APPLICANT GUIDE

ENVIRONMENTAL PROFESSIONAL (EP)
ENVIRONMENTAL PROFESSIONAL IN-TRAINING (Ept)
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABOUT THE EP AND EPt DESIGNATIONS ........................................................................ 4  
    Environmental Professional (EP) ............................................................................. 4  
    Environmental Professional in-training (EPt) .......................................................... 4  
ABOUT ENVIRONMENTAL EMPLOYMENT CERTIFICATION STANDARDS .............. 5  
    Identifying Your Specialization .............................................................................. 5  
ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS .......................................................................................... 6  
    Employment ........................................................................................................... 6  
        EPt ................................................................................................................... 6  
    Education ............................................................................................................... 6  
STEPS FOR CERTIFICATION ......................................................................................... 7  
    Application .............................................................................................................. 7  
        Getting Started ................................................................................................. 7  
        Registration ..................................................................................................... 7  
        Selecting Your Specialization ....................................................................... 7  
        Current Employment ....................................................................................... 7  
        Upload Resume ............................................................................................... 8  
        Education ......................................................................................................... 8  
        References ....................................................................................................... 8  
        Applicant Declaration and EP Code of Ethics ................................................. 9  
        Confirmation .................................................................................................... 9  
        Selecting Your Ethics Examination Date and Proctor – EP Applicants Only ....... 9  
Background Validation ................................................................................................. 10  
Self-Assessment .......................................................................................................... 11  
Peer Validation ........................................................................................................... 12  
    EP ......................................................................................................................... 12  
    EPt ....................................................................................................................... 12  
    All Applicants ...................................................................................................... 12
Welcome to the Environmental Professional Certification Process
Thank you for your interest in obtaining the Environmental Professional (EP) or Environmental Professional in-training (EPt) designation with ECO Canada.

ECO Canada’s certification process is overseen by the Canadian Environmental Certification and Approvals Board (CECAB). CECAB is a national board dedicated to recognizing competent environmental professionals in Canada. The Board oversees the final ratification of candidates, contributes to the maintenance of the certification process, and ensures that the Environmental Professional (EP) Code of Ethics is upheld.

The purpose of this Guide is to provide both prospective and current applicants with an overview of the requirements and process to obtaining their EP/EPt designation.

Please note that fees and process are subject to change, and that the website should be considered the most up to date place to find relevant information (www.eco.ca/certification).

ABOUT THE EP AND EPt DESIGNATIONS

Environmental Professional (EP)
This designation is intended for professionals who possess significant experience in the Canadian environmental sector and provides them with formal recognition of their unique environmental competencies.

The initial application fee for EP is $250 plus GST/HST. There is also a $50 Ethics Examination fee that applicants pay at the onset of their application. The annual membership fee for EP is $230 plus GST/HST and is payable upon initially being awarded the designation and every April 1st thereafter.

Please note that application fees are non-refundable, even in the event of an unsuccessful application for the EP/EPt designation. The EP ethics exam fee is refundable if it has not been written.

Environmental Professional in-training (EPt)
This option is intended for emerging professionals, and is available to recent graduates, newcomers to Canada and those with fewer than 5 years of environmental work experience.

The initial application fee for EPt is $200 plus GST/HST. The annual membership fee for EPt is $130 plus GST/HST and is payable upon initially being awarded the designation and every April 1st thereafter.
ABOUT ENVIRONMENTAL EMPLOYMENT CERTIFICATION STANDARDS

The EP and EPt designations are awarded based on the evaluation of an individual’s competency level, in his or her area of specialization, as compared to the National Occupational Standards (NOS) for Environmental Employment. The NOS for Environmental Employment were developed through extensive consultation and validation with industry experts within Canada. These standards were developed as a definitive guide of the skills and knowledge required for professionals to do their jobs within their selected field(s) of specialization.

Identifying Your Specialization

In order to recognize a variety of environmental expertise, a number of specializations in which a candidate can choose to become certified are offered. Associated with each specialization is a unique set of standards for proficiency, which serve as the foundation for the certification program. This system has been designed to allow professionals to obtain recognition that is specific to their skill set, and at the same time, reflects the entire scope of their expertise.

