



# APPLICANT GUIDE

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ENVIRONMENTAL PROFESSIONAL –  
ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS LEAD AUDITOR (EP(EMSLA))

ENVIRONMENTAL PROFESSIONAL –  
COMPLIANCE ENVIRONMENTAL AUDITOR (EP(CEA))



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## Welcome to the EP Auditor Application Process

Thank you for your interest in the EP(EMSLA)/EP(CEA) designation with ECO Canada. Please review the information provided in this guide to ensure your eligibility and to understand the application process.

### About Environmental Professional Certification

ECO Canada's designations are overseen by the Canadian Environmental Certification and Approvals Board (CECAB). The Board oversees the final ratification of all candidates who meet certification requirements, contributes to the maintenance of the certification process, and ensures that the [Environmental Professional \(EP\) Code of Ethics](#) is upheld.

The auditor stream consists of two different titles:

- **Environmental Professional - Environmental Management Systems Lead Auditor – EP(EMSLA)** – This title is intended for auditors who are involved in auditing organizations against an Environmental Management System or Sustainable Forest Management standard, often utilizing ISO 19011 or a similar audit process for that purpose. The EP(EMSLA) title recognizes expertise in two different specializations, of which applicants can choose to apply for one or both.
  - Environmental Management Systems – This specialization is available to applicants who perform EMS audits and are competent to carry out audits to standards such as ISO 14001.
  - Sustainable Forestry Management – This specialization is available to applicants who perform SFM audits and are competent to carry out audits to standards such as CSA Z809.
- **Environmental Professional - Compliance Environmental Auditor – EP(CEA)** – This title is intended for auditors who are involved in auditing the compliance of organizations against a relevant standard or set of criteria, often utilizing ISO 19011 or a similar audit process for that purpose.

The initial application fee for either of the environmental auditor titles is \$450.00 (\$250.00 application fee plus \$200.00 exam fee) plus GST/HST. Please note that application and examination fees are non-refundable, even in the event of an unsuccessful application for certification.

The membership fee for environmental auditors is \$230.00 plus GST/HST and is payable upon initial certification (prorated to an April 1 renewal) and every April 1 thereafter.



## About Environmental Auditor Certification Standards

Certifications are awarded based on the evaluation of an individual's career experience, competency level in his or her area of expertise, as compared to the [National Occupational Standards \(NOS\)](#). The NOS for Environmental Auditors were developed through extensive consultation and validation with industry experts within Canada. These standards were developed as a definitive guide to the skills and knowledge required for professionals to do their jobs within the areas of environmental auditing.

## Eligibility Requirements

To qualify for EP(EMSLA) or EP(CEA) designation, a candidate must satisfy basic requirements in the areas of employment, education, formal training, and professional practice (auditing experience). The eligibility requirements for the auditing certifications are outlined in this section.

### Employment

Applicants must have a total of five years of relevant work experience. Relevant work experience should contribute to the development of knowledge and skills in some or all of the following areas:

- Environmental management methods and techniques;
- Environmental science and technology;
- Technical and environmental aspects of operations;
- Relevant requirements of environmental laws, regulations and related documents;
- Environmental management systems and standards; and,
- Audit procedures, processes and techniques.

Internships are acceptable for use towards 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 Graduate degree (Master's or PhD) are acceptable to use towards satisfying the work experience requirements provided they meet specific criteria. Please contact [EP@eco.ca](mailto: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 auditing titles.



## Education

All applicants for auditor titles must have either:

- A degree from a recognized Canadian or international post-secondary institution / university. A degree generally involves a minimum of three years formal full-time or equivalent part-time study; or
- A diploma from a recognized Canadian or international post-secondary institution, community college, technical institute or CÉGEP (Québec). Technician/ technologist diplomas typically involve completion of two to three years and over 2000 hours of formal, accredited academic training. Canadian Certified Engineering Technologist (CET) and Applied Science Technologist (AScT) are examples of acceptable technical diplomas.

The degree or diploma should be relevant to the title sought. A relevant degree or diploma should concentrate on one of the following areas:

- Engineering;
- Natural science;
- Environmental science or technology;
- Law;
- Business administration; or
- Accounting

## Training

Applicants for auditing titles must have completed 35 hours of lead auditor training that contributes to the development of knowledge and skills in the following areas:

- Environmental management systems and standards against which audits may be performed, such as ISO 14001;
- Environmental science and technology;
- Technical and environmental aspects of various types of business activities and facility operations;
- Relevant requirements of environmental laws, regulations and related documents; and,
- Different types of environmental audits, audit procedures, processes, techniques, and guidelines for auditing, including ISO 19011.

Applicants are required to provide objective evidence that they have taken training in the required areas under the supervision of an appropriate instructor through a structured learning program that includes evaluation of participants' achievement of learning objectives. Formal training courses may include both group and individual learning activities.

Acting as an instructor in training courses on the topics specified may also be accepted as (fully or partially) satisfying this criterion.



For a list of acceptable training providers, please e-mail [EP@eco.ca](mailto:EP@eco.ca).

