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# CANDIDATE HANDBOOK FOR THE SLEEP TECHNOLOGIST REGISTRY EXAMINATION

# ABSM

AMERICAN BOARD OF  
SLEEP MEDICINE

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>3</b>
I. Sleep Technologist Registry Examination .....	3
II. About the American Board of Sleep Medicine .....	3
A. Contact the ABSM .....	3
III. Statement of Non-Discrimination, Fairness and Compliance with All Laws .....	3
IV. Confidentiality .....	4
<b>Candidate Eligibility Requirements</b> .....	<b>4</b>
A. Graduates of CAAHEP or CoARC Programs .....	4
B. A-STEP Introductory Program and Modules with On-the-Job Training .....	5
C. Health Professionals .....	6
D. Registered Polysomnographic Technologists .....	6
E. On-the-Job Training in an AASM-accredited Sleep Facility .....	7
I. Application .....	7
A. Application Procedure .....	8
B. Incomplete Applications .....	8
C. Registry Eligible .....	8
D. Refunds and Withdrawals .....	9
E. Failure to Pass the Examination .....	9
F. Applicants with Disabilities .....	9
<b>Examination Overview</b> .....	<b>10</b>
I. Content Areas .....	10
A. Study Performance .....	10
B. Record Scoring .....	10
C. Understanding Sleep Disorders .....	11
<b>Administration of Exam</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>Testing Center Examination</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>Testing Center Examination Policies</b> .....	<b>12</b>
I. Electronic Devices .....	12
II. Late Arrivals .....	12
III. No-shows and Cancellations .....	12
IV. Inclement Weather/Emergency Conditions .....	12
<b>Additional Examination Details</b> .....	<b>13</b>
I. Scoring .....	13
II. Examination Results .....	13
III. Appeal Procedure .....	13
<b>Reading List</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>RST Designation</b> .....	<b>15</b>
I. Duplicate or Replacement Certificates .....	15
II. Name/Address Updates .....	15
III. Recertification .....	15
IV. Verification of Credentials .....	15

## INTRODUCTION

### I. SLEEP TECHNOLOGIST REGISTRY EXAMINATION

The knowledge needed to be a competent Sleep Technologist typically requires a year of comprehensive training. This may include full-time training at a community college or other educational institution, or completion of the Accredited Sleep Technology Education Program (A-STEP). The Sleep Technologist Registry Examination is intended to certify that successful candidates have achieved the minimal competencies required for the position of sleep technologist (per the joint publication by the American Academy of Sleep Medicine, American Association of Sleep Technologists and American Society of Electroencephalographic Technologists).

All aspects of this examination are directed by the RST Examination Committee, which is comprised of one or more physicians, sleep technologists with varying degrees of experience, and a public member. Successful candidates will have demonstrated knowledge in the subject areas in the examination blueprint (page 10).

### II. ABOUT THE AMERICAN BOARD OF SLEEP MEDICINE

The American Board of Sleep Medicine (ABSM) was incorporated as an independent, nonprofit, self-designated board on January 28, 1991. The ABSM administered a series of examinations for physicians and PhDs in sleep medicine, as well as behavioral sleep medicine. In 2011, the ABSM began offering an examination for sleep technologists.

#### A. CONTACT THE ABSM:

American Board of Sleep Medicine  
2510 N. Frontage Road  
Darien, IL 60561  
**Email:** [absm@absm.org](mailto:absm@absm.org)  
**Phone:** 630.737.9701 | **Fax:** 630.737.9790  
**Website:** [absm.org](http://absm.org)

### III. STATEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATION, FAIRNESS AND COMPLIANCE WITH ALL LAWS

The ABSM prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, or any other basis that would constitute illegal discrimination.

## IV. CONFIDENTIALITY

All information submitted to the ABSM is strictly confidential. This includes candidate contact and financial information. Candidate information is maintained in an electronic database, which is limited to ABSM staff. Information about your training and accomplishments will be used to determine your eligibility to take the examination. Contact information will be used to keep you updated as you move through the examination process. If you are successful in obtaining certification as a Registered Sleep Technologist, you will be asked to inform the ABSM of any changes to your information as they occur. This will allow us to contact you with requirements for continuing education and recertification, as well as updates to any of the ABSM policies and procedures that may be relevant to you.

The ABSM will maintain a list of successful candidates and will provide this information to potential employers and state licensing boards to verify your status. Upon request, the ABSM will provide training institutions and credentialing associations with information about the number of students who have taken and who successfully completed the examination. This will be summary data and will not include the names of specific candidates.

