

# **Frequently Asked Questions**

**Professional Study**

**Professional Learning Units**

**Certification**

**Software Technology Inc.**

**Professional Development  
(STI PD)**

# **Frequently Asked Questions**

## **Glossary of Terms**

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## **Glossary of Terms**

### **Professional Development**

Professional development refers to skills and knowledge attained for both personal and professional growth, encompassing various facilitated learning opportunities. The *Alabama Administrative Code* currently uses the term “professional development” as related to professional study activities designed to meet requirements for renewal certification of instructional leaders. The term “professional development” may be associated with “seat time” at one event.

### **Professional Study**

The term “professional study” refers to learning opportunities for instructional leaders that fully address all knowledge and applicable ability indicators under the Alabama Standards for Instructional Leaders. “Professional study” supports the comprehensive development of knowledge and ability over time through content driven, long-term study for instructional leaders.

### **Alabama Council for Leadership Development**

The Alabama Council for Leadership Development (ACLD) convened in 2007 and provide advisement for a seamless system of professional development for Alabama instructional leaders. Members of the ACLD were appointed by the State Superintendent of Education, using nominations received from the State Board of Education members, education organizations, and other entities. Members currently include local superintendents, elementary/middle/high school principals, assistant principals, and teachers who have distinguished themselves by leading sustained student achievement in their schools or local education agencies (LEAs). ACLD members serve a three-year staggered term as referenced in the *Alabama Administrative Code* §290-4-3-.01().

### **Alabama Standards for Instructional Leaders**

The Alabama Standards for Instructional Leaders were adopted in 2005. The eight standards were established to realize the mission of enhancing school leadership among principals and administrators in Alabama resulting in improved academic achievement for all students. To obtain a copy of the standards visit <http://www.alex.state.al.us/leadership>. Click on Alabama Standards for Instructional Leaders.

The abridged standards are listed below:

1. Planning for Continuous Improvement
2. Teaching and Learning
3. Human Resource Development
4. Diversity
5. Community and Stakeholder Relationships
6. Technology
7. Management of the Learning Organization
8. Ethics

## Glossary of Terms *continued*

### Alabama Standards for Professional Development

The Alabama Standards for Professional Development were adopted in 2006. The 12 standards were established to enhance the quality of professional study activities statewide, including college and university in-service centers and other aspects of postsecondary and high education. To obtain a copy of the standard, visit <http://www.alex.state.al.us/leadership>. Click on Alabama Standards for Effective Professional Development.

The abridged standards are listed below:

1. Organize adults into learning communities.
2. Require knowledgeable and skillful school and district leaders.
3. Provide resources.
4. Use disaggregated student data.
5. Use multiple sources of information.
6. Prepare educators to apply research.
7. Use learning strategies.
8. Apply knowledge about human learning and change.
9. Provide educators with collaborative skills.
10. Prepare educators to understand and appreciate all students.
11. Deepen educators' content knowledge.
12. Provide educators with knowledge and skills to involve families and stakeholders.

### Instructional Leader

Instructional leaders are identified as superintendents, local education agency (LEA) central office instructional administrators, principals, and assistant principals as referenced in the *Alabama Administrative Code* § 290-4-3-.01(4)(a).

### Instructional Leader Certification

The term "instructional leader" includes anyone holding a valid Alabama instructional leader certificate.

Alabama instructional leader certificates are:

- Superintendent
- Superintendent-Principal
- Principal (any grade level)
- Educational Administrator
- Supervisor (any subject and/or grade level)
- Administrator of Career and Technical Education
- Instructional Leader
- Practicing Instructional Leader

If an individual wishes to obtain a copy of his/her certificate:

- Submit *Duplicate Certificate Request (Form DUP)*.
- Submit a \$30 fee to the State Department of Education (SDE).
- If employed by an LEA, the LEA will have the Form DUP.

All individuals, regardless of employment, may obtain Form DUP by going to the SDE Web site:

- Go to [www.alsde.edu](http://www.alsde.edu).
- Click on Sections.
- Select Teacher Education and Certification.
- Select Publications.
- Select Teacher Certification.
- Select Forms.
- Select Form DUP and download.

- Directions for form completion and fee submission are included in the Form DUP.

