

**CERTIFICATION, RENEWAL AND ANNUAL MAINTENANCE CRITERIA
CERTIFIED ENVIRONMENTAL AUDITOR (CEA)**

INTRODUCTION

The Quebec Association of Environmental Verification (QAEV) (Association québécoise de vérification environnementale) issues two types of certification, one for environmental auditors and another for environmental site assessors. This document defines the certification criteria for practitioners who currently work in the field of **environmental auditing** as well as criteria for the annual maintenance and renewal of the certification. It is the QAEV's objective to ensure that environmental site assessors, as defined in this document, are able to conduct environmental site assessments and sign the related reports.

This document

- sets the scope of the certification;
- specifies the reference standards;
- defines the requirements for the recognition of certified auditors;
- defines the requirements for certification renewal and maintenance.

To prepare this document, the QAEV took reference to the criteria and orientations of the organizations specified in Appendix G.

1. SCOPE

The QAEV recognizes that environmental auditing is a multidisciplinary activity and that an environmental auditor is primarily a generalist in the environmental field. Therefore, this activity cannot be related to a single profession. It should be mentioned that activities falling exclusively within the scope of practice of a professional corporation should be conducted by the concerned professionals.

QAEV certification does not bring exclusivity to the environmental auditing field. Certification is associated with various aspects such as qualifications, standards, public protection, credibility and promotion of good environmental auditing practices. The accreditation itself, along with a broad distribution of the CEA directory, offers good market guidance.

1.1 LEAD AUDITOR

The QAEV recognizes that an environmental audit should be conducted by a lead auditor having the personal qualities and relevant experience to ensure good leadership and efficient management throughout the environmental auditing process. In certifying environmental auditors, the QAEV considers the latter capable of managing environmental audits and signing audit reports.

2. REFERENCE TO STANDARDS

The QAEV recognizes that environmental auditing must be based on generally accepted standards regarding the practice and subject matter of environmental auditing. Without being limited or exclusive, an environmental audit should be conducted in compliance with the standards identified in Appendix E. Any departure from these standards will have to be clearly specified in the audit report.

3. DEFINITIONS

3.1A ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AUDITING

“Environmental compliance auditing is a systematic and documented assessment process for objectively gathering and evaluating the evidence to ascertain if an organization’s activities are in line with the existing codes, regulations and legislation.” (CSA-Z773-03)

3.1B ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM AUDIT

“Systematic and documented verification process of objectively obtaining and evaluating audit evidence to determine whether an organization's environmental management system conforms with the environmental management system audit criteria, and communicating the results of this process to the client.” (ISO 14050:2002)

3.1C ENVIRONMENTAL AUDIT (OF SYSTEM OR COMPLIANCE)

“Systematic, documented verification process of objectively obtaining and evaluating audit evidence to determine whether specified environmental activities, events, conditions, management systems, or information about these matters conform with audit criteria and communicating the results of this process to the client.” (ISO 14050:2002)

3.2A ENVIRONMENTAL AUDITOR

“Person qualified to perform environmental audits.” (ISO-14050:2002)

3.2B LEAD ENVIRONMENTAL AUDITOR

“Person qualified to manage and perform environmental audits.” (ISO 14050:2002)

N.B.: Considering the experience and the skills required to satisfy the certification criteria, the QAEV considers that the individual holding the CEA title may, depending on the degree of his or her knowledge of the field audited, perform the role of the “lead environmental auditor”.

3.3 SUITABLE WORK EXPERIENCE

Professional activities within more than one of the following areas (see Appendix A for further details):

- environmental science and technology;
- technical and environmental aspects of facility operations;
- application of environmental laws and regulations;
- environmental management systems and standards;
- verification methodology and techniques.

During their work experience, it is expected that candidates will have demonstrated the following qualities and skills:

- ability to clearly express concepts and ideas, both orally and in writing;
- good interpersonal skills: tact, diplomacy and the ability to listen to others;
- ability to remain independent and objective;
- appropriate methods and work organization to obtain efficient results during audits;
- ability to identify objective evidence and to determine root causes to the problems identified;
- good judgement;
- respect and sensitivity for the local context.

3.4 ENVIRONMENTAL AUDITING EXPERIENCE

Environmental audit days are days dedicated to one or more of the following activities: supervision, program management, preparation, execution, research and the writing of an environmental audit report.

3.5 ACADEMIC BACKGROUND

Academic background (or basic training) refers to the candidate's education (example: collegial, bachelor's degree or its equivalent).

3.6 CONTINUING TRAINING

Continuing training refers to the core specific training, related to environmental auditing, as defined in Appendix B.