If you have questions about the confidentiality policies or procedures of the ABSM please contact us using the information provided on [Page 3](#).

## CANDIDATE ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

**Irrespective of pathway, all candidates for the Sleep Technologist Registry Examination must have completed a program of secondary education (you must have a high school diploma) and must have current certification in Basic Life Support (BLS) for Healthcare Providers.**

### PATHWAY A. GRADUATES OF CAAHEP OR COARC PROGRAMS (WITH ASSOCIATE OR BACCALAUREATE DEGREE)

Candidates who have successfully completed training in polysomnography in a program accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP; these programs include CoA PSG and CoA END with PSG add-on) or a Commission on Accreditation for Respiratory Care (CoARC) program with the polysomnography specialty option are eligible to sit for the Sleep Technologist Registry Examination. Candidates must apply within 3 years of their graduation date OR submit 10 continuing education credits per year past the 3-year period up to 5 years post-graduation.

### PATHWAY B. 80-HOUR DIDACTIC ACCREDITED SLEEP TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION PROGRAM (A-STEP) INTRODUCTORY PROGRAM AND FULL SERIES OF ONLINE A-STEP MODULES WITH ON-THE-JOB TRAINING

Candidates who have completed the 80-hour didactic Accredited Sleep Technology Education Program (A-STEP) Introductory Program, the full series of online A-STEP modules\* and have exceeded the minimum experience in an American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM) accredited sleep center are eligible to take the examination. **The 80-hour didactic Accredited Sleep Technology Education Program (A-STEP) Program and the full series of online A-STEP Modules must be completed within 3-years of registration.**

Minimum experience in an AASM-accredited sleep facility includes\*\*:

1. Independent performance of 50 overnight sleep studies
2. Of these fifty (50) overnight sleep studies, minimum of twenty-five (25) must include include continuous positive airway pressure (PAP) titration
3. Performance of one (1) Multiple Sleep Latency Test
4. Performance of one (1) Multiple Sleep Latency Test:  
OR one (1) Maintenance of Wakefulness Test
5. Achievement of the minimum standard for 3 months of the inter-scorer reliability program OR a score of 85% or higher on the ABSM Sleep Scoring Proficiency Examination

\*\*The above experience must be obtained within a minimum of three (3) months and a maximum of eighteen (18) months. A board-certified sleep specialist or the medical director of an AASM accredited sleep facility must verify completion of the required experience in writing using the form provided in the application. The ABSM requires that candidates maintain a log to monitor their progress in obtaining the requisite experience. The log must be submitted to your sleep lab director along with your verification of clinical experience form.

\*Alternative Experience:

The Certified Polysomnographic Technician (CPSGT) certificate awarded by the Board of Registered Polysomnographic Technologists (BRPT) is an acceptable alternative to the 80-hour didactic Accredited Sleep Technology Education Program (A-STEP) Introductory Program and online modules.

### PATHWAY C. HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

Candidates who currently hold one of the following health professional credentials and exceed required minimum experience in an AASM-accredited sleep facility are eligible to take the examination:

1. Medical degree (MD or DO) valid in the United States
2. Doctoral-level degree (PhD or PsyD) in a health-related discipline
3. Physician Assistants (PAs)
4. Nursing degree (APRN, RN or LPN)
5. Allied health credential including Respiratory Care (RRT, CRT), Electroneurodiagnostics (R.EEG.T., R. EPT, CNIM); Paramedic (EMT-P); or Radiology (RT, RT(R), RT(CT), RT(BD))

Qualifying minimum experience in an aasm-accredited sleep facility:

1. Independent performance and scoring of twenty-five (25) overnight sleep studies
2. Of these twenty-five (25) overnight sleep studies, a minimum of fifteen (15) must include PAP titration.
3. Performance of one (1) Multiple Sleep Latency Test OR one (1) Maintenance of Wakefulness Test
4. Achieve the minimum standard for three (3) months of the AASM Inter-Scorer Reliability program OR a score of 85% or higher on the ABSM Sleep Scoring Proficiency Examination.

The above experience must be obtained within a minimum of three (3) months and a maximum of eighteen (18) months. A board-certified sleep specialist or the medical director of the AASM-accredited sleep facility must verify completion of the required experience in writing using the form provided in the application. Candidates may not verify their own experience. The ABSM requires that candidates maintain a log to monitor their progress in attaining the requisite experience. The log must be submitted to your sleep lab director along with your verification of clinical experience form.

