

**Sustainability
Excellence**

Credential Maintenance Program Guide

November 2024

Sustainability Excellence Credential Maintenance Program Guide

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Information in this Guide represents current policies and procedures for the Sustainability Excellence Credential Maintenance Program. Information in this Guide supersedes the information contained in any previously published Guides.

All information and guidelines are subject to change.

Please read and understand the guide, including all policies, procedures and consequences.

ABOUT GREEN BUSINESS CERTIFICATION INC. (GBCI)

GBCI is the world's leading sustainability and health certification and credentialing body, independently recognizing excellence in performance and practice globally while promoting adoption of building and business practices that continually and measurably improve health, equity, resilience and environmental wellbeing for all. GBCI administers project certifications and professional credentials and certificates including, Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) green building rating systems, as well as the PEER standard for power systems, the WELL Building Standard, the Sustainable SITES Initiative (SITES), EDGE (Excellence in Design for Greater Efficiencies), TRUE certification for zero waste and Investor Confidence Project (ICP) for energy efficiency retrofits.

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Credential Maintenance Program (CMP) Overview

By actively engaging in continuing education, Sustainability Excellence Associate (SEA) and Sustainability Excellence Professional (SEP) credential holders demonstrate their commitment to professional development, stay current in their field, and uphold the standards and requirements necessary to renew their credentials.

- **Enhancing knowledge and skills:** Continuing education allows credentialed professionals to stay updated with their field’s latest updates and best practices.
- **Maintaining competence:** By engaging in continuing education, credentialed professionals can demonstrate their commitment to maintaining and improving their competence.
- **Keeping pace with changes:** Continuing education helps credentialed professionals stay abreast of industry changes, ensuring that they remain relevant in continuing to deliver high-quality services.
- **Networking and collaboration:** Continuing education provides opportunities for credentialed professionals to network and collaborate with colleagues from diverse backgrounds. Interacting with peers and experts in the field fosters the exchange of ideas, experiences and best practices. It can lead to valuable connections, partnerships and collaborations, further enhancing professional growth.

Reporting Period

Sustainability Excellence credentials are maintained in 2-year cycles, or reporting periods, starting on the day the credential is earned (based on exam date) and ending 2 years minus 1 day from the start date. Reporting periods cannot be adjusted.

Exam date/reporting period start date	Reporting period end date	Next reporting period start date	Next reporting period end date
August 15, 2024	August 14, 2026	August 15, 2026	August 14, 2028

During the 2-year reporting period, credential holders must earn and report a **minimum number of continuing education (CE) hours** to renew their credentials. If credential holders do not complete and report the required CE hours and renew their credential on or before the end of their reporting period, their credential will expire and no longer be valid. See [CE hour requirements](#).

When an individual earns a SEP credential, they are assigned a new reporting period beginning the day of their SEP exam in accordance with the table above. Earning the SEP credential supersedes the SEA, meaning SEP credential holders only need to maintain their SEP credential.

CE Hour Requirements

SEA and SEP credential holders are required to earn and report a minimum number of CE hours to maintain their credentials. See [CMP Activities](#) for detailed requirements.

Total CE hours required per reporting period	
Sustainability Excellence Associate (SEA)	16*
Sustainability Excellence Professional (SEP)	32*

**Must be earned in at least 2 different activity categories. At least half of the total must come from the Education category.*

CMP Activities

There are 3 categories of CMP activities credential holders may participate in to earn CE hours. To maintain a credential, CE hours must be earned in at least 2 different activity categories, and at least half of the total requirement must come from the Education category. CMP activities must have occurred within a credential holder's reporting period.

Note that there are maximums for the number of CE hours that can be earned in activity categories A and C.

CMP Activity Category	Sustainability Excellence Associate	Sustainability Excellence Professional
A. Professional Practice & Participation	Max 5 CE hours	Max 10 CE hours
B. Education	Min 8 CE hours	Min 16 CE hours
C. Development of the Profession/ Volunteering	Max 5 CE hours	Max 10 CE hours

CE hours can be earned through participation in sustainability-related activities, events, organizations, and associations. CMP activities may count for credit if they relate to the practice of sustainability, and an activity does not need to be pre-approved by GBCI.

