

## Membership Designation Levels – June 2011 Update



On July 1, 2009, the Association of Bridal Consultants rolled-out the new points system for membership designations, combining membership advancement and educational advancement into one track. The purpose was to have ABC titles reflect a member's education and professional development levels, as well as his or her real world experience and industry contributions. ABC feels both are important.

Remember, the higher your ABC designation, the more opportunities available to you. Bridal Consultant and Vendor designations must be pursued separately.

### Cumulative Points Achieved

### Membership Designation Earned

0 – < 25 points

Wedding Novice

0 – < 50 points

Vendor

*If requested, be prepared to supply copy of DBA or Business License.*

25 – < 50 points

Wedding Consultant

50 – < 75 points

Professional Bridal Consultant / Professional Wedding Vendor

75 – < 100 points

Accredited Bridal Consultant / Accredited Wedding Vendor

*Essays and event portfolio required for Accredited level*

100 points or above

Master Bridal Consultant / Master Wedding Vendor

*Essays, event portfolio, and panel presentation/interview required for Master level*

## Membership Points System Guidelines

Don't worry. The process is simpler than it looks at first. So hang in there, continue to learn, and set goals to advance your membership level so you can enjoy the benefits. (If you choose not to advance to a higher level of membership during any particular year, you are only required to submit evidence of at least 6 hours continuing education with your membership renewal for all levels.) We want you to keep learning, no matter what. Also, here's some good news . . . no more proficiency exams. Once you have a designation, it is yours to keep but it only remains valid with a current ABC membership.

Here are some pointers when submitting your application to upgrade using the point system:

- Print and complete the summary checklist found on pages 3, 4 and 5 of this document.
- Accredited and Master applicants should also include pages 7 or 8 (as appropriate).
- Please supply "**copies only**" when presenting evidence of points earned. Only submit originals if requested. Also, please keep a copy of whatever you submit, as ABC will not retain your original package.
- Organize and label all documentation for evaluation. Poorly organized, unlabeled papers reflect an unacceptable level of professionalism and will be returned for resubmission. Your presentation to your professional association is as important as your presentation to a potential client. Package all the materials together in a binder not more than one and a half inches thick for Consultant and PBC/PWV, not more than two inches thick for Accredited, or three inches thick for Master.
- For Consultant, PBC/PWV only your points checklist will be returned. (Add \$15 for return shipping if you'd like your package returned.) Complete packages will be returned to Accredited candidates. Packages will be returned to Masters' candidates at Annual Conference or by return mail.

Consultant and vendor members with real world experience can probably move up to Professional Bridal Consultant/Professional Wedding Vendor membership very quickly once evidence of education and industry experience is submitted. So again, enjoy the new system. Your credentials can now reflect both your education AND you wedding industry experience.

*David M. Wood, President, Association of Bridal Consultants*

## Instructions

- The following Points Assignment List will be used for **Consultant, Professional Bridal Consultant, Professional Wedding Vendor, Accredited Bridal Consultant, Accredited Wedding Vendor, Master Bridal Consultant and Master Wedding Vendor** membership categories.
- Wedding portfolios and essays will be required at **Accredited** and **Master** levels.
- A panel presentation/interview is required for **Master** level.
- Letters of recommendation may be part of your points qualification documentation. **DO NOT** have individual clients or vendors mail recommendations to the office separately.
- The applicant is responsible for supplying proof of each item. ABC does not provide copies of certificates that have been issued previously, but may confirm attendance.
- When applying, print the pages and complete “Your Values” for the points you are using.
- Supply acceptable evidence/documentation – **please provide copies only – no originals!**

### **Education and Professional Development - appropriate documentation examples**

- ✓ Certificate showing Professional Development Program course or program completion.
- ✓ Copy of your college degree or transcript (highest level only)
- ✓ Annual Conference/regional conference – copy of training certificate or letter from your State Coordinator validating your full attendance.
- ✓ ABC seminars and all other educational courses – provide copy of training certificate with course, date, location and number of hours.

