-CM coding conventions and guidelines
- Medical Terms and Terminology
- Category II, III and Unlisted Codes
- Medicine and Diagnostic Procedures
- Evaluation and Management Coding
- Clinical Laboratory Services
- Billing and Payor Issues
- Anesthesia
- Surgical Procedures
- ABNs
- HIPAA Regulations
- Fraud and Abuse Issues
- The Medicare Appeal Process

BMSC **does not discriminate** against any applicant. All applicants for examinations will be judged only on published criteria for eligibility.

Examination Philosophy

BMSC credential exams are designed to test the day-in, day-out coding skills of the professional coder. As a result, many coding scenarios appear on the exam, as well as the crucial subject areas of medical anatomy and terminology. **This is the only nationwide certification exam created by coders for coders.** Our goal isn't to stump you with trick questions on procedures you will likely never see in your office or facility, but rather to ensure – for you and for your employer – that you have, in fact, achieved advanced proficiency in your chosen areas.

Applying for an Exam

To begin your process, review the information in this handbook. If you feel you are ready to begin this process and have met BMSC's recommended minimum requirements, submit an application for your desired specialty. Application forms are available at the BMSC website and in this handbook. We will also mail applications, if so desired.

Any candidate applying via mail is encouraged to send the application via registered, trackable mail. Please allow four to six weeks of processing time from the time you mail the application.

However you apply, you will receive an e-mail confirmation from BMSC that your registration has been received.

3 Preparing for ACS certification

Study Process and Materials

Because the ACS exams are skill-based, a coder doing excellent work every day should be prepared for the exam without the need for extra studying. We do, however, recognize people's desires for reference materials to brush up on skills and concepts.

We offer specialty-specific study outlines on our website to help aide candidates in seeing what topics will specifically be addressed. In addition, on our website we offer several skill-based questions similar to ones that will be on the test per specialty that can be downloaded. Download these and see how you do!

BMSC has study guides to assist with test preparation. Please check out our online store: at www.medicalspecialtycoding.com for more details on what references are currently available.

Test Format

All ACS exams are four-hour tests. They are mainly scenario-based, meaning that you are given a variety of scenarios that ask you to code them as you would on the job. They are objective tests that may consist of a mix of true/false, matching, fill-in-the-blank, and multiple choice. Each specialty exam is between 90-140 questions.

All ACS exams are "open book." **You must bring the following resources with you to the exam to have all the resources needed to take the test:**

- Photo Identification
- Current ICD-9-CM book
- Current CPT® book
- Current HCPCS book

For **Advanced Coding Specialist – Anesthesia (ACS-AN)** candidates, you are also allowed to bring the above resources and the following:

- ASA Crosswalk book. (Note: Only book versions of the Crosswalk are allowed – you will not be able to bring in any laptops or handheld devices with software on them).
- ASA Relative Value Guide

For **Advanced Coding Specialist - Evaluation and Management Auditing (ACS-EM)** candidates, **you will only need your CPT® book** for the exam.

While sticky notes attached to, or writing inside of, any of the above books is allowed, loose leaf papers are not allowed. You may not share reference books with other test takers and extra copies of the above books will not be provided. Please bring extra writing utensils you may need. Scrap paper will be provided for candidates to use during the exam. A passing grade is 80% correct.

Recertification Exams

The number of questions differs per specialty because the recertification exam only tests on code changes in the 18-24 months since you have earned your original certification. As a result, the length of the test will be much shorter than your original exam, and the time window is 90 minutes. It is an objective test.

The resources allowed for the recertification exam are the same as those allowed for the certifying exam. A passing grade is 80% correct.

4 Registering for the ACS examination

Fees

Initial Registration Fee for ACS Certification Exam — \$325.00

Registration Fee for Recertification Exam — \$199.00

Registration fee covers examination administration and credential management.

Registration forms can be found at the back of this handbook.

Selecting a Testing Location

Taking the Test at a Conference

Many candidates like to attend conferences or educational events to ensure that they have the knowledge needed to take a BMSC certification exam. While BMSC encourages this practice, please keep in mind that no conference is designed to train you to pass a given test. However, many conferences, especially the *Advanced Symposia*, will provide the latest information on coding in your specialty.

If you would like to take advantage of this education, then this route may be for you. The BMSC exam is a separate registration (and fee) from the conference itself.

To register for a certification exam at a conference, simply visit the Calendar on our website to view current offerings, click on the conference you are interested in, and register for BOTH the conference and the exam. You may also complete the ACS exam registration form in the back of this handbook and fax it to 1-301-287-2914.

Taking the Test Online

If you take your exam online, you will still need a proctor. The process works like this:

1. The candidate registers for his exam and indicates on the registration form that he or she would like to take it online.
2. BMSC processes your registration and emails the proctor a UserID and Password and log-in instructions for the candidate to use during the exam.
3. The proctor and candidate have 30 days (from when the proctor receives the log-in instructions) to decide on the date the candidate will sit for the exam.
4. The candidate and the proctor get together on the designated exam day. The proctor logs the candidate into the exam with the UserID and Password provided.
5. The candidate takes his exam online. Once the candidate is completed, the candidate clicks the submit button and the exam is electronically graded.
6. The candidate's exam results are emailed directly to candidate (sent to the email address the candidate provided on the exam registration form).

Special testing accommodations

Please contact BMSC if you have a situation that might require special testing accommodations.

5 Test Day

Candidates should report to the testing room 30 minutes before the exam start time to be signed in and have your reference materials checked. A government-issued photo ID is required for sign-in. This ID should include your photo and recent signature. Pencils and scratch paper will be provided (onsite only). Once you enter the testing room, you may not leave until the exam has started.

Before the exam is administered, the proctor will review the rules to follow while the test is in progress.

