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Speeding Accreditation Application Processing

The Brain Injury Association of America (BIAA) is the nation’s oldest and largest advocacy organization serving individuals who sustain brain injuries in car crashes, falls, and at work—both on the playing field and the battlefield. BIAA and its nationwide network of local chapters furnish information and support to survivors and training for treatment professionals and hands-on care providers. In 1996, BIAA established the Academy of Certified Brain Injury Specialists (ACBIS) so that professionals and direct care workers could demonstrate their knowledge and experience in working with brain injury patients.

Rehabilitation professionals and para-professionals from all parts of the care continuum – from acute care to residential rehabilitation to in-home and community-based services – and from all across the United States – apply for ACBIS certification. Non-healthcare professionals, including special education teachers and others who work with clients who have brain injuries, may also be eligible for certification.

Previously, ACBIS’ certification process was paper-based. Applicants submitted a multi-page application, complete with supporting documents such as their résumés and verification of employment, via mail or fax, and took a test. BIAA ACBIS coordinator Jessica Kerney then processed each piece of paper manually, requested missing documents or information, and sent test scores to applicants. When this additional paperwork came in, Kerney added it to the applicant’s file, placed it in a folder and took it to a storage area.

Transforming Application Processing with Online Forms & Workflow

The number of ACBIS applications increased from 500 in 2005 to 1,200 in 2008, prompting BIAA Director of Professional Services Marianna Abashian to investigate

Quick Facts

Location: Vienna, Virginia

Focus: Brain injury advocacy, education and research

Mission: To be the voice of brain injury

Access products used: Formatta





The Business Problems

Number of accreditation applications increases by over 300 percent in five years

BIAA staff member wastes time manually processing paper forms

Applicants must wait to hear if they passed the accreditation test

Preparing an application is time-consuming

The Solutions

Online forms & workflow creates a faster process that enables existing staff to deal with increased application load

Forms are processed electronically via computer, increasing productivity

Formatta delivers instant test feedback via e-mail

Everything needed for accreditation is easily submitted in a secure online environment

an electronic forms management solution. She selected the Formatta online forms and workflow suite from Access, the world's leading provider of electronic forms (e-forms) management, automation and workflow software.

"When we first saw a Formatta demo we felt like it'd been sent from heaven," Abashian says. "We realized that it could transform our application processing by removing paperwork."

Once BIAA chose Formatta, Abashian and Kerney worked with Access's experienced forms designers to create a customized online test that duplicated the paper-based version, as well as an online application form that eliminates the need for hard copy submission.

"The beauty of the ACBIS certification test form we created with Formatta is its simplicity," Abashian says.

Now, an applicant creates an online user account via the ACBIS website. If they have previously created a profile and enter their username and password, Formatta pre-fills certain form fields, saving time. They then submit their application and attach their résumé, employment verification and other required documents. Kerney receives their forms package via e-mail. The individual takes their ACBIS test on an online form using Formatta. The applicant receives their test score via e-mail.

"The ability to complete the ACBIS application online makes the process much easier for applicants, and they get instant feedback on their ACBIS certification test scores instead of waiting to see how they did," Kerney says. "Formatta has also eliminated the steps of printing the application, résumé and other documents and mailing them."

In addition to simplifying the ACBIS accreditation process for applicants, switching from paper forms to online versions has also benefitted BIAA staff members.

"I'm no longer looking through thousands of pieces of paper in file cabinets – I can access everything I need from my computer," Kerney says. "I can also approve an application on the form itself, and if I deny it I can explain what additional information is needed in a comments box instead of sending an e-mail or picking up the phone."

The final part of the ACBIS application review is employment verification. When relying on a paper process, an applicant's supervisor filled in a form by hand and mailed or faxed it to BIAA. Now, they simply complete a few fields in an online form and click 'Submit.' Kerney is notified that a new form requires attention. She opens the verification form, clicks 'Approve,' then clicks 'Send,' and it goes straight to the supervisor's e-mail address. This completes the application process.



“We’ve had a wonderful experience working with Access’s forms designers and support team,” Kerny says. “They’re responsive, know their products well and are readily available any time we need them.”

A Positive Support Experience

Since deploying Formatta, the number of annual ACBIS applications BIAA receives has increased to 1,600. With hard copies, this would have provided a logistical problem, but Formatta has enabled Kerney to process the additional application packets in a timely manner.

“The online forms and workflow Formatta provides has helped us process a greater number of accreditation applications without adding additional staff members,” she said.

An organization often encourages multiple employees to apply for ACBIS accreditation. With Formatta, a group administrator can log into a secure online portal, enter the individuals’ names and immediately view their test scores.

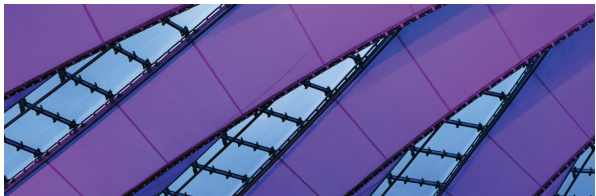
Another Formatta feature that has proved beneficial for BIAA is the ability to prevent an applicant from printing the ACBIS test, to ensure that the test information is secure and unavailable to other potential applicants.

To help new applicants, Kerney recorded an instructional webinar, and used the Formatta bubble tips tool to provide more information about what’s required for certain form fields.

“We’ve had a wonderful experience working with Access’s forms designers and support team,” Kerny says. “They’re responsive, know their products well and are readily available any time we need them.”

Abashian has also had positive interaction with Access. “Access’s ability to look at our process and refine our electronic workflow has really impressed us,” she says. “They’ve also made sure we have the best possible forms that meet our needs. We have a limited budget, but we find that Formatta provides great value for our organization.”





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