



naaee

North American Association
for Environmental Education

*Education We Need
for the World We Want*

Accreditation Manual

Distinguished College and University Programs

Introduction and Application Process



For more than four decades, the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) has been a leader in promoting excellence in environmental education throughout North America. Our mission is to bring the brightest minds together to advance environmental literacy and civic engagement through the power of education.

NAAEE supports the field with a variety of programs and services, including:

Annual Conference and Research Symposium—NAAEE has convened an annual conference for environmental education professionals since 1972. The conference is the largest national gathering of environmental education professionals in North America and promotes innovation in the field, networking, new tools and resources, and dissemination of research and best practices.

Resources and eePRO—Through its website and eePRO, our online professional development hub, NAAEE provides its members and supporters with high-quality professional resources including books, resource guides, essays, peer-reviewed research, best practices, research reviews, job listings, grant opportunities, news across the field, and more.

Professional Development—NAAEE offers unique services in professional development and support. Through online networking and professional learning, training seminars, online learning modules, strategic convening of environmental education leaders, and support of certification programs, NAAEE promotes leadership development and builds the capacity of its members and affiliates.

Policy—NAAEE is a non-partisan organization that plays a leadership role in raising the profile of environmental education at an international level. NAAEE works with partners to advocate for environmental education with agencies, organizations, foundations, and others to increase funding and support for the field.

Inspiring Innovation—NAAEE is committed to bringing new voices, ideas, and innovation to the field and broadening the reach and impact of environmental education.

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Accreditation

Distinguished College and University Programs

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Introduction

Preparing environmental education practitioners who possess the knowledge and abilities to provide high quality education to diverse audiences in a wide variety of settings is of utmost importance to our growing profession. Environmental educators teach in public and private classrooms, and in nonformal education institutions such as nature centers, zoos, museums, and parks. They organize environmental education programs in their communities, and work with all ages from infants to seniors. They teach at universities in education, environmental studies, geography, natural resource, social studies, and science programs. They develop curriculum materials and administer national, state, and local programs. Regardless of the setting and whether they are working in rural, suburban or urban areas, environmental educators need to be able to deliver instruction and develop materials that effectively foster environmental literacy.

Accreditation provides a means for recognizing institutions of higher education that provide programs that prepare high quality environmental education professionals. We invite you to use this document to reflect on your own program and apply for recognition based on the [*Professional Development of Environmental Educators: Guidelines for Excellence*](#) (NAAEE, 2019).

About the North American Association for Environmental Education [NAAEE]

For more than four decades, NAAEE has been the leader in promoting excellence in environmental education throughout North America. As a membership organization, NAAEE is dedicated to strengthening environmental education and increasing the visibility and effectiveness of the field. With members in more than 30 countries, over 17,000 members and affiliations, including 54 state, regional, and provincial environmental education organizations, NAAEE's influence stretches across North America and around the world. Key activities include an annual conference averaging over 1,000 participants from school systems, universities, non-profit organizations, government agencies, corporations, and other sectors of society; development of tools and resources promoting effective practice, such as the *Guidelines for Excellence* series, the Framework for Assessing Environmental Literacy, and eePRO; and on-going capacity building and professional development support throughout the U.S., Canada, and Mexico. For more about NAAEE visit www.naaee.org.

A Brief History and Overview of Environmental Education

By the late 1960s, an increased public awareness regarding environmental problems began, and a new term, environmental education, was introduced (Disinger, 2005). Much of the work in environmental education has been framed by the Belgrade Charter (UNESCO-UNEP, 1976) and the Tbilisi Declaration (UNESCO, 1978). These two documents furnish an internationally accepted blueprint for environmental education. The Belgrade Charter, adopted by the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm, continues to provide a widely accepted goal statement for environmental education:

The goal of environmental education is to develop a world population that is aware of, and concerned about, the environment and its associated problems, and which has the knowledge, skills, attitudes, motivations, and commitment to work individually and collectively toward solutions of current problems and the prevention of new ones.

Two years later, at the world's first intergovernmental conference on environmental education, the Tbilisi Declaration was adopted. This declaration, built on the Belgrade Charter, established three broad goals for environmental education. These goals provide the foundation for much of what has been done in the field since 1978:

- *To foster clear awareness of, and concern about, economic, social, political, and ecological interdependence in urban and rural areas;*
- *To provide every person with opportunities to acquire the knowledge, values, attitudes, commitment, and skills needed to protect and improve the environment;*
- *To create new patterns of behavior of individuals, groups, and society as a whole towards the environment.*

The overarching goal of environmental education is a sustainable future for all where environmental and social responsibility drive individual, group, and institutional choices. Ultimately, this goal will be achieved through the development of an environmentally literate society. Environmental literacy is not, however, reached easily. Environmentally literate individuals must develop a sophisticated set of skills that allow them to effectively address environmental issues and determine the best set of actions. They are thoughtful, skillful, and active members of their democracy, capable of taking individual action and making well-informed decisions collectively.

