



Calculating Professional Development Hours

Appendix B

Professional development hours (PDH) is the term that LA CES uses to measure how much credit a course carries. The American Institute of Architects uses learning units. Other organizations use the term continuing education unit (CEU).

All courses must be at least one PDH in length. One (1) professional development hour is a contact hour of at least fifty (50) minutes of instruction. Additional measures are in fifteen (15) minute increments; therefore, a ninety (90) minute course is one-and-a-half (1.5) professional development hours.

If courses are longer than one (1) hour in duration, time spent on breaks and meals will not count toward the number of hours. Travel time for courses with a travel component is also not counted unless directed learning is taking place on the trip.

Courses vs. Tours

Courses must have learning outcomes/objectives, be described in detail, and instructors must be qualified. Tours do not need to have learning outcomes/objectives and may be mostly self-guided or directed towards a general audience rather than professionals.

Distance Education

Distance education is offered whenever the instructor and student are not located in the same place; therefore, distance education includes correspondence, web-based courses, videos, and satellite programs. Since the instructor is not present, distance education programs must include a testing component in order to verify that the participant has successfully completed the program. Courses can be either *real-time* (where the instructor and learners are engaging in the learning activity at the same time) or *asynchronous* (where instructor and learners are separated by time and are not engaging in the learning activity simultaneously).

To determine the appropriate number of professional development hours for asynchronous distance education courses without specific time frames, the LA CES program requires signed affidavits from a sample population. These affidavits must include the names and contact information from at least five (5) individuals stating the length of time it took them to complete the course. Keep in mind that breaks away from the learning activity or time not directly related to the educational process do not qualify (i.e., breaks, lunch, etc.). No more than one (1) of the participants can be employed by the LA CES approved provider submitting the course.

The affidavits must:

- State the name and contact information of the individual sampling the course
- State the length of time it took him or her to complete the course (excluding breaks, lunch, etc.)
- Include the individual's relationship to the company
- Include professional credentials that qualify him or her to sample the course
- Be submitted to the provider with the individual's signature—electronic signatures will be accepted



After the approved provider submits all completed and signed affidavits to LA CES Administrators, the total number of professional development hours is calculated by averaging the total time of the pilot student group.

[Learn more](#) about distance education requirements.

LA CES education programs may qualify toward state continuing education licensing requirements in landscape architecture where mandated. [Learn more](#) about states that have mandatory continuing education requirements.