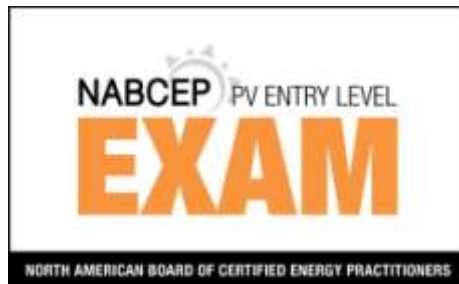




NABCEP PV Entry Level Program Provider Info Packet



North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners

PHOTOVOLTAIC (PV) ENTRY LEVEL PROGRAM

OVERVIEW, PROCESS & POLICIES FOR NABCEP ENTRY LEVEL EXAM PROVIDERS

About NABCEP

The North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners, Inc. (NABCEP) is a national voluntary, non-profit, professional credentialing organization lead by industry stakeholders. NABCEP certifies qualified practitioners in the fields of renewable and sustainable energy, and energy efficiency technologies, who have met the professional knowledge standards established by NABCEP. The purpose and goal of NABCEP is to assess and measure objectively the professional knowledge of renewable energy industry practitioners, and to promote the advancement of the renewable energy industry. NABCEP is dedicated to the implementation of appropriate professional standards designed to protect consumers and the profession.

Description of the PV Entry Level Program

In the scope of this program, providers are registered as administrators of the NABCEP PV Entry Level Exam. Institutions who want their students to have the chance to take the industry-designed NABCEP PV Entry Level Exam must apply directly to NABCEP, using the NABCEP PV Entry Level Provider Application. Before applying both the Entry Level Provider Application and this Entry Level Provider Info Packet, which outlines the NABCEP PV Entry Level Program should be reviewed. If questions remain please contact NABCEP directly.

Eligible Institutions

The NABCEP PV Entry Level Exam can be offered by any university, college, community college, or vocational-technical institute accredited by an agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education; or offered by any Joint Apprenticeship & Training Committee or U.S. Department of Labor approved apprenticeship program; or offered by a training program that has received accreditation from the Institute for Sustainable Power (ISP).

The Institute for Sustainable Power is an international non-profit organization that coordinates, develops, and maintains international standards for the evaluation and qualification of renewable energy (RE), energy efficiency (EE), and distributed generation (DG) training providers. The standard is the Institute for Sustainable Power Quality and its regional licensee is the Interstate Renewable Energy Council. More information can be found at IRECusa.org.

As of 7/15/10, ISPQ Certified Independent Master Trainers or Certified Independent Instructors can now register as Providers of the Entry Level Exam. However, students completing their course will only be able to sit for the exam via Computer-Based-Testing (CBT).

Application and Registration Notification

Only complete Entry Level Provider Applications will be reviewed. Potential providers are advised to apply as far in advance as possible since application turnaround time is dependent upon application backlog.

Please be advised that it is against NABCEP policies to advertise a course or training program as offering the NABCEP Entry Level Exam before formal notice of registration has been given.

NABCEP will notify the primary contact via e-mail when an application is received. Within the following three weeks an initial audit of the application will be completed. Educational providers will only be notified at this point if the application is incomplete.

Incomplete applications will only be reviewed once they are complete. Once a provider has been notified that their application is incomplete, they will have 3 months to complete the application. After this period, the application will be invalid and should the provider still wish to administer the Entry Level Exam, a new application will be required.

Complete applications, found to meet all criteria set forth by NABCEP, will be approved for registration. The primary contact will be notified via e-mail. The contact address will be sent to NABCEP's testing contractor, Professional Testing Inc. Preliminary packages containing the requisite agreement forms and administration manual will be sent to the provider within 5 business days of notice of their registration.

Paper and Pencil Exam

Within 10 business days of receipt of their agreement forms Professional Testing will send the examination and administration forms in an encrypted electronic file to the provider designated staff member. Examinations are printed, administered and proctored by provider personnel at the expense of the provider, and at a time and location determined and announced by the provider. All test related questions should be addressed to Professional Testing.

Computer Based Testing

Within 10 business days of receipt of their agreement forms Professional Testing will send the Provider Info Packet with computer based testing documents. At the completion of training, the Provider will send the Candidate Reporting Template with the names of all candidates taking the computer based test to Professional Testing for upload to the Pearson VUE website. ***It is extremely important that names in the Candidate Reporting Template match the legal picture identification of candidates exactly.*** Candidates whose names are not an exact match will not be allowed to sit for the exam.

