

SEP

Sustainability
Excellence
Professional

Candidate Handbook

Updated November 2024

SUSTAINABILITY EXCELLENCE PROFESSIONAL CANDIDATE HANDBOOK

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Information in this Handbook represents current policies and procedures for the SEA & SEP credentials. Information in this Handbook supersedes the information contained in any previously published Handbooks.

All information and guidelines are subject to change.

Please read and understand the entire Handbook, 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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Introduction

The Sustainability Excellence credentials have been designed by sustainability practitioners, for sustainability practitioners, through global collaboration and expertise. The goal of these credentials is to serve as global benchmarks for sustainability professionals, providing industry-recognized credentials that can be carried across national borders by:

- bringing cohesion and definition to the emerging profession of sustainability
- providing credibility for employers and assurance of a standard level of competency of a sustainability professional
- imparting evidence of competency for practitioners in the field, furthering their credibility, influence and career advancement opportunities

The Sustainability Excellence credentials define and standardize the competencies employers, and seekers of consultants should expect from sustainability professionals.

In 2016, the [International Society of Sustainability Professionals](#) (ISSP) launched the ISSP Sustainability Associate (ISSP-SA) and ISSP Certified Sustainability Professional (ISSP-CSP) credentials. These were acquired by [Green Business Certification Inc.](#) (GBCI) in November 2019 and renamed in December 2020 to the Sustainability Excellence Associate (SEA) and Sustainability Excellence Professional (SEP). GBCI is the premier organization independently recognizing excellence in green business industry performance and practices globally.

GBCI offers two Sustainability Excellence credentials available to sustainability practitioners:

Sustainability Excellence Associate (SEA): This is an introductory level credential for individuals who are new to the field of sustainability but have sufficient education and training to pass a test on basic knowledge and understanding of key sustainability concepts. The SEA is a prerequisite for the SEP.

Sustainability Excellence Professional (SEP): This credential is for experienced sustainability practitioners who demonstrate a combination of sustainability-related work experience and formal education.

The Sustainability Excellence Professional credential

This handbook offers specific guidance for the [Sustainability Excellence Professional \(SEP\)](#) credential, which demonstrates advanced knowledge and extensive experience in the sustainability field and recognizes leaders and experts at the forefront of the transition to a more sustainable world. The [Sustainability Excellence Associate \(SEA\)](#) credential must be achieved to pursue the SEP credential. The credential covers how to:

- Engage stakeholders: Skills and knowledge related to collaboratively working with stakeholders to forward a mutually satisfactory beneficial agenda.
- Plan sustainability strategies: Create a comprehensive, long-term and inclusive approach to the systematic implementation of sustainability vision and initiatives.
- Implement sustainability strategies: Managing the ongoing activities related to successful integration and fulfillment of sustainability goals.
- Evaluate and report sustainability efforts: Collect, analyze and report the results of sustainability metrics.
- Adjust plans: Continuously review efforts and adjust to meet emerging needs and opportunities.

Ongoing professional development and education activities are required to maintain and renew the SEP credentials every two years.

Requirements

Eligibility Requirements

All SEP candidates must agree to the [GBCI Disciplinary and Exam Appeals Policy](#) and [credential maintenance requirements](#).

The Sustainability Excellence Professional credential is awarded to those practitioners who demonstrate sufficient education and knowledge of sustainability concepts and issues by passing the SEP exam and competence in the tasks and responsibilities required of people working in the field. SEP applicants must meet the following criteria:

1. Pass the SEA exam
2. Submit an application providing evidence of eligibility for the SEP exam, including:
 - a. Proof of a bachelor's degree or global equivalent
 - b. Evidence of one of the following:
 - At least five years of sustainability-related professional experience within the last ten years; or
 - At least four years of sustainability-related professional experience within the last eight years and an additional year of full-time sustainability-related education or training; or
 - At least three years of sustainability-related professional experience within the last six years and an additional two years of full-time sustainability-related education or training
 - c. Three (3) references attesting to your work as a sustainability professional.

As a reminder, SEP applications must be reviewed and accepted before applicants may schedule and take the SEP credential exam.

In the event of appealing a SEP application decision, the candidate is only permitted to provide clarifying information that supports the original application. No new information may be provided. Please submit your appeal by [email to GBCI](#).

Identification Requirements

GBCI, along with Prometric, enforces a strict policy regarding acceptable identification to maintain the integrity and quality of the SEP exam and to ensure all candidates have access to a consistent and fair exam check-in process. All IDs must be plasticized or laminated by the issuing authority at the time of issue. Your ID must be in the original form it was issued; **duplicates, photocopies, or digital IDs will not be accepted.**

You are required to provide one form of valid government-issued identification that contains ALL the following four elements:

- a. Your name must EXACTLY match the name (in Roman characters) you used to register for the exam

- b. A recent, recognizable photograph that looks like you
- c. Your signature
- d. Be unexpired and include an issue date and an expiration date

What if my ID does not EXACTLY match the name used to register for the exam?

You must [contact GBCI](#) at least 10 business days prior to your testing date and notify them of the discrepancy between the name you used to register for your exam and the name printed on your legal documentation/government-issued ID.

If you do not contact GBCI in advance and your legal ID does not **EXACTLY** match the first and last name you entered when you registered for your exam, you will not be permitted to test and you will forfeit your exam registration fee.

Note: The identification that you present during your exam check-in must include your first and last name printed in **Roman characters** and must **EXACTLY** match the first and last name that you used to register for the exam. **Special characters** (e.g., accents, tilde, umlaut, cedilla, etc.) are not allowed in the first and last name fields. Please enter the corresponding Roman characters in the English alphabet that match what is printed on the ID. For additional information refer to the [Registering for Your Exam section](#).

IDs with names printed solely in non-Roman characters are not acceptable.

If you legally only have one name during registration enter '[No Name](#)' in the first or last name fields as applicable.

Examples of identification that typically comply with requirements include:

- a. Passport
- b. Driver's license with a printed signature, including date issued and date of expiration
- c. Current government-issued photo ID with signature, including date issued and date of expiration
- d. Green card, permanent residence card, or H-1B visa
- e. Military ID that includes date issued and date of expiration
- f. National ID

What if my primary ID does not meet all the identification requirements?

If your identification does not include a recent photograph, your signature, and an issue and expiration date, you must provide a **secondary identification** (with the same first and last name in Roman characters) that includes the outstanding required elements. Remember, at the time your secondary identification was issued, the issuing authority must have laminated it.

Examples of secondary identification that typically comply with the requirements include:

- a. Work-issued employee ID card
- b. School ID card
- c. Library card
- d. Health insurance card

- e. Credit card (due to security reasons, credit cards are not accepted as a form of secondary identification during the check-in process of remotely proctored exams.)
- f. India residents presenting an India PAN card or India voter ID that does not include a date issued and/or an expiration date, must also present a second form of identification (with the same first and last name and signature), which does include an expiration date. Unexpired credit card with a printed signature can only be used at test centers as a secondary form of ID.

