

# Utah Environmental Education Certification Program

## ***GOAL***

The goal of certification is to define the profession of environmental education by establishing standards for the professional qualifications of environmental educators, and to foster professional development of environmental education providers to operate within those standards.

## ***DEFINING A STANDARD***

The Utah Environmental Education Professional Certification program recognizes environmental education providers who have established specific knowledge, skills, experience and conduct in the field of environmental education, and who adhere to high ethical standards.

## ***FUNCTION***

The Utah Environmental Education Certification Program creates a network of professional environmental educators that can support each other regarding guidance and advice within the field of environmental education.

Though certification does not guarantee competence of individuals in addressing specific environmental topics, certification attests that environmental educators have met minimum standards regarding comprehension and experience within the field of environmental education. Through these standards, certification will help to insure the credibility of environmental education. Each certified member also acknowledges adherence to the Utah Environmental Education Code of Ethics and Standards for Professional Conduct.

## ***OBJECTIVES***

1. To establish and maintain public confidence within environmental education providers as professionals.
2. To establish minimum comprehension and ethical standards for environmental education providers and to encourage all practicing environmental educators meet such standards.
3. To serve the needs of environmental education providers who wish to establish and validate their professional credentials.
4. To enhance a sense of community among those providing environmental education in Utah.

## ***REQUIREMENTS and ELIGIBILITY***

Applicants will be eligible for Utah Environmental Education Certification if they meet all requirements outlined for the certification. There are no specific education and/or work requirements needed to obtain certification, only comprehension and ethics of environmental education.

Along with meeting the certification requirements as outlined in the Utah Environmental Education Certification Competency Rubrics, applicants must have an endorsement from an approved mentor, submit three (3) professional references, and must pledge to uphold the Utah Environmental Education Code of Ethics and Standards for Professional Conduct.

If an application does not meet the requirements to become Certified, they will be granted a Provisional status. Applicants have one year from the date of submission to resubmit materials to meet the standards of the certification program. Provisional status may not be renewed or extended, and an additional application fee is due upon resubmission.

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## **Comprehension and Experience**

The comprehension requirements for certification are outlined in the Utah Environmental Education Certification Competency Rubrics. In demonstrating comprehension, documents describing how the competency was successfully met will need to be included. These documents may include narratives, transcripts, lesson plans, papers, or other supporting documents demonstrating the competency was successfully met.

## **Mentors**

The mentor serves as the first-line of review in the certification process. Mentor will be chosen from the list of approved mentors in Utah (Contact USEE for a list of approved mentors or visit [www.usee.org](http://www.usee.org)). All approved mentors must be certified. The mentor will work with the applicant on the application before it is submitted. The mentor will need to fill out Form A and submit it as part of the application stating they have reviewed the application and feel that it meets the Competency Rubrics.

## **References**

Applicants will need three professional references (Form B) submitted with the application. References should be familiar with the applicant's background. Between the three professional references chosen, collectively they should address the five certification themes within the Certification Rubrics.

## **Utah Environmental Education Code of Ethics and Standards for Professional Conduct**

Applicants will need to read, sign and agree to uphold the Utah Environmental Education Code of Ethics and Standards for Professional Conduct.

## **Fees**

A \$25 application fee is due upon entering the Certification program before a mentor is assigned. Upon becoming certified, a certification fee of \$100 will be due. Certification is valid for 5 years.

## ***RECERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS***

Recertification is achieved by submitting documents showing how the applicant still meets the established standards for certification. Provisional status cannot be renewed, as the applicant must then apply to obtain the Certified certification. Recertification uses the same structure and fee schedule.

## ***CERTIFICATION REVIEW BOARD***

The Certification Review Board shall be comprised of 5 members chosen from the USEE Program Advisory Council. The Board will be chosen to provide equitable representation from various disciplines within environmental education (non-profit, secondary education, higher education, etc.). The Board shall determine eligibility of applicants and shall have the authority to confer certification.

Members of the Board will be appointed, or reappointed, by the USEE Program Advisory Council for a 2-year term. Individuals appointed to the Board must exemplify high standards of professional judgment, competence, and integrity and are required to have Utah Environmental Education Certification .

## ***NOTIFICATION***

Certification will be confirmed or denied in writing from the USEE Program Advisory Council Certification Review Board. The Board will meet in November of each year.

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## ***APPEALS PROCEDURE***

A decision of the USEE Program Advisory Council Certification Review Board to deny certification may be appealed in writing to the USEE Program Advisory Council Executive Committee. Appeals must be made within one year from the date of denial.

## ***DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE***

The USEE Program Advisory Council Certification Review Board shall have the authority to censure certification, to suspend certification for a stated period, or to revoke certification on the finding that an individual has willfully misrepresented the facts at the time of certification or violated the Utah Environmental Education Code of Ethics and Standards for Professional Conduct.

