

**International Ergonomics Association
Professional Standards and Education Committee**

Recommendations for Certification of an Ergonomist

Version 5, December 2016¹

The IEA suggests that all Federated Societies establish or co-operate with a process of certification of ergonomists. The IEA offers the following guidelines for the process and the minimum criteria to be applied.

The certifying body should aim to meet the requirements of the International Standard “Conformity assessment - General requirements for bodies operating certification of persons“ (ISO/IEC 17024)

Process of evaluation of the applicant

Purpose

The purpose of evaluating the applicant is to ensure that they are competent to practice as an ergonomist and can demonstrate an appropriate standard of professional performance. This protects the reputation of the profession.

Reference standards (Minimum competence requirements)

Expected standards of ergonomics practice should be defined clearly by the evaluating body and should refer to the IEA Core Competencies in Ergonomics.

Where certain competencies are required, evidence should be sought from educational certificates, examinations or work references to demonstrate the applicant possesses those competencies.

Methods of evaluation of competencies

The certification process should apply a range of measures to determine the person’s competence as an ergonomist. Competency in core areas of ergonomics may be demonstrated in a variety of ways. The aim should be to find a culturally acceptable and feasible combination for the region that will be covered, including but not limited to the following:

- Evidence of completion of an educational program in ergonomics that covers and assesses the required competencies.
- Evidence of a defined period of professional experience in ergonomics, e.g. at least 2 years.
- Presentation of appropriate products, work samples or descriptions of work projects and evidence of their outcomes, to demonstrate specified relevant ergonomic competencies.
- Examination of selected core competencies by written papers, oral interviews or practical tests.

Assessors

Evaluation of applications for certification should be carried out by multiple qualified and unbiased assessors. In order to establish a beginning panel of such assessors, assistance could be sought from Federated Societies or other bodies that already have a certification process in place.

¹ Replaces “Minimum Criteria for the Process of Certification of an Ergonomist” Version 4, October 2001

Minimum criteria to be satisfied by the applicant

Educational Qualifications

The aim should be for an educational qualification in ergonomics from a university level institution. Ergonomics is a science and requires academic level training. Based on the scope of the IEA core competence requirements for professional ergonomists, the IEA recommends:

- i. First level university qualification in ergonomics of a minimum of three years duration, which has included comprehensive preparation in ergonomics competencies.
- ii. Higher level university qualification in ergonomics of a minimum of one-year duration, following prior completion of a first level university education program in a related field² (involving a minimum of three years education).
- iii. A university level qualification in a related field of a minimum duration of four years, which has included substantial ergonomics content and completion of a major ergonomics project. This path accepts specialization in a specific area of ergonomics.
- iv. University level qualification in a related field of a minimum duration of three years, followed by continuing education programs to ensure a comprehensive education in ergonomics competencies and substantial experience in the practice of ergonomics.
- v. Completion of a doctoral level degree with a thesis in one of the specialty areas of ergonomics plus a continuing education program to ensure a comprehensive education in ergonomics competencies.

Consider making a number of routes to educational qualifications acceptable so that competent older practitioners, without formal ergonomics diplomas and degrees are not excluded. Ergonomics competencies may be developed during post-qualification experience and appropriate methods to assess this, should be considered.

Evaluation of applicants must be designed to ensure that ergonomics competencies can be proven, if necessary by using a variety of evaluative methods. If a formal ergonomics education or examination is not offered or appropriate in your region, then other methods such as oral interview, preparation of written essays or submission of examples of work should be required.

Supervised training

It is preferable that educational programs should include periods of ergonomics practice supervised by a qualified educationalist and/or a practicing ergonomist to achieve professional competency. Where this is not available, access to a mentor or supervisor during the initial periods of professional practice (for example, the first two years) should be encouraged.

Post-qualification experience in ergonomics practice

Post-qualification experience may include working as an ergonomics practitioner, educating others about ergonomics or carrying out ergonomics research, where some ergonomics practice forms part of the person's total activity.

The outcome of post-qualification experience should be achievement of competency in at least one of the main ergonomics areas of ergonomics (physical, cognitive, organizational) to complement the education.

It is important that the ergonomist can work independently and take full responsibility for his/her work. This can be assessed by project reports.

Recertification

The IEA recommends that certification be provided for a finite period (for example five years) and that a suitable process for recertification be defined by the certifying body, in which the applicant must demonstrate their continuing work in ergonomics and continuing education such that they remain up-to-date with scientific and practice developments. This can be assessed by attendance certificates from congresses, subscriptions to journals, and many other ways, but keeping a log book is recommended.

² A "related field" may be any professional field that prepares the student in a substantial set of the core competencies of ergonomics e.g. engineering, psychology, physiology.

Code of Conduct

The IEA strongly recommends that a Code of Conduct for professional ergonomists be signed by those who receive certification. The IEA has established guidelines for such a Code of Conduct.

It is also recommended that there is a process to deal with complaints about professional matters in regard to certified people.