ACS certification exams are four hours long. There are no scheduled bathroom breaks during the exam. If a candidate leaves for the bathroom, the break is allowed, but time does not stop.

Unallowed behavior

Candidates who partake in any of the following types of behavior will be dismissed from the test-taking venue and the scores will not be allowed. Examples of misconduct include, but are not limited to:

- Using electronic communication equipment (e.g., PDAs, calculators, cell phones);
- Giving or receiving help during the examination;
- Committing fraud by attempting to take the exam for someone else;
- Using notes or aids that are not allowed;
- Attempting to copy or remove test materials;
- Engaging in abusive, disturbing or uncooperative behavior.

Testing Issues

Occasionally, testing irregularities, including but not limited to administrative errors, unauthorized availability of test content or disruptions in test administration, occur and must be addressed.

If a testing issue occurs, BMSC will perform an investigation. BMSC may opt to score the test or cancel the test score. When appropriate, BMSC will give affected test-takers the opportunity to retake the exam as soon as possible and free of charge. Affected candidates will be told the reason for the cancellation of their test and options for retest. Appeals processes do not apply to testing irregularities.

Challenges, Complaints and Appeals

Challenges, complaints and appeals may be submitted in writing no more than 30 days after the examination is taken by a candidate. All challenges must be submitted in writing and include supporting documentation or evidence. Please send challenges to:

BMSC
Two Washingtonian Center
9737 Washingtonian Blvd., Ste. 100
Gaithersburg, MD 20878-7364

The burden of proof for challenges is borne by the applicant and all decisions on challenges, complaints or appeals made by BMSC and its advisory boards are final.

Complaints or appeals will not be considered after 30 days.

BMSC will not regrade an entire exam. You must have specific questions in order to challenge a question on an exam.

6 After the ACS Examination

Test results for all candidates are sent to candidates approximately six weeks after BMSC has received your exam.

Successful candidates:

Congratulations! You are now an Advanced Coding Specialist! You will:

- Receive a certificate of recognition of their status as an Advanced Coding Specialist in their relevant specialty
- Receive a credential lapel pin
- Be listed as an Advanced Coding Specialist in our Certified Coder Directory at www.medicalspecialtycoding.com
- At your discretion, have your supervisor officially notified of their achievement by the Executive Director

Unsuccessful candidates will:

- Receive an invitation to re-take the ACS examination one additional time, **for no additional fee**, within 60 days of their receipt of the result letter.

Feedback on Your Experience

You will receive an email asking you to complete a Post-Exam survey. Your answers to this survey will help us gauge how well we, and the exam, are serving you and how well you feel you were tested on coding conventions.

Release of Information

All candidates who become certified coders may have their names published in a newsletter, website or other public forum.

Information on your exam and scores will not be released to an outside party.

Revoking certification

Certification may be revoked if any of the following scenarios are met:

- The certified coder had supplied false information or supporting documentation.
- The certified coder has engaged in inappropriate conduct during the exam administration or after.
- The certified coder fails to comply with BMSC's Code of Conduct.

7 Maintaining your ACS Certification

Congratulations! You've become certified and have proven to your colleagues that you know your specialty. Your certification is important to you, and it's time to think about the maintenance process. Because BMSC's exams focus on skill-based testing, skill maintenance is built into a revolving process:

Year 1: Initial Certification

Year 2: Submit CEUs for Renewal

Year 3: Recertification

Year 4: Submit CEUs for Renewal

And so on...

In the first year after your initial exam, you will need to maintain your credential by earning 12 Continuing Education Units (CEUs).

If you earned your certification two years (or more) ago and have already renewed your certification by earning 12 or more CEUs, then the next step is to sit for your recertification exam.

Renewing Your Credential

To maintain your certification as an Advanced Coding Specialist, BMSC requires that you complete 12 Continuing Education Units (CEUs) during a renewal year. Your completed Application for Renewal with all required documentation of your continuing education is due with a payment of \$89.00 to BMSC on or before the anniversary of your certification (renewal date). BMSC will send you reminder emails that your renewal date is nearing.

Please Note: Do not submit CEUs to BMSC as you earn them. Your CEU and supporting documentation should be sent together before your certification anniversary date.

CEU applications and payments should be sent to:

Board of Medical Specialty Coding
Two Washingtonian Center
9737 Washingtonian Blvd., Ste. 100
Gaithersburg, MD 20878-7364

How to Earn CEUs

There are three ways you can earn CEUs:

Educational Events
Publications
Teaching or Presenting

Educational Events (seminars, conferences, workshops, audio seminars, etc.)

A list of events (both live conferences and audio/web seminars) that have been pre-approved for CEUs can be found on the Events section of our website.

PLEASE NOTE: Videos, audio CDs, online education and similar formats are considered to be events for purposes of CEU calculation and documentation requirements.

General Coding Educational Events

BMSC awards 1 CEU per 2 educational hours attended

Relevant Specialty Educational Events

BMSC awards 1 CEU per 1 educational hour attended

BMSC will give additional weight to certain specialty education relevant to a coder's specific ACS credential. An orthopedic-certified Advanced Coding Specialist (ACS-OR), for example, who attends an orthopedic coding symposium will earn 1 CEU per 1 hour of advanced orthopedic coding education. (Whereas all other ACS-certified coders would earn 1 CEU per 2 hours of education in this scenario.)

CEUs in this category are awarded for educational content only, not for social/networking events, meals or general sessions.

To submit pre-approved CEUs, simply include them in the Continuing Education Record portion of the Application for Certification Renewal. You only need to provide the activity date, name, format, indicate its pre-approval status and the number of earned CEUs. Please include a copy of your Certificate of Attendance with your Renewal Application.

To submit non-pre-approved CEUs, please include the following documentation for each event:

- Copy of the course agenda, including course objectives and name of sponsoring organization
- Name of presenter/s (include credentials, if applicable)
- Number of hours dedicated to coding education
- Copy of your certificate of attendance or completion

Your renewal application is due by the anniversary of your certification date (date on your certificate).

