CONTINUING EDUCATION GUIDELINES FOR ALABAMA LICENSED PROFESSIONAL GEOLOGISTS

2005

ALABAMA BOARD OF LICENSURE FOR PROFESSIONAL GEOLOGISTS

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CONTINUING EDUCATION GUIDELINES

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of Continuing Education (CE) in any profession is to provide a means for the practitioner to maintain professional skills and to stay abreast of the latest advances in his or her profession. Geologists should have Continuing Education requirements similar to that of engineers, attorneys, physicians, and other professionals in order to maintain up-to-date knowledge of new developments in their discipline. Although formal classroom instruction provides knowledge and skills, the Continuing Education Guidelines for Alabama Licensed Professional Geologists (LPGs) allow a range of other choices for CE activities.

In 1995, the Alabama Legislature approved the Geologists' Licensing Act (Act 95-399) thereby establishing the Alabama Board of Licensure for Professional Geologists (Board) and the Board Administrative Code (Rules and Regulations). The Act authorized the Board to require Continuing Education as a condition of license renewal. The Board has chosen the Professional Development Hour (PDH) method of evaluating and allocating credit for Continuing Education activities, generally modeled after that used by Professional Engineers. Further, the Board has determined that the Continuing Education requirement will be 30 PDH per biennium as outlined in the Administrative Code and described further in this document.

The Board wants all Alabama LPGs to benefit from the Continuing Education experience and considers Continuing Education an important part of professional development. It should not be considered a burdensome chore to be avoided, but

entered into in the spirit of professionalism. The Board considers a broad range of activities as outlined in these Guidelines acceptable for continuing education, thereby minimizing costs to the LPG. An important element at any Continuing Education activity should be interaction with one's peers as well as academic self-improvement and professional development.

The Board encourages LPGs to engage in more than the minimum number of PDHs in each biennium. This will avoid any difficulty in license renewal in the event that some claimed credit is disallowed.

AUDIT

The Board has the authority to require LPGs to furnish records and/or documentation of continuing education. LPGs should be aware that Continuing Education reported to the Board is subject to audit and activities claimed for Continuing Education credit that are deemed to be inappropriate will be rejected. These records must be maintained by the LPG for a period of three years after application for renewal is made, and copies must be furnished to the Board for audit verification, if requested. The Board performs audits regularly.

CONTINUING EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

There are many types of Continuing Education activities that have been approved by the Board (see Administrative Code, section 364-X-13-.02 (5) and (6). These include the following where they are pertinent to the stated purpose for Continuing Education: (1) Formal Educational Activities; (2) Formal activities of

Professional Societies, Agencies and Organizations; (3) Field Trips; (4) Regulatory and Safety Related Training, Internet Seminars and Courses, and In-House Activities; and (5) Oral and Written Technical Contributions. Due to the wide variety of Continuing Education opportunities, an all-encompassing list cannot be generated. The LPG is referred to the Administrative Code, section 364-X-13-.02, for additional guidance. The Board would like to stress that it is the responsibility of each LPG to report and claim only appropriate activities for Continuing Education credit. Examples of appropriate Continuing Education activities, and potential sources of credit, are given in these guidelines. As professional geologists, we should all use good judgment, high ethical standards, and common sense in determining what is, and what is not, appropriate activity for Continuing Education credit. Although the appropriateness of the majority of activities is self-evident, in order to prevent rejection of continuing education hours, the Board recommends that written preapproval be requested for any activity that is likely to be considered questionable. If there are specific questions about Continuing Education, LPGs should contact the Board.

CATEGORIES OF CONTINUING EDUCATION

1) Formal Educational Activities. Credit will be given for successfully completing college or university courses dealing primarily with the subject of geology or other related disciplines depending on course content. For purposes of Continuing Education credit, one university semester hour credit is converted to 15 PDH and one university

quarter hour credit is converted to 10 PDH. Formally auditing such classes instead of taking them for credit reduces these PDH conversions by one-third.

Continuing Education credit in this category may be obtained through: (1) a formal, university-sponsored, classroom educational activity, or (2) enrollment in a university-sponsored correspondence course, which gives formal Continuing Education Units (CEUs). For purposes of calculating PDHs, one CEU is converted to 10 PDH. All CEU activities must be directly related to the study of geology or a related discipline, dependent on course content.

