SOCIAL & LABOR CONVERGENCE

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SLCP Verifier Status Maintenance (VSM) Program

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) and Guide

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Version 2

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Appendix A: Process for Renewal of SLCP Verifier approval on Sumerra Training and Education Platform (STEP)

Purpose of the VSM Program

The purpose of the Social & Labor Compliance Program (SLCP) Verifier Status Maintenance (VSM) program, managed by the Verification Oversight Organization (VOO) Sumerra, is to ensure that Verifiers develop and enhance their professional-level social auditing and verification skills during the time that they retain the status of Verifier for the SLCP program.

Verifier Identification

A Verifier is a person who has met the qualifications for education, experience, and examination; and, has continued to meet the obligations for VSM which include: practicing ethically; completing required training and professional development, submitting an acceptable VSM worksheet -or- proof of status as an APSCA Certified Social Compliance Auditor (CSCA) , and passing a VSM audit (if audited).

A list of approved Verifiers is maintained by the VOO and is available to Verifier Bodies (VB) through their individual dashboards. Approved Verifiers are also listed on the SLCP Gateway and can be viewed by the VB Gateway administrators.

Contact Information & Communications

Verifiers are responsible to maintain up-to-date contact information with the VOO to ensure that communications are sent to a current email address.

Changes to VSM program requirements are announced by the VOO via email and will be posted on the SLCP support website. It is the responsibility of the Verifier to read the communications and ensure understanding.

Maintaining Verifier Status

Once an individual is approved as a Verifier, they are required to maintain their status annually. This is demonstrated by completion of any SLCP required training courses (e.g., updated Verifier training). In addition, Verifiers are required to submit documentation of other professional development in accordance with the minimum requirements to maintain their status as a Verifier. This can be accomplished by completing and submitting a VSM Worksheet for review and approval by the VOO -or- proof of status as an APSCA CSCA.

Activities claimed on the worksheet must be able to be supported with written records of participation/achievement which are maintained by the Verifier. While these records will not be required as part of the worksheet submittal, they must be made available upon request. Maintaining status does not mean that everything listed on the worksheet counts toward minimum requirements.

Status Maintenance Worksheet

A Verifier documents the required professional development via VSM Worksheet by meeting the minimum requirements as listed in the next section. Each Category is further explained in this SOP. The professional development contact hours categories are as follows:

- Category 1: Social & Labor System Assessments (16 hours)
- Category 2: Professional Knowledge & Practice (16 hours)
    a. Social compliance / specialized skills training on relevant subject matter

b. Attendance/speaking at relevant industry conference
c. Delivering external training
d. Volunteer participation on relevant committee/board
e. Other related activities

Minimum Requirements

Verifiers are required to complete any required training and a minimum of 32 hours of additional professional development during the approval period.

Process

Verifiers will complete the renewal with the Sumerra Training and Education Platform (STEP: https://training.sumerra.com) managed by the VOO. Worksheet forms will be available through the STEP platform. Worksheets are submitted in the STEP course page by following the instructions on the course page.

Activities claimed on the worksheet must be supported through a written impartial record. If a written, objective record is not available, the Verifier should not list the item on the worksheet. Examples of satisfactory records are listed in each of the Category sections. Worksheets are initially submitted without proof-of-participation records.

The VOO reviews each worksheet to judge whether minimum requirements are achieved. The VOO will contact the Verifier if the minimums are not achieved or if there is anything unclear or missing on the worksheet. Hours earned in excess of the minimum requirements does not earn extra credit nor does it carry over to a future status maintenance period.

Maintaining status does not mean that everything listed on the worksheet was acceptable for professional development contact hours. If a Verifier has questions about what was or was not acceptable (for purposes of future worksheets), the Verifier should contact the VOO.

Reporting Timing

Approval period is 12 months from the date Verifier was approved. Verifiers are provided a 13 months to expiration to allow a one month grace period for the submittal process. Verifiers will receive a notice from STEP when there are 3 months and 1 month before the status will expire.

