



Professional Development Alternatives Online Modules 2017-2018 Frequently Asked Questions www.fl-pda.org

The Professional Development Alternatives (PDA) online professional development modules, available to Florida educators since 2003, began with a partnership between the Florida Department of Education Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (BEES) and the Bureau of Educator Certification. The modules continue to be funded by the Florida Department of Education Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (BEES). Modules are coordinated by the Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System (FDLRS) Administration Project and the nineteen FDLRS Network Associate Centers, a FDOE/BEES project, in collaboration with the Florida Center for Interactive Media.

1. What is FDLRS?

The Florida Diagnostic & Learning Resources System (FDLRS) is a network of 19 centers that directly serve Florida's 67 school districts in the areas of Child Find, Parent Services, Human Resource Development (HRD), and Technology. It is a project of the Florida Department of Education Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services. In addition to the 19 centers, the FDLRS Network also includes 6 Multi-disciplinary Centers who focus on in-depth evaluations and several statewide projects offering specialized services. FDLRS provides information, technical assistance/consultation, resources, and professional learning opportunities related to effective education of children and youth who are exceptional and/or have unique needs. Learn more about FDLRS: www.fdlrs.org.

2. What is PDA?

PDA online professional development modules are designed to assist educators in becoming more proficient in responding to the various instructional and behavioral needs of each individual learner in order to maximize achievement of all students. The goal is for all students, including students with disabilities, to engage in and master rigorous academic standards. The modules were written for all educators currently employed in the state of Florida. Seven of the PDA modules are aligned with Florida's Exceptional Student Education (ESE) K-12 Certification Competencies and are designed to support educators in increasing their knowledge and skills for teaching students with identified disabilities, as well as other students who are experiencing challenges with behavior and/or academics. These modules may also assist educators with successful completion of the ESE K-12 certification exam and some of these modules may be used to satisfy out-of-field credit for teachers who have not yet passed the ESE K-12 certification exam, but are working in Exceptional Education teaching positions. The PDA Differentiating Reading Instruction: Making it Explicit for Students module is approved to satisfy competency 4 of the Florida Reading Endorsement. Many of the PDA modules support the recertification requirement of 20 hours in teaching students with disabilities (Renewal Credit in Teaching Students with Disabilities 1012.585, F.S.), however, each school district or private school agency determines which modules satisfy the content requirement for their employees.

3. What are the characteristics of the PDA modules?

FDLRS offers both facilitated modules and independent study modules. Facilitated modules provide ongoing collaboration with colleagues and expert facilitators as well as self-paced learning. Independent Study modules feature individual, self-paced learning, content-related assessments, and follow-up activities. Both types of modules



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share the following characteristics:

- ✓ Available statewide.
- ✓ Free to Florida educators.
- ✓ Resources and content are reviewed monthly and updated annually by expert writers.
- ✓ High-quality online content and a variety of learning activities for self-paced study.
- ✓ Classroom-related assessment tasks.
- ✓ Consistent, user-friendly format and organization.
- ✓ Technology support.
- ✓ Support Florida's Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS).

4. What are the requirements of a PDA module?

The requirements of facilitated PDA modules vary depending on the module, however, with all facilitated modules you will:

- ✓ Participate in orientation and additional face-to-face or virtual group meetings with your PDA Facilitator and colleagues,
- ✓ Study module content and access current external links to information available through the internet, and
- ✓ Complete assessment tasks that may include quizzes, discussion board prompts, and/or written assignments.

For PDA independent study modules, you will typically

- ✓ Complete a pre-assessment,
- ✓ Study module content and access current external links for information available through the internet,
- ✓ Complete "Check Your Knowledge" quizzes (with 80% accuracy) and a final post-assessment (with 80% accuracy),
- ✓ Complete a follow-up activity option (A Florida work location administrator or supervisor should review, verify and confirm completion of the follow-up activity), and
- ✓ Complete the final satisfaction survey.

5. Where can I learn more about the content of the PDA modules?

Facilitated module descriptions are available at the PDA website www.fl-pda.org. On the left side of the page, click on: View Course Descriptions.

Independent Study module descriptions are available at the PDA website www.fl-pda.org. On the right side of the page, click on: View Course Descriptions.

