



GRI Professional Certification Program FAQs

GRI Professional Certification Program

What is the GRI Professional Certification Program?

The GRI Professional Certification Program is a sustainability curriculum, hosted on the [GRI Academy](#), that delivers globally applicable professional development on the GRI Standards and offers professionals an opportunity for continuous learning and upskilling. The program will be delivered together with GRI's network of Certified Training Partners and will include a certification exam.

Why is the GRI Professional Certification Program developed?

This program is developed in response to a market needs, as we have been receiving many requests from people for a long time on how they can become certified professionals by GRI. Through this program, professionals will be able to enhance their knowledge, expertise, and skills on sustainability practices, particularly in implementing the GRI Standards, with the overall aim to improve the quality of sustainability disclosures and reporting.

What is the GRI Academy?

The [GRI Academy](#) is a dedicated learning platform for sustainability professionals. It provides access to the latest sustainability-related curriculum, including the Professional Certification Program and dedicated courses, on reporting with the GRI Standards.

What are the benefits of certification?

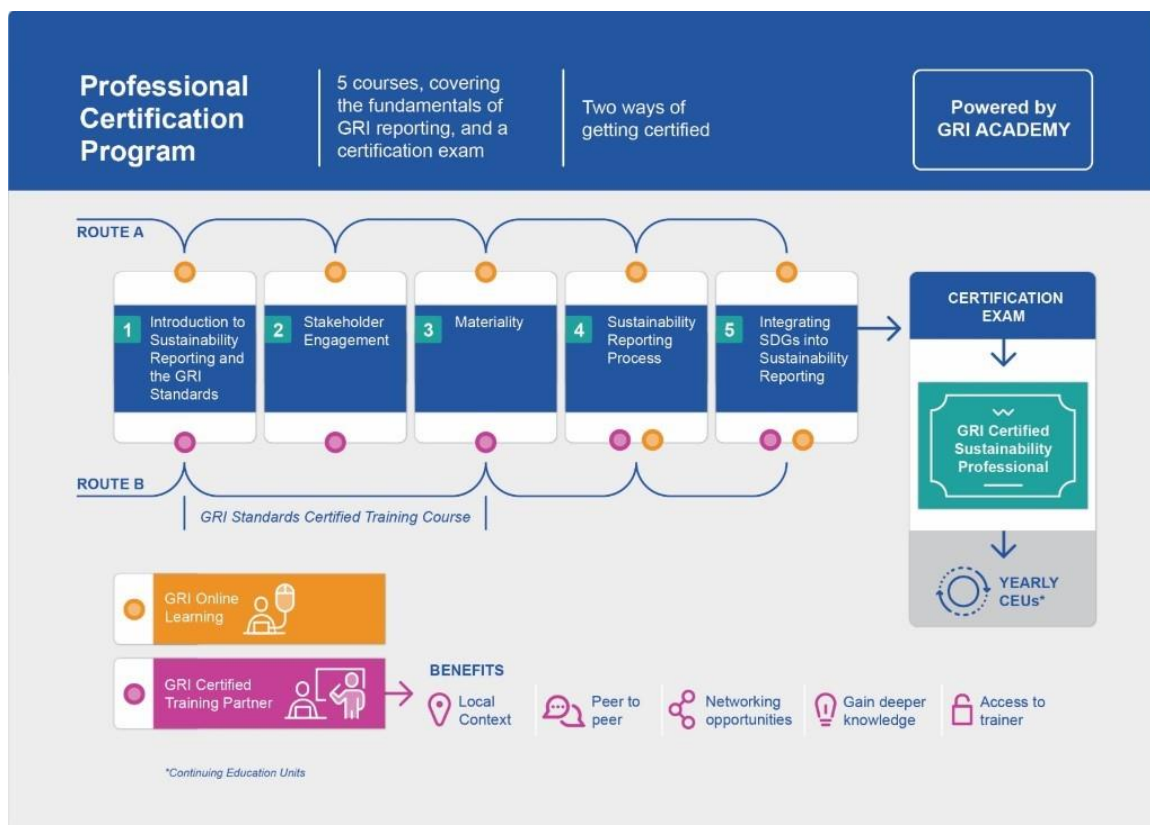
- **Improve skills** of sustainability professionals: and subsequently the quality of sustainability disclosures and reporting
- **Provide acknowledgement:** way for sustainability professionals to demonstrate knowledge, capability, and competence
- **Create credibility and marketability:** it is a form of quality assurance for sustainability professionals, improving their marketability
- **Maintain and upskill knowledge:** continuing education will keep sustainability professionals up to date

How can an individual get certified?

The Certification Exam has a defined learning path that includes five courses, covering the fundamentals of GRI reporting. Each course is worth one point. After attaining the five points, individuals will be eligible to take the Certification exam. The exam can be taken online. Passing the exam will grant individuals the status of '*GRI Certified Sustainability Professional*'. Certification can be renewed annually by taking the minimum learning hours through [Continuing Education Units \(CEUs\)](#).

