



Michigan ESP Center for Professional Learning

Guidelines for Course/Workshop Participants

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At a glance

What Is the ESP Certificate Program?

The overall ESP Certificate Program provides educational support personnel with a course of professional development that is structured to become progressively challenging and focused as study continues. This is called the “career continuum” approach. Participants move from study in a broad variety of basic content areas to more concentrated learning in specific topics.

Level I of the Certificate requires courses/workshops in four core curriculum areas as well as a number of elective choices.



Key Features of Level I

- 40 hours of structured learning
- Required and elective curriculum areas
- Educational opportunities consisting of workshops, classes and/or conferences
- Sessions that are pre-approved and evaluated for content and quality
- Instruction offered by community colleges, school districts, ISDs, professional organizations or private vendors
- Certificate upon completion

The Center does not actually offer courses/workshops. Rather, staff reviews the courses/workshops that are submitted to ensure that the content will be of value to the participant. They maintain a current listing of all approved courses/workshops that students can access at any time. The Center also maintains participant records, and upon successful completion of the program, issues the Certificate and transcript.

Advisory Board

This Certificate Program is supported by Lansing Community College, Mott Community College, Genesee ISD, Michigan Education Association and the Michigan State Department of Education. Representatives of these entities comprise the advisory board.



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I. Background Information

Introduction

The Michigan Educational Support Personnel (ESP) Center for Professional Learning is committed to providing the highest quality professional development for ESP personnel in education institutions throughout Michigan. The program is also designed to help make participants more fully aware not only of their personal and professional merit, but also of the important contributions made by ESP personnel collectively to the enhancement of student learning.

Education is undergoing significant changes, and ESP personnel are facing new roles, new responsibilities and new expectations. People serving in the many and varied support staff roles in education need and want more attention paid to their professional development training. There is a demand for courses/workshops that are relevant, sequential, have ESP input, and have application in the work place. Until now, such offerings have been few and infrequent.

Program Goals

Recognizing an existing need, the ESP Center for Professional Learning, MEA and the community colleges have worked to develop this Certificate Program for educational support personnel. The goals of this program are to:

- Increase the attention given to ESP needs for professional development
- Raise the level of professionalism for ESP
- Develop broad curricular parameters so that when participants complete the program, their knowledge and skills related to their individual jobs and to the institution's mission would be greatly increased
- Assure quality and applicability of all course/workshop offerings through a pre-approval process
- Award Certificate upon completion of a basic course of study

Program Administration

The Center is responsible for administering the ESP Certificate Program. This responsibility includes:

- Reviewing course/workshop applications
- Approving the appropriate number of credit hours of each experience to a given curricular area
- Collecting course/workshop evaluations
- Maintaining a comprehensive record of approved courses/workshops
- Keeping records on each participant's involvement in the program
- Consulting with agencies and individuals seeking information
- Awarding the Certificate upon completion of the total program



II. Program Description

Introduction

This broad-based program of study is designed to deliver new knowledge and/or skills that are specifically and directly useful to the participant in the workplace. It also will give the participant a broader and deeper understanding of the organization for which he or she works. There are four “required, core” curricular areas and other “elective, job-specific choice” areas. Participants have a wide selection of subjects within each of the areas to fulfill the required number of hours.

Hours

The entire program consists of 40 hours: 5 hours in each of the four core curriculum areas (a total of 20 hours), 10 hours in elective/job-specific area(s), and 10 hours that may be applied to any of the curricular areas. Any single course/workshop may be applied to only one curricular area. For example, if someone takes a six-hour course/workshop in Communication Skills, 5 of those hours satisfy the core area of Communications. The extra hour can apply toward the 10 additional hours needed in any core or elective area.

Minimum hours for CORE curriculum areas

Courses/workshops that count in any of the four CORE areas must be at least 5 hours in length

This can be accomplished in a variety of ways; for instance, a single daylong course/workshop or a 2 ½ hour course/workshop held one night a week for two weeks. The purpose of the 5-hour requirement is to achieve more in-depth learning in the subject area. It is also assumed that, because a single presenter will most likely cover the entire 5 hours, the material presented will have continuity and a richness of detail.

