

Graduate Safety Practitioner PROGRAM

INFORMATION FOR
QUALIFIED ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

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BOARD OF CERTIFIED SAFETY PROFESSIONALS

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Table of Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. How the GSP Program Works	2
3. Establishing Participation with BCSP	4
4. Participating in the GSP Program at Graduation	5

Forms

- Form GSP-S1 (Establishing Participation in the BCSP Graduate Safety Practitioner Program)
- Form GSP-S2 (Award Event Information)
- Form GSP-S3 (Graduation List)
- Form GSP-G1 (Graduate Declines Participation in the GSP Program)

I. INTRODUCTION

Understanding the Graduate Safety Practitioner Program

The Graduate Safety Practitioner (GSP) program is a new path to the Certified Safety Professional® (CSP®) certification available to graduates of safety degrees that meet BCSP Qualified Academic Program (QAP) standards. The GSP designation is a new path to the CSP certification and does not replace other paths.

The GSP program requires participation by the QAP. Graduates of these academic programs have only one opportunity to enter this path to the CSP, but failure to do so does not prevent pursuit of the CSP through other established paths.

Those accepted into the GSP program receive a waiver of the CSP application fee and do not have to pay or sit for the Safety Fundamentals examination. However GSPs must pay an annual renewal fee to retain the designation and must comply with time limits and other requirements to complete the CSP certification.

The GSP designation denotes graduation from a QAP and indicates progress toward the CSP certification. The GSP designation is not a certification.

Purpose of the GSP Program

The purpose of the GSP program is to recognize that an independently accredited academic program in safety meets BCSP QAP standards and that its graduates are prepared for entry into or advancement in professional safety practice.

Benefits for Qualified Schools

The primary benefits to a school with a safety degree program meeting the BCSP QAP standards include:

- Recognition for the quality of the degree program.
- Potential to accelerate professional development of graduates.
- Early participation by graduates in the CSP process.
- Potential to gain visibility and recognition for the degree program through events used to award the GSP designation.
- No fees for the QAP.

Benefits for Qualified Students

- A waiver of the CSP application fee.
- A waiver of the Safety Fundamentals examination and examination fee.
- A certificate awarding the GSP designation.
- Recognition for the level of preparation for professional safety practice.
- Recognition for being in a path toward the CSP certification.
- Recognition for holding the GSP designation with BCSP.

Definitions

Graduate Safety Practitioner. The Graduate Safety Practitioner (GSP) designation is **not a certification**. It is awarded to qualified individuals to mark their completion of an independently accredited academic program meeting BCSP QAP standards. The GSP designation recognizes students graduating from QAPs that have developed suitable knowledge and skills for entry into or advancement in professional safety practice. The GSP designation also denotes participation in a path leading to the CSP certification.

Qualified Academic Program. A Qualified Academic Program (QAP) is an academic degree program in safety meeting BCSP standards for participation in the GSP program. Currently, BCSP defines a QAP as a bachelor's or master's degree program holding program accreditation as a safety or similarly named program by the Applied Science Accreditation Commission of ABET (ABET-ASAC).

2. HOW THE GSP PROGRAM WORKS

Paths to the CSP Certification

There are three paths to the Certified Safety Professional (CSP), the general path, a path that recognizes approved certifications and licenses by examination, and the Graduate Safety Practitioner (GSP) path. Table 1 compares the three paths.

1. General Path. The general path applies to the majority of individuals seeking the CSP. In this path, individuals must meet education and experience qualifications and pass two examinations: Safety Fundamentals and Comprehensive Practice. The Safety Fundamentals examination covers basic facts and related core knowledge of professional safety practice. The Comprehensive Practice examination covers knowledge of application of professional safety practices.

The minimum educational requirement is holding a bachelor's degree in any field or an associate degree in safety and health acceptable to BCSP. Advanced degrees may also earn credit toward qualifying for the CSP examinations. BCSP uses a point system to award credit toward qualifications. Refer to the *CSP Application Guide* at www.bcsp.org for additional details on degrees and the point system.