Publications

The following publications are examples of pre-approved Continuing Education Units (CEUs):

Anesthesia and Pain Coder's Pink Sheet

Medical Practice Coding Pro

Orthopedic Coder's Pink Sheet

You can earn CEUs from publications in the following ways:

Review an article you've read in a BMSC-approved publication, and in writing, state what you've learned and how it will change the way you code and bill claims for your practice. Provide CPT®, HCPCS and ICD-9 codes as appropriate. Include the name of publication, article title, and date of publication on your submission.

Review a scenario (for example, one found in the *Coder's Pink Sheets*) and describe, in writing, what you've learned from the coding scenario and how you can apply what you've learned to your practice. Provide codes as appropriate. Include the name of the publication, date of publication, page numbers of scenarios you are referencing on your submission.

BMSC awards 1 CEU per review or scenario.

If you would like to submit a scenario or article review from a publication that has not been pre-approved by BMSC, please include a copy of the title page of the publication and article/entry from which you've developed the submitted scenario.

Teaching and Presenting

Developing, presenting and/or teaching relevant content will be approved for double-weighted CEU credit based on the event CEU rate on a case-by-case basis by BMSC. Please submit the following to BMSC to have your presentation approved for CEUs:

Please submit the following:

- Curriculum outline
- Resources used in the presentation
- Brief synopsis of the educational event (date, timeframe, audience, etc.)

Recertification

Recertification examinations will test your knowledge of coding and relevant clinical, reimbursement/compliance changes affecting your specialty since your original certification date (or your last recertification date).

The recertification exam is a short objective exam. You will have 90 minutes to complete the exam.

As with the original certification examination, you must pass your recertification examination with a score of 80% or higher.

The cost of the ACS recertification exam is \$199. If you have not received an email from BMSC approximately three months prior to your recertification date (see your certificate for the month and date), please notify us at info@medicalspecialtycoding.com, in case our email records are out-of-date.

As with your initial certification examination, you may opt to take your recertification test in your office online or at a pre-approved conference event. If opting to take your recertification test at your own office, you must nominate a proctor. Your proctor may NOT be a relative and also may NOT report to you on the job. Your proctor MUST be present when you sit for your examination and must immediately return your completed test to BMSC in the envelope provided.

The same proctoring policies will be enforced, and all applicants must adhere to examination pre-registration procedures.

Recertification examinations must be completed and returned to BMSC before your 2nd (4th, 6th, etc.) anniversary date. Recertification candidates who do not pass on their first attempt may re-take the recertification examination a second time within 60 days of receipt of their results letter at no additional cost.

Upon successful recertification, credentialed coders will receive a gold seal — indicating the year of recertification — to be placed on their ACS certificate.

1 About SCP Certification

The Specialties

Physician and facility coders who successfully pass the certification examination will be certified by BMSC and will earn their Specialty Coding Professional (SCP) in their specialty area.

Certified coders are in high demand for their ability to ensure appropriate reimbursement while reducing risk of liability. Earning the SCP certification indicates specialty-specific coding knowledge and experience. The following SCP credentials are available:

- Anesthesia (SCP-AN)
- Cardiology (SCP-CA)
- Emergency Medicine (SCP-ED)
- Family Practice/Pediatrics (SCP-FP)
- Gastroenterology (SCP-GI)
- General Surgery (SCP-GS)
- Obstetrics/Gynecology (SCP-OB)
- Orthopedics (SCP-OR)
- Pain Management (SCP-PM)
- Radiology (SCP-RA)
- Urology (SCP-UR)

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- Understand both basic and complex coding principles and guidelines
- Ensure their providers receive appropriate reimbursement
- Provide direction and instruction to less experienced coders in the workplace
- Demonstrate their coding skills daily

Your coding credential is a demonstration of your coding proficiency. As you become more experienced in the practical requirements of specialty coding, specialty-specific certification can provide additional professional and personal recognition and reward.

Many coders feel that certification makes them more effective when working with both clinicians and payers. Certified coders are generally better compensated and receive greater advancement opportunities. For job applicants, certification can provide a competitive advantage, and providers are increasingly requiring coding certification as a condition of employment.

2 Determining if you are ready to take the SCP Specialty-Specific Exam

Eligibility and Qualifications

The SCP exam assesses your proficiency in coding specifically for your specialty.

To be eligible to sit for any Specialty Coding Professional (SCP) certification, candidates must have earned a high school diploma from a United States high school, or have an equivalent background.

Experienced coders are not necessarily defined by years of experience, education or other credentials, therefore BMSC does not put a number on the years of experience a coder must have in order to sit for our exams.

Our most successful SCP candidates usually have at least two years coding in their specialty.

If you believe that your combination of education, experience and expertise qualifies you as an experienced coder in your specialty, then we invite you to sit for the relevant specialty certification examination.

As a candidate, you should possess a clear understanding of the following, as it pertains to your specialty:

- CPT®, HCPCS Level II and ICD-9-CM coding conventions and guidelines
- Medical Terms and Terminology
- Category II, III and Unlisted Codes
- Medicine and Diagnostic Procedures
- Evaluation and Management Coding and 1995 and 1997 Documentation Guidelines
- Basic Laboratory Services, if applicable to specialty
- Basic Billing and Payor Issues
- Basic Surgical Procedures, if applicable to specialty

BMSC **does not discriminate** against any applicant. All applicants for examinations will be judged only on published criteria for eligibility.

Examination Philosophy

BMSC credential exams are designed to test the day-in, day-out coding skills of the professional coder. As a result, many coding scenarios appear on the exam, as well as the crucial subject areas of medical anatomy and terminology. **This is the only nationwide certification exam created by coders for coders.** Our goal isn't to stump you with trick questions on procedures you will likely never see in your office or facility, but rather to ensure – for you and for your employer – that you have, in fact, achieved a high-level of proficiency in your chosen specialty.