3.7 PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Professional employment as a consultant or for prime contractors when the job allows direct supervision of environmental auditing-related activities.

3.8 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Professional development activities must either be associated with environmental auditing or considered relevant by the QAEV. The following activities are recognized as professional development activities: participation in conferences, symposiums, seminars, specific training courses, association meetings, a visit scheduled within conference program, committee attendance, authoring public presentations, article publication, training material development, training dissemination.

4. CERTIFICATION CRITERIA

4.1 CERTIFIED ENVIRONMENTAL AUDITOR (CEA)

The criteria are defined according to academic training, suitable work experience including environmental auditing experience, continuing training and the QAEV exam. The criteria described in this section lead to the certified environmental auditor title.

In order to be certified, candidates must meet the following requirements (see table presented in Appendix C):

A.

The candidate will have a university bachelor's degree in an appropriate field (engineering, natural sciences, environmental science, law, administration, accounting) or a relevant equivalence. He or she will have suitable work experience of at least five (5) years in the environmental field, and will have participated in at least eight (8) complete environmental audits for a minimum of forty (40) days of environmental auditing. He or she will have successfully completed the core QAEV continuing training or the equivalent, in the years prior to certification. Moreover, a minimum score of 60% is required to succeed the QAEV exam.

Or

B.

The candidate will have a university bachelor's degree or the equivalent. He or she will have suitable work experience of at least six (6) years in the environmental field and will have participated in at least eight (8) complete environmental audits for a minimum of forty (40) days of environmental auditing. He or she will have successfully completed the core QAEV continuing training or the equivalent in the years prior to certification. Moreover, a minimum score of 60% is required to succeed the QAEV exam.

Or

C.

The candidate will have both a university bachelor's degree (or the equivalent) and a master's degree (or higher) in appropriate fields (ex: engineering, natural sciences, environmental science, law, administration, accounting). He or she will have suitable work experience of at least four (4) years in the environmental field and will have

participated in at least eight (8) complete environmental audits for a minimum of forty (40) days of environmental auditing. He or she will have successfully completed the core QAEV continuing training or the equivalent, in the years prior to certification. Moreover, a minimum score of 60% is required to succeed the QAEV exam.

Or

D.

The candidate will have a university bachelor's degree (or the equivalent) and a master's degree (or higher) in an appropriate field (engineering, natural sciences, environmental science, law, administration, accounting). He or she will have suitable work experience of at least five (5) years in the environmental field and will have participated in at least eight (8) complete environmental audits for a minimum of forty (40) days of environmental auditing. He or she will have successfully completed the core QAEV continuing training or the equivalent in the years prior to certification. Moreover, a minimum score of 60% is required to succeed the QAEV exam.

Or

E.

A candidate without a university bachelor's degree could be accepted if he or she demonstrates, to the satisfaction of the certification committee, that he or she possesses equivalent competence in the environment field and more specifically in the area of environmental auditing. He or she must at least have obtained a college level diploma, have suitable work experience of at least eight (8) years and have participated in at least eight (8) complete environmental audits for a minimum of forty (40) days of environmental auditing. He or she will have successfully completed the core QAEV continuing training or the equivalent in the years prior to certification. Moreover, he or she will have succeeded the QAEV exam (minimum score of 60%).

5. CERTIFICATION RENEWAL CRITERIA

In order to renew his or her certification, the CEA must meet the following professional activity AND professional development criteria.

A. RELEVANT PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES:

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

A minimum of 240 hours of professional practice in the past three years

OR

ENVIRONMENTAL AUDITING EXPERIENCE

Participation in at least six (6) environmental audits, representing a minimum of 30 days within a period of three years.

B. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Have cumulated a minimum of 45 hours of professional development during the past three years among the activities mentioned in Appendix D, while observing the maximum hours recognized for certain categories. Note that for candidates wishing to maintain both the CESA and CEA designations, a total of 60 hours for both titles are required.

6. CERTIFICATION TERM, MAINTENANCE AND RENEWAL

Certification is valid for a period of three (3) years (from September 1 to August 31), after which it can be renewed for another term of three (3) years. The CEA who wishes to renew his or her certification must prove that he or she continues to adequately satisfy the renewal criteria provided in Section 5 above. In order to maintain his or her certification on an annual basis within the three-year validity period, the CEA must demonstrate that he or she will be able to satisfy the renewal criteria at the end of the three (3) year term, by means of relevant professional activities. CEAs are responsible for keeping an updated record or any other type of document regarding their training and experience to substantiate the case for certification maintenance and renewal.

6.1 ASSOCIATION DIRECTORY

The QAEV has put together a directory of CEAs. It is available on the QAEV's Website (www.aqve.com), which is updated once a year.

