



ARIZONA
ASSOCIATION FOR
ENVIRONMENTAL
EDUCATION



OFFICIAL COURSE SYLLABUS

Arizona Environmental Education Certification Program 2023 Courses

The Arizona Environmental Education Certification Program sets specific standards of knowledge, skills, and experience that highly qualified Environmental Educators in Arizona should be able to demonstrate. It is a competency and practice-based program – one where the applicant will demonstrate what they know and can do by building an online portfolio and engaging in a project. The competencies for Certification are based on the [NAAEE Guidelines for Excellence in Environmental Education](#), the [Arizona Framework for Environment Concepts and Themes \(AFECT\)](#), and the [Arizona Core Competencies for Environmental Education](#).

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About the Arizona Environmental Education Certification Program

The Arizona Environmental Education Certification Program is a self-paced, online professional development course designed for formal and non-formal educators. This course will build capacity to provide high quality environmental education whether a formal teacher in a K- 12 classroom or university, a non-formal educator in a nature setting, or informally teaching about the environment at a place of employment or enjoyment. The course helps to develop a portfolio that illustrates the applicant's competence in environmental education. It is not a facilitated course, rather, a reviewer provides feedback as the participants develops their portfolios.

Environmental Education (EE) is provided for a variety of age groups in a variety of settings. Environmental Education can occur in formal (academic) settings or non-formal non-academic settings or informally (on the spot). Environmental education is interdisciplinary, bringing together many learning objectives from the sciences to math to artistic expression to social-emotional skills. EE providers often develop specialty niches around age groups, places, issues, and approaches. Whether new to the field of environmental education or an experienced provider, this course will build on current skills and knowledge, expand one's network of providers and resources, and help to further develop strong foundations in environmental literacy.

All documentation and communication will be done online using the Canvas course website. Some assignments include the development and practice of an environmental education program or project. Participants are also provided discussion elements to connect with each other in forums and study groups. Educator cohorts are encouraged to collaborate, however work is assessed individually.

The best practices adopted globally for environmental education were developed by the National Project for Excellence in Environmental Education, defined in the Guidelines for Excellence Series endorsed by the North American Association of Environmental Education (NAAEE). This course is designed to equip educators with the knowledge, skills and abilities as outlined in NAAEE's Guidelines for the Preparation and Professional Development of Environmental Educators (2010) and Guidelines for Learning (K-12) (2010), as well as and support the Arizona State Standards, utilizing the Arizona Framework for Environmental Concepts and Themes.

As a certified environmental educator, participants join a network of high-quality providers developing an environmentally literate citizenry. Together, we uplift the profession, our students, and the planet.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the AAEE Environmental Education Certification course, participants will develop a portfolio to showcase their competency in delivering effective environmental education:

- Demonstrating increased confidence and ability to provide quality environmental education,
- Identifying effective environmental education resources,
- Building connections with a wider environmental education community,
- Creating and completing an environmental program or project
- Engaging in the process of self-reflection

Competencies

Please read and review the competencies below. These are located in the Canvas Course under Modules → Aligned Competencies.

- **North American Association for Environmental Education Core Competencies** based on *NAAEE's Guidelines for the Preparation and Professional Development of Environmental Educators*.
- **Arizona Association for Environmental Education Core Competencies of Environmental Educators**, which complement, but do not replace, the NAAEE competencies.
- **Arizona Framework for Environmental Concepts and Themes (AFECT)** which further support and articulate expectations toward mastery of environmental literacy in Arizona.

Participants are encouraged to not only read the competencies, but also find ways to integrate them into learning and apply them to teaching. Many of the assignments will prompt participants to align with these core competencies. For each assignment, consider those specific core competencies. Participants are encouraged to critically examine these competencies by discussing them with peers and/or the reviewers and implementing them into work and teaching.

Course Materials

The specific readings or materials required for this course are included in respective assignments. There are also suggested readings provided as resources in several assignments. Participants will need a computer with Internet access and. Additionally, it is recommended that participants find resources within their own niche. You are encouraged to share resources with other students on the forum page.

