## **Comparison of Continuing Education Requirements**

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his article is intended to:

- 1. Assist state Boards of Geology, particularly those planning to institute continuing education requirements.
- 2. Provide information to our AIPG members.
- 3. Determine whether our Continuing Professional Development Program (CPD program) meets requirements of individual states.
- 4. Compare requirements for geologists and engineers.

I have gathered all data presented here from the sources listed in the text or at the end of the article. First, I review the requirements of the states; second, I show AIPG's CPD program requirements; third, I compare an aggregate of the state requirements for engineers to geologists. Finally, I identify16 sources of information, not previously referred to in the report. All AIPG members are indebted to Tom Fails, CPG 3174, for his persistence and that of his committee for developing and adjusting the CPD Program details and seeing it through several Executive Committees. As we gain experience with the program, additional adjustments should be expected.

The explicit questions are:

If one meets the CPD requirements, will that satisfy state requirements?

How do continuing education requirements compare with requirements for engineers?

Answers to these questions should be of value for several reasons. The ideal situation would be that if one meets AIPG's CPD requirements, one also meets all state requirements. Many of our AIPG colleagues hold licenses and certifications in several states, and if our CPD Program meets this question of universality, record keeping could be greatly simplified. This question will take on more importance as additional states add continuing education requirements to the renewal of licenses and certifications. We also would like our CPD requirements to equal or exceed those of engineers, as a matter of demonstrating our maintenance of competence to ourselves, to employers and to clients.

#### **Requirements of the States**

A caveat is necessary. Not many states currently require continuing education. As time passes, continuing education requirements will be instituted by additional states, and be modified in other states. Therefore, enumeration and conclusions presented here are an update of what is currently in place. The National Association of State Boards of Geology website, http://www.asbog.org, is an important source of information about geology registration standards in the 50 states and Puerto Rico.

Currently, 10 states have continuing education requirements for renewal of certification or licensure, (Table 1). One (Mississippi) is voluntary for geologists. Three states (Connecticut, Iowa, and Massachusetts) do not license geologists per se but regulate the practice of environmental or ground water professionals involving waste or contamination sites. Geologists whose practice involves those activities in the three states fall under their requirements.

Table 1. States Requireing Continuing Education			
State	2 Title	Measure	
AL	Professional Geologist	PDH	
$\mathbf{CT}$	Licensed Environ. Professional	CE units	
DE	Professional Geologist	CE units	
IA	Groundwater Professional	Contact Hours	
KS	Professional Geologist	PDH	
MA	Llicensed Site Professional	CE credits	
MN	Professional Geologist	PDH	
MS	<b>Registered Professional Geologist</b>	PDH	
NH	Professional Geologist	Contact Hours	
SC	Registered Professional Geologist	Contact Hours	

Several measures are used for the accounting of continuing education efforts. Each relates to a time commitment in earning the credit, most commonly a clock hour. PDH refers to professional development hours, CE units and CE credits are continuing education units (not to be confused with CEUs), Contact Hours are self-explanatory,

The CEU is widely used elsewhere, and represents 10 honest hours of learning activity,

For details on the CEU, go to <http://www.iacet.org/>

Thirtyone states have some form of licensing or registration for professionals who practice geology or a narrow subspecialty. The requirements for the 10 states involved with continuing education are summarized in Table 2.

Variables among the states' requirements include the unit of measure (PDH, etc.), the number of units to be earned, the duration over which they must be earned, and whether the duration starts at a time other than immediately after the first

### **COMPARISON OF CONTINUING EDUCATION (continued)**

issuance of a license. For a better comparison, I have converted data to minimum hours per year. Please note that for some activities it takes more than one hour to receive an hour credit. You will need to review this situation for any given state.

### Table 2. Minimum Hours Per Year to Meet StateRequirements

State	Units	How Many Per Period	Minin Hrs/Y	nim Notes r
AL	PDH	30/2 YR	15	START YR 5
$\mathbf{CT}$	CE units	12/Yr	12	
DE	CE units	12/Yr	12	START YR 2
IA	Contact Hours	Up to 16/Yr	6	IN FIRST YEAR
KS	PDH	30/2 Yr	15	
MA	CE credits	48/3 Yr	16	
MN	PDH	24/2Yr	12	
MS	PDH	24/2 Yr	12	
NH	Contact Hours	24/2 Yr	12	
$\mathbf{SC}$	Contact Hours	32/2 Yr	16	

Activities that count toward fulfilling the continuing education differ greatly from state to state. Some are broad and flexible, whereas others are far narrower and prescribed.

Continuing education requirements for the seven states licensing geologists have some common attributes. Minimum hours of effort to fulfill requirements range from 12 to 16, and average 13.4.

