

**AFS Professional Certification Program**  
**Frequently Asked Questions**  
*Compiled by Task Force for Certification Implementation and  
the 1999-2000 Board of Professional Certification.*

**WHY SHOULD I GET CERTIFIED**

**How much does it cost to apply?**

**ANSWER:** For Certified Fisheries Professional (FP-C) applications, the cost for an AFS member is \$100, and a non-AFS member is \$200. For Associate Fisheries Professional (FP-A) applications, the cost for an AFS member is \$50 and a non-AFS member is \$100. Upgrading from an FP-A to a FP-C will cost \$50 for AFS members and \$100 for non-AFS members. For those applying for emeriti status, the cost is free at this time. Emeriti certificates cost \$10 each and emeriti certificates with plaques cost \$25 each. For renewing FP-Cs, it will cost \$50 for AFS members and \$100 for non-AFS members.

**CAN YOU GIVE ME A DESCRIPTION OF THE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM?**

**What are the general requirements for professional certification?**

**AFS Professional Certification, graduated prior to July 1, 2002**

<b>Certification Type</b>	<b>Degree and Experience</b>	<b>Coursework (Area-credits)</b>	<b>PDQP Time frame</b>	<b>Number of PDQPs Needed</b>
Associate Fisheries Professional (FP-A)	BS or BA + None	A-12, B-18, C-15, D-6, E-6	N/A	None
Associate Fisheries Professional (FP-A) upgrading to Certified Fisheries Professional (FP-C)	BS/BA + 5 yrs MS + 4 yrs PhD + 2 yrs	Previous FP-A designation	Past 2 years	30
Certified Fisheries Professional (FP-C)	BS/BA + 5 yrs MS + 4 yrs PhD + 2 yrs	A-12, B-18, C-15, D-6, E-6	Past 2 years	30
Certified Fisheries Professional (FP-C) (applying as established fisheries professional)	BS/BA + 9 yrs MS + 7 yrs PhD + 5 yrs	none	Past 5 years <i>or</i> Past 2 years 100	100  40

**AFS Professional Certification, graduated after July 1, 2002**

<b>Certification Type</b>	<b>Degree and Experience</b>	<b>Coursework (Area-credits)</b>	<b>PDQP Time frame</b>	<b>Number of PDQPs Needed</b>
Associate Fisheries Professional (FP-A)	BS or BA + None	A-12, B-18, C-15, D-6, E-6, F-6	N/A	None
Associate Fisheries Professional (FP-A) upgrading to Certified Fisheries Professional (FP-C)	BS/BA + 5 yrs MS + 4 yrs PhD + 2 yrs	Previous FP-A designation	Past 2 years	30
Certified Fisheries Professional (FP-C)	BS/BA + 5 yrs MS + 4 yrs PhD + 2 yrs	A-12, B-18, C-15, D-6, E-6, F-6	Past 2 years	30
Certified Fisheries Professional (FP-C) (applying as established fisheries professional)	BS/BA + 9 yrs MS + 7 yrs PhD + 5 yrs	none	Past 5 years <i>or</i> Past 2 years 100	100  40

**What are the educational requirements for professional certification?**

**ANSWER: Education Requirements (Required for FP-A and FP-C status)**

Subject Area	Graduated Before July1, 2002	Graduated After July 1, 2002
<b>A. Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences.</b> 12 semester or 18 quarter hours	Four (4) courses; two of which must be directly related to fisheries science.	Four (4) courses; two of which must be directly related to fisheries science and at least one must cover principles of fisheries science and management.
<b>B. Other Biological Sciences.</b> When added to the above courses must total 30 semester or 45 quarter hours.		
<b>C. Physical Sciences.</b> Must total 15 semester or 22 quarter hours.		
<b>D. Mathematics and Statistics.</b> 6 semester or 9 quarter hours.	Must include college algebra or calculus and one course in statistics.	Must include one calculus and one statistics or two statistics courses.
<b>E. Communications</b>	Must total 6 semester hours.	Must total 9 semester or 13 quarter hours. Three semester or five quarter hours may be taken in communication intensive courses if officially designated as such by the college or university.
<b>F. Human Dimensions.</b>	<b>None</b>	6 semester or 9 quarter hours