7. CERTIFICATION APPLICATION, MAINTENANCE OR RENEWAL

A candidate wishing to obtain a QAEV certification needs to submit a written request to the QAEV office before the deadline by completing the certification application form, which is available on the QAEV Web site, and by providing all the required documents, as well as the file processing fees.

In order to maintain and renew their certification, environmental auditors must complete the annual certification maintenance form (FR-2005-03) that will be sent by the administration along with the invoice for the annual maintenance. At the end of the third year of their certification, the CEAs will be required to complete the certification renewal form (FR-2006-15) that will be sent by the administration along with the invoice for the certification renewal.

8. PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE AND CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE

Certified environmental auditors must demonstrate professional competence in auditing in a way that promotes respect for their profession and for other professions.

Environmental auditors must have the knowledge, skills and relevant experience that will allow them to assume the position responsibilities. Section 4.5 of standard CSA-Z773-03 defines the environmental auditors required skills.

- “An audit team, composed of individuals with diversified knowledge and experience background, which works under the supervision of an audit team leader who often assumes the role of auditor. The auditor will demonstrate that the team has acquired, through a combination of relevant studies, training courses, skills and experience, sufficient knowledge to carry out a technically rational and reliable environmental compliance audit. The auditor will be familiar with the auditing techniques, relevant federal, provincial, regional and territorial legislation, and all relevant published criteria. Prior to performing an audit, the auditor will become familiar with the activity sector and the industrial processes under review.”¹

Certified environmental auditors are committed to respecting the QAEV’s code of good practice (Appendix F). Any deviation from the code of good practice will be investigated by an adhoc discipline committee appointed by the QAEV’s board of directors.

However, the good practice code does not replace professional corporation applicable ethic codes. The QAEV will forward complainants to their respective professional order for any complaint involving a CEA member that is member of a professional corporation. These complaints will have to be submitted to the QAEV discipline committee once they have been analyzed by the relevant professional corporation.

9. WORKING LANGUAGE

It is recommended for certified environmental auditors to avoid carrying out audits without independent translation assistance if they lack communication skills in the language used by the organization being audited.

APPENDIX A SUITABLE ENVIRONMENTAL WORK EXPERIENCE

The QAEV defines “ suitable work experience” as work activities or internship work

in the following areas:

- the private sector;
- the institutional sector (teaching and research);
- non-governmental organizations;
- public and para-public sectors;

in the following professions:

- manager;
- administrator;
- auditor, technician;
- inspector;
- specialist;
- engineer;
- consultant or adviser;
- lawyer;
- planner;
- scientist;
- specialized communicator;

in the following fields of expertise:

- auditing;
- environmental compliance auditing;
- environmental management;
- risk assessment;
- environmental consulting role;
- environmental law;
- impact assessment;
- environmental control;
- environmental protection;
- law/regulation development and application;
- research and development;
- environmental technologies;
- environmental science training.

It should be noted that successfully completing the short university program entitled «*Microprogramme de 2e cycle de vérification environnementale*» offered by Sherbrooke University is equivalent to one year of experience.

APPENDIX B CORE TRAINING

Mandatory training (required by the QAEV):

ENVIRONMENTAL AUDITING
General Auditing Principles – Methodological and Operational Aspects (7 hours)*
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Environmental Issues• History and Types of Audits• The Auditing Profession• Multi-disciplinarity
Methodology and operationalization: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pre-Audit Activities• Audit Mandate Planning• Work Tool Preparation
Legal Aspects (11 hours)* Environmental Law (municipal, provincial, federal and international) Professional Law
Theoretical and practical content of environmental management systems and ISO 14000 (10 hours)* History and International Context Environmental Management and Corporate Strategy Objectives, Principles and Components of the Environmental Management System ISO 14 000 International Standards
Case Study (7 hours)* Simulation of an Environmental Management System Audit

Optional training for all participants (35 hours):

Environmental Law
Principles <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Concept of Environment• Nature of Environmental Law• Environmental Law and Management
Application Mechanisms <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Preventive mechanisms• Remedial and Punitive Mechanisms
Environmental Law <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Federal Texts• Provincial Texts
Professional Law <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Notion of Professional Responsibility• Sources of Professional Responsibility• Protection against Responsibility• Duties of an Environmental Auditor
Case Study