Applying for an Exam

To begin your process, review the information in this handbook. If you feel you are ready to begin this process and have met BMSC's recommended minimum requirements, submit an application for your desired specialty. Application forms are available at the BMSC website and in this handbook. We will also mail applications, if so desired.

Any candidate applying via mail is encouraged to send the application via registered, trackable mail. Please allow four to six weeks of processing time from the time you mail the application.

However you apply, you will receive an e-mail confirmation from BMSC that your registration has been received.

3 Preparing for SCP Certification

Study Process and Materials

Because the SCP exams are skill-based, a coder doing excellent work every day should be prepared for the exam without the need for extra studying. We do, however, recognize people's desires for reference materials to brush up on skills and concepts.

We offer specialty-specific study outlines on our website to help aide candidates in seeing what topics will specifically be addressed. In addition, on our website we offer several skill-based questions similar to ones that will be on the test per specialty that can be downloaded. Download these and see how you do!

BMSC has study guides to assist with test preparation. Please check out our website: www.medicalspecialtycoding.com for more details on what references are currently available.

Test Format

All SCP exams are 2 1/2 hours long. They are mainly scenario-based, meaning that you are given a variety of scenarios that ask you to code them as you would on the job. They are objective tests that may consist of a mix of true/false, matching, fill-in-the-blank, and multiple choice. Each specialty exam has approximately 50 questions.

All SCP exams are "open book." **You must bring the following resources with you to the exam to have all the resources needed to take the test:**

- Photo Identification
- Current ICD-9-CM book
- Current CPT® book
- Current HCPCS book

For **Specialty Coding Professional – Anesthesia (SCP-AN)** candidates, you are also allowed to bring the above resources and the following:

- ASA Crosswalk book. (Note: Only book versions of the Crosswalk are allowed – you will not be able to bring in any laptops or handheld devices with software on them).
- ASA Relative Value Guide

While sticky notes attached to, or writing inside of, any of the above books is allowed, loose leaf papers are not allowed. You may not share reference books with other test takers and extra copies of the above books will not be provided. Please bring extra writing utensils you may need. Scrap paper will be provided for candidates to use during the exam.

A passing grade for the SCP exam is 70% correct or higher.

Recertification Exams

The number of questions differs per specialty because the recertification exam only tests on code changes in the 18-24 months since you have earned your original certification. As a result, the length of the test will be much shorter than your original exam, and the time window is 90 minutes. It is an objective test.

The resources allowed for the recertification exam are the same as those allowed for the certifying exam. A passing grade is 70% correct.

4 Registering for the SCP examination

Fees

Initial Registration Fee for SCP Certification Exam - \$249.00

Registration Fee for Recertification Exam - \$129.00

Registration fee covers examination administration and credential management.

Selecting a Testing Location

Taking the Test at a Conference

Many candidates like to attend conferences or educational events to ensure that they have the knowledge needed to take a BMSC certification exam. While BMSC encourages this practice, please keep in mind that no conference is designed to train you to pass a given test. However, many conferences, especially offered by our education partner DecisionHealth, will provide the latest information on coding in your specialty.

If you would like to take advantage of this education, then this route may be for you. The BMSC exam is a separate registration (and fee) from the conference itself.

To register for a certification exam at a conference, simply visit the Calendar on our website to view current offerings, click on the conference you are interested in, and register for BOTH the conference and the exam. You may also complete the exam registration form in the back of this handbook and fax it to 1-301-287-2914.

Taking the Test Online

If you take your exam online, you will still need a proctor. The process works like this:

1. The candidate registers for his exam and indicates on the registration form that he would like to take it online .
2. BMSC processes your registration and emails the proctor a UserID and Password and log-in instructions for the candidate to use during the exam.
3. The proctor and candidate have 30 days (from when the proctor receives the log-in instructions) to decide on the date the candidate will sit for the exam.
4. The candidate and the proctor get together on the designated exam day. The proctor logs the candidate into the exam with the UserID and Password provided.
5. The candidate takes his exam online. Once the candidate is completed, the candidate clicks the submit button and the exam is electronically graded.
6. The candidate's exam results are emailed directly to candidate (sent to the email address the candidate provided on the exam registration form).

Special testing accommodations

Please contact BMSC if you have a situation that might require special testing accommodations.

5 Test Day

Candidates should report to the testing room 30 minutes before the exam start time to be signed in and have your reference materials checked. A government-issued photo ID is required for sign-in. This ID should include your photo and recent signature. Pencils and scratch paper will be provided (onsite only). Once you enter the testing room, you may not leave until the exam has started.

Before the exam is administered, the proctor will review the rules to follow while the test is in progress.

SCP certification exams are 2 1/2 hours long. There are no scheduled bathroom breaks during the exam. If a candidate leaves for the bathroom, the break is allowed, but time does not stop.

Unallowed behavior

Candidates who partake in any of the following types of behavior will be dismissed from the test-taking venue and the scores will not be allowed. Examples of misconduct include, but are not limited to:

- Using electronic communication equipment (e.g., PDAs, calculators, cell phones)
- Giving or receiving help during the examination
- Committing fraud by attempting to take the exam for someone else
- Using notes or aids that are not allowed
- Attempting to copy or remove test materials
- Engaging in abusive, disturbing or uncooperative behavior.

Testing Issues

Occasionally, testing irregularities, including but not limited to administrative errors, unauthorized availability of test content or disruptions in test administration, occur and must be dealt with.

