



ALBERTA
Association

CANADIAN
INSTITUTE OF
PLANNERS

Serving Alberta, the
Northwest Territories
& Nunavut

**The AACIP Proposed
Continuous
Professional Learning
(CPL)
PROGRAM GUIDE
October 6, 2006**

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Introduction - A Program for Planners

1.1 The AACIP Continuous Professional Learning Program

The AACIP Continuous Professional Learning (CPL) Program was developed in response to the profession's recognition of its own needs as well as the public's growing need for assurance that many professionals, planners included, remain current with contemporary theory, methods, and practice within their profession.

This CPL Program Guide describes the protocols and categorization for the recording and administration of ongoing professional learning intended to be undertaken by every Full and Provisional member in Alberta, Northwest Territories and Nunavut. AACIP is committed to ensuring the program is useful, workable and meets the needs of members whether they practice in large urban areas or more remote areas.

The system is modeled after similar programs instituted by other professions and other CIP affiliates in Canada.

The Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP), through its National Continuous Professional Learning Committee, is developing a proposed framework that would serve as a national standard for professional learning. CIP's short term goal is to build a framework from which affiliates create their own program that is consistent with the national standard. The long term goal is to create the greatest possible degree of consistency and portability across affiliates. A member of AACIP currently sits on the National Committee.

All Full and Provisional AACIP members are able to begin submitting credits for the 2007 reporting year starting July 1, 2006. The CPL Program itself is overseen by AACIP Council and will be improved over time through the recommendations of the AACIP CPL Committee. It is being implemented and operated by AACIP including administrative staff, Council and the CPL Committee as well as coordination assistance from CIP to ensure maximum consistency and portability across Canada.

1.2 Coordinating the National Standard and the Affiliate Standard

There are both national standards that all affiliates will adhere to as well as Affiliate standards that may differ from affiliate to affiliate. The intent of the national standards is to ensure consistency and portability across Affiliates. The intent of the Affiliate standards is to provide enough flexibility to meet regional needs and preferences. The National CPL committee has the objective of eventually creating a unified CPL system across all Affiliates. The first step in this journey will start within each Affiliate developing their program and then cooperatively coordinate the models through the CPL Committee over time.

As of the date of this edition of the CPL Guide, the following are National Standards as adopted by the National CPL Committee:

National Standards and Responsibilities

- minimum of 18 hours/year
- mandatory across Canada
- self-reporting system for all
- consistent standards and portability among Affiliates
- option for Affiliates to implement a gradual but defined phase-in period
- applies to Full & Provisional members
- define a CIP budget commitment

Affiliate Standards and Responsibilities

- establish an ongoing CPL sub-committee in each Affiliate
- define a reporting mechanism
- set a reporting period (i.e. 18 hrs/yr or 54 hours over 3 years, etc.)
- define how 18 hours are to be earned
- define a disciplinary process
- set an Affiliate budget commitment
- conduct a member consultation process
- conduct a vote on program and to support formally regulated CPL
- set a date for implementation of the Affiliate's CPL Program

2.0

Start-Up Information for the Planner and the CPL Program

Essential information you need regarding dates and requirements of the AACIP Continuous Professional Learning Program:

The Program starting date across Canada was January 1, 2006. For AACIP, however, the initial reporting period to earn and record Learning Units for 2007 will be for the 18 month period between **July 1, 2006 and December 31, 2007**. It is in the interest of each member to start recording Learning Units starting July 1, 2006.

Subsequent reporting periods will be for the 12 month period between January 1st and December 31st of each year. Self-reporting will be done through the CIP National database at <http://www.cip-icu.ca/Members/ScriptContent/Index.cfm> .

The required number of Learning Units (LUs) for each reporting period will be 18 LUs – including a minimum of 9 learning units of Organized-Structured activities. Refer to Section 4.1 for details.

Excess Organized-Structured LU's earned in one year may be carried forward to the next reporting year.

3.0

Learning Units & Professional Learning Activities

3.1 Learning Units

Continuous Professional Learning credits are recorded as Learning Units (LU's). A Learning Unit represents one full hour (60-minutes, not including breaks) of approved professional learning activity (e.g. a three-hour session, which includes two 15-minute breaks earns you 2.5 LUs).

In some cases, where direct allocation of Learning Units by time is difficult, or not appropriate, fixed equivalent Learning Unit values will apply. Refer to Section 4.0 for information and examples.

3.2 Professional Learning Activities

Professional learning activities exist in many formats. Some activities may be in a typical class setting but there are many diverse formats that provide professional learning. The AACIP Continuous Professional Learning Program is intended to accommodate members' professional interests through flexibility and available resources for all MCIPs. Although the following list is not all-inclusive, it provides examples of the variety of activity types that may qualify for Continuous Professional Learning Unit credit (structured or self-directed).

