

Certified IPC Management Systems Auditor (CIMSA)

Candidate Handbook

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SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

About PECB

PECB is a certification body that provides education¹, certification, and certificate programs for individuals on a wide range of disciplines.

Through our presence in more than 150 countries, we help professionals demonstrate their competence in various areas of expertise by providing valuable evaluation, certification, and certificate programs against internationally recognized standards.

Our key objectives are:

1. Establishing the minimum requirements necessary to certify professionals and to grant designations
2. Reviewing and verifying the qualifications of individuals to ensure they are eligible for certification
3. Maintaining and continually improving the evaluation process for certifying individuals
4. Certifying qualified individuals, granting designations and maintaining respective directories
5. Establishing requirements for the periodic renewal of certifications and ensuring that the certified individuals are complying with those requirements
6. Ascertaining that PECB professionals meet ethical standards in their professional practice
7. Representing our stakeholders in matters of common interest
8. Promoting the benefits of certification and certificate programs to professionals, businesses, governments, and the public

Our mission

Provide our clients with comprehensive examination, certification, and certificate program services that inspire trust and benefit the society as a whole.

Our vision

Become the global benchmark for the provision of professional certification services and certificate programs.

Our values

Integrity, Professionalism, Fairness

¹ Education refers to training courses developed by PECB and offered globally through our partners.

The Value of PECB Certification

Global recognition

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.

The value of PECB certifications is validated by the accreditation from the International Accreditation Service (IAS-PCB-111), the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS-No. 21923) and the Korean Accreditation Board (KAB-PC-08) under ISO/IEC 17024 – General requirements for bodies operating certification of persons. The value of PECB certificate programs is 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 an associate member of The Independent Association of Accredited Registrars (IAAR), 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, CLUSIF, Credential Engine, and ITCC. In addition, PECB is an approved Licensed Partner Publisher (LPP) from the Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification Accreditation Body (CMMC-AB) for the Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification standard (CMMC), is approved by Club EBIOS to offer the EBIOS Risk Manager Skills certification, and is approved by CNIL (Commission Nationale de l'Informatique et des Libertés) to offer DPO 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. PECB has a team of experts who are responsible for addressing requests, questions, and needs. We do our best to maintain a 24-hour maximum response time without compromising the quality of the services.

Flexibility and convenience

Online learning opportunities make your professional journey more convenient as you can schedule your learning sessions according to your lifestyle. Such flexibility gives you more free time, offers more career advancement opportunities, and reduces costs.

PECB Code of Ethics

The Code of Ethics represents the highest values and ethics that PECB is fully committed to follow, as it recognizes the importance of them when providing services and attracting clients.

The Compliance Division makes sure that PECB employees, trainers, examiners, invigilators, partners, distributors, members of different advisory boards and committees, certified individuals, and certificate holders (hereinafter “PECB professionals”) adhere to this Code of Ethics. In addition, the Compliance Division consistently emphasizes the need to behave professionally and with full responsibility, competence, and fairness in service provision with internal and external stakeholders, such as applicants, candidates, certified individuals, certificate holders, accreditation authorities, and government authorities.

It is PECB’s belief that to achieve organizational success, it has to fully understand the clients and stakeholders’ needs and expectations. To do this, PECB fosters a culture based on the highest levels of integrity, professionalism, and fairness, which are also its values. These values are integral to the organization, and have characterized the global presence and growth over the years and established the reputation that PECB enjoys today.

PECB believes that strong ethical values are essential in having healthy and strong relationships. Therefore, it is PECB’s primary responsibility to ensure that PECB professionals are displaying behavior that is in full compliance with PECB principles and values.

PECB professionals are responsible for:

1. Displaying professional behavior in service provision with honesty, accuracy, fairness, and independence
2. Acting at all times in their service provision solely in the best interest of their employer, clients, the public, and the profession in accordance with this Code of Ethics and other professional standards
3. Demonstrating and developing competence in their respective fields and striving to continually improve their skills and knowledge
4. Providing services only for those that they are qualified and competent and adequately informing clients and customers about the nature of proposed services, including any relevant concerns or risks
5. Informing their employer or client of any business interests or affiliations which might influence or impair their judgment
6. Preserving the confidentiality of information of any present or former employer or client during service provision
7. Complying with all the applicable laws and regulations of the jurisdictions in the country where the service provisions were conducted
8. Respecting the intellectual property and contributions of others
9. Not communicating intentionally false or falsified information that may compromise the integrity of the evaluation process of a candidate for a PECB certification or a PECB certificate program
10. Not falsely or wrongly presenting themselves as PECB representatives without a proper license or misusing PECB logo, certifications or certificates
11. Not acting in ways that could damage PECB’s reputation, certifications or certificate programs
12. Cooperating in a full manner on the inquiry following a claimed infringement of this Code of Ethics

