

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT PSP

This document answers frequently asked questions and serves only as a guideline to applicants and PSP chairmen. It does not cover all aspects of the program, and it is not intended to supersede the PSP Book in any way.

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How do I know if I qualify for a PSP certificate?

Make sure you have a copy of the most recent version of the PSP Handbook dated 01.09. If not, visit the website www.naeop.org, the book can be downloaded. As of August 1, 2008 printed copies of the Handbook will no longer be available.

A PSP applicant must be an active or retired member of NAEOP. You must be a high school graduate or hold a GED. In lieu of either, you must have passed a minimum of three college courses.

Education

- The first thing to check is your education courses. You must have a minimum of five (5) 30 classroom clock hours or five (5) 2 semester credit hour courses or five (5) 3 quarter credit hour courses to apply for a Basic certificate Option I. If applying under Option II, a minimum of 30 semester credit hours (or 60-quarter credit hours) are needed for a Basic certificate. The number of courses increases with each certificate level. (See pages 4 and 5 in the *PSP* book.)
- On the Option I chart for the Basic certificate it states, "Course documentation for any five courses in listed areas." This means five courses in any of the areas listed on page 7 of the PSP book. You may have all courses in the same area, such as business, or you may have them in several of the areas. One course in each area is not required.

Experience

- You must have a minimum of four years office work experience. Each year employed in education counts as a full year; each year employed outside of education counts as a half year. Be sure to list the office or job title under experiences. Do not send a résumé or references unless requested. It just adds paper to your folder and is unnecessary.

Inservice

- You must have a minimum of 60 hours of inservice. Be sure to submit certificates of attendance for each inservice course. Certificates must reflect the length of the class or workshop.

Participation

- You must have a minimum of 10 participation points in education-related professional organizations. A minimum of 5 points must be earned from local, state, or national associations for educational office professionals.

What is the difference between education courses and inservice courses?

Requirements for education courses are listed under the Education column on pages 6, 7 and 8 of the PSP book. In order to meet the education requirements under Option I, each course must be at least 2 semester credits, or 3-quarter credits, or 3 CEUs, or 30 classroom clock hours. A college transcript or a certificate of completion from the granting institution must document courses. For other than transcripts, certificates of completion listing date(s) and total number clock hours completed or an official course description stating such must be attached to the certificate. It is the responsibility of the applicant to obtain certificates of completion for all courses. For courses less than 30 hours, a maximum of three subject related courses may be combined to meet a 30-clock hour course requirement. Regardless of the length of a course over 30 hours, the course counts as only one course (i.e., one 60-hour course counts as only one course, not two 30-hour courses).

Inservice courses can be one to six or more hours in length and may be earned through attendance at inservice training programs at conferences, conventions, institutes, non-credit courses, or workshops. Local, county, or state association, an educational system, or district sponsored inservice courses are acceptable. Specialized work-related professional associations can also sponsor them. A certificate of attendance, issued and signed by the sponsor/presenter, listing the course, date, and number of hours completed must accompany Form IIIa. If a certificate is not given upon completion, it is the responsibility of the applicant to secure some form of documentation from the sponsor or instructor verifying participation. Copies of receipts, registration forms, programs, or announcements of programs are not acceptable documentation.

Copies of all documentation should be included with the application. Do not send original certificates. Certificates become a part of the applicant's file and are not returned. **Exception: If applying under Option II, an official transcript must be submitted—not a copy.** You may request to have the original transcript returned after evaluation by enclosing a self-addressed stamped envelope for this purpose.

Can I combine related subject matter inservice classes to equal one 30-hour course?

A maximum of three related subject matter courses can be combined to equal one 30-hour course for an education requirement. (i.e., three 10-hour courses; one 18- and one 12-hour course; one 24-hour course and one 6-hour course). The same applies to college credit.

If I have a 60-hour course, may I divide it for two education courses or one education and one inservice course?