EP applicants can choose up to 5 specializations in which to become certified, and EPt applicants can choose up to 2. The diagram below lists all 14 of the available specializations for EP and EPt applicants related to the areas of Environmental Management, Environmental Protection, Resource Management, and Environmental Sustainability.

For a description of each and to view their NOS profiles, please visit the ECO Canada website at http://www.eco.ca/certification/whats-my-specialization/.
ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To qualify for the EP or EPt designation, a candidate must satisfy basic requirements in the areas of employment and education.

Employment

**EP**

Applicants must possess a minimum of 5 years of relevant Canadian environmental work experience.

While consecutive experience is preferable, applicants must have accumulated the required 5 years of experience over a maximum of 10 years. Equivalencies are also given for international employment – an applicant may submit 6 years of relevant environmental employment, of which at least one year must be Canadian employment.

Internships are acceptable for use toward satisfying the work experience requirements as they are defined as work placements that are independent of post-secondary studies.

Work terms that are undertaken as part of a Ph.D. Graduate degree are acceptable to use towards satisfying the work experience requirements, provided they meet specific criteria. Please contact EP@eco.ca for further information.

A co-op work term, or any work term whose completion is required for graduation from an undergraduate degree, is not acceptable to use towards satisfying the work experience requirements because it is viewed as part of the education requirement.

Volunteer experience is not considered acceptable employment for the EP designation.

**EPt**

There is no minimum employment requirement for EPt applicants. The focus for the EPt option is to allow the applicant to develop and hone their environmental skills, with the eventual aim of upgrading to the EP designation.

Education

Applicants for both the EP and EPt designation are required to have completed a minimum of either a 2-3-year college diploma or 3-4-year university degree, from a recognized Canadian post-secondary institution. Your highest obtained Canadian degree/diploma will be confirmed via a third-party verifier, BackCheck. BackCheck requires applicant consent to confirm credentials.

**NOTE:** If an applicant’s education was attained outside of Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, or Australia, a foreign credentials assessment is required from either IQAS, ICES, ICAS or WES. Applicants can choose to have an official assessment from a previous academic evaluation sent in (must be mailed directly from the assessment agency to ECO Canada), or it may be possible to have BackCheck confirm international education (not the case
for all countries) and for ECO Canada to determine equivalency. If the latter route is chosen, applicant’s will not receive a copy of this equivalency.

**STEPS FOR CERTIFICATION**

The following section details the steps involved in the certification process, from the initial application right through to the certification decision. It should be noted that the entire process from applied to certified takes an average of 9 weeks to complete. This timeframe depends largely on when the Approvals Board meets (the second Tuesday of each month) relative to when you apply vs. how long it may take you and your peer references to proceed through the application requirements.

**Application**

All applications are submitted via the [www.eco.ca/certification](http://www.eco.ca/certification) pages of the ECO Canada website.

From initial application payment to submission, the process should take no longer than 15 minutes, provided you have everything in order to apply (resume, references, etc.)

All applicants are required to upload a current resume upon application and should have the names and contact information of at least 3 peer references.

**Getting Started**

To begin your application you must first process payment for the application at [www.eco.ca/certification](http://www.eco.ca/certification). Once your purchase has been made, you will receive two e-mails – the first of which is a purchase receipt, and the second instructions on how to choose your account password and sign in. If you do not receive this email to your Inbox or Junk Mail Folder within the hour, please contact us.

**Registration**

Once you have set up your account, access the ‘My Certification’ tab where you will see the link to you continue your application. You will then proceed to the application page, at which point you will complete several more fields of information, in addition to your general contact information.

**Selecting Your Specialization**

Select the area(s) of specialization for which you wish to apply:

If you choose the EP designation, you may select up to 5 areas of specialization. If you choose the EPt designation, you may select up to 2 areas of specialization. The number of specializations selecting has no bearing on the approval of your application – you can select as few as 1 if that suits your experience and qualifications best.