[Please track your studies with this Excel file.](#)

### PATHWAY D. REGISTERED POLYSOMNOGRAPHIC TECHNOLOGISTS

Candidates who are currently Registered Polysomnographic Technologists™ (RPSGTs), have completed a program of secondary education (you must have a high school diploma), and have current Adult and Pediatric Basic Life Support (cardio-pulmonary resuscitation) are eligible to take the examination.

### PATHWAY E. ON-THE-JOB TRAINING IN AN AASM-ACCREDITED SLEEP FACILITY

Candidates who are currently employed with an AASM-accredited sleep facility, have completed the full series of online A-STEP Modules, and exceed the required minimum experience in an AASM-accredited sleep facility are eligible to take the exam.

QUALIFYING MINIMUM EXPERIENCE IN AN AASM-ACCREDITED SLEEP FACILITY:

1. Independent performance and scoring of fifty (50) overnight sleep studies
2. Of these fifty (50) overnight sleep studies, a minimum of twenty-five (25) must include PAP titration.
3. Performance of one (1) Multiple Sleep Latency Test or one (1) Maintenance of Wakefulness Test
4. Achieve the minimum standard for three (3) months of the AASM Inter-Scorer Reliability program OR a score of 85% or higher on the ABSM Sleep Scoring Proficiency Examination.

The above experience must be obtained within a minimum of three (3) months and a maximum of eighteen (18) months. A board-certified sleep specialist or the medical director of the AASM-accredited sleep facility must verify completion of the required experience in writing using the form provided in the application. Candidates may not verify their own experience. The ABSM requires that candidates maintain a log to monitor their progress in obtaining the requisite experience. The log must be submitted to your sleep lab director along with your verification of clinical experience form. [Please track your studies with this Excel file.](#)

Additional Requirements:

- Successful completion of the full series of online A-STEP Modules (must be completed within three (3)-years of registration)
- Successful completion of the ABSM's Sleep Scoring Proficiency Exam, OR participation in three months of the AASM's Inter-Scorer Reliability program through the sleep center.
- Attestation from the board-certified sleep specialist or the medical director of the AASM-accredited sleep facility verifying the candidate's employment (at least one year) and candidate's knowledge of all topics addressed in the 80-hour didactic Accredited Sleep Technology Education Program (A-STEP) Introductory Program.

## I. APPLICATION

The Registered Sleep Technologist Examination is NOT accredited by the National Commission on Certifying Agencies (NCCA). Some state licensing boards or employers require successful completion of a registry examination accredited by the NCCA. Before submitting your application, we highly recommend that you confirm that your state licensing board (if applicable) and your employer accept the Registered Sleep Technologist credential.

The ABSM is currently exploring NCCA accreditation for the Registered Sleep Technologist Examination.

Candidates for the Registered Sleep Technologist Examination must meet the eligibility requirements in place at the time the application is submitted and must submit a completed application form and required supporting materials. Supporting materials include copies of a high school diploma or equivalent, a current BLS for Healthcare Providers certification card, and any other documentation required based on the chosen exam pathway.

When evaluating the eligibility requirements for any of the 5 pathways, determine whether you meet **ALL** of the requirements. **If you do not meet ALL of the eligibility requirements, please do not submit an application.**

The attestation statement on the application must be agreed to by the candidate at the time of the application. The statement will provide assurance that the information provided in the application is true.

The application will be reviewed by the ABSM to determine if the candidate meets the eligibility requirements. Candidates will be informed of the determination by email. Candidates may appeal a negative determination in writing to the ABSM within 30 days of receipt of the determination. The decision following any appeal will be final.

The ABSM communicates with candidates via email. **Please be sure that you provide a valid email address to which these communications should be sent.**

#### A. APPLICATION PROCEDURE

##### The fee for the ABSM Registry Examination is \$250.00

The application can be found on our website and must be submitted online. Mailed or faxed applications are no longer accepted.

Applications, including any required documentation and forms, must be submitted by the current application deadline. **Applications received after the current application deadline will automatically be considered for future examination cycles.** No exceptions will be made to this requirement.

#### B. INCOMPLETE APPLICATIONS

A complete application is defined as including:

- 1) A fully-completed application form;
- 2) All supporting documentation as required on the application;
- 3) The examination fee of \$250.00.

Applicants will be notified if their application is not complete. **Completeness of an application cannot be verified by telephone; please do not call the national office for this information.**

If an application received on or before the current deadline is missing any component, it will be considered incomplete and will automatically be considered for future examination cycles once the proper attachments are resubmitted. If an application is incomplete for more than 365 days from the date received, it will be considered inactive, and a new application must be submitted.