If a testing issue occurs, BMSC will perform an investigation. BMSC may opt to score the test or cancel the test score. When appropriate, BMSC will give affected test-takers the opportunity to retake the exam as soon as possible and free of charge. Affected candidates will be told the reason for the cancellation of their test and options for retest. Appeals processes do not apply to testing irregularities.

Challenges, Complaints and Appeals

Challenges, complaints and appeals may be submitted in writing no more than 30 days after the examination is taken by a candidate. All challenges must be submitted in writing and include supporting documentation or evidence. Please send challenges to:

BMSC
Two Washingtonian Center
9737 Washingtonian Blvd., Ste. 100
Gaithersburg, MD 20878-7364

The burden of proof for challenges is borne by the applicant and all decisions on challenges, complaints or appeals made by BMSC and its advisory boards are final.

Complaints or appeals will not be considered after 30 days.

BMSC will not regrade an entire exam. You must have specific questions in order to challenge a question on an exam.

6 After the SCP examination

Test results for all candidates are sent to candidates approximately six weeks after BMSC has received your exam.

Successful candidates:

Congratulations! You are now an Specialty Coding Professional, and you will:

- Receive a certificate of recognition of their status as an Specialty Coding Professional in their relevant specialty
- Receive a credential lapel pin
- Will be listed as an Specialty Coding Professional in our Certified Coder Directory at www.medicalspecialtycoding.com
- May, at their discretion, have their supervisor officially notified of their achievement by the Executive Director

Unsuccessful candidates:

- Receive an invitation to re-take the SCP examination one additional time, **for no additional fee**, within 60 days of their receipt of the performance report.

Feedback on Your Experience

You will receive an email asking you to complete a Post-Exam survey. Your answers to this survey will help us gauge how well we, and the exam, are serving you and how well you feel you were tested on coding conventions.

Release of Information

All candidates who become certified coders may have their names published in a newsletter, website or other public forum.

Information on your exam and scores will not be released to an outside party.

Revoking certification

Certification may be revoked if any of the following scenarios are met:

- The certified coder had supplied false information or supporting documentation.
- The certified coder has engaged in inappropriate conduct during the exam administration or after.
- The certified coder fails to comply with BMSC's Code of Conduct.

7 Maintaining your SCP Certification

Congratulations! You've become certified and have proven to your colleagues that you know your specialty. Your certification is important to you, and it's time to think about the maintenance process. Because BMSC's exams focus on skill-based testing, skill maintenance is built into a revolving process:

Year 1: Initial Certification

Year 2: Submit CEUs for Renewal

Year 3: Recertification

Year 4: Submit CEUs for Renewal

And so on ...

In the first year after your initial exam, you will need to maintain your credential by earning 10 Continuing Education Units (CEUs).

If you earned your certification two years (or more) ago and have already renewed your certification by earning 10 or more CEUs, then the next step is to sit for your recertification exam.

Renewing Your Credential

To maintain your certification as an Specialty Coding Professional, BMSC requires that you complete 10 Continuing Education Units (CEUs) during a renewal year. Your completed Application for Renewal with all required documentation of your continuing education is due with a payment of \$69.00 to BMSC on or before the anniversary of your certification (renewal date). BMSC will send you reminder emails that your renewal date is nearing.

Please Note: Do not submit CEUs to BMSC as you earn them. Your CEU and supporting documentation should be sent together before your certification anniversary date.

CEU applications and payments should be sent to:

Board of Medical Specialty Coding
Two Washingtonian Center
9737 Washingtonian Blvd., Ste. 100
Gaithersburg, MD 20878-7364

How to Earn CEUs

There are three ways you can earn CEUs:

Educational Events
Publications
Teaching or Presenting

Educational Events (seminars, conferences, workshops, audio seminars, etc.)

A list of events (both live conferences and audio/web seminars) that have been pre-approved for CEUs can be found on the SCP Calendar of our website.

PLEASE NOTE: Videos, audio CDs, online education and similar formats are considered to be events for purposes of CEU calculation and documentation requirements.

General Coding Educational Events

BMSC awards 1 CEU per 2 educational hours attended

Relevant Specialty Educational Events

BMSC awards 1 CEU per 1 educational hour attended

BMSC will give additional weight to certain specialty education relevant to a coder's specific SCP credential. An orthopedic-certified Specialty Coding Professional (SCP-OR), for example, who attends an orthopedic coding symposium will earn 1 CEU per 1 hour of orthopedic coding education. (Whereas all other SCP-certified specialties earn 1 CEU per 2 hours of education in this scenario.)

CEUs in this category are awarded for educational content only, not for social/networking events, meals or general sessions.

To submit pre-approved CEUs, simply include them in the Continuing Education Record portion of the Application for Certification Renewal. You only need to provide the activity date, name, format, indicate its pre-approval status and the number of earned CEUs. Please include a copy of your Certificate of Attendance with your Renewal Application.

To submit non-pre-approved CEUs, please include the following documentation for each event:

- Copy of the course agenda, including course objectives and name of sponsoring organization
- Name of presenter/s (include credentials, if applicable)
- Number of hours dedicated to coding education
- Copy of your certificate of attendance or completion

Your renewal application is due by the anniversary of your certification date (date on your certificate).

Publications

The following publications are pre-approved for Continuing Education Units (CEUs):

Anesthesia and Pain Coder's Pink Sheet
 Medical Practice Coding Pro
 Orthopedic Coder's Pink Sheet

You can earn CEUs from publications in the following ways:

Review an article you've read in a BMSC-approved publication, and in writing, state what you've learned and how it will change the way you code and bill claims for your practice. Provide CPT®, HCPCS and ICD-9 codes as appropriate. Include the name of publication, article title, and date of publication on your submission.

Review a scenario (for example, one found in the *Coder's Pink Sheets*) and describe, in writing, what you've learned from the coding scenario and how you can apply what you've learned to your practice. Provide codes as appropriate. Include the name of the publication, date of publication, page numbers of scenarios you are referencing on your submission.

