



AIA Continuing Education System

Survival Guide 2009

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A grayscale photograph of two women in a design studio. The woman on the left is wearing glasses and a textured sweater, looking down at a laptop. The woman on the right is wearing a dark blazer over a white shirt, also looking at the laptop. In the background, there are several framed posters on a wall, some with the text 'Overall Design Concept' and 'Field Presentation'. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent orange shape at the top left and a semi-transparent white shape at the bottom right, creating a layered effect.

This AIA Continuing Education System (AIA/CES)

Survival Guide is designed to help AIA members understand continuing education requirements for AIA membership and for licensure in states requiring continuing education. It is not intended to explain the AIA/CES program in its entirety, but to provide answers to frequently asked questions and tips to help members get the most out of the AIA/CES program. It also points out common errors that impede the reporting process and offers leads on Web resources for continuing education courses.

Program Basics

What Is AIA/CES?

AIA/CES is a continuing education system developed by the AIA to organize professional development activities required for AIA membership. AIA/CES enables members to keep current on issues in the field, master new knowledge and skills, plan for the future, and responsibly meet the role society entrusts to a professional architect. The AIA/CES program has the potential to be a major force in improving and revitalizing the architecture profession.

What Is My Annual Requirement?

All active AIA members must successfully complete 18 learning unit (LU) hours each calendar year, with at least 8 of the 18 LU hours relating to health, safety, and welfare (HSW). Four of the HSW LU hours must be in sustainable design (SD).

Member Continuing Education Audits

AIA/CES conducts an annual audit of members' transcripts. Members who do not complete the audit year's annual requirement of general LU/HSW/SD by July of the current year are eligible for the random audit, in which auditors review the transcript for the minimum number of credits. Members' credits are calculated as follows:

Overage from previous year + audit year + current year

The overage applies only if there is a deficit in the audit year. Credits earned in the current year that apply toward the audit year's requirements are not subtracted from the current year's totals. They count twice: toward the current year and toward the audit year. The current year's credits apply to the audit year's requirement only if there is a deficit in the audit year. If a member is randomly audited for the audit year's requirements and the credits are not completed by September 30 of the current year, the member is not eligible for membership renewal until nine new credits dated October 1 of the current year or later are completed.

Member activities are randomly reviewed throughout the year to ensure compliance. Informal reviews are usually conducted by AIA/CES Records Department staff in consultation with AIA/CES staff. If a member attended the same course twice within three years, one of the courses is removed from the transcript. A course title reported by a member that does not indicate a relevance to architecture will probably be rejected. If a member reports attendance at a conference at which HSW courses were offered, each HSW course would need to be reported individually.

Reinstatement Policy

The AIA/CES Reinstatement Policy allows members who have been disqualified for noncompliance to reinstate their memberships at any time. Those applying to be reinstated must list, on the [Reinstatement Form](#), 9 unreported LU hours dated October 1 or later after the September 30 audit deadline. Once the member is reinstated he or she is responsible for meeting the

annual 18 LU hour (8 HSW/4 SD) requirement. If the former member seeks reinstatement a couple of years after the audit, the 9 LU hours must have been completed during the year before the date of the reinstatement request. The [Reinstatement Form](#) must be completed for reinstatement consideration.

Exemptions

Exemptions from the continuing education requirement may be granted for the following reasons:

- Severe medical difficulties for at least the last three months of the audit year (this includes immediate family members)
- An unexpected or temporary overseas assignment of more than six months or during the last three months of the membership year
- Severe financial hardship

Other unusual circumstances may be considered but must be reviewed by AIA/CES. Documentation is required. Fill out the [AIA/CES Exemption Form](#) if your circumstances meet the above criteria.

AIA/CES Registered Provider Courses

Courses offered by AIA/CES providers are filed with AIA/CES Records in Oklahoma. Within 14 days of a course's conclusion, AIA/CES providers verify and report the course attendees to AIA/CES Records.