**Current Employment**

On the application page, you will enter information about your current employment (start date, supervisor information, job description, etc.)
Upload Resume
Please upload your most recent resume to assist ECO Canada in the review of your eligibility. This resume should include the details of all relevant environmental employment as well as your education history. If you do not have your resume on hand, please upload a blank document indicating the resume is to come. You can e-mail it to EP@eco.ca after you complete the application page.

Education
Please select an option from the drop-down list that best describes your post-secondary education.

To verify your education background, ECO Canada uses the third-party verification service BackCheck. Once staff review your initial eligibility, you will be contacted via e-mail within 3 business days requesting that you complete a consent form. This is a requirement of your certification application. Please note that while BackCheck is able to confirm education with the majority of post-secondary institutions, it is not a guarantee – some institutions are easier to reach than others. If they are unable to confirm your education, we will request an official transcript be mailed directly from the academic institution to ECO Canada.

References
Peer Reference Selection and Requirements – EP Applicants

In completing the information on the EP application page, please submit a minimum of 3 references to a maximum of 5 per area of specialization that can validate your technical competencies. Peer references will be contacted after confirmation that your self-assessment has been successful.

Please note that each area of specialization requires three peer references for validation, but that the same peer may validate any number of your chosen specializations.

Peer references should be individuals that have worked with you and/or observed your environmental skills, and thus have sufficient knowledge of your environmental competencies. Co-workers, supervisors, and clients are suitable peers for EP applicants. As an applicant, you cannot choose anyone who you currently directly supervise to act as a reference, as this would cause a conflict of interest. You are also not able to submit a relative to complete a peer reference validation on your behalf.

It is the applicant’s primary responsibility to ensure the peer reference is aware of both the time commitment, deadline, and importance of completing a validation on the applicant’s behalf (we estimate that the peer validation can take 5 minutes for the general survey and anywhere from 15-20 minutes per area of specialization applied). If you are applying in multiple areas of specialization, you may wish to add additional references to reduce the time constraint on your peers, provided the additional peers can comment on your experience.
Peer Reference Selection and Requirements – EPt Applicants

In completing the information on the EPt application page, please submit a minimum of 3 references that can comment on your experience. References are contacted on a randomly-chosen percentage of EPt applicants, thus your peers may or may not be contacted. If your application is randomly selected, your peers will be contacted after confirmation that your Self-Assessment has been submitted. ECO Canada would notify you if/when your references are contacted.

*Please note that EPt applicants require 3 peers total.*

In order for an individual to act as a reference on your behalf, a peer must have sufficient knowledge of your environmental background. Do not worry if you have no work experience in the environmental sector. Co-workers, supervisors, former college/university professors or classmates, and clients are suitable peers for EPt applicants.

*Applicant Declaration and EP Code of Ethics*

At the bottom of the application page is the Applicant Declaration. Please read it thoroughly, and if you agree to abide by the [EP Code of Ethics](#), check the “I Agree” box. Please do read the EP Code of Ethics; it is an important part of both the EP and EPt designations, ensuring that all members are held to high standards of accountability. EPs will also write an Ethics examination, and both EPt and EP applicants must complete an Ethics Agreement once the Approvals Board (CECAB) conditionally approves their application, to formally be awarded their designation. Ethics is the cornerstone of both EP and EPt certification.

*Confirmation*

Upon successful submission of your application, you will be forwarded to the confirmation page. The confirmation page states that you will be contacted shortly regarding the next steps in the process (within 3 business days). This will occur after the Background Validation step (outlined below) has been undertaken by staff.

*Selecting Your Ethics Examination Date and Proctor – EP Applicants Only*

**Selecting the Date and Time of Your Examination –**

If you are applying for the EP designation, you will be required to write and pass the EP Ethics examination. The exam as well as the Self-Assessment and Peer Validation process (outlined later in this guide) will take place concurrently.

Once you submit your application and are directed to the Confirmation Page (mentioned above), there will be a link to Register for your Exam. By selecting this link you will be directed to the Examination Page where you can enter the date, time and proctor information for your Ethics Examination. All Ethics Examinations must take place between Monday-Friday and within the hours of 8:30am – 4:30pm MST. The date must also be at least 30 days from the date applied, in order to provide you with accurate time to prepare.
You will be sent all of the exam resources you need once staff confirm your eligibility for the EP designation. To find out more about the EP Ethics Examination, and the overall importance of Ethics as an EP, visit our website at www.eco.ca/certification/ethics.

