

Certified IPC Management Systems Auditor (CMSA)

Candidate Handbook

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SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

About PECB¹

PECB is a leading certification body dedicated to fostering digital trust through comprehensive education, certification, and certificate programs across various disciplines. We empower professionals to develop and demonstrate their competence in digital security and other areas of expertise by providing world-class certification programs that adhere to internationally recognized standards.

Slogan:

Beyond Recognition

Vision:

As the global leader in digital trust education and certification, our vision is to empower and inspire professionals by enhancing their skills and fostering their professional success.

Mission:

Our mission is to empower professionals with the knowledge and skills to protect their digital assets and ensure business continuity. Through our comprehensive training programs, we aim to foster a secure digital ecosystem where innovation thrives and risks are managed effectively.

Values

Growth, Change, Harmony, Simplicity, Reliability and Quality

¹ Notes:

- The legal name of PECB is "PECB Group Inc."
- PECB is an acronym that stands for "Professional Evaluation and Certification Board."
- Education (used in the first sentence of this page) refers to training courses developed by PECB, and offered globally through its network of partners.
- Certification refers to certification services provided according to ISO/IEC 17024.
- Certificate Program refers to certificate program services provided according to ANSI/ASTM E2659.
- The term "certified" shall only be used for personnel certifications, based on ISO/IEC 17024 requirements. The term "certificate holder" shall only be used for certificate programs, based on ANSI/ASTM E2659 requirements. Certificate holders are not certified, licensed, accredited, or registered to engage in a specific occupation or profession.

The Value of PECB Certification/Certificate Program

Accreditation

PECB credentials are internationally recognized and endorsed by many accreditation bodies, so professionals who pursue them will benefit from our recognition in domestic and international markets.

Our certifications are distinguished by prestigious global accreditations, affirming both their value and your expertise. PECB certifications are validated by top-tier bodies including the International Accreditation Service (IAS-PCB-111), the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS-No. 21923), the Korean Accreditation Board (KAB-PC-08), and Comité français d'accréditation (COFRAC N° 4-0637) under ISO/IEC 17024 – General requirements for bodies operating certification of persons. Additionally, our certificate programs are validated by the accreditation from the ANSI National Accreditation Board (ANAB-Accreditation ID 1003) under ANSI/ASTM E2659-18, Standard Practice for Certificate Programs.

PECB is also an esteemed associate member of The Independent Association of Accredited Registrars (IAAR), and a full member of the International Personnel Certification Association (IPC), a signatory member of IPC MLA, and a member of Club EBIOS, CPD Certification Service, and CLUSIF. Furthermore, we hold an approved status as an Approved Publishing Partner (APP) by the Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification Accreditation Body (CMMC-AB) for the Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification standard (CMMC), and are authorized by Club EBIOS to offer the EBIOS Risk Manager Skills certification and by CNIL (Commission Nationale de l'Informatique et des Libertés) to offer the DPO's skills and knowledge certification. For more detailed information, click [here](#).

High-quality products and services

We are proud to provide our clients with high-quality products and services that match their needs and demands. All of our products are carefully prepared by a team of experts and professionals based on the best practices and methodologies.

Compliance with standards

Our certifications and certificate programs are a demonstration of compliance with ISO/IEC 17024 and ASTM E2659. They ensure that the standard requirements have been fulfilled and validated with adequate consistency, professionalism, and impartiality.

Customer-oriented service

We are a customer-oriented company and treat all our clients with value, importance, professionalism, and honesty. Our Customer Support team is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to address questions, requests and needs.



PECB Code of Ethics

The Code of Ethics are the values and ethics that PECB is committed to follow, and defines the responsibilities of PECB professionals including employees, trainers, examiners, invigilators, members of different committees, partners, distributors, certified individuals and certificate holders.

To read the complete version of PECB's Code of Ethics, go to [Code of Ethics | PECB](#).



Introduction Certified IPC Management Systems Auditor

This document specifies the Certified IPC Management Systems Auditor certification scheme in compliance with ISO/IEC 17024:2012. It also outlines the steps that candidates should take to obtain and maintain their credentials. As such, it is very important to carefully read all the information included in this document before completing and submitting your application. If you have questions or need further information after reading it, please contact certification.team@pecb.com.