## Glossary of Terms *continued*

### Professional Learning Unit

A Professional Learning Unit (PLU) is a content-driven, long-term unit of professional study for instructional leaders that fully addresses all knowledge and ability indicators under an Alabama Standard for Instructional Leaders. Professional study that constitutes a PLU requires multiple professional development experiences over time and will always be aligned with the Alabama Standards for Professional Development in Rule 290-4-3-.01(3). A PLU is earned at the completion of professional study which fully addresses the knowledge and ability indicators under an Alabama Standard for Instructional Leaders. The professional study must include comprehensive coverage and evaluation of effectiveness in the school setting. Professional study that earns a PLU must be approved either by the Alabama Council for Leadership Development (ACLD) or approved by the local superintendent. The PLU will take the place of the continuing education unit (CEU) which is based on seat time at one event rather than the development of knowledge and ability over time (*Alabama Administrative Code* § 290-3-2-.01(29)).

**NOTE:** PLUs are directly related to an individual's instructional leader certification. PLUs are not related to an individual's position, role, or place of employment.

### Approved Professional Study

Approved professional development is defined as educational experiences meeting the requirements of the Alabama Professional Development Standards and aligning to the practice of instructional leaders with the Alabama Standards for Instructional Leaders as referenced in the *Alabama Administrative Code* §290-4-3-.01(4)(b).

**NOTE:** Approved professional study is directly related to an individual's instructional leader certification. Approved professional study is not related to an individual's position, role, or place of employment.

### Continuing Education Unit

A Continuing Education Unit (CEU) is a measure used in professional study programs in order for an educator to maintain certification. A CEU is defined as ten clock/contact hours of participation in a recognized professional study program. A CEU is based on seat time at one event, rather than the development of knowledge and ability over time.

Commonly Used Acronyms	
A+	A+ Education Partnership
AAC	Alabama Administrative Code
AASB	Alabama Association of School Boards
ACLD	Alabama Council for Leadership Development
AEA	Alabama Education Association
CEU	Continuing Education Unit
CLAS	Council for Leaders in Alabama Schools
FAD	Frequently Asked Question
GCQT	Governor's Commission on Quality Teaching
LEA	Local Education Agency
SBE	School Board of Education
SDE	State Department of Education
SSA	School Superintendents of Alabama
PS	Professional Study
PD	Professional Development
PLU	Professional Learning Unit
RIC	Regional Inservice Center
STI PD	Software Technology Incorporated, Professional Development
Form DUP	Duplicate Certificate Request

# **Frequently Asked Questions**

**For**

**Professional Study**

**Providers**

**Question 1 - 7**

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## Professional Study

1. What is a Professional Study (PS) Application, its purpose, and who should submit?

**A: The PS Application is an online document submitted to the Alabama Council for Leadership Development (ACLD) for review and approval of professional study to earn Professional Learning Units (PLUs) for individuals holding instructional leader certificates. An application should address one professional study. To receive approved PLU status, all PS applications must:**

- **Address one or more Alabama Standards for Instructional Leaders abbreviated as follows:**

1. *Planning for Continuous Improvement*
2. *Teaching and Learning*
3. *Human Resources Development*
4. *Diversity*
5. *Community and Stakeholder Relationships*
6. *Technology*
7. *Management of the Learning Organization*
8. *Ethics*

**NOTE: It is preferred that only one standard be addressed in a PS Application. However, certain areas of professional study may overlap, therefore allowing more than one standard to be addressed and/or more than one (1) PLU to be earned.**

- **Align the above addressed standard(s) to the 12 Alabama Standards for Professional Development over time, abbreviated as follows:**

1. *Organize adults into learning communities.*
2. *Require knowledgeable and skillful school and district leaders.*
3. *Provide resources.*
4. *Use disaggregated student data.*
5. *Use multiple sources of information.*
6. *Prepare educators to apply research.*
7. *Use learning strategies.*
8. *Apply knowledge about human learning and change.*
9. *Provide educators with collaborative skills.*
10. *Prepare educators to understand and appreciate all students.*
11. *Deepen educators' content knowledge.*
12. *Provide educators with knowledge and skills to involve families and stakeholders.*

- **Include a plan to evaluate the effectiveness of the professional study in impacting student achievement.**

- **Any agency, organization, association, and/or individual wishing to provide approved professional study that earns PLU status may complete a PS Application.**

- **Several different professional study opportunities may be offered that focus on different constituent groups and/or different standards.**