**What are the professional experience requirements for professional certification?**

**ANSWER: Minimum Degree and Experience Requirements**

Degree	Experience	Certification Eligibility
<b>BS or BA degree</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>FPA</b>
<b>BS or BA degree</b>	five years of full-time qualifying experience, post-bachelor's degree.	<b>FP-C</b>
<b>MS or MA degree</b>	four years of full-time qualifying experience, post-bachelor's degree.	<b>FP-C</b>
<b>Doctor of Philosophy degree</b>	two years of full-time qualifying experience, post-bachelor's degree.	<b>FP-C</b>

These requirements went into place effective July 1, 1998. Changes between the systems are underlined. Qualifying experience is that in which the candidate applies current knowledge in the fisheries sciences within the context of fisheries management, research, education, or administration. Qualifying experience generally requires that the candidate use independent judgment and action. Because the fisheries profession is so varied in specialization, identifying qualifying experience cannot easily be further generalized. See the program description for more details on qualifying experience.

**What are the professional development requirements for professional certification?**

**ANSWER: Professional development (required for new and renewing FP-Cs)**

Professional development is required of all Certified Fisheries Professionals (FP-Cs) to keep abreast of developments in the field and to ensure continued enhancement of knowledge and skills throughout the FP-C's career. Consequently, an FP-C must submit evidence of professional development activities to achieve and maintain certification. A point system is used to evaluate professional development. Prior to initial certification as an FP-C and every five years thereafter, an FP-C must submit evidence of continued activity and development by accumulating a minimum number of "**professional development quality points**" (PDQPs). Whereas a minimum number of PDQPs must be obtained in activity Categories I and II (continuing education), the remaining PDQPs must be distributed among at least two of the remaining three activity categories. These categories and examples of specific activities within the categories are listed below.

**Summary of PDQP distribution among categories for certification renewal.**

Category	PDQP Requirements
I or II	Minimum 35, maximum 60, combined
III	Maximum 35
IV	Maximum 35
V	Maximum 35
Total Minimum 100	

PDQPs are required to both achieve and maintain status as an FP-C. PDQPs are not required to achieve FP-A status because only formal education is needed. At the time of application for the initial FP-C, the candidate must have accumulated 30 PDQPs during the previous two years. These must be accumulated in at least two of the five categories. To maintain FP-C status, 100 PDQPs must be accumulated during the previous five years.

**Category I. Continuing education—fisheries**

Includes subjects directly related to fisheries science or management. Examples include fisheries management, habitat management, fisheries economics, fish diseases, aquaculture or fish culture, fisheries policy and law, aquatic ecology, etc.

The following activities all count for 0.5 PDQPs per hour

- Participation in short-courses or training programs sponsored or conducted by commercial organizations, professional organizations/agencies, employers, or universities.
- Attendance at annual or semiannual meetings or special conferences of professional societies, educational organizations, etc.
- Attendance at in-house meetings of employer involving education on new techniques or developments in the profession.
- Completion of self-instruction audiovisuals.
- Attendance at seminars conducted by experts in the subject.
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**Category II. Continuing education—nonfisheries**

Includes subjects that are not primarily fisheries oriented but are professionally enriching to the individual. Examples include computer science and statistics, managerial and leadership skills, public speaking, problem-solving, public relations, marketing, planning, and other related natural resource disciplines such as forestry, wildlife, etc.

The following activities all count for 0.5 PDQPs per hour

- Participation in short courses or training programs sponsored or conducted by commercial organizations, professional organizations/agencies, employers, or universities
- Attendance at annual or semi-annual meetings or special conferences of professional societies, educational organizations, etc.
- Attendance at in-house meetings of employers involving education on new techniques or developments in the profession
- Completion of self-instruction audiovisuals
- Attendance at seminars conducted by experts in the subject

**Category III. Oral communications in fisheries and nonfisheries subjects**

Includes the development, preparation, and presentation of activities such as those described in categories I and II. Context is any public meeting that is open to the general public or a select group of invited participants. For fisheries subjects, the audience need not be fisheries professionals. For nonfisheries subjects, the audience must be fisheries professionals. Multiple presentations of the same or similar subject matter can only be credited once during a certification renewal period.