No, this cannot be done. Regardless of the length of the course over 30 hours or 3-quarter credits or 2 semester credits, it counts as one course. Hours cannot be taken from one course and added to another to meet course hour requirements.

What if I am taking a course but it won't be finished before the PSP deadline? Do I have to wait until the next deadline?

Ask your instructor to write a letter (postmarked by the deadline) stating that you are enrolled in the course and will receive a passing grade. Be sure the letter states the number of hours, name and date(s) of course, and sponsoring institution/organization. It must be written and postmarked prior to the PSP deadline date. After you have received your grade, send a transcript or certificate of completion to the NAEOP PSP Registrar. Such a letter cannot be accepted if written before the class begins.

I completed Business College, but the college is no longer in existence and I have no way of securing a transcript. What do I do?

Contact the library in the city or town where the business college was located. With the diploma stating the year awarded and the name of the course, ask the librarian to locate the course description and the year(s) in the catalog. Copy the cover of the catalog for proof that year(s) attended coincide with the date of completion on the diploma. Also, copy the page(s) describing the list of courses required and the number of hours for each course. This information is sometimes housed in your state board of education higher education department. If this information cannot be obtained, credit may be granted for a maximum of 10 classes if a copy of a diploma is submitted.

Are internet courses accepted?

Yes. If an institution of higher learning provides the internet course, professional organization or professional business recognized by the certifying association of higher learning, it may be used to meet the 30-classroom clock hour requirement. Official documentation is required. Advance approval of course, using Form IX, by NAEOP PSP Registrar is recommended.

What courses are/are not acceptable?

- Audiocassette courses or videocassette courses without documented proof of a controlled classroom setting is not acceptable.
- Religious courses are acceptable only if offered by an accredited college and recorded on a transcript. They are not acceptable for inservice credit.
- Audited courses are not acceptable for education credit. They can be counted as inservice.
- Recreation courses, i.e., golf, aerobics, weight training, skiing, dancing, painting, drawing, weaving, etc., are acceptable only if offered by an accredited educational institution and recorded on an official transcript.
- Weight Watchers is not acceptable as either education or inservice courses.
- On-the-job training is not acceptable as an inservice or education course.
- With an official transcript the PSP registrar, on a course-by-course basis, will evaluate degree programs outside the normal realm of Business, such as Cosmetology. Only the courses on the official transcript will be considered.

What are the differences between Option I and Option II?

Education requirements for Option I can be met through combining community/junior college or college/university courses, business college courses, adult education courses, CLEP tests, courses offered by local boards of education, and/or Continuing Education Units (CEU). College courses must be at least 2 semester credits, or 3-quarter credits, and adult or continuing education courses must be 3 CEUs, or 30 classroom clock hours.

The education requirement for Option II is earned only through college credit. An official transcript is required. The original transcript will be returned after evaluation if you enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope, with your application.

Do I have to send an application for Approval of Inservice Training after the fact?

No. If it is not acceptable, you will have taken the course for your personal enjoyment. Generally, the local or state PSP chairman will send the application for any courses offered by the association. Once a course has been approved, it is not necessary to resubmit each time it is offered. If in doubt, ask your PSP chairman.

When in doubt about any course, submit Form VIII, Application for Approval of Inservice Training Program, to the PSP Registrar with a description of the course and the number of hours.

Do I have to list all inservice courses and participation for which I have documentation?

No. It is only necessary to submit the minimum of 60 hours for Form IIIa and 10 points for Form IIIb, but it is advisable to submit additional courses in case some do not qualify. Any amount over 60 hours (Form IIIa) and 10 points (Form IIIb) will be carried over to the next certificate. It is less work for you, the PSP Chairman, and the PSP Registrar to find and examine 10-20 points than to examine 50-60 points. Save them for another certificate. When you submit certificates of attendance or documentation, please attach in the same order as listed on Forms IIIa and IIIb. All listed inservice courses must have been taken since July 1, 1980.

On Form IIIa, list title of workshop—not just "Inservice"—and the complete date—i.e., "8/23/98," not just "1998." (See back of Form IIIa.)