2. May a provider submit more than one PS Application for ACLD review?

**A: Yes.**

3. May a PS Application be written for any of the eight instructional leader standards during 2009-2010?

**A: Yes.**

## Professional Study *continued*

4. What technical support is available for providers that are completing the PS Application?

**A:** *Upon request, technical support will be provided for applicants completing or revising a PS Application. Contact the SDE Leadership and Evaluation Unit at (334) 353-8924 for assistance.*

5. What is the ACLD timeframe for a PS Application submission, review, approval, and notification of application status?

**A:**

ACL D PS APPLICATION SUBMISSION AND REVIEW	
APPLICATION SUBMITTED BY	APPLICATION REVIEWED BY
October 1	November 30
December 1	January 31
February 1	March 31
April 1	May 31
June 1	July 31
August 1	September 30
APPROVAL AND NOTIFICATION	
A provider submitting an application according to the "Application Submitted By" dates listed above will receive written correspondence upon review. If an application is submitted after the "Application Submitted By" date, it will be reviewed in the order received according to the next scheduled submission date.	
APPLICATION APPROVAL PERIOD	
Professional study approved for PLU status may maintain approved status for up to five years from the date of initial approval, unless a shorter period is requested. If the provider wishes to make major changes during the approval period, an amended application must be submitted.	

6. If a local education agency (LEA) elects to use a provider (outside the LEA) to develop a professional study (that meets one or more of the instructional leader standards and is aligned to the professional development standards), should the LEA submit that professional study to the ACLD for approval?

**A:** *LEAs may submit applications for ACLD approval, though not necessary. LEAs will be responsible for reviewing and approving all professional study developed and implemented locally regardless of the provider they elect to develop and implement professional study. The LEA superintendent will determine the number of PLUs that may be earned through a professional study approved locally.*

7. What happens if an approved professional study is initiated but not completed by either the provider and/or an individual holding instructional leader certification?

**A:** *An approved professional study must be completed to earn a PLU. Under extenuating circumstances, an individual participating in the professional study may be granted additional time to complete a professional study so that PLUs may be earned. If a provider requires extended time for effective delivery of the professional study, a PS Application may be modified and re-submitted for further review and approval.*



# Frequently Asked Questions

For

Individuals

Seeking To Renew

## Instructional Leader Certification

- Superintendent
  - Superintendent-Principal
  - Principal (any grade level)
  - Educational Administrator
- Supervisor (any subject and/or grade level)
- Administrator of Career and Technical Education
  - Instructional Leader
  - Practicing Instructional Leader

Questions 1 – 8

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## Certification

1. How does an educator know if s/he must earn PLUs through the Alabama Standards for Instructional Leaders?

**A: Educators should review any certificates held. Valid instructional leader certificates are:**

- Superintendent
- Superintendent-Principal
- Principal (any grade level)
- Educational Administrator
- Supervisor (any subject and/or grade level)
- Administrator of Career and Technical Education
- Instructional Leader
- Practicing Instructional Leader

**After full implementation of the PLU system, any educator holding any of the above listed certificates must earn five PLUs over the five-year instructional leader certification cycle, regardless of position, title, or place of employment to renew instructional leader certification. These rules apply to educators in Alabama. There may be other requirements for individuals outside of Alabama.**

3. How many PLUs does an individual holding instructional leader certification need to earn and over what time period?

**A: After full implementation of the PLU system, an instructional leader must earn five PLUs over the five-year instructional leader certification cycle. At least two PLUs, must be earned from those approved by the ACLD. Two PLUs may be earned from those approved by the LEA superintendent. The fifth PLU may be earned from those approved by either the ACLD or the LEA superintendent.**

4. What is the timeframe for phasing in PLUs?

**A: Anyone seeking to renew instructional leader certification that expires after June 30, 2009, must earn PLUs, regardless of her/his position, title, or place of employment. CEUs will be counted if they were earned prior to June 30, 2009, within an individual's five-year instructional leader certification cycle.**

*Example*

<i>Certificate Valid Period</i>	<i>Minimum PLUs Required</i>	<i>Maximum CEUs Allowed</i>
<i>2005-2010</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>2006-2011</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>2007-2012</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>2008-2013</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>2009-2014</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>0</i>

**Anyone with instructional leader certification must earn PLUs. The first opportunity to earn PLUs will be in 2009. An individual may elect to earn PLUs to renew an instructional leader certificate or may allow the instructional leader certificate to expire.**

5. If an individual holds multiple certificates, will meeting renewal requirements for instructional leader certification renew the other certificates?

