

Candidate Handbook

CERTIFIED DATA PROTECTION OFFICER



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ABOUT PECB

PECB is a certification body for persons, management systems, and products on a wide range of international standards. As a global provider of training, examination, audit, and certification services, PECB offers its expertise on multiple fields, including, but not limited to, Information Security, Information Technology, Business Continuity, Service Management, Quality Management, Risk Management, Health, Safety, and Environment.

We help professionals and organizations show commitment and competence by providing them with valuable education, evaluation, and certification against internationally recognized standards. Our mission is to provide our clients with comprehensive services that inspire trust, demonstrate recognition, and benefit the society as a whole.

The principal objectives of PECB include:

1. Establishing the minimum requirements necessary to certify professionals, organizations, and products
2. Reviewing and verifying the qualifications of candidates to ensure that they are eligible to apply for a PECB certificate
3. Developing and maintaining reliable, valid, and current PECB certificate application processes
4. Granting certificates to qualified candidates, organizations, and products; maintaining records; and publishing a directory of the candidate who hold valid PECB certificates
5. Establishing requirements for the periodic renewal of PECB certificates and ensuring compliance with those requirements
6. Ascertaining that certified individuals meet ethical standards and adhere to the PECB Code of Ethics
7. Promoting the benefits of certification for organizations, employers, public officials, practitioners in related fields, and the public.

Why Choose PECB as Your Certification Body?

Global Recognition

Selecting the right certification body that offers qualitative and credible training and certification services can be challenging. However, by choosing an accredited certification body such as PECB proves that you are compliant with best practices, up to date, and trustworthy.

Individuals who obtain a PECB certificate will benefit from the recognition in domestic and overseas markets. Being accredited by some of the most reputable accreditation bodies in the world gives us global recognition.

Competent Personnel

The core team of PECB consists of competent individuals who have relevant sector experience. All of our employees hold professional credentials and are constantly trained to provide more than satisfactory services to our clients.

Compliance with Standards

Certification is proof of compliance with a particular standard. It proves that the standard requirements have been fulfilled and validated with adequate consistency, professionalism, and impartiality. PECB certifications are evidence of compliance with standards and their requirements, therefore reflecting safety, reliability, and superior quality.

Reasonable Fees

Apart from being the lowest charging organization for professional training and certification services, including both the examination and certification processes, PECB also charges the lowest certification maintenance fees in the industry.

Why not benefit from the opportunity of attaining accredited professional certifications that are globally recognized, fully compliant with standards, and affordable? PECB certifications have proven to be effective instruments for the validation of knowledge, skills, and experience in a rapidly changing economy. By holding a PECB certification, you will demonstrate that you have the necessary capabilities to safeguard yourself and your organization against persistent, changing, and undefined threats in a moderately challenging environment over a short period of time.

PECB CODE OF ETHICS

PECB professionals will:

1. Conduct themselves professionally, with honesty, accuracy, fairness, responsibility, and independence
2. Act at all times solely in the best interest of their employer, their clients, the public, and the profession, by adhering to the professional standards and applicable techniques while offering professional services
3. Maintain competency in their respective fields and strive to constantly improve their professional capabilities
4. Offer only professional services for which they are qualified to perform, and adequately inform clients about the nature of the proposed services, including any relevant concerns or risks
5. Inform each employer or client of any business interests or affiliations that might influence their judgment or impair their fairness
6. Treat in a confidential and private manner the information acquired during professional and business dealings of any present or former employer or client without its proper consent
7. Comply with all laws and regulations of the jurisdictions where professional activities are conducted
8. Respect the intellectual property and contributions of others
9. Not, intentionally or otherwise, communicate false or falsified information that may compromise the integrity of the evaluation process of a candidate for a professional designation
10. Not act in any manner that could compromise the reputation of PECB or its certification programs
11. Fully cooperate on the inquiry following a claimed infringement of this Code of Ethics

The full version of the PECB Code of Ethics can be downloaded here:

<https://pecb.com/en/pecb-code-of-ethics>.