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

Introduction to Certified IPC Management Systems Auditor

In today's rapidly evolving business landscape, management systems have become the backbone of operations, and organizations across various industries are increasingly recognizing the significance of robust management systems to ensure the achievement of their objectives and enhance overall performance. To meet this demand and address the need for competent professionals, the role of a certified management systems auditor has gained immense importance.

Certified management system auditors play a pivotal role in helping organizations effectively evaluate, assess, and enhance their management systems. These professionals are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to evaluate the compliance, effectiveness, and efficiency of management systems against established standards and guidelines. The Certified IPC Management Systems Auditor credential offered by reputable organizations ensures that auditors possess the necessary expertise and proficiency to carry out comprehensive audits across various management systems, including quality, information security, environmental, business continuity, occupational health and safety, and more.

This certification emphasizes adherence to international standards and best practices, and it equips auditors with the tools and techniques required to assess risks, identify improvement opportunities, and enhance the overall performance of organizations. By implementing an effective management systems auditing process aligned with recognized standards, organizations can gain valuable insights into their operations, mitigate risks, improve compliance, and achieve excellence in their respective industries.

By promoting certified management systems auditors, organizations demonstrate their commitment to meeting industry standards, enhancing governance, and ensuring the highest level of quality and compliance. Moreover, they recognize the need for professionals who can tackle the challenges of today and anticipate future risks and opportunities in the ever-changing business environment.

PECB certifications are not a license or simply a membership. They attest to the candidates' knowledge and skills gained through our training courses and are issued to candidates who have the required experience and have passed the exam.

This document specifies the certified management system 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 the PECB international office at certification.team@pecb.com.

SECTION II: EXAMINATION PREPARATION, RULES, AND POLICIES

Preparing for and scheduling the exam

All candidates are responsible for their own study and preparation for certification exams. Although candidates are not required to attend the training course to be eligible for taking the exam, attending it can significantly increase their chances of successfully passing the exam.

To schedule the exam, candidates need to contact marketing@pecb.com.

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 is \$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 objective of the “Certified IPC Management Systems Auditor” exam is to ensure that the candidate has acquired the necessary knowledge and skills to perform a management system audit by applying widely recognized audit principles, procedures, and techniques.

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

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 above-mentioned domains and their relevance, the exam contains 10 questions, 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.

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. **Paper-based:** Exams are provided on paper, where candidates are not allowed to use anything but the exam paper and a pen. 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.
2. **Online:** Exams are provided electronically via the PECB Exams application. The use of electronic devices, such as tablets and cell phones, is not allowed. The exam session is supervised remotely by a PECB Invigilator via the PECB Exams application and an external/integrated camera.

For more information about online exams, go to the [PECB Online Exam Guide](#).

PECB exams are available in two types:

1. Essay-type question exam
2. Multiple-choice question exam

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

A sample of exam questions will be provided below.

Note: PECB will progressively transition to multiple-choice exams. They will also be open book and comprise scenario-based questions that will allow PECB to evaluate candidates' knowledge, abilities, and skills to use information in new situations (apply), draw connections among ideas (analyze), and justify a stand or decision (evaluate).

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](#).

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.

Exam Security Policy

PECB is committed to protect the integrity of its exams and the overall examination process, and relies upon the ethical behavior of applicants, potential applicants, candidates and partners to maintain the confidentiality of PECB exams. This Policy aims to address unacceptable behavior and ensure fair treatment of all candidates.

