



Requirements of Approved Professional Development Unit Providers

Please note that all requirements, guidance, processes, and expectations outlined in this document are subject to change with the implementation and phased rollout of the new professional learning system. It is the responsibility of each approved provider to review updated guidance, monitor ongoing communications, and remain informed of current requirements as additional phases of the system are released. Providers are expected to check back regularly for updates to ensure continued compliance with all applicable expectations and procedures.

Administrative Rules of Montana

The requirements for Montana educator professional development unit (PDU) activities and approved PDU providers are outlined in the **Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM)**. All Approved Professional Development Unit Providers must follow these rules when issuing PDUs to Montana educators.

Specifically, the following rules apply:

- [ARM 10.57.215 Professional Development and Renewal Requirements](#)
- [ARM 10.57.216 Approved Professional Development and Renewal Activity](#)

Organizations that plan to offer professional development to educators more than once are encouraged to apply to become an **Approved Professional Development Unit Provider**.

Once approved, your status as a provider will remain active as long as you continue to follow the requirements in the ARM and in the [Data Reporting Requirements of Approved Professional Development Unit Providers](#).

Appropriate Professional Development Unit Activities

Administrative Rule of Montana (ARM) 10.57.215 explains what qualifies as appropriate professional development unit (PDU) activities.

To be eligible for PDUs, the activity must be:

- A planned and structured experience
- Beneficial 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
- Consistent with PK-12 public school curriculum

Activities that **do not qualify** for PDUs include:

- Planning time
- General staff meetings
- Unstructured mentorship time
- Compensation for additional work duties

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Although these activities may still contribute to valuable professional learning, they **do not meet the requirements** of ARM 10.57.215 for awarding professional development units.

Important:

Only **approved school districts, schools, and universities (public or private)** are allowed to issue professional development unit certificates to their currently employed licensed educators for professional development unit activities completed with **unapproved professional development unit providers**.

Determining Professional Development Units

[ARM 10.57.215 Professional Development And Renewal Requirements \(2a\)](#) states: "One hour of attendance at a professional development activity = one professional development unit." We accept whole numbers only.

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](#).

Questions

If, after reviewing these materials in detail, you have questions, email us at OIPDUPS@mt.gov .

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