- Committee or task force volunteering (professional and/or civic)
- Conferences
- Credit courses (Academic Institution)
- Distance Education
- Facility or site tours, walking tours (guided)
- Internet based courses
- Journal Articles / publications
- Lectures / seminars / workshops
- Teaching / research

The purpose of professional learning activities is to actively engage members in furthering their knowledge, understanding, skills and abilities, relevant to the theory, methods, and practice of planning (the definition of Continuous Professional Learning). In addition, the program will initially recognize Organized-Structured learning that is not directly related to planning but is intended to enhance the professionalism and capacity of planners to do their job better. For example, this could include management courses, self-improvement courses and software training.

3.3 Professional Learning Activity Categories

There are two broad realms of activities in which Learning Units may be obtained:

- **Organized-Structured Activities (through a course provider)**
- **Self-Directed Activities (self-learning)**

3.3.1 Organized-Structured Activities

Organized-Structured Activities include any structured courses, meetings, seminars and workshops that are either provided by AACIP, CIP and its Affiliates, or by an external provider or group, which *may or may not* be recognized in advance by AACIP. These activities would include organized and distance-education activities. Refer to Section 4.3.

Members of AACIP will be kept informed of AACIP program offerings and activities recognized by AACIP. For activities recognized in advance by AACIP, the number of LUs will be indicated by AACIP. On completion of a professional learning activity, the member will complete a report form for the activity and submit it to the AACIP office or preferably, use the internet to go directly to the CIP national database and enter the data directly by going to <http://www.cip-icu.ca/Members/ScriptContent/Index.cfm>.

(Please note, it is in your interest to keep accurate back-up documentation of all courses you attend to help ensure there is no discrepancy in the recording process).

3.3.2 Self-Directed Activities

Self-Directed Activities are activities that are largely independent and not normally recognized in advance by AACIP. To be eligible for credit, Self-Directed activities must be in some way planned, must be educational and yield new knowledge for the individual member and apply to the practice of planning.

These are activities in which members independently engage. Activities often provide support to the profession or society, as well as providing education to members. Examples are civic or professional committees (including AACIP Council, committees, Chapters or task forces). Additional activities include research or self-designed learning experiences. Activities that are associated with the day to day responsibilities of employment as a professional planner or planning instructor will not be considered eligible as credited professional learning activities.

Reading articles and publications, written reviews, informal sharing of knowledge, qualify for Self-Directed LUs.

Active participation in a civic/professional committee is considered a Self-Directed activity and may earn a planner a collective maximum of 5 LUs each year and 9 LU for participation on AACIP committees.

3.4 Reporting of Professional Learning Activities

To obtain Learning Unit credits for each Professional Learning activity, Members will enter to a Self-Report form online at: <http://www.cip-icu.ca/Members/ScriptContent/Index.cfm>. Members calculate LU hours for professional learning activities by reporting the number of hours spent in planning-related learning (to the nearest quarter hour). The minimum time increment for recording Learning Unit is 0.25 of an hour with a minimum of 0.5 hours per learning session (eg. a learning session may be 0.75 hr long or longer, but each session is not less than 0.5hrs). Refer to Section 4.4 on activities where fixed equivalent Learning Unit values may apply.

All submissions are considered on an individual basis and are subject to review and adjustment of LUs assigned. Assessing the eligibility of members' reported activities and spot monitoring of members' CPL records will be conducted annually by AACIP staff with referral to the AACIP CPL Committee as required for guidance and clarification.

In cases of doubt, the CPL Committee could request the member to clarify how the learning unit would meet the set criteria. Only matters of serious, potential non-compliance would be referred to a committee of AACIP for remediation and/or discipline. Members are encouraged to enter their self-report forms on a continuous basis, preferably as soon as possible after each activity is completed. In that way, the activity will be fresh; both AACIP and members will be dealing with smaller, regular submissions; and any concerns can be identified and addressed more promptly.

3.5 Member Non-compliance

The CPL Program requires member support and cooperation to be successful. The primary objective of CPL is to set a minimum standard for its members' ongoing professional learning. AACIP is committed to help members be successful in completing their CPL requirements, through identifying course offerings; annual conferences and access to CPL events and information on upcoming events whenever and wherever they may take place.

As a formally regulated program, individual member non-compliance will be assessed by AACIP to determine if a member requires assistance or if the member is subject to special circumstances affecting her or his ability to complete the annual CPL requirement.