BMSC awards 1 CEU per review or scenario.

If you would like to submit a scenario or article review from a publication that has not been pre-approved by BMSC, please include a copy of the title page of the publication and article/entry from which you've developed the submitted scenario.

Teaching and Presenting

Developing, presenting and/or teaching relevant content will be approved for double-weighted CEU credit based on the event CEU rate on a case-by-case basis by BMSC. Please submit the following to BMSC to have your presentation approved for CEUs:

Please submit the following:

- Curriculum outline
- Resources used in the presentation
- Brief synopsis of the educational event (date, timeframe, audience, etc.)

Recertification

Recertification examinations will test your knowledge of coding and relevant clinical, reimbursement/compliance changes affecting your specialty since your original certification date (or your last recertification date).

The recertification exam is a short objective exam. You will have 90 minutes to complete the exam.

As with the original certification examination, you must pass your recertification examination with a score of 70% or higher.

The cost of the SCP recertification exam is \$129. If you have not received an email from BMSC approximately three months prior to your recertification date (see your certificate for the month and date), please notify us at info@medicalspeciallycoding.com, in case our email records are out-of-date.

As with your initial certification examination, you may opt to take your recertification test in your office online or at a pre-approved conference event or online. If opting to take your recertification test at your own office, you must nominate a proctor. Your proctor may NOT be a relative, may NOT report to you on the job and MUST be present when you sit for your examination.

The same proctoring policies will be enforced, and all applicants must adhere to examination pre-registration procedures.

Recertification examinations must be completed and returned to BMSC before your 2nd (4th, 6th, etc.) anniversary date. Recertification candidates who do not pass on their first attempt may re-take the recertification examination a second time within 60 days of receipt of their results letter at no additional cost.

Upon successful recertification, credentialed coders will receive a gold seal — indicating the year of recertification — to be placed on their SCP certificate.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Introduction

The Board of Medical Specialty Coding's (BMSC) Ethical Principles and Code of Conduct (Ethics Code) consists of a statement of underlying principles and specific Ethical Standards. The General Principles are goals that we aspire to and are guides to Professional Coders striving for the highest ideals in BMSC. The General Principles are not themselves rules, they should be considered by Professional Coders in arriving at an ethical course of action. They are also statements of a Professional Coders' obligation to maintain the very highest standards of competence morality and dignity. The Ethical Standards establish more detailed guidelines for conduct as coders. Most of the Ethical Standards are written broadly, in order to apply to Professional Coders in varied roles. The Ethical Standards are not exhaustive. The fact that an Ethical Standard does not specifically address a given conduct does not mean that the conduct is necessarily either ethical or unethical.

Members of the profession are responsible for maintaining and promoting ethical standards and practices within their profession and in their interactions with other healthcare professionals. BMSC-certified coders are expected to uphold these standards, the objectives of BMSC and abide by BMSC bylaws. Actions that violate the standards of the Ethics Code may lead to withdrawal of the certification. In addition, when notified of a violation, BMSC reserves the right to report a Professional Coder to an employer or appropriate governmental agency.

This Ethics Code applies only to Professional Coders' activities that are part of their educational or professional roles as coders. Areas covered include but are not limited to the practice of coding; teaching; supervision of trainees; public service; policy development; organizational consulting; testimony; program design and evaluation; and administration. This Ethics Code applies to these activities across a variety of contexts, such as in person, postal, telephone, internet, and other electronic transmissions. These activities shall be distinguished from the purely private conduct of coders, which is not outlined in the Ethics Code.

The modifiers used in some of the standards of this Ethics Code (e.g., *reasonably*, *appropriate*, *potentially*) are included in the standards when they would (1) allow professional judgment on the part of Professional Coders, (2) eliminate injustice or inequality that would occur without the modifier, (3) ensure applicability across the broad range of activities conducted by coders, or (4) guard against a set of rigid rules that might be quickly outdated. As used in this Ethics Code, the term *reasonable* means the prevailing professional judgment of Professional Coders engaged in similar activities in similar circumstances, given the knowledge the Professional Coder had or should have had at the time.

In the process of making decisions regarding their professional behavior, Professional Coders must consider this Ethics Code in addition to applicable laws. In applying the Ethics Code to their professional work, Professional Coders may consider other materials and guidelines that have been adopted or endorsed by professional coding organizations and the dictates of their own conscience, as well as consult with others within the field. If this Ethics Code establishes a higher standard of conduct than is required by law, Professional Coders should meet the higher ethical standard.

Professional Coders are committed to increasing accurate documentation, correct coding, and proper billing. They are committed to the growth of professional knowledge and to the use of such knowledge to improve the legal and financial situation of medical practitioners or employers. This Ethics Code provides a common set of principles and standards upon which Professional Coders build their professional work.

This Ethics Code is intended to provide specific standards to cover most situations encountered by Professional Coders. The development of a set of ethical standards for coders work-related conduct

requires a personal commitment and lifelong effort to act ethically; to encourage ethical behavior by employers, employees, and colleagues; and to consult with others concerning ethical problems.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

General Principles, as opposed to Ethical Standards, are an aspiration, something we strive toward. Their intent is to guide and inspire coders toward the very highest ethical ideals of the profession. General Principles represent the underlying thoughts and ideals of our Ethical Standards.

Principle A: Attitude

Professional Coders strive to benefit those with whom they work and take care to do no harm. In their professional actions, Professional Coders seek to safeguard the welfare and rights of those with whom they work and other affected persons and entities. When conflicts occur between obligations or concerns, they attempt to resolve these conflicts in a responsible fashion. Because a Professional Coder's professional judgments and actions may affect the lives of others, they are alert to and guard against personal, financial, social, organizational, or political factors that might lead to misuse of their influence.