### **Professional Industry Experience - appropriate documentation examples**

- ✓ Dated tax ID, DBA (to validate years of wedding/business experience)
- ✓ Business plan, marketing plan
- ✓ Signed and dated tax forms
- ✓ Copy of business telephone bills with dates (must have company name on the bill)
  - One month per year (same month) is sufficient
- ✓ Evidence of employment in wedding-related positions/business
  - W-2 forms, wage statements, or employment contract covering period of employment
- ✓ Planned, coordinated, directed or provided your product or services to a wedding or event evidenced by the following:
  - Signed contract OR
  - Signed letters of recommendation from client(s) AND another participating vendor

### **Leadership/Participation - appropriate documentation examples**

- ✓ A copy of your State/Country Coordinator contract
- ✓ Letter from State/Country Coordinator indicating number of years as Local Networking Group co-director
- ✓ Mentor - letter naming apprentice(s) supervised and dates of apprenticeship(s)
- ✓ Other professional designation - copy of certificate or proof of designation
- ✓ Other appointed/elected ABC position - Letter from State/Country Coordinator, Director, or President

### **Professional Industry Contributions - documentation examples**

- ✓ Copies of published articles you have written (blogs, unsolicited internet articles not accepted)
- ✓ Book or media title, publisher, ISBN
- ✓ For paid engagements - copies of contracts, W-2 or 1099
- ✓ For other guest speaking engagements– date, agenda, itinerary, brochure, letter of appreciation

### **Related Activities**

- ✓ Current membership certificates or proof of payment in other professional organizations
- ✓ Letter of appointment or letter from board members confirming officer/board appointment
- ✓ Copy of award nomination/won

From: Member Name \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail Address \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Member Number (on your membership certificate) \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

**For Consultant/PBC/PWV, mail to:**

Association of Bridal Consultants  
56 Danbury Rd., Suite 11  
New Milford, CT 06776

Direct questions to: mbrsvc@bridalassn.com

**For ABC/AWV/MBC/MWV, mail to:**

Association of Bridal Consultants  
Elise Enloe, Director of Education  
660 Neile Court  
Oviedo, FL 32765

Direct questions to: EliseABCFL@aol.com

Subject: Request for Membership Designation

1. I request consideration for advancement to \_\_\_\_\_ in agreement with ABC's Standards of Membership and Code of Ethics. I have attached true, unaltered copies documenting my qualifications and my completed Points Assignment Checklist.

- 25 – <49.75 points                      Consultant Member
- 50 – <74.75 points                      Professional Bridal Consultant / Professional Wedding Vendor
- 75 - <99.75 points                      Accredited Bridal Consultant / Accredited Wedding Vendor
- 100 points or above                      Master Bridal Consultant / Master Wedding Vendor

	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>Your Total</b>
<b>Education and Professional Development</b>	<b>Minimum 10 points, Maximum 30 points</b>	
<b>Professional Industry Experience</b>	<b>Maximum 30 points</b>	
<b>Leadership/Participation</b>	<b>Maximum 30 points</b>	
<b>Professional Industry Contributions</b>	<b>Maximum 25 points</b>	
<b>Related Activities</b>	<b>Maximum 20 points</b>	
<b>TOTAL</b>		

1. For Novice members upgrading to Consultant level, once approved, your membership dues will be prorated and based on the date of membership upgrade. Once paid, you will receive your consultant membership materials.
2. I have enclosed my non-refundable application fee in the amount of
  - \$50 for advancement to Professional Bridal Consultant or Professional Wedding Vendor. Add \$15 for return shipping if you'd like your entire package returned.
  - \$120** for advancement to Accredited Bridal Consultant or Accredited Wedding Vendor. **Packages will be returned.**
  - \$250 for Master Bridal Consultant or Master Wedding Vendor. Packages will be returned to candidates at Annual Conference.
3. For application/advancement to Accredited Bridal Consultant or Accredited Wedding Vendor, I have followed the Accredited/Master application procedures and provided my essays and portfolio.