Provider Audits

Approved AIA/CES providers are responsible for providing quality education and reporting attendance of AIA members to the AIA/CES Records Department. If a member does not see course credits posted within four weeks of completing the course, the member should check the status of the credits by contacting the provider or e-mailing [AIA/CES](#).

How Will Quality Be Maintained?

Quality control begins when CES providers and AIA members file their records with the CES Records Office at the University of Oklahoma. If the forms submitted are incomplete or inaccurate, they are returned to the submitter with instructions for correcting the error. On another level, course quality is monitored through audit/review reports filed by members, subject matter experts, and course providers. The main object of an audit/review is to determine how well course content meets learning objectives.

AIA/CES transcripts constitute a six-year history of each member's continuing education credits. We recommend that members keep course materials and documentation for six years. These materials will be useful if a member's CES records are audited by AIA or a state licensing board.

New Sustainable Design Requirements

Beginning in 2009, of the total 18 CES Learning Units (LUs) required in a given calendar year, 4 LUs must focus on sustainable design and meet the established guidelines for sustainable design mandatory continuing education.

Why Did Sustainable Design Become a Mandatory Continuing Education (MCE) Requirement for AIA Membership?



Sustainability has been a focus of architectural practice for more than 30 years, and the AIA has provided resources and tools to help members serve their clients and communities through environmentally responsible projects. The AIA Board of Directors again recognized the need to help their fellow practitioners respond to the profession's latest challenges and opportunities as the issue of climate change and the impact of buildings on carbon emissions created a new tendency among clients and the broader public to look to architects for solutions that can help them leave greener footprints. The AIA is responding to this growing demand for our members to assume greater leadership in addressing the challenges facing our planet.

As shown in the AIA's position statements on sustainability and sustainable design, architects must take responsibility for their roles in creating the built environment. Sustainable design has evolved from a niche service offering to a profession-wide imperative. Social, political, and economic factors are all driving the market toward mainstreaming sustainability. AIA members who educate themselves in sustainable design will have a competitive advantage, as well as the privilege of providing greater levels of service to clients and the community.

How Does “Sustainable Design” Tie In to CES?

The Sustainable Design (SD) requirement does not replace the original requirement for 18 total hours, 8 of which must be in Health, Safety, and Welfare (HSW) subjects. HSW is a subset of LUs, and SD must be a subset of HSW. Four of the total HSW hours must be in sustainable design topics.

Can I Report SD Hours?

Yes, but with restrictions. You may report any structured activity related to HSW and SD and receive HSW and SD credit. In other words, the activity must be developed and presented to you by a third party. You cannot receive SD or HSW credit for any self-designed activity. For example, even though code research on energy is an HSW and sustainable design issue by nature, AIA does not allow HSW or SD credit if it is a self-designed activity. Also, for a course to be SD, it must also be HSW.

What Is the Relationship between SD and State MCE Requirements?

Texas is the only state licensing board that requires sustainable design credit for licensure. You can find courses in [sustainable design](#) and visit the [SD FAQ](#). For more information, please visit the general [FAQ](#) section.

Health, Safety and Welfare

How Does Health, Safety, and Welfare Tie In to CES?

The AIA requires members to earn eight of the annual LU hour requirements in the area of health, safety, and welfare (HSW). HSW content in any HSW-related course or educational event must be at least 75 percent to qualify the activity for HSW credit. This accomplishes three goals:

- Ensuring that HSW-related courses have a real relevance to AIA members
- Eliminating any question of whether the content of a course was actually related to HSW
- Protecting AIA members in states with mandatory continuing education (MCE) requirements

Can I Report HSW Hours?

Yes, but with restrictions. AIA members may report any structured HSW-related activity and receive HSW credit. In other words, the activity must be developed and presented to you by a third party. You cannot receive HSW credit for any self-designed activity. For example, even though LEED is an HSW and sustainable design issue by nature, the AIA does not allow HSW or SD credit if a member studies independently for the LEED exam. This policy was adopted to ensure that quality control guidelines are enforced and to comply with state licensing board requirements.