In 1994, NAAEE initiated the National Project for Excellence in Environmental Education (naaee.org/our-work/programs/guidelines-excellence) in an effort to develop a series of publications that describe components of high-quality environmental education. Each of these publications was developed by a diverse team of professionals, and each has gone through substantive review by thousands of professionals prior to its publication. The series includes [*Professional Development of Environmental Educators: Guidelines for Excellence*](#) (NAAEE, 2019). This publication describes what educators need to know and be able to do in order to design and implement a range of environmental education experiences for a full spectrum of learners. These *Guidelines* form the basis for NAAEE Accreditation: Distinguished College and University Programs.



Purpose of NAAEE Accreditation: Distinguished College and University Programs

NAAEE accreditation formally recognizes **high quality college and university** programs that **consistently** prepare well-qualified environmental educators who possess the understanding, skills, and dispositions associated with environmental literacy, as well as the ability to apply them in their educational practices. The purpose of accreditation is to provide a third-party, standards-based review process that:

- a) Encourages and recognizes excellence in the preparation and professional development of environmental educators, and
- b) Facilitates the in-depth, continual assessment and improvement of environmental education preparation and professional development programs within higher education institutions.

As part of this accreditation process, higher education programs are asked to provide evidence of how they address each of the six themes identified in the NAAEE [*Professional Development of Environmental Educators: Guidelines for Excellence*](#), although programs are given flexibility in *how* they are met. There is no one mold into which a program must fit—no set number of courses or experiences, no set examinations or measures. The accreditation program has been designed with the understanding that college and university programs are unique and how they go about preparing high-quality environmental educators reflects that distinctiveness.

Benefits of Accreditation

While earning accreditation is an honor, the *process* of completing the Self-Study Audit is a major benefit unto itself, providing an important opportunity to:

- Compare program outcomes and performance with well-accepted environmental education criteria
- Use the structured program evaluation and reflection process for evidence-based program improvement
- Revisit, revise, and clarify program goals, objectives, and implementation strategies
- Document program successes credibly and communicate them to internal and external audiences

Standards-based recognition helps programs and institutions:

- Attract and retain students
- Provide evidence of excellence for employers, funders, and donors
- Document program impact for university-wide reviews and other accreditation programs
- Demonstrate to the public, governing boards, donors and others that the program is using best practices and preparing well-qualified graduates
- Assure alumni and other supporters that the program maintains high standards

Participation benefits the field of environmental education, allowing us to:

- Document and recognize highly effective environmental education programs
- Share best practices, enriching all programs and the profession
- Leverage continued growth and development of environmental education programs and professionals
- Celebrate exemplary environmental education programs

Who Should Apply?

Due to the unique nature of environmental education, this recognition is open to all college/university environmental education (EE) programs that meet the competencies outlined in NAAEE [*Professional Development of Environmental Educators: Guidelines for Excellence*](#), including but not limited to college/university undergraduate and graduate programs in environmental education (e.g., majors, minors, certificates, endorsements) as well as other cross-disciplinary or integrated studies programs. To determine eligibility, colleges and universities should examine their programs using the Program Review Rubric included in this document.

NAAEE *Professional Development of Environmental Educators: Guidelines for Excellence*—SUMMARY

Successful environmental educators possess the competencies necessary to help all P–12 students and adults become environmentally literate. The NAAEE [*Professional Development of Environmental Educators: Guidelines for Excellence*](#) (NAAEE, 2019) articulate performance-based standards by describing essential knowledge, skills and dispositions of the environmental educator. Please refer to the full document for more information about each of the six Themes and their component parts.

Theme 1. Environmental Literacy: Educators must be competent in the skills and understandings outlined in [*K-12 Environmental Education: Guidelines for Excellence*](#) (NAAEE, 2019).

- 1.1 Questioning, analysis, and interpretation skills
- 1.2 Knowledge of environmental processes and systems
- 1.3 Skills for understanding and addressing environmental issues
- 1.4 Personal and civic responsibility

Theme 2. Foundations of environmental education: Educators must have a basic understanding of the goals, theory, practice, and history of the field of environmental education.

- 2.1 Fundamental characteristics and goals of environmental education
- 2.2 How environmental education is implemented
- 2.3 The evolution of the field

Theme 3. Professional responsibilities of the environmental educator: Educators must understand and accept the responsibilities associated with practicing environmental education.

