

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. 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.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS AND INFORMATION	ALL NEW CERTIFICATIONS	UPGRADE to higher certification level	RECERTIFICATION Ecologist in Training, Associate Ecologist and Ecologist only	STREAMLINED RECERTIFICATION Senior Ecologists and Emeritus Senior Ecologist Only
Cover Letter	X	X	X	X
Curriculum Vitae	X	X	X	X
2 References	X	X	X	
* One must be a current ESA member; only one can be from your current organization.				
2 Letters of Recommendation	X	X		
* One must be a current ESA member. May be from references named above or other individuals.				
Transcript(s)	X	X		
Graduation and Degree Name(s) with Date(s)	X	X		

* 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

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

ESA Certification Requirements for Eligibility

Reference Requirements

All candidates for the Ecologist in Training, Associate Ecologist, and Ecologist certifications must submit two (2) letters of recommendation from references. At least one reference must be a current ESA member. In addition, only one of the references may be from the candidate's home institution. Letters of recommendation in PDF format should be emailed to cert@esa.org with a note indicating the candidate's name.

Ecologist in Training

- 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

- 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

- 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 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

- 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* after completion of the minimum education requirements for certification (qualifying bachelor's degree or completion of required coursework in post-baccalaureate courses); and
- Additional experience includes the following:
 - Demonstration, in work output, of thorough knowledge of the literature and scientific principles and theories of ecology;
 - Demonstration of written original contributions or original interpretation of ecological information; and
 - Demonstration of technical or organizational competence as evidenced by supervision of projects.

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

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 [New in 2018]

- 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.