GBCI recommends referring to the Exam Specifications section of the [SEA Candidate Handbook](#) or [SEP Candidate Handbook](#) when evaluating whether a CMP activity is eligible to earn CE hours toward renewing your credential. If the activity relates to the Exam Specifications, it is most likely eligible.

A. Professional Practice and Participation

CE hours can be earned for working as a sustainability professional, attending sustainability-related meetings and conferences, or participating in organizations advancing the field.

Professional Practice and Participation Maximum CE hours: SEA = 5, SEP = 10		
Activity	CE Hours Earned	Example Documentation
A1. Employment or work experience in sustainability (full-time, part-time, consultant).	1 CE hour / 15 hours worked on sustainability projects <i>Maximum 4 CE hours</i>	Copy of CV or letter from employer outlining responsibilities related to sustainability.
A2. Membership in a professional association related to sustainability. <i>Membership must be maintained throughout the two-year reporting period.</i>	1 CE hour / year of membership	Proof of active/current membership, e.g., dues receipt/confirmation email.
A3. Attendance or participation in meetings of sustainability-related organizations.	0.5 CE hour / meeting	Letter from sponsoring institution, confirming participation including description of activities and number of hours.

B. Education

CE hours can be earned for either receiving or providing sustainability-related education. Course participants must be able to demonstrate learning, either through facilitator evaluation or receiving a passing grade based on a formal assessment.

Education Minimum CE hours: SEA = 8, SEP = 16		
Activity	CE Hours Earned	Example Documentation
B1. Courses, seminars, workshops, etc., related to sustainability (formal, e.g., courses from an accredited post-secondary institution, or informal, e.g., GBCI, GBCI education partners, associations, third party courses) <i>Each course may only be reported once per reporting period. Each course in a program of study must be reported separately.</i>	2 CE hours / credit hours (courses taken through accredited post-secondary institutions) 0.5 CE hour / contact hour (all other courses)	Proof/certificate of completion (e.g., name of organization, course name, content description or skills learned, date, location, duration, name of instructor) or unofficial transcripts.
B2. Obtaining other professional credentials (e.g., certifications/training) <i>Must relate to sustainability. Credential must be obtained during reporting period.</i>	2 CE hours / certificate	Proof of completion (e.g., copy of certificate).
B3. Attendance and/or presentation at a sustainability conference	0.5 CE hour / half-day for attending 1 CE hour / presentation <i>Maximum 10 CE hours</i>	Written confirmation of attendance and/or proof of presentation (e.g., ID tag, registration confirmation, booklet w/ session description).
B4. Preparing/presenting original lectures, seminars, or workshops related to sustainability (outside the normal course of employment/consulting, e.g., guest lecture). <i>Each presentation/course may only be reported once per reporting period.</i>	1 CE hour / hour of teaching, presenting, or preparing	Letter from sponsoring institution, letter from instructor (i.e., for guest lecture), copy of promotional material with participant's name, course sheet with participant's name.
B5. Other educational activities (e.g., webinars and books).	0.5 CE hour / book or webinar	Webinars: Written reflection on learning (upload personal reflection). Books read: Written reflection on learning (link to published book review or upload personal reflection).

B6. Contributing to peer-reviewed publications, authoring book or article.	4 CE hours / book authored 2 CE hours / article or chapter of peer-reviewed publication 1 CE hour / article for other source	Copy of abstract for articles, copy of book jacket/book title page, or table of contents listing authors or links to online versions.
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C. Development of the Profession/Volunteering

Development of the Profession/Volunteering Maximum CE Hours: SEA = 5, SEP = 10		
Activity	CE Hours Earned	Example Documentation
C1. Leadership position in a non-profit organization or professional association with a sustainability focus (e.g., board member, committee chair, etc.) and/or participation in professional sustainability body, association committee, or working group	2 CE hours / year of leadership position 1 CE hour / year of committee participation <i>Maximum of 8 CE hours</i>	Letter or certificate confirming participation including description of activities and number of hours
C2. Volunteering for a sustainability focused non-profit organization or providing sustainability consultation on a volunteer basis (services cannot be provided to employer or client).	1 CE hour / 10 volunteer hours	Letter or certificate confirming participation including description of activities and number of hours
C3. Participation in a mentoring program	1 CE hour / 5 participation hours	Evidence supporting coaching or mentoring arrangement, including notes from and dates of discussions and activities

Reporting Credential Maintenance

To self-report CMP activities for your SEA or SEP credential, log into your [GBCI account](#) and visit your [credentials page](#). Then, click the “Report CE hours” button below your credential record.