If the ABSM does not accept the application for examination and/or if the application is incomplete, the applicant will be assessed a \$50.00 administrative fee. The remaining \$200.00 from the original examination fee will be refunded to the applicant.

#### C. REGISTRY ELIGIBLE

The ABSM does not recognize or use the term “registry eligible” and does not issue statements concerning eligibility. The ABSM informs an applicant of admissibility to the examination in writing only when the applicant has an active, approved application on file with the ABSM. The letter informing the candidate of admissibility to the examination may be used to document “acceptance to sit for the examination” in compliance with Standard B-8 of the AASM Standards for Accreditation.

#### D. REFUNDS AND WITHDRAWALS

A withdrawal is defined as not taking an examination during a scheduled administration. If notification of withdrawal from an accepted candidate is received by the ABSM national office at least 2 weeks prior to the current examination date, the candidate will be assessed a \$50.00 administrative fee. The remaining \$200.00 from the original examination fee will be refunded to the applicant. A candidate whose notification of withdrawal is received by the ABSM office within 2 weeks of the current examination date is not entitled to a refund, except when the withdrawal is the result of a documented emergency. The candidate may apply for an emergency late withdrawal by submitting documentation of the emergency.

If a candidate does not take the examination for 2 scheduled administrations, the candidate’s application will no longer be active. A candidate may only withdraw once from the examination and must take it at the next scheduled administration in order to avoid submitting a new application.

#### E. FAILURE TO PASS THE EXAMINATION

A candidate who fails the examination may retake it within one year by submitting payment of the exam fee by the current exam cycle application deadline. After one year a candidate must submit a new application, including all required documentation. The individual must meet the eligibility requirements that are in

effect at the time of reapplication.

#### F. APPLICANTS WITH DISABILITIES

The ABSM recognizes that individuals with disabilities may wish to take the examination and will make reasonable accommodations for applicants with verified disabilities. The ABSM supports the intent of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Auxiliary aids (and services) can only be offered if they do not fundamentally alter the measurement of skills or knowledge the examination is intended to test. (Americans with Disabilities Act, Public Law 101-336). Applicants requiring special accommodations must complete an ADA accommodations request form and submit it at the time of approval to sit for the examination. Requests for reasonable testing accommodations must include documentation on letterhead from a qualified professional who has provided evaluation or treatment for the candidate of a formally diagnosed and ADA qualified disability. If the ABSM deems it necessary, an independent medical assessment may be requested at the expense of the ABSM.

If the candidate is approved to sit for the Sleep Technologist Registry Examination, the ABSM will communicate the ADA Accommodations Request to Kryterion. In some cases, the candidate will be responsible for working with Kryterion directly to obtain the necessary accommodation. Additional fees may apply. **Kryterion requires a minimum of thirty days advance notice for any special accommodations.**

## EXAMINATION OVERVIEW

The Registered Sleep Technologist Examination is a computer-based, multiple-choice examination. The examination consists of 150 questions, with four hours allotted for completion. Credit is granted for the selection of the single best response for each question. The examination tests the candidate's general body of knowledge in sleep technology. It covers sleep-related domains of practice including:

- Gathering and analyzing patient information
- Testing preparation procedures
- Sleep study procedures
- Sleep study record scoring
- Service management and professional issues

Polysomnograms, MSLTs, MWTs, and other laboratory information may appear on the examination. Successful completion of this examination leads to certification as a Registered Sleep Technologist (RST).

All examination items were developed by stakeholders who are certified by the ABSM. All items undergo extensive review before being included in the examination. All test materials

and all publications of the ABSM, whether electronic or written, are copyrighted.

## I. CONTENT AREAS (Examination Blueprint)

### A. STUDY PERFORMANCE (45% TOTAL):

1. Electrode application (10%)
2. Interventions (8%)
3. Patient care (5%)
4. Artifact recognition (5%)
5. Diagnostic protocols (5%)
6. Instrumentation and signal processing (5%)
7. Sleep center emergencies (4%)
8. Post-study activities (3%)

### B. RECORD SCORING (30%):

1. Sleep staging (8%)
2. Waveform recognition (6%)
3. Respiratory event scoring (6%)
4. Movement scoring (4%)
5. Cardiac event scoring (3%)
6. Pediatric scoring (3%)

### C. UNDERSTANDING SLEEP DISORDERS (25%):

1. Sleep related breathing disorders (10%)
2. Sleep related movement disorders (5%)
3. Hypersomnias (3%)
4. Pediatric sleep disorders (3%)
5. Insomnia (2%)
6. Parasomnias (2%)

## ADMINISTRATION OF EXAM

The Sleep Technologist Registry exam is administered as a computer-based exam at a Kryterion testing center. Candidates whose applications have been approved to sit for the exam will receive instructions to select the Kryterion testing center of their choice. Along with receiving notification of application acceptance, applicants will receive further information about scheduling a date and time to take the exam and other pertinent details.