Activity	PDQPs
Author/coauthor of an oral or poster presentation at a professional meeting	7
Author/coauthor of an oral or poster presentation to a nonprofessional audience	7
Organizer/instructor of a short course or workshop	20
Instructor of a quarter- or semester-length course	10 points per credit, maximum 30
Author/producer of self-instruction audiovisuals in fisheries	20

**Category IV. Written communications**

Developing, writing, editing, reviewing, and publishing fisheries-oriented materials. The written material need not be published, but it must be readily available to professional and nonprofessional audiences.

Activity	PDQPs
Author/coauthor of peer-reviewed article or book chapter	15
Author/coauthor of a book/monograph	30
Editor/coeditor of a book/monograph	15
Author/coauthor of non-peer-reviewed article in a magazine, brochure, newspaper, etc.	7
Author/coauthor of an agency publication or report	10
Reviewer or editor of an article that has been submitted for publication	3
Book reviewer for a professional publication	5

### Category V. Service

Involves membership and active participation in fisheries or aquatic professional societies and organizations, and community service that draws on the individual's professional expertise in fisheries. Community service may include contributions of professional expertise to civic groups, environmental organizations, government, etc. Points are given for each year served in multiple-year appointments.

Activities	PDQPs
Holding the highest office in an organization (including subdivisions), (e.g., president, director, chair, journal editor, etc.)	15
Holding the other offices in an organization (including subdivisions), (e.g., secretary, treasurer, associate editor, newsletter editor, Committee chair, etc.)	10
Committee Member	4
Mentor in the Hutton Junior Fisheries Biology Program	10

### What is the timetable for implementation of the revised professional certification program?

**ANSWER: AFS Professional Certification Implementation Timetable**

**THIS PROGRAM WAS FULLY IMPLEMENTED ON JULY 1, 2004.**

The American Fisheries Society (AFS) Governing Board approved a revised program of professional certification at its midyear meeting in March 1997. See the previous question for a summary of the program and the changes made.

### APPLICATION PROCESS

#### Who reviews applications and how long will it take to get mine reviewed?

**ANSWER:** The Board of Professional Certification is composed of 15 Certified Fishery Professionals who represent all the Divisions and volunteer their time to review applications. The Board is composed of 3 subcommittees, Experience, Education and Professional Experience. Applications are screened for completeness by the Coordinator of Unit Services on AFS staff. Complete applications are sent out for review bi-monthly. Once the committees receive the applications it takes about a month to finish the review. Depending on the timing of your submission it may take up to 3 months to learn the outcome.

#### How can I appeal if I think my application was rejected inappropriately?

**ANSWER:** The BPC makes every attempt to fully assess applications and avoid rejecting applications wrongly while still maintaining the integrity of the process. If you feel that your application was wrongly rejected you can appeal. You need to compile materials which explicitly address the reasons the BPC cited in rejecting your application. A cover letter should clearly describe your argument and provide supporting material for the Appeals Board to consider. The time limit within which the appeal must be filed is ninety (90) days from the date of the letter of notification of the Board's decision. The fee for submitting an appeal is \$50, without which the appeal will not be processed for consideration.

#### Do I have to be a college graduate at the time I send the application?

**ANSWER:** Yes, you must have a Bachelors degree to apply.

#### If my application was denied several years ago and I want to reapply will I have to pay the fee again?

**ANSWER:** Yes, if you submit a new application you have to submit the fee again.

### UPGRADING FROM FP-A TO FP-C

### **Are there parts of the application I can leave blank if I am upgrading?**

**ANSWER:** If your FP-A status has not expired you need not complete the coursework section or supply transcripts. If it has expired you have start over with a complete application including the fee.

### **When does an FP-A expire and how does that affect my application for FP-C? Do I have to submit a new application and the full fee if it has expired?**

**ANSWER:** Associate Fisheries Professional certification may be retained for a maximum of eight years, at which time the requirements for a Certified Fisheries Professional must be met and applied for in order to retain any AFS certification. Your certification status is considered lapsed if you do not apply to upgrade to FPC within the eight year period. If you choose to apply for FP-C after your certification is lapsed you must completely reapply just as if you had never been certified. This changed from 10 years to 8 years on July 1, 1998.

