

ISSP Sustainability
Professional Certification
Credential Maintenance Guidebook



INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY OF
SUSTAINABILITY
PROFESSIONALS

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Introduction

The ISSP credential maintenance process is a compulsory step in the assurance of continuing professional development of ISSP Credential Holders - sustainability professionals who have been awarded the ISSP Sustainability Associate (ISSP-SA) or the ISSP Certified Sustainability Professional (ISSP-CSP) designations. This Guidebook describes the ISSP credential maintenance process and how to ensure that credential holders are up to date. Feedback from credential holders to the Credential Maintenance Committee is appreciated and should be sent to certification@sustainabilityprofessionals.org.

Credential Representation

The ISSP-SA or ISSP-CSP designation can be used in electronic signatures or displayed on resumes, business cards, websites and public profiles. The credential is to be displayed as either:

- “ISSP Sustainability Associate” or “ISSP-SA” for the ISSP-SA credential or
- “ISSP Certified Sustainability Professional” or “ISSP-CSP” for the ISSP-CSP credential

Any other representation is incorrect and not allowed.

Reporting Period

ISSP Credentials (ISSP-SA and ISSP-CSP) are valid for two years and are renewable upon submitting evidence of professional development activities. The two year reporting period starts when the credential is awarded and ends 2 years minus 1 day after the award date. The award date and expiration date is included on credential certificates. Prior to the end of the two year reporting period, ISSP-SA and ISSP-CSP credential holders must submit evidence of having completed sufficient professional development activities to be recertified for an additional 2 years.

EXCEPTION: Those ISSP Credential Holders who participated in the Beta certification process and were awarded an ISSP-SA or ISSP-CSP designation have 3 years from their initial award date to complete the required professionals development activities to be recertified. Following that initial period, the Beta participants will change to a 2 year reporting period.

Certification Award Date	Initial Reporting Period	Following Reporting Periods
Before June 1, 2016	3 years from award date	2 years from recertification date
After June 1, 2016	2 years from award date	2 years from recertification date

Continuing Education Units (CEUs)

The professional development activities necessary to renew ISSP credentials are measured by Continuing Education Units (CEUs) as described in the table below. ISSP-CSP's must earn **32** CEUs within the renewal period and ISSP-SA's must earn **16** CEUs within the renewal period.¹ CEUs must be earned from a minimum of two Categories (one Category must be Education). Activities must have been performed after obtaining the most recent certification. Activities eligible for CEUs are divided into 3 categories with the following maximum and minimum number of CEUs in each category.

Category	ISSP-SA	ISSP-CSP
A. Professional Practice & Participation	Max 5 CEUs	Max 10 CEUs
B. Education	Min 8 CEUs	Min 16 CEUs
C. Development of the Profession/Volunteering	Max 5 CEUs	Max 10 CEUs

Many of the activities that can be used to earn CEUs are for sustainability-related activities, events, organizations, and associations. To simplify reporting, a list of pre-approved activities, events, organizations, and associations will be maintained by ISSP. An initial list is provided in [Appendix B](#) of this document and will be updated on [Credential Maintenance page](#) of the ISSP website. Other activities may count for credit if they relate to the practice of sustainability. ISSP recommends using the ISSP Job Task Analysis (JTA) when evaluating whether an activity is appropriate for Continuing Education Units.

If a non-Pre-Approved activity is audited, you will be required to explain which core competency area in the JTA the activity is related to.

Any hours logged for activities that are not pre-approved are not guaranteed as acceptable CEUs. The onus is on the credential holder to retain information required to justify the relevance to sustainability practice as described in the Job Task Analysis. If, in the course of an audit, these tasks are not approved, the credential holder will have 120 days to make up the hours they logged for unapproved activities.

¹As noted above in the section on Reporting period, those ISSP credential holders (ISSP-SA or ISSP-CSP) who received their credential during the Beta period (7/2016-4/2016) have 3 years from the date they received their credential initially to earn the CEUs to recertify. The Beta participants who earned the ISSP-SA are required to earn 20 CEUs and the Beta participants who earned the ISSP-CSP are required to earn the 40 CEUs during that initial three years.

A. Professional Practice and Participation

CEUs can be earned for working as a sustainability professional, attending sustainability-related meetings and conferences, or participating in organizations that are advancing the field of sustainability. A list of pre-approved activities, events, organizations and associations can be found on the [Credential Maintenance page](#) of the ISSP website.

