

**American Board of Swallowing
and Swallowing Disorders**

BCS-S Pathway: Separating Myth from Process

October 2026

<https://www.swallowingdisorders.org>

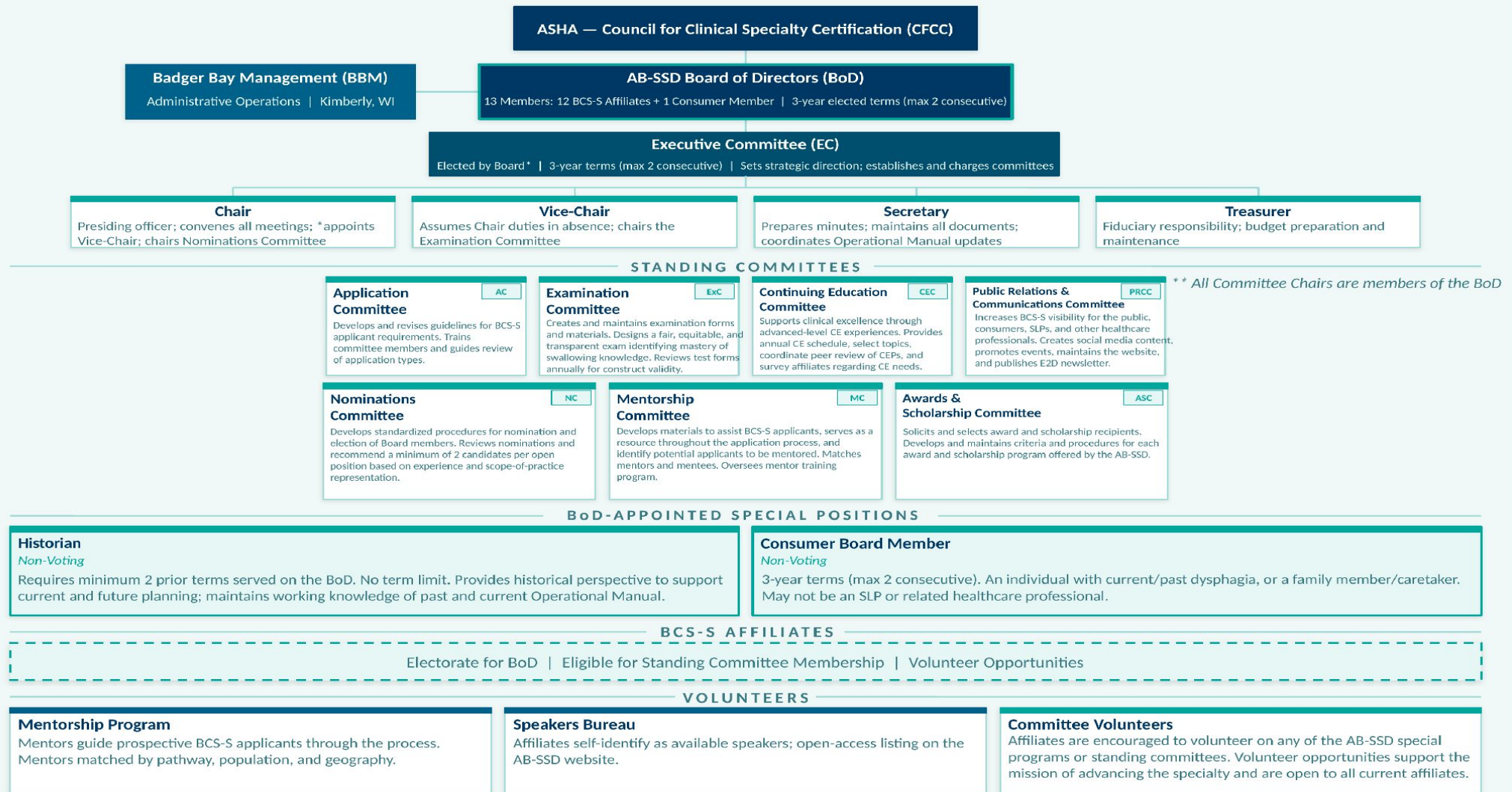
An information session and Q&A

Questions are welcome!

This is not a course or formal training session.
CEUs will not be offered.