- 3.1 Exemplary environmental education practice
- 3.2 Emphasis on education, not advocacy
- 3.3 Ongoing learning and professional development

Theme 4. Planning and implementing environmental education: Educators must combine the fundamentals of high-quality education with the unique features of environmental to design and implement effective instruction.

- 4.1 Knowledge of learners
- 4.2 Knowledge of instructional methodologies
- 4.3 Planning for instruction
- 4.4 Knowledge of environmental education materials and resources
- 4.5 Technologies that assist learning

- 4.6 Settings for instructions
- 4.7 Curriculum planning

Theme 5. Fostering learning and promoting inclusivity: Educators must enable all learners to engage in culturally relevant open inquiry and investigation, especially when considering environmental issues that are controversial and require students to seriously reflect on their own and others' perspectives.

- 5.1 A climate for learning about and exploring the environment
- 5.2 An inclusive and collaborative learning environment
- 5.3 Flexible and responsive instruction

Theme 6. Assessment and evaluation: Environmental educators must possess the knowledge, abilities, and commitment to make assessment and evaluation integral to instruction and programs.

- 6.1 Learner outcomes
- 6.2 Assessment that is part of instruction
- 6.3 Improving instruction
- 6.4 Evaluating programs

Initial Application Process

Applications for initial accreditation are based on a Self-Study Audit organized around three major sections (see descriptions of each section below):

- Section I. Cover Sheet (see p. 8)
- Section II. Program Data (see p. 9)
- Section III. Alignment with NAAEE *Guidelines* (see p. 10)

It is essential that the Self-Study Audit describe the program and how it addresses each of the six Themes included in the [*Professional Development of Environmental Educators: Guidelines for Excellence*](#) in terms of program design and participant assessment.

Because accreditation examines both *how* the program design is aligned to the *Guidelines* Themes and *how* program participants are assessed against those same *Guidelines* Themes, you will need to provide assessment data for at least two years. New programs should wait to submit their Self-Study until they have at least **two years of assessment data**. If more than one program is being submitted for accreditation, a separate application should be made for each program.

As you begin the Self-Study process, please keep in mind:

- 1) All forms required for your application can be downloaded at <https://naaee.org/our-work/programs/higher-education-accreditation>
- 2) The college/university program applying for recognition must be a member of the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) at the Partner Nonprofit level at the time of application. Membership must be maintained annually.
- 3) New programs should wait to submit their Self-Study Audit until they have collected at least two years of assessment data.
- 4) Separate applications should be made for each program.
- 5) Applications are reviewed annually and the deadline for application is **June 15**. Applications must be submitted electronically via email in a PDF file and sent to accreditation@naaee.org.

Re-Accreditation Application Process

Accreditation is awarded for a **seven-year** period, at which time programs must reapply.

The re-accreditation process requires programs to submit an updated Self-Study Audit which includes each of the three major sections completed for initial accreditation (e.g., an updated Cover Sheet, Program Data, and Alignment with NAAEE *Guidelines*). Programs are required to submit **at least one year of assessment data**.

Please keep in mind:

- 1) All forms required for your application can be downloaded at <https://naaee.org/our-work/programs/higher-education-accreditation>
- 2) The college/university program applying for recognition must be a member of the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) at the Partner Nonprofit level at the time of application. Membership must be maintained annually.
- 3) If more than one program is being submitted for re-accreditation, a separate application should be made for each program.
- 4) Applications must be submitted electronically via email in a PDF file and sent to accreditation@naaee.org. Applications must be received no later than **June 15**.

Award Process

A panel of environmental education professionals assembled and trained by NAAEE reviews the Self-Study Audit submitted by the applicant. Reviewers look for evidence that *demonstrates* how the program design (e.g., courses, experiences) provides program participants with opportunities to gain the understandings, skills, and dispositions described in each of the six *Guidelines* Themes. Reviewers also look for evidence that *demonstrates* how program participants are assessed for each of the six *Guidelines* Themes competencies, including the degree to which program participants have demonstrated their level of competency across each of the six *Guidelines* Themes (e.g., summary of assessment results).

The process results in two possible recommendations.

A. Recommendation #1: Awarding of NAAEE Accreditation: Distinguished College and University Programs.

Programs recommended for accreditation meet the following criteria:

All six *Guidelines* Themes scored at the acceptable or target level in both program design and participant assessment. Scores will be determined by the preponderance of the evidence supporting the whole theme.

Accreditation is awarded for a **seven-year** period, at which time programs must reapply.