A. Professional Practice & Participation (Maximum CEUs: ISSP-CSP = 10, ISSP-SA = 5)		
Activity	# CEUs Earned	Documentation Required
A1. Employment or work experience in sustainability (full-time, part-time, consultant)	15 hours worked on sustainability projects = 1 CEU <i>(up to maximum of 4 CEUs)</i>	Copy of CV or letter from employer outlining responsibilities related to sustainability.
A2. Membership in a professional association related to sustainability. ² <i>Member must maintain membership throughout the two-year reporting period. ISSP-CSPs must have professional membership in an association to earn CEUs.</i>	2 CEUs/year of membership (ISSP membership) 1 CEUs/year of membership (other associations) <i>(up to maximum of 4 CEUs)</i>	Proof of active/current membership, e.g. dues receipt/confirmation email
A3. Attendance or participation in meetings of sustainability-related organizations	0.5 CEUs/meeting <i>(up to maximum of 2 CEUs)</i>	Letter from sponsoring institution, confirming participation including description of activities and number of hours

² A list of approved organizations and associations can be found on the ISSP website. Other organizations may count for credit if they relate to the practice of sustainability. If a non-pre-approved organization is audited, you will be required to explain how the organization's mission is related to sustainability or aligned with the mission/vision of ISSP or furthers the field of sustainability.

B. Education

To be considered for credit, a course/workshop or seminar must include learning objectives related to the knowledge, skills, and abilities outlined in the [ISSP Job Task Analysis](#) and participants must be able to demonstrate learning (either through facilitator evaluation or receiving a passing grade based on a formal assessment). To earn credit for online courses, the course must include an assessment process that results in a passing grade and participant must receive a passing grade.

B. Education (Minimum CEUs: ISSP-CSP = 16, ISSP-SA = 8)		
Activity	# CEUs Earned	Documentation Required
B1. Courses, seminars, workshops, etc. related to sustainability (formal, e.g. courses from an accredited post-secondary institution, or informal, e.g. ISSP, ISSP education partners, associations, third party courses) ³ <i>Each course may only be reported once per reporting period. Each course in a program of study must be reported separately</i>	2 CEUs/credit hour (courses taken through accredited post-secondary institutions) 0.5 CEU/hour (all other courses) ⁴	Proof/certificate of completion (e.g. name of organization, course name, content description or skills learned, date, location, duration, name of instructor), or Unofficial transcripts.
B2. Obtaining other professional credentials (e.g. certifications/training) <i>Must relate to sustainability. Certification must be obtained during reporting period</i>	2 CEUs/certificate (up to maximum of 4 CEUs)	Proof of completion (e.g. copy of certificate)
B3. Attendance and/or presentation at a sustainability conference ⁵	0.5 CEU/half-day for attending 1 CEU/presentation (to a maximum of 10 CEUs)	Written confirmation of attendance and/or proof of presentation (e.g. ID tag, registration confirmation, booklet w/ session description)

Table continued on following page

³ To be considered for credit a course/workshop or seminar must include learning objectives related to sustainability as defined in the ISSP Job Task Analysis, participants must be able to demonstrate learning (either through facilitator evaluation or receiving a passing grade through formal assessment). To earn credit for online courses, the course must include an assessment process that results in a passing grade, and participant must receive a passing grade.

<https://www.sustainabilityprofessionals.org/EdPartner>

⁴ Generally 1 CEU = 10 contact hours. Courses that are preapproved by ISSP, listed on the ISSP website will have specific number of CEUs assigned.

⁵ A list of pre-approved conferences can be found on the ISSP website. Other conferences may count for credit if they relate to the practice of sustainability. Assumes presentations are sustainability-related

B. Education [continued] (Minimum CEUs: ISSP-CSP = 16, ISSP-SA = 8)		
Activity	# CEUs Earned	Documentation Required
B4. Preparing/presenting original lectures, seminars, or workshops related to sustainability (outside the normal course of employment/consulting, e.g. guest lecture). <i>Each presentation/course may only be reported once per reporting period.</i>	Teaching/presenting/ preparation = 1 CEU/hour <i>(up to maximum of 8 CEUs)</i>	Letter from sponsoring institution, letter from instructor (i.e. for guest lecture), copy of promotional material with participant's name, course sheet with participant's name
B5. Other educational activities (e.g. webinars and books).	0.5 CEUs/book or webinar	Webinars: Written reflection on learning (upload personal reflection) Books read: Written reflection on learning (link to published book review or upload personal reflection)