## Professional Practice

Each applicant shall demonstrate professional practice via the submission of audit logs, in order to demonstrate that his/her audit experience was gained under the prescribed conditions and within the required time frame. All audits shall have occurred within the five years immediately prior to application.

If an applicant has either been on maternity/parental or disability leave within the last 5 years, ECO Canada may extend the eligible timeframe for audit logs to a maximum of 1 additional year provided sufficient documentation is made available. It is also a requirement that at least 1 audit has been conducted in the 12 months prior to the application submission date.

Audit Log requirements for both EP(EMSLA) (per specialization) and EP(CEA) are as follows:

- A minimum of seven (7) audits must have been completed over the past 5 years, with a minimum of one (1) within the last 12 months. A minimum of four (4) audits must be within the applicant's specialization.
  - EP(CEA) applicants must submit a minimum of four (4) Compliance audits (Audit Type = Compliance)
  - EP(EMSLA) applicants with a specialization in EMS must submit a minimum of four (4) Management System audits (Audit Type = EMS). Management System audits include ISO 14001, OHSAS 18001, etc.
  - EP(EMSLA) applicants with a specialization in SFM must submit a minimum of four (4) Sustainable Forest Management audits (Audit Type = SFM). SFM audits include FSC, SFI, CSA-Z809, etc.
- The audits must account for a minimum of thirty-five (35) audit days. Of the audit days submitted, a minimum of twenty-one (21) audit days must focus on activities related to the Conduct of Audit (formerly referred to as 'on-site activities').
  - A minimum of twenty (20) audit days submitted must be in the applicant's area of specialization (Compliance, EMS or SFM)
  - An audit day shall not be less than 6 hours.
  - Conduct of Audit activities include opening and closing meetings, and the conformance determination phase of the audit.
  - Pre and Post Audit Activities (formerly referred to as 'off-site activities') include planning, document review and preparation of the audit report.



*Note: EP(EMSLA) applicants choosing both the EMS and the SFM specializations must submit a minimum of 7 audits and 35 audit days per specialization. Thus, such an applicant must submit a minimum of 14 audits, of which at least 4 must be EMS, 4 must be SFM, and the remaining may be EMS, SFM or Compliance. The audits submitted must account for at least 70 audit days, of which 20 must be EMS, 20 must be SFM, and the remaining may be EMS, SFM or Compliance.*

*Note: Audits of extended length may be used to constitute more than one audit for the purposes of meeting the number of audits application criterion. The following conversion can be used on extensive audits:*

- Each month of an extended audit = 1 audit
- One month is considered to be 20 working days
- Thus, extended audits are divided by 20. Any remainder is also considered to be an audit. For example, a 44-day audit = 3 audits (20+20+4), a 21 day audit = 2 audits (20+1), 20 day audit = 1 audit

In order to be considered acceptable auditing experience; an audit must meet the following criteria:

- EMS/SFM/Compliance audits mean audits as defined in ISO 19011, which are the “systematic, independent and documented process for obtaining audit evidence (records, statements of fact or other information, which are relevant to the audit criteria and verifiable) and evaluating it objectively to determine the extent to which the audit criteria (set of policies, procedures or requirements) are fulfilled”.
- Each audit must be an independent audit. Internal audits, sometimes called first-party audits, are conducted by, or on behalf of, the organization itself for management review and other internal purposes. In many cases, particularly in smaller organizations, independence can be demonstrated by the freedom from responsibility for the activity being audited. External audits include those generally termed second- and third- party audits. Second-party audits are conducted by parties having an interest in the organization, such as customers, or by other persons on their behalf. Third-party audits are conducted by external auditing organizations, such as those providing registration or certification of conformity to the requirements of ISO 14001.
- Audits must be verifiable. Audit verification can be supplied by the audit program manager, audit team leader, auditee, or another auditor on the team. If a verification contact person’s name and telephone number cannot be provided, that audit will not be considered in the certification process. The overall audit experience must include personal experience with each of the defined competency statements.



## Steps to Certification

The following section details the steps involved in certification, from the initial application right through to the certification decision.

### Application

Applications are accepted via the website only. [Click here](#) to be directed to the application page. The following section will help you in entering your qualifications into the applicant website. Note that you may find it beneficial to have a current resume available for reference.

### Payment

ECO Canada's online application system allows you to pay your non-refundable application fee via our website (select 'Buy Now' for the title you wish to apply for). Please pay your fees as soon as you are automatically directed to the payment page, as you will not be able to start your application until payment is made. The chart below summarizes application-related fees.

Auditor Fee Schedule			
Title	Application Fee	Examination Fee	Annual Renewal Fee
EP(EMSLA)	\$250 + GST/HST	\$200 + GST/HST	\$230 + GST/HST
EP(CEA)	\$250 + GST/HST	\$200 + GST/HST	\$230 + GST/HST

Once payment has been processed you will be e-mailed a receipt and login information to continue.

### Selecting Your Specialization

If you are applying EP(EMSLA) you will be directed back to the application pages to select the specialization (or specializations) you are applying for. EP(CEA) applicants skip this step as there are no specializations available under the EP(CEA) title.