Am I Supposed to Add My LU, HSW, and SD Hours Together to Meet the Requirements?

No. The HSW and SD columns on your transcript simply show how many of your total LU hours are related to HSW or SD. The annual requirement is 18 LU hours, of which 8 must be related to HSW. Of the 8 HSW hours, at least 4 must be related to SD. Thus, if you earn 8 hours of credit from an SD-related activity, you will need only 10 more hours to meet your requirement. Eight hours is the minimum requirement for HSW, and 4 hours is the minimum requirement for SD, but those numbers may be exceeded.

What Is the Relationship between HSW and State MCE Requirements?

Both the AIA and state licensing boards base their courses on the contact hour. A majority of states require 8 contact hours of HSW for their MCE requirements. Exceptions are Kansas, which has no HSW requirement; and Louisiana, Minnesota, North Carolina, Oklahoma, and Vermont, which require 12 HSW contact hours. The AIA/CES program requires 8 contact hours of HSW from a structured provider. Some states allow some form of self-reporting. Due to the quality assurance issues posed by the states, the AIA does not accept self-designed activities for HSW credit.

Caution: If you report structured activities for HSW credit, it is important that you clearly report all HSW courses and activities separately, ensuring that they are clearly identified. Failure to do so could result in the loss of your license due to noncompliance with state MCE requirements.

Self-Reported Activities



To be eligible for credit, self-reported activities must be planned educational activities that provide new knowledge that can be applied toward the practice of architecture. Members should complete the AIA/CES Self-Report Form and submit it to AIA/CES Records at the University of Oklahoma (see address at the end of this guide). Be sure to specify which type of learning activity you are reporting so the data can be entered accurately into your transcript. Members calculate LU hours for self-reported activities by reporting the number of hours spent in architecture-related learning.

Self-Designed Activity

Self-designed learning activities are organized by an AIA member to meet specific individual needs. A self-designed activity frequently involves more than one type of medium or method of delivery, such as research, reading, interviewing subject experts, researching with Web search engines, listening to CDs, or viewing videos. To determine what activities qualify for self-reporting, ask the following questions:

- Is this a planned learning activity?
- Is this activity intended to be educational?
- Are you acquiring new knowledge or are you sharing your knowledge with others?
- How will you apply this new knowledge to your practice?

The member should think of self-designed research in terms of billable hours. If the activity would qualify for billable hours at the member's place of employment then it can be self-reported. This reporting method is not acceptable for HSW or SD credit. Some state licensing boards will not accept this type of reporting for MCE requirements.

Structured Self-Reported Courses

A structured self-reported course must be offered by an organized third-party non-CES provider. Documentation of attendance or participation will usually be required as a supplement when reporting this activity to meet a state licensure requirement. The AIA is not able to assist members in acquiring support documentation that may be required by a state licensing board MCE audit. Structured courses are the only self-reported activities that could qualify for HSW or SD. AIA/CES Records staff will review the submission to verify that a course reported with a HSW or SD designation qualifies.

Professional Community Service

Professional community service could include architecture panels or community board meetings. Members can self-report 2 LU hours of community service per calendar year for all professional community service. Hours spent on research for volunteer activities can be reported by the member.

Submit Self-Report Forms Online

To receive LU hours as quickly and accurately as possible, submit the AIA/CES [Self-Report Form](#) online. Make sure to use current self-report forms. Do not use self-report forms dating from before 2009. These forms do not have the proper format or address for the current system. The program has changed significantly in the last few years, and the old forms do not include certain information significant to the AIA/CES requirement. By using an outdated form, you cheat yourself of the credit you need to meet your requirement.

Distance Learning: Synchronous Versus Asynchronous Education

Distance learning is defined as a method of instruction in which there is a separation of place or time between the instructor and learner, between fellow learners, or the learners and the learning resources.

