

# APPA's CEFP Credential: Keeping Pace with Today's Educational FM Professional

By Christina Hills

**A**s the educational facilities management profession grows more complex, employees are challenged to keep pace. Collaborating in a matrixed environment with other departments, dealing with aging infrastructures and coping with budget reductions and skills gaps all mean today's employees will need to work smarter – not just harder – to meet the demands of today's educational in-

stitutions. Hence, moving beyond the old adage, “do more with less” to “doing different with less!”

One way to ensure that employees are ready to meet these challenges is through broad exposure to all the areas of educational facilities management, and APPA's Certified Educational Facilities Professional (CEFP) credential is the best way to demonstrate their proficiency.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 48 million people in the United States held a professional certification or license last year, and nearly 25 percent of them were in a service industry. Statistically, certifications rise proportionally with education levels, and for those without advanced education, a professional certification can demonstrate knowledge, skills, and abilities needed for a specific job. In fact, in 2018, those with a professional certification or license had a lower unemployment rate than their non-credentialed counterpart.

For educational facilities professionals, earning the CEFP can bring not only professional endorsement, but personal validation, because APPA certification is the *only* facilities credential that focuses on professional development while encompassing the full multidisciplinary range of FM principles and practices targeted to the education industry sector.

## A THREEFOLD APPROACH

The purpose of APPA's certification program is threefold:

### 1. Assure educational institutions of the quality of their professionals:

When an employee demonstrates competence and



professionalism through the CEFP, an institution can expect to see that person leveraging knowledge and expertise to transform their institution into an inviting and supportive learning environment and in turn, elevating the value and recognition of the facilities profession.

## 2. Drive professional development:

To maintain the CEFP credential, a person must demonstrate their continuous learning by recertifying and earning 120 credits (“APPA units”) every four years. APPA units are gained through numerous ways, including work experience, professional development programs, leadership roles as well as volunteer work within the profession. For instance, a fulltime employee earns 10 units/year, so 40 of the required 120 units are earned just by going to work every day.

Recertification validates your commitment to the profession, lifelong competency, and professional development. When you recertify, your peers, employer and the public continue to see that you are dedicated to the profession and committed to the gold standard that the CEFP represents.

## 3. Establish industry standards:

The CEFP examination is based on an industry-wide set of tasks required for educational facilities professionals. These core competencies ensure that everyone who holds the certification has been exposed to a multidisciplinary array of relevant information that can be applied on the job or when collaborating with other teams.

The CEFP is referred to as “The Measure of a Professional,” and employers can use the CEFP as a tool to recruit well-trained applicants who can become high-performing employees, capable of future leadership roles.

## MAKING THE CEFP CREDENTIAL MORE ACCESSIBLE

Recently, after studying trends in the educational facilities management industry, APPA recalibrated its eligibility qualifications in order to make the CEFP more accessible. Now, with only eight years of combined education and related experience, a person can begin the certification process. For example, for those with a four-year degree in any subject, only four years of facilities-related work experience are required.

The process of earning the CEFP is simple; it can be done completely online whenever and wherever it’s convenient. Employees don’t have to miss work

to attend to an off-site training class, so there are no additional travel expenses.

APPA provides 24/7 access to their state-of-the-art customized interactive learning (CIL) system, which includes a 13-week prep course. Participants work at their own pace but have access to live and recorded webinars. A cohort group ensures that everyone has the option to learn from and network with their peers. Now, that’s collaborative peer-to-peer learning at its best!

Following the prep course, applicants take the examination online either at a testing center, remotely using a webcam, or on their campus. The exam consists of 110 multiple-choice questions and a series of scenario-based case study questions.

## APPA REGIONS LEND A HAND

Since APPA members are also members of a region, they can take advantage of reduced fees (and in some cases, free) to earn the certification. APPA regions understand that everyone benefits from well-rounded educational facilities management professionals, and they offer this discount as a benefit to their members. However, many regions have capped the number of discounts they offer each year, so interested professionals should contact their region right away to take advantage of this offer.

“APPA-certified professionals who have earned this respected credential distinguish themselves among their peers,” says Lander Medlin, APPA’s executive vice president. “CEFP certificants report that while they gained skills that were immediately applicable to their job, the personal validation that comes from this achievement stands out to them—this kind of recognition cannot be measured simply by a job description.”

APPA also has a program called Pathway to Professionalism (P2P) that will bring this learning option to your campus. If you have 20 or more people to train, APPA will provide all the same benefits contained in the online learning platform, as well as four in-person sessions at your location with a trained facilitator at no additional cost. 💰

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