6. Who can participate in the PDA online professional development modules?

The PDA facilitated modules have been developed for educators currently employed in education in the state of Florida. If you are not currently employed in education in Florida, it is your responsibility, prior to registering for any



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PDA module, to verify that your former Florida school district or private school agency is willing and able to submit inservice credits to FDOE for you. FDLRS reports inservice information to school districts and upon request to private school agencies. FDLRS does not submit inservice credits directly to FDOE. Inservice Credits are reported to FDOE by a school district or private school agency with an approved Master Inservice Plan (MIP) or its equivalent. If you are unable to identify a school district or private school agency that is willing and able to submit inservice credits for you, then you may need to take university courses to earn recertification credit.

The PDA independent study modules have been developed for educators currently employed in education in the state of Florida. If you are not currently employed in education in Florida, it is your responsibility, prior to starting any module that awards inservice credits, to verify the following two items. If you are unable to satisfy both items, you may need to take university courses to earn recertification credit.

- a) Identify a Florida administrator actively employed in education who is willing to review your follow-up activity and verify that it has been completed. FDLRS cannot verify follow-up activities.
- b) Contact your former Florida school district or private school agency to determine if they are able to submit inservice credits to FDOE for you.

7. If I am outside of the United States, may I participate in a PDA module?

Educators who are living outside the United States are permitted to participate in any of the PDA modules if they are able to access it through www.fl-pda.org and they are able to complete the required follow-up activities with Florida verification, but the courses were actually written for actively employed Florida educators. Sometimes educators who are out of the country are able to access the modules through their internet service, but many are not able to do that due to internet issues, firewalls, etc. Since the modules were developed for actively employed Florida educators, there is not a support system in place for users outside of the country who cannot access the courses through www.fl-pda.org.

8. I have never taken an online course. How will I know what to do?

For facilitated PDA modules, you will participate in a face-to-face or in a virtual orientation prior to starting the module. Your FDLRS PDA Coordinator and/or Facilitator will provide you with information prior to orientation. During orientation for facilitated modules, you will:

- ✓ Meet your FDLRS PDA Facilitator,
- ✓ Learn more about PDA and Desire2Learn, the PDA learning management system,
- ✓ Receive your username, password and course syllabus, and
- ✓ Take time to get comfortable navigating your module.

PDA independent study modules do not have a group meeting or orientation, but the module will provide you with explicit written directions.

9. Do I have to take all of the PDA modules and do I have to take the modules in a particular order?



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You may determine which of the facilitated or independent study PDA modules meet your professional development needs. You may take as many as you like, but it is recommended that you only take one at a time in order to focus on the content and assessment tasks required of that module. The modules do not have prerequisite requirements. You may take them in any order that aligns with your needs.

10. Can I participate in a PDA module if I am not currently working with students?

If you enroll in a facilitated module and are not currently working directly with students, talk with your facilitator at orientation. Your facilitator may be able to suggest options. It is possible that you might be able to team with a classroom teacher in your Florida school or district. You can possibly work with that classroom teacher to implement what you are learning in the module and evaluate its impact on student performance.

All of the independent study modules, require that you complete one of the follow-up activity options and have it reviewed and verified for satisfactory completion by a Florida administrator who is currently working in the field of education. In addition, all of the independent study modules, with the exception of the Positive Behavior Intervention Support independent study module, offer a follow-up option for Florida educators who are not currently working with students.

11. Which module should I take?

You will need to determine which PDA module best aligns with your interests and your professional development goals. You may want to consult with your principal or work location supervisor. Course descriptions are available at www.fl-pda.org.

12. Are PDA modules offered year around?

Facilitated PDA modules are offered on an ongoing basis both at a local level and with statewide registration from July 1 – May 15. PDA facilitated modules end by May 15 and your FDLRS PDA Coordinators will report inservice credits to the school districts in their service region to meet the June 30 deadline.

PDA independent study modules are available year around, however, if a district requires FDLRS confirmation of earned points in addition to a participant's downloaded certificate of completion, all course requirements should be completed by May 15 to allow time for communication and processing. Procedures and timelines vary from district to district.

13. How do I register for a PDA module?

Facilitated modules are offered with statewide registration and are also offered by the local FDLRS centers.

- ✓ **Facilitated Modules Offered Locally:** Contact your local FDLRS PDA Coordinator for course availability, scheduling, registration, and local district inservice credit information. Coordinator contact information is available at www.fl-pda.org, scroll down to "Contacts" and click on "PDA Coordinators."
- ✓ **Facilitated Modules Offered Statewide:** Go to www.fl-pda.org and click on the Statewide Registration banner in



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the upper left corner.

To register for an Independent Study module, go to www.fl-pda.org and click on “Register/Sign in” on the right side. Once you complete the registration process, you will be prompted to enroll in the independent study module of your choice.

