

REGISTRY AND CERTIFICATION PROCEDURES OF SOIL SCIENTISTS IN TENNESSEE

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INTRODUCTION

The Tennessee Registry of Certified Professionals in Soils (TNRCPs) is a non-profit organization operated in cooperation with the Soil Scientists Association of Tennessee (SSATN).

PURPOSES

The public demands evidence of professional competence from those whose activities affect the well-being and economic attitude of the general public. This need has been recognized in such professions as medicine, law, engineering, and accounting. Laws governing land-use and crop production practices (air, water, soil, and crop quality standards, management, and use of agricultural chemicals) create a need for the services of professionals in soils. Such professionals must be able to show evidence of their qualifications.

A certification program identifying professionals qualified for educational, scientific and service activities with public and private agencies is in the public interest. TNRCPs is established to develop standards and procedures for certification of persons qualified as professionals in soils and to maintain and publish a registry of persons so qualified.

CERTIFICATION

Certification is based on scholarly preparation, knowledge, and experience. Professionals listed on the registry have met the educational and practical experience standards, subscribe to the Code of Ethics, and qualify for the particular identification of special abilities. A Board of Certification (Board) passes on the credentials of each application for certification. All decisions of the Board pertaining to eligibility for certification and inclusion in the Registry must be considered final after due provision for an appeal. The Board is composed of six members. The President of the SSATN will appoint the first Board as follows: one for 1 year, one for 2 years, one for 3 years, one for 4 years, one for 5 years, and one for 6 years. Each following year the President of SSATN will appoint one member to replace the retiring member of the board. If other vacancies occur, the President of SSATN shall appoint a new board member to fill the unexpired term or terms.

CERTIFICATION PROCEDURES

STANDARDS FOR CERTIFICATION

ARTICLE I. CERTIFIED PROFESSIONAL STATUS

Section 1. General

- A. Certification is limited to individuals who are deemed qualified professionals in agronomy, crops, or soils and who subscribe to the Code of Ethics.
- B. A certificate is provided to each qualified individual registered as a Certified Professional (C.P.)
- C. Certification is valid for a calendar year in which it is granted and renewable as stated below.

Section 2. Minimum Requirements for Eligibility

- A. Applicants must meet one of the following requirements:
 - 1. Possess a baccalaureate degree with major in soils or agronomy, or a closely allied field of science or equivalent and five years as a practicing professional in the area of Soil Science.¹
 - 2. Possess a master's degree with a major in soils or agronomy, or a closely allied field of science or equivalent and three years as a practicing professional in the area of Soil Science¹.
 - 3. Possess a doctorate degree in soils or agronomy, or a closely allied field of science or equivalent and one year as a practicing professional in the area of Soil Science¹.
 - 4. Same degree and experience requirements as above but a major in a non-allied area with a written examination in the individual's specialty within the field of soils or agronomy are required. At the discretion of the Board of Certification, an oral examination may also be required.

Section 3. Area of Certification

- A. The areas of certification are Certified Professional as follows:

Soil Scientist	C.P.S.S
Soil Specialist	C.P.S.S

The requirements of registration for a "Specialist" are the same as for a "Scientist." The applicant chooses the most appropriate title at the time of application.

¹ Thirty (30) semester hours or equivalent must be in biology, physical science, and earth science with a minimum 15 semester hours in soil science.

Section 4. Application

- A. All applications must include a list of at least three (3) references one must have been an active member of the SSATN for the proceeding five years or a TNRCPS Certified Professional. Not more than two (2) references may be from the same institution, government agency, or industrial organization. Other references may be consulted by the Board of Certification.
- B. Be accompanied by the following fee:
 - 1. For applicants who are qualified with examination, the fee is \$10.00.
 - 2. For the applicants who are required to take an examination, the fee is \$50.00. If certification is not granted by the Board, \$25.00 will be refunded.
 - 3. For each Area of Specialty desired, the fee is \$10.00 for each in addition to the fees in (1) and (2).
- C. In an applicant fails an examination, they may reapply for examination after one (1) year upon payment of an additional fee of \$25.00.
- D. Certification may be renewed annually by payment of a \$5.00 fee and \$5.00 for each additional Area of Specialty. Annual renewal may require assurance of professional competency.
- E. The funds derived from fees are applied to defraying the cost of maintaining the Registry. Fees may be changed upon recommendation of the Board and approval by a simple majority vote of the SSATN present at an annual business meeting session.

