

Frequently Asked Questions:

IMPORTANT NOTICE (PLEASE READ)

The following FAQ serves as suggestions and helpful tips but it in **NO WAY** can guarantee that an applicant's portfolio will receive an approval or denial. This is not a mentoring program but rather the program provides information to help applicants navigate through the process. The IAEM and the CEM Commission have set policies and this initiative in no way can advocate for any candidate nor can any of the helpful tips be used to justify any portion of an applicant's portfolio. The final approval rests solely with the CEM Commission in their evaluation of an individual's portfolio. Under no circumstances is any of the information provided binding. The information is being provided to help you determine how to best put your portfolio together.

The CEM Commissioners can be located on the IAEM website at <http://www.iaem.com/certification/CEMComission/intro.htm>. However, the Commissioners are being asked to provide opinions in a number of different areas at all levels of government including the private sector. You are welcome to ask a CEM Commissioner questions about mentoring or other CEM/AEM specifics. However, please understand that they have full-time jobs and may be stretched. They are not obligated to mentor or support any applicant in any way other than what is required of them under the bylaws of the IAEM.

1. In the Work History area, it asks if there is a job description. I assume this means an 'official' one? I was often hired in a generic role but then given specific responsibilities. If I attached a printed email from my supervisor that verified the dates and job description would that suffice?

Work History (Job Description): The answer is an official job description should be provided whenever possible. In the absence of a job description (where there is no formal job description), the candidate should create a job description and accompany that job description with a signed attestation from the supervisor. Additionally the candidate should (where it is not blatantly obvious) cite percentages of time spent practicing comprehensive emergency management. For instance, if a person has experiential chops (fragments of time and jobs) where he or she did volunteer work, paid work, full time or part time, the candidate must demonstrate that the sum of all the chops or fragments equates to three years of full time, comprehensive emergency management work. And the citation must be validated by a supervisor's attestation (signature).

2. The Disaster Experience section only seems to want one experience described there. Since my fulltime job with Red Cross is in fundraising, and most of my emergency/ disaster experience is as a volunteer (even now, since my FT job isn't in response, I technically volunteer for disaster assignment), am I able to briefly describe each one, including lessons learned in the four phases?

Work in emergency management may be paid or volunteer, full time or part time, as long as the sum of the parts equates to 3 years of full time comprehensive emergency management. So volunteer work is acceptable. However, the candidate must explain his or her participation in 1 actual disaster or full-scale exercise. That participation must take on a "substantive role" and the candidate must describe his or her participation in each of the phases of emergency management. Roles and functions should be briefly described along with lessons learned.

3. Can I use my graduate degree to satisfy the education requirement and use my B.A. for the general/emergency management training requirements?

The CEM credential requires any Baccalaureate level degree from any college or university accredited by one of the 6 affiliated United States Department of Education accrediting organizations (or their foreign equivalency).

Bachelor's degree courses shall not be used for any of the general or emergency management training if the candidate is planning to use his or her Bachelors degree to meet the requirement. Currently until December 31, 2009 a candidate may use work experience in lieu of a bachelors degree. After January 1, 2010 the CEM requirement mandates a minimum of a baccalaureate degree.

A Masters degree or higher, may be used to satisfy any of the general management or emergency management training requirement, however, up to the maximum of 25 hours per category. So for instance, a master's degree may have in its curriculum Disaster Response Operations Management. Such a 3-credit (or more) Masters degree course would be counted up to 25 hours of emergency management training. Likewise a 3 credit Masters degree course (or more) in Grant Writing may be counted for 25 hours of general management training.

A candidate could use a Masters degree to satisfy the education requirements and the Bachelors degree to satisfy training if none of the Bachelors degree courses are transcribed on to the same transcript as the Masters degree courses. However, that will create the appearance of "double dipping" or reutilizing the same credit will be accepted. For instance, a person who holds an Associates Degree and a Bachelors Degree cannot utilize the Bachelors degree to meet the education requirements and then use Associates degree courses, which were counted by the college in the make up of the curriculum in the Bachelors degree.