By January 1, 2008, AACIP will have prepared a transition process of one or more reporting periods to allow members a grace period to ease into the routine of entering their credits, a waiver process and a discipline process to address matters of serious non-compliance as well as reinstatement. Major non-compliance and requests for waivers would be referred to an AACIP sub-committee for review on a case by case basis.

As this program is a requirement of being a member in good standing, serious non-compliance will result in a member being struck from the AACIP membership roster.

4.0

Professional Learning Unit Categories & Topic Areas

4.1 Professional Learning Unit Categories

All Learning Units are categorized as either Organized-Structured LUs or Self-Directed LUs depending on the Professional Learning activity.

Learning Units required annually:

9 Organized-Structured (min.) + 9 Self-Directed (max.) = 18 TOTAL LU's

All 18 (or more) Learning Units to be obtained can be Organized-Structured. However, only a maximum of 9 LU's may be eligible as Self-Directed in any one year.

4.2 Professional Learning Topic Areas

To qualify for Learning Units, topic areas involving planning are the preferred learning activities. However, those that are not specifically planning oriented such as management courses, self-improvement courses, software training, etc are acceptable. A rule of thumb is to ask yourself; “will this learning activity make me a better planner; a better professional?” Each member is expected to make their own assessment of whether the learning activity is appropriate. Topic areas involving planning should relate to professional planning responsibilities and where it can be shown to improve the professionalism of the member; eg. community development and design, including social and environmental responsibility, technical expertise, professional conduct and/or personal improvement. The following is a list of just some subjects that would qualify for AACIP CPL Learning Units:

- Code of Ethics
- Communications Skills
- Community Development
- Conflict Resolution and Mediation
- Demographics
- Environmental Analysis
- Environmental Law
- Heritage Preservation
- Housing
- Imaging and information management software
- Land use and development issues
- Legislation with indirect planning applications
- Management of Planning Projects
- Management skills and human resources
- Mapping – GIS
- Municipal Development Plans
- Municipal Government Act
- Planning Law Public
- Input and Analysis
- Regional Planning
- Rural Planning
- Site Design and analysis
- Urban Design / Place Making Sustainable Development Practices
- Urban Planning/Zoning
- The Local Government Act

4.3 Professional Learning Unit Categories - Activity Examples

Eligible types of planning related activities pertaining to these topic areas could include, but are not limited to:

Organized-Structured	Self-Directed
Organized or guided walking tours or mobile workshops	Self-directed research (e.g. web, literature, interviews)
Attendance and associated study within formal courses	Critical readings/reviews
Attendance at organized Workshops/Seminars/Lectures	Participation on professional, civic, advisory Boards and Committees (outside regular work duties) to a collective maximum
Attendance at AACIP/CIP/APA and planning related professional conference sessions	Self-guided educational walking tours
Preparation/Presentation of material for Lectures/Workshops/Seminars/Conference sessions	Self-guided tours and site visits and related discussions or deliverables
Organized Distance Education Programs & activities (tele-learning, correspondence, web based, etc.)	Volunteering on AACIP Council, committees, task forces, exam panels etc. to a collective annual maximum
Organized audio or film presentations/ documentaries	Researching and writing professional articles or books for review/publication in planning journals, publications and books
Organized presentations/activities of professional community outreach (i.e. to schools, community groups, etc.)	Critical review of professional development materials/tools (videos, multimedia, etc)
Attending an organized course, lecture or similar learning activity	Serving as a mentor to another planner within a mentorship program

4.4 Guidelines for the Assignment of Learning Units

In some cases, where direct allocation of Learning Units by time is difficult, or not appropriate, fixed equivalent Learning Unit values will apply. As guidance, please find below some examples of activities, in the two categories, with equivalent Learning Unit values assigned:

Maximum Credits for Organized-Structured Activities

ACTIVITY	Maximum LU's
Attending an organized course, lecture or similar learning activity	1.0 LU per hour of learning activity
Attending a guided tour, field study or mobile workshop (where duration is less than one half day):	1.0 LU
Attending a half day guided tour, field study or mobile workshop:	2.0 LU
Leading a guided tour, field study or mobile workshop (where duration is less than one half day):	2.0 LU
Leading a half day guided tour, field study or mobile workshop:	3.0 LU
Preparation of material for an organized lecture, workshop, seminar, presentation or conference session:	3.5 LU
Attending a full day guided tour, field study or mobile workshop:	4.0 LU
Leading a full day guided tour, field study or mobile workshop:	5.0 LU
Researching & writing a professional or academic article for review and organized publication:	3.0 – 6.0 LU (depending on length/complexity as defined by the writer)
Researching & writing a professional or academic book/text for review and organized publication:	6.0 LU – 12.0 LU (depending on length/complexity as defined by the writer)

