



# Requirements of Approved Professional Development Unit Providers

Questions? Please contact [OPIPDUPS@mt.gov](mailto:OPIPDUPS@mt.gov)

## Administrative Rules of Montana

The requirements related to Montana educator professional development unit activities and professional development unit providers are outlined in the Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM). [ARM 10.57.215 Professional Development and Renewal Requirements](#) and [ARM 10.57.216 Approved Professional Development and Renewal Activity](#) must be followed by all approved professional development unit providers when issuing professional development units to Montana educators. Organizations are encouraged to apply to become an approved professional development unit provider if they plan on providing professional development for educators more than one time. Status as an approved professional development unit provider will continue as long as the approved provider follows the ARM as outlined below and in the document "[Data Reporting Requirements of Approved Professional Development Unit Providers.](#)"

## Appropriate Professional Development Unit Activities

Administrative Rule of Montana (ARM) [10.57.215](#) outlines what professional development unit activities are appropriate for professional development units.

The professional development unit activities must be:

- a planned and structured experience,
- of benefit to the educator's professional development as defined in ARM [10.55.714](#),
- an exposure to a new idea or skill or an extension of an existing idea or skill, and
- consistent with PK-12 public school curriculum.

Awarding professional development units for activities such as planning time, general staff meetings, unstructured mentorship time, or as compensation for additional work duties does not meet ARM [10.57.215](#). Although these activities may be consistent with important professional learning educators engage in, they do not meet the definition of activities appropriate for professional development.

Approved school districts/schools and universities, public or private, are the only organizations that are allowed to issue professional development unit certificates to their currently employed licensed educators for professional development unit activities from *unapproved* professional development unit providers.

## Determining Professional Development Units

One hour of attendance at a professional development unit activity is equivalent to one professional development unit. Providers are able to estimate the amount of time it would take a typical participant to complete the professional development unit activity.

Increments of half hours are rounded down (example: 1.5 hours should be rounded down to one hour, whereas 1.75 hours should be rounded to 2 hours).

## Professional Development Considerations for School-Based Providers

ARM [10.55.714](#) outlines professional development as it pertains to the Standards of Accreditation.

When planning professional development, it may be helpful to consider the following questions. Does the professional learning opportunity...?

- Align with district educational objectives?
- Focus on teachers as central to student learning?
- Focus on individual, collegial, and organizational improvement?
- Respect and nurture the intellectual and leadership capacity of teachers, principals, and others in the school community?
- Reflect proven research and practice in teaching, learning, and leadership?
- Enable teachers to develop further experience in subject content, teaching strategies, use of technology, and other essential elements in teaching to high standards?
- Promote continuous inquiry and improvement embedded in the daily life of schools?
- Require substantial time (ongoing and sustained) and other resources?
- Provide time for collaborative planning by those who will participate in and facilitate that development?
- Provide time for evaluation on the impact of the professional development on teacher effectiveness and student learning with the results of the assessment guiding subsequent professional development?
- Factor into a coherent long-term plan?
- Meet the guidelines of appropriate, robust, and effective at improving educators' instructional practices and interventions to address every student's learning needs?

## PIR Days

ARMs [10.65.101](#) and [10.65.103](#) explain how Pupil Instruction-Related (PIR) Days are calculated. "A maximum of seven PIR days may be counted with a minimum of three of the days being used for instructional/professional/in-service development/training." The PIR days require the participation of each professional staff member for a total of six hours for each approved PIR day. Therefore, your district may require 16 or more hours of district-directed professional learning, and depending on the topics of the professional learning, you may or may not issue professional development units for educator attendance. Schools are permitted to issue professional development units for PIR activities that meet the definition of professional development unit activities per ARM [10.57.215](#).