

Recertification Overview

The criteria and guidelines to maintain valid PLS and PP certifications are established and monitored by the NALS Certifying Board. Criteria and guidelines may be changed from time to time in order to correspond with the five-year cycle of changes in education. NALS retains the right to make changes to the recertification process or criteria. Changes to the recertification process or criteria will be published in official publications of the Association.

There are three categories of recertification for PLS. The first category is mandatory recertification, which is required for PLS certification to remain current according to educational standards for those earning certification as of March 1994 or thereafter. The second category, voluntary recertification, is recommended and encouraged for those achieving PLS certification prior to March 1994. PLSs who voluntarily recertify must meet the same requirements and established criteria as for mandatory recertification. The third category is Certified PLS Emeritus, which applies to PLSs who are retired or disabled.

There are two categories of recertification for PPs. The first category is mandatory recertification, which applies to all PPs who are currently employed or seeking employment. The second category is Certified PP Emeritus, which applies to PPs who are retired or disabled.

PLS or PP recertification is required every five years for those falling under mandatory recertification and for those who voluntarily recertify. A completed PLS or PP Recertification Form, Affidavit/Application, the \$75 fee, and copies of education certificates or documentation are to be submitted to the NALS Resource Center prior to the expiration of the current validity period. Completed documentation will be accepted prior to the five-year deadline; however, this does not change the validity period for recertification. Recertification points earned after submission of the completed paperwork but prior to the expiration of the current validity period may not be applied to the next validity period.

PLSs or PPs not meeting the required recertification criteria will be given an additional six months to rectify the situation after notification from NALS. Documentation not previously submitted, including documentation from activities during the additional six-month period, may be submitted within this six-month period. The granting of this additional six-month period does not extend the expiration of the next recertification validity period. In the event the additional

recertification points are not submitted within the six-month period, the certification status would be changed to inactive, with notice given to the PLS or PP. Upon determination that recertification requirements have been met, evidence of recertification will be sent to the PLS or PP.

It is the professional responsibility of the Certified PLS or PP to calendar their recertification deadline. NALS does not send out reminder notices. The validity period for the PLS and PP certification are indicated on the certificate issued when the examinee passes the PLS or PP examination or on the most recent recertification certificate.

Mandatory Recertification. In order to maintain certification as a PLS or PP, applicants must accumulate 75 points in education credits. For PP recertification a minimum of 5 of the points must be on ethics. Points may be earned in any of the modules outlined in the Recertification Modules portion of this manual. Certificates and documentation of education credits are to be submitted to the NALS Resource Center prior to the expiration of the current PLS or PP certification period. Early applications will be accepted; however, early recertification approval will not alter the validity period for recertification. Subsequent to early recertification, no education credits earned in the current validity period may be submitted for the next recertification period.

Voluntary Recertification. PLSs falling under voluntary recertification may submit a PLS Recertification Form, Affidavit/Application and the \$75 fee, along with proof of earning of 75 points of education credits within a five-year period. The first time an applicant recertifies under voluntary recertification, the recertification period will end five years from the date of recertification by NALS. After the first recertification, the recertification period runs five years from the end of the prior recertification period.

Certified PLS or PP Emeritus. Certified PLS or PP Emeritus status is available to the following: (1) certified PLSs who are 55 years of age or older who are retired from employment in the legal services field; and (2) certified PLSs or PPs who are permanently disabled.

A letter requesting Certified PLS or PP Emeritus status may be submitted to NALS. If emeritus status is being requested because of a permanent disability, proof of disability should also be submitted. Upon notification of

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approval of emeritus status, the Certified PLS or PP will not be required to accumulate points to recertify. If a Certified PLS or PP returns to work in the legal field, the emeritus status is invalidated. PLSs or PPs who previously fell under mandatory recertification will have five years within which to recertify from the date of reemployment.

What Happens If I Don't Recertify? If an individual voluntarily chooses not to recertify, the certification designation will be valid until such time that the current validity period expires. After the period expires, the individual is to remove the certification designation and is requested to no longer use the designation Certified PLS and/or PP.

If a Certified PLS and/or PP come to the realization that they did not recertify within their five-year recertification period and desires to maintain their certification, the Certified PLS or PP must immediately contact the NALS Certification and Education Manager and provide a written account of why the certification was not renewed.

The NALS Certification and Education Manager, together with the Certifying Board, will review the circumstances surrounding the non-recertification on a case-by-case basis. Depending upon the information presented and the circumstances surrounding the lapse in recertification, a grace period may be granted for the Certified PLS or PP to recertify.

