### ESA Certification Requirements Checklist

#### Minimum Education Requirements

Candidates must have completed at least a bachelor’s degree or a higher degree in Ecology or a related science that includes the equivalent of at least 30 semester hours of Biological Science, 9 of which must be in Ecology. Additionally, at least 12 semester hours of Physical and Mathematical Science are required (total 42 credits). Grades equivalent to a B minus or higher are required for courses needed to meet requirements. Classes must include an introduction to three major areas of ecological inquiry: populations, communities, and ecosystems.

Here are the requirements for the ESA certification levels. Please choose the level that is appropriate to your level of education and experience.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REQUIRED DOCUMENTS AND INFORMATION</th>
<th>ALL NEW CERTIFICATIONS</th>
<th>UPGRADE to higher certification level</th>
<th>RECERTIFICATION Ecologist in Training, Associate Ecologist and Ecologist only</th>
<th>STREAMLINED RECERTIFICATION Senior Ecologist Only: those who want to re-certify or apply for Emeritus Senior Ecologist</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cover Letter</td>
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<td>Curriculum Vitae</td>
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<td>Two (2) References</td>
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<td>Two (2) Letters of Recommendation</td>
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<td>Transcript(s)</td>
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<td>Graduation and Degree Name(s) with Date(s)</td>
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* One must be a current ESA member; only one can be from your current organization.

* One must be a current ESA member. May be from references named above or other individuals.

**Ethics and Professional Conduct**

Certified Ecologists shall conduct their activities in accordance with the *Code of Ethics of the Ecological Society of America* and with the highest standards of professional conduct and personal honor.

* All fees are non-refundable.

* Certification cycle opens from November through January 31 every year.

* Reference and Letters of Recommendation Requirements

All candidates for New Certification or Certification Upgrade must submit two (2) letters of recommendation from references. At least one reference must be an ESA member. In addition, only one of the references may be from the candidate’s home institution. Letters of recommendation must be on company letterhead and be signed and sent by the recommender directly to cert@esa.org in PDF format.

* Note for the ESA Certified Ecologists

- If your certification expires in June this year, you should re-certify or upgrade now.
- If your certification expired in June last year, you can re-certify or upgrade with one year of grace period program.
- If your certification expired two years ago or before, you must apply under New Certification.

For questions, please contact cert@esa.org or (202) 833-8773.

For more information, please visit the FAQ page: https://www.esa.org/certification/FAQ/
ESA Certification Requirements for Eligibility

Ecologist in Training (EiT)

- Bachelor’s degree or higher degree in ecology or a related science from an accredited college or university.

This category is for graduating students who have met the education requirements for ESA certification but do not have the required professional experience for the current certification categories.

Associate Ecologist (AE)

- A bachelor’s or higher degree in ecology or a related science from an accredited college or university; and
- At least one (1) year of post-graduate professional experience* gained in the performance of research or data analysis demonstrating technical competence in current application of ecological principles and/or theory. Relevant experience should have been gained within the previous five (5) years.

Course requirements may be met with post-baccalaureate courses from an accredited college or university, but professional experience may not be counted until all academic requirements for certification are met.

Ecologist (CE)

- A master’s or higher degree in ecology or a related science from an accredited college or university and at least two (2) years of full-time equivalent professional experience* after degree; OR at least five (5) years of professional experience* in addition to the education requirement for Associate Ecologist; and
- In addition to the 1-year experience requirement for Associate Ecologist, candidates must also demonstrate the ability to perform professional work in ecology such as independent studies, complex data analyses, and publication of scientific journal articles, reports, or oral presentations.

Experience must follow completion of the education requirement for qualification at the Ecologist level. Relevant experience should have been gained within the previous five (5) years.

Senior Ecologist (SE)

- A doctoral degree in ecology or a related science from an accredited college or university, and at least five (5) years of full-time equivalent professional experience* after degree; OR at least ten (10) years of professional experience* in addition to the education requirement for qualification; and
- In addition to the 1-year experience requirement for Associate Ecologist, candidates must also demonstrate the ability to perform professional work in ecology such as independent studies, complex data analyses, and publication of scientific journal articles, reports, or oral presentations.

Experience must follow completion of the degree level used to qualify for Ecologist. Relevant experience should have been gained within the previous five (5) years.

Streamlined for Recertification: Senior Ecologist Only

Certified Senior Ecologists may submit a streamlined application for recertification, which requires a cover letter and current CV, if the following two conditions are met:

- Currently certified as a Senior Ecologist by the ESA, and
- A member in good standing with the ESA.

Emeritus Senior Ecologist (ESE)

- Previously certified as a Senior Ecologist for at least 10 years, with no more than a 2-year lapse of certification, and
- May no longer be employed full time.

If the Emeritus Senior Ecologist desires to depict certification on any official document, they must use the term 'Senior Ecologist Emeritus'. This is meant as an honorary recognition and does not imply continued professional status.

NOTE: Applicants who do not qualify under the above criteria may submit a statement to the Board of Professional Certification explaining why and how the intent of the education and experience requirements is satisfied.

* Time spent in graduate school beyond the degree being used for the level of certification sought counts as half-time experience. Length of experience will be evaluated only up to the application deadline.

For more information, please visit the FAQ page: https://www.esa.org/certification/FAQ/