



BEESS Portal to Professional Learning Alternatives

Frequently Asked Questions for Independent Courses

General

1. What is the BEESS Portal to Professional Learning Alternatives?

The BEESS Portal to Professional Learning Alternatives offers a variety of online courses, both facilitated and independent study, for Florida educators that will increase their ability to respond to the needs of students with disabilities. The BEESS Portal also contains links to webinars and mini-modules created by various BEESS discretionary projects.

The courses are developed and maintained by the Personnel Development Support Project (PDSP) and the Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System (FDLRS) through funding provided by the Florida Department of Education (FDOE), Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (BEESS).

2. What are the features of the BEESS Portal independent courses?

All independent courses are:

- free to Florida educators statewide
- available year around
- self-paced high-quality content with a variety of learning activities
- user-friendly in a responsive design format
- available with technical support

3. Where can I find more information about the courses on the BEESS Portal?

A list of the courses, descriptions, and suggested in-service points can be found on the BEESS Portal website at fl-pla.org under “Course Catalog”.

4. Who can participate in the independent courses?

Anyone can view the content for informational purposes. You may register by completing the demographic information and taking the pre-assessment. If you are seeking in-service points for renewal of a Florida educator certificate, you must complete the additional course requirements. These specific requirements can be found in the Overview of each course.

5. How do I register for a BEESS Portal an independent course?

To register for an independent course, go to fl-pla.org and select “Sign in” on the right side. Once you complete the registration process, you can enroll in any of the courses listed.

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

The independent courses are user-friendly and will provide you with explicit directions.

- 7. Can I participate in an independent course if I am not currently working with students?**
Yes; however, some independent courses may require you to have access to students in order to complete the follow-up activity, if you are seeking in-service credit.
- 8. Should I take the courses in a particular order?**
You determine which of the independent courses meet your professional learning 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 for that course.
- 9. How long do I have to complete an independent course?**
There is **no** time limit for completing a course. However, if you are seeking in-service points, allow adequate time for FDLRS to report confirmation of earned points to your district and for your district to process the in-service points. Procedures and timelines vary from district to district.
- 10. What happens if I can't complete an independent course after I have enrolled?**
You can stop taking the course at any time. However, it will remain on your list of enrolled courses until you have completed it. You can access the course content indefinitely.

In-service Points

- 11. What are the requirements for earning in-service points for an independent course?**
You must complete all of the following steps:
- Take the pre-assessment. A passing score is not required.
 - Review all course content. Content can be reviewed in any order.
 - Pass the Check Your Knowledge (CYK) at the end of each unit.
 - Pass the final assessment with at least 80% accuracy. If you don't score at least 80%, you may retake the final assessment after waiting 24 hours.
 - Complete one of the follow-up activity options and have the verification form signed by your supervisor. All supervisors must be current Florida administrators.
 - Upload the signed Follow-up Activity Verification Form.
 - Complete the Satisfaction Survey.

Each required next step can only be accessed after the previous step has been completed. Once you have completed the final step you will be able to access your Certificate of Completion.

Your in-service points will be reported to your school district by your local FDLRS PLA Coordinator on a quarterly basis (at the end of March, June, September, and December). However, you must follow your local procedures and submit your certificate of completion, if required.

- 12. Who can verify a follow-up activity?**
If you have enrolled in an independent course with a follow-up activity, it must be reviewed and verified for satisfactory completion by a current Florida administrator. FDLRS staff do not review or verify follow-up activities.

It is your responsibility, before starting a course, to ensure that you have a Florida school district administrator or supervisor who is willing to verify the completion of your follow-up activity. If you do not have one, you may want to register for a BEESS Portal-facilitated course that does not require an administrator's verification signature.

13. How do I get my in-service points recorded with my school district?

For currently employed Florida educators, once you have completed all the required steps outlined on the My Courses page, your FDLRS PLA Coordinator will send a list of names of course completers to the school districts in their service region every quarter (at the end of March, June, September, and December). Verification of completion will be sent to private school agencies upon request. Districts or private school agencies have the option of requiring additional follow-up activities to award in-service points. Participants must follow all local procedures and submit the certificate of completion if required.

If you have additional questions related to in-service points, please contact your local FDLRS PLA Coordinator. Their contact information can be found at fl-pla.org/coordinators/.

14. How do I get my in-service points recorded with the Florida Department of Education?

Florida school districts or private school agencies with an approved Professional Learning Catalog (formerly MIP) or its equivalent are responsible for reporting in-service points to FDOE. FDLRS does not report in-service points directly to FDOE.

For educators not currently working in the field of education, it is your responsibility, before starting the course, to verify that your former school district or private school agency will submit in-service points to FDOE for you. If the district or agency is unable to do this, you may need to take college credit to recertify.

15. May I earn partial in-service points for independent courses?

No partial credit is awarded for any of the BEESS Portal independent courses.

16. Can I take a course if I do not want in-service points?

Yes, all courses can be taken for informational purposes only. Register for the course by completing the demographic information. If a pre-assessment is required, you will need to complete it, but a passing score is not required.

17. Can I earn continuing education units (CEUs) for a course?

Some courses also offer CEUs for speech/language pathologists, occupational therapists, or physical therapists. See the course description for more information.

- For additional questions related to CEUs for speech/language pathologists, contact Alice Kaye Emery at aemery@coe.ufl.edu.
- For additional questions related to CEUs for occupational therapists or physical therapists, contact Lynne Garcia at imgarcia@fgcu.edu.

Educator Certification Renewal

18. How many in-service points do I need to recertify in Florida?

All questions regarding your recertification should be directed to your local personnel/certification department or the Florida Department of Education Certification office at <http://www.fldoe.org/teaching/certification/index.stml>.

19. Can I use the same course more than once to meet a requirement to renew my certificate?

No, you cannot receive additional credit if you take the same course more than once. Other courses on the BEESS Portal may meet your needs. If you need additional suggestions, contact your local FDLRS PLA Coordinator. Their contact information can be found at fl-pla.org/coordinators/.

20. Do the BEESS Portal courses satisfy the educator certification requirement for teaching students with disabilities?

Some of the independent courses satisfy the 20-hour recertification requirement for teaching students with disabilities. However, each school district or private school agency determines if a course satisfies the content requirement for their employees. Before enrolling in a course, participants should check with their district or local FDLRS PLA Coordinator at fl-pla.org/coordinators/.

21. Do I have to complete the SWD requirement every five years?

Contact your local FDLRS PLA Coordinator for guidance. Their contact information can be found at fl-pla.org/coordinators/.

22. Do the BEESS Portal courses satisfy the educator certification requirement related to the reading?

Some of the independent courses satisfy the recertification requirement for reading. However, each school district or private school agency determines if a course satisfies the content requirement for their employees. Before enrolling in a course, participants should check with their district or local FDLRS PLA Coordinator at fl-pla.org/coordinators/.

23. What is the process of renewing my Florida teaching certificate if I am not currently teaching?

Contact your last district of employment to see if they will work with you. However, not all school districts will work with individuals who are no longer employed by that district. If the district will not work with you, you may have to take university or college courses to earn the credits you need to renew your certificate.

24. For additional questions regarding renewing an educator certification, contact:

- Your school district recertification department
- FDOE Teacher Certification Call Center (800-445-6739)
- Your local PLA Coordinator - find at fl-pla.org/coordinators/
- FDOE Florida Educator Certification Renewal Requirements website <http://www.fldoe.org/teaching/certification/renewal-requirements>

