

NABCEP[®]

Raising Standards. Promoting Confidence.

NABCEP Associate Program Registered Provider Information Packet

2019



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North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners (NABCEP®)

NABCEP Associate Program™

OVERVIEW, PROCESS, & POLICIES FOR NABCEP ASSOCIATE EXAM PROVIDERS

1. ABOUT NABCEP

The North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners® (NABCEP) is the most respected, well-established, and widely recognized national certification organization for professionals in the field of renewable energy. NABCEP is overseen by a volunteer board of directors who are selected based on their experience and involvement in the renewable energy industry. NABCEP's mission is to develop and implement quality credentialing and certification programs for practitioners by supporting and working closely with professionals and stakeholders in the renewable energy and energy efficiency industries.

2. ASSOCIATE PROGRAM OVERVIEW

NABCEP administers three NABCEP Associate credential programs: NABCEP Photovoltaic Associate (PVA), NABCEP Solar Heating Associate (SHA), and NABCEP Small Wind Associate (SWA), collectively referred to as the NABCEP Associate Program. The NABCEP Associate Program recognizes individuals who have demonstrated knowledge of the fundamental principles of the application, design, installation and operation of Photovoltaic, Solar Heating or Small Wind energy systems. A NABCEP Associate credential (NABCEP Photovoltaic Associate™, NABCEP Solar Heating Associate™, or NABCEP Small Wind Associate™) is earned by qualified candidates passing an examination based on the related NABCEP Associate Learning Objectives or Job Task Analysis. The NABCEP Associate Handbook, available at www.nabcep.org, details how individuals can qualify and the step-by-step process for becoming a NABCEP Associate.

The NABCEP Associate Program is intended for many people who are currently working in, or seeking employment in, the renewable energy industry, including those who are: students in renewable energy programs, workers at an early stage in their renewable energy career, experienced professionals in related industries who have just begun offering renewable energy products or services, or those in renewable energy jobs for which there is no specific professional certification.

Institutions who want to become NABCEP Registered Associate Exam Providers must apply directly to NABCEP, using the online NABCEP Associate Provider application. Before applying, the Associate Provider application and this Associate Provider Info Packet should be carefully reviewed.

3. ELIGIBLE INSTITUTIONS

The NABCEP Associate Program registers qualified institutions to prepare candidates for a safe and successful career in the renewable energy sector. NABCEP Associate Exam Providers offer courses that prepare individuals to sit for the Associate Exams through the education pathway. NABCEP relies on independent, third party accreditation and/or government recognition to determine an institution's eligibility to provide education and administer Examinations.

Institutions must be accredited, certified, or approved by one of the following:

- 1) Governmental body recognizing workforce training, including the U.S. Dept. of Labor, the U.S. Veterans Affairs WEAMS Institutions, and other regional and national accredited trainers in renewable technologies;
- 2) Government approved Apprenticeship Programs;
- 3) Interstate Renewable Energy Council (IREC) Accredited Training Program or IREC Accredited Certificate Program for relevant technology (i.e., Photovoltaics, Solar Heating, or Small Wind);
- 4) National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCR) Accredited Training Sponsor for relevant technology (i.e., Solar Photovoltaics for PV Associate or Wind Turbine Maintenance Technician for Small Wind Associate).

4. INSTRUCTOR REQUIREMENTS

Provider Registration requires submission of a resume or CV for an instructor with relevant experience and academic credentials. Subsequent instructors may be added via the myNABCEP web portal once the institution is registered. Documentation must show proof of completion of an advanced training program in the relevant technology, professional certification in the relevant technology, and/or appropriate work experience.

NABCEP must be notified and provided with all necessary documentation if there is a change in or addition of instructors. Providers are obligated to keep their myNABCEP account information accurate and current.

5. INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS

Providers who have any residency requirements, must provide proof of general liability insurance covering the locations where training activities occur. Candidates must be guaranteed safe and healthy accommodations during their course of study and exam taking. A Certificate of Insurance, or its equivalent, is required to be submitted in the Registered Provider Application.

6. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

All registered NABCEP Associate Exam Providers must have programs that include course(s) which have an interactive teacher-learner structure requiring a connection between a learner and a learning source. This format can include classroom time led by an instructor. It can also include activities in which a learner is engaged in a planned learning event in which they are separated from faculty and other students but where the learner receives feedback and their progress is monitored. Examples include computer-assisted instruction, interactive video/CD/DVD and live stream webinars.

Providers agree that they will cover all of the objectives categorized in the Job Task Analysis (JTA) for the relevant technology in any course that is used to provide eligibility to a NABCEP Associate Exam. The complete Associate JTAs for each credential are posted at www.NABCEP.org. In recognition that different student populations may be able to cover material faster than others, NABCEP does not prescribe a minimum number of content hours required for each course; however, it is strongly recommended that at least 40 contact hours are needed to sufficiently cover the material.

