

Standards and Guidelines for Use of CEUs in Church Systems

The Society for the Advancement of Continuing Education for Ministry (SACEM), an ecumenical organization working for the promotion and support of continuing education for ministry, provides these guidelines for awarding Continuing Education Units. The United Methodist Church is a member of SACEM.

In order to encourage church agencies engaged in providing continuing education programs to their constituencies to maintain high standards for awarding Continuing Education units, SACEM recommends that the following guidelines be observed.

A Continuing Education Unit (CEU) is defined as “ten contact hours of participation in an organized continuing education experienced under responsible sponsorship, capable direction and qualified instruction.” (1) SACEM affirms that events for which CEUs are awarded should be characterized by:

Sponsorship by a responsible institution or organization which:

- Assumes administrative responsibility
- Maintains a permanent record system
- Assigns direct supervision to a capable program director or educational administrator

Capable direction, providing:

- Professional educational leadership in program planning and development
- Selection of the most effective educational format for the intended purpose
- Adequate program management
- Appropriate evaluation methods
- Assignment of qualified instructional leaders

Qualified instructional personnel, who have:

- Competence in the subject matter through training, experience, and/or demonstrated knowledge or skill (through publication or performance)
- Ability to communicate the educational content effectively
- Teaching skill (ability to enable persons to learn and grow)
- Understanding of and commitment to the nature and purpose of the church
- Ability to integrate (and enable others to integrate) the normative, situational, functional, and personal dimensions of ministry and learning
- Theological perspective and sensitivity to the issues being addressed

Adequate program planning and evaluation, including:

- Planning done in response to the educational needs of the target group
- Opportunity for input into the design from this group
- Clear statement of rationale and objectives
- Evaluation in terms of the objectives
 - of participants
 - of program by participants

Events that provide opportunity for most if not all of the following:

- Advance preparation
- Instruction in one or more of the content areas of the theological curriculum
- Skill development in one or more of the functions of ministry
- Stimulation and guidance for personal and professional growth
- Group dialogue and interaction
- Peer teaching and learning
- Theological reflection on the practice of ministry

Examples of activities that do not meet these criteria:

- “Indoctrination” programs dealing with the internal affairs of the church or judicatory
- “Inspirational” programs designed to build loyalty to the church or judicatory
- Board or committee meetings and orientation sessions
- Annual meetings and conventions
- Mass media programs (unless an integral part of a larger educational program)
- Entertainment and recreation – attendance at lecture series, cultural performance, film festivals, etc. (unless an integral part of a larger educational program)
- Work experience – on-the-job training (unless supervised and structured as part of a planned educational experience)
- Travel tours (unless intentionally designed as an educational experience, with qualified leadership, advance preparation, and opportunity for study and reflection)
- Individual scholarship (independent, unsupervised research and writing, unless part of an intentional plan for self-education)
- Self-directed studies (unless planned, supervised, or directed in conjunction with peers, lay committees, supervisors and/or sponsoring agencies)
- Activities for which credit, support or approval is requested after-the-fact (i.e., not part of an intentional plan)

(1) The Continuing Education Unit: Criteria and Guidelines (Revised April, 1979).
Available from the Council on the Continuing Education Unit, 13000 Old Columbia Pike,
Silver Spring, MD 10904