

Covenant Association
of the United Church of Christ
in the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference

Policy on
Continuing Education Requirements

The Covenant Association's policy, rationale, and wording for this policy on continuing education requirements are based on the [Pennsylvania Southeast Conference \(PSEC\) Life Long Learning/Continuing Education Policy](http://psec.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Pennsylvania%20Southeast%20Conference%20Policy.pdf), which can be found on the [PSEC](http://psec.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Pennsylvania%20Southeast%20Conference%20Policy.pdf) website at:
<http://psec.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Pennsylvania%20Southeast%20Conference%20Policy.pdf>.

Hours Needed

All Authorized Ministers need to complete continuing education hours to maintain standing. Full-time Authorized Ministers are to complete 40 contact hours every three years. Part-time Ministers are to complete 20 contact hours every three years. Two hours of these hours need to be in diversity training.

One contact hour consists of 50-60 minutes.

For simplicity in record keeping, the Covenant Association uses set three year time periods, based on calendar years. They are as follows:

2017-2020 (which gives ministers an extra year the first period to complete their total hours)
2021-2023
2024-2026
2027-2029
2030-2032
2033-2035
2036-2038
2039-2041
2042-2044
2045-2047
2048-2050

...and so on, following that three year cycle.

Authorized Ministers who are transferring to the Covenant Association from another association, conference, or denomination that does not have similar continuing education requirements will be on a pro-rated schedule. As of the date of being granted standing within the Covenant Association, within their *first* three year cycle: full-time ministers need 12 contact hours for each full year they have standing within the Covenant Association; and part-time need 6 contact hours for each full year. The same pro-rated schedule will be for newly Authorized Ministers within the Covenant Association.

It is the responsibility of each Authorized Minister to keep records of their own continuing education, maintaining a career long file of that documentation. Ministers should be prepared to present a record of their continuing education as a part of their periodic support consultations, and if otherwise requested by the COM.

Diversity Continuing Education

Ministers are expected to complete at least 2 hours of continuing education in “diversity” during each three year education cycle, which can be included toward the calculation of the total 40 hours. Diversity could include: culture, race, ethnicity, gender, gender identification, sexual orientation, etc.

Pastoral Ethics

Authorized Ministers and Members-In-Discernment are to complete at least 6 hours of pastoral/professional ethics (such as boundary training) during each three year education cycle. This is to be in addition to the total 40 hours and *cannot* be used to count toward that 40 hour total.

Authorized Ministers and Members-In-Discernment are expected to complete the Basic Boundary training within their first three year continuing education cycle.

Professional ethics courses approved by state licensing boards may also be used to meet this requirement. Authorized Ministers in specialized ministries may meet this requirement through professional ethics / boundary training offered by other professional organizations. When such a certificate is submitted, it should include documentation on how it pertains to pastoral ethics.

Approved Continuing Education

The selection of course work is determined by each individual but should have some direct application to improve the practice of ministry.

Any continuing education workshop, class, course, or program approved by the PSEC as continuing education is automatically approved by the Covenant Association. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Workshops at Association, Annual Conference, and General Synod Meetings;
- Courses and workshops at local seminaries and colleges;
- Online leadership courses;
- Community workshops/lectures; and
- Clergy retreats.

The Covenant Association also approves:

- Workshops offered in other UCC Conferences;
- Workshops offered by denominationally affiliated judicatories, including ELCA, Presbyterian Church U.S.A., Reformed Church of America, Disciples of Christ, United Church of Canada, and the Moravian Church;
- Spirit on Tap and Theology with a Twist;
- Courses approved by state licensing boards;
- PA Academy of Ministry;
- PA State Sunday School Teachers Association;
- Workshops approved by established local ministeriums; and
- Workshops listed as approved on the Covenant Association’s website.

Additional courses/workshops are approved at the discretion of the Covenant Association’s COM.

Leading a Workshop

Authorized Ministers who lead an approved workshop may count up to 8 hours of those leading/teaching/learning hours towards their 40 total hours.

In addition, the first time leading a particular workshop, ministers may count preparation time (up to 3 times the length of the workshop) toward their continuing education time. *For example, if it takes you 12 hours of study and preparation to prepare a 2 hour workshop, you may count the 2 hours of the workshop plus up to 6 hours of preparation, for a total of 8 hours of continuing education contact hours.*

Each successive time you lead a workshop, you may count up to twice as many hours of preparation. *For example, if it takes you 3 hours to review your notes and update your handouts for a 2 hour workshop you had led on a previous date, you may count a total of 4 hours (2 hours of workshop presentation, plus 2 hours of preparation).*