## **FILLING OUT AN APPLICATION**

### **What are the most common errors made when filling out an application?**

**ANSWER:** Errors specific to the Education, Experience and Professional Communication sections are discussed elsewhere in this FAQ list. Other common errors include no transcripts, no money, no signature, courses listed in the wrong sections, use of thesis, seminar or pass/fail credits, incomplete deficiency forms, etc.

## **PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

### **Qualifying experience involves responsible charge or oversight of fisheries projects. What does this mean and can you give me some examples?**

**ANSWER:** Qualifying experience is full-time work in which the candidate applies current knowledge in the fisheries sciences within the context of fisheries management, research, education, or administration. Research assistantships and technician level work are not considered qualifying professional experience. Neither is experience gained prior to obtaining a Bachelors degree. Qualifying experience generally includes responsibility for the entire project from design, implementation and data collection through analysis and report writing. Because the fisheries profession is so varied in specialization, identifying qualifying experience cannot be easily generalized. Below are types and examples of qualifying experience in each area:

Management involves the application of fisheries science principles (e.g., population dynamics, aquatic biology, limnology, habitat assessment and manipulation, human dimensions, fish culture, biometrics) toward the accomplishment of specific fisheries management goals and objectives. The candidate should have responsible charge or supervision over the planning, implementation, and assessment of projects. Responsible charge or supervision is defined as the direction of work such that the successful completion of the work depends on decisions made by the professional with limited oversight, direction, or approval of others.

Projects include recreational and commercial fisheries investigations and management, fish culture, environmental assessment, habitat restoration or enhancement, and fish disease management. Qualifying experience requires that the candidate use independent judgment and action.

Research involves responsible charge or supervision of field or laboratory fisheries research projects. Qualifying experience includes oversight responsibility for design, implementation, analysis, and report writing. Research projects should either be published in a recognized, peer-reviewed journal or used by the employer for the purpose of improved scientific methodology, regulatory decision making, or resource management practices.

Education involves college-level teaching of various facets of fisheries management, research, and administration. Education also may involve development and delivery of educational programs in fisheries for dissemination to the general public or particular stakeholders.

Administration involves direct-line authority over other fisheries professionals engaged in activities or programmatic responsibilities over activities that qualify for certification described under the headings of management, research, and education given above. Candidates must have responsibility and decision-making authority of such magnitude as district wide, regional, statewide, or national fisheries programs. Independent judgment and consequences of actions must be present.

### **Why doesn't experience gained while a graduate student count?**

**ANSWER:** The number of years of qualifying professional experience is less for those with advanced degrees (e.g., B.S./B.A. requires 5 years, M.S./M.A. requires 4 years, PhD. requires 2 years). So you would effectively be given credit in two different areas for graduate school if you were to count the experience gained towards a reduced experience requirement. If it took a long time to complete your degree because you took a full-time job, you need to make it very clear in the description of duties and responsibilities that you had taken a full-time job and were finishing your degree in your "spare time".

### **Do I need to include experience as a technician?**

**ANSWER:** No, do not include any experience that does not clearly meet the description of qualifying full-time experience.

### **What are the most common errors made when filling out the professional experience section?**

**ANSWER:** Incomplete or difficult to understand job descriptions are the biggest problem. It is sometimes difficult, based on the description provided, to determine if the position had a sufficient level of responsibility to qualify.

## **PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATIONS**

### **Can I include communications that I am going to complete in the near future?**

**ANSWER:** Only if a publication has been submitted and accepted but not yet published it can be listed.

**Publications: Must they be in peer-reviewed publications?**

**ANSWER:** Yes, under the publications section they should be peer-reviewed journal articles, chapters in books, or books.

**Publications: Do I have to be the senior author?**

**ANSWER:** No, it is acceptable to list publications no matter where you appear in the author list.

**Administrative Reports: If I don't work for an agency can I include reports provided to clients if I am a consultant?**

**ANSWER:** Yes, but they should be publicly available documents and not a confidential report that the client would not release.