Requests for extension of status beyond the current 13-month period can be made to the VOO. To request an extension of status, the Verifier should contact the VOO via email (SLCP@Sumerra.com) and provide relevant information (i.e., Verifier name, Gateway ID, reason for requesting extension, etc.) The VOO will evaluate all requests for extension on a case-by-case basis and provide notification to the Verifier if the request has approved and the duration of the extension.

Worksheet Audits

During each annual cycle, some Verifiers are randomly selected for a VSM audit. Activities claimed on the worksheet are verified through written, impartial records.

The purpose of the audit is to:

- Verify that the Verifier has achieved the minimum requirements necessary for recertification.
- Identify areas where Verifiers have difficulty in providing records so that the VOO may continuously improve its programs.

Verifiers selected for an audit are notified regarding which records are required. The provided records must be consistent with the dates and activities listed on the worksheet. Examples of satisfactory records are listed in each of the category summaries.

Verifiers are normally allowed two weeks to send the records to the VOO. This may occasionally be adjusted to account for holiday time periods. Additional time can be granted in some cases due to circumstances where the Verifier does not have access to the records, e.g., extended business or personal travel, location shutdowns, medical or family illnesses. The Verifier must contact the VOO to request additional time which may or may not be granted.

Audit results are reported to the Verifier. If the provided records support that the Verifier achieved the required minimum points, the status is maintained. If the provided records do not support that the required minimum points were achieved, the Verifier will be contacted to secure other records.

The Verifier will have failed to maintain status if:

- the audit records were not submitted, or
- the audit records do not support that the minimum requirements were achieved

Record Retention

Records acceptable for contact hours are described in each of the summary for the various Categories. Ideally, the Verifier should establish a records folder which can be built throughout the year. A single storage folder or location will also increase the chance that documentation will be available when needed.

Category Requirements:

Category 1: Social & Labor System Assessments (Audits & Verifications	Hours Required	
	Minimum	**Maximum**
	16	None

Description

Verifiers can claim professional development hours for the completion of social audits. This may be SLCP Verifications or other (non-SLCP) social & labor assessments or audits. Audits must be in line with standard practice in social auditing (e.g. SA8000, SMETA, etc.). In order for hours to be awarded, the verifier must have led (in full or in part) the assessment/audit activities.

If the assessment/ audit was conducted by an assessment team of two or more persons, all assessment/audit team members can claim status maintenance points for the assessment/audit if they were responsible for leading a portion of the assessment/audit activities.

Records

An acceptable record is one that contains the following information:

- The verifier's name;
- The full (legal) business name and address of the facility where the assessment/audit was conducted;
- The date(s) the assessment/audit was conducted; and
- Description of the assessment/audit scope

Unacceptable Records

- A proposal/quotation document between the verifier's organization a facility seeking a social audit that does not include the above listed information

Category 2: Professional Knowledge, Development & Practice	Hours	
	Minimum	**Maximum**
	16	None

Description

Verifiers can claim professional development contact hours for the following subcategories:

a. Social compliance and specialized skills training on relevant subject matter
b. Attendance/speaking at relevant industry conference
c. Delivering external training
d. Volunteer participation on relevant committee/board
e. Other activities

Records

Acceptable records are defined per the sub-categories.

Category 2A: Social Compliance and Specialized Skills Training

Description

Verifiers can claim professional development contact hours for attending social compliance and specialized training including social auditing skill building, social audit scheme training or other relevant subject matter. The hours eligible for claimed training are based on the technical contact hours of the training. Non-technical time includes breaks, lunches, networking travel time, etc. For example, if there is a training event that last for 5 hours of the day, but there is a one-hour lunch break included, you may only claim 4 contact hours.

In order to qualify for status maintenance points, the training:

- Must be delivered by a qualified trainer*
- Must occur during approval period; and
- Must include social auditing topics. For example:
  - Forced Labor Awareness, Ethics, Fire Safety Training etc.
  - Other scheme required training and refresher training: BSCI, SMETA etc.
  - Social Auditing Skill Building: interviewing skills or social auditing subject matter

**Internal Training is acceptable but must be delivered by a trainer with sufficient qualifications that should be available to the VOO upon request. Technical content of the training must also be made available to the VOO upon request.*

Records

An acceptable record is one that shows:

- The verifier's name;
- Date(s) and location of the training course;
- Course title and duration (in hours); and
- The name(s) and organization(s) of the course instructor(s).

