

# Staff Development Services

## Frequently Asked Questions Concerning **Professional Learning Unit (PLU) Credit**

These questions and answers are based upon current regulations (December 8, 2003) and are subject to change by the Georgia Department of Education (GDOE).

### 1. **What is a PLU?**

- A PLU is a unit of credit based on 10 contact hours of formal instruction or its equivalent (preparation phase) and on verification that the intent of the formal instruction has been implemented on the job (on-the-job performance phase) or on mastery verification conducted during the preparation phase.
- The minimum contact time for one PLU activity shall be 10 contact hours (one PLU). Training activities for more than one PLU shall be in multiples of 10 contact hours. Partial PLUs or fractions of PLUs may not be awarded. No more than eight contact hours of instruction shall be conducted per day with a maximum of four PLUs earned per week.

### 2. **What is a contact hour?**

- Contact hours include actual clock hours of formal instruction received during the preparation phase of a PLU activity. Such contact may also include time spent in on-line computer courses where actual contact time can be verified. Contact may also include supervised practicums that are an integral and necessary part of an instructional program.
- Contact time **shall not** include activities required for on-the-job assessment or mastery verification or non-class time to develop or produce class assignments.

### 3. **I'm a member of an agency other than a public school (i.e., private school, educational resource agency or other public or private agency interested in teacher training). How can my school/organization get approved to offer SDU courses?**

- You must submit a Professional Learning Unit Credit Plan. Once this plan is approved, each individual credit activity/course/program must be submitted separately to the Department as an addendum to their PLU Credit Plan for approval. The Professional Practices Commission will not approve a PLU credit course or activity for recertification that is not approved by the Department of Education.
- Professional Learning Unit Credit Plan application procedures and address can be found on the Georgia Department of Education Website <http://www.doe.k12.ga.us>. Please click on "**Improvement**" under Public Schools. Please click on "**Professional Learning**" under School Improvement at the right of the page. Then, click on "**PLU Credit Program Approval.**"

- 4. How many PLUs do I need to renew my certificate?**
  - Please see Georgia Professional Standards Commission Rule 505-2-.13 Standard Renewal Requirements for certification renewal procedures at [www.gapsc.com](http://www.gapsc.com).
- 5. Can partial or fractions of PLUs be awarded?**
  - No, the minimum contact time for one PLU activity shall be 10 contact hours (one PLU). Training activities for more than one PLU shall be in multiples of 10 contact hours. Partial or fractions of PLUs may not be awarded.
- 6. Is there a maximum number of PLUs I can earn per day or week?**
  - One PLU shall not be earned in one day. No more than eight contact hours of instruction shall be earned per day. Therefore, the minimum number of days to earn one PLU is two days. A maximum of four PLUs may be earned per week.
- 7. Can I get contact hours for time spent for the on-the-job performance phase of a PLU course?**
  - No, contact hours shall not include activities required for the on-the-job assessment.
  - On-the-job assessment is an evaluation conducted after the preparation phase of a PLU course to verify that the intent of the formal instruction has been implemented on the job.
- 8. What is mastery verification for a PLU course?**
  - An evaluation conducted during the preparation phase to determine whether participants have mastered the objectives of a PLU course.
- 9. What is a CEU?**
  - Continuing Education Unit based solely on contact hours.
- 10. Can CEUs be used for certification renewal?**
  - Yes, 6 semester hours of college course work or 10 credits of Georgia Professional Learning units (PLUs) or 10 credits of Continuing Education units can be used to renew your renewable certificate.
  - Professional Standards Rule 505-2-.13 Standard Renewal Requirements gives reference to acceptable resident college credit, Georgia staff development credit specifically approved for certification renewal in Georgia and Continuing Education Units (CEUs) issued by a provider authorized by the International Association for Continuing Education and Training (IACET).
  - Rule 160-3-3-.10 Professional Learning Unit (PLU) Program Approval gives reference to professional learning unit (PLU) credit. (For a copy of the

above Development State Board Rule please see website instructions under question 3 above.)

**11. Can a course or activity that issues Continuous Education Units (CEUs) earn PLU credit?**

- Yes. A public school employee should request that his or her professional learning coordinator and advisory committee consider the CEU course for PLU credit. If it meets PLU requirements set down by the school system, the system advisory committee may approve the activity for PLU credit. This action must be requested and approved before you participate in the course (“prior approval rule”). This process is at the discretion of your local school system. However, local policy may not allow this.
- If you are in a private school or other organization that has an approved Professional Learning Unit Credit Plan, then you can request that your organization submit an addendum to your organization’s credit plan to the Department of Education for approval for PLU credit.
- If you are not a public school employee or the employee of a private school or other organization with an approved Professional Learning Unit Credit Plan, you may not receive PLU credit for a CEU credit course or activity.

**12. My professional association requires annual training to maintain my license. Can I get PLU credit for that training?**

- Yes. IF you are a public school employee you can request that your professional learning coordinator and professional learning advisory committee develop a PLU course from the professional association required license training course so that it meets PLU requirements. This must be done, however, before you participate in the course (the “prior-approval” portion of the State Board Rule). If you are in a private school or other organization that has an approved Professional Learning Credit Plan, then you can request that your organization submit an addendum to your organization’s credit plan to the Department of Education for approval for PLU credit.
- Prior approval must be obtained, in writing, from the superintendent or the designee in order for the course to earn PLU credit by a public school employee.

**13. How can I be sure if a course or activity awards PLU credit?**

- Call that specific agency and ask if the Georgia Department of Education Staff Development Services has approved the course in question for PLUs. This may be verified with a copy of the official letter of approval from the Department of Education.
- Call Staff Development Services at 404-656-2433 and ask if the course in question has been approved for PLU credit.

**14. What should I receive from an organization or company that offers SDU courses/activities documenting that I have earned SDU credit?**

- You should receive a Staff Development Unit Course Completion Form or Certificate with the agency's name and address, a contact person's name, course title, date of completion, number of contact hours, the number of PLUs earned, your social security number and Instructor's and/or Observer's signature and date.

**15. Can professional learning credit I have taken before I came to Georgia be accepted for PLU credit in Georgia?**

- The only instance when staff development participation before coming to Georgia will earn PLU credit is if the organization providing the staff development was approved by the Georgia Department of Education to offer PLUs and you have documentation that you have participated. (See Question 8, 9, 10, 12 and 13 above.)

**16. When should I contact the Georgia Department of Education and when should I contact the Professional Standards Commission?**

- Contact the Professional Standards Commission when you have questions concerning certification matters.
- Contact the Georgia Department of Education when your question is concerned with PLUs or professional learning courses/activities for PLU credit.

**17. What is an Alternative Professional Learning Unit (PLU) Credit Plan?**

- A PLU Credit Plan that a local public school system, or an individual school through the system office of the Superintendent of Schools, may submit for approval as an alternative to the standard Professional Learning Unit (PLU) Credit Plan.
- The primary purpose of this option is to encourage the development of alternatives to the state definition of Professional Learning Unit (PLU) and to encourage the development of professional learning that is designed to more directly meet high standards of school improvement and student success through professional learning.
- Alternative PLU Credit Plan information and application procedures can be found on the Georgia Department of Education Website. (See question 3 for Website information). When you go to the Professional Learning Website, click on **Guidelines for Professional Learning Unit (PLU) Program Approval**.