Minimum hours for courses/workshops in ELECTIVE curriculum areas

Courses/workshops in the elective areas must be at least 2 hours in length

In the case of conference formats where sessions are less than 2 hours long, they will be evaluated on an individual basis by the Center. It is likely that in most circumstances, participants will receive a given number of credit hours in one designated elective area, instead of individual hours in a variety of curriculum areas.

Maximum hours per course/workshop

A maximum of 10 hours will be approved for any one learning experience

Although some courses/workshops are longer than 10 hours, it is felt that for a program that encourages exposure to a variety of content areas and requires only 40 hours in total length, a maximum of 10 hours for any one-course/workshop experience is reasonable.

Course/Workshop Attendance

Participants must attend the entire scheduled course/workshop to be awarded credit

When engaged in a program leading to a Certificate, it's very important that candidates demonstrate their commitment to the total educational process. For that reason, the Center will not give partial credits for any course/workshop. If, for example, someone attends only the morning of a daylong workshop, they will receive no credit for the time they were there.

In the case of an unavoidable conflict where a participant must miss a small portion of a course/workshop, the instructor has the option of working to help that person make up any missed material. In such cases, the participant must get written verification from the instructor that the work has been completed.

Curriculum Categories

The following is a list of the core curricular areas with examples of learning experiences/topics that might apply. The examples are not intended to be all-inclusive, but rather a sample.

ESP Core Curriculum Categories

I. Communication (Minimum of 5 hours)

Learning experiences designed to improve the ability to make oneself clearly understood as well as to improve the ability to understand others in the work environment. Content might include:

- Work-related writing
- Problem solving
- Team building
- Sign language
- Foreign language
- Nonverbal behavior
- Speaking/listening
- Decisionmaking
- Public relations
- Telephone skills
- Interpersonal communications

II. Legal/ethical (Minimum of 5 hours)

The federal and state laws that afford protection, extend privileges and describe rights and responsibilities of education institutions and the people in them. Content might include:

- Statutes
- Employment
- Administrative rules
- Workplace ethics
- Student/employee rights, responsibilities
- Disability laws
- Confidentiality
- Child abuse
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Juvenile code
- Indoor air quality
- Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

III. Behavior management (Minimum of 5 hours)

Prevention/intervention strategies for effectively managing student behavior and difficult situations. Content might include:

- Conflict resolution
- Crisis intervention/response
- Discipline strategies
- Students with special needs/disabilities
- Peer mediation
- Protective behaviors

IV. Growth/Development/Psychology (Minimum of 5 hours)

Learning about basic human growth and development—both normal and abnormal—to help school personnel understand and interact with a variety of people/students in the school setting. Content might include:

- Age appropriate behavior and expectations (early childhood, elementary, adolescent, adult)
- Behavior motivation theory
- Families/contemporary society
- Alcohol & other drug addiction (AODA)
- Learning styles
- Human relationships
- Special needs students
- Abnormal psychology
- Societal: culture, class, gender
- Basic human growth/development

ESP Elective Curriculum Categories

V. Elective categories (Minimum of 10 hours)

(Minimum of 10 hours in learning activities that are directly applicable to daily job responsibilities.) Content might include:

- Cultural diversity/equity
- Medical/health
- Nutrition
- Hazardous materials
- Instructional issues
- Technology
- Special needs students
- Safety
- Work environment/school organization
- Transitional services/school-to-work



Required Hours for Certificate: 40

Minimum of 5 hours in each of core areas:

Communication	(5)	
Legal/ethical	(5)	
Behavior management	(5)	
Growth/development/psychology	(5)	20

Minimum of 10 hours in elective areas that relate directly to daily job responsibilities:

Cultural diversity/equity		
Technology		
Work environment/school organization		
Medical/health		
Special needs students		
Nutrition		
Safety		
Other (specialized)	(10)	10

Ten additional hours in any of the above areas

(Can include extra hours over and above required hours from core and elective areas)	(10)	10
	TOTAL	40

Note: No credit is given to courses/workshops that are primarily related to union activities. This includes topics such as recruitment and organizing, contract negotiations or maintenance, member rights and responsibilities, or public relations geared toward union promotion. Credit is also not given for courses/workshops focused on personal topics such as retirement or financial planning and job search strategies.