Unacceptable forms of ID include, but are not limited to:

- a. Photocopies or duplicates
- b. ID without an expiration date or date of issue
- c. ID with the first and last name printed solely in non-Roman characters
- d. Social Security card
- e. Electronic/digital IDs
- f. Aadhaar cards: For India residents

Registering for Your Exam

Registration Process

1. Access your [Credentials page](#) by logging into your existing [GBCI site user account](#), or [create a new account](#) if you do not have one.
 - a. When you register for your exam, ensure your first name (given name) and last name (surname) are entered **EXACTLY** as they appear on the legal ID you will use for your exam. If your [GBCI site user account](#) name does not match your legal ID, correct your account name during exam registration in your [account settings](#). Do not use a nickname when setting up your [GBCI site user account](#).
 - b. If you legally have only one name, enter “No Name” in the first or last name fields as applicable. At least ten business days before your scheduled exam date, you must notify GBCI that you only have one legal name and provide us with the name you used to register, and the date and time of your exam. If you are testing in person, the test center location and GBCI will notify Prometric proctors that your legal ID has only one name. If you do not contact GBCI in advance and your legal ID does not **EXACTLY** match the first and last name you entered when you registered for your exam, you will not be permitted to test, and you will forfeit your exam registration fee.
 - c. If your native language utilizes non-Roman characters, enter your first and last name in Roman characters when you set up your [GBCI site user account](#) and register for the exam. Make sure to bring identification, such as a passport, with your name in Roman characters when you check in for your exam.
 - d. Please note that if the first and last name with which you register for your exam does not **EXACTLY** match the ID you present when you check in for your exam either at a Test Center or online for a remote proctored exam, you will not be permitted to test. You must contact [GBCI](#) at least ten business days before your exam date to change your registration, or you will risk being turned away, and you will forfeit your exam registration fee. See [Identification Requirements](#) below for additional details.

- e. Special characters (e.g., accents, tilde, umlaut, cedilla, etc.) are not allowed into the first and last name fields. Please enter the corresponding Roman characters in the English alphabet that match what is printed on the ID.
2. Visit the Credentials page, then select SEP registration. Follow the instructions on the screen to complete the exam registration.
 - a. First, ensure that you have achieved the [Sustainability Excellence Associate \(SEA\)](#) credential, which can be registered for and viewed on this page. **The SEA credential is a prerequisite to the SEP credential**, which builds upon this foundational knowledge.
 - b. Before proceeding further, complete the SEP Application Form, including uploading all necessary materials.
3. To register five or more candidates at one time, [contact GBCI](#).
4. Once you have completed the registration process or have received a SEP application approval, you will be given a unique eligibility ID (EID) and may schedule your exam by visiting prometric.com/gbcj. Prometric is the exam delivery organization for GBCI exams. There are two ways to take your SEP exam. You can take your exam either at a Prometric Test Center or through a remotely proctored internet-enabled (online) location of your choice using Prometric's ProProctor application.
 - a. If you want to schedule your exam in a physical test center, [click here](#).
 - b. If you would like to schedule a remotely proctored online exam, you will first need to ensure that your computer meets the technical specifications (See [Pre-Exam Checklist](#) below) and that the space within which you intend to take your exam meets the [testing environment requirements](#). Please review [Prometric's ProProctor User Guide](#) along with [GBCI's ProProctor Tips and Guidance document](#), the [ProProctor Exam Checklist](#), and [GBCI Online Exam FAQs](#) for useful information. Once you have verified that your computer meets the minimum system requirements, you can [click here](#) to continue scheduling your remotely proctored online exam.
5. On the Schedule Appointment screen, read through the instructions and click the green forward arrow button on the right-hand side at the bottom of the page to proceed to the next screen. Read through the Policy Notice, answer the age and consent questions at the bottom of the page and click the green forward arrow (Note: GBCI does not collect, store, or use biometric data for any purpose). You will then be asked to enter your exam eligibility ID (EID) and the first four characters of the last name you used when you registered.
 - Please be aware that Prometric's exam scheduling times are listed in a 24-hour notation, also known as military time in the form hh:mm (e.g., 15:00 to denote 3:00 PM, or 03:00 to denote 3:00 AM). It is important to note that if you select a time from 1:00 to 11:59, you are selecting the morning (AM) time slot and not the evening (PM) time slot.
6. Once you have successfully scheduled your exam appointment, you will see a confirmation number on the screen. You will also receive an automated email from Prometric with important details about your appointment. Check your spam filters, quarantine, clutter, and junk folder(s) to ensure you received the automated email – **please be sure to read the email in its entirety**. Consider adding Prometric's email address to your [safe sender list](#) to avoid missing future communications. Please print your confirmation notice and record your confirmation number. You will need this confirmation notice for any communication with Prometric to confirm, cancel, or reschedule your exam appointment through the [Prometric website](#). The confirmation number will also be required to [download and install](#) the

ProProctor application. You are not required to bring this information when you check in for your exam, though it may help should you need any assistance.

7. Once you register and pay for your exam, you have 12 months to schedule and take your exam session. If you fail to complete your exam within the 12 months, you will forfeit your registration and must submit a new exam registration and payment to GBCI. If you fail your first attempt at taking the exam, you may register and pay again in the same way as the initial registration. After three unsuccessful attempts within a 12-month period, starting from your first exam attempt, you must wait 90 calendar days before submitting a new registration and payment to GBCI. Candidates must pay the exam registration fee for each exam attempt.
8. You can confirm, cancel, or reschedule an exam on the [Prometric website](#).
9. In addition, if you have scheduled an exam at a test center and would like to reschedule it for a remote proctored online exam (or vice versa), you will first need to cancel your exam at the test center and then follow the link to schedule a remote proctored online exam. Applicable rescheduling or cancellation fees may apply.
10. Rescheduling and cancellation policy (new pricing effective January 1, 2025 – see table 2 below):

TABLE 1

REFUND POLICY – EFFECTIVE DEC 31, 2024		
DAYS BEFORE ORIGINAL EXAM DATE	CANCELLATION	RESCHEDULE
30 days or more	Yes	Yes
4-29 days	Yes, less a \$50 cancellation fee	Yes, less a \$50 rescheduling fee
0-3 days	No	No

- a. You may reschedule or cancel your exam up to 30 calendar days before your exam without a rescheduling fee.
- b. If you reschedule or cancel your exam fewer than 30 calendar days but more than four calendar days before the scheduled date, you will be charged a \$50 fee.
- c. You cannot reschedule your exam after midnight on the third day before the scheduled appointment. (For example, Wednesday appointments cannot be rescheduled after Sunday, 11:59 PM)
- d. If you miss your exam date, fail to reschedule or cancel three calendar days before the exam, you forfeit the entire exam registration fee.
- e. When you reschedule an exam, you will receive a new confirmation email from Prometric. Please check your spam filters, quarantine, clutter, and junk folder(s) to ensure you receive the email from Prometric. If you do not, please [contact Prometric](#) immediately to confirm that your exam was rescheduled.
- f. Due to circumstances outside of their control (e.g., weather-related closures or due to power outage), Prometric may cancel a candidate's exam appointment. If this is the case, you will receive an automated email cancellation from Prometric. You will have the option to schedule your exam either as a [remotely proctored online exam](#) or at a [Prometric test center](#). Please allow up to 5 business days for Prometric's scheduling system to process the cancellation updates. Once the system is updated, you can self-serve and [schedule your exam](#). Please use your current EID when rescheduling your exam.