SECTION II: EXAMINATION PREPARATION, RULES, AND POLICIES

Preparing for and scheduling the exam

Candidates are responsible for their own studying and preparation for certification exams. No specific set of training courses or curriculum of study is required as part of the certification process.

To schedule the exam, candidates have two options:

1. **Online:** Through the [PECB Exams application](#). To schedule a remote exam, please go to the following link: [Exam Events](#).
2. **Paper-based:** By contacting the PECB authorized partner that provided the training course. The partner arranges the date, time, and the location where the candidate is going to attend the exam.

To learn more about exams, competency domains, and knowledge statements, please refer to *Section III* of this document.

Rescheduling the exam

For any changes with regard to the exam date, time, location, or other details, please contact online.exams@pecb.com.

Application fees for examination and certification

Candidates may take the exam without attending the training course. The applicable prices are as follows:

- Lead Exam: \$1000²
- Manager Exam: \$700
- Foundation Exam: \$500
- Transition Exam: \$500

The application fee for certification are as follows:

- Master Certification: \$100
- Foundation Certification: \$200
- Transition Certification: \$200
- All other Certifications: \$500

For the candidates that have attended the training course via one of PECB's partners, the application fee covers the costs of the exam (first attempt and first retake), the application for certification, and the first year of Annual Maintenance Fee (AMF).

² All prices listed in this document are in US dollars.

Competency domains

The Certified IPC Management Systems Auditor exam is intended for any auditor, regardless of the type of industry, who wants to lead a management system audit.

The content of the exam is divided as follows:

- Domain 1: Certification audit process and principles
- Domain 2: Competencies and responsibilities of a management system auditor
- Domain 3: Planning and conducting management systems audits

Additionally, all candidates are required to take the Auditor Behavior Exam to fulfill the IPC requirements for accreditation. This exam is designed to evaluate auditors' responses to real-world scenarios, with a focus on ethical behavior, objectivity, effective communication, and professional decision-making.

Domain 1: Certification audit process and principles

Main objective: Ensure that the candidate understands all the requirements of management system standards and comprehends the overall certification process according to ISO/IEC 17021-1.

Competencies	Knowledge statements
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ability to understand, explain and illustrate the management systems audit process 2. Ability to explain the characteristics of audit evidence, audit findings, and audit conclusions 3. Ability to understand, explain and illustrate the certification process 4. Ability to differentiate between management system audit, process audit and product audit; types of audits: first, second- and third-party audit 5. Ability to recognize the relationship between the interested parties in certification audit 6. Ability to understand and conduct pre-certification activities 7. Ability to carry out stage 1 and stage 2 audit 8. Ability to conduct the activities following an initial audit including the evaluation of action plans, follow-up audits, surveillance audits and recertification audits 9. Ability to appropriately report audit observations in respect to the audit rules and principles 10. Ability to review and finalize audit results 11. Ability to understand and follow the principles of certification based on ISO 17021-1 standard 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Knowledge of the overall certification process 2. Knowledge of the difference between the combined, integrated, and joint audit 3. Knowledge of the common structure of ISO management system standards 4. Knowledge of the differences between management system, process, and product audits 5. Knowledge of the differences between first, second, and third party audits 6. Knowledge of the high-level structure of ISO standards 7. Knowledge of initiating an audit 8. Knowledge of the stage 1 and stage 2 steps 9. Knowledge of the evaluation process of evidence to draft audit findings and prepare audit conclusions 10. Knowledge of the guidelines and best practices to write nonconformity reports 11. Knowledge of the guidelines and best practices to present audit findings and conclusions to the top management of an audited organization 12. Knowledge of the possible recommendations that an auditor can make in the context of a certification audit and the certification decision process 13. Knowledge of the guidelines and best practices to evaluate action plans 14. Knowledge of the certification principles

Domain 2: Competencies and responsibilities of a management system auditor

Main objective: Ensure that a management systems auditor candidate is competent and knowledgeable of the auditor responsibilities during a management system audit by following auditing ethical principles and also understand the legal liabilities and implications.