## **EDUCATION**

**Why don't Pass/Fail, Thesis or Seminar Credits count?**

**ANSWER:** The Board requires a measure of competency (i.e., minimum of a "C-" grade) for course subjects that reflect a basic core curriculum for fisheries scientists. Pass/fail credits are not viewed as an acceptable measure of competency for a subject area. However, if the institution attended by the applicant provides evidence that a "pass" grade is equivalent to a "C-" grade then the Board will allow that course to be used for requirements. Thesis and seminar credits do not represent coursework.

**What if my educational institution did not award traditional A, B, C grades?**

**ANSWER:** Your institution should have a grading classification that provides letter-grade or percentage equivalents that can be associated with that institution's grading system. Request this information from the institution and forward this documentation with your application. It is your responsibility to provide documentation of the grade equivalent of the marks awarded. Pass/Fail courses are not acceptable so you must provide supporting material to prove the courses you are reporting on your coursework forms were not graded as pass/fail.

**What kinds of transcripts can I use? Do they have to be official transcripts sent directly from the educational institution to AFS or can I send official copies that were provided to me?**

**ANSWER:** You must supply official transcripts from all institutions that you list courses for on the application. These official transcripts may be sent by the applicant or by the institutions attended by the applicant.

**How do Canadian University credits translate into American credit hours?**

**ANSWER:** Generally, a Canadian course that goes for one full year earns 1 credit, and equates to 6 U.S. semester hours. A .5 credit course goes for 1 semester and equates to 3 U.S. semester hours.

**What are common problems with Section A – Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences?**

**ANSWER:** Under the current guidelines the most common problem is that applicants do not list two courses that are specifically related to fisheries science. These should be fisheries management, fisheries science, fish culture or aquaculture, ichthyology, fish ecology, etc. For those who complete their B.S./B.A. after July 1, 2002 one of the two fisheries science courses must cover principles of fisheries science and management. For example, if the four courses were ichthyology, fish ecology, limnology, and stream ecology, that would not be acceptable. The other two courses may be fisheries science or aquatic science courses such as limnology, oceanography, aquatic ecology, stream ecology, etc. Courses such as hydrology may not be used in Section A.

**What are common problems with Section B – Other Biological Sciences?**

**ANSWER:** The Board rarely finds problems with course submissions for Section B. However, the applicant should consider courses such as biology, wildlife management, ornithology, mammalogy, herpetology, botany, and general ecology when completing this section.

**What are common problems with Section C – Physical Sciences?**

**ANSWER:** The most common problem with this section is the use of courses such as conservation, water quality, landscape design, horticulture, etc. Section C must contain "traditional" science courses, such as chemistry, physics, hydrology, astronomy, soil science, and meteorology.

**What are common problems with Section D – Mathematics and Statistics?**

**ANSWER:** Under the current guidelines applicants must have a college algebra or calculus course and a statistics course. The primary problem is that often applicants do not have both courses and attempt to use other math courses (e.g., intermediate algebra, finite math). Under the new guidelines applicants must have a calculus course and a statistics course or two statistics courses – the algebra requirement has been removed.

**What are common problems with Section E – Communications Courses?**

**ANSWER:** The primary problem that the Board encounters with the communications section is that applicants attempt to use a literature, humanities or a foreign language course to meet the requirement. Applicants should use verbal and writing courses such as public speaking, discussion, composition, and technical writing to avoid problems. Additionally, courses that are officially designated by the institution as communications-intensive are allowable, but must be documented.

## What are common problems with Section F: Human Dimensions courses?

**Answer:** Most often the Board finds that applicants are unclear which courses would fulfill this requirement.

Courses in this section must be focused towards socio-economic topics of natural resource science and management, preferably those issues and aspects that directly pertain to fisheries management. They include courses such as named courses in human dimensions of natural resources and courses in policy, planning, administration, law, ethics, public relations, leadership, conflict resolution, natural resource economics, etc. if related to natural resource management. Introductory social science courses, such as sociology and psychology, do not qualify. Courses in this group may be double counted as fulfilling course requirements in the Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences category but the credit hours must be apportioned between the two categories based on the percentage time devoted to the human dimensions topic.

The following reviewed courses (full or partial [P] credit) are acceptable for the human dimensions educational requirement. It is highly recommended that applicants provide syllabi for other (unlisted below) courses with their application.