INTRODUCTION

As the number of businesses and organizations operating across borders is constantly increasing, the protection of personal data and data protection laws and rights are becoming more crucial for business, organizations and for individuals. Data protection is considered a fundamental right of natural persons, therefore, safeguards and measures shall be implemented to ensure the security of that data. The need for appropriate safeguards and measures that enable the security of data, prevent personal data breaches and ensure safe data processing is greater than ever, and is expected to constantly increase.

To protect and respect the fundamental rights and freedoms of natural persons with regard to the processing of their personal data, the European Parliament has approved the European Commission proposal for the publication of the General Data Protection Regulation which has entered into force after its publication.

Material and Territorial Scope

1. *GDPR applies to the processing of personal data wholly or partly by automated means and to the processing other than by automated means of personal data which form part of a filing system or are intended to form part of a filing system.*
2. *GDPR applies to the processing of personal data in the context of the activities of an establishment of a controller or a processor in the Union, regardless of whether the processing takes place in the Union or not*
3. *GDPR applies to the processing of personal data of data subjects who are in the Union by a controller or processor not established in the Union, where the processing activities are related to:*
 - a) *the offering of goods or services, irrespective of whether a payment of the data subject is required, to such data subjects in the Union; or*
 - b) *the monitoring of their behaviour as far as their behaviour takes place within the Union*

Being aware that the protection of personal data, prevention of a personal data breach and security of data processing are essential for all organizations operating within or in cooperation with organizations established in the European Union, thus the need for Certified Data Protection Officers has enormously increased. Today's employers are not just seeking for data protection professionals, but want prove that these professionals hold a predetermined set of knowledge and skills. Companies now place a high degree of importance on hiring, contracting with, and promoting credentialed security practitioners prepared to tackle today and tomorrow's security challenges, and personal data incidents.

PECB is the only North American organization that certifies CDPO professionals. It is important to understand that PECB certifications are not a license or simply a membership. It is peer recognition that an individual has demonstrated proficiency in, and comprehension of, a series of competencies. PECB certifications are awarded to candidates that can provide proof of experience and have passed a standardized exam in the certification area.

This document specifies the PECB Certified Data Protection Officer certification schemes in compliance with the ISO/IEC 17024:2012 standard (Conformity assessment – General Requirements for bodies operating certification of persons). Also, this handbook contains information about the process by which candidates may earn and maintain their credentials. It is very important that you read all the information contained in this booklet before completing and submitting your application. If questions arise after reading this application handbook, please contact the PECB office at certification@pecb.com.

PECB CERTIFICATION PROCESS STEPS

1. Decide which certification is right for you

Each PECB certification has specific education and professional experience requirements. To determine which credential is right for you, verify the eligibility criteria for the various CDPO certifications and your professional needs.

2. Prepare for the exam

All candidates are responsible for their own study and preparation for the exam. No specific set of training courses or curriculum of study is required as part of the certification process. Likewise, the completion of a training course will significantly enhance your chance of successfully passing a PECB exam. To learn more about exams, competency domains, and knowledge statements, please go to: [Exam Preparation Guides](#).

3. Apply and schedule the exam

To schedule an exam:

- a) Candidates can contact one of our resellers who provide training courses and exam sessions. To find a training course provider in your region, please follow this link: https://pecb.com/reseller/active_resellers. The PECB training course schedule is also available here: <https://pecb.com/events>.
- b) Candidates can also take a PECB exam remotely at the convenience of their own home through the PECB Exam application, which can be accessed here: <https://pecb.com/en/eventExamList/schedule>

4. Take the exam

Candidates will be required to arrive at least 30 minutes before the exam starts. Candidates arriving late will not be given additional time to compensate for the late arrival and may be denied entry to the exam. All candidates are required to present a valid identity card such as the national ID card, the driver's license, or the passport to the invigilator. The duration of the exam varies depending on the type of the exam (find below the description of the different exam types for more details). Additional time can be given to candidates taking the exam in a language other than their first language (if requested by the candidates on the exam day).

Exam type:

In essay type exams, also known as "open book" exams, the candidates are authorized to use the following reference materials:

- A copy of the Certified Data Protection Officer standard
- Any personal notes made by the candidate during the training course session
- A hard copy dictionary

For more information about exam details, please visit [Examination Rules and Policies](#).

