

LEED credits, prerequisites and points: How are they different?

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Learn how the components of LEED work to make certification possible.

This article is part of a series that provides an overview of the fundamental components of LEED.

LEED points, LEED credits, LEED prerequisites—they all contribute to certification, but how are they different? These three fundamental elements help you achieve LEED certification for your project. In the articles to come, we'll provide more detailed information about what these look like in each of the LEED rating systems: BD+C, O+M, ID+C, and ND. We'll also do a special edition on Homes.

Prerequisites

LEED certification means healthier, more productive places for us to live, learn, work and play, as well as less stress on the environment, by encouraging energy- and resource-efficient buildings. While project managers can pick and choose the credits they want to pursue, prerequisites set the minimum requirements that all buildings need to meet in order to achieve LEED certification.

Additionally, fulfilling the requirements of prerequisites will not earn points. Think of them as the foundation—without it, you can't construct a building.

Credits

These are what truly set your building apart from the rest. You are free to go for any credit you want within your chosen rating system, as long as it applies to your project type. Certain credits pair well with certain prerequisites or even other credits—we call that an integrated process—which amounts to synergistic benefits.

If prerequisites are the foundation, then credits are everything else. That is also why credits earn you points.

Points

The more points, the higher the reward. With LEED, there are many rewards, ranging from healthier spaces to buildings that save money and resources. The number of points a project earns determines the level of LEED certification it receives. There are four levels of certification:

- Certified (40–49 points)

- Silver (50–59 points)
- Gold (60–79 points)
- Platinum (80+ points)





Credits earn points, but prerequisites do not. Check out all of the credits and prerequisites in the LEED credit library.

In the next article, we'll review the prerequisites and credits that make up the LEED for Building Design and Construction (LEED BD+C) rating system.

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