Maximum Credits for Self-Directed Activities

Volunteering as a mentor under an organized mentorship program	1.0 LU (for each contact hour with protégé)
Critical reading/review of a journal, academic, or professional article:	1.0 LU
Critical reading/review of an academic or professional book :	3.0 LU
Undertaking a self-directed tour, field study etc. (where duration is less than one half day):	1.0 LU
Undertaking a Half day self-directed tour, field study etc:	2.0 LU
Undertaking a Full day self-directed tour, field study etc.:	4.0 LU
Participation on relevant boards, committees, task forces, or other professional, civic/community volunteerism (outside regular work duties) for one year, with less than 5 hours of meetings/work per year:	2.0 LU
Participation on relevant boards, committees, task forces, or other professional, civic/community volunteerism (outside regular work duties) for one year, with between 5 and 20 hours of meetings/work per year:	3.5 LU
Participation on relevant boards, committees, task forces, or other professional, civic/community volunteerism (outside regular work duties) for one year, with more than 20 hours of meetings/work per year:	5.0 LU
Participation on relevant CIP or AACIP boards, committees, task forces; with more than 20 hours of meetings/work per year:	9.0 LU

5.0

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

5.1 Why is AACIP implementing CPL?

The AACIP Continuous Professional Learning (CPL) Program was developed in response to the profession's recognition of its own needs as well as the public's growing need for assurance that many professionals, planners included, remain current with contemporary theory, methods, and practice within their profession. The elected representatives of AACIP and CIP view CPL as a necessary step to keep pace with the global trend towards rising standards of professional practice

5.2 Who will participate? - All Full and Provisional Members are required to participate and satisfy the requirements. Student and Associate members as well as non-practicing Members are exempt from the requirements. Medical leave and extraordinary circumstances will also be considered on an individual basis.

5.3 What qualifies as an eligible Learning Unit activity? – The definition of “what qualifies” is quite broad, recognizing the diverse nature of planning for people and the environment. Initially, courses that are not specifically planning oriented such as management courses, self-improvement courses, software training, etc are acceptable. A rule of thumb is to ask yourself; “will this learning activity make me a better planner; a better professional?” Each member is expected to make their own assessment of whether the learning activity is appropriate.

5.4 How do I report acquired Learning Units? - For any Organized-Structured activity you attend, or any Self-Directed activity you undertake on your own, you may report the acquired LU's by completing a Self-Report form that can be located on the CIP website at <http://www.cip-icu.ca/Members/ScriptContent/Index.cfm>. Please note; it is in your interest to keep accurate back-up documentation of all courses that you attend to help ensure there is no discrepancy in the recording process.

Submit the information to CIP or the Affiliate in one of several ways. The preferred method is to directly enter data online into the CIP database at the CIP website. If members do not have access to the Internet and need to use paper copies, blank forms will also be made available on the CIP and AACIP website. Mail, fax or drop-off a completed Self-Report form to the AACIP office. AACIP staff will then record the information into your record via the CIP database. Please keep a blank one to photocopy as needed.

5.5 How will Members' Learning Units be verified? - The members' Learning Unit submissions will be accepted in good faith, with random audits and evaluations performed by AACIP annually.

5.6 What if I do not comply with the CPL requirements in the time periods given?

The CPL Program requires member support and cooperation to be successful. The primary objective of CPL is to set a minimum standard for its members' ongoing professional learning. AACIP is committed to help members be successful in completing their CPL requirements, through identifying course offerings; annual conferences and access to CPL events and information on upcoming events whenever and wherever they may take place.

As a formally regulated program, individual member non-compliance will be assessed by AACIP to determine if a member requires assistance or if the member is subject to special circumstances affecting her or his ability to complete the annual CPL requirement.

By January 1, 2008, AACIP will have prepared a transition process to allow members a grace period of one or more reporting periods to ease into the routine of entering their credits, a waiver process and a discipline process to address matters of serious non-compliance as well as reinstatement. Major non-compliance and requests for waivers would be referred to an AACIP sub-committee for review on a case by case basis.

As this program is a requirement of being a member in good standing, serious non-compliance will result in a member being struck from the AACIP membership roster.

5.7 How does CPL apply to new or reinstated members of the AACIP? All persons who become, or who are registered or reinstated as full and provisional AACIP members between January 1, 2007 and December 31, 2007 are encouraged to satisfy the CPL requirements and are obtain up to 18 Learning Units by December 31, 2007. Members who are registered partway through the year will report Learning Units on a pro-rated basis in the first year of reporting at a rate of 1.5 learning units per month starting with the next full month. For example, if a new member is registered on July 12th, 2007, the required accumulation will be from August to December, 2007, resulting in a requirement to report 5 months x 1.5 learning units = 7.5 LU's.