There are two ways to get certified, route A and B. The learning path can be taken through the online courses that GRI provides - Route A - or through the Certified Training Partners, via the GRI Standards Certified Training Course – Route B (which provides the individual with three out of the five points required).

All of this can be accessed through the [GRI Academy](#).



Why are there two ways to get certified?

The reason for having different learning channels (face to face and online) is to cater to the needs of different types of learners and have a global reach at the same time.

How does Route B work - through the Certified Training Partners?

Over 100 [training partners](#) across 57 countries offer GRI's Certified Training Course, customized training in a peer-to-peer learning environment offering networking opportunities and locally tailored content.

Professionals can start their certification journey by taking the GRI Standards Certified Training course, after which they will be awarded three out of five required points towards unlocking the Certification exam. Some Training Partners will also offer course 4) 'Sustainability Reporting Process' and 5) Integrating SDGs into sustainability reporting. Otherwise these can be

What is the added value to take Route B?

There is a lot of added value of attending a course through a Certified Training Partner including:

- **Local context:** The material from Training Partners is certified including the local cases and examples which is tailored to the country where the course is being offered. Often, it is also offered in the local language.
- **Peer to peer learning:** CTPs provide opportunities for peer-to-peer learning, which is invaluable.
- **Networking opportunities:** Through the set-up of face to face or remote training sessions, the participants get networking opportunities through the CTP courses.
- **Deeper learning:** The GRI online courses cover the essentials of reporting, without going too deep into the concepts, whereas the CTP courses provide the depth through practical exercises and case studies.
- **Access to a trainer:** The participants get access to the trainer(s) throughout the CTP courses, whereas that is not the case with the GRI online courses.

For whom is the GRI Professional Certification Program?

Besides sustainability reporting professionals (within companies) and consultants, this program is also very useful for anyone who works with sustainability reporting, such as Chief Sustainability Officers and assurers.

Do you need to get certified in order to produce a Sustainability Report in accordance with the GRI Standards?

No, for the moment there is no such a requirement.

Can you explain a bit more about the courses?

The courses included (see underneath) cover the fundamentals of GRI reporting. In the GRI Academy you can find more information about the course, the content and the learning objectives.

1. [Introduction to sustainability reporting and the GRI Standards](#)
2. [Stakeholder Engagement](#)
3. [Materiality](#)
4. [Sustainability Reporting Process](#)
5. [Integrating the SDGs into sustainability reporting](#)

Certification exam

What does the Certification exam look like?

The Certification exam can be taken online. It consists of 40 multiple-choice questions and requires a passing score of 75%. If an individual fails the exam, they can retake it 3 times in 6 months with a 30-day cooling off period between each attempt.

How does the Certification exam differ from the previous GRI Standards exam?

The Certification exam is quite different. The Standards exam checked the knowledge of the individuals on how quickly they could access the information from the GRI Standards. The new Certification exam will check individuals' understanding of the concepts of sustainability reporting, and that is why it comes with a learning path.

Will the GRI Standards exam discontinue?

Yes, the GRI Certification exam replaced the GRI Standards exam per 1 July 2020. Those who have already purchased the exam can still take it until 15 October 2020.

Is the Certification Exam available on demand or is it scheduled for certain dates only?

The Certification Exam can be taken online through the GRI Academy. Upon completion of the learning path, all eligible candidates will be able to take this Exam at their convenience.

What language is the Certification exam in?

The GRI Professional Certification Program, including the Certification exam, is (currently) only offered in English. Depending on funding and demand we will consider translating it in other languages as well.

Can the Certification exam be taken without the other courses?

No, the Professional Certification Program requires a compulsory learning path, comprising of five fundamental elements. These learnings are a pre-requisite to take the Certification exam. In very specific cases, where the [Grandfathering policy](#) applies experts will be allowed to go directly to the Certification exam without having to go through the five courses.

Will participants earn a certificate when they complete the courses and the Certification exam?

Yes, participants will receive a certificate of completion for each course and a certificate of achievement once the Certification exam is passed. The certificate of achievement will mention that the participant has acquired the status of “GRI Certified Sustainability Professional”. The status can be maintained through annual minimum [CEUs](#).

How can those who have already taken the GRI Standards Certified Training course take the Certification Exam?

Those who have successfully attended the GRI Standards Certified Training course will already have acquired three out of five points towards the Certification exam. To redeem the points, they must select the ‘Route B Learning Path’ from the Course Catalogue in the GRI Academy. They will see that the first three courses have been marked as completed. They will then need to proceed with the online courses ‘Sustainability Reporting Process’ and ‘Integrating the SDGs into sustainability reporting’. Once they have completed both, the Professional Certification Exam will be unlocked. In cases where CTPs license these additional courses from GRI, these courses can also be taken by the participants through their local CTPs.

Pricing

What is the price of the GRI Professional Certification Program?