2) Formal Activities of Professional Societies, Agencies, and Organizations. The Board will recognize, and approve for PDH credit, certain formal activities of any of the major national, regional, or state geological organizations, including annual meetings, workshops/short courses, etc. Participation in an annual meeting of a professional geological organization, including annual regional meetings of such organizations, typically will earn the LPG eight contact hours (PDHs) for participating in each eight-hour day of meeting activities. These include attendance at oral technical sessions, poster sessions, symposia, and short courses. At the same type of meeting, pre- and post-meeting activities also may be attended for Continuing Education credit as long as these activities are geologic in nature and are sanctioned by the related annual meeting. The short courses of the Alabama Geological Society and annual meetings of organizations, such as the Geological Society of America and the American Association of Petroleum Geologists) are recognized by the Board as sources of Continuing Education credit.

As appropriate, educational activities of other state, regional or national geological societies, other scientific societies, academic institutions, agencies, and associations may be additional sources of Continuing Education credit, whether they give CEUs or not. A list of potential sources for Continuing Education credit is located on the Board's website, http://www.algeobd.alabama.gov/CEU_Opportunities.htm.

3) Field Trips. Field trips are recognized by the Board as an excellent way of attaining PDHs. Acceptable field trips must be sponsored by geology-related organizations and must have a formally prepared and edited guidebook. In general, acceptable field trips are sponsored by the Geological Survey of Alabama, the Alabama Geological Society, the Geological Society of America, the American Geological Institute, the American Institute of Professional Geologists, or comparable organizations and institutions.

4) Regulatory and Safety Related Training, Internet Seminars and Courses, and In-House Activities.

4a) Regulatory and Safety-Related Training. Training in this category must be primarily geologic in nature but can include some secondary regulatory, safety, and technology aspects that are directly applicable to the registrant's practice of geology. The initial 40-hour safety training (by OSHA, MSHA, or other similar organizations that are connected to the environmental or mining industry) will be approved for PDHs by the Board. However, no credit will be approved for subsequent 8-hour refresher

courses.

4b) Internet Seminars and Courses. To be acceptable, the Internet seminars or courses must be primarily geologic in nature and verifiable by the participant with appropriate documentation if requested by the Board.

A partial list of some Internet seminars may be found at this web page: **http://www.algeobd.alabama.gov/societiesandCEUsources.doc**.

4c) In-House Educational Activities. In-house activities may include some kinds of institution- or company-sponsored, geologic seminars or in-house training courses for employees, with certain restrictions. Examples of such activities that are likely to be considered acceptable are: (1) formal seminars, (2) distinguished or invited lectures, and (3) workshops designed to upgrade professional skills.

5) Oral and Written Technical Contributions. Continuing Education credit may be earned through preparation and presentation of certain oral and written technical contributions. Oral presentations may be given to a seated audience or in a display area while standing at a poster displaying geologic results as long as the presentation (oral or poster) is part of a geologic meeting where typically more than 25 geologists are

attending and there is a published program of the meeting. The total PDH credit for the activity will equal 2 times the duration of the presentation for each event, rounded to the nearest whole number. PDH credit for posters equals the number of hours that the author was present with his poster and available for interaction with attendees of the meeting.

LPGs who teach a Continuing Education course or otherwise give formal technical presentations, including leading geologic field trips, may earn Continuing Education credit for such activity. The total PDH credit for such a course, presentation, or field trip will equal 2 times the contact hour duration of the presentation (i.e., time in contact with the participants) for each event, rounded to the nearest whole number. LPGs are limited to one such teaching credit per biennium and this credit is limited to 8 hours per biennium.

Continuing Education credit will be given to college and university instructors who teach geology classes at a level above freshman (i.e., at a level higher than basic physical and historical geology and similar introductory basic geology classes). Continuing Education credit for sophomore, upper division, and graduate courses shall be given at the rate of one-half times the number of actual classroom contact hours with students per term.