If any of the above information is missing or if the course subject matter is not clear from the title, then additional records will be needed, e.g., event description, agenda or schedule.

If the training provider does not generate a participation record for the event, the following will be acceptable:

- Certificate, letter/email, or other record provided by the training provider showing completion of the training course; and/or
- Training registration receipt if purchased on site, for single day training

Unacceptable Records

- Training agenda/schedule that is not accompanied by the above listed information
- Presentation slides

Category 2B: Attendance/Speaking at Relevant Industry Conference(s)

Activity	Hour
General Attendance	1:1
Presenter/Speaker	1: 1.25 (1.25 Hours per 1 hour speaking time)

Description

Verifiers can claim professional development contact hours for attending and/or speaking at relevant industry conferences or seminars. Bonus hours are awarded presenter/speaker roles. Status maintenance points can only be claimed once per event in accordance with the criteria listed below. Attendance must be during approval period.

To claim contact hours for general attendance the conference:

- The conference must include technical / educational content; and
- The verifier must only claim actual hours of content viewed. For example, if you attend a full day conference but only view 2 hours of technical presentations, you must only claim 2 hours. Time not spent viewing/participating in educational content is not eligible. Non-technical time includes breaks, lunches, networking, exhibitor time, generic roundtables or discussions, travel time, social tours.

To claim contact hours for presenting/speaking at the conference:

- The presentation must be at least 20 minutes in length; and
- Cover a social auditing related topic*

***WARNING:** Sales, advertising, and marketing presentations are not eligible for presentation/speaker points.

Records

An acceptable record is one that shows:

- Verifier's name;
- Event title and duration (number of days);
- Date(s) and location of the event;
- Duration of eligible contact hours; and
- Description of the conference/presentation, if applicable and not clear from the title

If the hosting organization does not generate a participation record for the event, the following will be acceptable:

- Certificate, letter/email, or other record provided by the host organization showing proof of attendance or speaking engagement at the event; and/or
- Event registration receipt if purchased on site, for single day event (for general attendance only)
- Event badge only if issued on site, at a single-day event
- Registration record <u>and</u> evidence of physical presence in the city on the day(s) of the event, e.g. approved expense report, purchase receipts, etc.

Unacceptable Records

- Event agenda/schedule that is not accompanied by any of the above listed information
- Event badges if distributed prior to the Event
- Presentation slides

Category 2C: Delivering External Training

Description

Verifiers can claim professional development contact hours for providing specialized skills training externally of their organization. The hours awarded are based on the contact hours of the training. For example, if there is a training event that last for 5 hours of the day, but there is a one-hour lunch break included, you may only claim 4 contact hours.

If multiple instructors were responsible for delivering the training course, only the actual contact hours that were led by the Verifier can be claimed for contact hours.

In order to qualify for status maintenance points, the training needs to cover social auditing skills, be external of their organization and must be delivered during approval period.

Records

An acceptable record is one that shows:

- The verifier/trainer's name;
- Date(s) and location of the training course;
- Course title and duration (in hours);
- Eligible contact hours; and
- Information on attendees (i.e. participant list, organization, etc.).

If any of the above information is missing or if the course subject matter is not clear from the title, then additional records will be needed, e.g., event description, agenda or schedule.

Unacceptable Records

- Training agenda/schedule that is not accompanied by the above listed information
- Presentation slides

Category 2D: Volunteer Participation on Relevant Committee/Board

Description

Verifiers can claim professional development contact hours for volunteer participation on relevant committee/board. This means participation in technical or professional committee service outside of the Verifiers organization (e.g. board member with APSCA). In general, if the board is specifically dedicated to labor issues and social auditing it is eligible.

- Volunteer efforts must be completed during approval period.
- Contact hours will not be given for previous volunteer efforts or positions held.