Keep a copy of all forms and documentation submitted with an application. Do not send original certificates, as they are not returned. Do not send class notes or class manual. Only the certificate of attendance is required.

If a computer-produced list is attached to Form IIIa, it must be in the exact format and signed documentation attached in the same order listed. Otherwise, the form will be returned for proper formatting.

Why does the local PSP chairman have to sign inservice and participation forms?

The local or state PSP chairman or president signs these forms to verify that she/he has counseled the applicant and is aware the application is being submitted. Submit with Form IIIa copies of the certificates submitted to the local or state chairman for verification. There are some participation points that local and state chairmen may not be aware of that may change the points submitted.

If you do not have a local or state PSP chairman or president, send all of the documentation to the NAEOP PSP Registrar to verify your forms. The Notary Public verifies only that the signature belongs to the applicant.

Does volunteer work count for participation on Form IIIb?

No. These points must be earned by education-related association participation. Civic and volunteer organizations do not qualify (i.e., auxiliary organizations, Jaycees, Masonic organizations, sororities, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, little league, advisory committees, etc.). The PSP Registrar is not familiar with all acronyms of associations throughout the United States; so write out the name of each association listed on Form IIIb. (See back of Form IIIb.)

A minimum of 5 points must be earned from local, state, or national associations for educational office professionals.

What if I am not aware of, or there is not, a local or state association?

You may contact the National Office for the name of any state or local affiliated associations. If there is none, you may submit your application to the NAEOP PSP Registrar, stating you do not have a local or state association. All documentation verifying all courses and association participation must be attached. The PSP Registrar will not verify a form if there is a local or state association.

What do I have to do to apply for Recertification?

Established May 15, 2002, recertification provides the opportunity for continued recognition of professional growth. For a PSP certificate to be considered as current by NAEOP, members must recertify their highest-level PSP certificate every five years or upgrade to a higher PSP level. Submit completed Forms V and VI with appropriate fee and documentation.

Recertification applies to all PSP certificate levels. The first recertification certificates were awarded May 15, 2007. Certificates issued after May 15, 2002 have the recertification date printed on them.

The applicant must be a member of NAEOP for five continuous years since issue date of highest PSP certificate level and have completed sixty hours of continuing education (any combination of continuing education courses, workshops or seminars) during the five intervening years.

Why does recertification not apply to CEOE?

CEOE is a distinction. It is not a certificate level.

How soon will I know if I qualify for a certificate?

The PSP Registrar strives for a one-week turnaround on all applications. However, at deadline times it is difficult to meet this time commitment—so it is to your advantage to send your application early. Applications are accepted any time during the year. If you do not hear from the NAEOP office within two weeks after submission, contact the NAEOP Registrar.

What if I submit an application and fee but do not qualify? Do I have to submit another application and application fee?

There is no time limit to complete the requirements for a certificate. However, membership must be continuous while pursuing a certificate, i.e., if you finally complete the requirements five years after you submitted your application, you must have remained an active member during those years.

Is there an appeal process?

Yes. An applicant has the right to question the decision of the PSP Registrar relative to the level of certificate to be awarded or any requirement for qualification on Form I, Form II, Form IIIa, Form IIIb, or any other forms related to the program.

1. Only the applicant can appeal. No other individual or association (local or state) has this right.
2. Appeal request letters are normally written directly to the PSP Registrar; however, they may also be written to the PSP Chairman or the NAEOP President. They will forward it to the PSP Registrar. The PSP Registrar will in kind notify the PSP Chairman and NAEOP President of a pending appeal.
3. The PSP Registrar will review the appeal letter, the application, relevant material and communications. The PSP Registrar will communicate with the applicant to resolve the issue. If the PSP Registrar can solve the concern satisfactorily, the appeal will be dropped. This is to be communicated in writing to the applicant, the PSP Chairman and the NAEOP President.
4. If there is no resolution at this level copies of the appeal letter, the application and all relevant material and communications are to be mailed to the Governing Board members for their review. This is to be done several weeks prior to the July Governing Board meeting. The appeal will be placed on the July Governing Board meeting. The Governing Board will discuss the appeal and make a decision.
5. The PSP Chairman will present a written recommendation stating the decision of the Governing Board members to the NAEOP Board of Directors at its meeting for a vote.
6. The PSP Chairman advises the applicant in writing of the final decision following the NAEOP Board of Directors' meeting.

