



Required Education and Experience for Drinking Water and Wastewater Operator Certification

Arizona Administrative Code Title 18, Chapter 5, 112. Experience and Education

ADEQ shall consider the following criteria to determine whether an applicant has the experience and education required for certification in a specific class and grade:

1. Years of experience at a lower grade,
2. Qualifying experience in the same or a related field, and
3. Education in a qualifying discipline.

Operator Grade	Experience and Education Criteria For Each Grade	
	Education By Grade	Experience By Grade
Grade 1	High School Diploma	and No Experience Required
	Two Year Postsecondary Degree	and No Experience Required
	Bachelor's Degree or Higher	and No Experience Required
Grade 2	High School Diploma	and 1 year of qualifying experience as a Grade 1 operator
	Two Year Postsecondary Degree	and 1 year of qualifying experience, including 6 months as a Grade 1
	Bachelor's Degree or Higher	and 6 months of qualifying experience
Grade 3	High School Diploma	and 2 years of qualifying experience, including one year as a Grade 2 operator
	Two Year Postsecondary Degree	and 18 months of qualifying experience as a Grade 2 operator
	Bachelor's Degree or Higher	and 1 year of qualifying experience
Grade 4	High School Diploma	and 3 years of qualifying experience, including one year as a Grade 3 operator
	Two Year Postsecondary Degree	and 30 months of qualifying experience, including 1 year as a Grade 3 operator
	Bachelor's Degree or Higher	and 2 years of qualifying experience

- Two year postsecondary degrees and higher must meet the definition of “Qualifying Discipline”.
 - “*Qualifying discipline*,” means engineering, biology, chemistry, or a closely related technical or scientific discipline.
- Qualifying experience and certifications as an operator can be earned in Arizona or in another jurisdiction (Tribal, military, territories, outside of the United States, etc.).
 - “*Qualifying experience*” means experience, skill, or knowledge obtained through employment that is applicable to the technical or operational control of all or part of a facility.
- “*Certified operator*” or “*operator*” means an individual who holds a current certificate issued by the Department in the field of water or wastewater treatment, water distribution, or wastewater collection.
- Approval from ADEQ is required before skipping exams. Skip Exams taken without pre-approval, or exams taken early, are not eligible for certificate(s) submission.

For additional questions, please contact the Operator Certification Program

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