To participate in the Middle Grades 5-9 Online Content Review Modules, please visit <http://pdportal.florida-ese.org/>. **Please note that the additional courses you see on this website are not PDA courses.** For information about these courses, contact support+eseIS@fcim.org.

14. After I register for a PDA module, what do I do?

If you are taking a facilitated module, your FDLRS PDA Coordinator and/or your module facilitator will email you with detailed information about your next steps. FDLRS staff are committed to providing informative communication to support your professional learning goals.

If you are registering for a PDA independent study module, you will receive step-by-step directions as you proceed through the module.

15. How long do I have to complete a PDA module? How many hours will I spend on a module?

Typically, the number of inservice credits indicates the approximate number of hours you will spend working on your PDA module. Since participant background knowledge, study habits, and experience varies, it is difficult to determine the length of time an individual requires to thoroughly study the content and complete assessment tasks.

Facilitated modules are scheduled with a beginning and ending date and you will be provided with a course syllabus. Facilitated modules have required group meetings that will be conducted face-to-face or in a virtual classroom.

For PDA independent study modules, you have 16 weeks from the time you enroll to complete all requirements of the module. It is important to complete the module within the 16 weeks; however, it may be possible for you to reenroll if circumstances prevent you from completing by your deadline.

16. What happens if I have to drop a PDA module after I have enrolled? What happens if I fall behind with module requirements?

For facilitated PDA modules, you are required to follow the module syllabus requirements and due dates. If you are not able to meet the expectations, you should contact your PDA Facilitator immediately. FDLRS is committed to providing the support you need to complete your PDA module, however, you are expected to be current with all module requirements at the mid-point of the course. If you are not current at the mid-point, your PDA Facilitator or Coordinator may suggest that you reregister for the module at a different time. If your enrollment is cancelled, a record of your completed work will be on file for approximately one year. When you reenroll, you will not have to



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redo work that had been completed and passed.

For PDA independent study modules, you have 16 weeks from the time you enroll to complete all requirements of the module. It is important to complete the module within the 16 weeks; however, it may be possible for you to reenroll if circumstances prevent you from completing by your deadline.

17. The independent study modules require administrator verification. How can I verify the follow-up activity if I am not currently working in the field of education?

A mandatory requirement of the independent study modules is to complete one of the follow-up activity options. The option must be reviewed and verified for satisfactory completion by a Florida administrator who is currently working in the field of education. It is your responsibility, prior to starting the module, to ensure that you have an administrator or work location supervisor, actively employed in education in Florida, who will do this. FDLRS staff do not review and verify follow-up options. If you do not have a relationship with a current Florida administrator who can review and verify your follow-up activity, you may want to register for one of the PDA facilitated modules that does not require an administrator signature.

18. May I earn partial credit for PDA modules?

You must complete all of the individual module requirements to earn inservice credits. No partial credit is awarded for any of the PDA modules.

19. I don't need inservice credits; may I just "audit" a PDA module?

There are a few PDA study modules related to certification exam preparation that offer an "audit" type of option. They are the Foundations Study Module, the Elementary K-6 Online Content Review Module, and the Middle Grades 5-9 Online Content Review Modules. Inservice credit is optional for the Middle Grades 5-9 Online Content Review Modules. No other PDA module is available to "audit".

20. How do I know how many inservice credits I need to recertify?

All questions regarding your individual certification or recertification should be directed to your local personnel/certification department or to the Florida Department of Education Certification office <http://www.fldoe.org/teaching/certification/index.shtml>. It is critical that you get the individual information that you need related to your certification situation. FDLRS PDA Coordinators can answer questions regarding credit for FDLRS professional development. FDLRS staff are not certification specialists.

21. How can I get inservice credits recorded with the Florida Department of Education (FDOE)?

- **For current, active educators:** FDLRS does not report inservice credits directly to FDOE. Inservice credits are reported to FDOE by a school district or private school agency with an approved Master Inservice Plan (MIP) or its equivalent. Your local FDLRS PDA coordinator will report module completers to the appropriate school districts in their service region. Verification of completion will be sent to private school agencies upon request. Districts or



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private school agencies also have the option of requiring additional follow-up activities in order to award inservice credits.

- **For educators not currently working in the field of education:** FDLRS does not report inservice credits directly to FDOE. Inservice Credits are reported to FDOE by a school district or private school agency with an approved Master Inservice Plan (MIP) or its equivalent. **It is your responsibility, prior to starting the module,** to verify that your former school district or private school agency is able to submit inservice credits to FDOE for you. If the district or agency is unable to do this, you may need to take university credit to recertify.