C. Development of the Profession/Volunteering

C. Development of the Profession/Volunteering (Maximum CEUs: ISSP-CSP = 10, ISSP-SA = 5)		
C1. Leadership position in a non-profit organization or professional association with a sustainability focus (e.g. board member, committee chair, etc.) and/or participation in professional sustainability body, association committee, or working group (e.g. preparation/review of ISSP exam content, ISSP study guide reviewer, etc.) ⁶	2 CEUs/year of leadership position 1 CEU/year of committee participation (up to maximum of 8 CEUs)	Letter or certificate confirming participation including description of activities and number of hours
C2. Contributing to peer reviewed publications, authoring book or article	Authoring: - Book = 4 CEUs - Book chapter or Article for peer-reviewed publication = 2 CEUs/article or chapters - Article for other source = 1 CEUs/article (up to maximum of 8 CEUs)	Copy of abstract for articles, copy of book jacket/book title page, or table of contents listing authors or links to online versions.
C3. Volunteering for a sustainability focused non-profit organization ⁶ or providing sustainability consultation on a volunteer basis (services cannot be provided to employer or client). ⁷	10 hours = 1 CEU (up to maximum of 6 CEUs)	Letter or certificate confirming participation including description of activities and number of hours
C5. Participation in a mentoring program	5 hours = 1 CEU (up to maximum of 6 CEUs)	Evidence supporting coaching or mentoring arrangement, including notes from and dates of discussions and activities

⁶ A list of approved organizations and associations can be found on the ISSP website. Other organizations may count for if they relate to the practice of sustainability. If a non-pre-approved organization is audited, you will be required to explain how the organization's mission is related to sustainability or aligned with the mission/vision of ISSP or furthers the field of sustainability.

⁷ Examples of accepted volunteering activities include: participating in activities hosted by a not-for-profit organization with a social or environmental sustainability focus (e.g. tree planting, clean-ups, participating with Habitat for Humanity, chair of United Way campaign, etc.); providing professional services to a not-for-profit organization (must be sustainability related)

Reporting Credential Maintenance

Credential holders are required to set up a profile in the [ISSP Learning Center](#), where they will log the required CEU's for their ISSP-SA (16 CEU's), or ISSP-CSP (32 CEU's) on the ISSP-SA Credential Maintenance or ISSP-CSP Credential Maintenance page. Please refer to each of those pages for detailed reporting instructions.

Credential holders do not need to upload documentation for each activity unless they are selected to be audited. Documentation should be saved for 24 months after CEUs are submitted in case an audit occurs.

For tech support and other questions, please contact certification@sustainabilityprofessionals.org.

Renewal

Renewal is available from the start of the credential holder's final year of certification. ISSP credential holders will be notified 4 months prior to the end of the certification period if they have not already commenced the renewal process.

ISSP credential holders have until the expiration date to renew their certification. Information on renewing past due or expired memberships can be found under [past due/expiration](#).

Fees

The renewal fee for ISSP-SA certification is \$75 for ISSP members and \$150 for non-members. The renewal fee for ISSP-CSP is \$100 for members and \$200 for non-members. One may only renew the highest level credential received.

The ISSP membership rate will apply to members in good standing at the time of renewal payment. If ISSP membership is obtained after payment for certification has been submitted, ISSP will not refund the difference.

Past Due/Expiration

ISSP credential holders who fail to submit evidence of professional development activities prior to the end of the two year reporting period have a 60 day grace period to do so and must pay a late fee of \$100.00 (USD). If they do not submit evidence of professional development activities within the grace period and pay the late fee, their credential will expire. Credential holders are not allowed to allocate CEUs earned during the grace period to the previous reporting period.

Reviews

All ISSP credential holders are eligible to be selected for audit at random and, as such, should maintain appropriate documentation for 24 months after submission for renewal in case they are selected for audit. ISSP reserves the right to review any reported CEUs at any time. Information on documentation required for audit can be found within the tables in the [Continuing Education Units](#) section of this Guidebook.