B. Recommendation #2: Further development and review of the program is needed.

Programs recommended for further development and review do not meet the above criteria for accreditation and should continue to refine and review their programs.



Programs recommended for additional development are given specific feedback on each of the themes/guidelines. Using the feedback to guide development efforts, programs have the opportunity to resubmit their materials within a two-year time frame of the initial application. After this time, a new application must be submitted.

Self-Study Audit—Instructions for Completing the NAAEE Accreditation: Distinguished College and University Programs Application

The Self-Study Audit involves several steps:

- **Section I: Cover Sheet** (1 page)—Completed form
- **Section II: Program Data** (6 pages, maximum)—Includes vision, mission, philosophy, and goals; description of program; instructor information; and program participant information
- **Section III: Self Study Audit Report—Alignment to NAAEE Guidelines**—Includes Table 3, Course Alignment (1 page), Course/Experience Information Sheets (1 page per course/experience), and Table 4, Program Design Alignment, Assessment Alignment, and Assessment Results (12 pages, maximum)

Submit a separate report for each program seeking accreditation. Page limits for each section are indicated in the descriptions above. The report must be submitted as one continuous document with sections clearly separated and labeled, and pages consecutively numbered. Avoid references to a website except where indicated in the instructions. Narratives and tables should be single spaced.

No other appendices or attachments are permitted except where indicated specifically in the instructions. Descriptions should be as specific as possible to establish the evidence to be used in the review process.

All forms required for your application can be downloaded at <https://naaee.org/our-work/programs/higher-education-accreditation>.

Please refer to examples of application materials (e.g., Table 3, Course Alignment, Table 4, Program Design Alignment, Assessment Alignment, and Assessment Results, and Appendices) posted at <https://naaee.org/our-work/programs/higher-education-accreditation>.

Section I: Cover Sheet (1 page)

The Cover Sheet must be used for each report submitted. The cover sheet asks for basic contact information and other information about the program and college/university.

Date Submitted:

College/University:

Address:

Name of Preparer:

Title/Position of Preparer:

Phone Number:

Email Address:

Is your college/university a member of NAAEE?

Yes

No

Type of institution:

Public

Private

Other:

Average annual enrollment for your institution:

Is your institution designated a Minority Academic Institution (e.g., HBCU, HIS, Tribal College)?

Yes

No



Section II: Program Data (6 pages maximum)

1. Name of Program

2. Program Vision, Mission, Philosophy and Goals

State the mission, vision, philosophy, and goals of your program as they specifically relate to the NAAEE [Professional Development of Environmental Educators: Guidelines for Excellence](#).

3. Description of Program

Provide the following:

- a. Program design:** Clearly describe the design of the specific program for which you are submitting the application (e.g., elementary teacher preparation, secondary preparation; environmental education minor or concentration, endorsement, MA, MS, MAT). Attach a program of study or advising documentation that shows the recommended/required courses and sequences.
- b. State or institutional policies:** Describe policies that influence your program's ability to meet NAAEE [Professional Development of Environmental Educators: Guidelines for Excellence](#). This may include, but is not limited to, state approved degrees, certificates, endorsements, or absence of such policies.
- c. Historical context for the program:** Describe the major shifts in your program structure and changes such as shifts in state certification processes or changing nature of the student population served that have influenced program design.
- d. Any unique aspect(s) of the program:** Describe, for example, research, partnerships, and/or collaborations.

4. Instructor Information:

Complete the following information for each instructor responsible for teaching course/experiences that demonstrate guideline competence.

Table1. Instructor Information

Instructor Name	Highest Degree, Field, & College/University	Assignment: Indicate the role of the instructor in the program	Title/Rank	If applicable, Tenure/ Tenure Track (Yes/ No/NA)

5. Program Participants

Describe the number of program participants served by year, and, if available, program participant demographics (age, gender identity, and ethnicity). Provide **at least two years and up to six years of data** on participants enrolled in the program, beginning with the most recent year for which numbers have been tabulated.

Table 2. Program Participants

Year (report at the end of the academic year)	Number of New Students Enrolled in the Program	Number of Continuing Students Enrolled	Number of Students Who Have Completed the Program	Demographic Characteristics of Program Participants (e.g., age, gender identity, and ethnicity, if available)

Section III: Self-Study Audit—Alignment to NAAEE

Guidelines

For Section III, provide evidence that demonstrates, as explicitly as possible, 1) **how** your program is aligned to the six NAAEE *Guidelines* Themes and 2) **how** you assess program participants' competencies for each of the six *Guidelines* Themes.