Once candidate names are uploaded, Professional Testing will email the candidates with a prompt to register for the Entry Level exam. ***Please remind candidates not to contact NABCEP or Professional Testing about scheduling their exam and to wait for the email.*** Candidates will choose the location, date, and time for their exam, and are responsible for payment.

Expired Applications

The provider application form is periodically updated. It is the applicant's responsibility to verify that the application being submitted is the current up-to-date version of the form as posted on our website www.nabcep.org. NABCEP cannot accept applications more than three months out of date.

Fees

A \$300 annual fee is required to participate in the Entry Level Program. The initial \$300 annual fee must be submitted with the application. This fee will only be posted once the provider has received formal notification of registration. Annual fees from applications not completed or not approved for registration will be voided and returned. NABCEP will invoice the provider annually and retains the right to deny exam scoring and new exam forms to providers who are delinquent in payment.

Paper and Pencil Exam

The Entry Level Exam fee is \$75 per exam administered. NABCEP will invoice the registered provider for each exam administered once the scores have been released. NABCEP does not accept individual payments from students for exam fees. At their discretion, providers may add on an administration fee to the exam fee to cover the cost of the exam printing and administration expenses, to be retained by the provider. This additional administrative fee shall not exceed \$75.00 per exam.

Computer Based Testing

The fee for computer based exams through Pearson VUE is \$145 per exam. Candidates are responsible for payment at the time of registration. Providers are not allowed to add any administration fees for this type of exam.

Accounts Receivable

At NABCEP's sole discretion we may choose not to grade exam forms from registered organizations whose accounts are in arrears. It is NABCEP policy to provide warning letters and statements to providers whose accounts are 60 days past due. Any accounts exceeding 90 days past due are subject to termination and will be notified by NABCEP. It is the provider responsibility to ensure that their accounts are kept current. If special circumstances apply, the provider should contact the program manager to negotiate acceptable terms.

Instructors

There are several ways that instructors can qualify. A resume, CV or summary of experience for each instructor must be submitted with the application. Resumes must show the completion of an advanced PV training program that is accredited as an ISPQ Accredited Training Program, or an ISPQ Continuing Education provider or that is offered by an ISPQ Certified Master Trainer, or an ISPQ Certified Instructor; **OR** the completion of a train-the-trainer program offered by the National Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee (NJATC), one of the nine Regional Resource and Training Providers of the [Department of Energy's Solar Instructor Training Network](#). The completion of another train-the-trainer program may meet this requirement but will be reviewed on a case by case basis by NABCEP staff.

All installation experience should also be documented. NABCEP must be notified and provided with all necessary documentation if there is a change in instructor.

Program or Course(s) Requirements

Registered NABCEP PV Entry Level Exam providers must have programs that include course(s) which have an interactive teacher-learner structure. This implies a connection between a learner and a learning source. It can include classroom time led by an instructor and/or discussion leader. It can also include activities in which a learner is engaged in a planned learning event in which he/she is separated from faculty and other students but where the learner receives feedback and the learner's progress is monitored. Examples include computer-assisted instruction, interactive video/CD/DVD and/or web site learning.

Registered NABCEP PV Entry Level Exam providers are required to provide students with the necessary information covering the NABCEP-issued learning objectives. This material shall be presented in a well developed way. Courses can include more than the learning objectives but must include a comprehensive review of them. Students will not be retro-actively eligible to sit for the Entry Level Exam.

Prerequisite or bridge training and/or experience in electrical systems, mathematics, and other subjects may be required for some students to fully comprehend and satisfactorily demonstrate knowledge of all of the learning objectives. **Also, for intensive short courses (e.g., 40-hour, one-week workshops) students should be encouraged to spend approximately 2-3 additional hours outside of class (for each hour in class) to review the subject matter, solve problems, and study reference materials prior to taking the PV Entry Level Exam. This may require the student to take the exam at a later date rather than immediately following the course.**¹

Learning Objectives

The PV Entry Level Exam program is based on a set of Learning Objectives developed by a Committee of PV subject matter experts. The Learning Objectives include ten (10) skill sets:

- PV Markets and Applications
- Safety Basics
- Electricity Basics
- Solar Energy Fundamentals
- PV Module Fundamentals
- System Components
- PV System Sizing Principles
- PV System Electrical Design
- PV System Mechanical Design
- Performance Analysis, Maintenance and Troubleshooting

The skills identified in this analysis do not replace electrical trades, technician, technologist or engineering training. See the Learning Objectives document for the full description of these skills and tasks.

