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## Professional Development

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### A. Professional Development Point (PDP) Eligibility

##### 1. What are the types of PD activities that are eligible for PDPs?

There is a wide range of PD activities that can qualify for PDPs including but **not limited to: (1) ongoing participation in job embedded activities (e.g. mentoring/coaching, professional learning communities/PLC's; (2) participation in a series of short-term activities in a given topic that equal 10 hours (e.g., workshops, seminars) and (3) long-term activities (e.g., university courses).** Please see [Appendix B in the Recertification Guidelines](#)  for additional examples.

##### 2. Can I earn PDPs for attendance at a professional conference?

PDPs are no longer awarded for attendance at a professional conference. However, if (1) the conference spans two or more days allowing for attendance at a series of sessions/workshops on the same or similar topic totaling 10 hours or more and (2) if attendance results in a final product that would serve as an assessment of learning, then it could.

**Note:** Educators who attend a professional conference for less than 10 hours in a given topic may extend their learning to reach the required 10 hour minimum by developing a school-based activity or curriculum, or by publishing written material.

##### 3. Can I earn PDPs for attending professional development offered by a for-profit educational organization?

Yes, as long as the organization is registered with ESE as a PD provider and as long as the professional development meets the minimum expectations ([see question A7](#)). In addition, the PD must be part of an ongoing 5-year cycle individual professional development plan (IPDP) consistent with the educational needs of the school and/or district.

##### 4. Can I earn PDPs for attending professional development offered or sponsored by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education?

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education may offer 1.5 PDPs per clock hour for professional development programs that it sponsors as long as the programs meet the minimum expectations ([see question A7](#)) and includes a follow-up component. **Note:** For Department-sponsored activities that do NOT have a pre- and post-content assessment, only 30 PDPs can be counted toward recertification in a five-year cycle. For more information about PDP requirements please visit  [Recertification Guidelines](#).

##### 5. Can I earn PDPs for professional development that I design myself?

Educators may earn PDPs through an educator-designed professional development activity that results in a professional product that is related to the academic discipline of the license, including published written materials such as a book, journal article, book chapter, dissertation, or thesis. Educators may also earn PDPs for developing and implementing an activity for students, parents or teachers that incorporates the learning standards of the curriculum frameworks. For more information, please see the [W](#) **Recertification Guidelines**.

6. **May I earn PDPs as a trainer/presenter of a professional development course/workshop or seminar?**

Educators who develop and present a professional development workshop or seminar are eligible to receive twice the number of PDPs given to participants, with the presenter receiving a minimum of 10 PDPs and a maximum of 24 PDPs. These points may be counted the first time the training is provided in a five-year cycle.

**Note:** Educators are eligible to receive 30 PDPs the first time they make a presentation at a professional conference in a five-year renewal cycle (**Note:** If presentation is repeated, it is not eligible).

7. **What are the minimum requirements for professional development activities that are eligible for PDP's?**

PDPs may only be awarded under the following conditions:

- The professional development is offered by the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Department (ESE), school district, educational collaborative or a provider that is registered with ESE. ([See question D1.](#))
- The professional development must be at least 10 hours per topic.
- The professional development must include an assessment of learning. (This may be an end-of-course assessment or an observable demonstration of learning.)
- The professional development participant has met the provider's criteria for mastery.

**B. Bundling Hours for PDP's**

1. **I was told that I may be able to convert certificates of attendance for less than 10 hours of PD into PDP's. How do I do that?**

An educator may "bundle" several activities together when reporting their PDPs, provided they can demonstrate that these activities are related/similar in topic. To use PDPs for license renewal, an educator must accrue at least 10 hours of professional development about that topic. The easiest way to do this is to select PD offerings that are at least 10 hours in length. (**Note:** You cannot receive PDPs via bundling unless you complete an additional follow-up activity demonstrating proficiency. [See question A7.](#))

2. **Does the Department accept PDPs earned at a conference through the process of bundling?**

PDPs are no longer awarded for one day conferences unless bundling is involved. Conference attendance hours may be bundled with other hours for a minimum of 10 hours on related topics, including an observable demonstration of learning that could include a written product. **(Note: You cannot receive PDPs via bundling unless you complete an additional follow-up activity demonstrating proficiency. [See question A7.](#))**

Educators may also receive PDPs for attendance at a conference by extending their learning at the conference through educator designed activities such as the development of a school-based activity or curriculum.