Reviewers will be looking for evidence that demonstrates how the program design (e.g., courses, experiences) provides program participants with opportunities to gain the understandings, skills, and dispositions described in each of the six *Guidelines* Themes. In addition, they will be looking for evidence that *demonstrates* how program participants are assessed against those same *Guidelines* Themes. That is, they want to know how it is determined whether a program participant has met the competencies outlined in each of the six *Guidelines* Themes. Finally, reviewers will be considering the degree to which program participants have demonstrated their level of competency across each of the six *Guidelines* Themes (e.g., summary of assessment results). See Program Review Rubric.

1. Courses/Experiences Alignment (1- page maximum)

List all the courses and experiences in your program that address NAAEE *Guidelines* Themes and rate them as follows: 1 = introductory level, 2 = intermediate level, 3 = advanced level or NA = not applicable. Add rows as needed.



Table 3. Course/Experience Alignment

Course/Experience where <i>Guidelines</i> Themes are Addressed: 1 = introductory 2 = intermediate 3 = advanced NA = not applicable	<i>Guidelines</i> Themes					
	Theme 1	Theme 2	Theme 3	Theme 4	Theme 5	Theme 6

2. Course/Experience Information Sheet (1 page per course/experience)

For each course/experience listed in Table 3, provide:

- a. Brief overview, including the catalog description, course designator, and number, if applicable
- b. Brief description of major course assignments tied specifically to the *Guidelines* Themes
- c. Brief description of the tool(s) used to assess the assignments (e.g., rubric, scoring guide, examination)
- d. Listing of the major topics covered in the course/experience

Limit descriptions of assessments to those that provide the best evidence of competency of the *Guidelines* Themes. Please include copies of the assessments in an appendix. For assessments providing evidence of competency for more than one Theme and/or other course content, clearly label the section of the assessment that relates to each Theme.

Complete a separate information sheet for each course/experience.

Course/Experience Information Sheet (Limit to one page per course or experience). Delete the bracketed [] words below.

Course/Experience Information Sheet

[Course Title]

Course overview

[Brief overview, including the catalog description, course designator, and number, if applicable.]

Course assignments and assessing student work

[Brief description of only the major course assignments directly tied to the *Guidelines*. Brief description of how these course assignments are assessed. Limit descriptions of assessments to those that provide evidence of competency of the Guidelines Theme(s). For example:

Assignment:

- Assessment:

Assignment:

- Assessment:]

Course topics

[Listing of the major topics covered in the course/experience.]

3. Program Design Alignment, Assessment Alignment, and Assessment Results (12 pages maximum)

Using information supplied in Table 3, Course/Experience Alignment and the Course/Experience Information Sheets, complete Table 4, Program Design Alignment, Assessment Alignment, and Assessment Results. Provide specific evidence that demonstrates *how* your program is aligned to the six NAAEE *Guidelines* Themes and *how* you assess program participants' competencies for each of the six *Guidelines* Themes.

Instructions:

Column 1:

Name course/experience: Name the course/ experience. *Use a separate row for each course/experience.*

Column 2:

How Guidelines Themes are taught: Identify the guideline by number (e.g. 2.2). Describe what methods (e.g., lecture, discussion, and field trips) are used by faculty to teach the content that matches this guideline. Describe the applicable topics taught related to this guideline (e.g., differentiated instruction, history of EE, instructional strategies).

Guideline #

Methods:

Topics:

Column 3:

How program participants are assessed: Describe the assignments that show how students demonstrate competency related to the specific guideline (e.g., written lesson plan, exam, peer teaching, and journaling). Include any prompts or other directions that clearly tie the assignment requirements to the specific competency. A general assignment that does not include specific prompts related to the *Guidelines* Theme (e.g., journaling, lesson plan) may not provide sufficient evidence of alignment.

Assignments:

**Column 4:**

How student competency is evaluated: List the tools (e.g., rubrics, scoring guides, exam grades) that are used to assess assignments and indicate what level determines competency.

Limit assessments to those that provide the best evidence of competency of the specific *Guidelines* Theme. Please include copies of the assessments in an appendix. For assessments providing evidence of competency for more than one Theme and/or other course content, clearly label the section of the assessment that relates to the specific Theme.

Tool:

Appendix #:

Competency =

Column 5:

Summary of assessment results: Identify the percentage and number of students who demonstrated competency and the year the assessment took place. At least two years of data are required (e.g. Spring 2018: 100% of students at 80% or above, n = 12; Spring 2017: 90% of students at 80% or above, n = 10).

Semester/year:

Include a copy of or a link to all major assignments used to assess program participant competencies, and a copy of or a link to all rubrics, tests, scoring guides, etc. used to determine if a program participant has demonstrated competencies.