TABLE 2

REFUND POLICY – EFFECTIVE JAN 1, 2025		
DAYS BEFORE ORIGINAL EXAM DATE	CANCELLATION	RESCHEDULE
46 days or more	Yes	Yes
30 to 45 days	Yes, less a \$30 cancellation fee	Yes, less a \$30 rescheduling fee
4-29 days	Yes, less a \$60 cancellation fee	Yes, less a \$60 rescheduling fee
0-3 days	No	No

- d. You may reschedule or cancel your exam up to 46 calendar days before your scheduled exam date without incurring a rescheduling or cancellation fee.
- e. If you reschedule or cancel your exam between 30 and 45 calendar days before the scheduled date, a \$30 fee will apply.
- f. If you reschedule or cancel your exam between 29 and 4 days before the scheduled date, a \$60 fee will apply.
- g. You cannot reschedule your exam after midnight on the third day before the scheduled appointment. (For example, Wednesday appointments cannot be rescheduled after Sunday, 11:59 PM).
- h. If you miss your exam date, fail to reschedule or cancel 3 calendar days before the exam, you forfeit the entire exam registration fee.
- i. When you reschedule an exam, you will receive a new confirmation email from Prometric. Please check your spam filters, quarantine, clutter, and junk folder(s) to ensure you receive the email from Prometric. If you do not, please [contact Prometric](#) immediately to confirm that your exam was rescheduled.
- j. Due to circumstances outside of their control (e.g., weather-related closures or due to power outage), Prometric may cancel a candidate's exam appointment. If this is the case, you will receive an automated email cancellation from Prometric. You will have the option to schedule your exam either as a [remotely proctored online exam](#) or at a [Prometric test center](#). Please allow up to 5 business days for Prometric's scheduling system to process the cancellation updates. Once the system is updated, you can self-serve and [schedule your exam](#). Please use your current EID when rescheduling your exam.

Testing Accommodations

You may request accommodations if you have a documented disability that would prevent you from taking a GBCI exam under standard testing conditions. GBCI complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) provisions.

Under the ADA, entities that administer standardized examinations must offer the examinations in a place and manner that is accessible to candidates with disabilities. This may require reasonable modifications to the way the exam is administered. Prometric, the exam delivery company used by GBCI, will provide candidates reasonable auxiliary aids and services, except where it may fundamentally alter the validity of the exam results.

Available accommodations include, but are not limited to, a reader, magnifying screen for the computer monitor, a scribe, and extended testing time. If you require the presence of a certified service or emotional support animal during the exam, please indicate this requirement by checking the testing accommodations box during the registration process. You will need to submit the appropriate documentation to support your request. Prometric may not be able to accommodate all requests for remotely proctored online exams due to the testing environment security requirements.

If you require testing accommodations, you must indicate this during the registration process by checking the box that says, "Yes, I need testing accommodations." To be eligible for accommodations, you and your health care provider need to complete one form, the [Candidate Form](#) and the [Provider Form](#), to document your disability and need for accommodation. **Please email the completed forms and your testing accommodation request to accommodations@gbci.org or by faxing it to 202-318-2261.** GBCI will process your testing accommodations request once you submit both the Candidate and Healthcare Provider forms. Note: If you have registered for an exam without selecting "Yes, I need testing accommodations," contact us immediately at accommodations@gbci.org for assistance.

There is no additional charge for testing accommodations. Each request is evaluated individually. Once a testing accommodation request is approved, it is valid for 12 months. When registering for a new exam during your 12-month window, you must still check the box that says, "Yes, I need testing accommodations." Please email accommodations@gbci.org to request that your previously approved testing accommodations be applied to your new exam registration and state the date you originally sent your testing accommodations request. After 12 months from your original Candidate form and Healthcare Provider form approvals, you must submit a new set of Candidate and Provider forms to request your testing accommodations.

GBCI will review this documentation and, if approved, alert Prometric of the necessary accommodations. Please allow up to 10 business days to receive a reply from GBCI after submitting all your documentation. Please note that once you have requested testing accommodations, you cannot schedule your exam with Prometric until your request is processed. You will be contacted by email regarding the status of your testing accommodations request.

Exam Registration Fees

See the [Sustainability Excellence credentials webpage](#) for exam pricing. Once you register for your SEP exam, you will have 12 months from your registration date to schedule the exam. If you fail to complete your exam within the 12 months, you will forfeit your registration and must submit a new exam registration and payment to GBCI. Your paid exam registration fee is good for only one exam attempt within 12 months from the date your application was accepted.

USGBC members and International Society of Sustainability Professionals (ISSP) members receive discounts on the exam fees and the SEP application fee. For USGBC members to receive member pricing, please [link your member status](#) to your [USGBC site user account](#) **before** registering for an exam. For ISSP members to receive member pricing, please indicate your ISSP membership status when registering for an exam.

The Exam

You should review the [Exam Specifications](#) section of this document to determine your knowledge and readiness to sit for the exams. The Sustainability Excellence Associate exam covers Section 1: Core Sustainability Concepts. The Sustainability Excellence Professional exam covers Sections 2 through 6 of the Exam Specifications.

Exam Format

The SEP exam contains 100 multiple choice questions and is delivered in 2.5 hours. Each multiple-choice question will only have one correct answer option.

The exams have scored questions and unscored questions. All questions are placed randomly throughout the exam, and candidates are not informed of a question's status, so you should respond to all questions on the exam. Unscored questions are used to gather data regarding how the question performs. This data informs the use of the question in future exams.

The exams are computer-based. Exam questions and answer options are displayed on the screen. The computer records your responses and times for your exam. You can change your answers, skip questions and flag questions for later review.

During the exam, you may submit comments on any question(s) believed to contain a technical error in content by using the comment button in the navigation bar. To challenge an exam question, you must have commented on the question and explained your concerns. Within ten days of taking the exam, [inform GBCI](#) that you have left comments on your exam; in your correspondence, be sure to note your questions and the email address used to sign up for the exam, as well as the date on which you took it. You must notify GBCI within ten days of your exam date that you have left a comment within your exam.

If taking the **SEP exam**, be prepared to commit 2 hours 50 minutes. Total exam time is broken out as follows:

- An optional 10-minute tutorial, the 2.5-hour exam, and an optional 10-minute exit survey.

If you need to take a break before completing your exam in a test center, you may do so by raising your hand for assistance. Testing time is **NOT** suspended. Be aware that if you exit the test center or end the exam session by pressing "Finish" within your exam before completing the exam, the exam cannot be restarted, and the exam session and fee are forfeited.

Please note that breaks are not permitted during remote proctored online exams. It is strictly

prohibited for you to be out of the webcam's field of vision at any point while taking the exam. If you leave your seat during the exam, except when authorized to leave by the Remote Proctor at the end of the exam, your exam session and registration fee are forfeited.

Exam Language

The exams are available in English.

Exam Maintenance

Exams undergo a maintenance process, in which the questions are evaluated based on performance; poorly performing questions are removed and replaced with new ones.

Pre-Exam Checklist

Are You Ready?

Study Materials

The International Society of Sustainability Professionals (ISSP) has developed study materials for each credential exam. Visit the [Study Materials](#) page on ISSP's website for more information. Please [contact ISSP](#) directly for all inquiries related to their study materials.

See the [Sample Questions](#) section of this handbook for further preparation.

The amount of time needed to prepare for an ISSP exam is dependent on each individual and their familiarity with the [exam content](#). GBCI recommends that candidates give themselves at least a month to prepare using the resources linked above.

Two Months Before Your Exam (Test Center or Remote Proctored Online Delivery)

- a. Ensure that your first and last name in your [GBCI credentials account](#) match **EXACTLY** the first name and last name on the identification you will present your exam check-in (see [Identification Requirements](#)). **If your first and last names do not match, you will not be allowed to test, and you will forfeit the exam registration fee.** If you have any questions, please [contact us](#).
- b. Review your Prometric appointment confirmation email and confirm that the date, time and location of your exam are correct. If it is not, please visit prometric.com/gbc for information about rescheduling or canceling your exam. Note: Your exam time is written in the 24-hour notation in the form hh:mm (e.g., 15:00 to denote 3:00 PM, or 03:00 to denote 3:00 AM) along with your time zone.
- c. For an additional fee, you can experience the test delivery process you will go through when you take the exam at one of Prometric's test centers or online via ProProctor. The **GBCI Test Drive** allows you to familiarize yourself with Prometric's assessment platform, which will be used to deliver your exam. Click [here](#) for more information on how to pay and schedule a test drive at a test center or for a remotely proctored online exam.