NABCEP does not review or approve curriculum. Registered Providers and each Instructor must sign an agreement form in which they acknowledge that they will cover the relevant NABCEP Associate Job Task Analysis in a course or courses that provide eligibility to take the NABCEP PV, SH or SW Associate examination. The NABCEP Associate PV Job Task Analysis (JTA), Solar Heating Learning Objectives and Small Wind Learning Objectives provide the blueprint for each Associate Examination. These are the primary resources regarding which topics may or may not be covered on an Exam. Registered Courses may include subjects beyond the scope of the JTA but all Providers must agree to cover at least the subjects outlined by NABCEP in order to become a Provider.

Prerequisite or bridge training and experience in electrical/plumbing systems, mathematics, and other subjects may be required for some students to fully comprehend and satisfactorily demonstrate knowledge of all of the learning objectives. Students should be encouraged to spend an equivalent number of hours outside of class as spent in the class to review the subject matter, solve problems, and study reference materials prior to taking an Associate Exam. This is particularly important for intensive short courses (e.g., 40-hour one-week workshops), and online programs, and may require the student to take the exam at a later date rather than immediately following the course.

NABCEP Photovoltaic Associate Job Task Analysis

The PV Associate Exam is based on a set of performance domains developed by a committee of PV subject matter experts. The JTA is organized by 5 content domains:

- 1) Application
- 2) Sales and Economics
- 3) Design
- 4) Installation
- 5) Operation and Maintenance

NABCEP Solar Heating Associate Learning Objectives

The NABCEP Solar Heating (SH) Associate Exam is based on a set of Learning Objectives. Developed by a committee of Solar Heating subject matter experts, the Solar Heating Learning Objectives has 6 content domains:

- 1) Conducting a site analysis, including load analysis
- 2) Identifying SH safety practices, standards, codes and certification
- 3) Identifying systems for specific climates and applications
- 4) Identifying proper orientation and installation methods
- 5) Identifying proper use of balance of system components and materials
- 6) Identifying common SH maintenance items

NABCEP Small Wind Associate Learning Objectives

The Small Wind Associate Learning Objectives include 10 content domains:

- 1) Fundamentals of Electricity
- 2) Applications and End Uses
- 3) Fundamentals of Small Wind Turbines (including system components and science and theory)
- 4) Towers, Foundations, and Installation Considerations
- 5) Resource Assessment
- 6) Site Assessment
- 7) System Sizing Principles and Economics
- 8) Operation, Maintenance, and Troubleshooting
- 9) Safety and Best Practices
- 10) Impacts and Challenges of Small Wind

The content domains identified in these analyses do not replace electrical, plumbing or HVAC trades, technician, technologist or engineering training. See the JTA/Learning Objectives documents posted on the NABCEP website for the full descriptions.

NABCEP will periodically review content domains and make changes according to changes in codes, standards, technology and best practices in the industry. NABCEP will notify the Provider of any modifications.

7. APPLICATION PROCESS

NABCEP accepts online Associate Provider applications year round and reviews applications in the order they are received. Applicants can check the status of their applications on the portal at <https://my.nabcep.org>.

Providers will designate NABCEP Exam Administrators, who will function as NABCEP's main contact. Please be advised that an institution may not advertise a course or training program as offering a NABCEP Associate Exam or qualifying students to take any of the NABCEP Associate Exams before formal notice of registration has been given. Anyone registered as a Proctor or Exam Administrator, is prohibited from taking an Associate Exam for two years from the end date of their tenure.

Incomplete applications will be flagged and returned to the applicant with a deficiency notice outlining any missing, incomplete, or insufficient information. Notice will be sent via e-mail to the applicant and notes in the online application will indicate which sections were incomplete. Incomplete applications will remain accessible until resubmitted, rejected, or withdrawn.

8. EXAM ADMINISTRATION

The NABCEP Photovoltaic, Solar Heating and Small Wind Associate Exams are offered in two formats to Candidates who complete coursework with a NABCEP Registered Associate Exam Provider: 1) on-site by pencil and paper (U.S. & Canada option only), or 2) off-site through an independent Computer-Based Testing (CBT) center.

Paper and Pencil Exams (U.S. and Canada only): To administer the Associate Exam by Paper and Pencil, the Exam Provider will complete and upload a signed Exam Administration Personnel Agreement Form for each staff member who is involved in the administration of a NABCEP Associate Exam. Only one staff member may be designated as the Exam Administrator; this is the person who will access the Examination and administration forms via our secure online Portal, myNABCEP. Registered Providers may have more than one designated Exam Proctor. Examinations are printed, administered and proctored by Registered Provider personnel at a time and location determined by the Provider. **Instructors of courses which prepare students for an exam are prohibited from having any contact with the exam booklet and may not serve as the Exam Administrator or Proctor.** Anyone registered as a Proctor or Exam Administrator, is prohibited from taking an Associate Exam for two years from the end date of their tenure. Completed examinations, and all other testing materials, are sent to NABCEP's testing services vendor for scoring. The **NABCEP Associate Exam Administration Manual** contains full details on administering a NABCEP Associate examination.