It is important to provide specific evidence to support your descriptions and data that document participants' competency of each *Guideline* Theme. Refer to the Program Review Rubric to gauge the degree that your program addresses each *Guideline* Theme. Reviewers are looking for a preponderance of evidence that the program meets all six *Guideline* Themes for both program design and assessment.

Table 4. Program Design Alignment, Assessment Alignment, and Assessment Results Chart

Theme 1. Environmental Literacy: Educators must be competent in the skills and understandings outlined in [K-12 Environmental Education: Guidelines for Excellence](#) (NAAEE, 2019).

- 1.1 Question analysis and interpretation skills
- 1.2 Environmental processes and systems
- 1.3 Skills for understanding and addressing environmental issues
- 1.4 Personal and civic responsibility

Courses/Experiences	How <i>Guidelines</i> Themes are Taught	How Program Participants are Assessed	How Student Competency is Evaluated	Summary of Assessment Results
Course/Experience:	Guideline #. Methods: Topics:	Assignment:	Tool: Appendix #: Competency =	Semester/year: Semester/year:

Theme 2. Foundations of environmental education: Educators must have a basic understanding of the goals, theory, practice, and history of the field of environmental education.

- 2.1 Fundamental characteristics and goals of environmental education
- 2.2 How environmental education is implemented
- 2.3 The evolution of the field

Courses/Experiences	How <i>Guidelines</i> Themes are Taught	How Program Participants are Assessed	How Student Competency is Evaluated	Summary of Assessment Results
Course/Experience:	Guideline #. Methods: Topics:	Assignment:	Tool: Appendix #: Competency =	Semester/year: Semester/year:



Theme 3. Professional responsibilities of the environmental educator: Educators must understand and accept the responsibilities associated with practicing environmental education.

- 3.1 Exemplary environmental education practice
- 3.2 Emphasis on education, not advocacy
- 3.3 Ongoing learning and professional development

Courses/Experiences	How <i>Guidelines</i> Themes are Taught	How Program Participants are Assessed	How Student Competency is Evaluated	Summary of Assessment Results
Course/Experience:	Guideline #. Methods: Topics:	Assignment:	Tool: Appendix #: Competency =	Semester/year: Semester/year:

Theme 4: Planning and implementing environmental education: Educators must combine the fundamentals of high-quality education with the unique features of environmental education to design and implement effective instruction.

- 4.1 Knowledge of learners
- 4.2 Knowledge of instructional methodologies
- 4.3 Planning for instruction
- 4.4 Knowledge of environmental education materials and resources
- 4.5 Technologies that assist learning
- 4.6 Settings for instruction
- 4.7 Curriculum planning

Courses/Experiences	How <i>Guidelines</i> Themes are Taught	How Program Participants are Assessed	How Student Competency is Evaluated	Summary of Assessment Results
Course/Experience:	Guideline #. Methods: Topics:	Assignment:	Tool: Appendix #: Competency =	Semester/year: Semester/year:

Theme 5: Fostering learning and promoting inclusivity: Educators must enable all learners to engage in culturally relevant open inquiry and investigation, especially when considering environmental issues that are controversial and require students to seriously reflect on their own and others' perspectives.

- 5.1 A climate for learning about and exploring the environment
- 5.2 An inclusive and collaborative learning environment
- 5.3 Flexible and responsive instruction

Courses/Experiences	How <i>Guidelines</i> Themes are Taught	How Program Participants are Assessed	How Student Competency is Evaluated	Summary of Assessment Results
Course/Experience:	Guideline #. Methods: Topics:	Assignment:	Tool: Appendix #: Competency =	Semester/year: Semester/year:

Theme 6. Assessment and evaluation: Environmental educators must possess the knowledge, abilities, and commitment to make assessment and evaluation integral to instruction and programs.

- 6.1 Learners outcomes
- 6.2 Assessment that is part of instruction
- 6.3 Improving instruction
- 6.4 Evaluating programs

Courses/Experiences	How <i>Guidelines</i> Themes are Taught	How Program Participants are Assessed	How Student Competency is Evaluated	Summary of Assessment Results
Course/Experience:	Guideline #. Methods: Topics:	Assignment:	Tool: Appendix #: Competency =	Semester/year: Semester/year:



NAAEE Accreditation: Distinguished College and University Programs

Review Check List: To be completed by applicants and NAAEE reviewers.

