

## **Landscape Architect Continuing Education Requirement Answers to Frequently Asked Questions**

### **1. Why are landscape architects in Utah required to complete continuing education (CE)?**

During the 2011 General Legislative Session, the Utah Legislature passed H.B. 196 which amended the Landscape Architects Licensing Act (Utah Code Title 58, Chapter 53) and mandated that all landscape architects complete CE as a prerequisite to renewing licenses every two years. It was believed by the sponsor of the bill and the Utah Society of Landscape Architects that requiring landscape architects to complete continuing education would help protect the public health, safety, and welfare. The bill granted authority to the Utah Department of Commerce, Division of Occupational and Professional Licensing (DOPL) to further define CE requirements in administrative rule.

### **2. Where can licensees review the law that requires landscape architects to complete CE?**

Details regarding the CE requirements can be found in the Landscape Architects Licensing Act Rule (Utah Administrative Code R156-53). This can be accessed on the DOPL website at [www.dopl.utah.gov](http://www.dopl.utah.gov). To obtain clarification of the rule, contact DOPL via email at [doplbureau3@utah.gov](mailto:doplbureau3@utah.gov) or by phone at 801-530-6628.

### **3. How many contact hours of CE must a landscape architect complete and what is the time period within which the hours must be completed?**

Landscape architects must complete at least 16 contact hours of continuing education during each two year renewal cycle. See R156-53-304 (1). The two year period during which CE must be completed coincides with the biannual license renewal cycle, which begins June 1 of every even year and ends May 31 of every even year.

### **4. What constitutes a “contact hour” for purposes of fulfilling the CE requirement?**

Each contact hour of continuing education credit shall consist of not fewer than 50 minutes of education. One professional development hour (PDH) is equal to one contact hour. One university quarter credit hour is equivalent to 40 contact hours. One university semester credit hour is equivalent to 45 contact hours. One International Association of Continuing Education and Training (IACET) Continuing Education Unit (CEU) is equivalent to ten contact hours.

### **5. Must a CE activity be pre-approved by the Division of Occupational and Professional Licensing (DOPL) in order for it to count toward the CE requirement?**

No. DOPL does not pre-approve CE activities. Standards for activities are outlined in the Landscape Architect Licensing Act Rule. See R156-53-304 (4).

**6. Must a CE activity be sponsored or approved by the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) in order to count toward the CE requirement?**

No. In addition to activities sponsored by ASLA, activities may be approved by, or under the sponsorship of any of the following: an accredited university or college, a state or federal agency, a professional association, a professional society, professional organization, or company related to the practice of landscape architecture, or a continuing education provider providing an activity related to the practice of landscape architecture. See R156-53-304 (4)(d).

**7. Are there specific subjects that must be covered in CE activities?**

Acceptable activities must have a purpose and defined objective directly related to topics involving public health, safety, or welfare within the scope of landscape architecture practice or the ethics standards of landscape architecture practice. The terms health, safety and welfare are defined in R156-53-304 (4)(a)(i).

**8. Is it possible for a landscape architect to complete CE outside of formally established classrooms, seminars, conferences, or training sessions?**

Yes. R156-53-304 (4)(a)(ii) identifies several examples of acceptable activity types other than formally established activities in conferences or classrooms. These include, but are not limited to, the following activities: in-house programs sponsored by an organization, webinar, internet course, distance learning course, televised course, authoring of an article, textbook, or professional book publication, lecturing in or instructing a continuing education course, study of a scholarly peer-reviewed journal article, book, or book chapter, and pro-bono service that has a clear purpose and objective and maintains, improves, or expands the professional knowledge or skill of the licensee.

**9. Is there a limit on the number of CE contact hours that a licensee may complete within a specific type of CE activity?**

A list of types of activities for which there is a limit to the number of acceptable contact hours can be found in R156-53-304 (6). An unlimited number of contact hours may be completed for continuing education that is online, distance-learning, correspondence course, or home study provided the activity verifies registration and participation in the activity by means of a test or other assessment method such as a final summary, individual paper, or individual project which demonstrates that the participant learned the material presented.

**10. What justifies the waiving of the CE requirement and how can a licensee request a waiver?**

Acceptable reasons for waiving of the CE requirement include a serious medical or related condition, extended humanitarian or ecclesiastical service, or extended

presence in a geographical area where CE is not available. See R156-1-308d. To request a waiver of the CE requirement for a single license renewal period, a licensee must submit a written request to DOPL prior to the license renewal deadline. The request must provide an explanation for why the licensee was unable to complete the requirement.

**11. If a new licensee is issued a license after the beginning of a two-year license renewal cycle, must the licensee complete all 16 CE contact hours prior to the end of that first license renewal cycle?**

No. The required number of contact hours of CE for an individual who first becomes licensed after the start of the two year cycle is decreased in a pro-rata amount equal to any part of that two-year period preceding the date on which that individual first became licensed. See R156-53-304 (2).

**12. When is a licensee required to submit records verifying completion of CE to DOPL and what information should the records include?**

A licensee only needs to submit records that purport to verify completion of CE to DOPL if the licensee is audited by DOPL. DOPL will audit a percentage of licensees a few months before the end of every renewal cycle. During the audit, DOPL will request supporting documentation from selected licensees. Licensees are required to keep records that verify completion of CE for a minimum of 3 years after the close of the two year renewal cycle to which the records pertain. See R156-53-304 (4)(e). At a minimum, the documentation should contain the following: the date of the activity, the name of the activity provider, the name of the instructor, the activity title, the number of contact hours of CE credit, and the activity objectives. If the activity is self-directed, such as study or authoring of a scholarly peer-reviewed journal article, book, book chapter, or similar document, the documentation shall contain the following: the dates of study or research, the title of the paper, article, or book, an abstract of the paper, article, or book, the number of contact hours of continuing education credit, and the objectives of the self-study activity.

**12. May excess CE contact hours completed during one renewal cycle be counted toward the CE requirement of a subsequent renewal cycle?**

Yes. If a licensee completes more than the required number of CE contact hours during a two-year renewal cycle, up to eight contact hours of the excess may be carried over to the next two-year renewal cycle.