

Professional Development Units (PDUs) and Renewing Certifications

Designing	Conferring
Developing	Accrediting
Implementing	Maintaining



Functional Manager	PMO
Component	Candidate

PURPOSE: *The purpose of this job aid is to provide the Defense Intelligence Enterprise with a framework for certification maintenance. The information provided below is based on research conducted on a variety of certification programs. The list of criteria below is not exhaustive of all categories for PDUs (Professional Development Units), but is representative of categories currently being used by existing programs.*

The following criteria is based on research of other programs and can potentially serve as a “starting point” for developing a model for certification maintenance (also see job aid MNT 01 A for additional guidance on developing certification maintenance policies and procedures). A certificant must: (1) accrue 100 PDUs within a two year cycle by participating in and successfully completing “approved” professional development activities, and (2) continue to be an employee in “good standing.” A certification holder is in “good standing” once his or her employment status and/or affiliation is confirmed by a Component or Agency (per designated Component or Agency).

****NOTE: To comply with National Commission on Certifying Agencies (NCCA) Standards, the PDU categories used for maintenance must align with the results of the job task analysis (JTA). For instance, if using the “Certification Program” category of PDUs, the certifications for which you award PDUs must align with knowledge and skills relevant to the target population of the certification program.**

LIST OF REQUIREMENTS FOR MAINTENANCE/RENEWAL POLICY

1. IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE (IS): The revised NCCA standards “require” more granular information about the Implementation Schedule (IS) and certification maintenance timeline. The proposed structure for the IS includes:
 - a. An Introduction section that describes the purpose of the schedule and its relationship to other reports.
 - b. A Maintenance Clock section that outlines the certification maintenance cycle based on the program needs. Program needs may be defined by stakeholders, including working groups and/or governing boards, to determine the conferral and maintenance policy for obtaining the necessary professional development units (PDUs) needed to maintain certification.
 - c. The Maintenance Clock section should outline the conferral process for new certification holders. The policy for certification maintenance must come from governance board approval; once approved, the maintenance policy can be implemented. The table on the next page provides an example:

If conferred between:	2 year clock begins:	2 year clock ends:
1 April 2015 & 30 June 2015	30 June 2015	30 June 2017
1 July 2015 & 30 September 2015	30 September 2015	30 September 2017
1 October 2015 & 31 December 2015	31 December 2015	31 December 2017
1 January 2016 & 31 March 2016	31 March 2016	31 March 2018

- d. Based on a two-year certification maintenance cycle, individuals conferred a certification before the maintenance policy is implemented will begin their maintenance clock at the start of the policy date which will run for two years. Certification holders who do not accrue 100 PDUs by the last date of the two-year maintenance window will be deemed non-compliant and their certifications will be revoked.
- e. Waivers: Waivers to the Maintenance Clock should generally not be allowed. However, the two-year certification maintenance clock can be extended for approved reasons (e.g., deployment, medical leave, etc.). The length of time that a two-year certification maintenance clock could be extended depends on the approved reason. For example, a certification holder deployed for one year could petition for a one year extension to the two-year certification maintenance clock.

2. **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT UNITS (PDUs)/CATEGORIES**: In addition to following the relevant Maintenance Clock, certification holders must successfully complete professional development activities that fall under one of the below categories. The following categories are common examples from certification programs that require PDUs. The categories of activities, and PDU values assigned to those activities, should be vetted by appropriate working groups and approved by the certification governance board.

Category 1: CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS

PDUs might be awarded to individuals for obtaining additional certifications. A certification program is defined as a standard setting program that:

- a. Confers community-recognized credentials (i.e., certifications) to individuals who demonstrate mastery of a predefined set of knowledge and skills in a specified area; and
- b. Awards certifications only to those candidates who satisfy established criteria and/or standards by successfully meeting the requirements of a formal and standardized assessment process.

One approach is to award a certificant 100 PDUs for higher-level certifications within the same program, or 50 PDUs for certifications that are conferred from other agencies or outside the Federal government.

Category 2: CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

PDUs might be awarded to individuals for obtaining a certificate. A certificate is defined as a non-degree granting program that:

- a. Provides instruction and training to aid participants in acquiring specific knowledge, skills, and/or competencies with intended learning outcomes;
- b. Evaluates or assesses participants' achievement of the intended learning outcomes; and
- c. Awards a certificate only to those participants who meet the performance, proficiency, or passing standard for the program's assessment(s).

One approach is for certification holders to receive 50 PDUs for each approved certificate program gained during the defined 2-year certification maintenance cycle.