Materials to be submitted for Self-Study Audit	Complete	Incomplete
Section I: Cover Sheet (1 page maximum)		
If incomplete, describe what is missing in Section I:		
Section II: Program Data (6-page maximum)		
1. Name of Program		
2. Program Vision, Mission, Philosophy, and Goals		
3. Description of Program		
4. Table 1, Instructor Information		
5. Table 2, Program Participants		
If incomplete, describe what is missing in Section II:		
Section III: Self-Study Audit Report—Alignment to NAAEE <i>Guidelines Themes</i>		
1. Table 3, Courses/Experiences Alignment (1 page maximum)		
2. Course/Experience Information Sheet (1 page per core course)		
3. Table 4, Program Design Alignment, Assessment Alignment, and Assessment Results (12 pages maximum)		
If incomplete, describe what is missing in Section III:		
	Yes	No
Application is complete and qualifies for further review.		

Program Review Rubric

An organization’s submitted Self Study Audit will be reviewed using this rubric. Reviewers will draw primarily from the evidence provided in Section III of your report to complete this rubric and assess your eligibility for accreditation.

Higher education programs must meet **all six themes** at the Acceptable level or higher to earn accreditation. If the reviewers determine that the program does not meet all six themes at acceptable or target levels, the program will receive a recommendation that further development and review of the program is needed (see p. 7 for details).

Theme1. Environmental Literacy: Educators must be competent in the skills and understandings outlined in [K-12 Environmental Education: Guidelines for Excellence](#) (NAAEE, 2019).

- 1.1 Questioning, analysis, and interpretation skills
- 1.2 Environmental processes and systems
- 1.3 Skills for understanding and addressing environmental issues
- 1.4 Personal and civic responsibility

Program Design Alignment to NAAEE <i>Guidelines</i> Themes			Participant Assessment Alignment to NAAEE <i>Guidelines</i> Themes		
Evidence that programmatic design lacks or minimally meets the necessary components for <i>Environmental Literacy</i> .	Evidence that programmatic design adequately meets a majority of components necessary for <i>Environmental Literacy</i> .	Evidence that programmatic design clearly meets all components necessary for <i>Environmental Literacy</i> .	Assessments indicate a lack of or minimal evidence of participants’ competencies in the components for <i>Environmental Literacy</i> .	Assessments provide adequate evidence of participants’ competencies in a majority of the components for <i>Environmental Literacy</i> .	Assessments provide clear evidence of participants’ competencies in all of the components for <i>Environmental Literacy</i> .
Not Met	Acceptable	Target	Not Met	Acceptable	Target

Comments Theme 1



Theme 2. Foundations of Environmental Education: Educators must have a basic understanding of the goals, theory, practice, and history of the field of environmental education.

- 2.1 Fundamental characteristics and goals of environmental education
- 2.2 How environmental education is implemented
- 2.3 The evolution of the field

Program Design Alignment to NAAEE <i>Guidelines</i> Themes			Participant Assessment Alignment to NAAEE <i>Guidelines</i> Themes		
Evidence that programmatic design lacks or minimally meets the necessary components for <i>Foundations of Environmental Education</i> .	Evidence that programmatic design adequately meets a majority of components necessary for <i>Foundations of Environmental Education</i> .	Evidence that programmatic design clearly meets all components necessary for <i>Foundations of Environmental Education</i> .	Assessments indicate a lack of or minimal evidence of participants' competencies in the components for <i>Foundations of Environmental Education</i> .	Assessments provide adequate evidence of participants' competencies in a majority of the components for <i>Foundations of Environmental Education</i> .	Assessments provide clear evidence of participants' competencies in all of the components for <i>Foundations of Environmental Education</i> .
Not Met	Acceptable	Target	Not Met	Acceptable	Target

Comments Theme 2

Theme 3. Professional Responsibilities of the Environmental Educator: Educators must understand and accept the responsibilities associated with practicing environmental education.

- 3.1 Exemplary environmental education practice
- 3.2 Emphasis on education, not advocacy
- 3.3 Ongoing learning and professional development

Program Design Alignment to NAAEE <i>Guidelines</i> Themes			Participant Assessment Alignment to NAAEE <i>Guidelines</i> Themes		
Evidence that programmatic design lacks or minimally meets the necessary components for <i>Professional Responsibilities of the Environmental Educator</i> .	Evidence that programmatic design adequately meets a majority of components necessary for <i>Professional Responsibilities of the Environmental Educator</i> .	Evidence that programmatic design clearly meets all components necessary for <i>Professional Responsibilities of the Environmental Educator</i> .	Assessments indicate a lack of or minimal evidence of participants' competencies in the components for <i>Professional Responsibilities of the Environmental Educator</i> .	Assessments provide adequate evidence of participants' competencies in a majority of the components for <i>Professional Responsibilities of the Environmental Educator</i> .	Assessments provide clear evidence of participants' competencies in all of the components for <i>Professional Responsibilities of the Environmental Educator</i> .
Not Met	Acceptable	Target	Not Met	Acceptable	Target

Comments Theme 3



Theme 4: Planning and Implementing Environmental Education: Educators must combine the fundamentals of high-quality education with the unique features of environmental education to design and implement effective instruction.