4. Does working on an emergency management grant count towards the experience requirement for the CEM?

Depending upon what is inferred by working on an emergency management grant. For instance, is that writing for (applying for a grant)? Or is it that the candidate worked on a term limited job say a one-year emergency management consulting job paid by grant funding? If the intent is the latter then yes, whether the position is grant funded and time limited would count the same as any other emergency management employment. However if the intent is writing for a grant, then I would say that does not meet the spirit of experience. If writing for a grant is not part of the candidate's job description, and the candidate does write a grant proposal, that may satisfy a professional contribution requirement (depending up the individual case and how it is presented to the commissioners). If the candidate's job description includes grant writing, then this would not satisfy the requirements of a professional contribution.

5. Are there any CEM Commissioners that I can work with in the United Kingdom?

No, there are no CEM Commissioners in the United Kingdom. Applicants interested in seeking a mentor, should locate an experienced CEM practitioner who might help you through the process.

6. I work with a CERT team in my area. Does working with this team count towards the 2-3-years of Emergency management experience?

A CERT Team participation could count toward the experience requirement. However, the sum of all the parts must equate to 3 years of full time comprehensive emergency management (all 4 or 5 phases). The candidate would need to explain percentage of time allocation, specific duties, and relate those duties to the 5 tenets (phases) of emergency management.

So lets say a candidate is a CERT Team member for three years. The CERT participates in meeting for four hours once a month, and participates in a disaster for a couple days. This scenario would not equate to three years of full time comprehensive emergency management experience. However, it may equate to three (the number is arbitrary, its just an example), but when combined with other volunteer work in emergency management and professional paid work in emergency management could meet the requirement?

7. With a sour economy and layoffs in progress in many municipalities does an unpaid internship count towards the 2-3 years of Emergency Management experience?

The answer could be yes or no? An unpaid internship would meet the spirit of the emergency management work experience. However, if that unpaid internship in emergency management was a requirement of a particular college Bachelors degree curriculum, then no this would not count. The internship would be a course like any other course in the bachelor's degree curriculum. Since that bachelors degree curriculum is the foundation of meeting the formal education requirement then this would be considered "double dipping". However if this internship was outside of any college curriculum and not in anyway assessed by the college for credit or grading, then this internship could be applied toward the experience requirement.

8. I worked on a disaster in my community which required the use of many resources. However, the disaster was not declared. In order to satisfy the disaster/exercise requirement for the CEM, does the disaster have to be a local, state or federally declared?

The disaster should be federally declared. However, there are instances where large scale local disasters occur which may not meet the requirements of a federally declared disaster under the Robert T Stafford Act requirements. In such a situation the onus is on the candidate to demonstrate the scope of the disaster and it may be considered by the commissioners. The candidate should include formal documents such as newspaper articles, letters from local or state emergency management officials and any other archival proofs of compliance which may be able to paint a vivid picture for the CEM Commissioners reviewing the submission. Additionally the candidate will need written documentation which shows the role (s) that person played in the event.

9. I received my degree in Homeland Security. Can this degree be used just like the degree in Emergency Management? This will help me determine if I need 2 or 3 years of Full-Time experience.

No, a Bachelors Degree in Emergency Management is required to waive one year of full time emergency management experience. While Homeland Security has some crossover materials, courses, requirements etc, it does not focus on the five tenets or phases of emergency management. Also, emergency management must appear either on the degree or in the transcript.

10. Am I considered a student if I graduated in May but still unable to find a job?

You must be enrolled in a regionally accredited institution part-time or full-time in order to be considered a student by the IAEM standards. In order to qualify for the reimbursement, you must be an active member of the IAEM USA Student Region and enrolled in an accredited institution during the application process. In order to qualify for the \$100.00 reimbursement, the candidate must be on all four conference calls (the entire call), be a student enrolled in a university/college throughout the process, have not submitted your portfolio (unless a portion of it failed during the June CEM Commissioner meeting), be part of the USA Student Region, and contacted Christian Lanphere with the necessary information requested on the first conference call.

Interested parties that participated on the first call are welcome to continue to participate for information, clarification purposes and questions.

11. Does it matter if my education or degree comes from an online or traditional school?

No, it does not matter if you are enrolled in an online, hybrid (mixed online and classroom attendance) or brick-and-mortar (traditional school) as long as the university/college is regionally accredited by one of the 6 Higher Learning Commission accreditation bodies. If you are unsure about the university/colleges' accreditation, you need to contact the university/college directly or search for the university/college through the Higher Learning Commission website: <http://ope.ed.gov/accreditation/>

12. I am a Fire Fighter and do some work in Emergency Management? Does my experience as a Fire Fighter count towards the Emergency Management experience?