Renewal

Renewing your credential is available **one year** into your reporting period after the required CE hours have been completed. Even if all CE hours have been completed, renewal is not available until one year into your reporting period to ensure ongoing learning experiences demonstrating continued competency and up-to-date industry knowledge.

Within 24 hours of renewing your credential, your next reporting period will appear in your [GBCI account](#). You can start earning CE hours once your new reporting period begins.

It is your responsibility as the credential holder to record and maintain your continuing education in accordance with the guidance outlined in this CMP Guide. Please add gbc@communication.gbc.org to your [trusted contacts list](#) to ensure your GBCI CMP reminder emails are not filtered into spam, junk or clutter folders.

You have 30 days after the end of your reporting period to renew your credential without penalty, but remember that all reported CMP activities must be earned between the start and end dates of your reporting period.

To renew, credential holders must:

1. Report your required CE hours for your SEA or SEP credential through your [GBCI account](#), ensuring you have met all requirements.
2. Follow onscreen instructions.
3. Pay the nonrefundable renewal fee (see [Fees](#) for more information).

GBCI Review

GBCI reviews a percentage of all credential holders' CMP reporting at regular intervals to ensure that they have the documentation to substantiate their claims of continuing education activities. GBCI reserves the right to conduct these reviews at any time. GBCI will ask you to verify your completed activities with the appropriate documentation if you are selected for a review. Please remember to save documentation supporting all CE hours earned and documented. Credential holders should keep documentation of CE hours from their current reporting period and one previous reporting period. This review process will also be used to gather feedback on your CMP experience.

Fees

GBCI credential holders are responsible for paying a biennial CMP renewal fee at the time of renewal. Payments will only be accepted in US dollars.

USGBC and International Society of Sustainability Professionals (ISSP) membership discount applies to members in good standing at the time of renewal payment and may not be applied retroactively.

- SEA credential holders can [click here for pricing details](#).
- SEP credential holders can [click here for pricing details](#).

Past Due

Credential holders have a one-time 30-day grace period to renew and report hours previously earned within their reporting period after the reporting period has ended. Remember, CE hours must be earned *during* your reporting period, so you will not be able to earn CE hours for the current reporting period during this 30-day grace period. Your credential will expire if you do not report enough CE hours and successfully renew.

Expiration

GBCI professional credentials will expire if the credential holder fails to complete the CMP requirements by reporting the required CE hours and paying all applicable renewal fees.

Once a credential expires, credential holders may no longer include their credential information in their email signatures, business cards or social media profiles.

Reinstatement

To regain a credential after expiration, you must register and re-test as a new candidate for the expired credential and pay all applicable fees.

Note: If your SEP credential expires, you must start the credential process from the beginning and re-test for your SEA credential before being eligible to apply for the SEP credential.

Hardships

If unforeseen circumstances prevent you from completing your credential maintenance requirements in your 2-year reporting period, you must [contact GBCI](#) to explain your situation before your credential expires. For example, GBCI will consider situations such as military deployment or a credential holder's long-term illness.

Requests must be [submitted to GBCI](#) at least **30 days before the end of your reporting period**. Please be prepared to provide supporting documentation.

Failure to Comply

Each SEA and SEP credential holder is responsible for demonstrating full compliance with CMP guidelines. Unsupported, misstated, or fraudulent reporting of CE hours violates GBCI's Disciplinary and Exam Appeals Policy. Such reporting is cause for action by GBCI and may be grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including revocation of the GBCI credential. See GBCI's [Disciplinary and Exam Appeals Policy](#) for more information.

Failure to fulfill and/or report the required CE hours for the CMP reporting period and pay the associated renewal fees will result in the expiration of your credential.