Computer Based Testing (CBT): All registered Providers may authorize Candidates to take the NABCEP Associate Exam at an off-site, independent Computer Based Testing center designated by NABCEP. Candidates will have the opportunity to choose the location, date, and time for their Exam once they qualify. **Please note: Candidate names submitted for CBT authorization must match the legal government-issued identification document. Candidates whose names are not an exact match will not be allowed to sit for the Exam.**

Provider institutions are required to sign a NABCEP Associate Exam Provider Agreement Form, agreeing to comply with NABCEP Examination administration policies (as outlined in the NABCEP Associate Exam Administration Manual), including those related to maintaining the security of the Examination, confidentiality of the test items and other related issues. NABCEP Associate Exams are developed according to accepted psychometric standards of measurement; the items are written and reviewed by subject matter experts. NABCEP Exams are owned and copyrighted by NABCEP; the confidential and secure measurement of knowledge tested by the questions is not intended to be read, studied, discussed or taught by Exam Administrators, Exam Proctors or Instructors.

At regularly scheduled intervals, NABCEP sends score results directly to each Candidate* at the mailing address submitted via the online Roster in myNABCEP. Successful Candidates will receive a letter and a suitable-for-framing certificate. Registered Exam Administrators will have access to scores, via myNABCEP, for each Candidate who does not specifically opt-out of releasing their score to their Provider.

***Candidates who qualified for their exam through a course taught by a NABCEP Registered Provider outside the U.S. or Canada, will have their Score Reports mailed directly to the Provider. Providers will then be required to distribute the candidate notification letters and Certificates.**

9. FEES

Provider Registration Fee: An annual Provider Registration Fee is required to participate in the Associate Program. The initial annual fee is submitted with the initial application; NABCEP sends renewal invoices a month prior to renewal thereafter. See the NABCEP website for a schedule of all current fees.

Paper & Pencil Exam Fees. NABCEP charges Providers the same fee for both Paper & Pencil and Computer-Based Testing. North American institutions who are testing in the U.S. or Canada and have provided sufficient documentation may opt to administer NABCEP Exams in Paper and Pencil format. Providers submit online Rosters through the myNABCEP Portal where they can pay for each exam via credit card, e-check, or be invoiced by NABCEP. At their discretion, Providers may charge their students an additional administration fee of up to \$55.00 per paper & pencil exam administered. Registered Providers are responsible for collecting all exam and administrative fees from students, and submitting prompt payment of examination fees to NABCEP.

CBT Exam Fees. NABCEP charges Providers the same fee for both Paper & Pencil and Computer-Based Testing. Providers submit online Rosters through the myNABCEP Portal where they can pay for each exam via credit card, e-check, or be invoiced by NABCEP. At their discretion, Providers may charge their students an additional administration fee of up to \$25.00 per CBT candidate. **Registered Providers are responsible for collecting all exam and administrative fees from students, and submitting prompt payment of examination fees to NABCEP.**

Candidates who take an exam outside of the U.S. and Canada, will be charged an additional \$75 exam fee as part of their individual, online registration process. This additional fee will be paid directly to the CBT Provider (not the NABCEP Registered Provider) when they choose the date and place of their examination.

10. PAYMENT POLICY

All payments to NABCEP are due within 30 days of the invoice. Any Provider with 60 day overdue accounts may be subject to suspension. It is NABCEP policy to provide warning letters and statements to Providers whose accounts are 60 days past due. It is the Provider's responsibility to ensure that their accounts are kept current. If special circumstances apply, the Provider should contact NABCEP to negotiate acceptable terms. NABCEP reserves the right to suspend and withhold score reports from Providers whose accounts are more than 60 days overdue. Additional administrative fees may be charged for processing Provider errors in exam administration.

11. EXAM ADMINISTRATION AND SCORING

Exam Providers must agree to comply with NABCEP Examination administration policies (as outlined in the NABCEP Associate Exam Administration Manual), including those related to maintaining the security of the Examination, confidentiality of the test items and other related issues. The NABCEP Associate Exams are developed according to accepted psychometric standards of measurement; the items are written and reviewed by subject matter experts. NABCEP Associate Exams are a confidential and secure measurement of knowledge that is not intended to be read, studied, discussed or taught by Exam Administrators, Exam Proctors or Instructors.