Assignment Policy

In order to complete your Certification in Environmental Education, participants will need to complete all of the assignments with an 80% or better. Each assignment page will offer:

- What, if any, prerequisites are recommended
 - Instructions on what to upload to complete the assignment
 - What competencies are addressed within the learning
- Information on how that assignment will be scored by the reviewer including rubrics that specify the criteria reviewers will be using to score each assignment
- Discussion forum for participants to ask questions and offer suggestions to other participants.

Because this is a self-paced course, It is recommended that participants read through all the assignments and come up with a plan and schedule that works best for them. AAEE has developed a schedule for submitting groups of assignments, to be completed in order, but participants will want to design their own schedule that meets their needs.

Assignment Tracking

Students have found they are most successful with this self-paced learning process if they track their progress on assignments. Several templates supporting various assignments are available in the resource section, or you can make your own.

The Canvas system can be setup to send reminder emails. Participants might also set up a personal goal for completion and create reminders on an application such as MS Outlook, Google, etc. Reviewers will periodically check in with participants, however it is the responsibility of the participant to complete all assignment by the course deadline.

Assignment Details

The following is an overview and short description of each assignment. See the corresponding assignment page in Canvas for detailed information of how to complete the assignments. You must score an 80% on each assignment, and overall, to become certified.

Each assignment contains a short list of references for you to use as a starting point for your research. These references are not an exhaustive list and we strongly encourage you to do further investigation into each topical area, seeking unbiased information from a variety of sources such as journal articles and reference books. Please use the internet with caution and do not simply rely upon journal articles for your information.

1. Module 1:

- **What is Environmental Education? (20 points):** Describe the lens of environmental education that you practice and discuss varied lenses in the application of EE.

- **Formal, Non-formal, and Non-traditional Learning and Teaching (20 points):** No matter your previous experience with education, it is important to understand the difference between these three types of learning and teaching. Each is unique, yet there can be much overlap in the field of environmental education. Having a working knowledge of the types of learning and teaching will help you better understand how your work fits into the bigger picture.
- **Environmental Advocate vs. Environmental Educator? (25 points):** Identify and describe the differences between advocacy and education. Summarize any environmental issue first as an educator, then as an advocate. Reflect on why it is important for educators to understand and practice the difference.
- **Looking for and Understanding Bias (30 points):** Bias is a common issue environmental educators must address in order to ensure that teaching and learning is comprehensive. To gain a better understanding of the controversy of bias in environmental education, read the attached resources on bias then find and reflect on bias in a resource of your choosing.

2. **Module 2:**

- **The History of Environmental Education (20 points):** Provide a brief overview of the history of environmental education, highlighting some of the important historical influences on the EE field today (two minimum), briefly describing the impact of each.
- **Examining the History of EE from other cultural paradigms (20 points):** Environmental Education is a practice that brings together ideas from many varied cultures. Understanding your own perspective, while also learning about and understanding others creates the inclusive field of EE. In this assignment, reflect on the history of ee through a cultural paradigm that is not your own.

3. **Module 3:**

- **Place-based education and your biome (25 points):** Many natural processes shape a landscape's ecology, or bioregion. Additionally, cultural processes are impacted by the natural environment, and also impact the environment. These factors create a sense of place, which can play a huge role in Environmental Education through place-based education. In this assignment, reflect on your bioregion and its impact in place-based education.
- **Your Environmental Education Experience (10 points):** Complete two reflective activities to assess what your strengths are as an educator and where you would like to improve. Then, identify your resources for development.
- **Guidelines for Excellence Workshop (10 points):** Complete a Guidelines for Excellence Workshop through AAEE. This workshop will introduce you to guidelines that will help you create and identify effective practices,

materials, and curricula.

4. **Module 4:**

- **NAAEE DEI Module on eeLearn (10 points):** Complete the North American Association for Environmental Education’s Module on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. This module provides resources on how to ensure equitability and inclusiveness in environmental practice and education.

5. **Module 5:**

- **Environmental Educator’s Professional Code of Ethics (10 points):** Read and reflect on the Arizona Code of Conduct for Environmental Education Professionals. Describe the importance of competencies and content knowledge and the responsibility of handling these elements of your professional career.