5. Receive your exam results

Results will be communicated via email within a period of six to eight weeks from the exam date. The candidate will be provided with only two possible exam results: pass or fail, rather than an exact grade.

In case of exam failure, the results will be accompanied with the list of domains in which the candidate has failed to fully answer the question(s). This can help the candidate better prepare for a retake exam. Candidates who disagree with the exam results may file a complaint by writing to examination@pecb.com.

6. Apply for certification

All candidates who successfully pass the exam (or an equivalent accepted by PECB) are entitled to apply for the PECB credentials they were examined for. Specific educational and professional requirements need to be fulfilled in order to obtain a PECB certification. Candidates are required to fill out the online certification application form <https://pecb.com/en/user/checkEmail>, and fill out all other online forms (that can be accessed via their PECB online profile), including contact details of references who will be contacted to validate the candidate's professional experience. Lastly, before submitting the application, the candidate can choose to pay online or be billed. For additional information, the candidate can contact accounting@pecb.com or certification@pecb.com.

The approval of the application occurs as soon as the Certification Department validates that the candidate fulfils all the certification requirements regarding the respective credential. An email will be sent to the email address you provided during your application process to communicate your application status. If approved, the candidate will then be able to download the certificate from their PECB Account.

7. Maintain your certification

PECB certifications are valid for three years. To maintain the certification, the applicant shall demonstrate every year that he/she is still performing tasks that are related to the certification. PECB Certified professionals shall annually provide PECB with the number of hours of project related tasks they have performed, along with the contact details of individuals who can validate such tasks. Additionally, certified professionals should regularly pay the annual PECB certification maintenance fees.

A notification email is sent to our certified members, who are required to submit their Continuing Professional Development (CPD) along with the Annual Maintenance Fee (AMF) three months before the annual date of their certification. The PECB certified members will then be able to submit their CPDs by visiting their account and providing the required information for the respective certification.

CERTIFIED DATA PROTECTION OFFICER

PECB Certified Data Protection Officer certifications are professional certifications for specialists needing to implement and manage a framework to ensure compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation and safe processing activities.

The principal competencies and knowledge skills needed by the market are the ability to support an organization to ensure an adequate level of security of processing personal data and comply with the GDPR requirements including: the basic principles of security of personal data, transfers of personal data in third countries, designation of a DPO, rights of the data subject, roles of the data controllers and processors and the implementation of technical and organizational security measures.

Various professions may apply for this certification:

- Project managers or consultants seeking to prepare and support an organization in planning, implementing, and maintaining a compliance program based on the GDPR
- DPO and Senior Managers responsible for the personal data protection of an enterprise and the management of its risks
- Members of an information security, incident management and business continuity team
- Expert advisors involved in the security of personal data
- Technical experts and compliance experts seeking to prepare for a Data Protection Officer role

The requirements for CDPO certifications are:

Credential	Exam	Professional experience	Project experience	Other requirements
PECB Certified Provisional Data Protection Officer	PECB Certified Data Protection Officer Exam	None	None	Signing the PECB Code of Ethics
PECB Certified Data Protection Officer	PECB Certified Data Protection Officer Exam or equivalent	Five years: Two years of work experience in Data Protection	Data Protection activities: a total of 300 hours	Signing the PECB Code of Ethics

To be considered valid, these activities should include the following:

- Drafting the Data Protection plan
- Initiating the Data Protection implementation
- Implementing the Data Protection Policy
- Managing, monitoring, and managing the Data Protection implementation
- Identifying and acting upon continual improvement opportunities

GENERAL INFORMATION

Applying for Certification

Candidates who apply for the PECB certificate will need to provide the following:

- Two references, including their names and contact details
- Their most recent CV
- Their data protection project log

PECB will validate a candidate's professional experience with the references to ensure the accuracy of the application.

About Application

Language

PECB provides support in both English and French languages.

Application Fees for Certification

The application fee for certification is \$500.

