



# Attendance Guidelines for Professional Development Events – Participants

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## Introduction

To maintain compliance with the Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM) and uphold high standards for professional development, the following attendance guidelines have been established. These guidelines are designed to ensure meaningful participation and proper tracking of professional development activities.

As a participant of a professional development event, it is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with these expectations and adhere to the outlined requirements.

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## 1. Registration and Confirmation

- **Pre-Event Registration:**

It is recommended that all participants register for the event at least **14 days prior** to the event date. This ensures accurate tracking and compliance with ARM [10.57.216](#), which requires proper documentation for educator licensure.

- **Confirmation:**

Confirming your attendance is important as it allows hosts and instructors to make the necessary arrangements, such as preparing materials and scheduling appropriately. It also helps determine who will receive a feedback form, which is required to qualify for a certificate.

- **Late Registration:**

Late registration (less than 14 days before the event) will only be allowed if space is available. The event coordinator must have sufficient time to process the registration and ensure ARM compliance.

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## 2. Attendance Expectations

- **Full Attendance Requirement:**

According to ARM ([10.57.215 2a](#)), "one hour of attendance at a professional development activity equals one professional development unit." Only complete

hours of attendance will count toward earning a professional development unit certificate. Providers design their professional development activities to align with ARM [10.55.714](#) assuming all attendees participate in the entire session. Missing part of the session may result in missing critical content that addresses key learning objectives, which could impact your professional development unit eligibility.

- **Attendance Verification:**

Participants are encouraged to confirm that their attendance has been accurately recorded by the event host or instructor. This ensures proper documentation in accordance with ARM reporting standards and confirms eligibility for receiving professional development units.

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### 3. Absences and Exemptions

- **Absence Notification:**

If you are unable to attend the event, you should notify the event coordinator **at least 3 business days** before the event. In cases of emergency or unexpected absences, please notify the event host as soon as possible. Schools and districts may have additional attendance and absence policies, please verify with your district administrator to ensure compliance for in-service events.

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### 4. Participant Behavior Expectations

- **Professional Conduct:**

All participants are expected to demonstrate respect and professionalism during sessions. Disruptive behavior undermines the learning environment and the professionalism of the field. Invested participation and engagement are encouraged to fully benefit from professional development opportunities.

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### 5. Post-Event Documentation and Reporting

- **Receiving Professional Development Units:**

Upon successful completion of the event and meeting all attendance and participation requirements, you will receive an evaluation survey. In order to be awarded an OPI Professional Development Unit Certificate, you **must** complete this survey. Your feedback is critical for assessing the quality and effectiveness of professional development programs and their compliance with ARM.

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## 6. Record Keeping and Compliance

As part of the professional development process, educators are **responsible** for maintaining and uploading their certificates for licensure renewal.

Under [ARM 10.57.218](#), the following guidelines apply to educators seeking license renewal:

- **Record Keeping for License Renewal:**

When applying for license renewal, educators must submit a list of completed professional development activities in accordance with ARM 10.57.215. As the educator, it is your responsibility to maintain the **official documentation** that verifies your completion of these activities during the term of your license.

- **Audit Requirement:**

The Superintendent of Public Instruction has the authority to conduct an audit of any submitted renewal applications. If selected for audit, you will be required to submit official transcripts or original professional development unit certificates within 60 days of submitting your renewal application or receiving the audit notice.

- **Failure to Respond:**

If you do not respond within the allowed timeframe to a request for documentation related to professional development units, **your license renewal may be denied**. Therefore, it is critical to keep accurate records of all professional development activities, including certificates and transcripts, in a secure and easily accessible format.

### **Best Practices for Maintaining Records**

To ensure compliance and facilitate smooth license renewal, consider the following best practices for maintaining your professional development records:

- **Keep Original Documentation:** Safely store all certificates, transcripts, and other proof of professional development in an organized manner. For added security, scan paper copies of your certificates to maintain a digital record and consider backing up your files.
- **Document Completion Immediately:** After completing a professional development activity, immediately record the relevant details (e.g., date, event title, hours earned) and file any certificates you receive. You can upload these on TeachMT anytime, whether you are in a renewal year or not.

- **Track Your Hours:** Regularly review and update your records to ensure you are meeting the required professional development hours for license renewal.

By keeping thorough and organized records, you will ensure that you can easily provide verification of your professional development activities in the event of an audit and maintain compliance with [10.57.218](#).

If you have any questions about this process or need further assistance, feel free to contact the appropriate licensing authority or your event coordinator.