

# Sustainable Design

## Mandatory Continuing Education

In March 2008, the AIA Board of Directors voted to modify AIA member annual education requirements to include a minimum four hours of education in sustainable design within the mandated annual 18 learning units. This change is effective on January 1, 2009.

In today's rapidly changing landscape of codes, standards, and new products and materials, architects must maintain an awareness and expertise of an ever-increasing amount of information. The issue of climate change and the impact of buildings on carbon emissions have created a new expectation among clients and the public to look to the expertise of architects for solutions that can help them leave a greener footprint.

The AIA Board recognized the need to help prepare their colleagues and fellow practitioners respond to the latest challenge and opportunity facing the profession. Sustainability has been a focus of architecture practice for more than 30 years, and the AIA has provided resources and tools to help its members better serve their clients and communities through environmentally responsible projects.



### Frequently Asked Questions

#### **What is the continuing education requirement for an AIA Architect member?**

The annual continuing education requirement for registered Architect members is a total of 18 hours called learning units. Eight of the 18 learning units must be in health, safety, and welfare education topics.

Beginning in January 2009, and continuing through December 2012, four of the 18 learning units must be in sustainable design subject areas.

#### **What is the sustainable design mandatory continuing education requirement?**

Beginning in January 2009, four of the 18 learning units required in a given calendar year must focus on sustainable design and meet the established guidelines for sustainable design mandatory continuing education.

#### **When does this requirement go into effect? How long is it expected to remain in place?**

The AIA Board of Directors approved this change to begin on January 1, 2009.

The four hour sustainable design requirement is slated to expire on December 31, 2012. The AIA

Board of Directors will review the requirement before its expiration to determine if the requirement should be extended or amended.

#### **Is this also a state licensing board continuing education requirement?**

This sustainable design mandatory continuing education requirement is for AIA membership renewal only. To learn about the mandatory continuing education requirements in your state, please contact your state licensing board directly.

#### **Is the sustainable design learning unit retroactive?**

No. Continuing education learning units earned prior to January 1, 2009, will not count toward the sustainable design learning continuing education requirement for 2009. Coursework must be taken in the current membership year.

#### **Can sustainable design learning units be carried over to subsequent years after the 2010 member renewal period?**

Yes, sustainable design learning units earned after January 1, 2009, may be carried forward—similar to guidelines established for health, safety, and welfare and other continuing education learning units.

**Can the same education activity fulfill the sustainable design and health, safety, and welfare requirements?**

Yes, a single course will fulfill both requirements.

All sustainable design learning units must also qualify for health, safety, and welfare. Therefore, any qualifying sustainable design educational activity taken will also apply to the health, safety, and welfare requirement.

**How will I know that a course fulfills the sustainable design continuing education requirement?**

All applicable courses by AIA/CES registered providers will be identified as sustainable design qualifying, much like the courses and programs that carry health, safety, and welfare learning units.

Qualifying courses will be reviewed by AIA/CES and approved for sustainable design learning unit credit.

**How do sustainable design learning units get recorded on my transcript?**

All AIA/CES registered provider programs that qualify will be identified and recorded on your AIA transcript.

If you take a program from a non-AIA/CES registered provider, will you have to indicate that the program qualifies for sustainable design learning units when you submit your structured self-report form and provide supporting information to verify it meets one or more of the sustainable design subject areas and minimum content.

**Can I report programs not offered by the AIA CES registered providers as sustainable design learning units?**

Yes. You may report programs offered by a non-AIA/CES registered provider, or third party provider under the structured self-report program guidelines if they meet the sustainable design subject areas and minimum content.

When reporting a third party program, you must provide documentation of attendance and

participation along with the program description and learning outcomes that demonstrate it meets the sustainable design learning unit guidelines for content.

Members will usually be required to provide this information as a supplement when reporting the activity to meet a state licensure requirement. Please note that for members who self-report a structured activity, the AIA is not able to assist in acquiring any support documentation that may be required by a state licensing board continuing education audit.

**Can I self report self-designed activities as sustainable design learning units?**

No. A self-designed activity is described as one organized by the member specifically to meet his or her individual needs. A self-designed activity frequently involves more than one type of medium or method, such as research, reading, interviewing subject experts, listening to audiotapes, and/or viewing videos.

This type of self-reported activity does not qualify for sustainable design learning units or health, safety, and welfare credit. Note that some state licensing boards will not accept this type of reporting for mandatory continuing education requirements.

## Additional Resources

AIA Continuing Education System (CES)  
[www.aia.org/ces\\_m\\_default](http://www.aia.org/ces_m_default)

CES Sustainable Design Requirements  
[www.aia.org/cesfaq\\_default](http://www.aia.org/cesfaq_default)

Walk the Walk: Architects leading the Sustainable Evolution  
[www.aia.org/walkthewalk](http://www.aia.org/walkthewalk)

AIA Information Central  
800-242-3837

Sustainable Design Continuing Education  
[SDCE@aia.org](mailto:SDCE@aia.org)