BEESS Portal
to Professional Learning Alternatives

Frequently Asked Questions for Facilitated Courses

1. What is BEESS Portal to Professional Learning Alternatives?

The Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Service (BEESS) Portal to Professional Learning Alternatives (PLA) is a collection of online courses, both facilitated and independent study, designed to assist educators in becoming more proficient in responding to the various instructional and behavioral needs of individual learners to maximize the achievement of all students.

These courses are developed in partnership with the Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services and two Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) funded state projects: the Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System (FDLRS) and the Personnel Development Support Project (PDSP).

2. What are the characteristics of the BEESS Portal facilitated courses?

The BEESS Portal offers both facilitated courses and independent study courses. Both types of courses share the following characteristics:

- Available statewide
- Free to Florida educators
- Resources and content are reviewed quarterly and updated annually by expert writers
- High-quality online content and a variety of learning activities for self-paced study
- Classroom-related assessment tasks
- Consistent, user-friendly format and organization

3. What are the requirements of a BEESS Portal facilitated course?

The requirements of facilitated courses vary depending on the course; however, with all facilitated courses participants will:

- Engage in orientation and additional face-to-face or virtual group meetings.
- Study course content and access current external links to information.
- Complete assessment tasks including quizzes, discussion boards, and Dropbox assignments.

4. Where can I learn more about the content of the BEESS Portal facilitated courses?

Facilitated course descriptions are available at the BEESS Portal to Professional Learning Alternatives website fl-pla.org. In the Facilitated Courses section, select Course Catalog.

5. Who can participate in the BEESS Portal facilitated courses?

The facilitated courses have been developed for educators currently employed in education in the state of Florida; however, if not currently employed in education in Florida and seeking inservice credits for recertification, the courses may be taken if certain criteria are met. See questions 15-17 of this document for more information about inservice credit.

6. If I am outside of the United States, may I participate in a BEESS Portal facilitated course?

Educators who are living outside the United States are permitted to participate in any of the facilitated courses if they can access it through the BEESS Portal to PLA website.

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

A face-to-face or a virtual orientation is available for facilitated courses prior to starting the course. Your FDLRS PLA Coordinator and Facilitator will provide you with information prior to orientation. During orientation for facilitated courses, the following occurs:

- Meet the FDLRS PLA Facilitator
- Learn more about PLA and D2L (PLA learning management system)
- Receive a username, password, and course syllabus
- Learn to navigate the course and expectations

8. Do I need to take all facilitated courses, and do I need to take the courses in a particular order?

Participants may choose which courses meet their own needs. It is not necessary to take courses in a particular order.

9. Can I participate in a facilitated course if I am not currently working with students?

It is best to talk to the course facilitator to discuss how to proceed. The facilitator may have options to successfully complete the course.

10. Are facilitated courses offered year around?

The facilitated courses are offered on an ongoing basis both at a local level and with statewide registration from July through May.

11. Can I earn partial credit for facilitated courses?

No partial credit is awarded for any BEESS Portal course. All course requirements must be completed, to earn inservice credits.

12. How do I register for a facilitated course?

Facilitated Courses Offered Statewide: Go to fdlrs.org and courses under Current PLA Courses.

13. How long do I have to complete a facilitated course?

How many hours will I spend on a course? The typical number of inservice credits indicates the approximate number of hours spent working on the facilitated course. Since participant background knowledge, study habits, and experience varies, it is difficult to determine the length of time individuals require to thoroughly study the content and complete assessment tasks. Facilitated courses are scheduled with beginning and end dates and a course syllabus is provided to assist with time management.

14. What happens if I need to drop a facilitated course after I have enrolled?

What happens if I fall behind with course requirements? During a facilitated course, it is required to follow the course syllabus and due dates. At the midpoint of the course, it is also expected for participants to have all requirements complete. If coursework is not current at midpoint, the PLA Facilitator or Coordinator may suggest reregistering for the course at a different time.
If unable to meet the expectations, contact the PLA Facilitator immediately. If enrollment is canceled, a record of completed work will be on file for approximately one year and upon reenrollment, finished and passed work is not required to complete.

15. How do I know how many inservice credits I need to recertify?

All questions regarding individual certification or recertification should be directed to the local personnel/certification department or to the Florida Department of Education Certification office http://www.fldoe.org/teaching/certification/index.stml. It is critical to get information related to the specific certification situations. FDLRS PLA Coordinators can answer questions regarding credit for FDLRS professional learning. FDLRS staff are not certification specialists.

16. How can I get inservice credits recorded with the Florida Department of Education?

For current, active educators: Inservice credits are reported to FDOE by a school district or private school agency with an approved Professional Learning Catalog (PLC) or its equivalent. Your local FDLRS PLA Coordinator will report course completers to the appropriate school districts in their service region. FDLRS does not report inservice credits directly to FDOE. Verification of completion will be sent to private school agencies upon request. Districts or private school agencies also have the option of requiring additional follow-up activities to award inservice credits.

For educators not currently working in the field of education: It is the responsibility of the participant, prior to starting the course, to verify the former school district or private school agency will submit inservice credits to FDOE. If the district or agency is unable to assist, it may be necessary for the participant to take university or college credit for recertification.

17. Do ALL BEESS Portal courses satisfy the content requirement for teaching students with disabilities?

Many of the facilitated courses support the recertification requirement of 20 hours in teaching students with disabilities. However, each school district or private school agency determines which courses satisfy the content requirement for their employees. Participants should check with their district or local FDLRS PLA Coordinator to inquire about each facilitated course.

Additional questions can be directed to the PLA Administration team at PLA@fldrs.org
or contact your local FDLRS PLA Coordinator.