For Remotely Proctored Online Exams: One week before the exam

- a. Download the [ProProctor application](#) at least one week in advance of your exam. To download the ProProctor application, you will need the 16-digit confirmation number in your "Confirmation Appointment" email sent by Prometric. Check your spam filters, quarantine, clutter, and junk folder(s) to ensure you received the automated email.
- b. Review the [ProProctor User Guide](#) in preparation for your exam and adjust your testing environment accordingly. If you fail to prepare your testing environment per the ProProctor User Guide guidelines, you will risk being turned away and forfeit your exam registration fee. The [ProProctor User Guide link](#) is available in the exam confirmation email you received after you scheduled your remotely proctored online exam. Review

the [GBCI ProProctor Tips and Guidance](#) document, which has useful information for a successful testing experience, and the [ProProctor Exam Checklist](#) to help you prepare.

- c. If you are using an employer-issued computer, before scheduling your exam, check with your employer's IT department that you have the necessary permissions to make changes to your security settings (e.g., temporarily disable firewalls) and that you have permission to [install Prometric's ProProctor application](#). Note, if you are taking your exam at your workplace using your employer's internet, be aware that there may be back-end applications running that prevents the launch of ProProctor. GBCI recommends that test takers take their exam outside their employers' internet. We strongly suggest you send the [General Instructions for Corporate Computers](#), [ProProctor System Requirements](#), and the [ProProctor User Guide](#) to your IT department so that they fully understand what is required.
- d. Perform a [system readiness check](#) one week before your scheduled exam to ensure that your systems are compatible with ProProctor requirements. In addition, carefully review the ProProctor Software Installation guides for [Windows OS](#) and [Mac OS](#). If the system readiness check fails, the page will alert you to the failed item and prompt you to troubleshoot the errors and complete the check again. Note that the system readiness check does not assess whether you have the necessary permission levels to install and launch the ProProctor application. You may need to temporarily disable your browser's ad blockers and computer's firewall and antivirus as per [ProProctor's installation guides](#).
- e. Below please find a summary of ProProctor's system requirements. For the latest version, please refer to the "System Requirements" section in the [ProProctor User Guide](#).
 - Screen Resolution: 1024 x 768 is the minimum resolution required; 1920 x 1080 recommended
 - Operating System: Windows 8.1 or higher | MacOS 10.13 or higher
MacOS Ventura 13.0 to 13.2.1 are not supported; please upgrade to 13.3.1 before testing. Note iPad/Android tablets are not currently supported. Microsoft Surface or similar can be used only when configured in laptop mode.
 - Web Browser: Latest Google Chrome
 - Webcam Resolution: 640 X 480 pixels external for desktops, internal for laptops
 - Microphone: Enabled. Bluetooth headsets are not supported
 - Internet Connection: Speed 1.0 Mbps or greater
 - Only a laptop or desktop computer can be used to take the exam
 - No dual-monitor configurations are permitted for testing (e.g., a desktop with two monitors or a laptop with a separate monitor)
 - Desktop monitors with built-in cameras are not acceptable since it will prevent a comprehensive and effective 360-degree security check. If you are using a desktop computer, you must have an external camera connected via USB.
 - Monitors 27 inches or larger in width are not permitted during the exam. If you require a monitor of this size, you must obtain an approved testing accommodation in advance. See the [Testing Accommodations section](#).
 - Computers must be undocked

- [Download and install](#) the ProProctor application
 - Before launching the ProProctor application, ensure all computer-sharing programs, (e.g., TeamViewer, Chrome Remote Desktop, UltraViewer) are closed. The use of any such programs is strictly prohibited. Failure to adhere to this requirement will result in disqualification from taking the exam and forfeiture of the exam fee
- f. For best internet connectivity, GBCI recommends that you connect to the internet with an Ethernet cable for the duration of your exam rather than using a wireless connection. Wireless connections are less stable and can lead to sudden disconnections, which can result in you being dropped from your exam. If this happens, you should relaunch ProProctor to resume your exam. (Note that you will be required to go through the security check again.) If you are disconnected from ProProctor three (3) times, you will be asked by the Remote Proctor to reschedule your exam. Please [contact GBCI](#) for assistance with rescheduling your exam.
- g. If you use a wireless connection, position your device where you receive the strongest signal. Make sure that there are no other devices (phones, tablets, gaming/video streaming devices or TVs) or users connected to your internet connection for the duration of your exam. Lack of internet bandwidth or inconsistent internet bandwidth during your exam are the most common causes of incomplete connection or lost contact with ProProctor.

Exam Security

To ensure the integrity of the Sustainability Excellence exams, you are required to review and accept a nondisclosure agreement that prohibits any disclosure of exam content:

- a. Exam questions and answers are the exclusive property of GBCI
- b. Exam questions and answers are protected by copyright law. The exam may not be copied or reproduced in part or whole, by any means, including memorization.
- c. Future discussion or disclosure of the exam's content, orally, in writing, or by any other means, is prohibited.
- d. Theft or attempted theft of exam questions is punishable to the fullest extent of the law.
- e. Permitting another individual to take your exam whether in person or via a computer-sharing program is strictly prohibited. GBCI may deny, suspend, revoke, or take other actions with regard to your credential status, ban you from taking any future GBCI exams, and pursue legal action in accordance with the [GBCI Disciplinary Policy](#).
- f. Failure to comply with the agreement will result in the forfeiture of your credential.

What to Expect at the Test Center

- a. Plan to arrive at the test center at least 30 minutes before your scheduled exam appointment. If you arrive at the test site after your scheduled exam time, you will lose your seat and forfeit your exam registration fee.
- b. Upon arrival at the test center, you must show an acceptable form(s) of identification (see [Identification Requirements](#)) and sign in. Next, you will be escorted to a locker to store your belongings. You will have access to your ID and locker key for your exam duration. Then you will go through a security checkpoint, where you will be asked to empty your pockets, remove eyeglasses, roll down shirtsleeves, remove watches and

fitness trackers/ monitors, remove jewelry*, and roll up pant legs for inspection; and pass through a metal detector. Upon completing the enhanced security check-in, you will be escorted to a workstation by test center staff.

**Religious jewelry and wedding rings are exempt.*

- c. You must remain in your seat during the exam except when authorized to leave by test center staff. Raise your hand to notify test center staff if:
- You experience a problem with your computer
 - An error message appears on the computer screen (do not clear the message)
 - You need to take a break (testing time is NOT suspended)
 - You need the test center staff for any other reason

Accessing personal effects during your exam is a security infraction, and as a result, your exam session may be voided without a refund. Prometric test centers are outfitted with cameras that record each candidate's check-in process and exam experience. These recordings may be reviewed by Prometric test center staff and GBCI in the case of suspected security infractions. If you have a medical condition that may necessitate access to medication (e.g., an insulin pump), you must submit a [Testing Accommodation](#) request for approval to GBCI during exam registration.

- d. If you require a break (e.g., to use the restroom), you must abide by the aforementioned security policies. You will be required to repeat the security check before you are permitted to reenter the exam room.