The PSP Committee Chairman and the PSP Governing Board are under the direction of the NAEOP Board of Directors and the PSP Registrar is an employee of the NAEOP. The NAEOP Board of Directors has the right to agree with or reverse the decision of the PSP Governing Board.

Does NAEOP notify my school district or institution of my certificate?

Yes. When you have completed all the requirements you are notified by the PSP Registrar and asked to send the name of the administrator you wish to have notified, generally the superintendent or personnel director, and to indicate what PSP banquet you plan to attend. The administrator will receive a letter after the NAEOP Board of Directors has officially approved your certificate, generally four weeks after the deadline date. Notification to your administrator of your certificate or recertification is optional. The approval letter has an optional section for notification information.

Do I have to attend the PSP Banquet to get my certificate?

No. The banquet is for formal recognition purposes. You will receive your certificate by mail after the NAEOP Board of Directors has approved it, usually within three weeks after the deadline. You may receive recognition at any conference—even many years later. You will receive a notification letter from the PSP Registrar when you have qualified for a certificate. That letter requests your plans to attend the recognition banquet that year or some time in the future. If you choose a future conference, your reply is filed. If you do not designate a year and decide you wish to attend a banquet, notify the PSP Registrar of your plans.

Be sure to indicate on the conference registration form that you wish to be recognized at the PSP banquet. It is from this source that we have the names of those to be notified of the schedule for rehearsal and other information pertaining to the PSP banquet. If you do not notify us of your plans to attend and be recognized, your name will not be listed in the banquet program and we would not know to send you the information letter.

If it is not possible to register for the conference ahead of time or your plans allow you to attend at the last minute, you may still be recognized at the banquet. It would then be your responsibility to let the PSP Chairman or the PSP Registrar know so you can be included and informed of needed information; your name would not be in the printed program since this must be prepared in advance of the conference.

PSP recipients to be recognized are responsible for the purchase of their banquet ticket as well as the purchase of banquet tickets for all their guests.

Recognition for those who have recertified will be limited to a listing in the PSP Banquet Program.

How do I know when I am to arrive at the PSP banquet and where I'll sit? May my guests sit with me?

In June, you will receive a letter from the PSP Chairman that outlines the schedule for recipients at the PSP Banquet. Generally, you will need to be dressed for the evening and report to a designated area about two hours before the banquet for pictures and rehearsal. The dress for the evening is either formal or after-six dress. Seating of the recipient and guests will be detailed in the letter. The applicant is responsible for the purchase of all guest ticket(s) for the banquet.

I AM THE PSP CHAIRMAN

I have assumed the position of PSP Chairman of my association. What are my responsibilities?

The PSP Chairman is responsible for promoting PSP and counseling members on items needed for their PSP applications. Chairmen should acquaint themselves with PSP procedures in the PSP Book and this document. The PSP Handbook, as of 08.08, is only available in PDF format from the website. www.naeop.org.

It is suggested the chairmen hold PSP inservices for members interested in applying for a certificate. In this inservice, the chairman should go over each step of the application and offer individual assistance to those in need.

The PSP Registrar is available to answer questions. Letters can be sent to the National Office address or she can be reached by phone at the NAEOP office, 316-942-4822, ext. 120. The NAEOP PSP Chairman is also available to answer questions or to provide inservices. Check the latest issue of the NAEOP magazine for the name of the current chairman. PSP chairmen can keep up to date by reading PSP articles in the magazine. Regularly check with your president for information sent to affiliate presidents. If your association is not affiliated with NAEOP, please check the NAEOP website for the latest information pertaining to PSP

FEES - Some applicants are confused as to payment of fees. A PSP applicant must be a member of NAEOP and the membership fee is separate from the PSP certificate application fee. Some applicants think being a member of a local or state association makes them a member of national. Some are mistakenly advised that if the association has affiliated with NAEOP that they are members. This is not correct.

