



A SPECIAL GREEN REPRINT FROM:

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# UGL Unicco Offers LEED Certification Consulting Service

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The USGBC continues to show the way on sustainability with its LEED programs and with the introduction of LEED for Existing Buildings: Operations & Maintenance discussed in Doug Gatlin's article. LEED is also demonstrating its importance by becoming a check-off item for many forward-looking companies that lease Class A real estate. This tenant-driven demand, coupled with a greater awareness and interest on the part of building owners and managers to reduce the environmental impact of their buildings, creates a heightened interest in achieving LEED certification for commercial buildings.

UGL Unicco is responding to this demand by encouraging and sponsoring our technical staff to become LEED Accredited Professionals (LEED-AP). We have also established a consultancy service to help clients work through the LEED certification process. The service is open to any company that is interested in taking its operations to the next level.

## MANAGING THE LEED CERTIFICATION PROCESS

UGL Unicco staff manage the entire project, develop the action plans and submit the materials to the USGBC on behalf of the client.

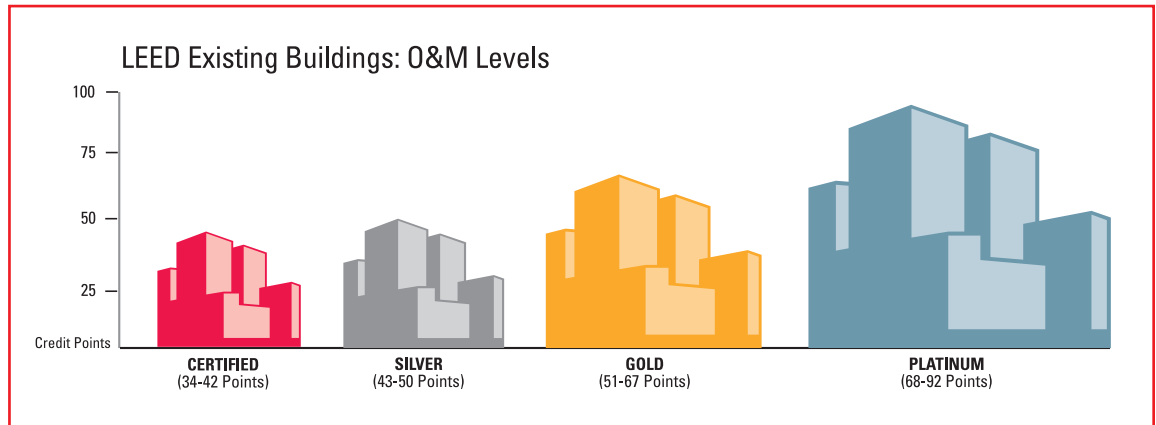
**Our approach to LEED certification has four distinct steps:**

**1) EDUCATION:** Either I or another UGL Unicco LEED-AP consultant will meet with you and your staff to explain LEED for Existing Buildings: Operations & Maintenance, how it came about, and its benefits and costs. We'll also give you an

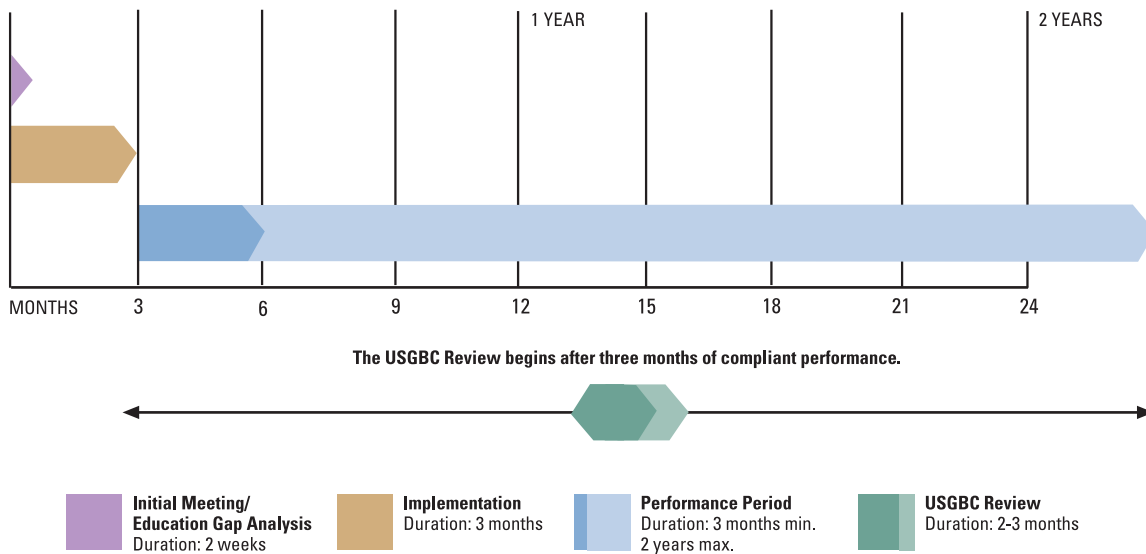
overview of the requirements and the steps to move through the process.