Section 5. Denial or Revocation of Certification

- A. The right to deny, revoke, or suspend certification is vested in the board.
- B. Certification may be denied, revoked, or suspended for any of the following reasons:
 - 1. For violation of rules, regulations, or Code of Ethics established by the Board.
 - 2. Misrepresentation of an application or submission of incorrect information in any communication to the Board of Certification or one of the sub-boards.
 - 3. For conviction of felony by a court of law.
 - 4. If the Board determines that the candidate does not meet the minimum requirements as stated in Section 2.
- C. Any applicant denied certification has the right of appeal.
- D. Any action to deprive a certified individual of his status shall be preceded by a served copy of the charges and a notice of a hearing at which time the individual can appear or be represented before the Board. At least a 30-day notice of a hearing will be given to the individual in such situations.

ARTICLE II. PROFESSIONAL-IN-TRAINING STATUS

Section 1. General

- A. It is acknowledged that individuals training in soil science may want to become professionally recognized through a professional certification program. There is a time lapse between completion of the degree and attainment of the minimum working experience required to be eligible for full certification with TNRCPS. For such cases, the classification of Professional-in-Training (P.T.) has been created.
- B. A certificate is provided to each qualified individual registered as a Professional-in-Training.
- C. Registration is valid for a calendar year in which it is granted and cannot exceed the number of years specified in Section 5 below.

Section 2. Minimum Requirements for Eligibility

- A. It is expected that those persons applying for the Professional-in-Training status will be recent graduates. These graduates, in applying, must be members of the SSATN and must meet the baccalaureate, master's, or doctorate degree requirements stated in Article I Section 2-A, 1, 2, or 3. They will not have met the experience requirements.
- B. The Professional-in-Training must subscribe to the Code of Ethics.

Section 3. Area of Certification

- A. The areas of certification are Certified Professional as follows:

Soil Scientist-in-Training S.S.T.

Soil Specialist-in-Training S.S.T.

The requirements of registration for a "Specialist" are the same as for a "Scientist."
The applicant chooses the most appropriate title at the time of application.

Section 4. Application

- A. Application is made by completing the application form and providing the following:
 - 1. An official transcript of all academic credits including verification of the degree(s).
 - 2. A professional resume.
 - 3. The names and addresses of at least two (2) individuals who are familiar with the applicants work and/or academic record. One must be from the faculty of the degree granting institution with one from an immediate supervisor
- B. If the applicant has held one or more professional positions, information about these experiences and references from these sources are requested.

- C. Registration is renewed annually by payment of a \$5.00 fee. Annual renewal is contingent upon presentation of evidence of continued professional work experience and/or registration in graduate work
- D. Funds derived from fees are applied to defray the cost of the Registry.
 - 4. If certification is not granted by the Board, \$25.00 will be refunded.

Section 5. Time Limit Requirement

- A. The length of time a person may hold the Professional-in-Training status before applying for full professional certification is dependent upon the degree held. All requirements are exclusive of full-time graduate school work beyond the baccalaureate degree.
 - 1. The individual holding a baccalaureate degree is limited to six (6) years as a Professional-in-Training and is eligible to apply for full certification after five (5) years of professional practice.
 - 2. The individual holding a master's degree is limited to four (4) years as a Professional-in-Training and is eligible to apply for full certification after three (3) years of professional practice.
 - 3. The individual holding a doctorate degree is limited to two (2) years as a Professional-in-Training and is eligible to apply for full certification after one (1) years of professional practice.
- B. If the Certified Professional status is not granted within the maximum time limit specified above, the Professional-in-Training status is terminated.

Section 6. Application for Professional Certification Status

- A. Transition from the Professional-in-Training status to full Certified Professional status is not automatic. To apply for Certified Professional status, the Professional-in-Training must follow the steps as outlined in Article I, Section 4. Application is made by completing the application form. The Professional-in-Training is subject to the same standards of ethics and professionalism as the Certified Professional which are stated in all sections of Article I.

Section 7. Denial or Revocation of Professional-in-Training Status

- A. The right to deny, revoke, or suspend certification as a Professional-in-Training is vested in the Board as stated in Article I, Section 5.