What to Expect at Virtual Check-In

- a. Plan to log on to the [ProProctor application](#) 30 minutes before your scheduled exam appointment. If you arrive at your virtual check-in after your scheduled exam time, you will forfeit your exam and registration fee.
- b. Upon logging into the ProProctor application, you will be prompted to capture a facial image from your webcam, followed by an image of your government-issued ID. Once these steps are completed, you will proceed to meet with a remote Readiness Agent who will guide you through all the security checks before launching your exam.
- **After logging into ProProctor, you should not have to wait more than 10-15 minutes (maximum) for a Readiness Agent to conduct the security check.** Waiting longer than that indicates that you may have an incomplete connection with ProProctor, and Prometric is unaware that you are waiting in the “lobby area” for your virtual check-in. If this happens, you should exit the application and relaunch ProProctor.
 - If you continue to experience an extended wait time, visit the [ProProctor help page](#) and contact ProProctor technical support via chat (this is the fastest method for assistance).
- c. The security checks conducted by the Readiness Agent will include verifying acceptable form(s) of identification (see [Identification Requirements](#)), followed by a comprehensive 360-degree webcam scan of the room and work surface area. Similar to being at a test center, the Readiness Agent will then ask you to raise your pants legs above the ankles, empty and turn all pockets inside-out and raise shirt sleeves above the wrists. If you wear eyeglasses, you will be required to remove them for visual inspection to ensure they don't contain a recording device. Large jewelry items must be removed due to concerns over

concealed recording devices. If you have long hair covering your ears, you will be asked to pull your hair back to ensure nothing is attached to your ear (such as a Bluetooth earpiece).

- d. To warrant a secure testing environment and prevent potential exam exposure, if you are planning to take your exam from a room that has windows or glass doors, it is important to cover them to prevent distractions and exam exposure. Once you start your exam check-in, if you have uncovered windows or glass doors, you will be asked to log-out, cover your window or glass door, and then log back in. It is important to thoroughly prepare your test environment and follow the guidelines to cover the windows or glass doors to minimize connectivity issues from having to log out and logging back in. Covering the windows or glass doors will ensure that your exam remains confidential and free from any unauthorized viewing.
- e. It is crucial to maintain a clutter-free desk in the area where you will be taking the exam. Clutter can be deemed as a potential security threat, which may prevent you from proceeding with your exam.
- f. A digital notepad is available in ProProctor during the exam instead of scratch sheets of paper. Scratch sheets of paper and a pen or pencil are not allowed during the remotely proctored online exam.
- g. A digital calculator is available in ProProctor during the exam to use in lieu of a physical calculator. Physical calculators are not allowed during the remotely proctored online exam.
- h. Upon completion of the virtual security check-in, you will be assigned to a Remote Proctor who will launch your exam and monitor you for the duration of your exam.
- i. It is strictly prohibited for you to be out of the webcam's field of vision at any point while taking the exam. You must remain in your seat and visible to the Remote Proctor during the exam except when authorized to leave by the Remote Proctor. Contact the Remote Proctor via chat or audio if:
 - You experience a problem with your computer
 - An error message appears on the computer screen (do not clear the message)
 - You need the Remote Proctor for any other reason
- j. Accessing personal effects during your exam is a security infraction, and as a result, your exam session could be voided without a refund. Audio, video, and chat messages are recorded throughout the entire duration of the exam. These recordings may be viewed by Prometric proctoring staff and GBCI in the case of irregularities or suspected security infractions. Please remember that it is very important that you take your exam in a well-lit room with a door that you can close. If someone else comes into the room while you are taking your exam, privacy laws require that Prometric immediately shut down your exam because the individual entering the room has not consented to be recorded. Your exam results will be voided, and you will forfeit the full exam fee.
- k. If you experience a loss of connection from your exam, please follow these steps to contact Prometric via the chat:
 - Go to the [ProProctor Launch](#) page.
 - Click on [Contact Support](#) located on the top menu bar which will take you to the Help Center.
 - Look for the Chat with an Expert button, located on the bottom right-hand side of the page, to initiate a conversation with one of Prometric's technical support agents.

Prometric Regulations

You must abide by the [Prometric security rules](#) while at the test center or in the remotely proctored environment. We recommend that you review these carefully before your scheduled exam date since you will be required to agree to them before starting your exam. See [Prometric FAQs](#) for more information.

Grounds for Dismissal

Any candidate who engages in misconduct or does not comply with the test proctor's warning to discontinue inappropriate behavior may be dismissed from the testing environment (test center or online), have exam results invalidated or be subject to other sanctions. Fraud, deceit, dishonesty, or other irregular behavior in connection with taking the exam is strictly prohibited.

If you are dismissed from the testing environment, [inform GBCI](#) within **10 business days** of your exam date and provide a reason for your behavior. GBCI reviews all instances of dismissal from the testing environment and makes a ruling based on the consideration of your rationale and the Prometric report of the incident. To appeal a GBCI ruling, [send an email](#) of your formal appeal to GBCI. At this stage, the Credentialing Steering Committee will review and make a final ruling on your case.

After Your Exam

Exam Results

Your exam results are displayed on the screen at the end of the exam, and a pass or fail score report is emailed to you following your exam session.

Within 72 hours of your appointment, your exam results are processed, your [GBCI credentials account](#) is updated, and, if applicable, your credential is updated in the [USGBC directory](#).

Passing the Exam

Designating Your Credential

As soon as you have passed the SEP exam, you can use the title "Sustainability Excellence Professional" or "SEP."

The SEP designation can be used in electronic signatures or displayed on resumes, business cards, websites and public profiles. The credential is to be displayed as: **Sustainability Excellence Professional** or **SEP**. Any other representation is incorrect and not allowed.

Certificates

Once your exam results have been processed, you can download a copy of your certificate through your [Credentials page](#) by logging into [your GBCI site user account](#).

Credential Maintenance Program

You must fulfill the requirements to maintain your credential.

SEP credential holders must maintain and renew their credentials every two years by earning and reporting continuing education (CE) hours within their 2-year cycle or reporting period. The reporting period starts when the credential is earned (based on the exam date) and ends two years minus one day from the start date. During the 2-year reporting period, a credential holder is responsible for earning and reporting their credential maintenance activities in their [GBCI credentials account](#). Once the required CE hours are met for the active reporting period, the credential holder can proceed to renew their credential.

For information on maintaining your credential, see the [Sustainability Excellence CMP Guide](#).

Exam-related Complaints and Exam Content Appeals

Because of the need for exam security, GBCI does not release exam questions or answers to candidates. GBCI does not respond to complaints or appeals received more than ten business days after an individual's exam date and does not respond to complaints or appeals sent to any organizations other than GBCI.

If you experience any problems at the Prometric test center or during a remotely proctored online exam, you must inform test center personnel before leaving the test center or the Remote Proctor before ending your online exam session. Prometric will draft an Incident Report and make it available to GBCI.

If you wish to submit an exam content appeal, you must submit comments during the exam on any question(s) believed to contain a technical error in the content. You can use the comment button located on the navigation bar. To challenge an exam question, you must comment on the question and provide a brief explanation of your concerns during the exam. After the exam, [inform GBCI](#) that you have left comments on your exam; in your correspondence, be sure to note your questions and the email address used to sign up for the exam, as well as the date on which you took it. GBCI reviews your concerns and notifies you of the findings. Email must be sent to GBCI within 10 business days from the exam date. GBCI does not respond to complaints or appeals received more than **10 business days** after an individual's exam date and does not respond to complaints or appeals sent to any organizations other than GBCI.

GBCI does not modify exam scores under any conditions. In the event of a successful exam content appeal, you will be allowed to retest at no charge; your original exam score will not be changed.

The only way to earn the SEA or SEP credential is to earn a passing score on the exam.

Audits

GBCI reserves the right to conduct an audit at any time (including prior to application submission and after a credential has been granted) of all current and past exam applications. Any information contained in your Credential account may be audited and a request for further documentation of any information or claims submitted by you may be made at any time. GBCI further reserves the right to take disciplinary or legal action—including but not limited to revocation of credential(s) – in the event that any conduct discovered during such an audit violates the GBCI Disciplinary and Exam Appeals Policy, GBCI policy, and/or law.

