



# Standard Practice for Assessment of Certification Programs for Environmental Professionals: Accreditation Criteria<sup>1</sup>

This standard is issued under the fixed designation E 1929; the number immediately following the designation indicates the year of original adoption or, in the case of revision, the year of last revision. A number in parentheses indicates the year of last reapproval. A superscript epsilon ( $\epsilon$ ) indicates an editorial change since the last revision or reapproval.

## 1. Scope

1.1 This practice covers minimum acceptable accreditation criteria to assist in the assessment of certification programs for environmental professionals.

1.2 The practice will assist a user of environmental services in identifying credible certification programs for environmental professionals.

1.3 *This practice does not propose to address any specific certification program for environmental professionals. It is the responsibility of the user of this guide to determine whether or not a specific certification program meets the criteria contained herein.*

1.4 *This standard does not purport to address all of the safety concerns, if any, associated with its use. It is the responsibility of the user of this standard to establish appropriate safety and health practices and determine the applicability of regulatory limitations prior to use.*

## 2. Referenced Documents

### 2.1 CESB Standard:

Guidelines for Engineering and Related Specialty Certification Programs<sup>2</sup>

### 2.2 NCCA Standard:

Standards for Accreditation of National Certification Organizations<sup>3</sup>

## 3. Terminology

### 3.1 Definitions:

3.1.1 *accreditation*—the recognition of a certification program as conforming to certain standards that qualify individuals receiving the certification for practice in a specific area. Accreditation applies to institutions and programs, not individuals.

3.1.2 *certification*—recognition by a body that an individual or entity has met specified criteria and is thereby qualified for a designated function.

3.1.3 *environmental professional*—a person possessing sufficient education, training and experience necessary to qualify for practice in a specialty area of the environmental profession.

3.1.4 *licensing*—the authorization granted by a government to an individual or entity to perform a function or service.

3.1.5 *registration*—the listing of an individual with and by a certifying or licensing body. The body may be either governmental or non-governmental. Registration grants no authority nor does it address qualifications.

3.1.6 *specialty area*—a specified, distinctly identifiable area of practice within a profession.

## 4. Significance and Use

4.1 This practice may be employed by users of environmental services to assess the credibility of certification programs for environmental professionals.

4.2 Environmental professionals seeking certification may use this practice to assess the credibility of certification programs for environmental professionals.

4.3 Certifying bodies for environmental professionals may use this practice to demonstrate that their specific certification program for environmental professionals meets minimum standards for credibility.

4.4 *This practice is not meant to apply to, replace or otherwise interfere with any existing government licensing board or registration program.*

## 5. Types of Certifying Bodies

5.1 Certifying bodies may be either governmental or non-governmental.

5.2 Governmental bodies such as state licensing boards may have established certification programs to meet their individual requirements, including state laws and programs. This standard is not mandatory for such bodies, however it may be used as a means to improve their programs.

## 6. Structure of Certifying Body

### 6.1 *The Certifying Body Shall:*

<sup>1</sup> This practice is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee E-50 on Environmental Assessment and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee E50.05 on Wetland Ecosystems.

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<sup>2</sup> Available from Council of Engineering and Scientific Specialty Boards (CESB), 130 Holiday Court, Suite 100, Annapolis, MD 21401-7032.

<sup>3</sup> Available from National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA), 1200 19th Street, N.W., Suite 300, Washington, DC 20036-2401.

6.1.1 Be independent from sponsoring professional organizations in matters pertaining to certification;

6.1.2 Consist of a majority of certified individuals (new certifying bodies should refer to 8.1.1.7); and

6.1.3 Maintain formal written procedures defining the criteria and process used to select or appoint members to the certifying body.

## 7. Resources of Certifying Body

### 7.1 *The Certifying Body Shall:*

7.1.1 Possess the expertise, knowledge and skill to implement the certification program.

## 8. Certification Program Operation

### 8.1 *The Certifying Body Shall:*

8.1.1 Have a program to evaluate individual competence for certification that is objective and based on the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to function in the specialty area. Such programs shall include the following as minimum criteria:

8.1.1.1 Have a developed document specifying the “minimum level of skills and knowledge” (referred to as the “body of knowledge”) required of a practitioner in the specialty area. The “body of knowledge” document shall be subjected to peer review by practicing professionals in the field of the specialty area. Provision shall be made to update the document to remain current and relevant. Such document shall be made available upon request.

8.1.1.2 Require applicants for certification to meet minimum educational and experience requirements for the specialty area.

8.1.1.3 Require applicants for certification to document education. The certifying body shall verify that minimum educational requirements have been met.

8.1.1.4 Require applicants for certification to supply references supporting relevant experience in the specialty area. References shall be contacted by the certifying body to verify relevant experience.

8.1.1.5 Have a professional code of ethics that applicants requesting certification are provided with and that certificants are required to adhere to in their professional practice.