Records

An acceptable record is one that contains the following information:

- The verifier's name
- Volunteer title/position held
- The full name of the organization or authority
- The validity/expiration dates of position
- Documents published by the Committee Sponsor or Society, showing the Committee/Board roster
- Pertinent documents or correspondence which identify you as a committee member, e.g., meeting agendas or minutes
- A letter from the committee/board chair.

Unacceptable Records

- Meeting agendas/schedules
- Presentation slides

Category 2E: Other

Description

Verifiers can claim professional development contact hours for items not included in another defined category. Submittals are considered on a case by case basis. Examples of potentially eligible professional development include:

- Achieving a professional certification related to social auditing (NOTE: APSCA CSCA is already an alternative to the worksheet) (2.5 hours per certification)
- Participation as a mentor in a structured mentorship program
- Published research on social auditing subjects (1 hour per published article/report)
- Submitting accepted new questions for the SLCP exam (1 hour per 5 questions accepted, max. 1 hour)

Please contact the VOO before submitting for hours in this category.

Records

Please contact the VOO before submitting for hours in this category.

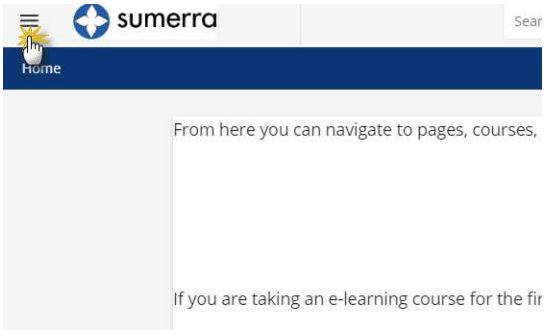
Appendix A: Process for Renewal of SLCP Verifier approval on Sumerra Training and Education Platform (STEP)

WARNING! Failure to follow this process may require you to re-do the process to ensure your renewal is properly logged.

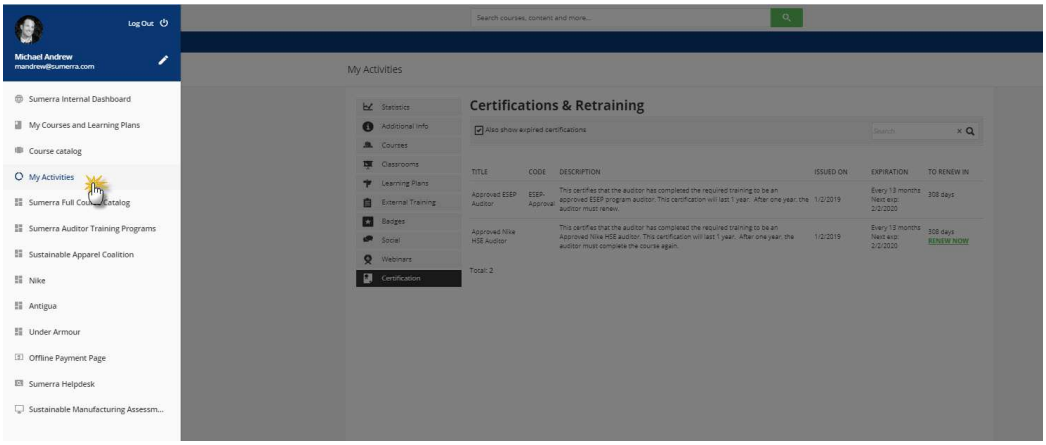
Viewing Your Approvals

In order to view your current approvals, please follow these steps.