Principle B: Duty

Professional Coders establish relationships of trust with those with whom they work. They are aware of their professional responsibilities to society and to the specific situations in which they work. Professional Coders uphold professional conduct, clarify their professional obligations, accept appropriate responsibility for their behavior, and seek to manage conflicts of interest that could lead to exploitation or harm. Professional Coders consult with, refer to, or cooperate with other professionals to the extent needed to serve the best interests of those with whom they work. They are concerned about the ethical compliance of their employers and colleagues' professional conduct.

Principle C: Integrity

Professional Coders seek to promote accuracy, honesty, and truthfulness in billing and coding. In these activities Professional Coders do not steal, cheat, or knowingly engage in fraud, subterfuge, or intentional misrepresentation of fact. Professional Coders strive to maintain their integrity and to avoid unwise or unclear commitments.

Principle D: Respect

Professional Coders respect the dignity and worth of all people, and the rights of individuals to privacy and confidentiality. Professional Coders are aware that special safeguards may be necessary to protect the rights and welfare of patients, clients and employers. Professional Coders are aware of and respect cultural, individual differences including those based on age, gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language, and socioeconomic status and consider these factors when working with members of such groups.

ETHICAL STANDARDS

Resolving Ethical Issues

Misuse of Work

If Professional Coders learn of misuse or misrepresentation of their work, they take reasonable steps to correct or minimize the misuse.

Conflicts Between Ethics and Law

If a Professional Coders ethical responsibilities conflict with law, regulations, or payor policy, Professional Coders will take steps to resolve the conflict. If the conflict is not solved, Professional Coders will abide by the law, regulations, or other legal authority.

Conflicts Between Ethics and Organizational Demands

If the requirements of an organization for which they are working conflict with this Ethics Code, Professional Coders will make every attempt to resolve the conflict and still follow the Ethics Code.

Competence

Boundaries of Competence

Professional Coders will provide services and teach only within the scope of their competence, based on their education, training, study, or professional experience.

Lifelong Learning

Professional Coders will work to develop and maintain their competence.

Human Relations

Discrimination

In their work-related activities, Professional Coders do not engage in unfair discrimination based on age, gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, socioeconomic status, or any basis proscribed by law.

Sexual Harassment

Professional Coders do not engage in sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is sexual solicitation, physical advances, or verbal or nonverbal conduct that is sexual in nature, that occurs in connection with the Professional Coder's activities or and that either (1) is unwelcome, is offensive, or creates a hostile workplace or educational environment, and that (2) is sufficiently severe or intense to be abusive to a reasonable person in the context. Sexual harassment can consist of a single intense or severe act or of multiple persistent or pervasive acts.

Other Harassment

Professional Coders do not knowingly engage in behavior that is harassing or demeaning to others due on factors such as those persons' age, gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language, or socioeconomic status.

Avoiding Harm

Professional Coders take reasonable steps to avoid harming their clients or employers or others with whom they work.

Conflict of Interest

Professional Coders will not take on a professional role when personal, professional, legal, financial, or other interests that could reasonably be expected to (1) impair their objectivity, competence, or effectiveness or (2) expose the organization to harm or exploitation.

Professional coders will not accept any gift, gratuity, payment or other inducement to from anyone that would call into question the objectivity and/or validity of their work product.

Privacy and Confidentiality**Maintaining Confidentiality**

Professional Coders have a primary obligation and take reasonable precautions to protect confidential information within the limits of law or established by institutional rules.

Minimizing Intrusions on Privacy

Professional Coders discuss confidential information obtained in their work only for appropriate professional purposes and only with persons clearly concerned with such matters.

Disclosures

Professional Coders may disclose confidential information with the appropriate consent of the individual client/patient, or another legally authorized person on behalf of the client/patient unless prohibited by law. Professional Coders disclose confidential information without the consent of the individual only as mandated by law, or where permitted by law for a valid purpose.

Advertising and Other Public Statements**Avoidance of False or Deceptive Statements**

Public statements include but are not limited to paid or unpaid advertising, certification applications, other credentialing applications, brochures, printed matter, directory listings, personal resumes or public comments such as print or electronic transmission, statements in legal proceedings, lectures and public oral presentations, and published materials. Professional Coders do not make false, deceptive, or fraudulent statements concerning their training, experience, or competence; their credentials; or their institutional or association affiliations.

Media Presentations

When Professional Coders provide public advice or comment verbally, in print, by the internet, or other electronic transmission, they take precautions to ensure that statements are based on their professional knowledge, training, or experience, are in accord with law or policy, and are ethical.

Record Keeping and Fees**Fees and Financial Arrangements**

A Professional Coder shall make all their charges are clearly stated in an agreement specifying compensation and billing arrangements. All fee practices will be consistent with law and will not misrepresent costs or charges.

Accuracy in Reports to Payors and Funding Sources

In their reports to payors for services and in coding and billing activities, coders shall take reasonable steps to ensure accurate reporting.

Education and Training

Accuracy in Teaching

Professional Coders take reasonable steps to ensure that course materials are accurate regarding the subject matter to be covered, basis for evaluating progress, and the nature of course experiences. When teaching or training, Professional Coders will present all information accurately, without bias and based upon reputable sources.

Student Disclosure

Professional Coders will take every possible step to ensure the privacy of any grades or other student information and will establish a timely and specific process for providing feedback to students.

Standard Tests

Should Professional Coders have access to any standard tests or certification exams, they will keep such information confidential and not release confidential information concerning the tests, the answers or any information concerning the scoring or development of the test or exam. Discussion of pertaining to and included in the BMSC tests is permitted for the sole purpose of test development as directed by BMSC.