Such an allegation must be presented to the Board in writing. Anonymous allegations will not be entertained. Anyone named in a disciplinary proceeding shall be informed in a timely manner of the evidence brought forward and be given an opportunity to respond to the allegations. The Board will review the case and will render a written decision informing the certified individual and the individual who initiated the allegation. Any such action of the Board may be appealed to the USEE Program Advisory Council Executive Committee whose decision will be final.

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## ***FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS***

### *Why certification?*

- To recognize exemplary environmental educators based on knowledge, experience and dedication to the field of environmental education.
- To set a standard of performance for environmental education providers.
- To provide employers, clients, colleagues and the public a credential they can trust.
- To insure the credibility of environmental education within Utah.

### *Who is eligible for certification?*

Anyone who meets the qualifications can apply for certification, regardless of employment status, training or education including formal educators, non-formal educators as well as any interested person.

### *Who is USEE?*

The Utah Society for Environmental Education (USEE) is a non-profit 501(c)3 umbrella organization providing support services to all environmental education providers in the state. USEE acts as a link between local environmental education providers and national environmental education organizations.

USEE has received grants from the National Science Foundation, Environmental Protection Agency, US Forest Service, Utah Department of Environmental Quality, and others. USEE is also funded from cooperative agreements, membership dues, and donations. USEE has received state, regional and national awards for environmental education. USEE strives to foster environmental knowledge, skills, attitudes and actions through statewide leadership that serves to expand the quality, scope and effectiveness of environmental education.

### *Is certification required to work in the field?*

No. Certainly, many talented people are not certified who work in the field of environmental education. Certification validates and recognizes that individuals have met minimum standards regarding comprehension and experience within the field of environmental education.

### *Will certification help me get a job or higher pay?*

We cannot promise you that, but being recognized as a Utah Certified Environmental Educator will show that you have met standards of comprehension in environmental education.

### *Is membership required for certification?*

No. However, an individual will receive a free one-year membership to USEE the first year they are certified. Additionally, membership will help in demonstrating competency.

### *Who certifies me?*

The certifying body is the USEE Program Advisory Council. The USEE Program Advisory Council is made up from a variety of environmental education interest groups from throughout the state. Everyone is welcome to join the USEE Program Advisory Council. Please contact USEE for more information.

### *What does certification cost?*

The fees for certification and recertification include a \$25 application fee plus an additional \$100 upon becoming certified.

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## What if I submit an application but do not meet the minimum qualifications to proceed?

If you submit an application that does not meet the minimum qualifications for Certification, you will be notified as to areas for further development and then put on Provisional status. You then have one year to resubmit an application to obtain Utah Certified Environmental Educator.

## How long does certification last?

Certification is both valid for five years.

## How long does the entire process take?

The process length varies depending on how long it takes for you to show competency in the areas described in the rubrics.

## How do I become certified?

To become certified, you should obtain an application packet, submit the \$25 application fee, find a mentor with the help of USEE, demonstrate competency in the areas described in the Utah Environmental Education Certification Competency Rubrics, agree to follow the Utah Environmental Education Code of Ethics and Standards for Professional Conduct, then submit a completed packet. If you meet the qualifications, you will then be notified.

## Are there books or training activities that will help me prepare for certification?

To find information regarding workshops and references that will help you show competency, look on the USEE web site ([www.usee.org](http://www.usee.org)) or contact USEE.

## Is there a deadline?

To get into each years application group, a complete application needs to be postmarked by October 1.

## Where do I get an application?

You can download a copy of the entire application packet from the USEE web site ([www.usee.org](http://www.usee.org)) or by contacting USEE at 350 S 400 E Suite G4, Salt Lake City, UT 84111 801-328-1549.

# Utah Environmental Education Certification Program Application Procedure

An application for Utah Environmental Education Certification may be obtained from the Utah Society for Environmental Education or on-line at [www.usse.org](http://www.usse.org)

To enroll in the program, submit a completed Application form along with a \$25 application fee. USEE will then contact you and will help to arrangement a mentor to work with to obtain certification.

Upon agreement with your mentor that you have fulfilling all of the requirements within the Certification Rubrics, a completed application packet will need to be submitted. Incomplete applications will not be accepted. All applications must be postmarked by October 1<sup>st</sup>.

The following must be submitting for the application packet to be complete:

- Form A signed by mentor in sealed envelope with signature over the seal
- Three references (Form B) each in a separately sealed envelope with signature over the seal
- Signed Utah Environmental Education Code of Ethics and Standards for Professional Conduct form
- Documentation of rubric competencies

## Send complete applications to:

Utah Society for Environmental Education  
c/o Utah Environmental Education Certification Program  
350 South 400 East, Suite G4  
Salt Lake City, UT 84111

## ***CHECKLIST***

- Have you shown competency for all the objectives in the Competency Rubrics?
- Has your mentor signed Form A? Is the envelope signed over the seal?
- Are the three letters of reference included with a signature over the seal?
- Have you included documentation for demonstrating competency of the rubrics?
- Have you made copies of all materials for your records?