

DOE Offers Zero-Energy Approval for Higher Ed

The U.S. Department of Energy is accepting applications for its Zero Energy Design Designation (ZEDD) Program.

by Elizabeth Waters

The building sector—one of the country's main sources of emissions—must transform the way buildings are designed, constructed, operated, and retrofitted if we are to meet the Biden administration's 2050 net-zero-economy goal. Many of the practitioners who will be responsible for this work over the next two decades are still in—or have yet to enter—post-secondary design and construction programs. By teaching them the skills to design and construct low-carbon, high-efficiency buildings powered by renewable energy, colleges, universities, and trade schools can prepare the next generation of architects, engineers, and contractors to meet our country's decarbonization goals.

In 2022, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) launched the Zero Energy Design Designation (ZEDD) program to recognize post-secondary programs that are doing just that. Last year, 17 programs across 12 institutions (11 in the U.S. and one in South Korea) earned the designation, which is valid for three years.

To be recognized, programs must have certain course requirements. Programs can use a pre-existing curriculum as-



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The DOE's Zero Energy Design Designation (ZEDD) program recognizes post-secondary programs that teach students to design and construct high-efficiency, low-carbon buildings.

sociated with the Solar Decathlon program or the DOE Zero Energy Ready Home certification. Alternately, they can make a case for their own in-house curriculum, which requires demonstrating their program includes certain features, like building science education or a zero-energy-design practicum.

DOE is currently accepting applications for 2023. The deadline to apply is July 7.

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