

**Board of Certification in Professional Ergonomics**  
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**BOARD OF CERTIFICATION IN  
PROFESSIONAL ERGONOMICS**



## **Ergonomics Certification:**

## **Employment Benefit and Job Market Edge**

BCPE White Paper  
September 2021

## What Is Certification

Certification is a voluntary process that validates your qualifications in a specific field. Certification demonstrates your knowledge and experience to employers, clients, and peers and signifies your commitment to continued excellence in professional practice. Certification also increases visibility, builds credibility, and validates expertise with those outside the profession.

Organizations known as certification bodies test the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to perform a job at a professional level. The certification earned from a certification body attests to a minimum level of professional competence. The Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards, Inc. in Washington, D.C., which grants the Certified Financial Planner (CFP) designation, is an example of a certification body.

There are organizations that offer certificates in human factors, ergonomics, and usability, which sounds like certification, but is actually quite different. Completing a few days of a course, which is typical of a certificate program, does not qualify one to be a mechanical engineer, nor does it qualify one as an ergonomist. As you will see, the Board of Certification in Professional Ergonomics (BCPE) is much more thorough, and as a consequence, certification has much more meaning.

## What Is Ergonomics and Who Is Certified?

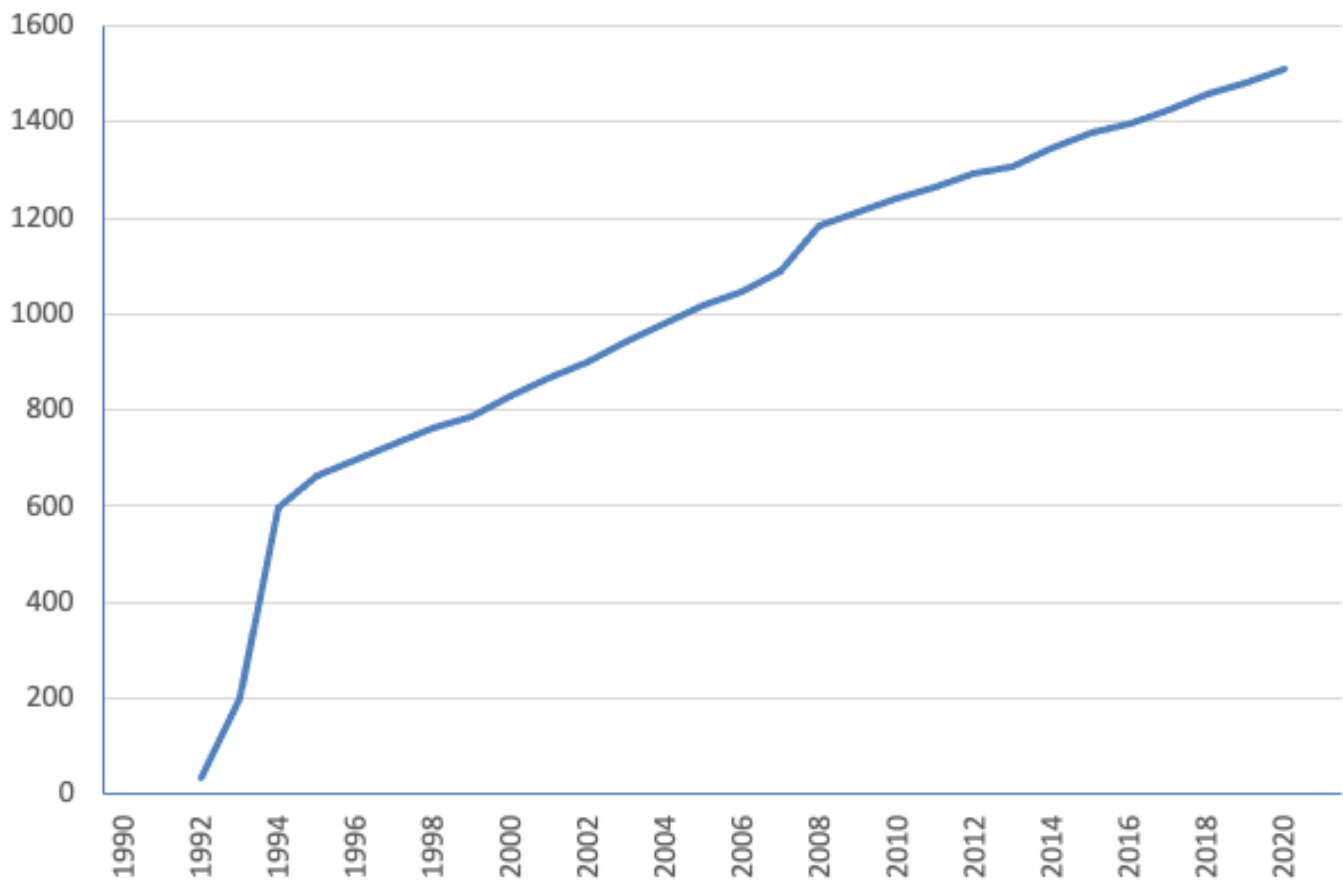
Ergonomics is a multi-disciplinary field concerned with *human factors* in design. Its methods can be applied to any technology, simple or complex, that involves a human interaction and user experience.