Competencies	Knowledge statements
1. Ability to determine the competence criteria for auditors	1. Knowledge of the necessary competencies that an auditor shall have in order to perform audit activities
2. Ability to interpret the management system standards	2. Knowledge of the management system standards
3. Ability to apply the principles of an audit	3. Knowledge of the client and organization to be audited
4. Ability to achieve, evaluate, and maintain auditor competence	4. Knowledge of the certification body's processes
5. Ability to determine the roles and responsibilities of the auditor	5. Knowledge of the principles of an audit
6. Ability to conduct an audit with integrity, objectivity, and independence	6. Knowledge of the auditor's personal behavior to conduct effective and efficient MS audits
7. Ability to understand the auditor's personal behavior necessary for effective and efficient management systems audit	7. Knowledge of good practices when determining the audit team members
8. Ability to improve the auditor's communication skills with the top management, the auditee, and all other stakeholders	8. Knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of an auditor
9. Ability to understand and evaluate the organizational structure of the auditee	9. Knowledge of the auditor's communication skills with all interested parties
10. Ability to identify issues related to conflicts of interest, including financial interests, business relationships, current employment, former employment, and subsequent employment	10. Knowledge of the analysis of the organizational structure of the auditee
11. Ability to understand the client's confidential information regulation	11. Knowledge of the fundamental ethical principles
12. Ability to understand the concept of liability	12. Knowledge of the techniques for identifying actual and potential conflicts of interest
13. Ability to identify the categories of the auditor's legal liabilities	13. Knowledge of how to preserve the confidentiality of information
	14. Knowledge of liability to clients, liability to third parties, and criminal liability

Domain 3: Planning and conducting management systems audits

Main objective: Ensure that the management systems auditor candidate can appropriately prepare and conduct an audit in the context of management system standards.

Competencies	Knowledge statements
1. Ability to comprehend value-based auditing	1. Knowledge of value-based auditing
2. Ability to apply a risk based approach in auditing	2. Knowledge of risk-based approach in auditing
3. Ability to recognize the common mistakes during MS audits	3. Knowledge of materiality within the management system
4. Ability to understand the impact of risk and materiality on audit planning	4. Knowledge of performing materiality and risk assessment
5. Ability to understand and distinguish the different types of risk	5. Knowledge of the common mistakes made during an audit
6. Ability to plan the audit	6. Knowledge of steps in planning an audit
7. Ability to determine the audit schedule and audit time	7. Knowledge of the specific criteria used when determining the audit time
8. Ability to determine the audit objectives, scope, and criteria	8. Knowledge of establishing audit objectives, scope, and criteria
9. Ability to create an audit plan	9. Knowledge of writing an audit plan
10. Ability to prepare and conduct on-site activities	10. Knowledge of the activities to be carried out during the on-site visit
11. Ability to conduct the opening and closing meetings	11. Knowledge of the steps to execute the opening and closing meeting
12. Ability to gather appropriate evidence objectively from the available information and evaluate it	12. Knowledge of audit procedures for collecting and analyzing quantitative and qualitative evidence
13. Ability to assess the process approach	13. Knowledge of the evidence collection procedures
14. Ability to conduct interviews, observation, documented information review, and analysis	14. Knowledge of the steps involved in sampling and technical verification
15. Ability to use evidence collection tools such as sampling, or technical verification	15. Knowledge of the evidence collection analysis
16. Ability to analyze the evidence collection through corroboration, triangulation, and evaluation	16. Knowledge of performing a quality review to ensure the effectiveness of the audit
17. Ability to manage and maintain audit documentation	17. Knowledge of audit documentation management and conservation approaches
18. Ability to conduct audit quality reviews	

Based on the abovementioned domains and their relevance, 10 questions are included in the exam, as summarized in the table below:

		Level of understanding (Cognitive/Taxonomy) required						
		Points per question	Questions that measure comprehension, application, and analysis	Questions that measure evaluation	Number of questions per competency domain	% of the exam devoted to each competency domain	Number of points per competency domain	% of points per competency domain
Competency domains	Certification audit process and principles	10	X		3	30	30	30
		10	X					
		10		X				
	Competencies and responsibilities of a management system auditor	10	X		2	20	20	20
		10		X				
	Planning and conducting management system audits	10	X		5	50	50	50
		10		X				
		10		X				
		10		X				
		10	X					
Total points		100						
Number of questions per level of understanding			5	5				
% of the exam devoted to each level of understanding (cognitive/taxonomy)			50%	50%				

The passing score of the exam is **70%**.

After successfully passing the exam, candidates will be able to apply for obtaining the “Certified IPC Management Systems Auditor” credential.