After passing the Safety Fundamentals examination in this path, individuals hold the Associate Safety Professional (ASP) designation to denote progress toward the CSP.

2. Certification/Licensure Waiver Path. CSP candidates in this path do not have to pay or sit for the Safety Fundamentals examination. This waiver recognizes that a candidate has passed a certification or licensure examination for a safety-related credential acceptable to BCSP. Individuals in this path cannot achieve or hold the ASP designation and are awarded no special designation while pursuing the CSP certification.

3. Graduate Safety Practitioner Path. In this path, candidates who graduate from QAPs receive a waiver of the Safety Fundamentals examination and are awarded the GSP designation. The GSP designation recognizes that the accredited degree prepares the graduate for entry into or advancement in the safety profession. Individuals in this path cannot achieve or hold the ASP designation.

General Rules and Procedures for the GSP Designation

An individual has one opportunity to participate in the GSP program. Failure to take advantage of this opportunity does not prohibit the individual from entering the CSP process through the other two paths if requirements in those paths are met.

Someone who has been awarded the GSP designation may lose it for a variety of reasons. Loss of the GSP designation may require the individual to move to one of the other two paths and meet the rules associated with those paths.

Achieving the GSP designation requires participation by the school from which the individual achieved a degree that BCSP has identified as a Qualified Academic Program (QAP) for the GSP designation. **Individuals cannot apply directly to BCSP for the GSP designation.**

Qualified students seeking the GSP designation receive a waiver of the CSP application fee and must submit special application forms through the QAP Coordinator.

The introductory date for the GSP program is the Spring 2006 semester. The GSP program will not be retroactive. Only those graduating after the GSP program is introduced may seek the GSP designation. However, earlier graduates may benefit from other BCSP policies for graduates of ABET-accredited safety and safety-related programs. Contact BCSP for additional details.

Overview of Process

Table 1 shows a summary of the GSP process. Sections 3 and 4 provide further details for QAPs.

Initially, BCSP must establish that a QAP wishes to participate in the GSP program. Once a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) has been signed, the QAP defines the frequency of graduation cycles. For example, a school may elect to participate once per year or may wish to participate at the end of each academic term.

The remainder of the procedure occurs with each graduation. The school defines the dates for graduation and any associated event for presenting GSP certificates. The school also identifies a point of contact to work with BCSP as a QAP Coordinator. This person manages the schedule of events leading to the awarding

of GSP certificates and provides BCSP with a projected list of graduates.

The QAP Coordinator works with students to explain the GSP program and to ensure that application forms are completed and submitted to BCSP as a group. The

QAP Coordinator will assist BCSP in resolving application problems and will plan and implement the short ceremony to distribute GSP certificates. The QAP Coordinator will assist BCSP in updating the graduation list if there are any changes from the initial projected graduation list.

Table I. PATHS TO THE CERTIFIED SAFETY PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION
Summary Outline

(Refer to the detailed literature on the CSP certification at www.bcsp.org for complete details for each path.)

Path	Education	Experience	Safety Fundamentals Examination ¹	Comprehensive Practice Examination ²	Certified Safety Professional
1. General Path	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bachelor's degree in any field OR • Associate degree in safety and health 	4 to 7 years of acceptable professional safety experience (The exact amount depends on the degree level and field of the major.)	Passing the Safety Fundamentals examination leads to the <i>Associate Safety Professional (ASP)</i> designation, denoting progress toward the CSP certification.	Passing the Comprehensive Practice examination is the last step in achieving the CSP certification.	
2. Certification/Licensure Waiver Path	Same as General Path	Same as General Path	The Safety Fundamentals examination is waived because of examinations leading to other acceptable certifications or licenses. A person in this path cannot hold the ASP designation.	Same as General Path	
3. Graduate Safety Practitioner Path^{3,4}	Bachelor's or master's degree in safety from a degree program acceptable to BCSP. (The GSP designation denotes that a degree of this type was earned and the person is in process toward the CSP certification.)	Same as General Path	The Safety Fundamentals examination is waived because of the level of training in the degree program for entry into or advancement in professional safety practice. A person in this path cannot hold the ASP designation.	Same as General Path	

Time Limits and Other Key Rules

¹ Once eligible for the Safety Fundamentals examination through credit for a degree and/or experience, the candidate **must sit** for the Safety Fundamentals examination at least once every 3 years to remain a candidate.