Candidate Confidentiality

GBCI recognizes your right to control personal information. GBCI policy safeguards this information from unauthorized disclosure (See sections 14 and 15 of [GBCI's Disciplinary and Exam Appeals Policy](#)). You can change your preference to be contacted by updating your personal preferences in your [GBCI site user account](#).

To protect your right to control score distribution, your exam score is released only to you, the exam taker, and authorized GBCI staff, except as required by law. GBCI does not release exam scores except for use in research studies that preserve your anonymity. Candidate exam scores always remain confidential unless released with the written consent of a candidate.

Official statistics regarding the Sustainability Excellence exams, including all question performance data, individual data and demographic data, are confidential; however, GBCI may publish aggregate, non-identifying information based on such data.

Helpful Links

To assist you in your credential examination process, below is a compiled list of helpful reference links. These resources will provide quick access to important information, guidelines and support materials.

- a. [SEA Candidate Handbook](#)
- b. [SEP Candidate Handbook](#)
- c. [Credentialing Help Center \(FAQs\)](#)
- d. [ProProctor Tips and Guidance for GBCI Exams](#)
- e. [ProProctor Exam Checklist](#)
- f. [Prometric FAQs](#)
- g. [ProProctor FAQs](#)
- h. [ProProctor User Guide](#)
- i. [System Readiness Check](#)
- j. [Common Technical Issues](#)
- k. [ProProctor Help \(including live chat\)](#)
- l. [GBCI's Disciplinary and Exam Appeals Policy](#)

Exam Specifications

The Sustainability Excellence certification exams are based upon the Job Task Analysis derived from ISSP's competency research project conducted in 2010 and generated through a multi-stakeholder process in 2013. The diagram to the right illustrates the six core competency areas required for the job of a "sustainability practitioner." At the center is a fundamental understanding of sustainability issues, principles, and concepts. The Sustainability Excellence Associate credential focuses on this core competency. Sustainability Excellence Professional credential holders must demonstrate knowledge and related experience in the other five categories and the core conceptual knowledge area.

Each of the six competencies is further broken into specific related job tasks. These tasks and the associated knowledge required to perform them comprise the Exam Specifications. While not a comprehensive study guide, this outline does convey to certification applicants the knowledge areas covered on the exam portion of the certification scheme.



Sustainability Strategy and Management

NOTE: The resources provided in the following tables do not represent an exhaustive list of the references or sources needed to gain the necessary knowledge or competencies, nor do their study guarantee successful completion of the Sustainability Excellence certification exams.

Section 1

Core Sustainability Concepts

Demonstrated familiarity with the core issues, trends, concepts and frameworks of sustainability.

Job Task

Related knowledge and competencies

1.1 Explain ideas, concepts and importance of sustainability to various audiences

- Demonstrate familiarity with global and local, economic and scientific issues, by describing key trends, impacts and perspectives relevant to sustainability. For example, defining sustainable development, Limits to Growth theory, LOHAS trends, I=PxAxT equation, steady state or circular economy models.
- Explain sustainability frameworks and principles such as the Triple Bottom Line,
- Identify issues of social justice and social impacts
- Explain and apply systems thinking.
- Summarize historically significant events related to sustainability such as Brundtland Commission, Kyoto Protocol, Agenda 21, the various COP's
- Describe current trends in and interplay among various sustainability issues such as waste, water, pollution, social impact, etc.
- Explain the importance of sustainable practice and how it can contribute to social, environmental, and business objectives

1.2 Choose and customizing appropriate third-party sustainability resources

- List applicable regulatory trends and policies as they relate to sustainability (e.g., whistleblower, Sarbanes-Oxley, ESA, RoHS, WEEE, EuP, Montreal Protocol, IPCC).
- Demonstrate expertise in GHG inventorying and its relationship in areas such as buildings, transportation, and materials.
- Define sustainability claims, eco-labels and certifications such as EPEAT, Energy Star, LEED, etc.
- Describe key aspects of the landscape and architecture/hierarchy of global institutions, frameworks and standards relevant to the organization, its sustainability issues and its stakeholders. For example, GRI, Earth Charter, Hannover Principles, and Kyoto Protocol
- Identify relevant trends, technologies, approaches related to common sustainability initiatives (e.g., energy reduction and production, life cycle assessment, life cycle costing, bioremediation, GEMI, CDP, etc.)

Resources for Core Sustainability Concepts

- ISSP Glossary of Sustainability Terms.
- Meadows, D (2008). Thinking in Systems, A Primer. Chelsea Green: VT.
- Global Issues website, <http://www.globalissues.org/issue/168/environmental-issues>
- Cook, D (2004). The Natural Step, Green Books Ltd: UK.
- Hawkin, P., Lovins, A., Lovins, H. (1999). Natural Capitalism, Little Brown and Company: NY.
- UN Millennium Development Goals, <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>
- UN Millennium Eco Assessment, <http://www.unep.org/maweb/en/index.aspx>

Section 2

Stakeholder Engagement

Skills and knowledge related to collaboratively working with stakeholders to forward a mutually satisfactory beneficial agenda.

Job Task

Related knowledge and competencies

2.1 Identify, map and prioritize stakeholders and their primary interests or concerns

- Define stakeholder and the critical attributes that relate to your organization using tools and models like the stakeholder influence and importance matrix and stakeholder influence diagram
- Define the importance and utility of engaging stakeholders in your sustainability efforts
- List the critical steps or activities involved in facilitating stakeholder groups
- Identify driving forces behind stakeholder motivations
- Prioritize stakeholder needs and concerns
- Identify ethical frameworks and filters for stakeholder interaction

2.2 Develop a strategy and means of engaging with each stakeholder

- Analyze and evaluate key person(s) within each stakeholder group
- Define the stages of stakeholder engagement.
- Create stakeholder engagement assessment matrix: classify stakeholders as: unaware, resistant, neutral, supportive, leading
- Identify points of leverage with stakeholder groups
- Select appropriate organizational planning techniques and strategies appropriate for each stakeholder
- Access, engage, and include stakeholders, influencers, and trusted advisors in dialogue
- Advise employees of stakeholder identities and needs
- Create stakeholder register: identification information (name, organization, etc.), assessment information (major requirements, expectations, potential influence on project, etc.), stakeholder classification (internal/ external, supporter/neutral/resistor).
- Describe strategies for behavior change management

2.3 Implement and institutionalize procedures for engaging and communicating with internal stakeholders (e.g., senior management, functional leads, line employees)

- Discuss company sustainability opportunities in communications
- Build consensus and support among diverse stakeholders
- Describe strategies for engaging with hostile stakeholders
- Explain the relevance of sustainability to all employees to give them guidance around opportunities for them in their jobs.