Failure to Comply

The ISSP disciplinary process shall be triggered if there is found to be any fraudulent reporting of CEU's. The credential expires if the CEU's are not fulfilled or reported within the designated reporting period, allowed grace period, or if an extension is not approved. See section on [reinstatement](#).

Extensions

ISSP credential holders can request an extension to their reporting period, up to 1 year. Extensions are granted for the following circumstances:

- Health emergencies (self or immediate family members)
- Military deployment
- Long term unemployment
- Death in the family
- Maternity or paternity leave
- Geographic displacement due to natural disasters (e.g., weather, earthquake)

The above is not an exhaustive list of circumstances nor a guarantee that an extension will be granted. Credential holders should submit their extension request in writing (email is acceptable) to ISSP at least 30 days prior to the end of their reporting period. ISSP will review requests on a case-by-case basis and provide a response within 14 days of receiving a request.

Reinstatement

A prior credential holder can choose one of two options in order to regain a credential after it has expired:

Reinstatement Option 1 - The individual must apply, register, and retest as a new candidate. Such individuals are responsible for all applicable fees.

Reinstatement Option 2 - The individual must pay a late fee, plus all other applicable fees that would have been required had the credential been maintained through the expired period (e.g. renewal fees). Such individuals are also required to complete all the CEUs that would have been required to renew the credential over the expired period.

Certification Hierarchy

When a credential holder passes the ISSP-CSP exam, the credential maintenance requirement timeline and CEU requirement shall re-start from the day the ISSP-CSP exam was passed.

Appendix A: Credential Maintenance Audit Rules

Auditing of credential maintenance submissions will form a key part of the feedback loop in verifying and keeping high standards of professional development for sustainability practitioners. The rules set out below, govern how ISSP will assess performance against the Credential Maintenance Standard.

In each calendar year, the Credential Maintenance Committee shall review a blind random mix of Credential holders' submissions. The sample shall contain a representative mix from the various geographies representing the global membership of ISSP (ie, if 80% of credential holders are based in North America, then 80% of the sample should cover this geography).

In year one of certification renewals, 20% of renewals shall be audited to verify the quality of compliance to the standard. If compliance is to the satisfaction of the Credential Maintenance Committee, the percentage of renewals to be audited shall reduce by 5% each year, to a minimum of 5%.

The ISSP Certification Manager shall compile a report for each quarterly Credential Maintenance Committee meeting, providing a concise summary of the findings from the random sample of credential holders. The report shall be structured as below, with the first six items also being tracked in one composite line graph;

- 1) Total number of CEU's logged in the ISSP CEU tracker
- 2) Total number of credential holders who have logged CEU's.
- 3) Total number of credential renewals submitted during the preceding quarter.
- 4) Number of credential renewals selected for random sample audit.
- 5) Number of credential renewals selected to be audited not requiring discussion.
- 6) Number of credential renewals selected to be audited requiring discussion.
- 7) Individual Case Files compiled for committee review and decision making.

Should any update be required to the Credential Maintenance Standard, or clarifications need to be communicated to credential holders, the ISSP Certification Manager will perform this role to support the Credential Maintenance Committee.

Should the Credential Maintenance Committee find that any credential renewal submission has been fraudulent, this shall trigger the ISSP disciplinary process. The ISSP Certification Manager shall also provide positive feedback to credential holders who have been audited that met or exceeded the ISSP credential maintenance standard.

If a member of the Credential Maintenance Committee is selected for a recertification audit, they will recuse themselves from the review meeting and documents pertaining to their file.

Appendix B: Pre-approved Events, Organizations and Associations

The following is a list of pre-approved events, organizations, and associations for earning CEUs.

Please see page 4 of this Guidebook for more information on pre-approved vs non pre-approved CEU activities.

This is an initial list which will continue to grow, and we encourage credential holders to reach out to certification@sustainability.org for suggestions on further events, organizations, and associations ISSP should consider for pre-approval.

Pre-approved Organizations

- AASHE
- ACCO
- EcoCanada
- EIANZ
- IEMA
- ISSP

Pre-Approved Conferences

- Ceres
- GLOBE Series
- GreenBiz
- ISSP conferences
- Responsible Business Summit
- The SRI Conference
- Sustainable Brands (including New Metrics)
- VERGE