Number of states (of 7) recognizing activities to fulfill continuing education requirements:

•	college credit or CEU courses.	7
•	some type of supplemental education	7
•	publication	6
•	teaching	6
•	field trips	5
•	being an officer or committee member of	
	professional society	5
•	presentations	4
•	In-house workshops	4

In contrast, requirements in the three states with other licenses cannot be generalized as a group. The minimum number of hours per year to meet requirements ranges from 6 to 16. How these can be earned, tend to be dictated, and are subject to change.

#### AIPG's Continuing Professional Development Program

AIPG members now have the option of seeking an additional credential. Successful colleagues will earn the designation "CPD" and it will appear in the AIPG directory. The CPD program is based upon consistent effort in two or three areas of activity. Effort is measured in terms of Professional Development Points (PDPs) in the areas of continuing education, professional participation, and technical contributions. Over a three calendar year period, one needs to obtain 30 PDPs in each of 1) continuing education and 2) professional practice and volunteer participation. One may substitute PDPs based on technical contributions for either continuing education or professional practice in each year. The plan expects that the points will be earned at the rate of 10 or more per year in each of the two categories, and be reported annually. More detail is needed when a committee evaluates the progress in order to award the CPD designation after the third year.

The original program appeared in *The Professional Geologist* (*TPG*) in the November, 2002 issue. Specific activities that count toward PDPs, are presented in greater detail in three "Primers" that have appeared in more recent issues of *TPG* (March, April, and May/June, 2003). I have compiled data from those sources and present them in as Table 3.

Four items stand out in comparing CPD requirements to the states' requirements for geologists

- There is no recognition for the teaching of classes.
- PDPs in formal or supplemental education are conservatively awarded.
- Professional and Volunteer Participation include a rich array of activities.
- Supplemental education generally is more broadly defined.

It appears that CPD requirements meet or exceed those of the seven states licensing geologists. CPD certainly exceeds the states on an effort basis. To be certain about some supplemental education activities, you should make your own comparison. If in doubt, ask a state board in writing for a clarification, or exceed the minimum expectations, or avoid activities that are not recognized by a particular state.

Because the acceptable activities of Connecticut, Iowa, and Massachusetts are narrowly defined, a geologist interested in practice under those rules needs to refer to the specific document before planning any program of continuing education. Do not find yourself meeting CPD requirements with activities not acceptable to the state.

So, the conclusion is that CPD Program requirements will satisfy seven of the states, and with care will satisfy the other three states.

### Comparison of Engineers Requirements to our Profession

At this writing, renewal of an engineer's license in 21 states requires evidence of "continuing professional competency" and is measured in Professional Development Hours (PDHs). According to information found in frequently asked questions at <http://www.pdhonline.org >, "Typically, each licensee is required to obtain 15 (30 if biennial) PDH units during the renewal period." That site also informs us that one contact hour, in general, equates to one PDH. Activities leading to additional PDHs:

- 2 PDH each contact hour of teaching for the first time
- 10 PDH each published paper, article or book
- 10 PDH each patent