Category 3: **NON-CREDIT BEARING TRAINING/EDUCATION COURSES**

PDUs might be awarded to individuals who participate in non-credit bearing training or education courses. A non-credit bearing training or education course is defined as a non-degree granting program that:

- a. Consists of an organized series of planned learning experiences (instructor-led or self-paced) developed and delivered to aid participants in acquiring specific knowledge, skills, and/or competencies associated with a topic area or group of tasks that can be completed together; and
- b. Awards a certificate of completion to individuals who attend and/or participate in the course.

One approach is for candidates to receive 1 PDU for each “contact” hour (or equivalent “seat time” hour) associated with an approved non-credit-bearing training/education course, and to place a cap or limit on the number of allowable PDUs for each non-credit-bearing training or education course.

Category 4: **CREDIT-BEARING TRAINING/EDUCATION COURSES**

PDUs might be awarded to individuals who participate in credit-bearing training/education courses. Credit bearing training/education courses:

- a. Consist of an organized series of planned learning experiences (instructor-led or self-paced) designed and developed to aid participants acquire knowledge, skills, and/or competencies associated with a coherent body of study within a discipline or set of related disciplines;
- b. Are delivered by an accredited academic institution;
- c. Result in academic credits granted by and recognized by accredited academic institutions; and;
- d. Represent a required course in an academic degree program.

Individuals interested in receiving PDUs for credit-bearing training/education course(s) must submit the following information to their Agency’s Certification Program Management Office:

- a. Course Title and Number
- b. Provider Name and Contact Information
- c. Formal Name of Degree Program
- d. Competencies Addressed (using approved list of Security-Specific Competencies)
- e. Number of Earned Academic Credits

One approach is for candidates to receive 15 PDUs for each credit hour of an approved credit-bearing training/education course.

Category 5: **CONFERENCE/WORKSHOPS**

PDU's might be awarded to individuals for conferences and workshops. A conference is a live (in-person or online) meeting with main presenter(s) to brief participants on a wide range of interrelated issues/topics.

A workshop is a working meeting or presentation with the goal of helping attendees to develop knowledge or skills associated with a specific topic area. Workshops often include focused exercises or collaborative work to encourage active participation of attendees.

Individuals interested in receiving PDU's for conferences/workshops must submit the following information to their Agency's Program Management Office:

- a. Conference/Workshop Title and Location
- b. Conference/Workshop Sponsor Name and Contact Information
- c. Competencies Addressed (using approved list of Security-Specific Competencies)
- d. Number of Days Attended

One approach is for individuals to receive 5 PDU's for each day of an approved conference or workshop, with a maximum allowable PDU's of 15 in this category. Some programs only award PDU's to individuals for presenting at a conference versus attending a conference.

Category 6: **JOINT-DUTY ASSIGNMENTS**

PDU's might be awarded for Joint Duty Assignments (JDAs). Individuals interested in receiving PDU's for a JDA must submit the following information to their Agency's Program Management Office:

- a. JDA Position Title
- b. Host Organization and Supervisor Contact Information
- c. Home Organization and Supervisor Contact Information
- d. Competencies (aligned with JTA) addressed by JDA duties

One approach is that individuals will receive 25 PDU's for each year of Joint Duty Assignment, with a maximum allowable PDU's of 50 for this category.

Category 7: **AGENCY SPECIFIC/PROGRAM SPECIFIC PROJECTS**

PDU's might be awarded for successfully completing short-term Agency-specific/Program-specific projects that require subject matter expertise (SME). Participation in Agency-specific/Program-specific projects is voluntary in nature and will need to be executed outside of regular duty hours. PDU's will vary from one project to another, and the maximum allowable number of PDU's for this category might be 20 PDU's. Individuals interested in participating in Agency-specific/Program-specific projects will need to submit a completed SME Demographic Questionnaire and Project Interest Inventory to their Agency's Program Management Office.

3. A POTENTIAL METHOD FOR TRACKING PDUs:

LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (LMS)/ CERTIFICATION SYSTEM OF RECORD (CSR)

Based on the Agency, a Learning Management System (LMS) for e-learning content delivery and Certification System of Record (CSR) will be used to collect, track, and store certification maintenance records (TBD). Individuals will be responsible for inputting completed professional development activities into the Agency's Learning Management System (LMS)/ Certification System of Record (CSR) (TBD).

The Agency's Learning Management System (LMS) and Certification System of Record (CSR) will automatically send notices to individual, individual's supervisor, and individual's component-specific PMO/POC at pre-defined intervals (TBD).