The essay portion of the CEP application process affords the Applicant an opportunity to demonstrate his/her/their technical mastery in the environmental profession. The five essays comprise the primary element on which the CRB Board relies to determine Applicant qualifications for certification.

The first two essay questions, focusing on current affairs and ethics, are required for every applicant. These questions are key for any professional, regardless of technical specialty area. The applicant may then choose any three of the remaining questions to which to respond. A total of five essays must be completed. Essays should draw from personal knowledge, including citing specific experience and examples where possible. Responses should demonstrate the applicant's leadership, problem solving and risk management skills, and they should highlight the practical application of being a CEP. While efficiency is important, essays must be of sufficient length and content to provide reviewers with the necessary material for assessing and scoring the Applicant's qualifications and eligibility to call themselves a CEP.

ESSAY 1: Maintaining Competency (REQUIRED)
ESSAY 2: Ethics (REQUIRED)
ESSAY 3: Applicant Chosen
ESSAY 4: Applicant Chosen
ESSAY 5: Applicant Chosen

REQUIRED ESSAYS

ESSAY 1. Keeping abreast of shifts in environmental science, policy or regulations requires effort that often goes far beyond our day-to-day work. Identify emerging issues within your area of specialty and explain how you keep current, identifying recently published references that you utilize which should be added to the ABCEP's Body of Knowledge.

ESSAY 2. You are hypothetically working on a project for a client and notice a mistake was made that went unnoticed. The mistake will significantly affect the project schedule, possibly leading to abandonment of the effort and could lead to legal action against you and/or your company/institution. Describe how you would proceed. A personal experience with ethical issues and how you resolved the issue may be used where appropriate.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

Includes questions that span multiple certification categories.

QUESTION G1. Describe the basic processes necessary to ensure that projects, research, or other environmental efforts under your supervision are managed successfully. Use an example from your own experience and explain how you implemented basic project management processes to achieve technical quality. Include specific examples of the tools

and/or techniques you use to achieve the desired outcome(s) minimizing potential risk for failure.

QUESTION G2. In undertaking a complex project or task, describe a situation you have encountered where an unforeseen difficulty or variable was introduced. Describe how you recognized the situation and the steps you took to analyze or determine the best course of action to resolve the problem. What obstacles did you encounter in resolving the issue and what did you learn from the situation?

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Includes evaluation of risks to; or past impacts upon the occupants of ecosystems, workplaces, or residences exerted by physical, chemical, or biological agents to which exposure may occur.

QUESTION EA1. The identification of 'valuable wetlands' may be accomplished using several evaluation techniques. Describe an example of how it has been necessary for you to assign value to a wetland. Provide examples of where a methodology used in another area could be applied to a specific location as a more effective means for evaluation. How would you address seemingly valuable wetlands that were not afforded legal protection in the analysis process?

QUESTION EA2. Many laws, policies and guidance standards recognize that protecting and conserving biodiversity, maintaining ecosystem services, and sustainably managing living natural resources are fundamental to sustainable development. Identify and describe how you've used one or more models for assessing project induced immigration in relation to a particular regulatory standard to monitor the impact on land use change and land use patterns.

QUESTION EA3. You are assigned to assess risks to human health potentially posed by a substance or substances that will be emitted to the air, water, soil, or workplace environment. How would you proceed?

QUESTION EA4. What approach would you suggest for analyzing the potential effects of climate change in environmental impact analysis? How would you account for such factors as combustion of natural gas or a situation where climate change associated with weather patterns/sea level rise, where the analysis or proposed action focused on the extraction of the hydrocarbon and not necessarily on its potential end uses? Should these impacts be looked at in terms of their global context – and is that appropriate?

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION

Includes preparation of reports, presentation of facts, completion of other action to establish administrative records demonstrating compliance with environmental statutes, regulations, and permits.

QUESTION ED1. A company is developing an oil and gas project on private surface but accessing government-owned minerals. Explain how you would advise your client on the most expedient path forward to develop the resource while achieving required permitting and compliance burdens.

QUESTION ED2. What approach would you suggest for analyzing the potential effects of climate change in environmental impact analysis?

QUESTION ED3. Establish the importance of public involvement process in environmental planning and provide two examples of the tools and techniques that you have used to effectively plan and manage the public involvement process. How effective was the public involvement process you used? Analyze the process you used and recommend changes for future public participation efforts based on your experience with the two examples provided.

QUESTION ED4. You work for a construction company that is looking to build a large development on private land. To develop the property, you need to connect to utilities (water, power, etc.) that require impacts on an easement you have rights to through a national protected area. The easement is within an area of key habitat for a protected species that draws thousands of ecotourists and observers each year. How would you navigate advancing the project to receive the appropriate approvals?

ENVIRONMENTAL OPERATIONS

Includes management of facilities in accordance with requirements of environmental statutes, regulations, and permits.

