

## **AIA COURSE DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES**

Every AIA/CES registered course must be carefully developed and designed according to CES policies and with the needs and learning preferences of architects in mind. This section outlines some primary things to keep in mind when developing a course.

### **What Qualifies as AIA/CES Education?**

The AIA/CES continuing education program is directed exclusively to architect, engineer, and construction industry (AEC) professionals and primarily serves AIA architect members. In general, AIA/CES registered course content must be applicable to the architecture industry and benefit or enhance an architect's practice. In addition, approved courses should help architects to:

- Acquire new knowledge or skills
- Build upon or expand current knowledge or skills
- Stay up to date on new developments in the field
- Learn best practices
- Advance their careers by teaching content that will lead to additional certifications or degrees
- Think creatively and develop new ideas

Furthermore, AIA/CES-registered courses must be implemented and delivered with the intent to teach and must be strictly educational in nature. Therefore, product or services promotions are not permitted at any time during a course.

### **Course Development Principles**

When a course developer understands the adult learner and knows productive presenter skills, the opportunity for participants to gain new knowledge throughout the course is enhanced. Adults have a need to know. They are ready and motivated to learn when they can identify how a new skill will benefit them. If they come into the activity feeling that they do not need this knowledge, they will not learn it. Sometimes the benefits of a learning activity may seem clear to the presenter, but the presenter should always take the time to clarify these benefits. The more adults have their "need to know" met, the more likely they are to fully participate and benefit from the learning activity.

An adult approaches learning to find answers or solutions to identified problems or questions. The presenter's role is to help participants not only learn the material but also learn how to apply it in real-world situations. Because course participants seek knowledge that is applicable to their circumstances, effective adult learning activities should include simulations, case studies, and problem-based learning.

Although adult learners already know a lot, they may not recognize how much they already know. A good presenter helps them realize what they have learned from experience, practice, and education and how to apply it to the new knowledge they are gaining. Adults are capable of connecting what they are learning with applications in the real world; a presenter assists with this linkage.

Effective presenters go beyond the role of simply teaching. They understand the relationship between themselves as an educator and the adult learner. They value the experience adults bring to a learning setting, and they are able to create an environment that stimulates and motivates learning.

Good presenter skills include the ability to:

Explain information effectively. Vary methods, use examples, and provide metaphors to emphasize points and comparison.

Question the learner. Ask open-ended questions, stimulate discussion, and encourage comprehension (for example, through analysis and evaluation).

Responding to questions, mentally or verbally, helps a learner internalize the knowledge rather than just remember the information.<sup>23</sup>

Motivate learning. Encourage, excite, and inspire the learner about ideas and information.

Analyze information. Help learners understand options and break down the information for better comprehension.

Manage the learning environment. Monitor discussions, tone down strong members of a group or bring out less vocal ones, resolve disagreements, and keep discussions on track.

Create an environment that addresses all senses. Support what you say with visual aids, as people learn mostly by what they see to make the impact stronger, provide tactile stimulation (handling materials samples, keying into a computer, or filling out a worksheet) to support what you said and what they saw.

## **Course Titles**

All course titles should describe the course content. As noted earlier, the AIA tracks member continuing education activities on an AIA transcript. This transcript is often used by members to show their state licensing board their continuing education coursework. Unfortunately, the only thing that state licensing boards can see on the course transcript is the provider name, date and time the course was taken, the type of learning units, and the course title. Since this is the only course information displayed on the transcript, it is important to make the titles as accurate and descriptive of the course content as possible.

## **Course Description**

The course description should accurately reflect the course content and related to the learning objectives.

## **Course Learning Objectives**

AIA/CES strives to maintain the highest standards of education, using all tools available to consistently improve provider courses. Learning objectives shape a learning event and help ensure its success. This is why we require all courses to have learning objectives.

Learning objectives are an extremely effective tool for assessing whether the desired student outcomes are accomplished and whether a presenter has successfully taught the material.

#### AIA/CES learning objectives course requirement

AIA/CES requires that all provider courses have learning objectives, which must be listed when registering a course. There is a minimum requirement of four learning objectives per course. If your course is being offered for Health, Safety, and Welfare (HSW) or Sustainable Design (SD) credits, then three of the four learning objectives must address these topic areas because of the 75 percent course content rule for those types of courses.

#### What is a learning objective?

A learning objective is an explicit statement that clearly expresses what the student will be able with the knowledge acquired from the course. It is an observable and measurable student outcome statement. Learning objectives should be concise and concrete so that they are open to limited interpretation. Learning objectives should begin with, "At the end of this course, participants will be able to..."

Writing learning objectives is where design and developing an educational course begins. Learning objectives help students clarify their personal goals for a course and give them a framework against which to measure their success.

A learning objective consists of three parts:

#### BEHAVIOR

Describes what participants will be able to do as a consequence of taking a course. (for example, "calculate")

#### CONDITION

Describes conditions under which the student will perform the behavior. (for example, "using the sample course residential project")

#### CRITERIA

Describes the criteria you will use to evaluate student performance. (for example, "the total cost of materials") Combine the behavior, condition, and criteria and you have an official learning objective.

#### EXAMPLE

"At the end of the course participants will be able to calculate the total cost of materials using the sample course residential project."

#### **Health, Safety, and Welfare (HSW)**

To qualify for AIA HSW Continuing Education Hours, there must be a clear demonstration of how the general public will benefit from the knowledge gained by attendees at the proposed program, and 75 percent of program content must relate to one or more of the following:

- Aspects of architecture that have salutary physical effects among users of buildings protecting the public from accidental injury. Examples are accessibility, acoustical systems, energy efficiency, mechanical, plumbing, electrical systems, and materials.

- Aspects of architecture intended to limit or prevent accidental injury or death among users of buildings or sites. Examples: codes, regulations, natural hazards, life safety systems - suppression, detection and alarm standards.
- Aspects of architecture that engender demonstrable positive responses among, or enable equal access by, users of buildings or sites. Examples: building design and materials, methods & systems, construction contracting, ethics and regulations governing practice of architecture, preservation, adaptive reuse, and the study of environmental issues.

For HSW course qualification, three of the four learning objectives must address the above HSW topics. Detailed requirements and a list of HSW topics can be found online:

<http://www.aia.org/education/provider-resources/index.htm>.

### **Company identification**

All presentation information and materials must relate to those directly relevant to the session topic, and will not promote in a commercial way the products or services of the presenter or any company or organization. Speakers will not discuss company information\* or display brand identification during the educational learning unit time period. Presenters' company wordmarks, logos, branding and product names can appear only on the first and last pages, slides, or screens of printed materials, slide or video presentation. The quality assurance slide as provided by AIA Philadelphia must be displayed at the beginning of the presentation.

*\*An architect, other designer, or contractor can discuss a project and the merits of that project.*