

Soil Science Society of America (SSSA) and Association of Ohio Pedologist (AOP) Memorandum of Understanding

In recognition of the common missions of the Soil Science Society of America (SSSA) and the Association of Ohio Pedologist (AOP) in certifying soil scientists, it is hereby mutually understood that a specific cooperative relationship between SSSA and AOP has been established and in place since January 1, 2008. The memorandum of understanding (MOU) describes the duties and responsibilities of each party involved in the certification process.

Policies and Procedures: The SSSA Certified Professional Soil Scientist (CPSS) and Certified Professional Soil Classifier (CPSC) national certifying board (hereafter referred to as “the national board”) will establish all policies and procedures of certification. The current policy and procedures enacted by the national board will be enforced at the state level via the Ohio CPSS/CPSC certifying board (hereafter referred to as “the Ohio board”), an SSSA board with a cooperative agreement with AOP through this MOU. The Ohio board may not deviate from or add to the national policies and procedures. The Ohio board may recommend changes to the national board for consideration but the national board must enact said recommendations prior to implementation. The Ohio board is an extension of the national board and follows the same policies and procedures.

The Ohio board: An Ohio board will be maintained by AOP, with a minimum of three and no more than five members representing a diverse segment of soil science individuals from academia, private practice and government. Ideally at least one member should be from a state agency that impacts soil-related issues, e.g., on-site waste systems, nutrient management, water quality, licensing, sanitation. At least three members need to be CPSS/CPSC certified. Each member will serve a three-year term and no more than two consecutive three-year terms. These members shall be nominated by AOP Executive Council, and the Ohio board and appointed by the SSSA President. The Ohio board will provide boards members’ contact information to SSSA and to AOP Executive Council and provide timely updates when changes are made so a current board members’ list can be maintained at SSSA. All board members must sign the SSSA appointment letter before their term becomes active. The Ohio board will keep the national board and the AOP Executive Council informed of its activities by a written annual report. The national board may conduct an annual review to ensure compliance with stated policies and procedures.

Optional: The Ohio board may develop state specific training courses on Ohio soils and regulations impacting soil scientists and CPSS/CPSC individuals may be required to complete these if they desire to work in Ohio and utilize their CPSS/CPSC certification. These courses would be part of their continuing education.

Credential Review: Applicants will submit their credentials to the national certifying board via the SSSA office in Madison, WI. The SSSA CPSS/CPSC office will be the official records collection point for all CPSS/CPSC programs. Once the application is deemed complete by SSSA staff, each member of the Ohio board will be sent an electronic copy and requested to provide their vote directly to the national CPSS/CPSC office by the stated deadline. The Ohio board will notify the AOP Executive Council of any applicants. A simple majority vote of the Ohio board determines the outcome of the application. A majority in favor is required to grant certification; ties will equal a denial.

Exams: Applicants will need to pass the Fundamentals exam administered by the Council of Soil Science Examiners (CSSE).

Fees: Fees will be set by the national board.

Continuing Education: Ohio board will follow the national standards for continuing education. The Ohio board may require additional specific course work and/or requirements for Ohio soil scientist as part of their continuing education.

Ethics and violations: The Ohio board will enforce the SSSA CPSS/CPSC code of ethics. All Ohio CPSS/CPSC will sign the code of ethics as a requirement for being certified. The Ohio board will review all ethics complaints and render a decision based on the standards set by the national board. The AOP Executive Council may act as a liaison between its membership and the Ohio board regarding alleged ethics violations in Ohio. The national board will act as the appeal body for all ethics complaints.

Implementation of these cooperative activities will proceed equitably in accordance with the policies and procedures of the cooperating organizations. This MOU automatically remains in effect until rescinded or replaced by written agreement between signatory boards. Either party may terminate this MOU by giving 60 days written notice to the other party.

This MOU is implemented with the signatures of the Society offices on behalf of their respective organization and replaces prior MOUs.



Kathryn C. Sasowsky, AOP President

January 24, 2024
Date



Dawn Gibas, SSSA Director of Certifications

January 25, 2024
Date