Practitioners are known as ergonomists, human factors professionals, or user experience professionals. All are concerned with the “fit” between humans and jobs, tasks, tools, functions, information, and environments of use. Their job is to make things safe, easy, comfortable, and even enjoyable to use. By applying theoretical principles and data, practitioners achieve their goals - to optimize human well-being and overall system performance.

The BCPE certifies practitioners to show they have broad competence in the fields of ergonomics, human factors, and user experience. The BCPE is a non-profit organization.

As of 2012, the BCPE has certified 1,689 individuals, more than any other certification body worldwide (Smith, 2012). This is still the case today. As shown in the figure, the number of full Professionals certified by the BCPE has steadily increased since its inception in 1990. This trend follows other certification bodies that report growth even in the recession of the mid-to-late 2000s (Institute for Credentialing Excellence, 2009).

**Growth of Full Professionals Certified by the BCPE Between 1992-2020.**



## **BCPE Certification Designations**

All applicants for Certification in Professional Ergonomics take the same exam. Certificants choose the designation within the Professional and Associate levels that suit their practice.

<b>Professional Level</b>	Certified Professional Ergonomist (CPE)
	Certified Human Factors Professional (CHFP)
	Certified User Experience Professional (CUXP)
<b>Associate Level</b>	Associate Ergonomics Professional (AEP)
	Associate Human Factors Professional (AHFP)
	Associate User Experience Professional (AUXP)

## BCPE Certification Requirements

For certification at the Professional Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bachelor's degree and academic coursework covering BCPE core competencies</li> <li>• Three years, full-time professional work experience with an emphasis on design</li> <li>• Passing score on the CPE/CHFP/CUXP written examination</li> </ul>
For certification at the Associate Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bachelor's degree and academic coursework covering BCPE core competencies</li> <li>• Approved AEP/AHFP/AUXP application</li> <li>• Ongoing work toward fulfilling Professional Level experience requirement of three years*</li> </ul>

\*One (1) year of work experience equivalency is granted to PhD graduates of a HF/E program from an accredited university or college.

## Being Certified Will Help You Find a Job and Remain Employed

BCPE credentials are recognized (and desired) by some of the nation's top employers, including:	Amazon Fulfillment Services	Kohler Company
	AON Risk Services	Library of Congress
	Coca-Cola Refreshments	Raytheon
	Exxon Biomedical Sciences	United States Navy
	Ford Motor Company	World Bank

In a survey of 125 organizations headquartered in North America, the top 3 benefits of hiring someone certified as cited by employers was, among those certified: (Knapp & Associates, International, 2007)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Independent verification of competency</li> <li>• Greater productivity and efficiency</li> <li>• Higher quality of work</li> </ul>
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No matter what professional certification pathway you choose, during the certification process you can expect to (Knapp & Associates International, 2012):

- Establish an avenue for acquiring important knowledge/skills/competencies relevant to current and/or future job roles.
- Acquire knowledge/skills/competencies that might not otherwise have been focused on and/or which may expand future career opportunities.
- Get verification of your knowledge/skills/competencies and a means of differentiating one's skills from those of others from an independent third-party.
- Evaluate your strengths and areas for improvement and opportunities to develop new or more advanced knowledge/skills competencies through continuing education.

## How to Get Certified by the BCPE

BCPE applications are available for download under Resources > Documents at [www.bcpe.org](http://www.bcpe.org).

For certification at the **Professional Level**, the application must be accompanied by evidence of the requisite education, work experience, and work samples. Upon approval of applications by the BCPE, all applicants must obtain a passing score on the exam prior to becoming certified.

For certification at the **Associate Level**, the application must be accompanied by evidence of the requisite education and under goes review for approval. The Associate Level can be held for a maximum of 6 years during which transition to Professional Level is expected.

At both the Professional and Associate Levels, once certified, certificants must remain current in their professional practice and abide by the BCPE code of ethics.

Further information regarding certification in professional ergonomics is available by telephone (888) 856-4685 or email [bcpehq@bcpe.org](mailto:bcpehq@bcpe.org)

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The Board of Certification in Professional Ergonomics is endorsed by the IEA (International Ergonomics Association) and is a corporate member of ICE (Institute for Credentialing Excellence). All credentials awarded by the BCPE are recognized for Professional membership in the American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE).