



## PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE: POST-NOMINAL LETTERS (2011, R2018, R2023)

### **Policy Statement**

The American Society of Landscape Architects believes the post-nominal letters “PLA” should be used to denote licensure, an abbreviation of the title “Professional Landscape Architect.” ASLA also supports state licensure board endorsement of the post-nominal letters PLA through regulation or policy.

### **Justification**

The use of post-nominal letters is a standard practice in many professions to indicate professional recognition and achievement of licensure. Using the post-nominal letters, PLA indicates to clients, employers, and colleagues that the individual has met the professional standards required to be licensed and possesses a valid active state license, while also helping to provide consistent recognition and public awareness for the landscape architecture profession nationwide.

### **Issue**

Licensing laws in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and several U.S. territories regulate the use of the title “landscape architect,” which may include post-nominal letters such as PLA. The title-protection provisions prohibit any non-licensed individual from in any way holding themselves out as a landscape architect, which includes abbreviations and other derivations of the term landscape architect.

It is important to note that (1) PLA does not conflict with the existing legal terminology (licensure and registration), thereby allowing for universal usage; and (2) PLA is consistent with existing post-nominal abbreviations for other related disciplines, such as engineering (PE) and land surveying (PLS).

Customary usage of PLA by licensed landscape architects does not require action from state licensing boards. The PLA designation is intended to signify licensure, and it is the responsibility of the licensee who uses the designation to remain in compliance with licensure requirements and only to use PLA in jurisdictions where the licensee has a valid license. State licensing boards can endorse the usage of the PLA designation through regulation or policy. In keeping with existing title restriction provisions, state licensure boards alone have the authority to ensure that only individuals with a valid license hold themselves out as landscape architects, including the use of PLA.

PLA does not replace ASLA as a designation but establishes a supplementary designation that is recognized by all to signify licensure (Example: Jane J. Smith, ASLA, PLA).

### Guide to Usage

Jane J. Smith, ASLA, PLA

Jane J. Smith, FASLA, PLA

Jane J. Smith, PLA (for landscape architects who are not members of ASLA)

### **Note**

This policy is one of an integrated group of policies on licensing issues.