### **C. Verifying PD Provider Approval**

#### **1. How do I know if a PD provider is approved to issue PDPs?**

PDPs may be awarded by, or under the auspices of the Department, school districts, or educational collaborative. **All other professional development providers are required to register as a provider with the Department of Education.**

**Note:** Organizations and programs that grant university/college credits or CEUs (*and not Professional Development Points*) are not required to register with the Department. However, if a university program or CEU granting organization wishes to provide professional development points, the organization or university program must register with the Department. For more information visit the [Guidelines for Professional Development Providers webpage](#).

#### **2. How do I know if professional development offered online by a provider can be applied toward license renewal?**

If you will receive graduate credits for successful completion of the online program, **the credits must be earned by an accredited college or university or from a registered PD Provider with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education** in order to convert the credits to PDPs towards licensure/license renewal. You are advised to research the college program online to learn about the program's accreditation.

If the PD is a brief webinar or training then it is unlikely to count as it would not meet the minimum requirement for PDPs ([see question A7](#)).

With the exception of accredited colleges and universities who will be awarding credits, ask the online PD provider if they are registered with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and ask for their provider number.

**Note:** Some online PD providers will partner with institutions of higher education to give educators the option of earning graduate credits which can be converted to PDP's.

#### **3. Is professional development offered by a provider from another state eligible for MA PDPs?**

Yes, as long as the PD provider is a registered PD provider in Massachusetts and is offering professional development that meets the minimum expectations ([see question A7](#)). It is also important that the PD

is part of an ongoing individual professional development plan consistent with the educational needs of the school and/or district.

4. **If I am not working in a school, am I required to have written pre-approval by ESE for professional development activities before I enroll?**

No, there is no such requirement. If you are not working in a school, be sure to maintain a description of the course, the number of PDPs earned the name of the PD provider, and the provider's contact information, website, and link. Include your own notation as to how the content will enhance your skills and knowledge as well as your contribution to the education community.

## **D. Professional Development Provider Registry**

### **For Educators**

1. **With the changes to the ESE review and approval process for registered PD providers, are PDPs still only be accepted from registered providers?**

Yes. Registered providers are still required to complete an application that generates the information and data used for the registry. This detailed information allows Massachusetts educators to determine for themselves if a provider's professional development is relevant to their needs. A district or school administrator may submit a request to ESE for the complete application.

2. **What is the process that an administrator should use to request a copy of a provider's application?**

Requests should be submitted to [profdev@doe.mass.edu](mailto:profdev@doe.mass.edu) and include the provider's name and content area.

3. **Given that ESE is no longer doing a full review of a provider's application before adding them to the registry, how should a Massachusetts educator determine the quality of a registered provider?**

We believe that the information on each provider's profile enables Massachusetts educators to determine the quality in a number of ways such as, but not limited to:

- contacting the provider to request a copy of a course syllabus, letters of reference, or instructors resumes
- reading the description of services to determine if the PD will address the appropriate content area
- reviewing and comparing providers described offerings in the same content area

It should also be noted that, if ESE receives several complaints about a provider, the Department may consider removing the provider from the registry.

## For Providers

4. **Given the changes made to the review and approval process in May 2015, does my status as an approved provider still end in June 30?**

No, we are extending the deadline through fall 2015; however, you will not be added to the online registry until you submit an application.

5. **It appears that the registry will serve primarily as a resource that educators can use for finding PD providers. Can automatic PDP providers (i.e., districts and collaborative) register their professional development if it is open to educators outside their district or region?**

Yes, but this will be limited to the spring and fall enrollment periods only.

6. **I was approved in the summer of 2014 and told that my status expires in 3 years. Do these changes affect my expiration date?**

Not at this time.