NABCEP will periodically review the Learning Objectives and make any changes according to changes in the National Electrical Code or any technology changes. NABCEP will notify the Provider of any modifications to the Learning Objectives.

The Exam

Providers will be required to sign a NABCEP Entry Level Exam Provider Agreement Form, agreeing to comply with NABCEP examination administration policies, including those related to maintaining the security of the examination, confidentiality of the test items and other related issues. The NABCEP Entry Level examination is developed according to accepted psychometric standards of measurement; the items are written and reviewed by Subject Matter Experts. The NABCEP Entry Level Examination is a confidential and secure measurement of knowledge that is not meant to be read, studied, discussed or taught by Providers or their instructors.

After exam administration, answer sheets must be returned to the Professional Testing Inc. for scoring via a traceable carrier at the expense of the Provider. Successful candidates will receive a suitable-for-framing letter stating that they have achieved a passing score on the PV Entry Level Exam.

Upon grading of the answer sheets, NABCEP will send candidate scores directly to each candidate to the mailing address provided in the Exam Scheduling Form and Release of Scores. A candidate passing the examination will receive an official letter from NABCEP stating that they have passed the Entry Level Exam. Providers will be sent a listing of the scores of each candidate who signed the release.

Exam Administration Location

NABCEP offers the opportunity to administer the Entry Level Exam in both paper and pencil and computer based formats. **Pencil and paper exams may only be administered from the location covered by the certificate of liability insurance provided in the application; Providers cannot administer the paper and pencil exam off-site or in multiple locations.**

Additionally, Providers offering training in an online format, Providers that are accredited as ISPQ Certified Independent Master Trainers or ISPQ Certified Independent Instructors are required to offer the exam via a Pearson VUE testing center.

Appropriate Certificate of Insurance

All registered NABCEP Entry Level Exam providers that administer the paper and pencil exam must submit a copy of the appropriate Certificate of Insurance(s) showing that professional liability and general liability policies are maintained with respect to the administration of examinations.

Special Accommodations

All providers must provide special testing accommodations and comply with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act and with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act and other applicable laws. If a student requires special testing accommodations the required forms must be submitted to Professional Testing Inc. for review.

Students

Students must successfully complete coursework with a registered NABCEP Entry Level Exam provider in order to become eligible to sit for the Entry Level Exam. Student must be provided with a copy of the NABCEP PV Entry Level Exam Candidate Information Sheet which can be found on NABCEP's website under "Entry Level" and "for Students." Each student must also be provided with a copy of the NABCEP PV Entry Level Exam Learning Objectives. Providers and students are encouraged to contact NABCEP if they have any questions about our programs.

Use of a Passing Score Achievement

A PASSING SCORE ON THE NABCEP PV ENTRY LEVEL EXAM DOES NOT CONFER THE TITLE OF A NABCEP CERTIFIED INSTALLER™ OR ANY OTHER TITLE OR CREDENTIAL FROM NABCEP. Successful Candidates may state that they have passed the PV Entry Level Exam issued by the North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners (NABCEP). The passing score achievement document may only be displayed in association with the individual achieving the passing score, as the achievement is personal and may not be transferred, assigned to, displayed or used by any other individual, organization, business, or entity. Replacement documents are available from NABCEP for a fee of \$25.00.

Registration to provide the NABCEP PV Entry Level Exam is not an affiliation with NABCEP. NABCEP does not provide, offer, administer or approve courses or training so courses or programs registered as Entry Level Exam providers cannot claim that they have been approved by NABCEP.

Passing of the NABCEP PV Entry Level Exam is a way for candidates to demonstrate that they have achieved a basic knowledge of the fundamental principles of the application, design, installation and operation of grid-tied and stand-alone PV systems. Schools and Training Programs will offer a course(s) during a semester or other defined time period and then administer a NABCEP-issued exam.

The knowledge demonstrated by passing this test does not replace the knowledge, skills or abilities of the electrical or other construction trades, or those of other professions or degree programs that require considerably more academic and/or practical experience. This achievement demonstrates that the student has passed an industry-designed, NABCEP-issued exam. A passing score by itself does not qualify an individual to install photovoltaic (PV) systems. In no way does passing this exam indicate that an individual is certified by NABCEP.

As the international standard for renewable energy training and instructors, NABCEP plans to require all registered providers to obtain ISPQ accreditation for their training programs in the next 18 to 24 months. NABCEP recommends that current and potential providers begin this accreditation process concurrently or prior to applying to NABCEP to become a registered provider of the Entry Level exam.

If you have any questions about NABCEP, please contact

North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners



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