The AIA/CES recognizes distance learning as a useful and convenient way for architects to engage in professional development and earn continuing education credit. Distance learning is considered a viable alternative to traditional classroom-style continuing education courses. It is a practical way to give architects ready access to ongoing state-of-the-art and up-to-date continuing education and it may substitute for or supplement traditional continuing education courses, such as workshops, conferences, or seminars.

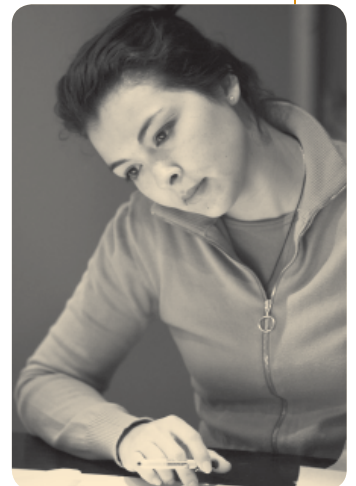
With distance learning delivery methods improving in speed, technological capacity, and efficiency, there are more and more opportunities to deliver high-quality continuing professional education via the latest technology. However, distance learning does not have to depend on technology; traditional correspondence courses (“paper and pen”) are also effective ways to deliver continuing education. These courses may employ several delivery methods, alone or in combination. In asynchronous courses, the learner(s) and instructor are not engaging in the learning activity at the same time (learning anytime, anyplace).

In synchronous distance learning courses, the learner(s) and instructor are engaged in the learning activity simultaneously (for example, a Webcast.)

Course Delivery Options

Distance learning courses can be offered through various methods. The course may use a single medium (for example, a CD-ROM) or a combination of sources (for example, a magazine and online support). As with any learning activity, priority should be given to the subject content and desired outcome. Technology-based options include

- Internet
- Podcasts
- Publications/articles
- Teleconferences/audio conferences
- Webcasts
- National Council of Architectural Registration Boards monographs



Mandatory Continuing Education

What Is Mandatory Continuing Education (MCE)?

MCE is education required by a state for an architect to retain a license. Forty states have implemented an MCE state license requirement, but the requirements vary from state to state. Alabama, for example, requires 12 hours per year, Florida requires 20 hours every two years, and New York requires 36 hours every three years. Except for Kansas, the states with MCE requirements also require that 8 to 12 of these hours be in HSW. California requires 5 hours in an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) subject every renewal cycle, and Texas requires 1 hour in ADA and 1 hour in SD as part of the 8 hours required per year. As of January 2009, the states that do not have an MCE requirement are Arizona, Connecticut, Maine, Michigan, Montana, Nevada, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, and Washington. For more information about individual state requirements, please see the [MCE chart](#).

Each state has the legal right to establish its own guidelines and requirements. However, most states' requirements are similar, whether they require architects to meet them annually or biannually. The typical AIA member has four or more state licenses and must meet the continuing education requirements for each of the states in which the member intends to practice.

To date, most states that require MCE indicate that they will accept AIA/CES transcripts as documentation for completion of the continuing education credit. *For AIA members, this means that our single record-keeping system is the documentation needed for reporting most of your state MCE requirements.* We do, however, strongly suggest that you keep backup documentation of your activities as support, especially if the credit is a self-reported activity. The AIA or your state licensing board may require you to show backup documentation.

Frequently Asked Questions

I Am a New AIA Member. Am I Required to Earn LU Hours?

First-time members of the AIA are not required to complete the annual 18 LU hours (8 HSW/4 SD) the year they join, although records are kept for those who submit activities. Any credit received in the first year will not apply toward the following year's requirement unless the total credits exceed the 18 LU hour requirement.

I Am a Former AIA Member and Want to Renew. What Requirements Must I Meet?

Former AIA members who were in good standing when they were last active will be exempt from completing continuing education *in the year in which they reapply*. Those who are reapplying following a lapsed membership due to insufficient CES credit will be required to

complete 9 LU hours within the 12 months prior to renewal and to complete the annual total of 18 LU hours (8 HSW/4 SD) for the year in which they reapply, for a total of 27 LU hours. See the earlier section on reinstatement.