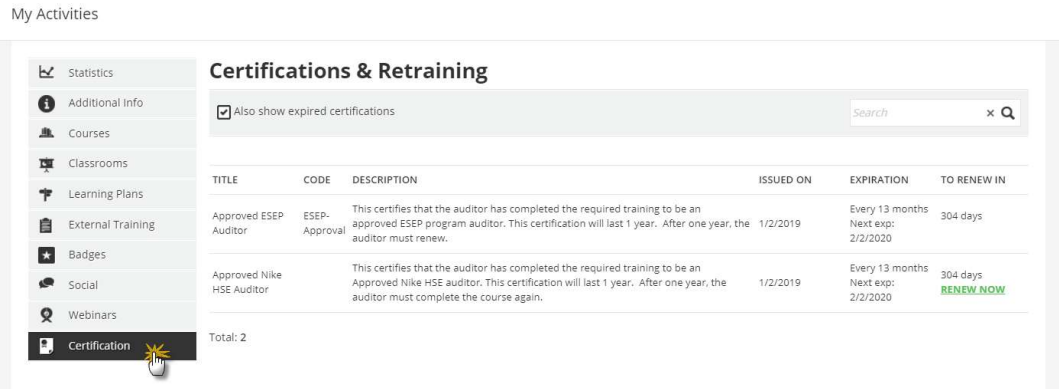
1. Log in to your STEP account (when you became a Verifier an account was created for you. Your user name is your email. You can use the forgot password link if you don't know it)
2. Click the menu button (three lines) in upper left of your main page