### Employment

On the Background tab, you will complete a section for employment experience. ECO Canada recommends you include all relevant employment in your application, rather than simply entering that which would satisfy the minimum requirement. Please exclude employment that is not environmentally related. For supervisors of your previous employment you may enter "N/A" for their e-mail and/or phone number and/or address if you no longer have this information.

### Education

Education is also entered into the Background tab. To verify the education information you have submitted ECO Canada uses the third-party verification service BackCheck. After finalizing your background, you will be contacted via e-mail within 3 business days requesting that you complete a consent form. This is a requirement for your certification application.



### *Training*

Formal Training is detailed on the Background tab. Please note that verification of training is required – please send ECO Canada a certificate of completion or similar documentation granted for any formal auditing course you may have taken to [EP@eco.ca](mailto:EP@eco.ca).

### *Membership*

This section is for individuals who do hold memberships in other organizations. This is not a requirement.

### *Other Designation*

This section is for individuals who do hold professional designations or certifications from other organizations. This is not a requirement.

### *Professional Practice: Audit Logs*

Your audit logs will also be added to the Background tab. When completing each audit log, please ensure that you fill in each field, as all of this information is required (auditee, audit days, description of the audit, etc.).

### *Agree to Abide by the EP Code of Ethics*

Once you have completed the above steps in the Application Process, the “Finalize Background” button will appear at the bottom of the Applicant Hub page. You will then be prompted to read and agree to abide by the [Environmental Professional Code of Ethics](#). Please do read the Code of Ethics; it is an important part of the Environmental Professional title, ensuring that all members are held to high standards of accountability. If you agree to abide by the EP Code of Ethics, click on ‘Continue’, and you will be taken to the payment page. If you click on ‘Cancel’, you will be brought back to the Applicant Hub and your application will not be processed.

### **Background Validation**

Once you have submitted your application, Background validation will typically be completed within 2 weeks. In this stage, the Registrar ensures that all components of your application are complete. It is common for applicants to be asked for additional information regarding any information that may seem contradictory or inconsistent in order to clarify the details of your application information. As well, the Registrar will examine any documentation that you have submitted to ensure that it meets the requirements of the certification scheme.

During background validation, staff may contact the verification contacts that you listed in your employment history. ECO Canada contacts these individuals in order to determine that the employment information is accurate. Verification contacts will not be asked about your personal attributes.



You will be contacted by email if the Registrar requires further information, or if the Registrar has moved your file to the Expert Review/Examination stage.

## Examination

Once your application is deemed complete, ECO Canada will contact you to schedule your written examination. Examinations are coordinated by staff and are written online. It is the responsibility of the applicant to secure both an eligible proctor and suitable location (often at the applicant's place of employment).

Successful applicants must achieve a minimum passing grade in the written exam, monitored by an eligible proctor. The exam(s) cover:

- Audit principles, concepts and skills;
- Environmental science and technology;
- Management system practices;
- Legislation, regulations, standards and guidelines.

Typically, applicants choose to set up their exam 6-8 weeks after the Background validation process is complete so that they have adequate time to prepare. For further details regarding the examination component, please [click here](#). Note that if you do not pass the written examination, you may choose to rewrite it after a period of three months. There is a fee for rewriting the exam, please contact the Registrar at [EP@eco.ca](mailto:EP@eco.ca) for details.

## Expert Review

Occurring concurrently with the Examination process, an Expert Review will be conducted to ensure that the competency requirements have indeed been fulfilled in accordance with the certification scheme. The Expert Reviewers must sign a confidentiality agreement and a conflict-of-interest declaration.

During expert review the verification contacts that you listed in your audit logs may be contacted. ECO Canada contacts these individuals in order to determine that the audit has taken place and was conducted as stated. Verification contacts will not be asked about your personal attributes.

Reviewers must recommend your application to the Registrar for approval.

## Registrar Review

Once the results of your Background Validation, Expert Review and Examination 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 Board for ratification.



## Board Ratification

The Approvals Board will review elements of your application and provide final ratification. The Approvals Board meets once a month and all candidates are notified of the Board review outcome via e-mail the week of the meeting.

## Successful Certification

If you are successfully certified as an environmental auditor with ECO Canada, you will be mailed a certification package including a wall certificate, and your name will be added to the publicly available roster.

At this time, the first-year membership fee will be charged to successful Auditor applicants.

## Appeal of Certification 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](mailto: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](mailto: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.

## Certification Maintenance

### Annual and Term Renewal Requirements

All certified members are required to submit their professional development activities and a record of their professional practice to ECO Canada on an annual basis. For more information on the requirements please review the [Auditor Member Guide](#) or contact us at [EP@eco.ca](mailto:EP@eco.ca).

## How to Contact ECO Canada Staff

Should you require any assistance while in the application process, or have questions after becoming certified, please feel free to contact Certifications staff at any time:

[EP@eco.ca](mailto:EP@eco.ca)

403-233-7484

[www.eco.ca/certification](http://www.eco.ca/certification)