Alberta Environment and Parks
Policy for
Continuing Education Unit Evaluation and Credit

Background

The Alberta Water and Wastewater Operator Certification program requires that operators have post-secondary education, or equivalent, to meet the requirements for Levels III and IV certification.

Certification program administrators across North America recognize that many operators have not had the opportunity to attend formal post-secondary education programs. Therefore, the Continuing Education Unit (CEU) system can be utilized by operators to gain the equivalent of post-secondary education.

In addition, effective January 1, 2005, operators in Alberta require between 0.6 and 3.6 CEU for renewal every 3-year renewal period (in some cases, operators with multiple certificates require more than 3.6 CEU).

The Continuing Education Unit (CEU)

A Continuing Education Unit is defined as 10 contact hours of participation in an organized, relevant continuing education experience under responsible sponsorship, capable direction, and qualified instruction as approved by the certification authority.

Forty-five (45.0) CEU are considered adequate to be substituted for one year of formal post-secondary education.

In Alberta, relevance is determined on a case-by-case basis by Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) after consultation with the AEP Water and Wastewater Operator Certification Advisory Committee.

Post-Secondary Education

The certification program guidelines require either 2 years of post-secondary education for Level III certification or 4 years of post-secondary education for Level IV certification. Substitutions of applicable approved experience or CEU are permitted.

Post-secondary education is defined as a one, two, three or four year program at a recognized institution that results in a diploma, certificate or degree. The program must be shown to be relevant to the water and wastewater operations industry. This means that it must be science/math based rather than arts/humanities based.

Relevance is determined on a case-by-case basis by AEP after consultation with the Certification Advisory Committee. The maximum post-secondary education credit that can be applied to the certification program is four years.

Partial degrees or certificates are evaluated on a CEU basis, based on courses completed and relevance to water and wastewater operations. For example, if a person drops out of a recognized four-year degree program after two years, he/she will NOT be given credit for two years of post-secondary education. Rather, the individual courses successfully completed will be evaluated on a CEU basis.

Education and Training
Education and training can be broken into six separate categories:

1. High school diploma, high school equivalency diploma or GED, as well as “Adult Upgrading” are NOT eligible for CEU assignment.
2. Formal post-secondary programs (certificate, diploma, degree)
3. Formal related water and wastewater training on specific topics or for preparation for certification exams – eligible for CEU assignment.
4. *On-the-job training is considered work experience and NOT eligible for CEU assignment.
5. **In-house training MAY be approved for CEU
6. Continuing education courses or events that do qualify for CEU.

* On-the-job training is defined as: Training that takes place at the work site and is supervised by a manager or an experienced coworker.

** In-house training is a training program for learning opportunities developed by the organization in which it is used. Training may be required to be provided to employees as part of legislative requirements for industry performance and safety standards or continuing education requirements. In-house training that qualifies for CEUs is a course that has the following 4 key components:

1. Written detailed course layout including objectives, outcomes, and evaluations;
2. Students must be in a learning environment;
3. Material must be not be “facility specific”
4. Equipment used for training must not be in service.

Evaluation of Courses for CEU Assignment

In order for AEP to evaluate a course for CEU assignment, the course must meet the following criteria:

1. Subjects covered must relate to an approved need-to-know, job analysis, competency profile, occupational standard or occupational guideline approved by AEP. Such documents will be approved by AEP as necessary. Information on the current Association of Boards of Certification “Need to Know” can be found at:
   - Need-to-Know Criteria
2. Except for designated offerings (popular and common such as the AWWOA annual seminar or the WCW annual conference) each offering must have an official course completion document issued by the responsible sponsor (i.e. a certificate, letter, etc.) that indicates attendance and successful completion by the student. The number of hours or CEU approved by AEP or another jurisdiction must be shown on the document.
3. Face to face courses must be at least on half-day duration. The minimum CEU assigned to such a course will be 0.3 CEU. Courses less than 3 hours in length will NOT be considered for CEU.
4. Requests for CEU must have documentation attached that provides the name and qualifications of the instructor, statement of relevance to water/wastewater operations, a description of the delivery method, and a detailed course outline showing topics and time spent on each topic.
5. Courses workshops that are to be considered for 30 hours or more (3.0 CEU) must include a formal student evaluation (exam or assignment). A copy/description of the evaluation tool and the notes or hand-outs must accompany the application for CEU.
6. Although not mandatory, courses under 30 hours (3.0 CEU) those that have some sort of student evaluation at the end (exam, exercise, project) will be considered for CEU more readily than those that do not.
7. Evaluations from individuals (not course providers), will only be completed if the individual is a certified operator in Alberta.
Courses Considered for CEU

Any course that meets the definition of CEU, and that can be referenced to a recognized need-to-know, will be assigned CEU.

This includes classroom courses, seminars, conferences or workshops. It also includes courses that are offered by correspondence or on-line. CEU for correspondence or on-line courses will be determined by assessing the amount of time it would take to deliver the material if it were to be delivered in a classroom setting, not the amount of time it actually takes to complete.

In-house training by a utility may be acceptable as long as the training is packaged into modules of at least three (3) hours (0.3 CEU). Each module may be delivered in one session or over an extended period of time.

AEP will not recognize CEUs or Award CEUs for the following:

- Mass media programs (Webcast/Video/DVD/Webinars) that are not part of an educational program
- On-the-job training, apprenticeships and work experience
- Association nomination and elections sessions
- Work related staff and committee meetings
- Association business meetings and reports
- Self-directed study without course completion/verification
- Assigned reading and study time (homework) associated with any training program
- Tours
- Report writing
- Trade shows
- Product demonstrations (any length)

As well, operators apply for Level III Certification can only use a maximum of 10.0 CEUs from computer related training. Operators applying for Level IV Certification can only use a maximum of 20.0 CEUs from computer related training.

CEU for Certification vs. CEU for Renewal

At present time there will be no differentiation between CEU for certification or for renewal. Any course assigned CEU by AEP will be recognized for either certification or renewal subject to other established restrictions.

Operators who repeat training courses will be given CEU’s for certification purposes once only. Repeated courses will not be counted for total CEU accumulation. Upon completion of courses within the 3 year renewal period, full credit can be applied one time for one renewal, and then only eligible to be reused every second renewal period at half value only.