2.4 Implement procedures for engaging and communicating with external stakeholders (e.g., suppliers, industry partners, NGO's community members)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Describe suitable approaches and considerations for managing multi-stakeholder engagements – Build consensus and describe strategies for engaging with hostile stakeholders
2.5 Build relationships across organizational functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Create sub-groups of engaged employees – Build and nurture leadership and support from key stakeholders – Enlist support of employees and functional leads
2.6 Prepare communications with input from key stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Produce and control communications, create communications plan, identify communication methods applying current models for effective communication

Resources for Stakeholder Engagement

- Atkisson, A. (2008). ISIS Agreement, Earthscan: London.
- Zadek, S., (2007), The civil corporation (2nd ed.), Earthscan, London.
- Andriof, J., S. Waddock, B. Husted and S. Sutherland (2002). Unfolding stakeholder thinking: Theory, responsibility and engagement, Greenleaf, Sheffield.
- United Nations Environment Programme (2005). From Words to Action: The Stakeholder Engagement Manual. Volume 2: The Practitioner's Handbook on Stakeholder Engagement. <http://www.accountability.org/about-us/publications/the-stakeholder.html>
- Business for Social Sustainability (BSR), (November 2011). Stakeholder Mapping, <http://gsvc.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Stakeholders-Identification-and-Mapping.pdf>
- McKenzie-Mohr, D and Smith, W (1999) Fostering Sustainable Behavior, Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers.
- Doppelt, Bob (2010). Leading Change Toward Sustainability, Sheffield, UK: Greenleaf Publishing, p249.
- Husted, B., J.S. Waddock and S. Sutherland, 2003, Unfolding stakeholder thinking 2: Relationships, communication, reporting and performance, Greenleaf, Sheffield.
- A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK GUIDE) 5th edition, Project Management Institute, ISBN 978-1-935589-67-9

Section 3

Plan Sustainability Strategies

Create a comprehensive, long-term and inclusive approach to the systematic implementation of sustainability vision and initiatives

Job Task	Related knowledge and competencies
3.1 Develop a high-level, long-term sustainability road map	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Describe strategic frameworks and planning models (e.g., backcasting, SWOT) and approaches to implementing them – Identify key contributors to the planning process – Relate sustainability vision to core purpose and define a sustainable version of the organization – Establish base line metrics or baseline performance – Apply appropriate tools (e.g., impacts assessment, resource flow diagrams) to identify critical aspects and impacts; inputs and outputs – Distinguish between a sustainability framework and common sustainability standards. – Describe different approaches to developing a plan for an organization (e.g., ADDIE model, hierarchy of competencies)
3.2 Articulate the business case for sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Identify business aspects that benefit financially from the application of sustainability principles and practices – Distinguish between Green and Sustainable practices – Short term return vs long-term return – Define the relationship between risk and sustainability – Articulate how sustainability links to business strategy – Identify an organization's key priorities and risks and communicate in business language – Conduct a cost benefit analysis – Recognize and account for externalities – Conduct life cycle costing – Present business case to senior management & obtain approval – Developing an understanding of the context for the organization to which sustainability will be applied
3.3 Articulate a long-term vision of sustainability for the organization and a strategy to achieve it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Identify critical aspects of a sustainability plan that must be met. Distinguish between what is necessary to be sustainable from what is currently feasible – Overcome constraints of current thinking; establish BHAG's

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Identify alignment of producer and consumer – Design transmaterialization strategies – Distinguish between vision, goals, strategy, indicators – Identify key benefits that will attract employees to participate
3.4 Create an overarching project framework to support the higher-level framework, that can be operationalized and implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Design cyclical process for managing a sustainability plan – Identify existing organizational systems that could be leveraged to create a SMS (e.g., HR, strategic planning, budgeting, training)
3.5 Identify material issues and the relevant key indicators, specific metrics and targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Devise SMART metrics – Calculate baseline data – Identify obstacles to measuring long-term impacts, externalities, etc. – identify the most common metrics shared across industries and regions – Familiarity with Balanced Score Card and its application to TBL metrics – Explain life cycle costing principles – Identify material issues and apply prioritization techniques – Understand how to determine and create baselines for key indicators – Appropriately design/choose TBL metrics. Distinguish between and appropriately apply leading and lagging indicators; Qualitative and quantitative metrics – Understand the processes, key terms, standards and approaches to conducting greenhouse gas inventories and audits – Identify the relationship to and application of emerging accounting practices.
3.6 Identify the critical components of an SMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Define the PDCA cycle – Identify the key attributes of an SMS (e.g., cyclical/iterative) – Understand that implementation is an embedding process and the key elements are training, communication, SOP's and documentation – Check - monitor progress and system so need metrics and audit process and implement a corrective action mechanism – Act - top level strategic and regular revisiting of the whole plan and process – Plan and understand importance of the Management Review

Resources for Planning Sustainability Strategies

- UNESCO (2014) UNESCO Roadmap for Implementing the GAP on ESD.
- The Natural Step backcasting process
- Hitchcock, D and Willard M. The step by step Guide to Sustainability Planning
Willard, B. The New Sustainability Advantage, Sustainability Champion's Guidebook.
- Deming, E
ISO standards 14000, 26000
Blackburn, W. The Sustainability Handbook.
- Wackernagle, Ecological Footprint.
- Kaplan and Norton, The Balanced Score Card.

Section 4

Implement Sustainability Strategies

Managing the ongoing activities related to successful integration and fulfillment of sustainability goals

Job Task

Related knowledge and competencies

4.1 Establish effective support and governance structures for the implementation of sustainability strategies and initiatives

- Understand governance models, processes, decision frameworks

4.2 Implement an SMS in alignment with accepted standards and protocols

- Understanding of the benefits of standardized SMS's
- Familiarity with continuous improvement standards and protocols (e.g., ISO series of standards)
- Apply PDCA model and strategies

4.3 Integrate sustainability principles into organizational functions, policies and practices

- Define the phases of implementation of sustainability
- Change management theory; strategies and barriers to change
- Describe the basic approach to life cycle assessment

4.4 Manage complex projects

- Define the different process groups of a project (Initiating, Planning, Executing, Monitoring and Controlling, Closing).
- Classify the project into the project management knowledge areas (integration, scope, time, cost, quality, human resource, communication, risk, procurement, stakeholder).
- Analyze and select the appropriate process model components (Inputs, Tools & Techniques, Outputs).
- Manage the project per project requirements and plan.

4.5 Communicate sustainability plans and concepts and choose strategies for buy-in from all members and levels of an organization

- Plan Communications: who needs it; when is it needed; where should it be stored; what format; how to retrieve it; any barriers to overcome such as language, time zones, cultural, etc.
- Familiarity with the strategies and concepts of community-based social marketing
- Communications Management Plan:
- Wilhelm, K, Making Sustainability Stick
- Manage Communications: Determine and limit who will communicate with whom and who will receive what information

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Control communications: the process of monitoring and controlling communications throughout the entire project life cycle to ensure the information needs of the project stakeholders are met. – Ensure optimal information flow among all communication participants, at any moment in time. – Analyze Communication dimensions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Interactive and technology-based ○ Internal and external ○ Formal and informal ○ Vertical and horizontal ○ Push and pull communications
4.6 Launch and support teams and work groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Launch and charter teams – Build commitment among team members – Facilitate groups through decision making – Hold teams accountable for results – Lead teams through the stages of team development – List the critical steps in building consensus in groups
4.7 Drive innovation, improvement and continuous learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Innovation Theory - motivators for adoption, barriers to adoption, etc. – Familiarity with product stewardship, LCA's – Understanding of the theory of double loop learning
4.8 Distribute communication and determine process for gathering feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Ensure two-way communication and assure line manager acceptance

Resources for Implementing Sustainability Strategies

- A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK GUIDE) 5th edition, Project Management Institute, ISBN 978-1-935589-67-9
- Duckworth, A. and Moore, R (2010). Social Responsibility: Failure Mode Effects and Analysis, CRC Press <http://www.crcpress.com/product/isbn/9781439803721>
- Whiteley, A., 1995, Managing change: a core-values approach, Macmillan Education, Australia.
- Benn, S., D. Dunphy and A. Griffiths, Organizational Change for Corporate Sustainability (3rd ed.), Routledge, New York.
- US Environmental Protection Agency
- Kotter, John (1996). Leading Change, Harvard Business School Press: Cambridge

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- See Husted, B., J.S. Waddock and S. Sutherland, 2003, Unfolding stakeholder thinking 2: Relationships, communication, reporting and performance, Greenleaf, Sheffield.
 - Fleischer, D. GREEN TEAMS: Engaging Employees in Sustainability, GreenBiz.com
 - Available at <http://www.neefusa.org/pdf/greenbiz-reports-GreenTeams.pdf>
 - GMIC Guide to Forming a Green Team, Green Meeting Industry Council
 - McKenzie-Mohr, Doug and Smith, William (1999). Fostering Sustainable Behavior, Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers.
 - Willard, B The New Sustainability Advantage
 - McDonough, W. and Braungart M. (2002). Cradle to Cradle, New Point Press: NY
 - Doppelt, B. ((2010). Leading Change Toward Sustainability, Greenleaf Publishing: Sheffield, UK
 - Rogers E., Diffusion of Innovation
 - Wilhelm, K (2014). Making Sustainability Stick, Pearson Education: New Jersey
 - Hitchcock, D. and Willard, M (2015). The Business Guide to Sustainability, Taylor and Francis: London

Section 5

Evaluate and Report Sustainability Efforts

Collect, analyze and report the results of sustainability metrics.