Candidates are encouraged to get a good night's sleep the evening prior to taking the exam and to eat a well-balanced meal before reporting to the testing center.

## TESTING CENTER EXAMINATION

Candidates are encouraged to arrive to the testing center 20 minutes before the scheduled testing time to allow adequate time for check-in. Candidates are required to present their Test

Taker Authorization Code at the Kryterion testing center they utilize, along with two forms of ID. One form of ID must be government-issued; the other can be a bank credit or debit card, etc. Please visit the [Kryterion website](#) for complete details.

Prior to entering the examination, candidates must review and agree to the following:

***“This exam is confidential and proprietary. It is made available to you, the examinee, solely for the purpose of assessing your proficiency level in the skill areas referenced in the title of this exam. To protect the integrity of the examination, the examinee must adhere to the following strict guidelines. The examinee shall not disclose to any third party the contents of this examination, including, but not limited to questions, form of questions, or answers, in whole or in part, in any form or by any means, verbal or written, electronic or mechanical, for any purpose. The examinee shall not falsify score reports, by modifying and/or altering the original results/score reports for any exam record. The examinee shall not cheat during the exam (such as looking at the monitors of other exam takers), utilize improper assistance, or use non-authorized material such as notes or electronic devices. The examinee shall not engage in falsification of identity or impersonating another individual to gain access to an exam. Examinees that engage in any misconduct that diminishes the security and integrity of the Sleep Technologist Registry Examination in any way will be permanently prohibited from taking any future exams. In addition, the candidate may have their certification revoked.”***

Personal belongings are not allowed in the testing area. Lockable storage will be made available to you to store your personal belongings (with the exception of your ID) during the examination.

The testing area should be free from foot traffic, talking, and other distractions. If necessary, the test proctor should have noise-cancelling headphones and earplugs available for your use.

## I. VIOLATIONS DURING TESTING

### TESTING CENTER EXAMINATION POLICIES

All testing materials are the property of the ABSM. Individuals can be dismissed from the testing center for causing a disturbance, if observed cheating or memorizing questions, if access to the testing center was fraudulently obtained, or for other reasons as determined by the test supervisor.

## I. ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Recording devices, cellular phones, tablets, cameras, personal digital assistants, and other electronic equipment are not permitted in the examination room. Any candidate found in possession of such devices may be disqualified without further consideration or refund.

## II. LATE ARRIVALS

The exam administrator will accommodate late arrivals at its discretion based on availability.

## III. NO-SHOWS AND CANCELLATIONS

Any exam cancellation must be submitted through the candidate’s Kryterion account up to seventy-two (72) hours prior to the scheduled test session.

The candidate is able to reschedule or cancel a scheduled test session through the candidate’s Kryterion account up to seventy-two (72) hours prior to the scheduled test session without penalty.

If the candidate reschedules or cancels within seventy-two (72) hours of the scheduled test session, he/she will be required to pay a \$110 fee to Kryterion through your candidate account at the time that you reschedule or cancel the scheduled test session. In addition to the \$110 Kryterion cancellation fee, the ABSM will charge a \$50 administrative fee.

## IV. INCLEMENT WEATHER/EMERGENCY CLOSING

If a testing center closes due to inclement weather, all testers will be rescheduled by Kryterion at no additional cost. If, however, the center remains open, students must report to the testing center as scheduled.

Candidates that do not report to a testing center as scheduled will be considered a no-show, and no refund will be given. There may be some exceptions if the tester can document an inability to be physically present.

### ADDITIONAL EXAMINATION DETAILS

## I. SCORING

All scoring is performed without knowledge of the candidate’s identity, and all decisions concerning examination scoring are made before the matching of names and candidate code numbers. Once the code is broken, no decisions or individual scores are changed, with the exception of a granted appeal.

## II. EXAMINATION RESULTS

The results of the examination are made available to candidates immediately upon completion of the examination and are mailed to candidates within one month after the examination.