3. Click the My Activities

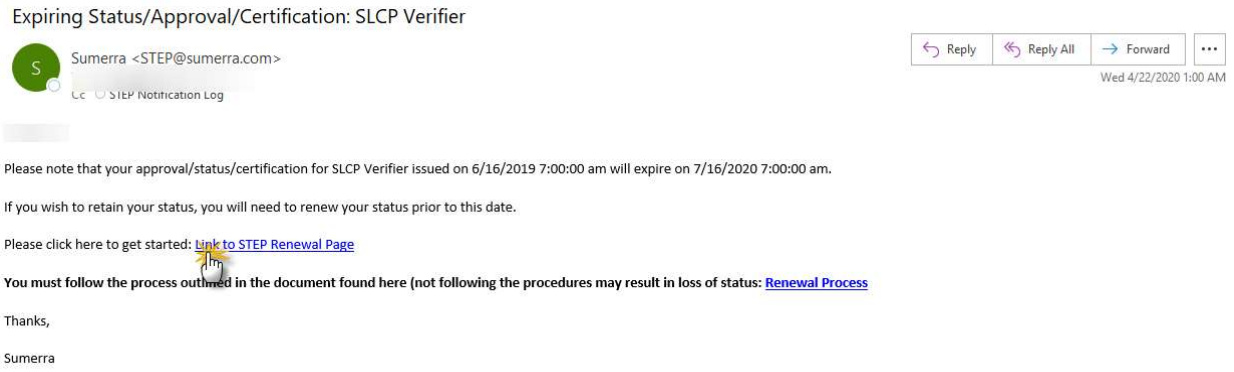


4. Click Certifications, and you will be able to view all of your approvals

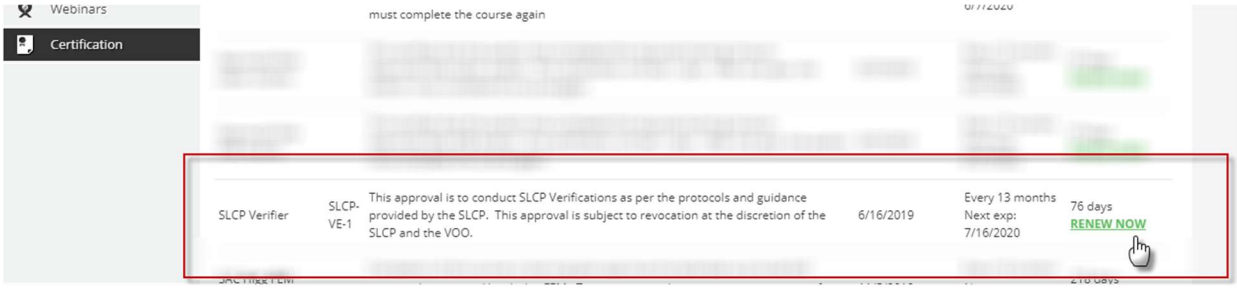


Basic Procedures for Renewal

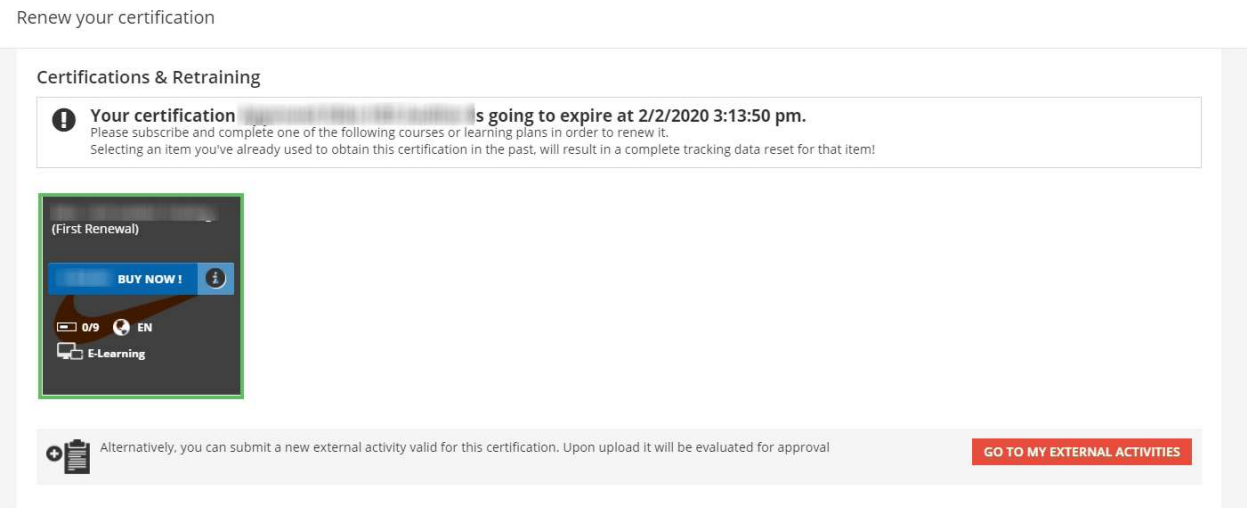
The process of approval (called Certifications on the STEP site) is the same for all approvals in the Sumerra systems. All approved providers should receive a notification email three months and 1 month prior to expiration. One way to renew is to click the link provided in the email (NOTE: You must be logged into STEP first).



Alternatively, you can click the 'Renew' button found on your approval list



Clicking the email link or Renew Now link will both take you to a list of 'courses' that can be completed to complete your renewal. Click the Play button and complete the enrollment

