PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Policy Statement
The American Society of Landscape Architects supports continuous lifelong learning to advance professional competency. Each individual’s deliberate pursuit of professional growth and development recognizes both changing environmental awareness and emerging knowledge and technology. This growth is central to professional relevance, the public welfare, and the ability to respond to the needs of the natural and built environment.

Rationale
Professional growth and development are necessary to respond to an evolving knowledge base and to maintain professional competency. Competency in professional practice is integral to protecting the public health, safety, and welfare. The continuing advancement of professional skills can only be achieved through lifelong learning.

The typical stages of lifelong learning are identified as formal education, internship, professional proficiency, licensure, continuing education, mastery, and mentoring. Each step along the continuum serves as a base for advancement toward succeeding competencies. The characteristics of the steps are as follows:

Landscape architectural formal education addresses that body of knowledge derived from the practical and theoretical applications of the diverse fields of art and science toward the resolution of planning, design, and policy problems. Professional education is best attained through accredited programs at the undergraduate or graduate levels.

Internship is the time period during which theoretical and practical knowledge is brought to bear on problem solving under the direction of experienced practitioners and mentors.

Professional proficiency is the state of practice where, through both education and experience, the professional possesses the necessary skills and knowledge to meet moral, ethical, and legal responsibilities towards society. Proficiency is typically followed by licensure and it may lead to professional divergence and specialization.

Continuing education is the pursuit of knowledge that adds to professional proficiency and generally follows completion of the professional education. Continuing education of enhances perception, philosophies, and technical skills and encourages new directions through research or self-study with the goal of ensuring an increasing proficiency in practice.

Mastery is the expansion of professional horizons through widespread acceptance of one's work, ideas, research, or publications. It involves the concepts of altruism, collaboration, reputation, and natural effectiveness. The desirable state of mastery is not an end point but a continuing search.

Mentoring embodies the mentor-protégé relationship that involves a professional providing direct assistance and encouragement with career and professional development to a protégé. The relationship is characterized by counseling, guiding, role modeling, and sponsoring. Those who have reached a degree of proficiency have a responsibility to mentor those who are seeking knowledge.