Following successful completion of the CMSA exam, candidates must take a subsequent closed-book Auditor Behavior Exam based on the IPC framework. This exam evaluates auditors' ethical behavior, integrity, and professional judgment in realistic audit scenarios, despite the cross-cultural contexts. Comprising 20 multiple-choice questions with a 30-minute time limit and an 80% passing score, the test emphasizes critical attributes such as objectivity, accountability, and effective communication. It is designed to reinforce the importance of ethical conduct, ensuring that auditors uphold transparency and independence, core values essential to maintaining public trust and the credibility of the audit process.

Taking the exam

General information about the exam

Candidates are required to arrive/be present at least 30 minutes before the exam starts.

Candidates who arrive late will not be given additional time to compensate for the late arrival and may not be allowed to sit for the exam.

Candidates are required to bring a valid identity card (a national ID card, driver's license, or passport) and show it to the invigilator.

If requested on the day of the exam (paper-based exams), additional time can be provided to candidates taking the exam in a non-native language, as follows:

- 10 additional minutes for Foundation exams
- 20 additional minutes for Manager exams
- 30 additional minutes for Lead exams

PECB exam format and type

1) Online Exam: Exams are provided electronically via the PECB Exams application. The use of secondary electronic devices, such as tablets and phones, are not allowed during the exam. The exam session is supervised remotely by a PECB Invigilator via the PECB Exams application and an external/integrated camera.

PECB Exam Types:

- a. Multiple-choice, closed-book, where the candidates are not allowed to use any reference materials. Usually, Foundation and Transition exams are of this type.
- b. Essay-type, open-book, where candidates are allowed to use the following reference materials:
 - A hard copy of main standard
 - Training course materials (through KATE and/or printed)
 - Any personal notes taken during the training course (through KATE and/or printed)
 - A hard copy dictionary
- c. Multiple-choice, open-book, where candidates are allowed to use the following reference materials:
 - A hard copy of main standard
 - Training course materials (through KATE and/or printed)
 - Any personal notes taken during the training course (through KATE and/or printed)
 - A hard copy dictionary

2) Paper Based: Exams are also available in a paper format. The use of electronic devices, such as laptops, tablets, or phones, is not allowed. The exam session is supervised by a PECB approved Invigilator at the location where the Partner has organized the training course.

PECB Exam Types:

- a. Multiple-choice, closed-book, where the candidates are not allowed to use any reference materials. Usually, Foundation and Transition exams are of this type.
- b. Essay-type, open-book, where candidates are allowed to use the following reference materials:
 - A hard copy of main standard
 - Training course materials (printed)
 - Any personal notes taken during the training course (printed)
 - A hard copy dictionary
- c. Multiple-choice, open-book, where candidates are allowed to use the following reference materials:
 - A hard copy of main standard
 - Training course materials (printed)
 - Any personal notes taken during the training course (printed)
 - A hard copy dictionary

For specific information about exam types, languages available, and other details, please contact support@pecb.com or go to the [List of PECB Exams](#).

This exam comprises essay-type questions. Essay-type questions are used to determine and evaluate whether a candidate can clearly answer questions related to the defined competency domains. Additionally, problem-solving techniques and arguments that are supported with reasoning and evidence will also be evaluated. The exam aims to evaluate candidates' comprehension, analytical skills, and applied knowledge. Therefore, candidates are required to provide logical and convincing answers and explanations in order to demonstrate that they have understood the content and the main concepts of the competency domains.

This is an open-book exam. The candidate is allowed to use the following reference materials:

- A hard copy of the ISO/IEC 17021-1 and ISO 19011 standards
- Training course materials (accessed through the PECB Exams app and/or printed)
- Any personal notes taken during the training course (accessed through the PECB Exams app and/or printed)
- A hard copy dictionary

For specific information about exam types, languages available, and other details, please contact examination.team@pecb.com or go to the [List of PECB Exams](#).

A sample of exam questions will be provided below.

Sample exam questions

Question 1:

Prepare a list of questions for the interview that you will conduct with the manager of the organization that you are about to audit.

Possible answer:

- *Can you please explain what are your organization's goals and how are you currently performing compared to your competitors?*
- *What are the main objectives of the management system in place?*
- *Who are the key personnel responsible for the management system's implementation and monitoring?*
- *How do you communicate changes in the management system to the relevant stakeholders?*
- *Could you please provide us with the previous audit results?*
- *How do you ensure that the necessary resources are allocated to maintain and improve the management system?*
- *How does the organization identify and assess risks and opportunities related to the management system?*
- *Is it possible to have your permission to observe the documentation of the management system within your organization?*

Question 2:

You have received a corrective action plan to review. Evaluate the adequacy of the proposed corrective actions. If you agree with the corrective actions, explain why. If you do not agree with them, explain why not and propose an alternative corrective action that is more adequate.

Nonconformity 1: The auditor has detected and issued nonconformity because the audit procedure has not been documented properly.

Corrective action plan 1: Review the audit procedure and document it as requested.

Possible answer:

I agree with the proposed corrective action. The audit documents should be documented and updated based on the organization's policy.

You are auditing a company in a region with different labor laws and cultural expectations. How do you ensure your audit respects local practices while maintaining professional standards?

Apply international standards strictly, regardless of local customs

B. Seek to understand local regulations and balance them with applicable audit criteria

Avoid sensitive topics entirely to prevent cultural misunderstandings

Auditor Behavior sample exam questions:

1. **After an audit, a team member publicly shared audit details on a professional networking site. How should you respond as the audit team leader?**

- A. **Remind the team member of confidentiality protocols and report the breach if necessary**
- B. Ignore the post, unless the client reacts
- C. Ask them to take it down without involving others

2. You are auditing a company in a region with different labor laws and cultural expectations. Which approach should you follow in this case?
 - A. Apply international standards strictly, regardless of local customs
 - B. Avoid sensitive topics entirely to prevent cultural misunderstandings
 - C. **Seek to understand local regulations and balance them with applicable audit criteria**

3. The auditee asks to see preliminary audit notes before the closing meeting. As the audit team leader, what should you do in this case?
 - A. Share the notes to build transparency
 - B. **Decline politely, explaining that only finalized findings will be shared**
 - C. Allow selective access to notes that show positive results

Exam results

Exam results will be communicated via email.

- The time span for the communication starts from the exam date and lasts three to eight weeks for essay type exams and two to four weeks for multiple-choice paper-based exams.
- For online multiple-choice exams, candidates receive their results instantly.

Candidates who successfully complete the exam will be able to apply for one of the credentials of the respective certification scheme.

For candidates who fail the exam, a list of the domains where they have performed poorly will be added to the email to help them prepare better for a retake.

If candidates do not agree with the results, they have 30 days from the date of receiving the results to file a complaint through the [PECB Ticketing System](#). Complaints received after 30 days will not be processed.

Exam Retake Policy

There is no limit to the number of times a candidate can retake an exam. However, there are certain limitations in terms of the time span between exam retakes.

If a candidate does not pass the exam on the 1st attempt, they must wait 15 days after the initial date of the exam for the next attempt (1st retake).

Note: Candidates who have completed the training course with one of our partners, and failed the first exam attempt, are eligible to retake for free the exam within a 12-month period from the date the coupon code is received (the fee paid for the training course, includes a first exam attempt and one retake). Otherwise, retake fees apply.

For candidates that fail the exam retake, PECB recommends they attend a training course in order to be better prepared for the exam.

To arrange exam retakes, based on exam format, candidates that have completed a training course, must follow the steps below:

1. **Online Exam:** when scheduling the exam retake, use the initial coupon code to waive the fee
2. **Paper-Based Exam:** candidates need to contact the PECB Partner/Distributor who has initially organized the session for exam retake arrangement (date, time, place, costs).

Candidates that have not completed a training course with a partner, but sat for the online exam directly with PECB, do not fall under this Policy. The process to schedule the exam retake is the same as for the initial exam.

Exam Security Policy

A significant component of a professional certification credential is maintaining the security and confidentiality of the exam. PECB relies upon the ethical behavior of certification holders and applicants to



maintain the security and confidentiality of PECB exams. Any disclosure of information about the content of PECB exams is a direct violation of PECB's Code of Ethics. PECB will take action against any individuals that violate such rules and policies, including permanently banning individuals from pursuing PECB credentials and revoking any previous ones. PECB will also pursue legal action against individuals or organizations who infringe upon its copyrights, proprietary rights, and intellectual property.

SECTION III: CERTIFICATION PROCESS AND REQUIREMENTS

Certified IPC Management Systems Auditor credentials

All PECB certifications have specific requirements regarding education and professional experience. To determine which credential is right for you, take into account your professional needs and analyze the criteria for the certifications.

The credentials in the CMSA scheme have the following requirements:

Credential	Education	Exam	Professional experience	MS audit/assessment experience	Other requirements
Certified IPC Management Systems Auditor	At least secondary education	Certified IPC Management Systems Auditor	<p>Work Experience: Five years of which two years of work experience in the relative field</p> <p>MS experience: at least two years of relevant experience in the implementation, operation, and/or auditing of management systems</p>	Acted as a member of an audit team, team leader or as sole auditor on at least 4 complete audits, the total duration of which shall be a minimum of 20 days including preparation and reporting with a minimum of not less than 8 days on site	<p>Pass the Auditor Behavior Exam</p> <p>Have a Lead Auditor course or CMSA equivalent to 40 hours training</p> <p>Signing the PECB Code of Ethics</p>

To be considered valid, the audit activities should follow best audit practices and include the following:

1. Planning a management system audit
2. Managing a management system audit program
3. Drafting audit reports
4. Drafting nonconformity reports
5. Drafting audit working documents
6. Reviewing and managing documented information related to the audit
7. Conducting on-site audits
8. Following up on nonconformities
9. Leading an audit team

Applying for certification

All candidates who successfully pass the exam (or an equivalent accepted by PECB) are entitled to apply for the PECB credential they were assessed for. Specific professional experience requirements need to be fulfilled in order to obtain a PECB certification. Candidates are required to fill out the online certification application form (that can be accessed via their PECB account), including contact details of individuals who will be contacted to validate the candidates' professional experience. They can choose to either pay online or be billed. For additional information, please contact certification.team@pecb.com.

The online certification application process is very simple and takes only a few minutes:

- [Register](#) your account
- Check your email for the confirmation link
- [Log in](#) to apply for certification

For more information on how to apply for certification, click [here](#).

The Certification Department validates that the candidate fulfills all the certification requirements regarding the respective credential. The candidate will receive an email about the application status, including the certification decision.

Following the approval of the application by the Certification Department, the candidate will be able to download the certificate and claim the corresponding Digital Badge. For more information about downloading the certificate, click [here](#), and for more information about claiming the Digital Badge, click [here](#).

Education: At least secondary education

The candidate needs to have completed a minimum of secondary education.

Exam: Certified IPC Management Systems Auditor

Candidates must pass a comprehensive examination consisting of development questions exam covering 3 domains of the Audit of a Management System.

Work experience

The minimum professional experience required is:

- Five years full-time work experience
- Two years of work experience in the relative field

MS experience: at least two years of relevant experience in the implementation, operation, and/or auditing of management systems

MS auditing experience: Acted as a member of an audit team, team leader or as sole auditor on at least 4 complete audits, the total duration of which shall be a minimum of 20 days including preparation and reporting with a minimum of not less than 8 days on site. All auditing experience shall have been gained in the three-year period prior to certification.

Auditor Behavior Exam: Pass the Auditor Behavior Exam for Auditors

Training: Have a Lead Auditor course or CMSA equivalent to 40 hours training

Personal behavior: Is able to demonstrate the best personal behavior necessary to carry out effective audits in accordance with clause 7.2.2 of ISO 19011:2018 and Annex D of ISO 17021-1:2015.

Competence: Is able demonstrate that he/she has the needed competence and knowledge to carry out an effective audit in accordance to the clause 7.2.3.2 of ISO 19011:2011.

Evaluation of certification applications

The Certification Department will evaluate each application to validate the candidates' eligibility for certification or certificate program. A candidate whose application is being reviewed will be notified in writing and, if necessary, given a reasonable time frame to provide any additional documentation. If a candidate does not respond by the deadline or does not provide the required documentation within the given time



frame, the Certification Department will validate the application based on the initial information provided, which may lead to the candidates' credential downgrade.

SECTION IV: CERTIFICATION POLICIES

Denial of Certification/Certificate Program

PECB can deny certification/certificate program if candidates:

- Falsify the application
- Violate the exam procedures
- Violate the PECB Code of Ethics
- Fail the exam

Any concerns regarding the denial of certification/certificate program may file a complaint or appeal by following the complaint and appeal process (<https://pecb.com/en/complaint-and-appeal-procedure>).