Sincerely,  
(Applicant Signature)

Member Name \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail Address \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Member Number (on your membership certificate) \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_



**Association of Bridal Consultants  
Membership Levels of Designation  
Points Assignment Checklist  
Updated **June 2011****

<b>Education and Professional Development</b>	<b>Minimum 10 points, Maximum 30 points</b>	<b>Your Values</b>	<b>Approved</b>
* Professional Development Program (PDP) – Introduction	2		
*Professional Development Program (PDP) – Etiquette	2		
*Professional Development Program (PDP) – Sales & Marketing	2		
*Professional Development Program (PDP) – Wedding Day	2		
*Professional Development Program (PDP) – Related Services	2		
*Professional Development Program (PDP) – Planning & Consulting	2		
*Professional Development Program Final w/Projects	3		
PDP Distinguished Graduate Overall score of 94 percent for all courses and Final Exam/Projects	1		
Weddings as a Business (WAB)	3		
Working from Home (available 2010)	2		
Penn Foster Program includes PDP, WAB and additional modules: Learning Styles (1), Setting Fees (1), Multimedia Marketing (1), Bridal Show Boothmanship (1)	24		
ABC Seminars: New Horizons, Expanding Horizons (all), Cultural Horizons	2		
ABC Far Horizons, Global Horizons and ABC FAMs (full attendance ) 1 point per full day excluding arrival & departure days	Up to 3 per trip		
ABC Annual Conference (full attendance per year attended)	5		
ABC state or regional meeting or workshop (1 per 6 hours education)	1-2		
Associate Degree <b>or</b>	2	} Highest level only	
Bachelor’s Degree <b>or</b>	4		
Master’s Degree <b>or</b>	6		
Doctorate Degree	8		
Vendors ONLY – submit relevant specialty education/training for evaluation/equivalency	as determined		
Other wedding certificate programs (submit transcript of topics and grades)	5		
<b>LWPI - CWEP course</b>	<b>10</b>		
Industry-/business-related education 2 to 4 hour seminar	0.25		
Industry-/business-related education 5 to 8 hour seminar	0.5		
Industry-related conferences: Wedding MBA, Special Event, BizBash, ARA, WEVA, NACE, etc.	1		
Additional university/college or industry related course more than 8 hours (per course completed)	1		
Approved safety or medical course (First Aid or CPR)	0.5		
<b>Education and Professional Development TOTAL</b>			

*\*If joining with less than 25 points, the association strongly recommends that you successfully complete the full Professional Development Program (PDP).*

Member Name \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail Address \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Professional Industry Experience</b>	<b>Maximum 30 points</b>	<b>Your Values</b>	<b>Approved</b>
Intern/apprentice with recommendation from supervising ABC members	1 per wedding/event		
Experience in wedding industry (years in business)	1 per year		
Planned, coordinated, directed, or serviced wedding or event	1 per wedding/event		
<b>Professional Industry Experience TOTAL</b>			

<b>Leadership/Participation</b>	<b>Maximum 30 points</b>	<b>Your Values</b>	<b>Approved</b>
ABC membership (1 point per completed 6 months)	2 per year		
State/Country Coordinator (max 10 points)	2 per year		
LNG Co-Director (max 5 points)	1 per year		
Mentor/apprenticeship supervisor for ABC Novice(s)	1 per apprenticeship		
PBC/PWV	2		
ABC/AWV (do not count level you are requesting)	4		
Other <b>industry-related</b> professional designation (CMP, CSEP, CSS etc.)	1 per current designation		
Other appointed ABC position	1 per year or project		
Participate in ABC meeting committee	1 per local; 2 per state/regional; 4 per national/international		
<b>Leadership/Participation TOTAL</b>			

<b>Professional Industry Contributions</b>	<b>Maximum 25 points</b>	<b>Your Values</b>	<b>Approved</b>
Published article (author) in industry-related publication (per article)	1 per article		
University/college instructor of industry-related course	1 per course		
Industry or university/college guest speaker	0.5 per engagement		
Industry panelist, moderator, or roundtable leader	0.25 per engagement		
Published industry-related book or video (author)	5 per book or video		
Published industry-related book (co-author)	2 per book		
Published industry-related book (contributor)	1 per book		
Industry-related training presentation or audiovisual (author)	1 per presentation		
<b>Professional Industry Contributions TOTAL</b>			