The answer could be yes or no? Does simply being a fire fighter and working meet the work requirement? No. However, if the candidate has concurrent duties (supported by the job description and validated by the person's immediate supervisor), then some of the work would qualify. It's up to the candidate to identify percentages of time and the phases of emergency management and the role. The sum of all the parts must equate to three years of comprehensive full time emergency management experience (all 5 phases). So for example, if as a fire fighter, your job requires you to participate in emergency management activities about 25 % of your overall time and you have 8 years completed of service, then you may qualify for two years of emergency management full time experience? You must show percentages, and validate any statements with letters or other documentation.

13. I am a member of the National Guard and served as the Operations Chief and supervised many personnel/troops during Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita. Does that count for Emergency Management experience?

Yes, certainly the time spent in National Guard during the disaster would count. The key is that the experience must be explained in the tenets or phases of emergency management and the time spent, and validated by a letter from your immediate supervisor. National Guard time served alone won't meet the requirement, but documented time, roles and validation by a supervisor of the disaster activities would surely count.

14. I have a mixture of part-time and volunteer hours in emergency management? Can my volunteer time count towards the Emergency Management experience requirement?

Yes, part-time, full time, volunteer or paid, as long as the sum of the parts equates to three years of full time comprehensive emergency management.

15. Is there a formula that I should use to come up with 3 years of full-time experience if I have a mixture of volunteer, part-time and full-time experience?

Yes, part-time, full time, volunteer or paid, as long as the sum of the parts equates to three years of full time comprehensive emergency management.

16. Where do I find the list of CEM Commissioners and what is the best way to reach out to them if I would like to be mentored?

There is a current list of CEM Commissioners on the IAEM Website <http://www.iaem.com/certification/CEMCommission/intro.htm>. It is important to remember that while nothing prevents you from contacting the CEM Commissioners that does not mean that the CEM Commissioners have any availability to mentor (most have full time positions with many time requirements). The CEM Commissioners are often Senior Emergency Management leaders and practitioners, and most don't have the time to mentor. Many CEM Commissioners are on local, state, and national committees, speaking before Congress, consulting in areas impacted by disasters, or teaching. It is best to find a current CEM that you may know, and reach out to them.

17. If I go for the AEM first then decided to upgrade to the CEM, do I have to pay two fees or is the fee a one time thing?

The AEM and CEM are independent of each other. The AEM may be considered a stepping-stone to the CEM. Each individual portfolio review has a fee requirement. The fees charged pay for the administration of the CEM program. That means; the fees pay for the commissioner's transportation, housing and meal expenses. All CEM Commissioners are volunteers and not paid by the IAEM to review portfolios.

So, if the candidate has two reviews; AEM and CEM, then there would be two fee charges for the two independent reviews. Likewise if a candidate does not pass the CEM requirements after the initial review and a second review, the candidate could apply all over again with the new fee. Each candidate is given an initial portfolio assessment and if the candidate does not meet the requirement, they may resubmit those portions of the portfolio which did not meet the requirements one time for the initial fee.

18. Do I have to have a degree in Emergency Management in order to satisfy the education requirement?

No. Any baccalaureate degree from a regional accredited (US DOE affiliated or equivalent agency outside the United States) is acceptable. A Bachelors degree in emergency management does reduce the work experience to two years.

19. I received two personal award/medals for service during Katrina/Rita in 2005 and Gustav/Ike in 2008. Do those count for the Awards section of the Contributions to the profession?

The answer is most likely. It depends on what the award was. If the award has a candidate's name on it, was issued by an organization external to the candidate, and rises to the level of an award. Basically an award is something on a grander scale than an "attaboy letter". In the question you mention 2 awards/medals for service. If the candidate did something outstanding, more so than was required under the job description, and rises to a grander scale than the typical; "attaboy letter" for attendance then there is a good chance it would qualify under this category.

20. I am an ICS 300/400 certified instructor. Because I am full-time in the National Guard, I can't get paid for teaching. It is not a requirement of my job to teach, but I do it (during work hours) to get more military people ICS qualified. Does that count for teaching?

