

Annual Recertification Training Requirements

Introduction

Annually, all Virginia Cooperative Extension Master Gardeners (VCE-MGs) must participate in at least eight (8) credit hours of Continuing Education Recertification Training.

The greatest overall benefits derived from participation in any educational instruction are products of thoughtfully planned processes – those which articulate and reflect clearly defined, pre-determined learning objectives.

Attributes of such instruction (common to both *formal learning* and *non-formal learning*) include: identification of specific areas for improvement and/or knowledge gain; quantifying (or at least, suggesting) indicators of progress; assignability – specificity as to “who” will do “what” and, being time-bound; being realistic with regard to when results will be achieved.

In this and several other key respects, *non-formal learning* is different from *informal learning*.

Non-formal learning is purposive but voluntary learning that takes place in a diverse range of environments and situations for which teaching/training and learning is not necessarily their sole or main activity. These environments and situations may be intermittent or transitory, and the activities or courses that take place may be staffed by professional learning facilitators (such as youth trainers) or by volunteers (such as VCE-MGs). The activities and courses are planned, but are seldom structured by conventional rhythms or curriculum subjects. They usually address specific target groups, but rarely document or assess learning outcomes or achievements in conventionally visible ways.

The VCE-MG Training Program is an example of *non-formal learning*.

Informal learning, from the learner’s standpoint at least, is non-purposive learning which takes place in everyday life contexts in the family, at work, during leisure and in the community. It does have outcomes, but these are seldom recorded, virtually never certified, and are typically neither immediately visible for the learner – nor do they count in themselves for education, training or employment purposes.

While informal learning has tremendous value in our lives, it is not acceptable as training for VCE-MG Annual Recertification purposes.

Annual Recertification Training Requirements

Pre-Approval Requirement

Pre-approval for all annual recertification training is required by the Extension Agent whose responsibilities include oversight of each unit's VCE-MG Program.

Under normal circumstances, programs that have not been pre-approved by the Extension Agent, or his designee, will not qualify for VCE-MG Annual Recertification Training Hours.

Pre-approval for all events should be requested at least two weeks prior to their occurrence.

Calculating Recertification Credit

Under normal circumstances, qualifying activities must be at least one hour in length, and exhibit relevance to VCE's goals (public education, agricultural profitability, consumer horticulture, environmental sustainability, etc.). To determine the number of recertification credit hours for each activity in which you participate, count only the educational time spent. Do not include travel, registration, meals, breaks, "pre-work," homework or other non-educational parts of the activity. Time spent pursuing such matters will be recorded as contributed (a.k.a., contributory) hours.

Recertification credit hours are calculated to the nearest quarter hour. For example, if a one-day workshop includes five hours and 20 minutes of actual educational time, the number of recertification credit hours awarded would be rounded to 5.25.

Calculating Credit for VCE-MG Steward Training

Hours spent attending advanced VCE-MG Steward Training may be applied to annual recertification training. VCE-MG Steward Training hours may be pro-rated and applied to annual recertification requirements over several years.

Calculating Credit for Instruction at Lectures, Seminars, Conferences, etc.

You earn one recertification credit hour for every hour of concurrent session time, excluding meals and breaks. For example, a 75-minute session equals 1.25 recertification credit hours.

You also earn credit for general sessions if a speech lasts at least one hour, and is relevant to VCE's goals (public education, agricultural profitability, consumer horticulture, environmental sustainability, etc.).

Annual Recertification Training Requirements

Calculating Credit for Videoconferences, Audiotapes, Webcasts and Podcasts

You will earn one training hour for every instructional hour, up to a maximum of 8 credit hours per calendar year.

Calculating Credit for E-Learning/Online Courses

You will earn one training hour for every instructional hour, up to a maximum of 8 credit hours per calendar year.

Calculating Credit for Association Meetings

Only pre-approved continuing-education activities during Norfolk Master Gardener Association meetings qualify for recertification credit. Again, approved programs will be reported in 15 minutes increments.