

## Six Steps to Earning All Your PDUs

By Cornelius Fichtner, PMP, CSM

As a certified Project Management Professional (PMP)®, the last thing you want to happen is to have your certification suspended. This happens if you do not earn the required 60 [Professional Development Units](#) (PDUs) within your three-year recertification cycle. Often, once the stress of taking and passing the PMP® Exam is over, you step back into focusing on projects and other deadlines, and the need to earn PDUs is relegated to the back of your mind or even forgotten all together. You want to avoid a situation in which your recertification cycle is coming up and you have earned only a few, or worse yet, no PDUs. So, let's take the task at hand - "The need to earn 60 PDUs within the three-year recertification cycle" - and break it down as a 6-step plan of attack:

### Step 1: Learn the Rules

The first thing you need to do is learn the rules for earning the required PDUs. Just like if you want to drive a car, it is best to start by learning the traffic rules. The best way to learn the rules for earning and claiming PDUs is to read the Continuing Certification Requirements (CCR) section of the Project Management Professional (PMP)® Handbook at <http://www.pmp-precast.com/pmphb>

### Step 2: Review the online CCR System

Every PDU earned needs to be reported through the Project Management Institute's (PMI)® online CCR System. You can report your PDUs through the CCR System, print a copy of your PDU transcript, review PDU category limits, and see your progress towards recertification. The best way to understand the CCR System is to check out the system for yourself. You can find it at <https://ccrs.pmi.org/>.

### Step 3: Plan to earn PDUs from multiple categories

In Step 1 above you learned that PDUs can be earned in six categories. The goal of this step right here is to plan how many PDUs you would like to earn from each category. You do not have to earn PDUs in all six categories, and you could simply earn all of your PDUs in category A (Courses offered by PMI REPs, Chapters and Communities). However, understanding each category may lead to you earning PDUs in categories you had not initially considered. Plus, as you plan your PDUs, you will see that working as a professional in project management will earn you 15 "free" PDUs for just for doing your job. That leaves you with only needing to earn 45 PDUs in the five other categories.

### Step 4: Find providers that meet your lifestyle

Once you plan your PDUs, you need to find PDU providers that will best fit your lifestyle.

There are many providers on the market that offer both free and commercial PDUs in a variety of formats. If you are a tech savvy, then online webinars may be for you. If you have a long commute to work, then subscribing and listening to free podcasts in your car on the way to work will be a good fit. If you are looking to get more involved with your local PMI community, then maybe volunteering as a board member for your local PMI chapter is good for you. If you prefer in person learning and the exchange of ideas with a personal trainer, then look into providers that offer traditional classroom training. If you are looking to mingle and to get to know those who are part of your local PMI chapter, then attending a local chapter dinner meeting will benefit you.

As you can see, there are many opportunities available to earn PDUs, and it is likely at least one or two will fit your lifestyle. And don't worry if you are not sure about how to find training providers, because there are websites out there dedicated to helping you find PDU opportunities. These sites are free and run by dedicated volunteers. Check out <http://pdu4free.com/>, <http://www.pduotd.com/>, or <http://www.pdu-insider.com> (Disclaimer: the last one is my own website).

## Step5: Take Action!

Now that you know the rules, are familiar with the online CCR System, have planned your PDUs, and have found providers that fit your lifestyle, you need to take action to earn your PDUs. In most cases signing up for PDUs can be done online with your selected provider. Once you are signed up, all you need to do is attend your selected training event.

## Step 6: Claim your earned PDUs immediately

You have attended a webinar, completed training, or maybe attended a PMI Chapter dinner meeting and have earned PDUs. Now you need to input that PDU information into the online CCR System at <https://ccrs.pmi.org>. You will have all of the information you need on the certificate you receive from each training event. Immediately inputting your PDUs not only keeps you from forgetting to claim the PDUs you have earned, but also each time you log into the system you can see how many PDUs you have earned and how many you still need to earn.

In conclusion, earning 60 PDUs within three years is really easy if you have a plan. And if you are not all that interested in following these six steps, I recommend that you at least complete the first step. Knowing and understanding the rules will elevate you above 75% of the PMPs out there who do not fully understand the PDU requirements. Knowing the rules will help you avoid making the mistake of not earning the 60 PDUs you need to maintain your PMP® Certification.

*About the author:* Cornelius Fichtner, PMP, CSM is a noted PMP expert. He has hosted The PM Podcast since 2005 and published over 250 free interviews with PM experts from around the world. Certified PMPs who listen to these interviews can earn up to 30 category C PDUs. It's absolutely free and there is no need to sign up. Details are at <http://www.pm-podcast.com/pdu>

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## Summary

Congratulations, you have passed the PMP® Exam and are now a PMP® Credential holder! Now you need to shift your focus from passing the exam to earning the 60 [PDUs](#) required to maintain that credential you worked so hard to obtain. If you follow this 6-step plan of attack, you will be well on your way by knowing the rules for earning PDUs, understanding the online CCR System, having a plan for earning PDUs, identifying [PDU providers](#) that meet your lifestyle, earning your PDUs, and claiming the PDUs you have earned.

## Keywords:

PMP, PDU, CCRS, PMP certificate, PMP Certification, Project Management Professional, PMI, Project Management Institute, PDU activities.

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