



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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LEED[®] for Commercial Interiors

What is LEED for Commercial Interiors?

LEED for Commercial Interiors addresses the specifics of tenant spaces primarily in office, retail and institutional buildings. LEED is a comprehensive rating system that takes into consideration the specific needs and restrictions of the tenant market. It is part of a comprehensive suite of LEED assessment tools developed by the USGBC to promote green design, construction, and operations practices in buildings nationwide. LEED for Core & Shell is a companion rating system; together, LEED for Commercial Interiors and Core and Shell will establish green building criteria for commercial office real estate for use by both developers and tenants.

What tools do I need to go through the LEED certification process for a commercial interior?

The Reference Guide will help guide the project team through the LEED credit process. In addition, the entire LEED system is available on-line through online work templates.

How do I know if my commercial interior is a good fit for LEED?

USGBC encourages the project team to tally a potential point total using the rating system checklists for all possibilities. The project is a viable candidate for LEED certification if it can meet all prerequisites and achieve the minimum points required in a given rating system. If more than one rating system applies, then it is up to the project team to decide which one to pursue. If questions or concerns remain, please e-mail leedinfo@usgbc.org.

What are the LEED requirements for the tenant space vs. the whole building as applied to LEED credits and prerequisites?

Sustainable Sites credit 1 applies to the building selected, not to the scope of work.

Water Efficiency credit 1 is based on the planned occupancy of the space, regardless of when the restrooms are constructed, who pays for them or where they happen to be located.

Energy and Atmosphere prerequisite 1, Fundamental Commissioning, applies to the work done during the project, and as a minimum applies to the energy-related system listed in the requirement.

(See page 19 of V2 of LEED for Commercial Interiors) It is not expected that the central building-wide systems will be commissioned (unless it is part of the scope of work), but some tenants may elect to have their commissioning authority confirm that these systems meet the owner's project requirements and the basis of design. Note that Indoor Environmental Quality prerequisite 1, and the flush-out compliance path in Indoor Environmental Quality credit 3.2 require evaluations of the air handling system, ideally done before deciding on the space; owners who routinely hire their own commissioning authority may elect to have them do these evaluations.

Energy and Atmosphere prerequisite 2, Minimum Energy Performance, and Energy and Atmosphere prerequisite 3, CFC Reduction in HVAC&R Equipment, only apply to the scope of work defined by the project team.

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Energy and Atmosphere credit 1.1 and 1.2 only look at the lighting power used in the project space. By contrast, Energy and Atmosphere credit 1.3 either prescriptively addresses the design of the HVAC system, or the overall performance of the HVAC system even when a project shares a common system with other parts of a building. The exception, “Appropriate Zoning and Controls,” by virtue of how the requirement is written, only applies to the tenant space.

In the Indoor Environmental Quality section of the LEED for Commercial Interiors rating system, several of the prerequisites and credits address performance of the HVAC system. In Indoor Environmental Quality prerequisite 1, Minimum IAQ Performance, the requirements of ASHRAE 62.1-2004 apply to the capabilities of the building’s HVAC system; but, because modifications to the whole HVAC system may be beyond the scope of an individual tenant project, the requirement provides an alternative minimum.

I am trained as an interior designer and don’t have the background to handle the energy- and HVAC-related credits. What do I do?

Successful LEED projects begin with a fully integrated design team in which all the professional disciplines work together toward the project goals. While each needs to be aware of the other’s contributions and participate in the decision making, none can or will have the knowledge and experience to complete a project unassisted

I am not familiar with commissioning and have never encountered it in an interior project. Is it really necessary? How do I get it done?

Commissioning is a process to assure that the project is built and operating as it was designed. Independent commissioning agents can be hired to perform the task. Larger Architectural and Engineering firms may have commissioning agents on staff.

Where do I find the reference materials for my project?

Go to www.usgbc.org then click on ‘MyUSGBC’ in the upper right-hand corner. Log-in with your site user information and look on the left-hand side of the screen under ‘Project.’ There you can access resources, Letter Templates, Credit Interpretation Requests (CIR’s) and Surveys.

Does the LEED rating system recommend building products?

No, USGBC certifies buildings and tenant spaces under the LEED rating systems, not the materials that are used to construct the building.

Within the LEED rating systems, building products contribute to achieving LEED points following performance-based requirements. To meet these requirements, practitioners identify products that have specific attributes. Some LEED points will require that certain limits or minimums be met. Other points require that specific product technical information be quantified in order to calculate the product’s aggregate environmental or health value.

Many manufactures now offer the necessary product technical information that you need to meet LEED credit requirements and have trained sales professionals who can guide you to products and materials that may contribute to LEED credits, as well as meet your broader environmental criteria.

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How long will my commercial interiors certification last? What if I renovate?

LEED does not have any provisions requiring recertification at this time.

What educational programs are available to learn more about LEED?

USGBC has developed LEED training workshops and they are listed on the USGBC Web site as they are scheduled or by [clicking here](#).

Are IIDA, ASID, and AIA continuing education units available for LEED Workshops?

Continuing education units are available. Please inquire when you sign up for a LEED workshop for details.

Can interior designers become LEED Accredited Professionals?

Yes. Anyone wishing to seek accreditation can sit for the exam.

Is professional accreditation available specifically for LEED for Commercial Interiors?

In late 2006, LEED Professional Accreditation will be available for any of three exams based on LEED for New Construction, LEED for Commercial Interiors, or LEED for Existing Buildings. All candidates that pass will earn the LEED Accredited Professional designation. Reciprocity will be offered among all LEED products for the purpose of attaining a point towards certification under ID Credit 1.

How do I get started?

You can learn more about LEED on USGBC's Web site by [clicking here](#), or contacting the USGBC at (202) 828-7422 or via email leedinfo@usgbc.org.