Continuing Education credit also will be given for authorship of technical papers, articles, books, or other published works that are peer reviewed or go through a comparable technical editing process. Credit cannot be claimed until the abstract or paper has been published or the meeting for the presentation has ended. Credit earned

will equal preparation time not to exceed 15 PDH per contribution per biennium. LPGs claiming multi-authored papers should appropriately prorate PDHs.

Persons claiming this type PDH are requested to retain meeting programs and copies of publications so that they may be examined at the discretion of the Board when claimed by the LPG.

QUESTIONABLE AND/OR UNACCEPTABLE CONTINUING EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

Continuing Education activities must be primarily geologic in nature, i.e., directly pertaining to the science of geology. The Board will not allow Continuing Education credit for time spent learning marketing or business skills, but will allow credit for educational activities of a scientific nature directly related to the licensee's geologic employment. Credit will not generally be given for general safety and health courses and general office machine training (e.g., computers). Credit will not be given for courses such as Introduction to Windows, Introduction to Word, etc., or other general computer courses. In addition, Continuing Education credit will not be awarded for joining or maintaining membership in professional societies, reading professional journals, attending college or university classes if the person is seeking an undergraduate degree in geology or a closely related field. Credit will not be allowed for presentations made to non-geological audiences like civic clubs, Boy/Girl Scouts, K-12 classes, etc.

In order to prevent rejection of any continuing education hours, the Board recommends that written preapproval be requested for any activity that might be

questionable. Before contacting the Board, renewing LPGs are asked to please carefully read the forgoing document.

APPENDIX

TABLE OF CONVERSIONS TO PDHs

One (1) University semester hour of credit ……..… fifteen (15) PDH

One (1) University quarter hour of credit …….. ten (10) PDH

One (1) Continuing Educational Unit (CEU) ……..… ten (10) PDH

One (1) Contact hour of acceptable professional activities……one (1) PDH*

except as prorated for multi-authored papers and presentations

EXAMPLES OF PDH CREDIT CONVERSION

Examples	Contact or Credit Hours	PDHs
College or university geology course[1] Example – Credit: 3 semester hours	3 x 15	45
Formally audited college or university geology class Example – Credit: 1 semester hour	(1 x 15) / 3	5
University-sponsored correspondence course Example – CEUs: 1	1 x 10	10
Participation in an annual meeting of a geologic society Example – Time spent: 1.5 days	8 x 1.5	12
Non-CEU generating educational activity of a regional geological society Example – Contact hours: 6	6	6
Participation in field trip associated with a geologic society meeting Example – Trip duration: 2 days	15	15

[1] If course is given in quarter hours, the class credit is multiplied by ten (10).

In-house regulatory or safety training Example – Contact hours: 16[2]	16	15
Internet seminar or course in geology Example – Contact hours: 13[2]	13	13
Institution- or company-sponsored seminar Example – Contact hours: 1[3]	1	1
Presenting a talk to a seated audience at a geologic society meeting Example – Talk duration: 20 minutes[4]	0.33 x 2	1
Presenting a poster paper at a geologic society meeting Example – Poster displayed while author is present: 2 hours	2	2
Teaching geologic material at a Continuing Education activity[5] Example – Total of 3.25 hours of teaching	3.25 x 2	7
Teaching a college or university level geology class above freshman level Example: 30 contact hours per term	15 x 0.5	8
Single or first author of a peer-reviewed geologic paper published during the biennium Example: 100 preparation hours[6]	15	15
Author, but not single or first author, of peer-reviewed geologic paper published during the biennium Example: 15 preparation hours and 3 authors	15/3	5

[2] Regardless of Internet seminar or course duration, only a maximum of 15 PDHs are allowed per biennium.

[3] Regardless of institution- or company-sponsored educational activity duration or the total of such activities (e.g., 20 one-hour seminars), only a maximum of 15 PDHs are allowed per biennium.

[4] Talk duration is multiplied by two and rounded to the nearest whole number.

[5] Actual total clock hours spent lecturing, multiplied by 2. Credit for renewal is limited to one such activity per biennium and a total of 8 PDHs per biennium.

[6] LPGs are limited to a maximum of 15 PDHs per paper per biennium, prorated for multi-authorship.