<b>Related Activities</b>	<b>Maximum 20 points</b>	<b>Your Values</b>	<b>Approved</b>
Membership in other related professional association/organization (ISES, NACE, WEVA, ADJA, PPA, local wedding organization, etc.)	1 per current membership		
Officer/board member in industry-related professional association/organization	1 per term		
Industry award (Miss Dorothy Scholarship, Miss Dorothy Heart, Rising Star, Esprit, Gala, etc.)	1 per award		
Industry award nomination/application (Rising Star, Esprit, Gala, etc.)	0.5 per nomination/application		
Community service project/contributions/volunteer	1 per project		
<b>Related Activities TOTAL</b>			

## How to get from Zero to Professional Bridal Consultant (PBC) in 2 Years (or less)

This is a generic plan that can be expedited or extended and assumes the member has no other existing education or wedding/event experience.

<b>First Year</b>	<b>Points Earned</b>	<b>Comments</b>
1 year Novice Membership	2 per year	
Professional Development Program (with potential additional point for Distinguished Graduate)	15 +1 for <i>Distinguished. Graduate</i>	Education & Professional Development 6-8 months for completion
New Horizons (2) or State Coordinator Novice Workshop (1 per 6 hour workshop)	1-2	Education & Professional Development
Weddings as a Business	3	Education & Professional Development Target 4-6 months for completion
Working from Home and Virtual Offices	2	Education & Professional Development
Develop Your Business Plan	None	For business startup, Miss Dorothy Scholarship and Cele Lalli Award
Apprentice a wedding	1 each (2)	Professional Industry Experience
Work 2 community service projects/events	1 each (2)	Related Activities
Apply for Miss Dorothy Scholarship (as a Novice)	1	
<b>Points Accumulated First Year</b>	25 - 27	
Upgrade to Consultant		
<b>Second Year</b>	<b>Points Earned</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Consultant Membership	2 per year	
Apply for Cele Lalli Rising Star Award (within 6 months of upgrade)	1	Related Activities
Start/Open Your Business	1 per year	
Expanding Horizons: Let Your Business Blossom, Rehearsal to Reception Rx, Etiquette & Service Revival and/or Cultural Horizons	2 each (4)	Education & Professional Development
Attend Annual Conference	5	Education & Professional Development
Attend State Meeting	1 per 6 hour meeting	Education & Professional Development
Sandals and/or Ask Me Training	.25 each (.5)	Education & Professional Development
First Aid or CPR Course	0.5 each (1)	Education & Professional Development
Apprentice 2-4 weddings	1 each (4)	Professional Industry Experience
Work 2 community service projects/events	1 each (2)	Related Activities
Certified Sandals Specialist (CSS)	1	Leadership/Participation
Participate in local meeting committee	1	Leadership/Participation
Write a published article (state newsletter, local publication)	1 each	Leadership/Participation
<b>Points Accumulated Second Year</b>	19 - 26	
Upgrade to Professional Bridal Consultant	>50	

## Accredited Bridal Consultant/Accredited Wedding Vendor Application™

To receive the designation of Accredited Bridal Consultant or Accredited Wedding Vendor, submit the following portfolio package consisting of:

- your points qualifications
- two essay questions and
- a wedding portfolio
- (optional) a letter of reference from state or country coordinator or a Master Bridal Consultant or Master Wedding Vendor addressing your character and ABC involvement.

Your essays and portfolio will be combined with your points for a final determination. PLEASE package all the materials together in a binder **not more than two inches thick**. Your presentation for this level of achievement is as important as your presentation of materials to a potential client.

Answer **question 1 and one other** of the following essay questions in 350 words or less each.

1. **What is the greatest value of Association membership? How has ABC membership contributed to your growth, and how can the Association convey this to new members?** (You agree to have your answer quoted/published on the ABC website or in **Wedding Planner Magazine**.)
2. There is a severe weather-related incident (blizzard, hurricane, whatever fits your situation) the day before a large wedding. Describe your plan of action for all concerned and how you deal with the bride/groom, and all other vendors. You can use an actual wedding incident if you have experienced something similar to this scenario.
3. Networking is essential to the wedding profession. Describe how and where you network and how it benefits your business and professional growth.
4. The wedding was less than “perfect” due to circumstances beyond your control. You did your best, but you have received a formal complaint against you/your business. Describe how you would handle the situation. You can use an actual wedding incident if you have experienced something similar to this scenario.