22. How many inservice credits will I earn when I complete a PDA module?

There are more than 25 PDA online professional development modules available through the FDLRS network. The modules vary in length, requirements, and complexity. Each module awards a set number of inservice credits when all of the module requirements are met. If a module indicates it is worth 30 inservice credits, then you will earn 30 inservice credits if you complete all requirements of the module. Modules range from 5 – 60 inservice credits. When participating in any professional development for inservice credit, ensure that it is accepted by your school district or private school. FDLRS PDA Coordinators can assist you with this information or provide you with appropriate district contact information. Click here to find your local [PDA Coordinator](#), or go to <http://fl-pda.org/coordinators/>.

Facilitated Modules

60 inservice credits:

- Assessment & Evaluation
- Foundations of Exceptional Education
- Instructional Practices
- Language Development & Communication Skills
- PBS: Understanding Student Behavior
- Transition
- Differentiating Reading Instruction
(Awards credit for Competency 4 of the FL Reading Endorsement)

30 inservice credits:

- Differentiating Mathematics Instruction
- Differentiating Science Instruction
- Interpersonal Interactions and Participation

20 inservice credits:

- Introduction to Differentiating Instruction
- Engaging Learners through Informative Assessment
- Technology for Student Success: An Introduction
- Technology for Student Success: Assistive Technology

10 inservice credits:

- Technology for Student Success: Tools to Support Reading Comprehension

5 inservice credits:

- Matrix of Services
- Surrogate Parent



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Independent Study Modules

20 inservice credits:

- Effective Teaching Practices for Student with Disabilities: Focusing on the Content Areas
- Teaching Students with Disabilities
- Paraprofessionals Support for Students with Disabilities
- Positive Behavior Intervention Support

Optional inservice credits:

- Middle Grades 5-9 Online Content Review Module

10 inservice credits:

- Battelle Developmental Inventory – 2nd Edition
- Inclusive Practices for the Developmentally Appropriate Pre-K Classroom

No inservice credits:

- Elementary K-6 Online Content Review Module
- Foundations Study Module

23. Do ALL PDA modules satisfy the content requirement for teaching students with disabilities (Renewal Credit in Teaching Students with Disabilities 1012.585, F.S.)?

Many of the PDA facilitated modules support the recertification requirement of 20 hours in teaching students with disabilities (Renewal Credit in Teaching Students with Disabilities 1012.585, F.S.), however, each school district or private school agency determines which modules satisfy the content requirement for their employees.

Some of the independent study PDA professional development module were written to meet the recertification requirement for teaching students with disabilities credit (Renewal Credit in Teaching Students with Disabilities 1012.585, F.S.); however, each school district or private school agency determines if the module satisfies the requirement for their employees.

Participants should check with their district or local FDLRS PDA Coordinator to inquire about each PDA module.

24. Where do I access additional information regarding the recertification requirements of Renewal Credit in Teaching Students with Disabilities 1012.585, F.S.?

Technical Assistance Paper: Renewal Credit in Teaching Students with Disabilities

<http://info.fldoe.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-6975/dps-2014-12a.pdf>

25. I have to recertify by June 30 of this school year; is there anything I need to know?

PDA facilitated modules end by May 15 and your FDLRS PDA Coordinators will report inservice credits to the school districts in their service region to meet the June 30 deadline.

PDA independent study modules are available year around, however, if a district requires FDLRS confirmation of earned points in addition to a participant's downloaded certificate of completion, all course requirements should be completed by May 15 to allow time for communication and processing.

Procedures and timelines vary from district to district.



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26. If FDLRS started developing PDA modules in 2003, how do I know I am accessing current content?

Each of the PDA modules is assigned a lead contact writer who is an expert in the content of the module. The lead contact writers review each module monthly to repair broken links. While content updates are minor during the school year when modules are active, an alert will be provided to ensure that current FDOE news is reflected in the module. Annually, all of the lead contact writers thoroughly review module content, links, and assessment tasks to ensure that participants will have access to the most current information that is available.

27. May I print a hard copy of any module to study and keep?

You may print each page individually. There is not a provision for printing the entire module at one time. Module content is updated annually so printed materials may become inaccurate. You may bookmark external links. To print a page, right click on the page and select the “print” option. Follow your browser’s instructions. Only the visible content that appears on the page will print, so be sure to click on the triangles to expand additional content before printing or use the download links where provided.

*Any additional questions should be directed to the
PDA Management Team at PDAQuestions.com,
or contact your local PDA Coordinator,
<http://fl-pda.org/coordinators/>.*