Any disclosure of information about the content of PECB exams is a direct violation of this Policy and PECB's Code of Ethics. Consequently, candidates taking a PECB exam are required to sign an Exam Confidentiality and Non-Disclosure Agreement and must comply with the following:

1. The questions and answers of the exam materials are the exclusive and confidential property of PECB. Once candidates complete the submission of the exam to PECB, they will no longer have any access to the original exam or a copy of it.
2. Candidates are prohibited from revealing any information regarding the questions and answers of the exam or discuss such details with any other candidate or person.
3. Candidates are not allowed to take with themselves any materials related to the exam, out of the exam room.
4. Candidates are not allowed to copy or attempt to make copies (whether written, photocopied, or otherwise) of any exam materials, including, without limitation, any questions, answers, or screen images.
5. Candidates must not participate nor promote fraudulent exam-taking activities, such as:
 - Looking at another candidate's exam material or answer sheet
 - Giving or receiving any assistance from the invigilator, candidate, or anyone else
 - Using unauthorized reference guides, manuals, tools, etc., including using "brain dump" sites as they are not authorized by PECB

Once a candidate becomes aware or is already aware of the irregularities or violations of the points mentioned above, they are responsible for complying with those, otherwise if such irregularities were to happen, candidates will be reported directly to PECB or if they see such irregularities, they should immediately report to PECB.

Candidates are solely responsible for understanding and complying with PECB Exam Rules and Policies, Confidentiality and Non-Disclosure Agreement and Code of Ethics. Therefore, should a breach of one or more rules be identified, candidates will not receive any refunds. In addition, PECB has the right to deny the right to enter a PECB exam or to invite candidates for an exam retake if irregularities are identified during and after the grading process, depending on the severity of the case.

Any violation of the points mentioned above will cause PECB irreparable damage for which no monetary remedy can make up. Therefore, PECB can take the appropriate actions to remedy or prevent any unauthorized disclosure or misuse of exam materials, including obtaining an immediate injunction. PECB will take action against individuals that violate the rules and policies, including permanently banning them 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.

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.

Candidates that disagree with the results may request a re-evaluation by writing to examination.team@pecb.com within 30 days of receiving the results. Re-evaluation requests received after 30 days will not be processed. If candidates do not agree with the results of the reevaluation, they have 30 days from the date they received the reevaluated exam results to file a complaint through the [PECB Ticketing System](#). Any complaint 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 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.

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 CIMSA scheme have the following requirements:

Credential	Education	Exam	Professional experience	MS auditing 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 Personality Test</p> <p>Have a Lead Auditor course or CIMSA equivalent to 40 hours training</p> <p>Signing the PECB Code of Ethics</p>

To be considered valid, the auditing activities should follow best management 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 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 (that can be accessed via their PECB account), including contact details of individuals who will be contacted to validate the candidates' professional experience. Candidates can submit their application in English, French, German, Spanish or Korean languages. 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](#).

PECB provides support both in English and French.

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

Personality Test: Pass the Personality Test for Auditors

Training: Have a Lead Auditor course or CIMS A 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

PECB can deny certification/certificate program if candidates:

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

Candidates whose certification/certificate program has been denied can file a complaint through the complaints and appeals procedure. For more detailed information, refer to [Complaint and Appeal Policy](#) section.

The application payment for the certification/certificate program is nonrefundable.

Certification status options

Active

Means that your certification is in good standing and valid, and it is being maintained by fulfilling the PECB requirements regarding the CPD and AMF.

Suspended

PECB can temporarily suspend candidates' certification if they fail to meet the requirements. Other reasons for suspending certification include:

- 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.

Revoked

PECB can revoke (that is, to withdraw) the certification if the candidate fails to satisfy its requirements. In such cases, candidates are no longer allowed to represent themselves as PECB Certified Professionals.

Additional reasons for revoking certification can be if the candidates:

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

Candidates whose certification has been revoked can file a complaint through the complaints and appeals procedure. For more detailed information, refer to [Complaint and Appeal Policy](#) section.

Other statuses

Besides being active, suspended, or revoked, a certification can be voluntarily withdrawn or designated as Emeritus. To learn more about these statuses and the permanent cessation status, go to [Certification Status Options](#).

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 professional development (CPD) hours. In addition, they need to pay the annual maintenance fee (\$120). 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 complaints must be made no later than 30 days after receiving the certification decision. PECB will provide a written response to the candidate within 30 working days after receiving the complaint. If candidates do not find the response satisfactory, they have the right to file an appeal.

For more information about the Complaint and Appeal Policy, click [here](#).

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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**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.

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