8.1.1.6 Award certification only if the applicant passes a comprehensive examination based on the requirements of the document specified in 8.1.1.1; and meets all other stipulated certification requirements.

8.1.1.7 New certification programs may grant certification to applicants on the basis of education and demonstrated experience, without examination, for a limited period of time not exceeding approximately two years, provided all other certification requirements are met. After that time, no applicant shall be certified other than by examination.

8.1.1.8 Award certification for a predefined and limited period of time, not exceeding approximately five years, after which recertification shall be required.

8.1.1.9 Establish re-certification requirements.

8.2 Provide any sponsoring professional organization(s), and those who employ or otherwise use environmental services within the specialty area an opportunity for input into the policies of the certifying body;

8.3 Have written mechanisms in place within the organization to re-evaluate on a periodic basis the knowledge, skills, and abilities used to define the specialty area;

8.4 Develop a comprehensive examination designed to test the body of knowledge relevant to the specialty area;

8.5 Take reasonable precautions to protect the integrity of all examinations before, during and after the examination period;

8.6 Have written mechanisms in place to avoid any real or perceived conflict of interest, (for example, an applicant and the evaluator shall not be from the same company); and

8.7 Provide a means for differentiating certifications issued after a substantive revision to the certification requirements of the certifying body from those certifications issued prior to the revision.

## 9. Public Disclosure of Certification by Certifying Body

### 9.1 *The Certifying Body Shall:*

9.1.1 Publish and make publicly available a document that clearly defines the certification responsibilities of the certifying body and outlines any other activities of the certifying body which are not related to certification;

9.1.2 Publish and make publicly available a general description of the procedures used in examination construction and validation, administration, and results reporting;

9.1.3 Publish and make publicly available a comprehensive summary of the information, knowledge, or functions covered by any examination required; and

9.1.4 Publish and make publicly available, at least annually, a summary of certification activities, including number of applicants, and number and names of those certified.

## 10. Certifying Body Responsibilities to Applicants

### 10.1 *The Certifying Body Shall:*

10.1.1 Not give preferential or prejudicial treatment to any applicant;

10.1.2 Provide all applicants with written copies of procedures to apply for and attain certification;

10.1.3 Maintain a written policy for the periodic review of application and testing procedures to ensure consistency and equitableness;

10.1.4 Report examination results to applicants in a timely manner;

10.1.5 Provide, upon request, to all applicants who fail the examination or fail to meet the requirements of the certification, a written response indicating the general areas of deficiency;

10.1.6 Consider and treat the specific and detailed examination results of each applicant as confidential; and

10.1.7 Publish and maintain a written policy detailing appeal procedures.

## 11. Certifying Body Responsibilities to the Public and Consumers

### 11.1 *The Certifying Body Shall:*

11.1.1 Ensure that the examination measures the knowledge, skill, and abilities required for practice in the specialty area;

11.1.2 Award certification only after the examination has been successfully passed and all other certification requirements have been met;

11.1.3 Maintain a publicly accessible roster of individuals awarded certification;

11.1.4 Maintain written due process policies and procedures for the discipline of certificants, for cause, including revocation of certification;

11.1.5 Maintain written provisions for sanctions to certificants resulting from misuse, abuse, or fraudulent use of certification; and

11.1.6 Ensure that any title or credential awarded by the certifying body accurately reflects the specialty area.

**12. Independent Accreditation of Certifying Body Certification Programs**

12.1 Independent (third party) verification of conformance with the accreditation criteria in this standard brings to any certification program a higher level of credibility.

12.2 Certification bodies are encouraged to obtain independent (third party) verification of conformance with this standard through a nationally recognized body experienced in conducting accreditation. Said accreditation experience would be demonstrated by accreditation of a minimum of three separate certification bodies.

12.3 Accreditation criteria established by either the Council of Engineering and Scientific Specialty Boards (CESB) or the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA) shall be considered in conformance with this practice.

12.4 A certifying body that has received independent (third party) verification that their certification program is in conformance with this practice may state:

”(name of certifying body and specialty certification) conforms with the accreditation criteria in ASTM Practice E 1929, as independently verified by (state

the accreditation organization which conducted the accreditation and provide the address and phone number).”

12.5 Independent (third party) accreditation of conformance with this standard shall be re-evaluated by the accrediting body within a period not exceeding approximately five years.

12.6 Independent (third party) accreditation shall require that the certifying body conform at a minimum with the requirements of this standard.

**13. Interim Self-Declaration Option by Certifying Bodies**

13.1 A certification body desiring to demonstrate conformity with the accreditation criteria in this practice may, after self-evaluation, declare itself to be in conformance with the accreditation criteria for a period not exceeding three years from the date this practice is first officially published, after which time conformance with this practice shall only be demonstrated by independent (third party) accreditation consistent with Section 12. This interim option is made available in order for the certification body to obtain independent (third party) accreditation. Certification bodies using this interim option shall apply for independent (third party) accreditation within one year from the date this practice is first officially published. Self-declaration shall be supported by written documentation including execution of the Conformity with Standard Form included in Appendix X1.