Are Associate, Allied, and Emeritus Members and Intern Development Program (IDP) Participants Required to Earn LU Hours?

Associate, allied, and emeritus members are exempt from the LU requirement but are encouraged to participate for their own benefit and that of the profession. Records are kept for all members who report their activities. IDP participants and nonmembers may use the AIA record-keeping services. Nonmembers may have a CES transcript maintained by the AIA for a \$145 annual fee. Download the [application](#) from AIA.org.

Can I Report Credit for Passing the LEED Exam?

Under the AIA/CES policies that have been in place since 1995, the AIA has never accepted CE credit for taking an exam in any topic area. The LEED exam is the most recent example of this type of exam. Study time has always been accepted for general research credit. By 1999, state licensing boards had begun to reject research credit for state MCE credit. At that time the AIA tightened its policy so that only planned, structured activities offered by a third-party organization would qualify for HSW when reported by a member. If a member had been part of an organized firm or AIA chapter study group that was structured and registered as a course, AIA could accept some of the study time for HSW and SD. The LEED course is unique and requires the member to consider these options:

- A member can report study time as research, with no HSW or SD.
- If the member's firm or chapter set up an organized study group, it could register and report the study sessions and everyone participating would obtain HSW and SD credits. These study courses are similar to graduate school-level MBA or law school study groups. Members of the study group are expected to meet for a specific number of hours within a semester. Successfully passing the exams means that attendees receive credit for studying the material effectively. Firms and chapters that have used this approach average between 12 and 20 hours of group study time.

How Are Transcript Records Kept and How May They Be Accessed?

Individual transcript records are updated daily on www.aia.org. Anyone with an active AIA membership number can [access a transcript](#) online. Sign in on the right, and enter your member number in the space provided. Then click the "Login" button. You may then print an unofficial copy of your CES transcript.

Official CES transcripts are available upon request. A hard copy of the transcript can be faxed or mailed to a member for a fee of \$10 per copy. You may make your request in writing, by phone, or by fax to:

The University of Oklahoma Continuing Education
AIA/CES
Room B-1
1700 Asp Avenue
Norman, OK 73072
Information line: 800-605-8229
Fax: 405-325-6965
More [FAQ](#) can be found at
http://info.aia.org/aia/cesfaq_default.cfm



Tips

Always Check Your Transcripts

This is the only way to make sure your records are up to date. Don't assume that the record will be on your transcript because you went to a course or sent in a Self-Reporting Form. AIA/CES providers register courses and report attendance online. With online transmissions, the occasional computer glitch or system crash may cause information to be lost. The only way to ensure that you get all the credit you've earned is to [check your transcript](#) after an activity, which only takes a few minutes.

Keep Your Documentation

Always keep documentation of courses you've attended and forms you've submitted. Don't forget to print out online forms. This habit will save you a lot of work if information is missing from your transcript.

In addition to the AIA/CES requirement, many members have state licensing requirements. Keeping documentation ensures that you will be prepared if additional information is requested from your state licensing board. We recommend that you keep documentation for a minimum of three years, but some state licensing boards require you to keep documentation for six years.

Contact the Course Provider If Your Record Is Inaccurate

Course information is sent from the provider directly to AIA/CES Records. Contact the course provider if you attended a course offered by an AIA/CES provider and the course does not appear on your transcript one month later. If the provider has sent the information, contact AIA/CES Records at 800-605-8229. The AIA national component can assist you if you are having problems with an AIA/CES provider but cannot report a course that a provider has not filed.