III. Guidelines for Program Participants

Who Is Eligible?

The ESP Certificate Program is open to any individual who is working in an educational support position for an education institution in Michigan. These positions can include:

- Clerical/Secretarial/Administrative Services
- Building & Grounds Maintenance/Repair
- Instructional & Non-Instructional Aide/Technician
- Technical Services
- Food Services
- Skilled Trades/Crafts/Machine Operations
- Security Services
- Transportation Services
- Health & Student Services

Individuals who are not currently employed in a support position are also eligible to pursue the Certificate.

How to Get Started

Usually the first question interested support personnel ask is: "Where can I take Center-approved courses/workshops?" The two primary options are identified below:

Existing Courses/Workshops

The Center office maintains an updated listing of approved courses/workshops and contacts. Call for a written list to see if there is a location close to you. Talk to the identified contact person for the Center or the provider about signing up for a course/workshop or about future courses/workshops you would like to see offered. The course/workshop provider takes responsibility for setting up the course/workshop, advertising and corresponding with the Center about course/workshop approval and credit hours.

Initiating a Course/Workshop in Your Area

If you do not find an institution near you that offers a course/workshop, you can take the initiative to get one started. Here's how:

- Talk with the person responsible for professional development where you work about the interest you and your coworkers have in pursuing the ESP Certificate. You may find that your institution is already coordinating and/or offering training that could meet some or all of the credit hours for the program.

- Contact an agency or institution that might be interested in hosting a course/workshop, or series of courses/workshops. Examples are local community colleges, ISDs, school districts, professional organizations like Michigan Association of School Boards or Michigan Education Association, and private vendors.

TAKE NOTE: Here are two helpful tips to keep in mind while you work to make ESP courses/workshops available in your area:

- Talk with your colleagues and enlist their interest and support. This is an effective way to demonstrate that offering Center-approved courses/workshops is a worthwhile and popular effort.
- If you need help in any step of the process, don't hesitate to contact the Center office for advice or assistance.

Individual Responsibilities

The success of the Certificate Program depends on the effort of each individual participant. Attention to upholding the program policies will ensure that school administrators and boards value the Certificate. It also will help guarantee a quality professional development experience that will strengthen the careers of educational support personnel. To be successful, participant responsibilities include, at a minimum, the following:

- Verify that sessions are approved for Center ESP credit hours
- Attend each course/workshop for the entire time period scheduled
- Get a Verification of Hours form from the presenter for each course/workshop
- Keep the Verification of Hours forms together as you accumulate them (Make an extra copy of each, and keep one at home and one at work)
- Notify the Center office in writing when you have finished your 40 hours, and send along all your original Verification of Hours forms

Upon Completion

After you have notified the Center of completing the 40 hours, office staff will verify from Center records that you have met all program requirements. Once that has been done, you will receive a letter requesting instructions about how you would like to receive your Certificate. The choices are 1) receiving the Certificate (and other items noted below) in a folder at no charge, or 2) having your certificate mounted on a plaque for a small charge.

Along with the Certificate, participants will receive a congratulatory letter from the Center's Director, a verification letter and transcript for your employer's personnel files, and approval for a press release.



Program Participant Checklist

Check with the Center to:

- Identify institutions, agencies or organizations that host (or will host) Center-approved courses/workshops
- Attend courses/workshops that fulfill core and elective categories
- Sign the Verification of Attendance form at each session
- Secure Verification of Hours form from the presenter
- Keep two copies of each Verification of Hours form
- When you have successfully completed your 40 hours of instruction, submit these forms to the Center:
 - Letter of application for certification
 - Original Verification of Hours forms
 - Presenter's written verification of any course/workshop work that was made up

Modeled with permission after the ESP Certificate of the Professional Development Academy (Wisconsin Education Association Council).