In the "Teaching" category of professional contributions, it does not matter whether a candidate gets paid or not for his or her efforts. The candidate must teach a formal course (like a FEMA state hand off G level course or similar, or like a college course) in an emergency management related subject for a minimum of three hours. Documentation that shows the candidate did the activity cited, the duration, topic, location and date must be provided and validated by the candidate's supervisor, that the activity was not part of the candidate's routine job requirements.

21. I served in the Army and was a Nuclear, Biological, Chemical (NBC) NCO. As part of that job I was assigned to the US Army Chemical School as instructor as well as severing over 5 years with a Special Forces Company. Will my time in the military count towards Emergency Management experience? Specifically due to the homeland security aspects of the job.

First, Homeland Security is not necessarily Emergency Management. There are some overlying responsibilities; however, Emergency Management recognizes five tenets or phases: Mitigation, Preparedness, Response, Recovery and Protection/Prevention.

Some of the work in the military may qualify, but that is contingent upon the candidate's ability to cite and support (with documentation) the equivalent of three years of comprehensive emergency management. There are three CEM Commissioners who are either active or retired military. As an example if a candidate cites that he or she was a full time HazMat Technician for five years that would not necessarily equate to 3 years of comprehensive full time emergency management experience. It is suggested that applicants carefully explain their role, support it with a job description and add an explanation along with the appropriate supervisor signature. Specialty response technician level roles such as Haz-Mat, Fire Service, Law Enforcement, Search and Rescue typically do not qualify on their own, because the candidates are unable to document claims and support them against the requirement of the equivalent of three years of full time comprehensive emergency management.

22. I work in a hospital and serve in the hospital's Incident Command Structure. Does that count for Emergency Management experience?

No, that would not likely count. The candidate must explain his or her role; support the claim with adequate supporting documentation including a formal job description and a supervisor's signature. An example, the candidate worked in a hospital also for 17 years part time as a Registered Nursing Assistant. The candidate served under the hospital's incident command structure as well (on the few occasions we used it in 17 years), however, my responsibilities did not support three years of full time comprehensive emergency management experience. The reason why this does not count is because the candidate was not involved in mitigation, recovery, and only marginally involved in preparedness, response and prevention/protection.

23. If I have a degree in Philosophy (which has very little to do with EM.) I found the excel list of approved courses from the IAEM website. Is there any way to get a better idea of what classes may count for the General training requirement? For instance I have had classes on ethics but they were general ethics not business/EM specific.

The baccalaureate degree can be in any subject area (including philosophy). General management courses usually include computer training, human resources, leadership, self help skills, interpersonal communications, communications, budgeting/finance, grant writing, diversity: typically non-technical courses. Unfortunately we do not have an available list of all courses. The commissioners use an excel template of many common emergency management courses, and some general management courses.

My suggestion (and its only a suggestion) is to consider the FEMA Independent Study Series courses which compose the Professional Development Series: IS 139, IS 230, IS 235, IS 240, IS 241, IS 242, IS 244. These are general management (although they may also be counted as emergency management) courses.

24. If there are some classes I can use to meet some General Management training requirements in my BA, can I then use my Masters Degree toward getting the one year off the experience requirement? Does it even matter since my graduate degree will not be in EM specifically?

If your Masters degree is not in Emergency Management, you will not be able to take the year off the experience category. If your Bachelors is in Emergency Management you can take the 1 year off the work experience requirement, however, if you apply the Bachelors degree to the education requirement you cannot use any of the coursework contained in the Bachelors Degree curriculum to support any general management or emergency management training hour requirements.

25. I've worked as a volunteer emergency management planner in addition to other EM areas but not in a paid role. Recently I was able to have AF Emergency Management added to my logistics role as secondary duty. That has only been the last few months. Can I use the time as a volunteer to count towards the Emergency Management experience?

Volunteer or paid, does not matter. What does matter is that the candidate can cite and support the equivalent of three years total of comprehensive emergency management experience. This must be supported by documentation including job description and affirmed by a letter from the supervisor.

All questions should be directed to Christian Lanphere at christian@lanphere.org or through a CEM mentor that the two parties have mutually agreed upon.