The application payment for the certification/certificate program is nonrefundable. This is because of the process of verifying the application, the evidence submitted by the candidates, and the engagement of the relevant departments in this process.

Suspension of Certification

PECB can temporarily suspend certification if the candidate fails to satisfy the requirements of PECB. Additional reasons for suspension can be if:

- PECB receives excessive or serious complaints by interested parties (Suspension will be applied until the investigation has been completed).
- The logos of PECB or accreditation bodies are willfully misused.
- The candidate fails to correct the misuse of a certification mark within the determined time by PECB.
- The certified individual has voluntarily requested a suspension.
- PECB deems appropriate other conditions for suspension of certification/certificate program.

Individuals whose certification has been suspended, are not authorized to further promote their certification while it is suspended.

A suspended certification can either be:

- Reinstated — if reasons for suspension are corrected within the given time frame by PECB
- Revoked — if reasons for suspension are not corrected within the given time frame by PECB

Suspended members must remediate their suspension within a maximum period of 6 months.

Note 1: For ISO/IEC 27005:2022 Risk Manager/Lead Risk Manager, failure to submit the CPD and AMF payment during the cycle will result in a 12-month suspension period, during which you can address any outstanding AMFs and CPDs. If no action is taken during the suspension period, the certification will be revoked.

Note 2: For CNIL– DPO, failure to comply with the recertification requirements (work experience in data protection and passing the CNIL– DPO recertification exam) will result in a 12-month suspension period. If no action is taken during the suspension period, the certification will be revoked.

Revocation of Certification

PECB can revoke (that is, to withdraw) certification if the candidate fails to satisfy the requirements of PECB. Candidates are then no longer allowed to represent themselves as PECB certified professionals. Additional reasons can be if candidates:

- Violate the PECB Code of Ethics
- Misrepresent and provide false information of the scope of the certification/certificate program
- Break any other PECB rules
- Any other reasons that PECB deems appropriate

Individuals whose certification has been revoked, are not authorized to use any references to a certified status.

Individuals whose certification has been revoked may file a complaint or appeal by following the complaint and appeal process (<https://pecb.com/en/complaint-and-appeal-procedure>).

Note 1: For ISO/IEC 27005:2022 Risk Manager/Lead Risk Manager, failure to submit the CPD and AMF payment during the cycle will result in a 12-month suspension period, during which you can address any outstanding AMFs and CPDs. If no action is taken during the suspension period, the certification will be revoked.

Note 2: For CNIL– DPO, failure to comply with the recertification requirements (work experience in data protection and passing the CNIL– DPO recertification exam) will result in a 12-month suspension period. If no action is taken during the suspension period, the certification will be revoked.

Other Statuses

Besides being active, suspended, or revoked, a certification can be voluntary withdrawn, or designated as Emeritus.

Emeritus Status

Means that your certification is in good standing, but does not need to be maintained by fulfilling CPD nor AMF requirements.

To qualify and be eligible to apply for the Emeritus status, you must be over 60 years of age, have held a PECB certification for at least five years, and you must no longer practice job functions that are specific to the certification.

Optionally, Emeritus who would like to continue practicing job functions, such as audits and/or implementation projects, must report their CPDs on an annual basis, and fulfill a minimum annual requirement of 20 hours of work experience, implementation/auditing or consulting-related experience, training, private study, coaching, attendance at seminars and conferences, or other relevant activities. AMF is not required.

To apply for this status, please complete [the form](#) and send it to certification@pecb.com.

Important note: In order to return to active certification status, you are required to retake the exam and apply for certification.

Check the [brochure](#) for more information about the benefits of the Emeritus Certification Status.

Voluntary Withdrawal Status

Means that your certification is in good standing, but you decide you do not want to maintain your certification(s) anymore.

To apply for this status, please complete [the form](#) and send it to certification@pecb.com.

Individuals whose certification has been voluntarily withdrawn will no longer be allowed to present themselves as PECB Certified Professionals.

Important note: *In order to return to active certification status, you are required to retake the exam and apply for certification.*

Permanent Cessation Status

In the event that the certified individual passes away or becomes incapacitated (e.g., because of an accident), the legal representative is responsible for sending the required information to PECB (i.e., death certificate or medical certificate). Consequently, the name of the person will be removed from the contact list and the PECB account will be deleted.