7. **I am an approved provider through 6/30 that submitted a new application that was not approved by ESE in 2014, I have been working on revisions based on the feedback that I received. What is my status as a provider now that expectations have changed?**

Under the circumstances, we will extend your status to October 30, 2015 as described in question 1 above.

8. **My application was reviewed and approved by ESE staff in 2014 prior to these changes; will the registry make note of that?**

Yes. Provider numbers beginning with S indicate that the review was done in spring (or in the initial summer period) while those that begin with F indicate that the review occurred in the fall. The provider number also includes the year of the review. Therefore, any application from a provider that begins with S2014 or F2014 indicates that the application was reviewed and approved by ESE staff. (NOTE: This does not apply to universities and colleges as they register through a different process.)

## For All Users

9. **Does a registered PD provider's approval expire?**

Approval to award PDPs is granted for three years. Registered providers must renew their application every three years if they wish to continue issuing PDPs. The renewal process was recently changed. To view the questions on the new registry application along with the rubric to be used for scoring, visit the [Instructions for completing the PD Provider Registry Application](#).

10. **Do all professional development providers have to register with the state through an approval process or are some providers automatically registered?**

According to Department regulations [603 CMR 44.03\(2\) \(b\)](#), the following entities are not required to register with the Department:

- School Districts

- Collaboratives

In addition, based on Department regulations [603 CMR44.02](#), university and college credits may be converted into PDPs. Therefore, university and college PD programs/courses that only issue credits or CEUs **are not required** to register with the Department. However, if a university/college PD program/course wishes to offer professional development points, they must register with the Department.

All other PD providers who wish to award PDPs must apply to become registered with ESE. See the [Instructions for completing the PD Provider Registry Application](#).

## **E. PDP Sources/Options**

1. **I heard that the Department will convert my university credits to PDP's, is that true?**

Yes, as a general rule of thumb, one hour of eligible professional development activity = 1 PDP (i.e., 1 PDP is earned for each clock hour). This also applies to academic credit for upper-level or lower-level undergraduate courses. 1 credit = 15 hours = 1.5 CEUs = 15 PDPs. However there are exceptions which are listed below:

- Upper-level undergraduate course (when substantially new to the educator) or approved equivalent = 1 semester hour = 22.5 PDPs
  - Graduate-level course or approved equivalent = 1 semester hour = 22.5 PDPs
  - Audits of undergraduate or graduate course or approved equivalent = 1 semester hour = 7.5 PDPs

## **F. PDP Recordkeeping and Documentation**

1. **I am looking for a record of the PDPs I have earned in the past few years. Does the Department have this information?**

ESE does not keep record of PDPs. It is the educator's responsibility to keep record of their PDPs as stated in the regulations: Due to the fact that an applicant may be randomly selected for a PD Audit, it is important that an educator hold on to their PD verification for 5 years from date applying to renew.

44.09: Documentation and Recordkeeping:

- A. Each educator shall maintain the following materials to verify completion of license renewal requirements:
  - i. An individual professional development plan (IPDP), which has been approved by the educator's supervisor if required by 603 CMR 44.04(3), to be achieved over the five year period, that includes the educator's goals for strengthening content area knowledge and professional skills, for remaining current in other professional issues, and

- ii. Reasonable documentation which validates the completion of an activity and the number of points accrued;
  - iii. A record of completed license renewal activities, which at a minimum shall include the topic and type of professional activities completed, the dates of such activities, and the number of points completed.
- B. The educator shall maintain the documentation, record log, professional development plan, and application for five years from the date of the renewal of the license. For those educators who are applying professional development points earned by completing a Department-approved SEI endorsement course of study in more than one renewal cycle, as outlined in Department guidelines, all renewal documentation must be maintained for ten years from the date of the renewal of the license.
- C. All documentation is subject to a random audit by the Department and review by an educator's supervisor, and must be provided to the Department upon request.
2. **When should I start to collect Professional Development Points (PDPs)?**

Educators may start earning PDPs for their first renewal cycle upon the issuance of a Professional level license. For subsequent renewal cycles, only PDPs earned after the previous expiration date are eligible. Activities older than five years from the date of application may not be counted.

