



# BEESS Portal to Professional Development Alternatives

## 2020-2021 Frequently Asked Questions for Independent Study Courses

### 1. What is the BEESS Portal to Professional Development Alternatives?

The BEESS Portal to Professional Development Alternatives offers a variety of online courses for Florida educators that will increase their ability to respond to the needs of students with disabilities. The courses on this site are developed and maintained by the Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System (FDLRS) and the Personnel Development Support Project (PDSP), funded by the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE), Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (BEESS).

The Professional Development Alternatives (PDA) facilitated and independent study courses were merged with the Personnel Development (PD) Portal independent study courses to create a “one-stop” for professional development needs related to students with disabilities. The BEESS Portal also contains links to model lessons, webinars, and mini-modules created by other BEESS discretionary projects.

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

The BEESS Portal offers both facilitated courses and independent study courses. All independent study courses are:

- available statewide
- offered year around
- free to Florida educators
- self-paced high-quality content with a variety of learning activities
- displayed in a consistent user-friendly and 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 independent study courses, course descriptions, suggested amount of inservice credits, and BEESS contacts can be found on the BEESS Portal website at [fl-pda.org](http://fl-pda.org). On the right side of the page, select “View Course Descriptions”.

### 4. Who can participate in the independent study 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 inservice points for renewal of a Florida educator certificate, you must complete the additional course requirements. Specific additional requirements can be found in the Overview unit of each course. Refer to the questions under the Inservice Credits section for more information.

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

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

[fl-pda.org](http://fl-pda.org)

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## 6. Can I participate in an independent study course if I am not currently working with students?

Yes; however, if you are taking an independent study course for inservice credit, you must complete a follow-up activity and have it reviewed and verified for satisfactory completion by a Florida administrator who is currently working in the field of education.

If you are taking the Positive Behavior Intervention Support independent study course for inservice credit, you must be working with students in order to complete the follow-up activity.

## 7. How do I register for a BEESS Portal independent study course?

To register for an independent study course, go to [fl-pda.org](http://fl-pda.org) and select “Register/Sign in” on the right side. Once you complete the registration process, you can enroll in any of the courses under the available tab.

## 8. Should I take the courses in a particular order?

You determine which of the independent study courses meet your professional development 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 of that course. A couple of courses have related content and should be taken in a specific order.

## 9. How long do I have to complete an independent study course?

There is no time limit for completing an independent study course; however, if you are seeking inservice credits allow adequate time for FDLRS to report confirmation of earned points to your districts and the processing of inservice points by the district. Procedures and timelines vary from district to district.

## 10. What happens if I can't complete an independent study course after I have enrolled?

The independent study course will remain in your list of enrolled courses until you have completed all of the course requirements. You may continue to access the course content indefinitely.

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## FLDOE Inservice Credits

### 11. What are the requirements for earning inservice credits for an independent study course?

If you are seeking inservice credits, you must complete all course requirements listed below.

- Complete a pre-assessment
- Review all course content, including additional resources, external links and videos
- Pass the Check Your Knowledge quizzes
- Pass the final assessment with 80% accuracy
- Complete the follow-up activity (when applicable)
- Upload the Follow-up Activity and Verification Form, signed by your Florida administrator or supervisor who reviewed your completed follow-up activity (If applicable)
- Complete the satisfaction survey

### 12. If I enroll in a course that has a follow-up activity and I am not currently working in the field of education, who can sign the Follow-up Activity and Verification Form?

If you have enrolled in an independent study course with a follow-up activity, it must be reviewed and verified for satisfactory completion by a Florida school district administrator or supervisor in the field of education. FDLRS staff do not review and verify follow-up activities. It is your responsibility, prior to 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 different BEESS Portal facilitated course that does not require an administrator's verification signature.

### 13. May I earn partial inservice credits for independent study courses?

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

### 14. If I don't want inservice credits, can I still take an independent study course?

Yes, all courses can be taken for informational purposes only. You will first need to register for the course by completing the demographic information and taking the pre-assessment.

### 15. How many inservice credits do I need to recertify in Florida?

All questions regarding your individual recertification should be directed to your local personnel/certification department or to the Florida Department of Education Certification office

<http://www.fldoe.org/teaching/certification/index.shtml>. FDLRS staff are not certification specialists.

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## 16. How do I get my inservice credits recorded with my school district or private school agency?

For currently employed Florida educators, your local FDLRS PDA coordinator will report course completers on a quarterly basis (at the end of March, June, September and December) to the school districts in their service region. 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 in order to award inservice credits.

## 17. How do I get my inservice credits recorded with the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE)?

Florida school districts or private school agencies with an approved Professional Learning Catalog (formerly MIP) or its equivalent are responsible for reporting inservice credits to FLDOE. FDLRS does not report inservice credits directly to FLDOE.

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

## 18. Do the BEESS Portal courses satisfy the educator certification requirement for teaching students with disabilities (Renewal Credit in Teaching Students with Disabilities Section 1012.585, Florida Statutes)?

Some of the independent study 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. Participants should check with their district or local FDLRS PDA Coordinator prior to enrolling in a course.

## 19. Where do I access additional information regarding the recertification requirements of s. 1012.585, F.S.?

On the Florida Department of Education's website, the Technical Assistance Paper: Renewal Credit in Teaching Students with Disabilities <http://info.fldoe.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-6975/dps-2014-12a.pdf> provides questions and answers related to the additional educator certification requirements for all educators working with students with disabilities.

Any additional questions can be directed to the PDA Management Team at [PDAQuestions@gmail.com](mailto:PDAQuestions@gmail.com) or contact your [local PDA Coordinator](#)

Technical questions can be directed to the PDSP Tech Support at [support+fl-pda@fcim.org](mailto:support+fl-pda@fcim.org).



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