For all the candidates that have followed the training course and the exam with one of PECB's resellers, the application fee includes the costs associated with examination, application for certification, and the first year of Annual Maintenance Fee (AMF) only.

Exam Cancellations

Please contact your reseller for any changes regarding the exam date, time, location, or other details.

ABOUT EXAMINATION

Admission Rules to Examination

Candidates shall comply with all the security rules established for the examination. For more specific information about this exam, please contact examination@pecb.com to request a copy of the corresponding exam preparation guide, or download it from the PECB website: <https://pecb.com/en/exam-preparation-guides>.

Exam Security

A significant component of a successful and respected professional certification credential is maintaining the security and confidentiality of the exam. PECB relies upon the ethical behaviour of certificate holders and applicants to maintain the security and confidentiality of PECB exams. If candidates or someone who holds PECB credentials reveal information about PECB exam content, they violate the PECB Code of Ethics. PECB will take action against individuals who violate PECB Policies and the Code of Ethics. Actions taken may include permanently barring individuals from pursuing PECB credentials and revoking certifications from those who have been awarded the credential. PECB will also pursue legal action against individuals or organizations who infringe upon its copyrights, proprietary rights, and intellectual property.

Exam Tips

On the day of the exam:

1. Plan to arrive at the exam site at least 30 minutes prior to your appointment
2. Get a good night's rest the night before
3. Eat a well-balanced meal prior to reporting to the exam centre and avoid excessive stimulants such as caffeine
4. Read and follow the instructions carefully; ask the invigilator for clarification if you are not sure about the instructions
5. Periodically check your progress (This will allow you to make any adjustments in time.) and pay attention to the remaining time to finish the exam
6. Your exam score will be determined by the number of questions you answer correctly. You will not be deducted any points from incorrect answers, therefore try answering every question.

Exam Scores and Scoring Method

PECB evaluates all applications fairly. PECB does not impose limitations on the number of candidates that will pass. Exam scores are based on the number of questions answered correctly.

Exam Results

Scores are strictly confidential and they cannot be obtained over the phone or sent to a third party. If you have any questions concerning your exam results, you should direct them in writing to examination@pecb.com.

Exam Retake Policy

There is no limit on the number of times a candidate may retake an exam. However, there are some limitations in terms of the allowed time frame in between exam retakes, such as:

- If a candidate does not pass the exam on the first attempt, the candidate must wait 15 days (from the initial date of the exam) for the next attempt (first retake). The retake fee applies.

Note: Candidates who have completed the full training course but failed the written exam are eligible to retake the exam once for free within a 12-month period from the initial date of the exam.

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- If a candidate does not pass the exam on the second attempt, the candidate must wait three months (from the initial date of the exam) for the next attempt (second retake). The retake fee applies.
- If a candidate does not pass the exam on the third attempt, the candidate must wait six months (from the initial date of the exam) for the next attempt (third retake). The retake fee applies.
- After the fourth attempt, a waiting period of 12 months from the last session date is required, in order for the candidate to retake the same exam. The regular fee applies.

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

To arrange exam retakes (date, time, place, and costs), the candidate needs to contact the PECB reseller who has initially organized the training course session.

Closing a Case

If a candidate does not apply for the certificate within three years, their case will be closed. Even though the certification period expires, the candidate has the right to reopen their case. However, PECB will no longer be responsible for any changes regarding the conditions, standards, policies, candidate handbook, or exam preparation guide that were applicable before the case was closed. A candidate requesting their case to reopen must do so in writing and pay the required fees.

ABOUT CERTIFICATION

Professional References

For each certification application, two professional references are required. Professional references shall be the individuals who have worked with you in a professional environment and can validate your data protection experience, current, and previous work history. You cannot use as a professional reference the persons who fall under your supervision or are a relative of yours.

Professional Experience

Candidates shall provide complete information regarding their professional experience, including job title(s), commencement and end date(s), job description(s), and more. Candidates are advised to summarize their previous or current assignments, providing sufficient details to describe the nature of the responsibilities that they have had. More detailed information can be included in the résumé.

DP Experience

The candidate data protection experience log will be checked to ensure that the applicant has achieved the required number of project activities-hours.