The PSP certificate application fee must be submitted with the application. Be sure the applicant is aware that when submitting an application for an Advanced III, Option I, or Associate Degree or higher under Option II, and the distinction of CEOE, they must submit two fees. If they do not meet the requirement for the PSP certificate, the CEOE fee will be returned if it appears the applicant will not meet the requirements in the near future. Therefore, it is best if two checks are submitted if there is any doubt about meeting the requirement.

DOCUMENTATION - Copies of all signed documentation should be included with the application. Do not send original certificates as they become a part of the applicant's file and are not returned. Exception: If applying under Option II, an official transcript must be submitted—not a copy. The applicant may request to have the original transcript returned after evaluation by enclosing a self-addressed stamped envelope.

GUIDELINES - All guidelines must be followed or the application may be returned. This can prove costly to the applicant when an application is submitted close to the deadline. Therefore, encourage applicants to submit applications at least two weeks prior to a deadline in case there are problems or mail delays.

When submitting the application packet, place the forms in order, beginning with Form I. If applying for an upgrade of certificate level, do not use Form I, but replace it with Form V at the top of the packet. Paper clip documentation to each form—do not staple.

Do not place applications in plastic covers or notebook binders.

FORM I - Be sure to advise the applicant that they must be an NAEOP member. They may submit the \$45 membership application fee and the \$40 PSP application fee at the same time. On Form I, make sure the maiden or previous name is included. The NAEOP office receives some

transcripts directly from institutions with only the maiden name listed and the PSP Registrar has no way of knowing to whom the transcript belongs. The National Office has a file of transcripts received like this for which an application has never been received. Transcripts are not evaluated unless an application and application fee are submitted. Advise applicants to ask the institution to send the transcript to them in a sealed envelope stating on the outside it is an official transcript and not to be opened. Then the applicant can send the transcript with the application. The applicant may request to have the original transcript returned after evaluation by enclosing a self-addressed stamped envelope for this purpose.

If an applicant is sending a college transcript there is no need to send a high school transcript. That information is listed on the college transcript. If there are multiple college transcripts, send only the one that has accepted all the previous colleges' credit. That will save the applicant transcript fees. However, if previous credits are not listed, then all transcripts should be sent.

Form I under experience requests not only the school or business, but also the job title or department in which employed. This is important because only office work experience is eligible for experience. If an applicant, for example, lists K-Mart but nothing else, the Registrar does not know if the experience was as a cashier, stock clerk, or bookkeeper.

On the back of Form I, Section 4 requests the listing of courses (other than college) that are to be used to meet the education requirement. **Do not list inservices here.**

FORM II - This form does not need to be completed by the applicant's immediate supervisor. If the applicant is not comfortable with the current administrator, an administrator for whom the applicant worked previously may complete the form. This form may be submitted with the rest of the application packet or the administrator may mail it directly to the NAEOP office.

FORM IIIa - When checking Form IIIa, be sure all information is listed, i.e., sponsor, name of inservice, date, and hours. Advise applicant to attach all certificates of attendance/completion with the form for each inservice listed in the order listed. If applicant has less than the required inservice points, so advise as to the amount needed. Familiarize yourself with the unacceptable courses listed on page 2 of this document. Regular association activities do not count as inservice, i.e., board meetings, bosses' night, installation banquets, etc.

The PSP applicant has the responsibility of obtaining a certificate and/or form verifying inservice participation from the sponsoring organization or institution, or instructor. Copies of receipts, checks, programs, or announcement of programs are not acceptable documentation.