Job Task	Related knowledge and competencies
5.1 Conduct an impact assessment of organizational or community inputs, operations, outputs and stakeholder relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Apply impacts assessment models and strategies - Perform cost-benefit analysis & employee motivational studies - Manage supply chains
5.2 Design, implement and maintain data systems for collecting accurate, timely and reliable data (maximally integrated with other data collection systems of the organization).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conduct validity & reliability studies based on data compiled from comparable organizations. - Design TBL dashboards with leading, lagging, qualitative and quantitative metrics - Determine materiality of metrics and reporting requirements - Perform and review greenhouse gas inventories and audits - Apply prevailing standards for measuring and managing social, environmental and economic impacts.
5.3 Analyze data and draw conclusions about progress.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Apply concepts of materiality, transparency, context, completeness to measures and reports - Selecting, interpreting and reporting on sustainability key performance indicators
5.4 Gather data, case studies, examples, and logically compile and order them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prepare defensible, readable and accessible reports - Demonstrate understanding of widely accepted reporting formats like CDP, GRI, SASB, IIRC

Resources for Evaluating and Reporting Sustainability Efforts

- [CDP](#)
- [Global Reporting Initiative \(GRI\)](#)
- [The International Integrated Reporting Council \(IIRC\)](#)
- [Sustainability Accounting Standards Board \(SASB\)](#)

<h2>Section 6</h2>	<p>Adjust plans</p> <p>Continuously review efforts and adjust to meet emerging needs and opportunities</p>
Job Task	Related knowledge and competencies
<p>6.1 Maintain and continuously refine management systems</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Conduct regular reviews of SMS, plans, strategic priorities, threats and opportunities – Perform annual SWOT & cost-benefit analysis
<p>6.2 Prioritize action based on context, analysis and set targets</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Use accredited project management concepts – Recognize and incorporate new and emerging opportunities that have the potential to enhance uptake of sustainability initiatives

Sample Questions

Disclaimer

The exam questions listed here were discarded while creating questions for new exams. The questions are provided for your convenience to better familiarize yourself with the format and general content of questions on exams.

The content of these questions, while representative of the type of questions you can expect, does not necessarily mirror the content that will appear on the actual exams.

Furthermore, your ability to correctly answer these sample questions does not in any way predict or guarantee your ability to successfully answer questions on the actual exams.

Sustainability Excellence Professional (SEP) Sample Questions

1. What are the four steps of an LCA?
 - A. Goal Definition and Scoping, Inventory Analysis, Impact Assessment, then Interpretation**
 - B. Goal Definition and Scoping, Inventory Analysis, Impact Assessment, then Extrapolation
 - C. Process Mapping, Goal Definition, Inventory Analysis, Impact Assessment, then Interpretation
 - D. Goal Definition and Scoping, Inventory Analysis, Extrapolation, then Interpretation
2. A carpet manufacturer changes its business model to switch from a product company to a service company in which it promotes the leasing of carpet tiles instead of selling wall to wall carpet to customers. This is an example of . . .
 - A. Cradle-to-cradle
 - B. Rematerialization
 - C. Dematerialization
 - D. Transmaterialization**
3. As the sustainability coordinator, you've just been approached by an NGO (Non-Governmental Agency) to participate in a collective impact initiative for what you consider to be one of the most critical issues in your industry. You see value in this effort, but need to

convince your organization to support your involvement. Which of the following rationales would you use to justify your involvement to your leaders?

- A. Your involvement will fulfill your personal target for employee volunteer involvement.
- B. Your involvement will help you manage the long-term risks to your organization.**
- C. You will learn a lot about what your competition is doing.
- D. You will be able to mention this association in your report to stakeholders.

4. What is "backcasting?"

- A. A process associated with life cycle assessments that looks upstream in the value chain to identify impacts.
- B. The process of establishing baseline measures for organizational impacts.
- C. A planning process that involves moving backwards from a vision of an ideal future to the current state.**
- D. A process the IPCC uses to track increase in global temperature change.

5. What would you ask to determine the most material sustainability issues facing an organization?

- A. Which organizational impacts are most likely to influence the decisions of stakeholders?**
- B. Which business and environmental trends are most urgent to address?
- C. Which parts of our operation have the greatest potential for cost savings?
- D. Which aspects of our operations would present the greatest risk to the organization if not addressed?

6. You lead the implementation of an organization-wide sustainability effort for a mid-sized manufacturing firm. A cross-functional steering committee developed a comprehensive, long-term plan under your facilitation. The plan includes several major initiatives, at least two of which require significant participation from line employees. The employees, however, are largely unfamiliar with the concepts of sustainability and jaded by past organizational change initiatives that have come and gone without major impact. Most employees are skeptical when you introduce this new initiative. One of the first projects the organization has slated is an across the board waste reduction effort. This involves the cooperation of employees to assure the newly implemented recycling system you and the committee designed works. What would be your first step in enrolling employees in this effort?

- A. Provide training to all impacted employees on the workings of the proposed waste reduction system. Include hands-on practice of material handling to assure they understand where and how each key material is to be handled.
 - B. Convene employees in small groups and invite them to engage in a problem-solving activity which focuses on increasing the efficiency of their processes and making their work more effective and productive.**
 - C. Recruit employees to participate in a "dumpster dive" to both demonstrate the problem the new system is trying to solve as well as give them firsthand experience with the issue.
 - D. Hold work teams accountable for both measuring and reducing the waste in their units. Tie waste reduction results to performance reviews and/or reward systems.
7. You are the sustainability coordinator for your organization. In the last year you rolled out a series of trainings and briefings that provided all employees at all levels with the essential concepts of sustainability and encouraged everyone to begin thinking of ways that the concepts might be applied to business processes throughout the organization. You simultaneously created a system that enabled employees to submit their ideas to you directly. You have been surprised at the response as it has been far greater than you anticipated. You have been inundated with ideas. You realize now, that you were unprepared for this response. What should be your next step?
- A. Pick the suggestions that have the most merit and begin working on them immediately conveying your successes as they are achieved.
 - B. Celebrate and communicate the success of the program and recruit people to help you process the suggestions.**
 - C. Request additional staffing to help you deal with suggested projects.
 - D. Pass the suggestions on to the executive team to process and respond to them.
8. What does the term "materiality" mean as it relates to sustainability?
- A. The aspects of an organization's operations and activities that lead to the most important positive and negative economic, environmental and social impacts for which the organization can be held accountable.**
 - B. The social, environmental and financial impact of the materials consumed or produced as part of an organization doing business.
 - C. The relevance of an organization's sustainability vision and goals.
 - D. The concept of, or applied use of, various building materials or substance

Contact

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