VERIFICATION OF CONTINUING EDUCATION ACTIVITY

Registrants are responsible for reporting all claimed Continuing Education activities to the Board. This information will be submitted on the Board-approved, 2005 Continuing Education Reporting Form under the proper Category of Continuing Education. Further, all other pertinent information as indicated by the headings under each category (e.g., organization, subject, date, and contact hours) will be clearly indicated on the 2005 Continuing Education Reporting Form, copies of registration receipts, meeting programs, manuscripts, proof of seminar presentation, transcripts of course for credit or CEUs, et cetera, and all other appropriate proof of successful activity completion should be retained for three years by the renewing LPG, not submitted. These must be made available for later Board verification, if requested. LPGs or their institutions or companies should retain copies of all Board correspondence and pre-approval letters related to an LPG renewal. The Board-approved, 2005 Continuing Education Reporting Form will accompany the "Renewal of Registration" form, which each LPG will receive biennially. Further, a copy of the reporting form is enclosed in the Appendix to this document and is available at any time on the Board's website www.algeobd.alabama.gov.

CARRYOVER CREDIT

At the end of a biennium, a registrant with surplus PDH credit may bring forward to the next biennium a maximum of 15 PDHs, as credit toward the next biennial requirement

with the exception of Category 4 credits (i.e., Regulatory and safety training, internet seminars and in-house activities). Category 4 credits may *not* be carried over to the next biennium. Professional Geologists licensed will be exempt from the Continuing Education requirements for their first renewal period and may carry forward up to 15 PDH earned during the exempt period to the next biennium.

AUTHORITY TO REQUIRE CONTINUING EDUCATION

Statutory Authority. Act 95-399, Section 5-i

"(i) The Board shall renew and reissue certificates as provided in this act. As a condition of reissuance or renewal, the Board shall have the authority to require, in general or in individual cases, evidence of continued competence in the practice of geology through means such as, but not limited to, the review of qualifications, experiences, and requirements for continuing professional education."

2005 CONTINUING EDUCATION REPORTING FORM

NAME_____

ADDRESS_____

CITY_____ ST_____ ZIP_____

LICENSE NUMBER_____

NOTICE: For general guidelines, please read the document titled Continuing Education Guidelines for Alabama Licensed Professional Geologists (2005). For specific guidelines, please refer to Alabama Board of Licensure for Professional Geologists Administrative Rules, Ethics, and Enabling Act, Section 364-x-13-.02. Please note that documentation is required for all PDH credit claimed and should be available for later examination, if requested. This form can be modified as needed to document your particular PDH credit, but please use this form for reporting. The categories, 1 through 5 below, correspond to the same numbered categories in the 2005 Guidelines. Please note that 'contact hours' and PDHs are not the same as explained in the 2005 Guidelines for each category. Further, in some categories, there are limitations on the number of PDHs that can be claimed and/or the PDHs are prorated in some manner. Please see 'Examples of PDH Credit Conversion' in the 2005 Guidelines.

1) Formal Educational Activities

Name of College of University	Course	Date Attended	Semester Hrs	Qtr Hrs	PDHs
a.					
b.					
c.					

2) Formal Activities of Professional Societies, Agencies, and Organizations

Organization	Subject	Date	Contact Hrs	PDHs
a.				
b.				
c.				
d.				

3) Field Trips

Organization	Subject	Date	Contact Hrs	PDHs
a.				
b.				
c.				

4) Regulatory and Safety Training, Internet Seminars and Courses & In-House Activities

Source/Description	Date	Contact Hrs	PDHs
a.			
b.			
c.			
d.			

5) Oral and Written Technical Contributions

Title of Paper	Published By	Date	Pages	Prep Hrs	PDHs
a.					
b.					
c.					

Total PHDs carried forward from last biennium	_____
Total	_____
Total PDH's Claimed	_____
Total PDHs carried forward to next biennium*	_____

*Category 4 PDHs cannot be carried forward into the next biennium.

_____

Signature of Applicant/Date

Licensee certifies that the information above is true and correct by applying his/her seal or stamp. (Apply Seal or Stamp)