APPENDIX C CERTIFICATION CRITERIA TABLE

	A	B	C	D	E
ACADEMIC TRAINING	Bachelor's degree (or the equivalent) in an appropriate field	Bachelor's degree (or the equivalent)	Bachelor's degree (or the equivalent) and master's degree (or higher), both in an appropriate field	Bachelor's degree (or the equivalent) and master's degree (or higher) in an appropriate field	College diploma (CEGEP)
SUITABLE WORK EXPERIENCE	5 years	6 years	4 years	5 years	8 years
ENVIRONMENTAL AUDITING EXPERIENCE	8 audits 40 audit days				
CONTINUING TRAINING	Completion of core training or equivalent				
EXAMINATION	A minimum score of 60% to succeed the QAEV exam				

It should be noted that successfully completing the short university program entitled «*Microprogramme de 2e cycle de vérification environnementale*» offered by Sherbrooke University is equivalent to one year of experience. It should however be noted that in any case, at least 4 years of relevant work experience is required

APPENDIX D CERTIFICATION RENEWAL CRITERIA

CEAs must meet relevant professional activity AND professional development criteria in order to maintain their certification.

RELEVANT PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Professional practice: 240 hours

OR

Environmental audits: six audits and 30 days

AND

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: 45 hours (one certification) or 60 hours (two certifications)

-Participation in conferences, symposiums, seminars: unlimited

-Participation in Course/training: unlimited

-Association meeting: recognized maximum: 5 hours

-Organized conference visit: recognized maximum: 2 hours

-Committee participation: recognized maximum: 10 hours

-Public presentations: recognized maximum: 10 hours

-Article publication: recognized maximum: 10 hours

-Development of training material: recognized maximum: 20 hours

-Training distribution: recognized maximum: 20 hours

APPENDIX E STANDARDS

1. Environmental Auditing Standards

- Environmental Compliance Audit (CAN/CSA Z773-F03)
- Criteria for Quality Management and/or Environmental System Audits
CAN/CSA-ISO 19011-03

2. Environmental Management System

- Environmental Management Systems: Use Requirements and Criteria - ISO
14001-2004

3. Miscellaneous

- ISO/IEC 17000: 2004 Conformity assessment — Vocabulary and general principles
- ISO 14050:2002, Environmental management - Vocabulary

APPENDIX F CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE

During the practice of environmental auditing, every QAEV member must strive to apply the following criteria:

- a) be honest and sincere, and provide professional services with integrity and diligence;*
- b) have the necessary skills, competences, knowledge and experience to perform the requested services;*
- c) continually seek to improve professional knowledge and skills;*
- d) serve the client in a conscientious, diligent, and efficient manner;*
- e) hold in strict confidence, except as required by law, all client matters and business-related information gathered during professional practice, and not use this information for personal gain;*
- f) remain free of any influence, interest or relationship that impairs judgement, independence or objectivity when providing professional services;*
- g) commit to honest, thorough and straightforward communication in the performance of professional duties;*
- h) not be associated with any false or misleading report, statement, or representation;*
- i) act with courtesy and good faith toward other professional auditors;*
- j) abstain from advertising that could be misleading or counterproductive for the practice;*
- k) continuously strive to enhance public regard for the environmental auditing profession;*
- l) imperatively inform their clients if they do not hold insurance covering professional responsibility. Professional association members who are QAEV members are imperatively insured under the Professional Code.*

APPENDIX G ORGANIZATIONS

The QAEV prepared the current document with reference to the criteria and orientations of the following organizations:

- International Society of Accredited Safety Auditors Inc. (Licensing Requirement), (U.S.A.);
- Certification of Industrial Hygienists (American Board of Industrial Hygienists), (U.S.A.);
- European Union - Regulations introducing a community management system and environmental audits (Eur.) (EMAS);
- National Environmental Auditors Registration Board (U.K);
- California EPA Registered Environmental Assessor Program, (U.S.A.);
- *Institut français des auditeurs et vérificateurs de l'environnement*, (Fr.);
- Report of the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants (Can);
- National Registry of Environmental Professionals, (U.S.A.);
- National Association of Environmental Professionals, (U.S.A.);
- National Environmental Training Association, (U.S.A.);
- ISO/TC 207/SC 2 Environmental Auditing: Qualification Criteria for Environmental Auditors, Discussion Paper, Nov 21, 1993 & March 22, 1994.
- Environmental Auditing: Types of Environmental Auditing, Discussion Paper, January 7, 1994;
- Environmental Auditing Roundtable, Draft Qualification Criteria for Environmental Auditors, Position Paper of the United States/ Technical Committee, Subcommittee 2; Environmental Auditing/ Task group on Auditor Qualifications, in Environmental Audit Report, Vol. 4, No 1, February 1994.;
- Standards Council of Canada, Criteria regulating the accreditation of a personnel certification body CAN-P-9 (ISO 17024:2003)