Submit to Director of Education a portfolio of a wedding you have done in the past **three** years.

Applications for Accredited may be submitted at any time, but will not be reviewed between October 15<sup>th</sup> and November 15<sup>th</sup>.

Materials to include are:

- Initial contact information, welcoming letter, phone log, etc.
- Your promotional material
- Contract or agreement with the client
- Contract with vendors (if this was your responsibility) or how you coordinated with vendors
- Schedules – both long range planning and wedding day itinerary
- Any other “things” (invitations, décor, programs) you were responsible for
- Pictures from the wedding, preferably professionally taken
- Follow up evaluation from the client and/or vendor(s) (at least one is required)
- Your summary and evaluation of the event – the good, the bad, why this wedding was selected to present

*Please keep your package submission to a 2-inch binder (fits in a USPS Priority or FEDEX “Medium” box). Don’t forget your application fee of \$120, payable to the Association of Bridal Consultants.*

## Master Bridal Consultant/Master Wedding Vendor Application™

To receive the designation of Master Bridal Consultant or Master Wedding Vendor, you submit the following package for review by the Master's Panel. In addition to your points qualifications, complete two of the following essay questions, and provide an outline or summary of your Master's wedding portfolio. Your points, essays, portfolio presentation and panel interview will be evaluated by a panel of three MBCs/MWVs for a final determination. Package these materials together in a binder not more than 3 inches thick. Your presentation for this level of achievement is as important as your presentation of materials to a potential client. This approved submission qualifies you to present your wedding portfolio to the Masters Panel.

Answer **question 1 and one other** of the following essay questions including **your name and the question at the top of each essay**. Your answers should be between 350 and 500 words each.

- 1. You are applying for a title of prestige. Describe the role as a Master Bridal Consultant/Master Wedding Vendor and how you will fulfill that role.**
2. Describe one of your most difficult wedding/event challenges that required a "master" level of skills/expertise to solve/resolve. What was your solution?
3. Describe an ethical challenge you have encountered or were involved with. Describe the situation, your role/involvement, and how you handled it.

**Finally**, you must present a portfolio of a wedding or wedding-related project/event you have done in the past three years that demonstrates your industry contributions, leadership, and mastery to a panel of three Master Bridal Consultants/Master Wedding Vendors at annual conference. Your portfolio should be prepared in triplicate for the panel and delivered by the candidate to the panel. Materials to include (as appropriate) are:

- Communications: initial contact, intake/needs assessment, proposal, meetings, phone log, etc.
- Contract or agreement with the client and contract(s) with vendors (if this was your responsibility) or how you coordinated with vendors
- Budget
- Schedules – both long range planning and wedding day itinerary
- Your role/responsibilities
- Pictures, slide show or other media from the wedding/event
- Follow up evaluation from the client and/or vendor(s) (at least one is required) and/or evidence of event publication/media
- Your evaluation of the event, and how this wedding or event demonstrates "master" skill level
- Submit **just the outline** of your portfolio presentation **with your application** for Master Bridal Consultant for distribution to the panel members prior to arrival.

The Master Bridal Consultant panel meets on Sunday at the Annual Conference in November. Once your application for Master is reviewed, you will be contacted to confirm panel presentation. Applications must be received by **July 1** annually to be considered for presentation at Annual Conference.

- You will be responsible for your travel to the panel presentation.
- Audio-visual equipment or other setup requirements must be requested in advance. Visual displays and handouts for each panel member are an important part of your presentation.
- Candidates will have 15 to 20 minutes to present their portfolio to the panel.
- Panel members will have 20 minutes to ask questions about candidate's points, essays, portfolio and additional questions on other wedding-related topics.
- Candidates will get feedback from the panelists on their presentation, however, the decision of the panel is final and may not be contested. If not selected, candidates may reapply the following year without paying an additional application fee.
- The panel may award Accredited Bridal Consultant/Accredited Wedding Vendor to candidates who qualify for those designations.

*Don't forget your application fee of \$250, payable to the Association of Bridal Consultants.*