Pricing	Price
1. Introduction to sustainability reporting and the GRI Standards	€ 300
2. Stakeholder Engagement	€ 100
3. Materiality	€ 100
4. Sustainability Reporting Process	€ 200
5. Integrating the SDGs into sustainability reporting	€ 200
Certification Exam	€ 350
TOTAL	€ 1,250

Note: GRI Community members get a 25% discount

Is there a discount on the Certification exam for those who attended a GRI Standards Certified Training course through a Certified Training Partner?

Yes, participants of the GRI Standards Certified Training course will get 25% discount on the Certification exam fee.

Are there any discounts for participants?

- Participants of the GRI Standards Certified Training course, through the GRI Certified Training Partners, get 25% discount on the Certification exam fee.
- Discount for students:
 - o Students get 10% discount on the courses and the Certification exam.
 - o Bulk discount for universities: (>50 online courses) - 15% discount
- Discount for companies: Bulk discount (>100 online courses) - 10% discount

CEUs

What are CEUs?

The continuing development of professional competence involves a program of advancing educational activities. Continuing Education Units (CEUs) is the term used in this program to describe the educational activities that assist GRI Certified Sustainability Professionals in achieving and maintaining quality in their professional services.

Why are CEUs required?

To maintain the certification status, GRI Certified Sustainability Professionals should participate in learning activities that maintain and/or improve their professional competence. GRI Certified Sustainability Professionals are responsible for complying with all applicable CEU requirements, rules, and regulations of the GRI Professional Certification Program.

The right to use the title 'GRI Certified Sustainability Professionals' is regulated by GRI and imposes a duty to maintain and enhance professional competence on a yearly basis.

How do CEUs work?

The Certification exam has a validity of 1 year. The sustainability professional can maintain the status by going through a yearly minimum of 8 learning hours through CEUs. 1 CEU is equivalent to 1 learning hour. The CEUs are provided via the GRI Academy and are clearly marked as such.

To confirm the extension of the certification period, GRI will annually issue certificates for all the professionals who maintain their GRI Certified Sustainability Professional status. Individuals can track their CEU progress in the GRI Academy. The minimum number of CEUs will be clearly indicated per year for the professionals to renew their status. Individuals who take more than the required 8 CEUs in a year will not be allowed to roll over the CEUs to the next year.

When will the CEUs be available?

The first CEUs will be made available in October 2020. These will be based on the new Topic Specific Standards (OHS, Water, Tax). Also, when the new requirements of the Universal Standards will be launched courses related to these updates will also be offered.

Thereafter, the validity, as mentioned on the renewal certificates and in the GRI Academy, should be followed to take the yearly minimum CEUs to maintain the status.

What kind of CEUs are offered?

GRI will provide a selection of learning activities (e.g. courses, webinars, workshops, events etc.)

While choosing the CEUs, the professionals should follow a thoughtful, reflective process addressing the individual's current and future professional plans, current knowledge, and skill level, and desired or needed additional competence to meet future opportunities or professional responsibilities, or both.

How do I know how many CEUs I have?

CEUs are documented and tracked per participants in the GRI Academy. You can check your progress any time using your GRI Academy credentials.

Would the preparation time needed to take the courses be included in my CEUs?

No, CEUs are calculated based on the length of the courses. Preparation time is not included in the calculation of the CEUs.

What happens if I am not able to complete the CEUs before the expiration of the certification period?

You will not be able to renew and your certification status will expire. You must then complete the process for reinstatement and pay the necessary fees.

What is the process of reinstatement?

If you do not complete the minimum CEU courses required for the renewal of your certification before the certification expiry date, then the following process for reinstatement needs to be followed to continue with the GRI Professional Certification status:

Reinstatement categories	Process
Within 3 months of Certification expiry	Complete all the required CEUs for the past year A fee of €100 will apply
After 3 months of Certification expiry	Retake the Professional Certification Exam Complete all the required CEUs for the period missed

The reinstatement process has 2 categories. You fall in the first category if you take all required CEUs within 3 months of the Certification expiry date. In this case, you will be required to complete all the CEUs for the past year and pay €100 euro fee.

The second category of the process of reinstatement applies to those who have not completed all required 8 CEUs after 3 months from the expiry date of the certification. In this case it will be necessary to retake the Professional Certification Exam and complete all the required CEUs for the period missed.

Grandfathering policy

Who does the Grandfathering policy apply to?

The Grandfathering policy has been designed specifically for experienced sustainability professionals.

Can you clarify what the Grandfathering policy entails?

If you are an experienced sustainability professional, who complies with the two predetermined criteria (see underneath), you may request for a grandfathering to take the GRI Professional Certification exam without going through the learning path (five courses). The request is a [self-declaration statement](#) including proof of relevant experience.

What are the criteria to comply with the Grandfathering policy?

- Minimum 5 years of proven experience in sustainability reporting using the GRI Standards and /or GRI Sustainability Reporting Guidelines and
- Minimum 10 GRI reports composed / contributed to

Both these criteria shall be valid.

Can GRI Nominated Trainers also be included in this policy?

Yes, they can.