Selecting an Examination Proctor –

Exam proctors are required to ensure the integrity of the exam writing process. The objective of an exam proctor is to verify that exams are completed independently by applicants. Proctors are identified by applicants, according to the following requirements:

- Availability at the time of the examination, for the entire duration of the examination.
- Holds in good standing an appropriate designation with ECO Canada or a similar certified or licensed professional body/association (for example, P.Eng., P.E., QEP, P.Chem., etc.)
- Fluency in either English or French, at the preference of the applicant.
- Proctors must not have been involved, within the last two years, in related training activities associated with the applicant.

Proctors will be required to accept, sign and return a Confidentiality/Conflict of Interest Agreement, as well as an Evaluation Volunteer/Contractor Acknowledgement Form prior to proctoring the examination.

If an applicant encounters difficulty finding an available, suitable proctor, the applicant is welcome to contact ECO Canada for assistance.

Background Validation

All applicants undergo a validation of the employment and resume information that they have submitted. In this stage, staff ensure that all necessary information to evaluate and validate all of your employment and education submissions have been received.

During the Background Validation, staff may contact the verification contact(s) you listed in your employment history to ensure the information is accurate.

Once you have submitted your application, Background Validation will typically be complete within 3 business days. You will be contacted by e-mail with the results of your background validation – you may be asked to proceed to the Self-Assessment and schedule your Ethics Examination, submit further information, or re-evaluate which title you wish to pursue.

If you are asked to proceed to the Self-Assessment, you will also be enrolled in a practice Ethics Examination at this point. The practice exam will provide an overview of the types of questions you can expect in the exam. This practice exam is entirely online and integrated into your ECO Canada account.

Prior to beginning your Self-Assessment, applicants are encouraged to record all relevant environmental employment on the ‘Background’ tab of their application. This ensures the entire scope of their employment is taken into account upon Board Review and is especially
important for EPt members who are provided with free and discounted professional development resources post-certification based on their years of environmental work experience.

**Self-Assessment**

Based on the NOS technical competency statements in the area(s) of specialization that you have chosen, you will be required to conduct a self-assessment of your technical competencies comparing your skills and knowledge to the national standard.

If you are applying as an EP, the results of your self-assessment must meet or exceed the minimum levels established through the NOS validation process (this exact score and pass criteria is kept confidential to protect the integrity of the process). If you are applying as an EPt, you are not required to meet the minimum levels, but rather to use this as an opportunity to document any experience gained to date that can help you post-certification to identify areas where more experience/training is required.

Each EP/EPt specialization is comprised of a series of competency statements. For each statement, you will be asked to do the following (example using one section of the Site Assessment & Reclamation area of specialization):

**Site Assessment & Reclamation**

**Environmental and Social Impact Assessment**

Ensures that the impact assessment scope, criteria and conditions (geographic, environmental, economic, social, and cultural) are defined adequately.

Identifies which areas are likely to be significantly impacted by development activities, e.g., biophysical, economic, social, cultural, and heritage resources.

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**No Experience**

You have no experience in this work

You haven’t done, supervised or led this work in the past 5 years

**Learning**

You only work on pre-assigned duties related to this work

You require supervision

**Guidance**

You can perform most aspects of this work

You require occasional guidance

**Independent**

You can perform this work independently and may coordinate this work

Your involvement is widespread and you may oversee aspects of this work

**Lead**

You lead and have the overall responsibility for the quality & outcomes of the work

You have significant breadth and depth of knowledge and experience
Once you have submitted your self-assessment, the results will be evaluated by the Registrar. If the evaluation has been successful, you will receive an email confirmation and will be able to move on to the peer validation stage. If your assessment is unsuccessful, the Registrar will conduct a review of your application, and will provide you with a list of available options.

Only EPs are required to achieve a minimum score – EPt’s are not expected to have a high level of experience and the self-assessment is only used as a tool to evaluate your competency level and identify areas of strength and potential areas for improvement.

