

The background is a light blue gradient with several realistic water droplets of various sizes scattered across the surface. The droplets have highlights and shadows, giving them a three-dimensional appearance.

CERTIFICATION

STORMWATER INSPECTOR CERTIFICATION

CERTIFICATION VS. CERTIFICATE

PROGRAMS

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Distinctions Between Assessment-Based Certifications and Certificates of Attendance or Participation

CERTIFICATION

- Professional or personnel certification is a voluntary process by which individuals are evaluated against predetermined standards for knowledge, skills, or competencies.
- Participants must demonstrate that they meet the standards by successfully completing an assessment process To evaluate an individuals knowledge, skills and competency, and experience.
- A timed comprehensive exam must be completed and successfully passed (usually 70%) to be considered for “certification”.
- A time-limited credential “Certification” (usually 1 -year) is issued to successful applicants. The credential awarded by the certification program provider denotes that the participant possesses particular knowledge, skills, or competencies and experience. (Includes designation and Certification number)
- To retain the credential, individuals must maintain continued competence (meet continuing education requirements).

Distinctions Between Assessment-Based Certifications and Certificates of Attendance or Participation

CERTIFICATE

A professional Certificate is a credential to help professionals enhance their job performance and marketability in their respective field.

Certificate training and education can be provided by institutes of higher learning, professional organizations or an employer.

A professional Certificate is a result of an educational process designed for specific individuals (in which both newcomers to the industry as well as seasoned, experienced professionals can participate).

The end goal of a professional certificate is so that professionals may demonstrate knowledge of course content at the end of a set period of time (hours, days, usually no longer than a week of training).

A certificate typically indicates attendance or completion of a specific course or series of courses with a specific focus.

Distinctions Between Assessment-Based Certifications and Certificates of Attendance or Participation

A common question often heard from professionals ready to take the next step to advance their career is....

“What is the difference between Certification and Certificate Programs and what is best for me?”

This presentation will hopefully identify the specific differences in the two types of programs and clarify for each individual which is best for your career, your personal credentials and your marketability within the industry.

So, Let's get started and dive into the specific differences and then.....

We will have time for your questions, concerns and hopefully provide answers to help your career decisions.

Either option can benefit your career.

Here is the value of a Certificate Program:

If you already have a professional Certification, Registration or designation (such as: Professional Engineer, Professional Geologist, Professional Architect, Certified Professional in Erosion and Sediment Control (CPESC) or have a Stormwater Inspector Certification.....

Certificate Courses are likely your best option for your time and money as the courses provided are usually specific technical training to your industry.

In a professional Certificate Course you can obtain professional development hours (PDH) or continuing education units (CEU's).

If you are a professional without a “professional designation”, Certificate programs/courses can be beneficial to your personal growth by attending the specific technical training course (you will be provided a certificate of completion for your attendance) to prove you completed the training.

Either option can benefit your career.

Here is the value of a Certification Program:

Certification is the more valuable and recognized achievement.

- Requires approval from an independent certification body (University, Agency or independent certifying body/organization) for an individual to be accepted into the Certification Program.
- Certification includes a professional's experience and education component and....requires the passing of an exam.
- The completion of a Certification program involves the completion of a course or series of courses with a specific concentration of content relevant to the industry the Certification is designed for.
- The Exam consist of content based on specific industry knowledge. Most Exams are around 4 hours in duration and must be passed with a 70% or better.
- Upon passing of a Certification Exam, a time-limited credential is provided to an individual who meets the assessment standard. (Usually 1 year time-limited, issuance of Cert. with Cert. No.)
- Renewal of the time-limited credential usually requires continuing education to remain up-to-date on changes in the industry and specific number of Continuing Education Units (CEU) or Professional Development Hours (PDH)
- Usually, a recognized Certification is portable in any location you work within the industry (U.S. or International).