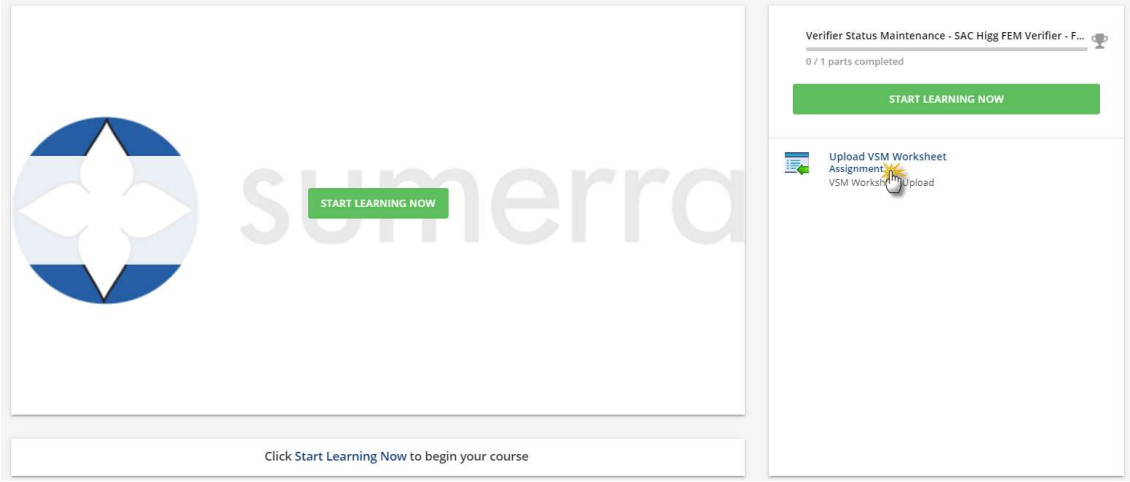


Submitting Your Worksheet

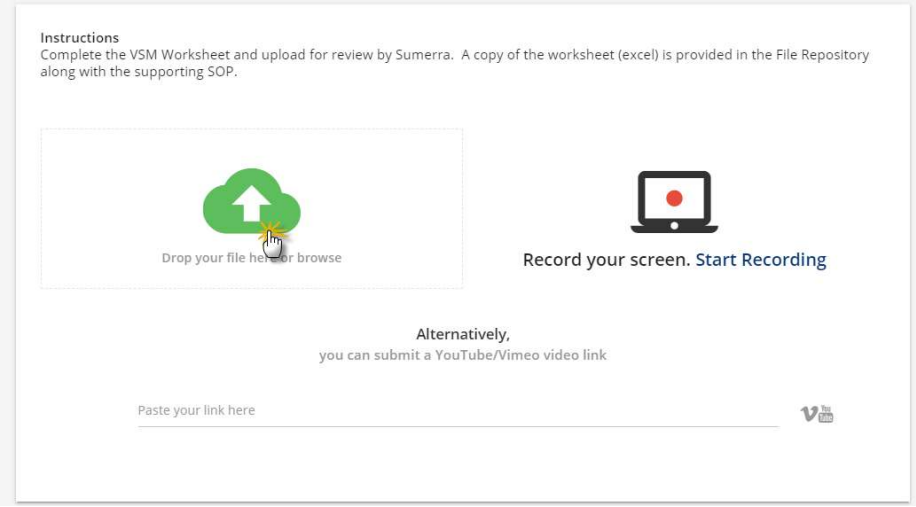
First you should complete any trainings or other activities in the course. Then you can submit your VSM worksheet.

Submitting your worksheet is easy.

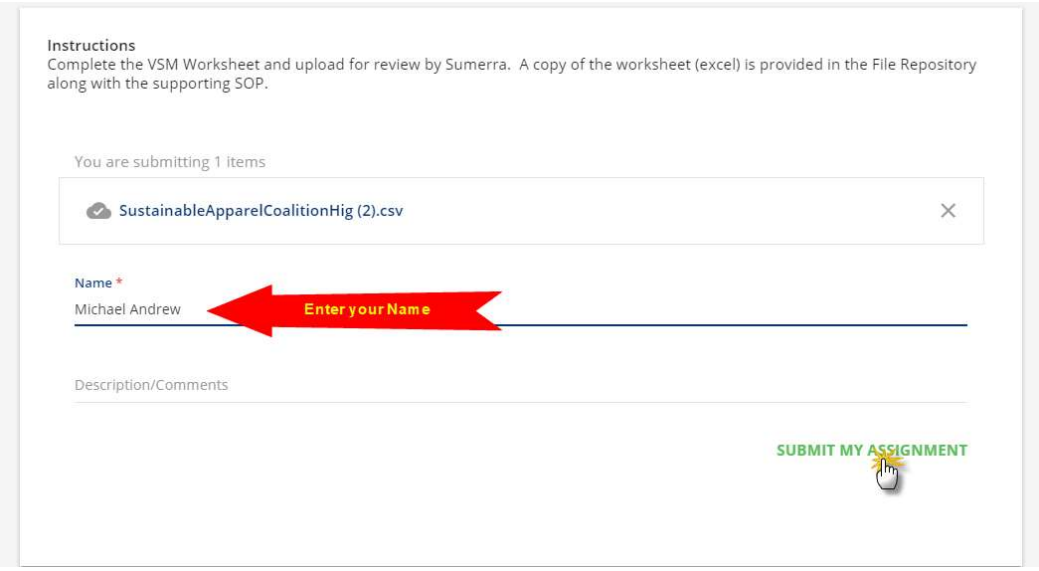
1. Click on the assignment object



2. Drop your worksheet file / or click to upload



3. Fill in your name and submit



Our team will review your submittal and we will contact you should there be any questions. Once approved/rejected, you will receive a message regarding your approval.