**Exam results cannot be verified by telephone; please do not call the national office for this information.**

### III. APPEAL PROCEDURE

Within 30 days of the date of the notification letter informing the candidate of a negative determination (rejection of credentials or failure of the examination), the candidate may appeal by complying with the following procedure: The individual may request a review of the negative determination by submitting a written explanation of the reason for refuting the negative determination, along with a nonrefundable appeal fee of \$50.00. All materials must be submitted in writing to the American Board of Sleep Medicine, 2510 N. Frontage Road, Darien, IL 60561.

All appeals are carefully reviewed and any decision is considered final.

### READLIST

RST candidates are encouraged to use the following references in preparation for the ABSM Sleep Technologist Registry Examination. The suggested readings are based on the topics covered in the RST exam:

1. American Academy of Sleep Medicine. *A Technologist's Handbook: Understanding and Implementing the AASM Manual for the Scoring of Sleep and Associated Events: Rules, Terminology and Technical Specifications*. Darien, IL: American Academy of Sleep Medicine; 2017.
2. Berry RB, Brooks R, Gamaldo CE, et al.; for the American Academy of Sleep Medicine. *The AASM Manual for the Scoring of Sleep and Associated Events: Rules, Terminology and Technical Specifications*. Version 2.4. Darien, Illinois: American Academy of Sleep Medicine; 2017.
3. American Academy of Sleep Medicine. *International classification of sleep disorders*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Darien, IL: American Academy of Sleep Medicine, 2017.
4. Epstein LJ, Kristo D, Strollo PJ, et al. Clinical guide for the evaluation, management and long-term care of obstructive sleep apnea in adults. *Journal of Clinical Sleep Medicine* 2009;5(3):263-76.
5. Kushida CA, Chediak A, Berry RB, et al. Clinical guidelines for the manual titration of positive airway pressure in patients with obstructive sleep apnea. *Journal of Clinical Sleep Medicine* 2008;4(2):157-71.
6. Lee-Chiong T, Butkov N. *Fundamentals of Sleep Technology*. Philadelphia: Lippincott, Williams & Wilkins, 2007.
7. Littner MR, Kushida C, Wise M, et al. Practice parameters for clinical use of the multiple sleep latency test and the maintenance of wakefulness test. *Sleep* 2005;28(1):113-21.
8. American Academy of Sleep Medicine. *An Introduction to Sleep Disorders*. Darien, IL: American Academy of Sleep Medicine, 2018.
9. Rosenberg R, Trimble M, Brooks R, Hebding J, Mattice C. *A Technologist's Guide to Performing Sleep Studies*. Westchester, IL: American Academy of Sleep Medicine, 2009.

### RST DESIGNATION

A candidate who successfully completes the Sleep Technologist examination will be designated as a Registered Sleep Technologist (RST) and issued a certificate. The ABSM Registered Sleep **Technologist certificate will be valid for 5 years after the date of issue**. RST's can maintain the credential by recertifying in the fifth year of their certification (see **Recertification** below).

#### I. DUPLICATE OR REPLACEMENT CERTIFICATES

Individuals who hold the Registered Sleep Technologist credential may request a duplicate or replacement certificate by completing a request on the [ABSM website](#). There is a \$25 fee for each duplicate or replacement certificate requested. Please allow four-six weeks for receipt of the certificate via mail.

#### II. NAME/ADDRESS UPDATES

Individuals who hold the Registered Sleep Technologist (RST) credential must inform the ABSM of any changes to their name, address, or other contact information as soon as possible. Email is the primary form of communication of the ABSM, so it is imperative that the ABSM have a current email address on file at all times.

#### III. RECERTIFICATION

The ABSM Registered Sleep Technologist credential is valid for five years from the date of issue.

In order to renew your RST credential, you will need to go on the ABSM website and upload evidence (certificates) confirming you've obtained 50 sleep-related continuing education credits in the five years since you've received your RST credential. If you have not already done so, please visit the [ABSM website](#) to create an account, at which time you will be able to upload your continuing education credit certificates. **The ABSM will not accept CE certificates that are mailed or faxed.** See the Recertification Guidelines and RST Recertification Application, found on [absm.org](#) for more information.

#### IV. VERIFICATION OF CREDENTIALS

The American Board of Sleep Medicine provides primary source verification of RST's. A listing of individuals who have earned the Registered Sleep Technologist credential is available on the [ABSM website](#) in a searchable directory. Individuals who achieve a passing score on the Sleep Technologist Registry Examination will automatically be listed in this directory, unless a written request is submitted to the ABSM office.