13.2 A certifying body that, after self-evaluation, is able to demonstrate conformance with the accreditation criteria in this practice may state:

”(name of certifying body and specialty certification) conforms with the accreditation criteria in ASTM Practice E 1929, as determined by self-evaluation.

Documentation will be provided upon request.”

13.3 A certifying body that, after self-evaluation, declares itself to be in conformance with this practice shall provide a user, upon request, with a copy of the completed Conformity with Standard Form included in Appendix X1.

**APPENDIX**

**(Nonmandatory Information)**

**X1. DEMONSTRATION OF CONFORMITY WITH PRACTICE E 1929**

**I. Structure of Certifying Body**

- (a) Independent in matters pertaining to certification  Yes  No\*
- (b) Consist of a majority of certified individuals  Yes  No
- (c) Written procedures exist for selection of members  Yes  No

**II. Resources of Certifying Body**

- (a) Possess expertise, knowledge and skill to implement the certification program  Yes  No

**III. Certification Program Operation**

- (a) "Body of knowledge" documented  Yes  No
- (b) "Body of knowledge" peer reviewed by practicing professionals in the field of the specialty area  Yes  No
- (c) Provision to update "body of knowledge"  Yes  No
- (d) Minimum educational requirements established  Yes  No  
Description of requirements: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- (e) Minimum experience requirements established  Yes  No  
Description of requirements: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- (f) Applicant required to document education  Yes  No
- (g) Applicant required to document experience  Yes  No
- (h) Applicant required to supply references supporting relevant experience  Yes  No
- (i) Verification that applicant meets educational requirements  Yes  No
- (j) Verification of applicant's experience  Yes  No
- (k) Professional code of ethics exists and required to be adhered to  Yes  No
- (l) Examination required  Yes  No  
Description: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- (m) Examination tests the body of knowledge relevant to specialty area  Yes  No
- (n) Precautionary measures taken to protect the integrity of the examination process  Yes  No
- (o) Recertification program exists  Yes  No
- (p) Written mechanisms in place within the organization to re-evaluate on a periodic basis the knowledge, skills and abilities which define the specialty area  Yes  No
- (q) Opportunity for outside input into policies of the certifying body  Yes  No
- (r) Written mechanisms exist to avoid conflict of interest  Yes  No
- (s) Policy in place to differentiate certifications after any substantive revision(s) to requirements made  Yes  No

**IV. Public Disclosure of Certification by Certifying Body**

- (a) Publish and make publicly available a document defining certification responsibilities and activities  Yes  No
- (b) Publish and make publicly available descriptions of procedures used in examination construction and validation, administration, and results reporting  Yes  No
- (c) Publish and make publicly available description of information, knowledge, and functions covered by examination  Yes  No
- (d) Publish and make publicly available, at least annually, a summary of certification activities  Yes  No

**V. Certifying Body Responsibilities to Applicants**

- (a) Non-discrimination policy in place  Yes  No
- (b) Applicants provided with written application procedures  Yes  No
- (c) Periodic review of application and testing procedures  Yes  No
- (d) Timely reporting of examination results  Yes  No
- (e) Deficiency information made available to applicants who fail to be certified  Yes  No
- (f) Maintain confidentiality of examination results  Yes  No
- (g) Published policy detailing appeal procedures  Yes  No

**VI. Certifying Body Responsibilities to the Public and Consumers**

- (a) Examination measures knowledge, skill and abilities required for practice in the specialty area  Yes  No
- (b) Award certification only after successful examination and all certification requirements met  Yes  No

- (c) Maintain publicly accessible roster of certified individuals  Yes  No
- (d) Written due process policies and procedures exist for disciplining certificants for cause  Yes  No
- (e) Provisions exist for sanctions to certificants resulting from misuse, abuse or fraud  Yes  No
- (f) Name of credential accurately reflects specialty area  Yes  No

\* Any negative answer constitutes non-conformance with the practice. An explanation may be attached to this document with the reason for non-conformance.

Name of Certifying Body \_\_\_\_\_

Address of Certifying Body \_\_\_\_\_

Specialty Certification Description \_\_\_\_\_

New Certification  Existing Certification

Scope of Practice \_\_\_\_\_

Conformity with ASTM Practice E 1929  
for Specialty Certification

- Self-Declaration
  - Applied for Independent Accreditation
    - Date: \_\_\_\_\_
    - Accreditation Organization: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Independent Accreditation not yet applied for
- Independent Accreditation
  - Accreditation Organization: \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - Phone: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Date Accreditation Received: \_\_\_\_\_

I SWEAR UNDER OATH THAT THE INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THIS DEMONSTRATION OF CONFORMITY WITH ASTM PRACTICE E 1929 DOCUMENT IS TRUE AND CORRECT.

*Signature of Certifying Body Officer:*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**FIG. X1.1 Demonstration of Conformity With ASTM Practice E 1929**

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