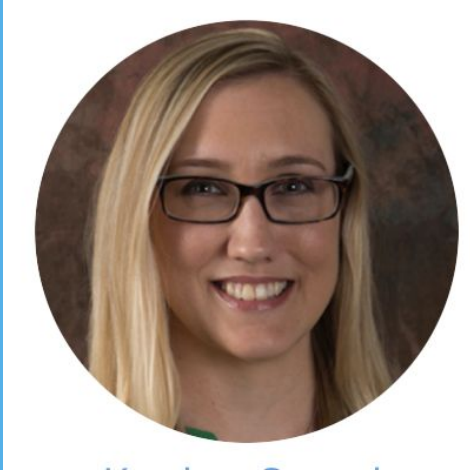
American Board of Swallowing and Swallowing Disorders (AB-SSD) — Organizational Structure



Based on AB-SSD Operational Manual (updated Sept 2026) | swallowingdisorders.org | ** Ad Hoc Committees may be assembled at the discretion of the Chair



Executive Committee



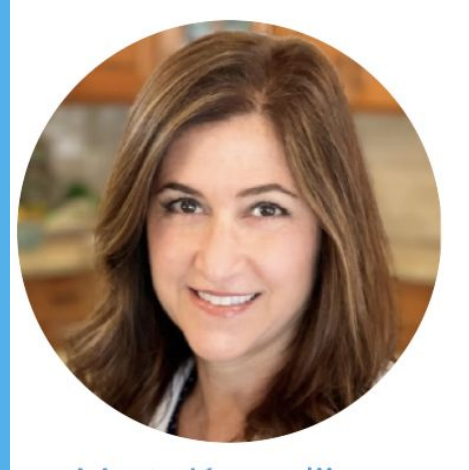
Kendrea Garand

Chairperson



Erin Reedy

Vice Chairperson
Test Committee Chair



Marta Kazandjian

Secretary



Lisa Evangelista

Treasurer



Committee Leadership



**Christina
Rappazzo**

Continuing Education
Committee Co-Chair



Jordan Hazelwood

Application
Committee Chair



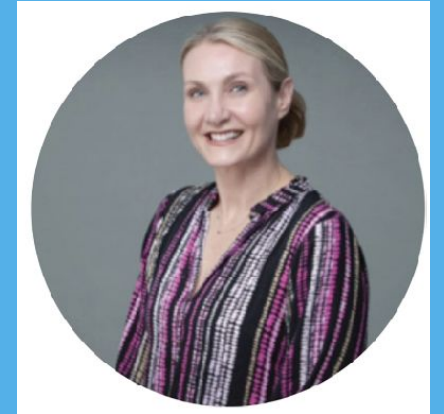
**Maria Centeno
Vázquez**

Mentorship
Committee Chair



Karen Sheffler

Public Relations &
Communications
Committee Chair



**Laurie J.
Wennerholm**

Awards
Committee Chair



At-Large Board Members & Non-Voting Members



Aaron Padilla

Board Member



Kahla Graham

Board Member



Melissa Farrow

Board Member



Kevin Moss

Consumer Board
Member



Barbara Sonies

Historian



Tonight's Conversation

- 01 Understand the initial certification and renewal tracks
- 02 Find the forms, resources, and mentorship that supports your next step
- 03 Plan your preparation, documentation, and examination
- 04 Ask the Board questions about your situation



<https://www.swallowingdisorders.org>



American Board of Swallowing
and Swallowing Disorders

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Nov. 18 2026

Register Here!

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ADVOCATING & I

- Benefits of BCS-S
- Application Process
- Request a Mentor
- Application and Resources
- Examination Guide

Become Board Certified

Path to becoming a board certified specialist in
swallowing and swallowing disorders (BCS-S).

Get Certified



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Initial Certification Tracks

Track	Experience	Dysphagia Hours	Nature of Work
Clinical	At least 3 years after CCC-SLP	350 hours/year in each of the last 3 years	Direct patient contact; up to 100 of 350 hours/year may be dysphagia supervision
Academic/ Administrative	350 hours/year in each of the last 3 years	100 hours/year in each of the last 3 years, plus 450 total in the last 4 years	Direct patient contact; including clinical research with human participants

Both tracks require documentation of **advanced** dysphagia expertise



Readiness Checklist for Initial Applicants

- ✓ Current CCC-SLP and at least 3 years of dysphagia work after certification
- ✓ Track-specific hours documented and ready for verification
- ✓ Intermediate to advanced dysphagia CE documented for the last 3 years
- ✓ Three recommendations and evidence of related professional activities
- ✓ Readiness reviewed with a mentor, including gaps and a plan





APPLYING FOR SPECIALTY CERTIFICATION IN SWALLOWING?

