



## Distance Education Requirements

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### Appendix C

LA CES approved providers may offer distance education courses after the approved provider has submitted additional information to demonstrate compliance with the LA CES distance education requirements.

Distance education is a useful and convenient method for landscape architects to engage in professional development and earn continuing education credit. Distance education is a viable alternative to traditional, classroom style programs. It is a practical way to provide landscape architects ready access for ongoing, state-of-the-art, and up-to-date continuing education and it may be a substitute or supplement for traditional continuing education programs such as workshops, conferences, or seminars.

Distance education is defined as: A method of instruction where there is a separation of place and/or time between the instructor and learner, between fellow learners, and/or the learners and the learning resources. These courses may use several delivery methods, used alone or in combination. 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).

Distance education courses can be offered through various delivery methods. The course may use a single medium (e.g., Internet or CD-ROM), or a combination of sources (e.g., audiocassette with a workbook and Internet support).

As with any learning activity, priority should be given to the subject content and desired outcome. The method of delivery should be based on the course's learning objectives and the preferred effect.

Distance education program delivery methods or any combination include: audio tape, Internet; cable television, publication/articles; CD-ROM/software, satellite broadcasting; computer-based training (CBT), teleconference/audio conference; correspondence (written) courses, videotapes; email, web cast; fax transmissions, workbooks.

The policies and procedures detailed herein provide a basic standard by which LA CES evaluates distance education programs. The policies and procedures were modified from and reflect those published by the American Institute of Architects Continuing Education System (AIA/CES), International Association for Continuing Education and Training (IACET), and the Distance Education Training Council (DETC). These policies and procedures are necessary to maintain high quality standards and to ensure a smooth process for providers and learners.

### Proof of Competency Required

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.

All LA CES distance education programs require a test or proof of competency. For the first hour of credit a test must have a minimum of ten (10) questions with a pass/fail rate of seventy-five (75) percent. A minimum of two (2) additional questions are required for each additional hour.



## Process

An approved provider must submit a sample distance education program for pre-approval. After the sample program is approved, additional distance education programs do not need to be pre-approved if the provider follows the same development procedures. The monitoring process will be used to confirm that distance education programs conform to LA CES requirements.

1. Approved providers must submit a complete copy of the program and support materials (i.e., a complete set of what would be sent to the learner, such as the learning materials, instructions, required test, worksheets, web links, etc).
2. For asynchronous distance education courses, providers must also submit affidavits to support the number of professional development hours assigned to the course.

All distance education courses must be strictly educational in nature and applicable to the landscape architectural industry. If the course is offered on the same venue as a marketing product (e.g., CD-ROM, Internet Website), the “for credit” portion must be clearly indicated, marked, and separate from any product, brand, or service promotion. Misuse of distance educational programs for self-promotion may result in termination of LA CES approved provider status.

Courses are rated on an approved or denied basis. Status of the program is provided to the primary LA CES approved provider within thirty (30) days.

Courses that are approved:

- May be distributed and advertised as offering LA CES professional development hours.
- May use the LA CES logo in promotional materials.

Courses that are denied:

- May not offer LA CES professional development hours.
- May not be included in any list (or database) of LA CES programs.
- May not use the LA CES logo in any advertisements related to the course.
- May not use any reference to LA CES.
- May be resubmitted for review with necessary corrections.

Any violation of the above list may jeopardize approved provider status with LA CES.

When the course of study is completed, the participant must report completion of distance education course directly to the provider (via email, fax, postal service, voice mail, Internet, etc). Information that must be collected for proper reporting purposes include: name; phone number; and email address (if applicable). The provider must send a certificate of completion to the participant.

Providers must be sensitive to course “shelf life.” Courses should be evaluated periodically to ensure that professional development hours are being awarded for up-to-date educational activities with appropriate and applicable information. All LA CES approved provider courses must be evaluated and re-registered, at minimum, every two (2) years.

## Calculating Professional Development Hours for Distance Education Programs

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 affidavits to LA CES Administrators, the total number of professional development hours is calculated by averaging the total time of the pilot student group.