5.8 Can an MCIP earn Learning Units from Professional Learning programs in other provinces or states? - Yes. The AACIP Continuous Professional Learning (CPL) Program will typically accept Learning Units for activities acquired and or accepted in other recognized CIP Affiliates and other professional planning institutes (eg. United Kingdom-RTPI, United States-APA).

5.9 What qualifies as distance-education activities for the purpose of accumulating LUs? - Distance education is defined as a method of instruction where there is a separation of place and/or time between the instructor and learner, between fellow learners, and/or the learners and the learning resources. Distance education is a valid educational tool for all members whether they live in remote locations or in urban areas. It qualifies as an Organized-Structured learning unit in cases where there is distinct, programmed interaction between the member and the course provider. Multiple delivery methods are possible. This is expected to be a useful method of accumulating Learning Units for members in all locations.

Examples of distance-education program delivery include:

- Audiotape/audio conferencing
- Television programming (e.g. Knowledge Network)
- CD-ROM/software
- Computer software on-line training
- Correspondence (written) courses
- Publication/articles
- Teleconference
- Videotapes
- Internet courses

5.10 Can I take the same course twice or earn LU's for preparing and delivering a presentation twice? - Yes, as long as it is not within the same reporting period.

5.11 Can I exceed the annual requirement and carry forward acquired Learning Units? Yes. If a member participates in eligible Organized-Structured learning activities that together exceed 18 LU credits in a reporting year, up to an additional 18 Learning Units are eligible to be carried over to the next consecutive reporting year. Members must report a minimum of 9 Organized-Structured LU's in any one year, but may report up to 36 LU's over 2 consecutive reporting years.

5.12 Can my normal business, work or practice activities be submitted for Learning Unit requirements? No. The intent is to acquire/investigate/explore new areas of information in addition to, or outside the Members' normal daily business or practice. This requires the Member to assess their experience, activities, and duties and decide what is inside or outside their daily business routine. There will always be new material to learn. The profession is constantly advancing and one must evolve with it. Likewise, in order to collect eligible LU's, professional instructors will be required to move outside of their normal, daily teaching environment/ assignments/ job description and into a learning environment that is considered distinct from their routine and their job description.

5.13 What about special in-house seminars? Can they qualify for LU's? Yes. This applies to events by 'outside' consultants or industry representatives brought in by the workplace for distinctive information sessions not normally available within the workplace.

5.14 Does studying for a CIP entrance exam or attending a CIP exam preparation course qualify as an Organized-Structured activity? – No. Readings in preparation for the CIP exam are eligible *Self-Directed LU's* up to a maximum of 9 LU's per year. However, the exam preparation course and the examination itself are not eligible LU's.

5.15 In summary, what limitations apply to accumulating Learning Units?

As a program, use these parameters when reporting:

- The minimum time increment for recording Learning Unit is 0.25 of an hour with a minimum of 0.5 hours per learning session (eg. a learning session may be 0.75 hr long or longer, but each session is not less than 0.5hrs).
- A minimum of 18 Learning Unit hours must be reported between Jan. 1 and Dec. 31 of each year (except the inaugural year which allows an 18 month reporting period of July 1, 2006 – Dec. 31, 2007).
- A minimum of 9 LU's per year must be Organized-Structured
- A maximum of 9 LU's per year may be Self-Directed

5.14 How long should I keep the paperwork supporting my CPL records? -

Keep your records for the current year plus the previous year. Any AACIP CPL audit will be done no later than the year following any self-reporting of a member's educational activity.

5.15 How do I make suggestions to improve the program and how will I know when significant changes to the CPL program are proposed? – Ultimately, CPL is your program and must have the support of members if it is to be successful.

The introduction to the CPL program is intended to be inclusive, accessible and achievable for all members regardless of where they live. As the program evolves, AACIP will gather feedback from members in a variety of ways to improve program process and content and availability, especially to members in outlying areas. Moreover, members will be consulted for their input prior to Council consideration of significant program changes.

6.0

Summary & Feedback

There will undoubtedly be a variety of issues and questions that arise as members report their activities. The CPL Committee and the AACIP Council will be keeping you informed on the monitoring and review of the system as it is refined and improved in future years.

Your questions, comments and feedback are important to ensuring the system develops in a manner which is most meaningful and effective for the Members. Please contact the AACIP Office with your questions or comments or visit the AACIP website at www.aacip.com and follow the links to Members/Continuous Professional Learning .

You can contact the AACIP Office at:

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