Readiness Checklist

Updated November 2024

Yes	No	Not Yet	Application Requirements
			Have worked with patients with dysphagia for at least three (3) years since getting my CCC.
			Currently have my ASHA CCC and am in good standing with ASHA.
			If applying in clinical track: Have worked with patients with dysphagia for at least 350 hours each year for the last 3 years .
			If applying in the Academic/Administrative Track: Have worked with patients with dysphagia at least 100 hours each year for the last 3 years AND have accrued a total of 450 hours in the last 4 years: • Must be in an official supervisory or administrative role if working clinically. • Must be seeing human subjects if in Academic/Research role.
			Have obtained 75 hours (7.5 CE) of advanced CE in dysphagia over the last 3 years . • A minimum of 4.5 of the CEUs need to be ASHA sponsored courses. • CEUs should be obtained from Intermediate and Advanced level courses/conferences. • A minimum of 1.0 CEUs at the Advanced level are required.
			Can obtain 3 letters of reference that attest to my <i>advanced</i> knowledge and skills in dysphagia from a diverse set of professionals AND to the number of hours I have worked with patients with dysphagia.
			Evidence of Skills in Education/Mentorship, Leadership, and Research In addition to the requirements listed above, applicants must also demonstrate intermediate to advanced skills related to DYSPHAGIA in 2 or more of the following categories: Education/Mentorship, Leadership, and Scholarship/Research. Provide sufficient details and examples to illustrate intermediate and advanced skills. It is advised that you review your readiness with a mentor. The activities listed below are examples and are not exhaustive but serve as illustrative suggestions for each category





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EDUCATION/MENTORSHIP

- Served as CFY supervisor in swallowing and swallowing disorders over the last 3+ years.
- Taught a community-based group (e.g., public health literacy regarding dysphagia, effects of aging on swallowing for elders, or disease-specific support groups as it relates to swallowing).
- Taught a graduate course on swallowing and swallowing disorders in an ASHA CAA accredited university program in the past 3 years (for clinical tract applicants). The course syllabus should be attached.
- Educational presentations at major regional, state, national, or international conferences and/or postgraduate workshops on swallowing and/ swallowing disorders. These lectures must have been presented to an audience that extended beyond the applicant's institution. Title of presentation, date, participant objectives, and audience must be included.
- Served as primary advisor to a master's or doctoral student to guide their research for a thesis or dissertation.

LEADERSHIP

- Held leadership positions in ASHA and other professional organizations whose mission includes a focus on swallowing and swallowing disorders (e.g. chair of committee, officer).
- Participated in the development of ASHA or state association position papers or guidelines on swallowing and swallowing disorders. Specific details and a copy of the materials must be included.
- Served on major committees of regional, state, or national organizations whose mission includes a focus on swallowing and swallowing disorders. Describe the work of the committee.
- Developed a formal swallowing-related program within your institution that involves *multiple disciplines*. You must have been responsible for ongoing monitoring and quality improvement within the institution for this swallowing-related program. Describe the program in detail and include any relevant protocols.

SCHOLARSHIP/RESEARCH

- Presented a peer-reviewed research paper or poster at a scientific meeting.
- Published at least 1 peer-reviewed research article as the primary or secondary author. A copy of this article must be included.
- Published a chapter directly related to swallowing or swallowing disorders in a peer-reviewed book. Specific reference and copy of the chapter must be included.
- Actively participated in research activities in swallowing and swallowing disorders involving some form of direct patient contact (e.g. conducting a survey or applying research methods under study of diagnostic tools or treatments).