Ways to Achieve Your Annual LUs

- Attend the AIA National Convention in Miami, June 10–12, 2010.
- Attend courses or conferences offered by your local or state AIA chapter.
- Attend courses or conferences offered at sites across the country by the AIA Member Communities or the AIA Contract Documents Department. Call AIA Information Central, 800-242-3837, or check the [site](#).
- Attend courses offered by other registered CES providers [in your state](#).
- Complete courses offered by *Architectural Record*, Hanley Wood, Ron Blank.com, NCARB, or other [distance learning providers](#).
- Attend brown-bag or lunchtime courses offered within your firm.
- Do you teach a course? If it is not a full-time job, record the course you teach or the time you spend researching new knowledge (for example, codes, designs, or structures) to prepare for a presentation. For more information, visit the [FAQ](#).
- Are you traveling? Planning a tour of a city? Identify in advance what you want to learn and then report your architectural learning opportunities (for example, a tour and description of the historic preservation of houses in Charleston, S.C.).*
- Are you spending time researching the latest codes or specifications for a new project? What new knowledge do you hope to gain that you can apply toward your profession? Record time spent researching this new knowledge for a committee or community group.*
- Find other available courses on the [AIA Events Calendar](#).

*You should record these activities on an AIA/CES [Self-Report Form](#) (now available to complete and automatically file via www.aia.org).

Designing Your Future: AIA/CES Curriculum Frameworks

To strengthen the relevance of continuing professional education, AIA/CES provides *Designing Your Future*, a collection of curriculum frameworks developed to provide a pathway of learning for architects interested in advancing their professional knowledge, skills, and abilities. The curriculum frameworks provide information that will help you determine what knowledge or skills you may need to become proficient in a particular area. Use one of the four frameworks to help you select continuing professional education that best suits your needs and interests. You can find [Designing Your Future](#).

CES Courses

Do you want to know what CES courses are coming up next month or next year? Are you looking for courses in a specific geographic location? Are you looking for a course on a specific topic? A database on the AIA Web site lists thousands of courses and provides a quick, easy way to find educational activities offered by AIA/CES providers. You can search the database by course date, location, or title. Course information submitted by the providers is updated daily in the [database](#).

Contact Information

AIA/CES Records

The University of Oklahoma maintains your transcripts. Call them if you need assistance with a course that has not shown up on your transcript.

Phone: 800-605-8229

Fax: 405-325-6965

E-mail: cceaiarecords@ou.edu

AIA National

The AIA/CES national staff answers questions about the CES course and annual audits.

Continuing Education

Phone: 800-242-3837

E-mail: ces@aia.org

Membership

AIA Information Central handles all general membership inquiries and requests.

Phone: 800-242-3837

E-mail: infocentral@aia.org

AIA National Convention

Workshops and other educational activities at the convention are a good place to earn CES credits.

Miami, June 10–12, 2010

Phone: 800-242-3837

Fax: 202-626-7365

E-mail: convention@aia.org

Links

Reinstatement Form

www.aia.org/groups/aia/documents/document/aiab028662.doc

AIA/CES Exemption Form

www.aia.org/groups/aia/documents/pdf/aiab078777.pdf

Find Courses in Sustainable Design

<http://sparky.occe.ou.edu/ouaia/search/CourseSearch/index.cfm>

Sustainable Design FAQ

www.aia.org/education/ces/AIAS076973

General FAQ

http://info.aia.org/aia/cesfaq_default.cfm

Self-Reporting Information

www.aia.org/education/ces/AIAS077025

MCE Chart

www.aia.org/education/ces/mcechart/AIAS074729

Application for Records-Only Tracking Service

www.aia.org/education/nonmembers/index.htm

Access Transcript Online

www.aia.org/education/index.htm

AIA web site

www.aia.org

MCE Requirement in Place

www.aia.org/education/ces/mcechart/AIAS074700

Distance Learning Providers

www.aia.org/education/findproviders/AIAS075937

AIA Events Calendar

<http://info.aia.org/aia/aiaevents.cfm>

AIA/CES Curriculum Frameworks

www.aia.org/education/ces/AIAS076194

Online Course Database

www.aia.org/education/findcourses/index.htm