After a paper and pencil Exam administration, answer sheets and all other Exam materials must be returned to NABCEP's testing contractor for scoring via traceable carrier at the expense of the Provider. Exam Providers are not responsible for, and should not attempt to, score examinations.

Upon grading of the answer sheets, NABCEP sends score results directly to each Candidate at the mailing address submitted via the online Roster in myNABCEP. Successful Candidates will receive a letter and a suitable-for-framing certificate. Registered Exam Administrators will have access to scores, via myNABCEP, for each Candidate who does not specifically opt-out of releasing their score to their Provider.

Providers located outside the U.S. and Canada, are responsible for delivering score results and certificates to their submitted Candidates. NABCEP ships these reports to the Provider in batches approximately 2 weeks after testing.

12. EXAM CONTENT

Each examination consists of seventy (70) multiple-choice questions, with four (4) choices per question. Sixty (60) of the questions are scored and ten (10) of the questions are un-scored pilot questions. The pilot questions are randomly distributed throughout the examination and are not identified.

NABCEP Associate Exams are written by industry Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) under the guidance of professional psychometricians (testing specialists). NABCEP Associate Job Task Analyses provide the blueprints for the NABCEP Associate Exams and are the primary documents to reference with regard to what topics may or may not be covered on any exam. All students attending a course that provides eligibility for a NABCEP Associate Exam should be given a copy of either the PV Associate JTA, the Associate Solar Heating Learning Objectives or the Associate Small Wind Learning Objectives (found on the NABCEP website under "Associate Program" and "Learning Objectives"). All Exam Candidates should also be referred to the NABCEP Associate Handbook which includes NABCEP Policies and Procedures and detailed information regarding credential maintenance.

13. PRACTICE EXAM

A practice NABCEP Photovoltaic Associate Examination is available for a fee on the NABCEP website. Practice exams are not yet available for Solar Heating Associate or Small Wind Associate. The practice exam is intended to provide candidates with an understanding of the types of questions that may be encountered on the exam, a general feel for the level of difficulty to expect, experience with the computer-based test environment, and a sense of the pace that will need to be maintained to answer all questions in the specified time. It is not intended as a study tool for learning the content that will be covered on the exam.

14. 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 U.S. Civil Rights Act and other applicable laws. If a student requires special testing accommodations the required forms must be submitted to NABCEP for review and approval prior to granting or providing any special testing accommodations. Approval may take several weeks or more. Please submit any requests for special testing accommodations as far in advance as possible.

15. EXAM DURATION

Candidates are provided with two (2) hours to complete an examination. Providers should allow for an additional thirty minutes of time for pre-Exam administrative activities once all Candidates have arrived; therefore, the room should be reserved for a minimum of three hours.

16. SCORE REPORTS

Scoring occurs using a scaled process to ensure fairness from one examination to the next. A minimum scaled score of 65, using a 0-99 scale, is required to pass each NABCEP Associate Examination. A Pass or Fail Score Report will be mailed directly to each Candidate after their answer sheets have been submitted and scored.* Exam Administrators will have access to Candidate score records via the online Portal.

****Score Reports for Candidates qualifying through an overseas Provider will be mailed to the Provider's Exam Administrator rather than individual candidates.***

17. RETAKE POLICY

Candidates are eligible to sit for the Associate Exam for a period of two years from the date they complete the training program. Candidates may take the Exam up to 6 times every 12 months. Candidates may register to retake their exam via Computer Based Testing regardless of the format they took it previously. Registered Providers must confirm their eligibility by providing a Course Completion Document that shows the date they completed the qualifying course. Candidates may then register and schedule their retake exam directly from their personal account in myNABCEP.

18. ASSOCIATE CREDENTIAL RENEWAL POLICY

NABCEP Associates are required to renew their credential every 3 years. NABCEP Associates must document 12 hours of Continuing Education by uploading Course Completion Documents to their individual myNABCEP online accounts. This renewal process is accomplished through NABCEP directly and does not involve the training provider; however, it is important for all applicants to be aware of this requirement.

19. MARK USE POLICY

Individuals who have achieved a passing score on a NABCEP Associate Examination, and met all other eligibility criteria including renewal requirements, may state that they are a NABCEP Photovoltaic Associate (NABCEP PVA), NABCEP Solar Heating Associate (NABCEP SHA), or NABCEP Small Wind Associate (NABCEP SWA). They may use the title of NABCEP Associate only, and may not refer to themselves as "NABCEP Certified," or use any of the other NABCEP certification designations, such as NABCEP Certified PV Installation Professional®.

Registered Providers are permitted to use the NABCEP Brand in marketing the registered course. A NABCEP Registered Associate digital logo is emailed to the Exam Administrator upon application approval. Providers who choose not to renew their annual registration or who, for any other reason, are suspended or revoked from the Provider Program, are prohibited from continued use of the NABCEP logo, credential, certificate, wordmark, or seal.