Evaluation of Certification Applications

The Certification Department will evaluate each application to validate the candidate's eligibility for certification. A candidate whose application is being reviewed will be notified in writing and given a reasonable time frame to provide any additional documentation if necessary. 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 can eventually lead to the downgrade of it to a lower credential.

Denial of Certification

PECB can deny certification 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 can be appealed in writing to the Certification Board.

The application payment for the certificate is non-refundable. This is because of the process of verifying the application, verifying the evidence submitted by the candidates, and verifying the engagement of the relevant units in this process.

Suspension of Certification

PECB can temporarily suspend certification if the candidate fails to satisfy the requirements of PECB. Additional reasons for suspending certification 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 wilfully 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

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Revocation of Certification

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

- Violate the PECB Code of Ethics
- Misrepresent and provide false information of the scope of the certificate
- Break any other PECB rules

Annual Maintenance Fee for Certification

To maintain their credentials, candidates should pay the Annual Maintenance Fee (AMF) every year. Only the candidates who pay the AMF will appear online in the PECB Directory of Certified Professional.

Recertification

PECB certificates are valid for three years. In order to maintain a certificate, candidates are required to provide evidence that they are performing activities related to the respective certification on an annual basis. In addition, candidates are also required to pay the Annual Maintenance Fee (AMF).

After successfully maintaining a PECB certificate for three years, candidates can then apply for a renewal of their certificate.

Note: *PECB Certified Professionals who hold Lead Certificates and fail to provide evidence of certification maintenance requirements will have their credentials downgraded. On the other hand, holders of Master Certificates who fail to submit CPDs and pay AMFs will have their certificates revoked.*

To find out more about the Recertification process, please visit:

<https://pecb.com/en/certification-maintenance>.

Upgrade of Credentials

Professionals can apply to upgrade to a higher credential as soon as they can prove that they fulfil the requirements.

In order to apply for an upgrade, please log in to your PECB Account, visit the “My Certifications” tab, and click on the “Upgrade” link. The upgrade application fee is \$100.

For example, if a professional has been certified as Provisional Data Protection Officer and has 5 years of work experience, two of which are related to Data Protection, and a total of 200 hours of data protection project activities, and within a year he/she makes an additional 100 hours, adding up to a total of 300 hours data protection project activities, the professional can apply to be upgraded to Data Protection Officer.

ABOUT PECB GENERAL POLICIES


PECB Code of Ethics

You can find the PECB Code of Ethics at: <https://pecb.com/en/pecb-code-of-ethics>. Adherence to the PECB Code of Ethics is a voluntary engagement. However, if a member does not follow this code by engaging in gross misconduct, PECB membership may be terminated and certifications revoked. Not only is it important for PECB certified professionals to adhere to the principles of this Code, but also each member should encourage and support adherence by other members.

Other Exams and Certifications

PECB does accept certifications and exams provided from other recognized accredited certification bodies. PECB will evaluate the requests through its equivalence process to decide whether the respective certification(s) or exam(s) can be accepted as equivalent to the respective PECB certificate (e.g., ISO/IEC 27001 Lead Auditor certificate).

Non-discrimination and Special Accommodations

All candidate applications shall be evaluated objectively without regard to age, sex, race, religion, national origin, or marital status. PECB will allow for reasonable accommodation ⁽¹⁾ as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) ⁽²⁾ or an equivalent National Law. A candidate who needs special accommodation must make the request in writing and allow an extra two weeks for the processing of the application. Click here to download [Special Accommodations for Candidates with Disabilities Form](#) .

Complaints and Appeals

Any complaint that a candidate has must be made no later than 30 days after their certification has been denied. Within 30 working days after receiving the complaint, PECB will provide a written response to the candidate. Should the response from PECB not be satisfactory, the candidate has the right to file an appeal. You can read more about the complaint and appeal procedures by visiting the following link: <https://pecb.com/en/complaint-and-appeal-procedure>.

(1) 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

(2) 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 postsecondary 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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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. Visit Help Center here: www.pecb.com/help

Emails:

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Certification: certification@pecb.com
Customer Service: customer@pecb.com

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