QUESTION EO1. Environmental regulations are frequently changing, and with those changes come associated compliance burdens and challenges on operations. Describe the change management process by which you have addressed these issues in relation to the operations you oversee. This will allow an applicant to so choose to use a global governance and apply at a smaller level.

QUESTION EO2. Describe the general environmental and regulatory considerations associated with the decommissioning and abandonment of operating facilities.

QUESTION EO3. Describe a situation where a proposed facility or operational project if implemented as planned would result in exceedance of requirements in environmental statutes, regulations or permits. How did you overcome the situation through project design, mitigations, etc. to achieve compliance?

QUESTION EO4. As operational facilities age, aspects of the original design may no longer address the operating parameters, leading to increased risk of a negative event. Describe a hazard analysis or risk assessment that you led or participated in which identified a hazardous environmental situation. How did you document the issue, and what are the proper steps to ensuring it is managed?

QUESTION EO5. What methods would you undertake to keep an aging facility up to safety standards and how would you develop a plan to keep current with recent Health and Safety protocols or regulations?

ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING

Includes arrangement for master plan implementation; future facility construction, operation, and/or management; or program operation in accordance with anticipated requirements of environmental statutes, regulations, and permits.

QUESTION EP1. You manage a utility's environmental division. Company officers seek to build a 106-mile liquid products pipeline between a distribution location and a city in the neighboring jurisdiction. They ask you to obtain the required permits. How would you proceed?

QUESTION EP2. Discuss the importance of the mitigation hierarchy in developing a mitigation strategy for a project? Provide an example of where you have used this process with a client/applicant in developing a project.

QUESTION EP3. As an environmental manager assigned to a project in a jurisdiction in which you previously have never worked, how would you assure compliance with that jurisdiction's environmental statutes and regulations? How have certain individual jurisdictional statutes and regulations modified your approach to complying with higher-level and/or conflicting statutes and regulations?

QUESTION EP4. Permitting wetland impacts requires both the justification for the project need as well as an illustration that the impact from the project has been minimized where unavoidable through an alternatives analysis. Describe a challenging – but justifiable – wetlands permitting assignment and how both the project need and wetland impact were justified. Provide relevant details on the project's environmental/regulatory, socio-political, geographic and temporal contexts that contribute to the challenges.

ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH AND EDUCATION

Includes conducting and reporting on original investigations into the dynamics of environmental phenomena, teaching about such phenomena as investigated by oneself and/or other investigators.

QUESTION ERE1. How are academic institutions adequately preparing students to enter the environmental profession? How might curricula be improved in the area of environmental assessment to enable environmental professionals to resolve complex problems and think critically? Provide specific examples of emerging skills or technical areas that have been inadequately included in curricula or degree programs to date.

QUESTION ERE2. Although the peer review process does not guarantee the accuracy, validity, or reproducibility of research, it is still a cornerstone of the process to publish ones work and a stamp of approval that it meets a certain quality threshold. One of the predominant challenges in the peer review process, however, is the availability of experts in niche fields as well as the bias of these experts. Share an example of feedback you received during a peer review and how it was addressed satisfactorily to advance your work to publication. How from your perspective can the peer review process be improved?

QUESTION ERE3. Scholarly work has been gradually increasing for the past two centuries with up to three million articles published per year in recent times. Why do we need scientific rigor and transparency in research? How can we do a better job in detecting and preventing misconduct and detrimental research practices?

QUESTION ERE4. While doing research for a non-peer reviewed report, you find an article that agrees with your viewpoint. How do you determine the reliability of the article and/or use it in your report?

QUESTION ERE5. If you were to design a course on environmental policy, how would you organize it and why? What approaches to policy analysis would you include, if any? What five major readings would you select for your students and what would you want to ensure they learned as a part of these?

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Includes evaluation of sustainability in planning and project implementation, and preparation of project and development plans that integrate long-term viability of resources into environmental practice.

QUESTION ES1. Sustainability practices support ecological, human, and economic health and vitality. Describe how you have or would approach integration of sustainability concepts into either (1) planning or design of a large infrastructure project, (2) development of an operational program for industry, or (3) public policy development.

QUESTION ES2. In responding to increasing demand from investors, companies have widely began documenting their ESG activities through voluntary reporting. Discuss the evolution of ESG reporting and the role of voluntary standards in today's market, how you have engaged to shape your organizations reporting or documentation practices, and how you helped your organization converge toward any material disclosures.

QUESTION ES3. The concept of environmental sustainability has driven companies and organizations to integrate various practices to achieve sustainability in their operations. Discuss how you have helped your organization evolve their practices as it relates to enhancing sustainability ratings from ESG ratings providers.

QUESTION ES4. The Project you are working on has not included any processes/actions that contribute to sustainability. How do you introduce the concept and work to include sustainable practices that do not adversely impact the overall cost of the project?