Related Professional Activities

Education/Mentorship teaching, presentations, supervision, and advising

Leadership professional service, guidelines, or multidisciplinary program development

Scholarship/Research peer-reviewed presentations, publications, and clinical research

Describe your contribution, audience, scope, and impact with supporting evidence

Activities should demonstrate expertise beyond routine job expectations



Continuing Education

Certification	Total Dysphagia CE	ASHA CUE Minimum	Advanced Level Minimum	Course Level
Initial Certification	7.5 CEUs / 75 hours over 3 years	1.0 CEU / 10 hours	4.5 CEUs / 45 hours	Intermediate or advanced
Renewal	12.5 CEUs / 125 hours over 5 years	3.0 CEUs / 30 hours	7.5 CEUs / 75 hours	Intermediate or advanced, across all 5 years

Keep certificates, course level, learning objectives, and time-ordered agendas



Mentorship

-  Request a mentor through the AB-SSD online form
-  Share your track, patient population, setting, and application timeline
-  Review readiness, CE documentation, and professional activity evidence together
-  Ask for support early and follow up as your application develops



The 3–5 year Plan

Year 1 review requirements, identify your track, and connect with a mentor

Years 2–3 broaden dysphagia experience and build *intermediate to advanced* CE

Years 3–5 develop professional activities and preserve evidence of your work

04 This slide is a suggested planning summary, not a requirement to wait five years.





Application Process: A 3-5 Year Plan to Become Board Certified

- ❖ This chart represents only some **EXAMPLES** of how to grow your experiences and skills to prepare for candidacy as a Board Certified Specialist.
- ❖ Make sure you have robust and varied professional accomplishments, activities, and advanced skills across a **MINIMUM** of **two of the three areas** over the course of the last 5 years or more (Education/Mentorship, Leadership, Scholarship/Research). Again, **items listed are EXAMPLES only**. Please use Appendix C for further description of this advanced skill documentation:
https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.swallowingdisorders.org/resource/resmgr/application/2024_appendix_c_final_v2.pdf

Year 1	Clinical Practice	Continuing Education	Education/Mentorship	Leadership	Scholarship/Research
REVIEW & PREPARE	Review the AB-SSSD application process. Are you interested in the Clinical Track OR Academic/ Administrative Track? Are you focusing on Pediatrics, Adults, or both? Concentrate on finding a supportive supervisor, at your place of employment, who has expertise in dysphagia* Look for opportunities to evaluate and treat a variety of people with dysphagia*	Start attending intermediate and advanced live and/or online dysphagia* courses: state association meetings, ASHA conventions, SIG13 Perspectives, Dysphagia Research Society annual meetings, DRS Institute for Education (DRSIE), and AB-SSD's CEU courses. Review AB-SSD website tab: Become Board Certified → Application Process → How to Obtain & Document Continuing Education https://www.swallowingdisorders.org/page/Requirements	With a colleague or supervisor, prepare and submit a proposal for a poster or oral presentation at your state association or ASHA. Give a dysphagia* in-service to fellow SLP's working in your facility. Be a co-presenter with clinical staff to present an in-service to a patient/family group. Develop facility-specific or organization-specific patient or staff dysphagia educational materials. Join a dysphagia journal group and assist in organizing and leading.	Seek dysphagia-related opportunities at site of employment to develop leadership skills; e.g. department and facility committees, assist with dysphagia quality improvement projects. Participate in dysphagia-related volunteer opportunities at the local, state, or national level early on in your career so that you can move into leadership roles later.	Read journal articles to develop evidence-based research on dysphagia. Meet with a research mentor at local University programs and/or meetings such as Dysphagia Research Society and ASHA. Explore ways to participate in research from beginner level onward.

* NOTE: The term "dysphagia" is used throughout to cover the following concepts: typical swallowing, swallowing disorders, and feeding/swallowing issues across the lifespan.



Application Submission & Review

- 01 Complete the correct online form and provide all required attachments
- 02 Keep your own copy of the application and supporting documents
- 03 The committee reviews the evidence of ***advanced*** experience and related professional activities
- 04 The Board's decision notification explains your next steps



BCS-S Exam Scheduling & Preparation



Follow the scheduling instructions in your acceptance notification



Schedule within 1 month and complete the first exam attempt within 3 months; must be passed within one year of the approved application date.