SUMMARY of Difference: Certificate vs. Certification

Assessment-based Certificate Program	Professional or Personnel Certification Program
PURPOSE: Build capacity and recognition of a specialty area of practice or set of skills	PURPOSE: Recognize professionals who meet established knowledge, skills, or competencies
Provides instruction and training (non-degree granting)	Assesses knowledge, skills, and/or competencies previously acquired (experience, knowledge and education)
Goal is for participants to acquire specific knowledge, skills, and/or competencies in specific area of practice	Goal is to validate the participant's competency through a conformity assessment system (Comprehensive Exam)
Assessment is used to evaluate mastery of the intended learning outcomes; linked directly to the specific learning event	Assessment is best used to assure baseline competencies and to differentiate professionals; independent of a specific learning event
Assessment content may be narrower in scope	Assessment content is usually broad in scope
Awards a certificate to recognize mastery of the specific learning outcomes; it is NOT a certificate to qualify an individual to do work associated with a need for "Certification", it is only confirming an individual's attendance or participation, which is awarded to individuals who have attended or participated in a course or training program but did not have to demonstrate mastery of the intended learning outcomes	Awards designations to recognize achievement The designations awarded and provided by the Certification Body allow individuals to place designations behind your name (you know...the Letter designations such as (Examples): CPESC, CESSWI, CISEC, etc. in the stormwater world). Includes individual Certification Number. Some Certifications and designations allow professionals to obtain a Stamp/Seal authority (depending on the Certification you achieve).
To earn accreditation, complies with an Agency or Organization Standard and follows typical Certificate procedures for recognition of a specific knowledge, skill or competency	To earn accreditation, complies typically to the ISO 17024 or equal Standards for the Accreditation of Certification Programs and follows the typical standard application procedures

State Agencies and MS4's: Requirement of Certified Stormwater Inspectors

STATES (Example):

- California-Qualified SWPPP Practitioner (QSP)
- Colorado-Transportation Erosion Control Supervisor Certification (TECS)
- Florida-Florida Stormwater, Erosion, and Sedimentation Control Inspector (FSESCI) Qualification Program.
- Minnesota-Requires Stormwater Inspector Certification (can be from State DOT, other State/Local agencies or national recognized Certification providers)
- North Carolina-Stormwater BMP Inspection and Maintenance Certification (NCSU), many communities require this.
- South Carolina-Certified Erosion Prevention & Sediment Control Inspector (Clemson U.) –not required...yet.
- Washington State-Certified Erosion and Sediment Control Lead (CESCL)

MS4's Outside of Texas (Example):

- Hot Springs, Arkansas-Stormwater Inspector Certification

Texas Cities (MS4's) Requiring specific "Certified Stormwater Inspectors" (Example:

- Austin
- San Antonio
- Travis County
- Likely more MS4's in large metropolitan areas (DFW, Houston, San Antonio/Austin corridor) will require in future.

Why are States and MS4's requiring Certified Stormwater Inspectors?

States and MS4's over decades of EPA and State Permit requirements realize that the general definition of "Qualified Person" to perform routine stormwater inspections.....is not working.

Results of "poor" quality inspections by operator Inspectors:

- Chronic non-compliance sites (failing BMP's, poorly maintained BMP's, discharge of pollutants to MS4
- Poorly documented inspection reports or...no documented inspection reports
- Lack of consistency regarding on-site operator inspectors
- Little or no maintenance and modification of the site SWPPP
- Poor communication between operator Inspector and MS4 Inspector
- Failure to respond or react to regulatory enforcement (Notices, Stop Work Orders, etc.)

States and MS4's that have moved to requirements for Certified SWPPP preparers and Certified Stormwater Inspectors have noted over a short (and in cases long) term, improvement in site management, SWPPP and BMP compliance, less public complaint and more compliance with their MS4 Permit.

Additionally, from a Fiscal point of view, MS4 inspectors are more productive at inspecting more sites (due to many more compliant sites) and have more time to focus on other MS4 tasks and experience a larger quantity of MS4 inspections.

SUMMARY

Many States and MS4's have either developed "in house" SWPPP Design and/or Stormwater Inspection Certifications (through their own Departments or localized Universities). Additionally, many have also allowed outside, independent Certification Bodies into their policies or Ordinances giving Authority/recognition to very specific/authorized Certification Bodies.

Their reason for specifying "specific" Certification Organizations are simple.....

The Certification Organization has a Certification program that meets National or International Certification Standards Criteria (Example: ISO 17024) that are recognized by the industry within the United States or Internationally.

There are many organizations claiming to provide a Stormwater Certification.

However, if their program does not have these criteria elements in their program..they are NOT a Certificate Program:

- Required Application policy in order to apply for Certification (based on experience, knowledge and education)
- Application Approval process (by review board or review panel)
- Approval letter to take the Certification Exam (proctored/timed exam) with comprehensive Stormwater content
- Provision of location with a proctored, timed exam with independent off-site grading of exam (pass by 70%)
- Issuance of a Certification with designation (including a Certification Number)
- Requirement for Continuing Education for (for annual or bi-annual Renewal of Certification)
- Professional Conduct Policy

Then.....It is a "Certificate" Program and.....**NOT** a "Certification" Program.



TIME FOR.....

Open discussion,...
Questions and Answers!