3. **A colleague told me that we are no longer required to maintain an Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP) now that the educator evaluation system has changed and Professional Practice Goals are part of that system. Is this correct?**

An IPDP is still required. For more information about how certain activities undertaken pursuant to the development of an Educator Plan may meet the requirements for an Individual Professional Development Plan, please visit the [Educator Evaluation FAQ webpage](#).

4. **I am working in a private school; do I still need to complete a PD plan?**

Educators with professional licenses who are employed in schools other than Massachusetts public schools still need to develop an Individual Professional Development Plan and successfully complete the requisite number of PDPs as set forth in 603 CMR 44.05(2), 44.06(1), or 44.07(1) within a particular five-year validity period. **Supervisor approval and endorsement of the plan is optional for educators who are not employed in a Massachusetts public school.** However, the Department highly recommends that educators seek such approval to ensure that the professional development activities in the plan are consistent with school and district goals.

Please review the information found at [Advancing/Renewing a License](#) and the [2000 Recertification Guidelines](#).

## **G. District/School Responsibilities**

1. **Can our district award PDPs for participation on committees/teams?**

A district's decision to award PDPs for team meetings and committees should be based on (1) the intended purpose and content of the meeting, and (2) whether or not it meets ESE's minimum definition of professional development ([See question A7.](#)) If the committee work does not add up to 10 hours or more in a particular content or if there is no observable product of learning, then the activity does not meet ESE's minimum definition of professional development.

**2. What information should be listed on a PDP certificate?**

A PDP certificate must contain the following information:

- the PD activity - total hours
- date of completion
- a one to two -sentence description of purpose/objective(s) of PD
- description of the assessment of learning
- the signature of the PDP provider

**H. Institutes of Higher Education (IHE)**

**1. The new policy that requires IHEs to register with the Department was not written in the previous guidelines. Why the change?**

When ESE began revising the Professional Development (PD) Provider guidelines, our goal was to clarify who needed to register with the Department. We reviewed the regulations 603 CMR 44.03 (2) (b) and found that it explicitly stated two entities were not required to register with the Department: School districts and Educational Collaboratives. As a result, the guidance shifted to align with the current regulations.

**2. IHEs were listed as automatic providers of professional development points on the PD website before. Why were we removed?**

The IHE entity was removed to align with the current regulations.

**Will the guidelines create more work? Do we have to register every single course or PD?**

The PD registration form for IHEs will require IHEs to check off the content area categories for which they provide PD. Content area categories are listed below. In addition, the registration contains an assurance stating that the IHE will provide high quality PD to Massachusetts educators. *IHEs will not undergo an approval process to issue professional development points (PDPs).*

A complete list of content area categories\* on the PD Registration form:

Arts	Career/Vocational Technical Education	College and Career Readiness	Comprehensive Health
Curriculum & Instruction - General	Data and Assessment	English Language Arts	English Language Learners

Foreign Language	History/Social Science	Instructional Technology/Digital Literacy	Leadership & Administration
Mathematics	Safe and Supportive Learning Environments	Science, Technology & Engineering (STE)	Special Education
Supervising Practitioner	Supporting Additional Learning Time		

*\*If your content area does not fit into one the above categories, you will have an option to choose "other."*

**3. What value does registering with ESE add for IHEs?**

ESE will post the name and program information of registered IHEs on the professional development website. The online posting will facilitate an educator's access to professional development providers. This will bring more awareness to the PD work that IHEs do.

**4. My organization has already moved forward with specific professional development prior to learning of this shift. What does this new policy mean for our ability to provide PDPs this year?**

This shift will not have a negative impact on professional development currently being offered. IHEs will have an opportunity to register for all content areas for which PD is currently being offered and/or will be offered.

**5. We offer PDPs for supervising practitioners; will we be able to continue this under the new guidelines?**

Yes. As indicated in the License Renewal Guidelines, you may offer PDPs to supervising practitioners.

**6. When will the registration become available?**

We will have a rolling registration process, which will become available January 15, 2015.

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