Passing score is 80%; Up to 3 attempts per application



Use the *Examination Guide* with link to *Suggested Resources* to plan broad study (https://www.swallowingdisorders.org/page/Exam_Guide)

Confirm exam timing and retake requirements with the Board



BCS-S Exam Content

- 01 Application approval establishes eligibility to take the exam
- 02 Choose the adult-focused or pediatric-focused examination
- 03 Multiple-choice questions assess knowledge and clinical judgment *and* case-based questions assess application of knowledge
- 04 Content includes neuroanatomy, swallowing physiology, assessment, and intervention



Renewal Certification Tracks

Track	Hours in each of the 5 years	Focus
Clinical Renewal Track	At least 350 hours	Clinical experience in swallowing and swallowing disorders
Academic/Administrative Renewal Track	At least 100 hours	Clinical experience alongside academic or administrative work
Leadership and Industry Renewal Track	At least 100 hours	Direct/hands-on care and/or indirect clinical care

Renewal occurs every 5 years; you may renew under a different track



Readiness Checklist for Renewal Applicants

- ✓ Confirm your renewal date and select the track that fits your current role
- ✓ Document annual dysphagia hours for the full 5-year period
- ✓ Compile 125 hours of qualifying CE and evidence of continued professional skills
- ✓ Update your CV, ASHA documentation, and employment verification
- ✓ Complete the track-specific form, required attestation, and renewal fee



Leadership & Industry Renewal Track



For current BCS-S affiliates whose careers have shifted to leadership or industry



Describe ***advanced*** dysphagia responsibilities in a narrative of 1,000 words or less



Explain direct or indirect care and the clinical impact of your work



Include the required attestation, updated CV, ASHA card, and CE evidence



Easy2Digest Newsletter



American Board of Swallowing
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E2D Newsletter

Easy2Digest is a news brief for Board Certified Specialists in Swallowing and Swallowing Disorders which is sent out via email to affiliates quarterly.

October 2026

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June 2026: Summer Special

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June 2026

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<https://www.swallowingdisorders.org/page/easy-to-digest>



Easy 2 Digest & Ongoing Updates

-  Read Easy 2 Digest for Board news and certification updates
-  Use the online archive to revisit prior issues
-  Watch for CE opportunities, affiliate stories, and volunteer announcements
-  Check current forms and requirements again before submitting



Website Navigation & Resources

Your goal	Website section	Resources
Apply for the first time	Become Board Certified	Requirements, mentor request, application
Prepare documentation	Application and Resources	Appendices A–C, letters, hour verification
Renew BCS-S	Current Affiliates / Renewal	Renewal information and track-specific forms
Stay connected	Easy 2 Digest and AB-SSD events	News, CE opportunities, Board updates

Use the current online forms and documentation resources



FAQs: Preparing for Initial Application

Is a mentor required? No, however AB-SSD strongly encourages mentorship

Do routine work duties alone demonstrate readiness? Describe *advanced* expertise and work beyond routine expectations

Does the 3–5 year plan require a 5-year wait? It offers planning examples. Initial eligibility begins after the required post-CCC experience

How many activity categories are required? Review Appendix C and ask the Board about track-specific expectations



FAQs: Preparing to Renew

Can I change tracks when renewing? Yes. Select the track that fits your current role

Is Leadership and Industry only a renewal application track? Yes. The Leadership and Industry track is designed to for renewals only.

Do I retake the exam at renewal? Current affiliates do not retake the exam

Can virtual CE count? Yes. Qualifying *intermediate or advanced* dysphagia content can be in person or virtual



Helpful Links

- **Application Process (All Steps Listed):**
<https://www.swallowingdisorders.org/page/Requirements>
- **Request a Mentor:** <https://www.swallowingdisorders.org/page/Mentors>
- **Application Form & Resources:**
<https://www.swallowingdisorders.org/page/applicationandresources>
 - **Appendix A: Continuing Education Documentation:**
https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.swallowingdisorders.org/resource/resmgr/application/appendix_a_final_8.4.2026.pdf
 - **Appendix B: Clinical Hours Documentation:**
https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.swallowingdisorders.org/resource/resmgr/application/appendix_b_v3.pdf
 - **Appendix C: Intermediate to Advanced Skill Documentation:**
https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.swallowingdisorders.org/resource/resmgr/application/2024_appendix_c_final_v2.pdf
- **3-5 Year Plan:**
https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.swallowingdisorders.org/resource/resmgr/application/3-5_year_plan_031125.pdf
- **Readiness Checklist:**
https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.swallowingdisorders.org/resource/resmgr/application/2024_readiness_checklist_final.pdf



Contact Us

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