Aquaculture Extension	Recreational Use of Natural Resources
Constitutional Law (P)	Resource and Environmental Economics
Culture and the Environment	Soil and Water Conservation (P)
Economics of Environmental Policy	The Legislative Process (P)
Economics of Social Issues (P)	Wilderness and River Recreation Management
Environmental and Agricultural Law	Wildlife Law Enforcement and Public Relations
Environmental Economics	
Environmental Ethics	
Environmental History of the U.S.	
Environmental Interpretation	
Environmental Law	
Environmental Planning	
Environmental Politics	
Environmental Protection	
Fish and Wildlife Administration, Policy, and Law	
Fish and Wildlife Administration	
Forest Land Policy and Administration	
Human Dimensions and Fish Management	
Human Dimensions in Wildlife and Fisheries	
Human Dimensions of Fisheries and Wildlife Management	
Human Ecology	
Humans and the Environment	
Integrated Ecosystem Management	
Integrated Natural Resource Management	
Introduction to Environmental Economics and Policy	
Issues in Natural Resource Conservation	
Land Use Planning (P)	
Law and Resources	
Managing for the Environment	
Multicultural Perspectives in Natural Resources	
National Wildlife Policy	
Natural Resource Advocacy	
Natural Resource Conservation	
Natural Resource Decision Making	
Natural Resource Economics and Policy	
Natural Resource Management and Planning	
Natural Resources History and Policy	
Park Interpretation (P)	
Principles of Conservation (P)	

### **What are the coursework deficiency requirements?**

**ANSWER:** There are five major subject areas represented on the application form (six for those graduating after July 1, 2002) that must be fulfilled. The waiver of up to two coursework deficiencies allow an individual having minor shortcomings in basic coursework to achieve certification. Under these guidelines an applicant may satisfy two course deficiencies. Only one course deficiency is allowed in each subject area and a total of two deficiencies may be waived.

### **What are common problems with coursework deficiency forms?**

**ANSWER:** Incomplete information is the primary problem with deficiency waivers. Typically, when information is missing the applicant simply failed to follow the details of the guidelines. Remember that only two course deficiencies may be waived and each must be in a different subject area.

### **May I submit a course deficiency form for the Associate Fisheries Professional (FP-A) level?**

**ANSWER:** The basic coursework requirements must be met regardless of the level of certification sought. Thus, if you have a deficiency you must submit the appropriate information that will satisfy the deficiency. Because those seeking FP-A status generally don't have qualifying experience they have fewer options to satisfy a deficiency.

### **What if I have course deficiencies such that I simply do not meet the educational requirements but work as a fishery professional and would like to be certified?**

**ANSWER:** Coursework requirements can be waived for established fisheries professionals. Established fisheries professionals are active fisheries professionals who cannot satisfy the minimum education requirements. The old current requirement is 20 years of full-time qualifying experience regardless of degree. The experience requirement effective July 1, 1998 is five years of full-time qualifying experience with a Ph.D., seven years with an M.S. or M.A. or nine years with a B.S. or B.A.

### **Under the new requirements, at what point will I no longer need to send in my transcripts?**

**ANSWER:** You only need to submit transcripts when your educational credentials are being reviewed (i.e., FP-A or new FP-C). Transcripts are not needed when upgrading from FP-A to FP-C or applying for FP-C as an established fisheries professional. Under the new system, if you are certified at the FP-A level you will have eight years to apply for and receive the FP-C level. Beyond the eight-year deadline you would have to resubmit your transcript and coursework requirement form. After you receive FP-C status, there is no need to submit transcripts again when renewing your certification.

### **Coursework requirements change in 2002. Do those apply to everyone that applies after July 1, 2002 or only those who graduate after that date?**

**ANSWER:** The change in coursework requirements occurring in 2002 are only applicable to individuals who complete their Bachelor's degree (B.S., B.A., or equivalent) after July 1, 2002..

### **My educational background includes coursework that was taken outside of the United States. Please advise me on how to convert my credit hours to the U.S. educational system.**

**ANSWER:** The Board reviews applications containing coursework from institutions outside the U.S. on an individual basis. The applicant should have the equivalent of a four-year degree and must fit all appropriate coursework into the specific subject areas on the application form.