The objective of the initial meeting is to help you evaluate whether LEED certification is achievable and worth pursuing for your building, and at what level. It also helps you begin to think about the resource commitment that will be required to make it happen.

**2) GAP ANALYSIS:** This is a data-gathering step that takes a snapshot of how the building ranks at the outset. We determine what prerequisites are already met and if some fundamental changes are required before the process even starts. We look at quantifiable benchmarks, like Energy Star



## LEED Certification Timeline



certification for building systems, energy use and water consumption, that are relatively easy to measure.

We also look at procedures, such as smoking restrictions or janitorial practices, that may already be in place and that just have to be documented to satisfy a LEED performance threshold.

Based on current practices and equipment, we identify how many points are already in hand or are easily achievable, and then we list the other points that may require some operational changes.

Generally, UGL Unicco doesn't charge for these first two steps. We view them as pre-project planning and consider the project to start with the third step – Implementation.

**3) IMPLEMENTATION:** We kick off this phase with a full-day strategy planning session. The property manager, chief engineer, head of janitorial and other operational management and service providers are brought together to examine the Gap Analysis and determine the resources required to achieve each of the performance thresholds.

Specifics, such as entryway mat cleaning and maintenance, and pest control methods – essentially every LEED credit category – are discussed and ranked in terms of both cost and effort. Based on this discussion,

we decide the level we will seek (Certified, Silver, Gold or Platinum).

The implementation strategy session marks the beginning of a relatively intense time when the task team meets every week or so. We develop quantifiable action items for each of the credits. Management makes the operational changes and documents the results. In some cases, capital equipment is brought up to specification. Throughout this phase, the UGL Unicco consultant manages the project steps and works with your management to guide them through the process.

**4) PERFORMANCE PERIOD:** Once the action items supporting the performance thresholds have been addressed, we begin tracking the metrics. This is the period when the certification clock starts ticking since USGBC requires at least three months of performance data. The LEED certification task team meets about once a month during the performance period to monitor how things are progressing. When the audits show compliance with the certification criteria for three months for the required number of credits, we are ready to submit documentation for review.

### USGBC REVIEW

The UGL Unicco consultant works with your staff to get the documentation in place and handles all of the online submissions. We also work with USGBC to address any questions that come up during the review. USGBC typically takes two-to-

three months to review the submission and comments on each of the elements. They're pretty good about giving feedback, and we have an opportunity to address their concerns. There's a lot of communication with USGBC during the process, and the UGL Unicco consultant brings you and your staff in, as necessary.

### A NATURAL EXTENSION

LEED certification consulting is a natural extension of UGL Unicco's green initiatives, such as our UGL Unicco GreenClean program, which has been in place for years. We support USGBC, even participating in a Core Committee that was instrumental in developing the new LEED for Existing Buildings: Operations & Maintenance guidelines.

Our expertise helps our clients achieve a higher level of sustainability and efficiency. We have a good track record of shepherding our clients through the process because we're able to leverage our experience and knowledge. It's an important new UGL Unicco service since LEED has an intrinsic value that enables you to differentiate yourself from the competition while reducing your buildings' environmental impacts, creating healthier work environments and increasing your property values.