

Our top 10 application tips when applying for Chartered Ecologist status

We have pulled together some useful information and top tips from our volunteer assessors to read before you get started on completing your CEcol application form.

1. Complete a self-assessment

We strongly recommend that you carry out a complete self-assessment using the Competency Framework. There is a [Self-assessment Tool](#) available on the CIEEM website to assist you with this. It will give you an indication of your strongest skills and help you to decide on the competencies that you might wish to include in your application.

2. Get your sponsors involved early

It is a very good idea to discuss your application with the sponsors you have in mind to support you as early as possible in the process. This gives you the opportunity to talk through suitable examples and projects you may have worked on together. Getting your sponsors engaged at an early stage will help ensure you have their full support for the evidence you intend to supply.

3. Assessors need all the facts

The assessors can only reach a decision on your application based on the information you provide, so if you refer to a specific role, project, qualification or licence in your evidence of competence, make sure you provide sufficient detail. For example, be sure to provide information on the scale and complexity of projects rather than assuming the assessors will know about them already. Make it clear to assessors that you possess the skills needed for a particular competency even if those skills are mentioned elsewhere in your form.

4. Make good use of the word count

The word count is an indication of the amount of information required to sufficiently evidence a competency so make good use of it, giving the assessors as much information as possible within the limit to make their assessment.

5. Take centre stage

Write your submission using the first person. It is important to make your role in the evidence you submit very clear to the assessors. Avoid any confusion or ambiguity and use the first person when writing your evidence not the passive voice. Rather than 'the data was analysed', write 'I analysed the data'. This is your opportunity to let yourself shine.

6. Do not rush your application

We encourage you to take the time to read your application again to satisfy yourself that it represents you well. It is sometimes a good idea to put an application to one side for a few days or a week in order to read it once more with fresh eyes before submitting. Alternatively

ask a colleague to read it through. Your sponsors will also be able to assist with this as they will be certifying that they have read your application. You may wish to complete a draft of your form on a separate document so that you can use tools such as spellcheck before submitting it. Incomplete or incorrectly completed application forms will be returned to you and will delay the assessment process. Please help yourself by taking the time to get it right first time.

7. Do not make assumptions

Our volunteer assessors are all experienced members of the Institute but, like you, they have particular specialisms and will not have an in depth knowledge of all areas of our Competency Framework. If you make reference to any less common acronyms, be sure to explain them in full to begin with. In addition, our assessors are based all over the UK, Ireland and beyond so will not necessarily be familiar with acronyms, systems or projects specific to your locality or area of specialism.

8. Use STARE (Situation-Task-Action-Result-Evaluation)

We recommend using this approach to structure your evidence regarding specific examples because it works well. Assessors need to see examples in your evidence and the STARE structure gives you the framework to provide the information they are looking for. Ensure you do not miss the 'E' for evaluation as this is a really crucial point for our assessors.

9. Things to avoid

- Simply listing publications or projects in which you have been involved. You need to draw from these to provide the evidence to justify your competence level.
- Making a series of declarations or generalisations. Specific examples are required to tell our assessors how well you do something or how it was regarded by others.
- Using the passive voice. It is very important that you clearly demonstrate your input with regard to the evidence you present and this is best achieved by using the first person.
- Using acronyms that are not explained in the first instance of use. It is frustrating and time consuming for assessors to have to search for the meaning of unfamiliar acronyms.
- Relying on only one or two examples of the same type of project to evidence most or all the competencies. The assessors are looking for a depth and breadth of experience.
- Underusing the word count.

10. Stay in touch

We are here to help! Contact us at membership@cieem.net with any queries you have on the application process and we will be happy to answer any queries you may have by email or on the telephone.

Please be aware that forms and guidance are subject to change and so if you have requested a form, either via the website or by email, and some time has passed and you have not used it, please check back with us to ensure that you are using the current version.