If the Certified PLS and/or PP is granted a grace period to recertify and does not do so within the time period given, the PLS and/or PP certification shall become invalid and the designation will be removed from the individual's record. If a designation is removed, a letter to the individual will be sent by the NALS Certification and Education Manager notifying the individual of the removal of their certification designation along with a request that the certification designation(s) no longer be used.

In the event the PLS and/or PP designation becomes invalid, it will be necessary for the individual to retest.

GETTING READY TO RECERTIFY

1. **Am I Required to Recertify?** Recertification is required for those PLSs or PPs falling under mandatory recertification. Recertification is encouraged for those PLSs or PPs falling under voluntary recertification. Upon notification of approval of Certified PLS or PP Emeritus status, the PLS or PP will not be required to accumulate points to recertify. If a PLS or PP Emeritus returns to work in the legal field, the emeritus status

is invalidated. A PLS or PP Emeritus under mandatory recertification will have five years within which to recertify from the date of reemployment.

2. **Earn Recertification Points.** Participation in educational activities to earn points toward recertification is required. See section entitled Recertification Modules in this manual. Appropriate educational topic may include topics such as: law office procedures, technology, ethics and judgment, grammar, and law-related topics. Obtain certificates or other documentation confirming participation in educational activities. Attach additional information to documentation as needed.
3. **Get Organized.** A file with all CLE certificates and documentation should be maintained by the PLS. A chart including date of activity, topic and points earned may be utilized to keep track of credits. Be sure to highlight when your five-year validity period is due to expire.
4. **Submit PLS or PP Recertification Form, Affidavit/ Application, \$75 Fee, and Documentation.** At any time prior to the expiration of the current validity period, the following items are to be submitted to the NALS Resource Center:
 - (a) PLS or PP Recertification Form;
 - (b) Affidavit/Application;
 - (c) copies of original certificates or documentation pertaining to education credits; and
 - (d) the \$75 fee.

Applicants should retain originals, as the NALS Resource Center discards submitted documents upon approval of the recertification application. The NALS Resource Center will accept applications prior to the expiration of the fifth year following certification. Acceptance of early recertification submissions will not affect the recertification period. Points may not be accrued during the current validity period for the next period. The Resource Center does not process education credits as they are earned. Any partial recertification applications and/or education credits submitted to the NALS Resource Center to date are to be resubmitted during the appropriate time period with the completed documentation, and the \$75 fee. The NALS Resource Center no longer provides quarterly or annual reports for recertification.)

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- 5. What if I Have Accrued Extra Points?** Education points earned within the current validity period may not be used for the next validity period. You may attend the education but you may not include it for the next recertification application.
- 6. What Do I Get?** Upon receipt by the Resource Center of your completed PLS or PP Recertification Form, Affidavit/Application, the \$75 fee, and the appropriate education certificates or documentation, you will receive evidence of recertification in the form of a certificate.
- 7. Who Else is Notified of My Recertification?** Notification regarding individual recertification will be provided only to the association's publication editors for purposes of association-wide publicity.
- 8. If you fall under voluntary recertification and decide to recertify for a particular purpose (i.e., to serve on the NALS Certifying Board), you are not required to recertify; however, it is recommended.**

RECERTIFICATION MODULES

NALS has identified the following recertification modules, which are guidelines for educational activities that PLSs or PPs may utilize in order to accumulate 75 points in education credits toward recertification. There is no limit as to the number of points that may be earned in any one module. Applicants need not accumulate points in all modules in order to recertify.

Successful Completion of Postsecondary Education Courses. This module covers successful completion (Grade C or better) of relevant courses (courses related to the PLS or PP examination or any area of law) at an accredited institution of higher education. Higher education institutions are generally organized into semesters (14 to 15 weeks in length providing "semester hours," or 10 to 12 weeks in length providing "quarter hours"). Points are calculated on the basis of 15 points per semester hour and 10 points per quarter hour. Copies of transcripts or grade reports and official course descriptions are to be submitted with the completed recertification packet. Applicants should retain originals, as the NALS Resource Center discards submitted documents upon approval of the application.