The easiest way that to convert your academic hours to U.S. semester credit hours is to compare the number of hours per week the course you are considering has met. For a lecture or discussion course a U.S. semester hour is typically 50–60 minutes for 14.5–15 weeks, or a total of about 12–15 hours of class time per credit hour. Thus, to determine your equivalent credit hours, divide the total number of hours you spent in lecture/discussion by 12. One semester hour for a laboratory or field course experience typically requires 2–3 times the number of hours as the lecture/discussion course. Therefore, to determine your equivalent credit hours for any laboratory or field course or portion of a course, divide the number of hours you spent in the laboratory or field by 24. Here is an example: The class you just completed consisted of 40 hours of lecture and 30 hours of lab. To calculate U.S. semester credit hours:  $40/12 = 3.3$  credit hours plus  $30/24 = 1.25$  credit hours for a total of  $3.3$  plus  $1.25 = 4.55$  credit hours. (This is the most liberal conversion because it uses the minimum number of hours per credit. Some U.S. universities require more time per credit hour.)

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **What is a PDQP, and why does AFS require them?**

**ANSWER:** Professional development is required of all Certified Fisheries Professionals (FP-Cs) to keep abreast of developments in the field and to ensure continued enhancement of knowledge and skills throughout the FP-C's career. Consequently, a FP-C must submit evidence of professional development activities to achieve and maintain certification. A point system is used to evaluate professional development. Prior to initial certification as a FP-C and every five years thereafter, a FP-C must submit evidence of continued activity and development by accumulating a minimum number of professional development quality points (PDQPs).

### **How will the timing work on the accumulation of Professional Development Quality Points (PDQPs) and initial certification and renewal?**

**ANSWER:** PDQPs are required to both achieve and maintain status as a FP-C. PDQPs are not required to achieve FP-A status because only formal education is needed. At the time of application for the initial FP-C, the candidate must have accumulated 30 PDQPs during the previous two years. These must be accumulated in at least two of the five categories. To maintain FP-C status, 100 PDQPs must be accumulated during the previous five years.

### **How do I track my PDQPs and will I have to submit documentation?**

**ANSWER:** The Professional Development Activity Form is available from the **Certification Form Center**. You simply need to track the relevant activities and submit the most relevant activities per the instructions included with the form.

### **Do I need to take a workshop that officially carries AFS approved continuing education units (CEUs) to accrue PDQPs ?**

**ANSWER:** No, there is no extra credit provided for AFS approved training and CEUs are not required. The kinds of activities which count for PDQPs are described above and in the instructions provided with the Professional Development Activity Form.

## **EMERITI STATUS**

### **What is emeriti status and who qualifies?**

**ANSWER:** Individuals who held the FP-C designation for at least twenty (20) years (need not be consecutive) and who are employed less than full time or are retired, may request emeriti status through which they can maintain their FP-C status without the renewal requirement. Successful female applicants receive emeriti status while successful male applicants receive emeritus status.

### **How do I convert to emeriti status under the new certification program?**

**ANSWER:** The emeriti application is very simple. You must explain your employment status (must be employed less than full time or retired) and provide your certification number and initial date of certification (must have been certified for at least 20 years).

## **CERTIFICATION RENEWAL**

### **Can I apply for certification renewal now if my certification is not due for a few years but I can meet the renewal requirements now?**

**ANSWER:** No, you need to stick to the schedule outlined. The BPC simply can not handle the additional load and the schedule was devised to provide some balance among those seeking certification renewal. Additionally, if you renew early it will change your schedule so that future certification renewals will also have to be done sooner. It is best to just sit on your completed Professional Development Activity Form until your designated time comes around.

## **OTHER QUESTIONS**

### **What type of certificate will I receive?**

**ANSWER:** You will receive a certificate signed by the AFS President, the Executive Director, and the Chair of the Board of the Professional Certification that includes your certificate type, certificate number, expiration date and the seal of the American Fisheries Society.

### **Who should I contact for more information?**

**ANSWER:** Gail Goldberg, Unit Services Coordinator, [ggoldberg@fisheries.org](mailto:ggoldberg@fisheries.org), (301) 897-8616 ext. 201  
5410 Grosvenor Lane | Bethesda, MD 20814 | phone 301/897-8616 | fax 301/897-8096