Board of Medical Specialty Coding
EXAMINATION REGISTRATION FORM

1. CREDENTIAL EXAMINATION

- Home Care Coding Specialist-Diagnosis \$249
HCS-D Recertification Candidate \$129
AHCC Membership Price \$229*
AHCC Recert Membership Price \$109*

* Please provide membership ID#

- Certified Compliance Professional-Physician \$249
Specialty Coding Professional (SCP) \$249
Advanced Coding Specialist (ACS) \$325
CCP-P Recertification \$129
SCP Recertification \$129
ACS Recertification \$199

- Anesthesia
Cardiology
Evaluation & Management Auditing (ACS only)
Emergency Medicine
Family Practice/Pediatrics
Gastroenterology
General Surgery
Obstetrics/Gynecology
Orthopedics
Pain Management
Radiology
Urology

2. TESTING METHOD

- Online - in my office or other location
Onsite (Check the BMSC website for an updated list of exam opportunities and locations.)

Table with 6 columns: City, ST, Day, Date, Time, Conference Name

3. CANDIDATE INFORMATION (PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE)

Company Address: Please check here if you would like your exam results sent to your company address.
Name: Title:
(as you would like it to appear on your certificate)

Organization:

Address: City: State: Zip:

Phone: Fax: Email:

Personal Information: Please check here if you would like your exam results sent to your personal address.

Name:

Address: City: State: Zip:

Phone: Fax: Email:

(You will receive exam status notifications and reminders via email)

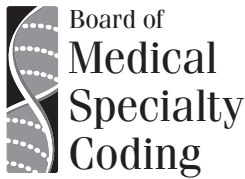
4. PAYMENT INFORMATION

- Credit Card
VISA
MC
AMEX

Cardholder: Signature

Card #: Expiration

- Check Payable to Registrar, BMSC (TIN 26-3622553) Please include Registration and PNF forms with check.



Individual Proctoring Protocol (IPP) Process Overview

In order to preserve the integrity of the examination process, credential candidates who choose to take their qualifying examination at their office must first agree to comply with the Board of Medical Specialty Coding's Individual Proctoring Protocol (IPP).

*Please Note: if you choose to register for an exam at any conference, you do not need to fax a proctor nomination form to BMSC before the conference. Your examination will be proctored onsite, so there is no need to nominate a proctor.

Candidates must nominate a qualified individual proctor and complete and return the **Proctor Nomination Form** with the registration form to the Board for approval. BMSC will then forward instructions to administer the qualifying examination for the relevant credential to the approved proctor.

A qualified proctor should be an impartial test administrator. Examples of **qualified** proctors include colleagues, supervisors, clergy and other impartial individuals. An **unacceptable** proctor would be BMSC certified, anyone related to the candidate through marriage or blood, an employee of the candidate or someone who is compensated for proctoring duties.

For Examinations Taken Online:

The proctor will:

1. Receive the UserID and Password for the candidate to use for the examination via email. This email will also include links to appropriate forms (proctor instructions and supporting documents) for candidates to use during the exam. Candidate will have 30 days from the time the proctor receives the log-in instructions to take the exam.
2. Schedule a time and place for candidate to sit for the examination.
3. Administer the examination according to instructions provided by BMSC.
4. Keep exam content confidential and not duplicate in any way.

As a credential candidate, you and the proctor must agree to abide by the requirements of the Individual Proctoring Protocol, and you understand that failure to comply with these requirements may result in your disqualification.

Questions or concerns about the IPP should be directed to:

The Board of Medical Specialty Coding (BMSC)
Two Washingtonian Center, 9737 Washingtonian Blvd., Ste. 100, Gaithersburg, MD 20878-7364
info@medicalspecialtycoding.com
www.medicalspecialtycoding.com
Phone: 1-800-897-4509 Fax: 1-301-287-2914



Application for Certification Renewal

- (HCS-D) Home Care Coding Specialist Diagnosis** \$69.00 **OR** \$89.00 (\$20 late fee)
- (CCP-P) Certified Compliance Professional Physician** \$69.00 **OR** \$89.00 (\$20 late fee)
- (SCP) Specialty Coding Professional**_____ (specialty) \$69.00 **OR** \$89.00 (\$20 late fee)
- (ACS) Advanced Coding Specialist**_____ (specialty) \$89.00 **OR** \$109.00 (\$20 late fee)

Individual Data

Name (as it appears on your certificate)	Credential/Specialty	Certification Date
Title	Organization	
Street Address	City	State Zip
Phone	Fax	E-Mail (to receive annual reminders and tests status)
<input type="checkbox"/> Credit Card <input type="checkbox"/> VISA <input type="checkbox"/> MC <input type="checkbox"/> AMEX		Card # _____

Signature	Expiration
<input type="checkbox"/> Check Enclosed (Payable to Registrar, Board of Medical Specialty Coding, TIN 26-3622553)	

Continuing Education Record

10 CEUs required for HCS-D CCP-P and SCP renewal. 12 CEUs required for ACS renewal.

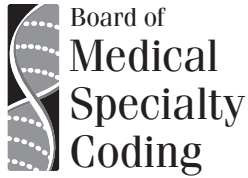
For activities NOT Pre-approved: Collect supporting documentation for each educational activity. Mark each set with a number, summarize below (see example below) and enclose the required documents for each (e.g., course outlines w/learning objectives, publication title pages, copy of article, individual scenarios, etc.) with this form. For detailed requirements by activity type, refer to the HCS CEU/Renewal Process documentation. BMSC will determine the number of CEUs credited to you using the policy described within the HCS CEU/ Renewal Process documentation.

For Pre-Approved Activities: List the date, activity type and total CEUs earned below.

Questions regarding pre-approval status or other CEU issues may be directed to one of our representatives at (800) 897-4509, or via email at info@medicals specialtycoding.com.

	Activity Date	Format	Pre-Approved?	CEUS
<i>Sample</i>	<i>January 14, 2010</i>	<i>Audioseminar</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>3</i>
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				

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