PSP chairmen should make sure their associations provide certificates of attendance for all inservices they sponsor. An inservice should be a minimum of one hour. The certificate should list the title of the inservice (not just "inservice"), the date, signature of instructor or organizer, and the hours. If the program spans more than one day, a certificate for each day indicating the hours for each of the days should be issued.

Continuing Education Units (CEUs) are offered through accredited institutions and transcripts issued. **DO NOT** use CEUs on certificates of attendance that are not approved by a continuing education institution. Many people mistake a CEU for hours.

Associations may offer satellite or video inservices in a controlled setting. Credit may be awarded after approval from the PSP Registrar.

Inservices listed on Form IIIa that do not have an accompanying certificate of attendance or documentation will not be counted. A registration form, canceled check, request for absence, or notice of inservice is not acceptable for documentation of attendance. Inservices must have been attended since July 1, 1980.

If a computer-produced list is attached to Form IIIa, it must be in the exact format and documentation attached in the order listed. Otherwise, the form will be returned for proper formatting. Be sure the applicant has signed the form and her signature has been notarized. You must also sign the form. Please give your mailing address under your signature.

FORM IIIb - The applicant should present copies of documentation of membership or committee participation. Most associations annually publish a membership roster and a list of officers and committee members, which should be a part of the PSP chairman's files passed on from previous chairmen. Attach copies of membership cards, certificate of participation, and/or signed verification from the association. Please direct the applicant to spell out acronyms of associations on this form. AEOPs, PTA/PTSA, AFTs, and NEAs are easy to figure out; other local groups are not.

A minimum of 5 points must be earned from local, state, or national associations for educational office professionals. When you list membership years, indicate actual years, i.e., 1993-97, and 4 points. Be sure the applicant has signed the form and her signature has been notarized. You must also sign the form. Please give your mailing address under your signature.

Important: All inservice and education courses are to be verified by a certificate of completion/attendance signed by the instructor or a transcript.

FORM IV - This form is used when upgrading from one certificate level to another. A new Form II must be submitted with the application. A member may apply for only one certificate per deadline.

Forms IIIa and IIIb must be completed, even if the applicant has inservice or participation carryover hours or points. State on the forms the number of carryover hours or points and put the total at the bottom where requested. The forms still must be signed by the applicant, notarized, and signed by you.

When upgrading, do not include Form I. Place Form IV on the top of the packet instead. Be sure the education courses to upgrade the level are listed on the reverse side and documentation attached.

FORM V - This form is used for recertification. Established May 15, 2002, recertification provides the opportunity for continued recognition of professional growth. For a PSP certificate to be considered as current by NAEOP, members must recertify their highest-level PSP certificate every five years or upgrade to a higher PSP level. Five years continuous NAEOP membership and sixty hour of continuing education is required for recertification.

FORM VI - This form is used for continuing education for recertification. The forms must be signed by the applicant, notarized, and signed by you.

FORM VII - This form is to be submitted after completion of the requirements for an Advanced III, Option I, or Associate Degree certificate or higher under Option II. It may be submitted at the same time the application for the PSP certificate is submitted. The application fee must be included.

FORMS VIII and IX - The PSP chairman is responsible for submitting applications for approval of inservice training (Form VIII) or education courses under Option I (Form IX) for any classes the association offers. However, once an inservice or course for education credit has been approved, it is not necessary to submit the form each time it is offered. Applicants do not need to submit this application for an inservice or education course already approved in your city or state. However, if the applicant is unsure, it is always wise to submit one just in case. Applicants are not to submit these forms after attending an inservice. Submission of these forms generally gives approval to the sponsoring organization and the organization can announce the approval for PSP credit when announcing the course.

MISCELLANEOUS - Advise the applicant to keep a copy of all forms submitted. Copies of certificates are acceptable. Official transcripts are required to document any college class. All documents submitted become part of the applicant's file and are not returned. Files are purged after obtaining CEOE distinction.

Visa, MasterCard or Discover is acceptable for payment of membership and application fees.

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