6. **Module 6:**

- **NAAEE Research and Evaluation Module on eeLearn (10 points):** Complete the North American Association for Environmental Education’s Module on Research and Evaluation. This module provides resource on how to conduct effective and appropriate research and evaluation for projects.

7. **Module 7:**

- **Action Project Overview and Learning Outcomes (20 points):** Here you begin the creation of an Action Research Project. This project is a multi-step process to address an issue you care about. You will use this project to create change. Use this first assignment as an avenue to reflect, address question, or develop ideas.
- **Action Project Kick-Start Your Thinking:** Complete steps one and two of your project. You will generate your topic and its limitations, then complete guiding questions to develop your own research question. These steps will help you identify a clear purpose for study.
- **Action Project Introduction, Part 2 (Relevant Background Reading):** In this assignment you will complete the reading review section of your Action Plan. Conducting key research will allow you to identify background information, define terms and concepts, and highlight the current information supporting your research question.
- **Study, Part 1 (Data collection and analysis methodology):** Begin the discussion on data in this assignment. Here you will define what type of data you will collect, your methodologies for collection, and result presentation.
- **Study, Part 2 (Data analysis and presentation of findings):** In this assignment you will present and analyze your data and findings. Discuss what happened in your data and provide evidence of your findings. This step of the process allows you to discuss found relationships, trends, or patterns.
- **Study, Part 3 (Discussion)** The discussion portion of your project helps you define the overarching relationships of the project. These connections are further discussed by taking a look at how these findings further knowledge and understanding in the field.

- **Conclusion (Outcomes, implications, and reflections/personal action plan):** Complete a reflection of your study. Here you will think about the outcomes of your study and how they came to be. You will discuss limitations or talk about what you have learned as a result of the study. In addition, you will consider recommendations for studies in the future.
- **Completed Action Research Project:** Create and submit an APA formatted draft of your study. Here is where you will use proper citations, format, and conventions. Submit the completed project under this assignment.

8. **Module 8**

- **Community Engagement In Practice:** In this assignment you will use what you have learned to reflect on how your practice in EE can engage your community. Bringing together the pieces of this course overall, assess how your programming is collaborative, inclusive, community centered, and invests in long term change.
- **Your Future as and Environmental Educator:** In the final assignment of the certification, take the opportunity on where you will grow from here. Using the Guidelines for Excellence *Professional Development for Environmental Educators*, decide where you would like to develop further. Then, identify opportunities you would like to pursue based on your professional growth template from Assignment 1.

• **Reviewers and Grading**

One reviewer will be assigned to score all of your assignments. Please think of the reviewer as a resource. This certification should be seen as a learning experience just as much as it is an assessment of competencies. The goal is to finish the certification with more knowledge, experience, and confidence in the field of Environmental Education.

Each assignment includes a rubric that the reviewer will use. Review the rubric before completing the assignment. Scored rubrics will be returned to participants as they are completed by the reviewer. The course is based on the principles of mastery learning, so if participants do not meet the requirements on their first attempt on any assignment, they will be given the opportunity to review the materials and resubmit the assignment. This ensures that students complete the course with the competencies necessary to provide quality environmental education.

In order to maintain continuity of student/reviewer contact, students are expected to complete the course, with their reviewer by the deadline. This also ensures that the content of the course remains relevant and timely. Reviewers are expected to respond to submitted assignments within 30 days. We recommend submitting each assignment as it is finished rather than all at once. This will give the reviewer time to review and will give the participant time to reflect and grow from this learning experience. Please be mindful that your reviewer also works on a schedule as well as may have another full-time job, therefore if you submit many

assignments at one time, it may affect your reviewer's ability to return feedback within a two week time frame.

AAEE seeks only high-quality reviewers who have gone through the certification themselves and have a degree in this field. Reviewers have been intensively interviewed for their ability to communicate thoughtfully and effectively and for their ability to commit to the program timeframe and overall vision. The reviewer is there to both support the participants learning journey and uphold the competency standards. Reviewers represent AAEE and NAAEE standards and are not to proselytize their own environmental agendas. If differences arise that prevent the participant from feeling comfortable with moving forward, the participant is encouraged to appeal to the AAEE certification team (Certification@arizonaee.org) for a second opinion or a different reviewer.