Peer Validation

*EP*

Your peers will be contacted after confirmation that your Self-Assessment has been successful. Peers of EP Applicants will be presented with the same set of statements that the applicant evaluated themselves on in the self-assessment and asked to rate the applicant on the same scale.

*EPt*

If your application is randomly selected, your peers will be contacted after confirmation that your Self-Assessment has been successful. Peers of EPt Applicants will be presented with a generalized list of environmental competencies and asked to select those that apply to the applicant.

*All Applicants*

It is essential that you confirm participation of your peers prior to submitting their information to ECO Canada.

Once submitted, peers will be notified to begin the validation and periodic reminders will be sent out until it is complete. To ensure that the two-week time limit for applications is not exceeded, it is important to keep in contact with peers and enable completion of the validation in a timely manner.

**Note:** Applicants may not discuss the details of their self-assessment or peers’ validation with peer validators as the process is strictly confidential.

If your peers successfully validate your level of competence, your application will be forwarded to the Registrar for final review. If your peers do not validate your level of competence, the Registrar will contact you with options regarding how to proceed.

Registrar Review

Once the results of your Background Validation, Self-Assessment and Peer Validation have been received by the Registrar, a final review will be conducted to ensure that all steps were
successful, and all submissions and documentation are in place before your application goes to the Approvals Board for ratification.

**Board Ratification**
The Approvals Board will review elements of your application and provide final ratification. Generally, the CECAB meets during the second week of each month.

If your application is approved for certification by the Approvals Board, you will be notified via email.

**Ethics Agreement**
Upon Board Approval, all members will be required to read, sign and submit an Ethics Agreement. This Agreement will reiterate the importance of one conducting themselves as an EP/EPt professional and Ethically and will summarize the key tenets of the EP Code of Ethics. Failure to complete this Ethics Agreement will result in a cancellation of your bid for the EP/EPt designation.

**Designation Granted**
Once granted your EP/EPt designation and fulfilling your payment and Ethics Agreement requirements, you will be mailed a certification package including a wall certificate and membership card, and your name will be added to the publicly available roster.

**Appeal of a CECAB Decision**
If you are unsuccessful in your application for certification, and you feel that the certification process was handled inappropriately, you are entitled to appeal the certification decision.

If you would like further information on the appeal fee or process, please contact the Registrar at EP@eco.ca.

**Complaints Regarding the Certification Process**
If you are unhappy with aspects of the certification process, you are entitled to file your written complaint with the Registrar (EP@eco.ca). ECO Canada endeavors to investigate complaints in a constructive, impartial and timely manner. The complaint is assigned to a suitable investigator, and a correction, cause and corrective or preventive actions are determined and carried out. The complainant will be updated when significant progress has been made and/or when the investigation has concluded.

**MAINTENANCE REQUIREMENTS**
All certified members are required submit their Professional Development activities to ECO Canada on an annual basis. For more information on the credit requirements, please review the Member Guide available in your certification account or contact us at EP@eco.ca.
CODE OF ETHICS AND DISCIPLINARY ACTION
Maintenance of certification also hinges on members maintaining adherence to the Environmental Professional (EP) Code of Ethics. Certification may be revoked if a certified member breaches the Environmental Professional (EP) Code of Ethics. Revocation proceedings could be initiated by a complaint, registered in writing, to the Registrar by an employer, client, or member of the general public. In such proceedings, ECO Canada ensures that all parties are treated fairly and equitably. The following actions are examples of what could initiate a complaint and ultimately result in revocation of a certificate:

- Falsification of credentials
- Evidence of professional incompetence
- Breach of the Code of Ethics
- Knowingly falsifying environmental documentation
- Professional misconduct

ECO Canada maintains a policy and procedure for complaints against certified members, as well as withdrawal and cancellation of certification. For details, visit our website at www.eco.ca/certification/ethics.

CONTACT US
Should you require any assistance while in the application process, please contact our office at any time:

EMAIL: EP@eco.ca
PHONE: 403-233-0748
www.eco.ca/certification