Upgrade and downgrade of credentials

Upgrade of credentials

PECB Professionals can apply for a higher credential once they provide evidence that proves that they fulfill the requirements of the higher credential.

PECB Certifications can be upgraded online through your dashboard by logging [here](#), clicking **My Certifications** and then the **Upgrade** button.

For more information about the upgrade fee, go to the [Certification Maintenance](#) page on the PECB website.

Note: *For downgraded certifications that need to be upgraded, an evaluation will be done to determine if an exam is required prior to obtain an upgraded certification.*

Downgrade of credentials

A PECB Certification can be downgraded to a lower credential due to the following reasons:

- AMF has not been paid.
- CPD hours have not been submitted.
- Insufficient CPD hours have been submitted.
- Evidence on CPD hours has not been submitted upon request.

Renewing the certification

PECB certifications are valid for three years. To maintain them, PECB certified professionals must meet the requirements related to the designated credential, e.g., they must fulfill the required number of continual PECB certifications are valid for three years. To maintain them, PECB certified professionals must meet the requirements related to the designated credential, e.g., they must fulfill the required number of continual professional development (CPD) hours. In addition, they need to pay the annual maintenance fee. For more information, go to the [Certification Maintenance](#) page on the PECB website.

Closing a case

If candidates do not apply for certification within one year, their case will be closed. Even though the certification period expires, candidates have the right to reopen their case. However, PECB will no longer be responsible for any changes regarding the conditions, standards, policies, and candidate handbook that were applicable before the case was closed. A candidate requesting their case to reopen must do so in writing to certification.team@pecb.com and pay the required fee.

Complaint and Appeal Policy

Any complaint that a candidate has must be submitted in writing no later than 30 days after PECB's initial decision. Within 30 working days of receiving the complaint, PECB will provide a written response to the candidate, outlining the results of the review and any actions taken.

Candidates may request a re-evaluation of their exam results or certification decision within 30 days. If not satisfied, they can file an appeal through the PECB Ticketing System. For more detailed information, please refer to the [Complaint and Appeal Policy | PECB](#)

SECTION V: GENERAL POLICIES

Non-discrimination and special accommodations

All candidate applications will be evaluated objectively, regardless of the candidates' age, gender, race, religion, nationality, or marital status.

To ensure equal opportunities for all qualified persons, PECB will make reasonable accommodations³ for candidates, when appropriate. If candidates need special accommodations because of a disability or a specific physical condition, they should inform the partner/distributor in order for them to make proper arrangements⁴. Any information that candidates provide regarding their disability/special needs will be treated with confidentiality. To download the Candidates with Disabilities Form, click [here](#).

Behavior Policy

PECB aims to provide top-quality, consistent, and accessible services for the benefit of its external stakeholders: distributors, partners, trainers, invigilators, examiners, members of different committees and advisory boards, and clients (trainees, examinees, certified individuals, and certificate holders), as well as creating and maintaining a positive work environment which ensures safety and well-being of its staff, and holds the dignity, respect and human rights of its staff in high regard.

The purpose of this Policy is to ensure that PECB is managing unacceptable behavior of external stakeholders towards PECB staff in an impartial, confidential, fair, and timely manner. To read the Behavior Policy, click [here](#).

Refund Policy

PECB will refund your payment, if the requirements of the Refund Policy are met. To read the Refund Policy, click [here](#).

³ According to ADA, the term "reasonable accommodation" may include: (A) making existing facilities used by employees readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities; and (B) job restructuring, part-time or modified work schedules, reassignment to a vacant position, acquisition or modification of equipment or devices, appropriate adjustment or modifications of examinations, training materials or policies, the provision of qualified readers or interpreters, and other similar accommodations for individuals with disabilities.

⁴ ADA Amendments Act of 2008 (P.L. 110–325) Sec. 12189. Examinations and courses. [Section 309]: Any person that offers examinations or courses related to applications, licensing, certification, or credentialing for secondary or post-secondary education, professional, or trade purposes shall offer such examinations or courses in a place and manner accessible to persons with disabilities or offer alternative accessible arrangements for such individuals.

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**Emails:**

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Certification:
certification.team@pecb.com

Customer Service:
support@pecb.com

**PECB Help Center**

Visit our Help Center to browse Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ), view manuals for using PECB website and applications, read documents related to PECB processes, or to contact us via Support Center's online tracking system.

www.pecb.com