

3745-6-03

**General education and professional experience requirements, professional certifications and requirements for certification, approved trainers, testing, and professional development requirements.**

(A) General education and professional experience requirements. Individuals applying to be a water quality certified professional shall have completed a minimum of two years of college-level coursework from an accredited educational institution, and achieved passing marks in a minimum of fifteen semester credit hours of college-level coursework in aquatic ecology, ichthyology, limnology, aquatic biology, aquatic invertebrate zoology, or other environmental sciences, and have five years of professional experience in aquatic habitat and biological assessments or a related discipline. Professional experience may be substituted for coursework on a case-by-case basis, as determined by the director. Up to two years of professional experience may be credited to an applicant who has a master's degree or higher in a related field.

(B) Professional certification requirements. Applicants may apply for stream certification, wetland certification, advanced wetland certification, or any combination thereof. All demonstrations of competence in this section shall be done to the satisfaction of the director. Certification requirements are as follows:

(1) Stream certification application requirements. Applicants for stream certification shall complete the following:

(a) Demonstrate through education and experience a general knowledge of stream and riverine physical forms and habitat features, and possess the ability to identify common aquatic macroinvertebrate and stream salamander taxa, in addition to having two years of professional experience in stream quality assessments.

(b) Within the past two years, the applicant shall have completed all approved training in the stream assessment methods listed in paragraph (B)(1) of rule 3745-6-05 of the Administrative Code, and achieved passing marks in the testing developed and administered by Ohio EPA for all of the following areas of study:

(i) Principles of stream assessments, Ohio's section 401 rules (located in Chapter 3745-32 of the Administrative Code), and Ohio's water quality standards (located in Chapter 3745-1 of the Administrative Code).

(ii) Qualitative Habitat Evaluation Index (QHEI).

(iii) Headwater Habitat Evaluation Index (HHEI).

(iv) Headwater Macroinvertebrate Field Evaluation Index (HMFEEI).

(v) Stream Salamander Community Assessment.

(2) Wetland certification and advanced wetland certification application requirements.

(a) Applicants for wetland certification shall complete all of the following:

(i) Demonstrate through education and experience a general knowledge of wetland physical forms and habitat features, in addition to having two years of professional experience in wetland quality assessments.

(ii) Within the past two years, the applicant shall have completed all approved training in the wetland assessment methods listed in paragraph (B)(2) of rule 3745-6-05 of the Administrative Code, and achieved passing marks in the testing developed and administered by Ohio EPA for both of the following areas of study:

(a) Principles of wetland assessments, Ohio's section 401 rules (located in Chapter 3745-32 of the Administrative Code), and Ohio's water quality standards (located in Chapter 3745-1 of the Administrative Code).

(b) Ohio Rapid Assessment Method (ORAM).

(iii) Within the past three years, the applicant shall have demonstrated completion of acceptable training in wetland plants identification, hydric soils, and wetland delineation.

(b) Applicants for advanced wetland certification shall complete all of the following:

(i) Demonstrate through education and experience, knowledge of and the ability to accurately use plant taxonomic references and dichotomous keys to identify midwestern plants.

(ii) Demonstrate through education and experience, knowledge of and the ability to accurately use amphibian taxonomic references and dichotomous keys to identify midwestern amphibians.

(iii) The applicant shall satisfy all of the requirements of wetland certification under paragraph (B)(2)(a) of this rule.

(iv) Within the past two years, the applicant shall have completed all approved training in the wetland assessment method listed in

paragraph (B)(3) of rule 3745-6-05 of the Administrative Code, and achieved passing marks in the testing developed and administered by Ohio EPA for both of the following assessments:

(a) Vegetation Index of Biotic Integrity (VIBI).

(b) Amphibian Index of Biotic Integrity (AmphIBI).

(3) The director may waive any requirement in paragraph (A) of this rule at the director's discretion based upon a demonstration by the applicant of an alternate combination of education and experience to that which is set forth in paragraph (A) of this rule, provided the applicant has completed the applicable requirements set forth in paragraph (B) of this rule.

(C) Approved trainers.

(1) Trainers. Training required for professional certification under this chapter shall be provided by Ohio EPA or an approved third-party trainer having qualified as a subject matter expert.

(a) Third-party trainer requirements. A person interested in offering training shall submit a written application to Ohio EPA with all of the following information:

(i) A resume that documents technical experience, education, and employment history.

(ii) A detailed description of the expected training and testing services to be provided.

(iii) A detailed training content manual for the specialty offered.

(iv) Completion of a trainer application.

(b) Qualification as a subject matter expert. A person interested in offering the training required for certification under this chapter shall have the following qualifications:

(i) Successful completion of training and testing in a specialty within the three years prior to applying as a trainer for that specialty.

(ii) Technical competence in the pertinent subject matter.

(iii) Five or more years of practical experience performing the skills required for the specialty.

(iv) A post-secondary educational degree in a scientific field related to

the specialty.

(v) Documented experience in presenting technical training offered through classes, field trips, seminars, workshops, or conferences.

(c) The director shall either approve or deny the training application, or request additional information by notifying the applicant. If the director denies the application, the director shall identify the deficiencies upon which the denial of the application is based.

(d) As new information or methodologies become available, the subject matter expert shall successfully complete that training and testing.

(e) The subject matter expert shall take the annual program update training in paragraph (E) of this rule.

(f) Certification as a trainer shall expire after six years. The trainer may recertify under (C)(1)(a) within one hundred eighty days before expiration.

(D) Testing. Testing required for certified professionals shall be administered by Ohio EPA.

(E) Professional development requirements. All individuals certified under this chapter shall complete annual program update training as provided by Ohio EPA.