### COMPARISON OF CONTINUING EDUCATION (continued)

Table 3. Earning PDPs in AIPG's Continuing Professional Development Program				
I. Formal Education (college credit or CEUs awarded)				
1 semester hour	= 15 or 16 50-minute perio	ods	= 1.6 PDP	
1 quarter hour	= 12 50-minute periods		= 1.2 PDP	
1 CEU	= 10 contact hours		= 1.0 PDP	
II.Supplemental Edu	cation (no college or CEU cr	redit)		
For each <b>contact ho</b>	<b>ur</b> of activity:			
Geoscience short cour	rse		= 0.6 PDP	
Field trip			= 0.6 PDP	
Auditing geoscience t	echnical talk		= 0.3 PDP	
Auditing formal class	sroom courses in geoscience		= 0.6 PDP	
Auditing formal class	sroom course in a related dis	scipline	= 0.5 PDP	
Auditing CEU geosci	ence class		= 0.1 PDP	
In-house geoscience t	raining		= 0.6 PDP	
ASBOG Preparation	course		= 0.6 PDP	
Private reading of ge	oscience literature		= 0.1 PDP (3 PDP Annual Limit)	
III. Professional Part	icipation			
Full time practice de	pendent on geoscience		= 4.0 PDP (Min 30 Hr for 40 Wks)	
Officer in geoscience	organization for a year		= 4.0 PDP (5.0 if AIPG)	
AIPG executive comm	nittee for a year		= 4.0 PDP	
Committee chair for	a year (max. of 2)	each	= 2.0 PDP (3.0 if AIPG)	
Committee member f	for a year (max. of 2)	each	= 1.0 PDP (1.5 if AIPG)	
Attend AIPG nationa	l or sectional meeting	each	= 3.0	
Attend AIPG Nationa	al or sectional field trip	each	= 3.0	
Attend other geosci.	org. mtg, conference or conve	ention	= 2.0 for first, 1.0 for others	
Attend other geosci.	org. field trip		= 2.0 for first, 1.0 for others	
Organize and/or lead	tech. session at convention	each	= 3.0	
Organize and/or lead	field trip at convention		= 3.0	
Membership in natio	nal geosci. org.	each	= 1.0 each (MAX 3)	
Serving on state boar	rd of geology a full year		= 4.0 PDP (REDUCE IF LESS TIME)	
Serving on ASBOG E	Executive Committee a full ye	ear	= 4.0 PDP (REDUCE IF LESS TIME)	
Serving as ASBOG Subject Matter Specialist per mtg.		= 2.0 PDP		
Writing Prof. Exam I	Problems		= 2.0  PDP (PER YEAR)	
IV. Volunteer Particip	pation			
See page 14 of the April, 2003 issue The Professional Geologist for full list of activities.				
PDPs not yet deter	mined for:			
Active volunteer work, geology related.				
Volunteer lobbyist work				
Non-technical community service				
V. Technical Contribution, authorship involving distributed materials and presentations				
You must see p. 15 of the May/June, 2003 issue The Professional Geologist for specific details				
The totality of resear	ch, authorship, and presenta	ation or	publication is recognized.	
Non-peer reviewed ge	eotechnical paper or present	ation	= 2  to  14  PDP	
Subsequent presenta	tion		= 1  to  4  PDP	
Peer reviewed poster	1 1 1 00		= 2  to  14  PDP	
Geotech. paper, articl	e, monograph, or book <60 p	ages	= 5  to  25  PDP	
Geotech. paper, articl	e, monograph, or book >60 p	ages		
Pro bono Course or F	ieia trip involving written m	naterial	= 2 to 10 PDP	
Subsequent presenta	uon		TUA C 01 T = 1	

### **COMPARISON OF CONTINUING EDUCATION (continued)**

In the short comparison, summarized in Table 4, it appears that AIPG requirements exceed the engineers, and engineers exceed the average for geologists in the 7 states

#### Table 4. AIPG, Average of 7 States (Geology), and 21 States (Engineering)

	Units of Measure	Number Needed/Yr
AIPG	20	PDP
Geology	13.4	PDH, CE, contact hours
Engin.	15	PDH

#### Additional Sources of Information, listed by state

- 1. Neathery, Thornton L., 1996. Alabama Board of Licensure for Professional Geologists Administrative Code, Chapter 364-X-13 Expiration and Renewals.
- 2. Detailed Information for Environmental Professional, Licenses (LEP). 2002, Connecticut Licensing Info Center.
- 3. State of Connecticut Department Regulation of Department of Environmental Protection. Undated. Continuing Education Requirements, pp. 4-6.
- 4. Delaware Board of Geologists, 2002. CE Log, Sections 1, 2, and 3.
- 5. Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 2003. Underground Storage Tanks, General Information.
- 6. IAC Environmental Protection, Chapter 134, 1998. Certification of Groundwater Professionals, 4p.
- 7. Kansas State Board of Technical Professions, 2001. Frequently Asked Questions and Answers Regarding Continuing Education.
- 8. Robert Cowdery, 2003. Oral communication.
- 9. Board of Registration of Hazardous Waste Site Cleanup Professionals (Mass.), 2002. General Information on Current LSPs
- 10.Board of Registration of Hazardous Waste Site Cleanup Professionals (Mass.), 2003. Amendments to 309 CMR.
- 11.Board of Registration of Hazardous Waste Site Professionals (Mass.), 2003. Obtaining Approval of Courses and Conferences for LSP Continuing Education Credit.
- 12.Minnesota Board of Architecture, Engineering, Land Surveying, Landscape Architecture, Geoscience, and Interior Design (AELSLAGID), undated. Continuing Education.
- 13.Minnesota Board of Architecture, Engineering, Land Surveying, Landscape Architecture, Geoscience, and Interior Design (AELSLAGID), undated. Continuing Education Assessment Form.
- 14.Board of Registered Professional Geologists (Mississippi), 2002. Voluntary Continuing Education and Professional Development Program.
- 15.Board of Licensure for Professional Geologists (New Hampshire), 2001. Continuing Education Requirements.
- 16.South Carolina Board of Registration for Geologists, 2002. Continuing Education Guidelines.

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