



Central Texas - Balcones Chapter

## **A New System for Distinguishing Professionals**

The Green Building Certification Institute (GBCI), in partnership with the USGBC, launched a new credentialing system in April 2009 designed to ensure that LEED-accredited professionals have the latest knowledge and understanding of green building practices and that they are recognized for their specific area of specialization. The Credentialing Maintenance Program (CMP) encourages green building professionals to maintain and advance their knowledge and expertise, and is being facilitated by the GBCI.

As GBCI's first Education Reviewing Body (ERB), USGBC is the only third-party organization authorized to review and approve courses to support CMP requirements. USGBC offers programs and courses that will count toward GBCI CE credit hours, but is not the only education provider for the CM program. Because any organization may submit courses for review by USGBC, LEED professionals now have a wide variety of options to meet the requirements of a green building education that will help them maintain their credentials, stay competitive in the marketplace, and become leaders in their industry.

### **Establishing and Maintaining Your LEED credential**

All credentials awarded by GBCI, including LEED Green Associate and LEED AP with specialization, must now be maintained on a 2-year cycle through the accumulation of continuing education (CE) hours. Existing LEED APs have two options to enroll in the CMP: retest, or meet all requirements of the prescriptive CM program during their 2-year initial reporting period ('reporting period') in the category of their chosen specialization.

During the reporting period (which follows the date GBCI awarded their credential, or the 2 years following enrollment for LEED APs credentialed under v2.0 or 2.2), LEED professionals are required to earn continuing education (CE) hours through participation in credentialing maintenance activities, listed on GBCI's website ([www.gbci.org](http://www.gbci.org)). LEED professionals must now self-report all of their CE hours online. If they fail to complete these requirements and/or do not report their hours to GBCI, it will result in the expiration of their credential at the end of the 2-year enrollment window, and they will simply be listed as a LEED AP without specialization in the Professional Directory.

Once the CMP requirements for their credential have been fulfilled, LEED professionals may renew their credential and pay the annual \$50 CMP renewal fee. LEED professionals are required to renew their credential within the 30 days following the end of their reporting period. If the credential is not renewed within 30 days of the end date, it will result in the expiration of their credential.

Why is USGBC doing this?

The purpose of the credential maintenance program is not to measure or guarantee continuing competence, and therefore, LEED professionals of the future will not be required to sit for additional examinations after fulfilling initial credentialing examination. However, LEED professionals do have the option of maintaining their credential through retesting (without completing continuing education). In order to retest, LEED Professionals must apply (including meeting eligibility requirements) and register for the required exam and are responsible for all applicable fees. If LEED professionals wait until their credential expires (24 months after their exam date), they must test like all new candidates, which means taking both parts of the exam.

Due to the rapid evolution of the LEED rating system, it is important to stay current with the usage of technology and best practices associated with creating a credential program. A credentialing system that distinguishes between multiple levels of accomplishment and expertise is needed to differentiate green building professionals with basic, advanced, and extraordinary levels of knowledge. Eligibility requirements for all levels of the exam system have been introduced as have credentialing maintenance requirements that ensure that LEED professionals have the latest knowledge and understanding of green building practices.