² Once eligible for the Comprehensive Practice examination through credit for a degree and/or experience (and having passed the Safety Fundamentals examination if that is required in the path), the candidate **must pass** the Comprehensive Practice examination within 3 years.

³ The applicant has only one chance to enter the GSP path at the time of graduation from a QAP. This applicant may enter any of the other CSP paths at any other time and may hold the GSP designation for no more than 10 years. The GSP program is available at the time the program is introduced and thereafter as long as a QAP participates.

⁴ The GSP program is not retroactive for previous graduates.

3. ESTABLISHING PARTICIPATION WITH BCSP

Overview

The Graduate Safety Practitioner (GSP) designation requires participation by a school with a Qualified Academic Program (QAP). **Individuals graduating from a QAP cannot apply directly to BCSP to participate in the GSP program.** The GSP designation will only be awarded to individuals graduating from a QAP in collaboration with the school. Therefore, it is important for a school operating a QAP to formally declare the desire to work with BCSP to award the GSP designation to its graduates.

The three simple steps on Form GSP-S1 are required to establish participation. First, decide on participation with approval from the appropriate authorities of the school. Next, identify an individual to serve as a point of contact who will assist BCSP in the awarding of the GSP designation. And lastly, identify the graduation schedule that will be used by the school during participation in the GSP program.

It should be noted that a QAP pays no fees to participate in GSP activities. In addition, there are no fees for graduates to pursue the GSP designation. However, participating graduates must pay an annual renewal fee to retain the GSP designation while pursuing the Certified Safety Professional (CSP) certification.

Establish Commitment to Participate. Schools with QAPs must establish the authority to participate from appropriate school officials and gain the support of the leaders of the QAP. The exact procedure of establishing authority will vary with the policy and procedures of a school.

The authority to participate should be recorded through one or more signature(s) from the appropriate person(s) on Form GSP-S1.

Identify a QAP Coordinator. The school should determine a QAP Coordinator to work with BCSP to coordinate applications and to ensure BCSP receives a validated list of graduates. Most likely it will be a member of the faculty for the QAP. It may also be someone on the staff of the QAP program who handles student records. If there is a potential issue regarding the availability of the QAP Coordinator, it may be best to provide a primary contact and a backup contact. At certain times, the timing of preparation activities will be

critical and communication between BCSP staff and the QAP Coordinator must remain open.

Define the Graduation Schedule. Finally, the school should identify the graduation date(s) that will be involved. Some schools have one formal graduation ceremony and/or celebration per year. Others may have formal procedures without a ceremony at the end of each academic term.

A QAP electing to participate in the GSP program must participate at least once per year. The maximum is once per academic term. The school must decide how often it wishes to coordinate the GSP program with BCSP.

It is important to understand that the only opportunity for students to participate is at the time a school lists them on a graduation list provided to BCSP. Graduates have **only this one** opportunity to participate. They **must** apply at the time their names appear on a validated graduation list provided to BCSP. **Graduates cannot apply individually to participate in the GSP path of the CSP certification process.** They can apply at some point after graduation through another path to the CSP.

Complete and Return Form GSP-S1

Use Form GSP-S1 to declare participation in the GSP program. Submit the completed form to BCSP. Retain a copy for school records. Upon receipt, BCSP will acknowledge participation.

Renewal of Participation and Termination

BCSP will seek an annual Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). The main goal in this procedure is to ensure that participation information is still accurate. The QAP Coordinator(s) may have changed, the contact information may have changed or the frequency of participation will change. The renewal provides an opportunity to update that information. A QAP may elect to terminate participation at any time by simply declaring so in writing to BCSP.