Grading Policy & Scale

Points on each assignment vary according to its requirements. The rigor of each criterion varies, as do the points available. Each assignment has a detailed corresponding rubric outlining assignment criteria. Participants are expected to achieve a score of 80% or greater on each assignment. Assignments not attaining an 80% or greater must be re-submitted according to reviewer feedback. The resubmission of assignments is also expected to be completed by the deadline.

Online Participation & Communication

The course offers forums as a way for participants to learn from each other and share resources, but the forums are not facilitated or designed to be discussion spaces led by the reviewers. It is not a place to self-promote work or environmental agendas. Please keep all communication through these forums as helpful and not hurtful. Complaints about conduct can be sent to reviewers (certification@arizonaee.org). Violators may have their forum access revoked or their participation in the certification program denied.

Student Responsibilities

Just like any college course, work will be checked for plagiarism. This is a non-credit course—participants are participating because they want to, not as a requirement from an outside employer or individual. Participation in this program is to expand and demonstrate competency in environmental education. Stealing other people's work or reusing past published work does not expand learning.

Literacy about environmental issues comes in many forms and many contexts. It also comes with a variety of scientific proof. We live in a time of both healthy critical questioning of scientific understandings and unfortunate corruption of scientific work. Environmental Educators are not tasked with filling their students' minds with "truth" but to equip their students with tools for critically examining facts about environmental issues to make informed

decisions. The certification program does not advocate for the right way to “be an environmentalist,” we advocate for high quality environmental education. Participants should be prepared to defend their work and their sources.

Format and Style

All uploaded content and assignments should include the participant’s name, email, and phone number. Use of standard fonts (i.e. Times New Roman, Calibri, etc) in 12 point with single spacing and 1 inch margins is encouraged. APA format is encouraged on all assignments. For guidance, please consult: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

Navigating Canvas and Uploading Documents

Once logged in to Canvas, click on the “courses” tab and find the “AAEE Certification” course. Once in the course, use the navigation below. It is recommended that participants read through all instructions to ensure successful navigation and completion.

- **Home Tab:** is the initial welcome page.
- **Modules Tab:** is the aggregate page for navigation. Modules are groups of information such as files for navigation, types of resources, and the links to the assignments.
- **Syllabus Tab:** provides list of assignments and a copy of the course syllabus.
- **Assignment Tab:** are all the assignments needed to complete for certification.
- **Discussions Tab:** discussion topics are listed and can be accessed here. Each assignment has its own discussion and can also be accessed through the assignments.

Uploading documents: All assignments will require uploaded documents. Though Canvas is compatible with many file formats, please upload PDF files as these are the most universal for all other users. Photos and scans can be imbedded (saved) within PDF files.

Uploading photographs: Insert photographs into a word processing document and save as a PDF. This allows the user to add text that will help the reviewer to know what the pictures represent.

Uploading videos: Please upload videos to Vimeo or YouTube rather than uploading them to Canvas. These sites allow users to make videos private and then provide the link to the reviewer in the assignment upload.

Photographic ethics: Participants retain all rights to pictures and videos. AAEE is not allowed to use these photos/video without permission from participants. Though AAEE will not

disseminate pictures, it is the participant's responsibility to obtain permission to photograph anyone, especially children.

Completion

Once the participant has successfully submitted all assignments and the reviewer has completed grading of all assignments, the participant will be notified by the reviewer of the final grade and will receive a certificate of completion.

Non-discrimination Policy

AAEE is committed to providing all members with the organization free of all types of harassment and discrimination based on race, color, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, age, gender, physical or mental disability or veteran status. It is our policy to insist that all members be treated with dignity, respect, and courtesy. AAEE prohibits and will not tolerate such unlawful harassment or discrimination by those who do business with AAEE. All complaints of harassment or discrimination will be thoroughly, promptly, and objectively investigated.