CODE OF ETHICS

ARTICLE I. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

1. The privilege of professional practice imposes obligations of morality and responsibility as well as professional knowledge.
2. Each Certified Professional Soil Scientist and Soil Specialist (hereafter called Registrant) agrees to be guided by the highest standards of ethics, personal honor, and professional conduct.

ARTICLE II. RELATION OF PROFESSIONAL TO THE PUBLIC

1. A Registrant shall avoid and discourage sensational, exaggerated, and/or unwarranted statements that might induce participation in unsound enterprises.
2. A Registrant shall not knowingly permit the publication of his reports or other documents for any unsound or illegitimate undertaking
3. A Registrant shall not give professional opinion or make recommendation without being as thoroughly informed as might reasonably be expected considering the purpose for which the opinion or recommendation is desired; and the degree of completeness of information upon which it is based should be made clear.
4. A Registrant may publish dignified business, professional, or announcement cards, but shall not advertise his work or accomplishments in a self-laudatory, exaggerated, or unduly conspicuous manner.
5. A Registrant shall not issue a false statement or false information even though directed to do so by employer or client.

ARTICLE III. RELATION OF PROFESSIONAL TO EMPLOYER AND CLIENT

1. A Registrant shall protect, to the fullest extent possible, the interest of his employer or client insofar as such interest is consistent with the law and his professional obligations and ethics.
2. A Registrant who finds that his obligations to his employer or client conflict with his professional obligation or ethics should have such objectionable conditions corrected or resign.
3. A Registrant shall not use, directly or indirectly, any employer's or client's information in any way which would violate the confidence of the employer or client.
4. A Registrant retained by one client shall not accept, without client's written consent, an engagement by another if the interests of the two are in any manner conflicting.
5. A Registrant who has made an investigation for any employer or client shall not seek to profit economically from the information gained, unless written permission to do so is granted, or

until it is clear that there can no longer be a conflict of interest with the original employer or client.

6. A Registrant shall not divulge information given him in confidence.
7. A Registrant shall engage, or advise his employer or client to engage, and cooperate with other experts and specialists whenever the employer's or client's interest would be best served by such service.
8. A Registrant shall not accept a concealed fee for referring a client or employer to a specialist or for recommending professional service other than his own.

ARTICLE IV. RELATION OF PROFESSIONAL TO EACH OTHER

1. A Registrant shall not falsely or maliciously attempt to injure the reputation of another.
2. A Registrant shall freely give credit for work done by others to whom the credit is due and shall refrain from plagiarism in oral or written communications, and not knowingly accept credit rightfully due another person.
3. A Registrant shall not use the advantages of salaried employment to compete unfairly with another member of his profession.
4. A Registrant shall endeavor to cooperate with others in the profession and encourage the ethical dissemination of technical knowledge.
5. A Registrant having knowledge of unethical practices of another Registrant shall avoid association with that Registrant in professional work.

ARTICLE V. DUTY OF THE PROFESSION

1. A Registrant shall aid in exclusion from certification those who lack moral character, who have not followed this Code of Ethics, or who do not have the required education and experience.
2. A Registrant shall uphold this Code of Ethics by precept and example and encourage, by counsel and advise, other Registrants to do the same.
3. A Registrant having positive knowledge of deviation from this Code of Ethics by another Registrant shall bring such deviation to the attention of the Board.

TENNESSEE REGISTRY OF CERTIFIED PROFESSIONALS IN SOILS
APPLICATION FOR CERTIFIED PROFESSIONAL IN SOILS
OR
PROFESSIONAL-IN-TRAINING

Mail Application to:

Soil Scientists Association of Tennessee
Kevin Raley, Secretary/Treasurer
2803 Tweed Place
Thompsons Station, TN 37179

Applying for Certified Professional

Soil Scientist C.P.S.S.
 Soil Specialist C.P.S.S.

Applying for Professional-in-Training

Soil Scientist S.S.T
 Soil Specialist S.S.T

Name to be printed on certificate:

(please print or type exactly as it should be shown)

Application Fee

Please include payment with application and make checks payable to the Soil Scientists Association of Tennessee

Certified Professional-----\$10.00

Professional-in-Training-----\$ 5.00

I hereby certify that I am a member of the Soil Scientists Association of Tennessee and all information submitted in support of this application is correct and true to the best of my knowledge. I have read and fully subscribe to the Code of Ethics.

(please sign)

(date)