4. PARTICIPATING IN THE GSP PROGRAM AT GRADUATION

This section details the process by which a school with a Qualified Academic Program (QAP) can arrange for graduating students to participate in the Graduate Safety Practitioner (GSP) program. This process occurs for each graduation in which the school participates with BCSP. Refer to Figure 1 on page 9.

Initiate Student Participation

Obtain Completed Applications from Students.

Once the GSP schedule is established between the QAP and BCSP, the next task is to ensure that every candidate for the GSP designation identified in the graduation list completes a GSP Application Form and that BCSP receives the forms for all candidates.

The QAP Coordinator should ensure they have a sufficient supply of the *GSP Application Guide*. The publication contains the rules, procedures, instructions, and the GSP Application Form for applicants. The QAP Coordinator should collect all applications and verify that they are complete, especially their signature(s), mailing address, and email address(es).

Please note that a person scheduled to graduate from a QAP may decide not to participate in the GSP program at the time of graduation. While the only opportunity to participate in the GSP program occurs at graduation, an individual may wish to apply for the Certified Safety Professional (CSP) at another time through the general path to the CSP certification and the procedures associated with that path.

Obtain Non-participation Declarations. Each person appearing on the graduation list who does not wish to participate in the GSP path upon graduation must complete Form GSP-G1. The QAP Coordinator must collect these forms and submit them with the applications. An individual may choose to submit his or her completed form in an envelope to the Coordinator. Should someone who appears on an initial graduation list not graduate, his or her right to participate in the GSP process is deferred until he or she appears on a validated graduation list.

Submit Completed Applications to BCSP. After collecting and checking the completeness of all applications, the QAP Coordinator must submit them to BCSP in a timely manner.

BCSP must receive the applications no later than **one month** prior to the graduation date. BCSP staff will

evaluate and enter the applications into the BCSP database so that the GSP certificates and related materials are shipped to the QAP Coordinator in time for the scheduled distribution event.

The GSP Application Form is designed to allow a graduate to authorize the QAP representatives to see their application form. However, concerns over confidential information occasionally may create special problems. For example, BCSP requires applicants for the CSP to report any criminal conviction information with the application, regardless of the path to the CSP certification.

Should a GSP applicant have private information to submit with his or her application form, the individual may want to place his or her application in a sealed envelope and submit it with any supplemental information. The QAP Coordinator should send the sealed envelope with his or her name on it along with all others. It is possible that the individual application information cannot be evaluated in time to be awarded the GSP designation at the same time as other graduates.

Use Form GSP-S3 as a cover sheet for the collection of applications. Check the appropriate box to indicate whether the individual's application is included.

Resolve Application Problems. BCSP staff may need to coordinate with the applicant or the QAP Coordinator to resolve any problem with an application (i.e. missing information or information that may delay participation in the GSP program).

Examples of problems are missing signatures, lack of complete mailing address, email address, etc. In addition, a delay may result from BCSP having to evaluate criminal conviction information that applicants are required to disclose. The BCSP policy on criminal convictions appears at www.bcsp.org/downloads.

Confidentiality Guidelines for Application Materials

Accreditation standards require that BCSP protect the confidentiality of applicant, candidate, and certificant information used in the certification process. These standards are very strict.

The application for the GSP designation has been modified in the signature block to allow a QAP Coordinator to be able to see applications and associated materials in the application process. In handling applications, a QAP Coordinator must take precautions to ensure that application materials are managed and stored where unauthorized individuals do not have access to them. Completed applications and associated materials are not to be copied. As soon as they are complete, the applications and any associated materials are to be sent directly to BCSP via traceable parcel.

QAP Coordinators must also be aware that some GSP applicants may not want anyone except for BCSP to have access to the application contents and related materials. The applicants have that option. Applicants should be informed that if they use that option, they must place their application materials in a sealed envelope, put their name on the envelope and then give them to the QAP Coordinator to submit with all other applications.