Attendance at Seminars/Workshops, NALS Online Educational Chats and NALS CLE Online. This module covers attendance at conferences, seminars, workshops, chapter educational programs, etc. and participation in

NALS Online Educational Chats on topics related to the PLS and PP examinations or any area of law. Seminars and NALS Online Chats must be a minimum length of 30 minutes. Copies of certificates of attendance or other documentation confirming participation in the program are to be submitted with the completed recertification packet. Applicants should retain originals, as the NALS Resource Center discards submitted documents upon approval of the application.

Included in this module is credit for watching videotapes or listening to audiotapes on relevant topics. One hour equals one point of education credit. Except for topics related to the PLS or PP examination, credit is not available for personal development and/or motivational programs or for sessions providing information about the PLS or PP examination. To request points for watching a videotape or listening to an audiotape, complete Section B of the PLS or PP Recertification Form.

Seminars/Workshops Taught. This module covers teaching at conferences, seminars, workshops, chapter educational programs, etc. on topics related to the PLS or PP examination or any area of law. Seminars must be a minimum length of 30 minutes. One teaching hour equals four points, which includes credit for preparation and presentation time. Except for topics relating to the PLS or PP examination, credit is not available for personal development and/or motivational programs or for sessions providing information about the PLS or PP examination. To request points for teaching educational programs, complete Section C of the PLS or PP Recertification Form. A copy of the seminar brochure verifying the applicant as a speaker or other documentation confirming applicant's participation in the program is to be submitted with the completed recertification packet. Applicants should retain originals, as the NALS Resource Center discards submitted documents upon approval of the application.

Certifications. Successful completion of certifications, other than PLS or PP certification, such as Certified Legal Assistant (CLA), Registered Paralegal (RP), Certified Professional Secretary (CPS), Certified Administrative Professional (CAP), specialty certifications, etc. based on 20 points per certification also qualify for recertification points. A PLS or PP Recertification Form, Affidavit/Application, copies of the certificates, and the \$75 fee should be submitted to the NALS Resource Center. Applicants should retain originals, as the NALS Resource Center discards submitted documents upon approval of the application.

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Authoring Articles and Publications. Section D of the PLS or PP Recertification Form should be completed and submitted, along with documentation verifying participation in authoring of articles or publications. This module covers authoring articles regarding PLS- PP-related topics and law-related education. Five points are awarded for substantive articles.

GUIDELINES FOR COMPLETION OF PP or PLS RECERTIFICATION FORM

The completed PLS or PP Recertification Form, Affidavit/ Application, the \$75 fee, and copies of certifications or documentation are to be submitted to the NALS Resource Center prior to the expiration of the current validity period for recertification. Applicants should retain originals, as the NALS Resource Center discards submitted documents upon approval of the application.

The top portion of Section A must always be completed. Complete all of Section A. Complete other sections only if they apply to you.

- For change of address, name, or telephone number, complete the top portion of Section A and fill in the new information as appropriate in the bottom portion of Section A.
- For successful completion of postsecondary courses, attach copies of the transcripts or grade reports and official course descriptions, or complete Section B. Points are calculated on the basis of 15 points per semester hour and 10 points per quarter hour.
- For attendance at and participation in seminars/ workshops, NALS educational online chats attach copies of the certificates of attendance or other documentation confirming participation in the program, or complete

Section B. Seminars and educational online chats must be a minimum length of 30 minutes.

- To request points for watching a videotape or listening to an audiotape, complete Section B. One hour is equal to one point. Except for topics related to the PLS or PP examination, credit is not available for personal development and/or motivational programs, or for sessions providing information about the PLS or PP examination.
- For seminars/workshops taught, attach copies of documentation verifying the teaching of a seminar or workshop, or complete Section C. A minimum length of 30 minutes is required. One teaching hour equals four points, which includes credit for preparation and presentation time. Except for topics relating to the PLS or PP examination, credit is not available for personal development and/or motivational programs, or for sessions providing information about the PLS or PP examination.
- For certifications other than PLS or PP certification, attach copies of your certificates. Twenty (20) points are awarded per certification.
- For petitions, complete Section D and attach documentation verifying participation in the authoring of law-related articles or publications. Five points per article may be earned for substantive articles.
- Total points. There is no limit to the number of points that can be earned in any one module. Recertification points may be earned in any one or more of the modules. Applicants need not satisfy all modules.

Return completed Recertification Form, Affidavit/Application, copies of certificates or documentation, and the \$75 fee to:

NALS Resource Center—Recertification
8159 East 41st Street
Tulsa, OK 74145

Telephone: (918) 582-5188
Fax: (918) 582-5907
Email: cert-edu@nals.org