- 4.1 Knowledge of learners
- 4.2 Knowledge of instructional methodologies
- 4.3 Planning for instruction
- 4.4 Knowledge of environmental education materials and resources
- 4.5 Technologies that assist learning
- 4.6 Settings for instruction
- 4.7 Curriculum planning

Program Design Alignment to NAAEE <i>Guidelines</i> Themes			Participant Assessment Alignment to NAAEE <i>Guidelines</i> Themes		
Evidence that programmatic design lacks or minimally meets the necessary components for <i>Planning and Implementing Environmental Education</i> .	Evidence that programmatic design adequately meets a majority of components necessary for <i>Planning and Implementing Environmental Education</i> .	Evidence that programmatic design clearly meets all components necessary for <i>Planning and Implementing Environmental Education</i> .	Assessments indicate a lack of or minimal evidence of participants' competencies in the components for <i>Planning and Implementing Environmental Education</i> .	Assessments provide adequate evidence of participants' competencies in a majority of the components for <i>Planning and Implementing Environmental Education</i> .	Assessments provide clear evidence of participants' competencies in all of the components for <i>Planning and Implementing Environmental Education</i> .
Not Met	Acceptable	Target	Not Met	Acceptable	Target

Comments Theme 4

Theme 5: Fostering Learning and promoting inclusivity: Educators must enable all learners to engage in culturally relevant open inquiry and investigation, especially when considering environmental issues that are controversial and require students to seriously reflect on their own and others’ perspectives.

- 5.1 A climate for learning about and exploring the environment
- 5.2 An inclusive and collaborative learning environment
- 5.3 Flexible and responsive instruction

Program Design Alignment to NAAEE <i>Guidelines</i> Themes			Participant Assessment Alignment to NAAEE <i>Guidelines</i> Themes		
Evidence that programmatic design lacks or minimally meets the necessary components for <i>Fostering Learning and Promoting Inclusivity</i> .	Evidence that programmatic design adequately meets a majority of components necessary for <i>Fostering Learning and Promoting Inclusivity</i> .	Evidence that programmatic design clearly meets all components necessary for <i>Fostering Learning and Promoting Inclusivity</i> .	Assessments indicate a lack of or minimal evidence of participants’ competencies in the components for <i>Fostering Learning and Promoting Inclusivity</i> .	Assessments provide adequate evidence of participants’ competencies in a majority of the components for <i>Fostering Learning and Promoting Inclusivity</i> .	Assessments provide clear evidence of participants’ competencies in all of the components for <i>Fostering Learning and Promoting Inclusivity</i> .
Not Met	Acceptable	Target	Not Met	Acceptable	Target

Comments Theme 5



Theme 6. Assessment and Evaluation: Environmental educators must possess the knowledge, abilities, and commitment to make assessment and evaluation integral to instruction and programs.

- 6.1 Learners outcomes
- 6.2 Assessment that is part of instruction
- 6.3 Improving instruction
- 6.4 Evaluating programs

Program Design Alignment to NAAEE <i>Guidelines</i> Themes			Participant Assessment Alignment to NAAEE <i>Guidelines</i> Themes		
Evidence that programmatic design lacks or minimally meets the necessary components for <i>Assessment and Evaluation</i> .	Evidence that programmatic design adequately meets a majority of components necessary for <i>Assessment and Evaluation</i> .	Evidence that programmatic design clearly meets all components necessary for <i>Assessment and Evaluation</i> .	Assessments indicate a lack of or minimal evidence of participants' competencies in the components for <i>Assessment and Evaluation</i> .	Assessments provide adequate evidence of participants' competencies in a majority of the components for <i>Assessment and Evaluation</i> .	Assessments provide clear evidence of participants' competencies in all of the components for <i>Assessment and Evaluation</i> .
Not Met	Acceptable	Target	Not Met	Acceptable	Target

Comments Theme 6

Selected References

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NOTES:

Additional information and examples including sample Tables 3 & 4 can be found at NAAEE's Higher Education Accreditation website, <https://naaee.org/our-work/programs/higher-education-accreditation>.

Information about the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) can be found at naaee.org.

Information about the National Project for Excellence for Environmental Education along with downloadable copies of each of the publications and resources designed to help individuals use the guidelines is available at naaee.org/our-work/programs/guidelines-excellence.