Initiate the Graduation Cycle

BCSP needs details for each graduating class that a school elects to include in the GSP program. An important goal is to ensure that the graduates receive their GSP designation prior to leaving school. Use Form GSP-S2 to report the plan and schedule for GSP events for a specific graduation date.

BCSP prefers to have the GSP certificates distributed at a public event associated with graduation or with the end of the academic term. However, if that is not possible, a less formal event can be coordinated to ensure that each graduating GSP applicant receives their GSP certificate. Should there be no graduation event, BCSP can mail the certificate directly to each qualified GSP applicant following graduation to a valid mailing address.

Please submit Form GSP-S2 at least two months in advance of the graduation date. Refer directly to Form

GSP-S2 for the information needed to properly coordinate the GSP process.

Example Comments for Graduation List

The Graduation List will be submitted more than once per cycle. Form GSP-S3 is used to identify and communicate graduates and any changes in the graduation list. Submit a copy to initiate the graduation cycle. Place a second copy as a cover sheet for the applications submitted. After the graduation event, submit a final copy to verify that all actually graduated or identify any changes to earlier lists. In a second or later cycle, identify any individuals carried forward from a previous list who did not graduate. Anyone not participating must complete Form GSP-G1 to decline.

In the Comments column on the Graduation List, insert comments as needed. Below are a few suggestions to consider.

Chose Not to Participate in the GSP Program. Check the appropriate box to indicate whether the individual is or is not participating. Should that change from a previously submitted list, enter a comment to report the change. Note that anyone who does not participate at the time of their graduation must use one of the other paths to the CSP certification. **The GSP designation can be elected only at the time of graduation.**

Already Applied for the CSP Certification. Should someone have already applied for the CSP certification prior to graduating, but does not yet hold the ASP designation, please note their decision to participate in the GSP program. Choosing to participate in the GSP program will waive the Safety Fundamentals examination, but BCSP will not refund any fees paid.

Already Holds the ASP Designation. Should someone already hold the ASP designation, there is no advantage to changing to the GSP program. Transfer from the ASP status to the GSP designation is not allowed. Please identify if the graduate already holds the ASP designation.

Holds the CSP Certification. Should someone already hold the CSP certification, they cannot participate in the GSP program. Please enter a note to identify anyone holding the CSP certification and appearing on a graduation list.

Did Not Graduate. There may be several situations that result in someone appearing on the initial graduation list but not graduating during the graduation

cycle. Examples are failing a course at the last minute, taking an incomplete and deferring graduation to a later time, encountering a health or other emergency situation that defers graduation, etc. If there is such a change, please enter a comment to explain. BCSP simply needs to know that graduation was deferred and does not need to know the details of the individual situation. BCSP may have to work with the QAP Coordinator to not award GSP materials or possibly to return them. The individual would be eligible to appear on the next cycle's graduation list.

Deferred from a Previous Graduation List. For a second or later graduation cycle qualifying for the GSP program, an individual who appeared on a previous list, but did not graduate can appear on the next applicable cycle's list. When that occurs, enter a comment to explain that the individual was deferred from the last cycle. That will help prevent confusion over a person's name appearing on two different cycles.

Prepare for Award Event

Establish Award Event. The QAP Coordinator at the participating school must identify whether there will be a special award event or whether GSP applicants will receive certificates informally.

The overall goal of an award event is to create a public relations opportunity to mark entry by your students into, or advancement in, professional safety practice. Such an event helps to add distinction to the QAP from which GSP applicants are graduating. The short public event is an ideal opportunity for photographs and a brief recognition ceremony.

Some schools have departmental graduation events, such as a dinner attended by the graduates, parents, and others. Often there are a few key statements by representatives of the school and presentations of important awards. Some schools have an awards dinner near the end of an academic term at which a wide range of awards are presented to students, faculty, alumni, and guests. Awarding of the GSP certificates may be incorporated into events like these.

Another option might be to organize a special event among students studying under the QAP at which all graduates are recognized and awarded their GSP certificates in front of peers.