**A: Yes.**

### **Certification continued**

6. If a teacher holds both instructional leader and teacher certification, may s/he elect to not renew instructional leader certification and renew teacher certification through existing teacher certification requirements?

**A: Yes. A teacher may elect not to renew instructional leader certification. If a teacher decides to reinstate a lapsed certificate, s/he must adhere to current Alabama renewal requirements for reinstatement of the lapsed certification.**

7. When an individual renews an existing instructional leader certificate, will s/he receive a certificate that states "instructional leader" or "practicing instructional leader?"

**A: No.**

8. Must an individual earn PLUs if s/he is an administrator, but does not serve as an instructional leader in any of the following?

- Local education agency
- Private school
- Parochial school
- Agency/organization/association/group/other (e.g., SDE, Alabama Education Association, School Superintendents of Alabama, Alabama Association of School Boards, Council for Leaders in Alabama Schools, A+ Education Partnership, other)
- Institutions of higher education
- Private/commercial businesses
- Employment outside Alabama

**A: Yes. PLU requirements are based on the instructional leader certification held, not the position or role in which an individual serves. If the individual holds one of the following certificates, s/he must earn PLUs:**

- Superintendent
- Superintendent-Principal
- Principal (any grade level)
- Educational Administrator
- Supervisor (any subject and/or grade level)
- Administrator of Career and Technical Education
- Instructional Leader
- Practicing Instructional Leader

9. Will reading coaches follow the Alabama Standards for Instructional Leaders or the Alabama Quality Teaching Standards?

**A: A reading coach holding a teacher certificate must meet the requirements specified for renewing that certificate. A reading coach holding any of the following certificates must meet the requirements specified for renewing that certificate:**

- Superintendent
- Superintendent-Principal
- Principal (any grade level)
- Educational Administrator
- Supervisor (any subject and/or grade level)
- Administrator of Career and Technical Education
- Instructional Leader
- Practicing Instructional Leader

# Frequently Asked Questions

For

Professional Study Providers

And

Individuals  
Seeking To Renew

## Instructional Leader Certification

- Superintendent
- Superintendent-Principal
- Principal (any grade level)
- Educational Administrator
- Supervisor (any subject and/or grade level)
- Administrator of Career and Technical Education
  - Instructional Leader
- Practicing Instructional Leader

Questions 1 – 6

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## Software Technology, Incorporated, Professional Development (STI PD)

1. How will the SDE keep a record of PLUs earned for renewing instructional leader certification?

**A: The SDE will use STI PD to renew Alabama instructional leader certificates.**

2. Who will use STI PD to record PLUs earned?

**A: All providers of approved professional study will use STI PD to record PLUs.**

3. What if a local education agency (LEA), group, and/or individual does not know how to use STI PD to record PLUs?

**A: All LEAs currently have access to STI PD. LEAs and/or groups may contact the SDE's Office of Technology Initiatives for technical assistance related to STI PD. Individuals should contact their district technology coordinators or professional development coordinators for technical assistance related to STI PD. The SDE's Leadership and Evaluation unit, in cooperation with selected SDE sections and STI, will be responsible for ensuring STI PD training specifically related to the PLU implementation process is available to all seeking training.**

4. How will an individual know if PLUs have been accurately "credited" by the provider and/or recorded by the LEA designee through STI PD?

**A: An individual may access and review her/his personal STI PD profile at any time to determine current PLU status. An individual requiring assistance in accessing her/ his personal professional study profile may contact the LEA's designee.**

5. How does an individual know if a professional study is "really approved" by the ACLD and/or LEA?

**A: The PLU coding system established through STI PD will be the only method used to "house" approved professional studies through the ACLD and/or LEAs.**

**The ACLD and/or LEA approving professional studies will be the only entities with the ability to enter "approved" studies through STI PD. The SDE will establish an official calendar that confirms ACLD-approved professional study.**

**If the professional study being offered is not located in the STI PD system, it has not been approved by the ACLD and/or LEA.**

### Example

- **ACLD-approved professional studies should have an assigned code (e.g., series of numbers and letters) identifying the: (1) ACLD approval, (2) standard addressed, and (3) year earned.**
- **LEA-approved professional studies should have a similar assigned code identifying the: (1) LEA, (2) standard addressed, and (3) year earned.**

6. Will the SDE recognize any other method (e.g., hard copies, other) to keep a record of PLUs earned?

**A: No.**