To add to the prestige of the awarding of GSP certificates, the school may want to have a former graduate or other professional safety dignitary participate in the procedure by awarding the certificates

or by introducing the GSP presentation. BCSP staff can identify current or past BCSP Directors who are available to serve in this role. The QAP Coordinator will need to contact anyone on the list to solicit their participation in the award event.

The QAP Coordinator is responsible for receiving certificates from BCSP and ensuring that they are delivered to the GSP applicants. If there will be no special event at which GSP certificates are to be awarded, the QAP Coordinator must notify BCSP so that BCSP can send GSP certificates directly to graduates.

No matter what process is used, the QAP Coordinator must provide BCSP with the official graduation list that identifies who will receive GSP certificates.

Plan the Presentation. The QAP Coordinator will establish the details for the awarding of GSP certificates as part of the event. Included in the event is an introduction of the awarding of GSP certificates and their distribution. Sample introductory comments appear below.

Example Introductory Comments for GSP Certificate Presentation

As someone who has achieved the Certified Safety Professional certification, I am delighted to participate in this event. Today, graduates of this (name of degree) program are being recognized by the Board of Certified Safety Professionals for completion of this high-quality academic program and entering or advancing in their professional safety careers. The Graduate Safety Practitioner designation denotes this accomplishment and marks their entering the process to achieve the Certified Safety Professional certification. The CSP certification is a mark of excellence for those in professional safety practice. Congratulations to the new graduates!

Notify BCSP of Event Details. If not previously explained on Form GSP-S2, the QAP Coordinator must provide BCSP staff with necessary information about the award event.

BCSP staff will need to know the following:

- Will there be an award event or will BCSP mail GSP certificates directly to candidates?
- What is the date for the award event?
- Are there any important instructions for BCSP about the event?
- Are there any other details the QAP Coordinator thinks BCSP staff will need?

The date of the event is critical so that the BCSP staff can provide the GSP certificates to the QAP Coordinator in time for distribution. BCSP will send the GSP certificates to the QAP Coordinator at least one week prior to the award event.

Provide BCSP with Updates in the Graduation List. The QAP Coordinator will notify BCSP of any changes in the initial graduation list. This update is needed at least two weeks prior to the event in order for BCSP to provide the proper award materials in advance of the event. Refer to “Example Comments for Graduation List” on pages 6 and 7 for suggestions on communication notes for BCSP.

Receive Award Packets from BCSP. BCSP will send award materials based on the updated graduation list approximately one week prior to the event date provided to BCSP.

Check for Errors and Late Changes in the Graduation List. Should there be a last minute change in the graduation list, the QAP Coordinator is responsible for making the necessary adjustment. If someone (previously on the list) will not be graduating, the QAP Coordinator must pull the award packet for that person from the materials provided by BCSP. The person can appear on the next graduation event list, whether it is the following year or the following term.

Conduct Award Event

This step focuses on ensuring that the QAP Coordinator has everything ready for the graduation event at which the GSP materials are to be presented. Preparation requires checking the graduation list for any changes and notifying BCSP of these changes. Records can then be updated and proper materials shipped to the QAP Coordinator so that the event can move ahead smoothly.

Complete Post-Event Follow Up

After the graduation event, a follow-up is required. This includes providing final updates to BCSP.

Submit Final Graduation List. BCSP needs to know about any changes to the graduation list used to provide GSP materials to the QAP Coordinator for a graduation event or to mail materials directly to the graduates.

Resolve Changes in the Graduation List. BCSP will work with the QAP Coordinator to take care of any problems that may have occurred. Refer to “Example Comments for Graduation List” on pages 6 and 7 for suggestions on communication notes for BCSP.

Provide Address Updates. Please share any known address updates for graduates.

Share Recommendations to Improve Procedure. BCSP is interested in suggestions for improving the process by which the GSP designations are awarded.

Complete Public Relations Activities. If your school intends to send announcements (e.g., news releases) or photos to local newspapers or use them in departmental publications, it is best to take care of these matters before or soon after the graduation event.

Figure I. GSP PROCESS TIMELINE

