

SOUTH CAROLINA EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE SYSTEM



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The South Carolina Early Care and Education Technical Assistance(TAP) System was initially an outgrowth of an 18-month study that identified a comprehensive approach to link all necessary system components to enhance the state's capacity to effectively support and monitor Early Care and Education programs. A component of the study emphasized the need to provide technical assistance to educators of young children in order to offer higher quality care.

A workgroup of collaborative partners was subsequently organized in spring 2004 to develop a statewide coordinated process to facilitate the provision of technical assistance in early care and education programs. Sincere thanks must be given to Debra Session and to representatives of the organizations listed below for their time and thoughtful feedback to create the initial System. These partners continue to work with us to make the South Carolina Technical Assistance System a reality:

Educators of Young Children
South Carolina Department of Social Services – Child Care Services, and ABC Child Care Programs
South Carolina Center for Child Care Career Development
South Carolina Department of Education - Office of Early Childhood Education
South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness
Clemson University – Institute on Family and Neighborhood Life
South Carolina Head Start Collaboration Office
South Carolina Resource and Referral Network
United Way Success By 6®
Trident Technical College
University of South Carolina

In 2008, the partners, led by SCDSS and First Steps, determined that the system needed to be thoroughly reviewed and revised to meet the ever-changing needs of the child care workforce and to include the latest research and best practice information. This document is the result of that effort, which was completed in the fall of 2009. The Center for Child Care Career Development(CCCCD) administers the application process for technical assistance providers' certification and offers annual professional development opportunities for certified technical assistance providers. The partners in the TAP System will provide the Center with regular updates regarding implementation of the technical assistance system. In addition, CCCCD will continue to serve as the forum for partners to provide feedback and make recommendations regarding modifications.

INTRODUCTION

South Carolina is committed to high quality early care and education experiences as a key aspect of an early learning system. The State has long recognized the importance of ongoing professional development for educators of young children. South Carolina Department of Social Services currently requires licensed child care providers to complete 15 hours of training annually. Public schools provide professional development for their 4K teachers, as do the federally funded Head Start programs. Recent brain research clearly provides evidence of the need for high quality early education experiences to stimulate a child's full potential.¹ Increased interest in school readiness initiatives has resulted in a need for guidance and support to improve the quality of instruction and learning environments for young children

Stimulating learning environments for young children require well-trained and experienced staff. All staff, regardless of expertise, can benefit from guidance and support that enhances their ability to work with young children. This is the goal of the South Carolina Early Care and Education Technical Assistance System. Technical assistance/mentoring initiatives are viewed as effective practices to provide direct on-site guidance and support to educators of young children. Technical assistance facilitates the integration of good teaching practices and materials into early care and education settings and emphasizes research-based practices.² Resources must be committed to enhance the professional development of educators of young children. South Carolina must ensure that appropriate expertise is present in the state's Early Care and Education Technical Assistance System to address that need.

Technical assistance is offered by public and private organizations and private consultants through a range of on-site assistance including targeted guidance, consultation, planning, modeling, and support. The TAP System outlines a distinct statewide process designed to document specific qualifications of technical assistance providers who provide quality enhancement support to early care and education programs. To assure consistency of core knowledge statewide, academic credit courses have been identified that focus on development, curriculum, guidance, and the health and safety of infants, toddlers, and preschool children. Additional courses on program administration for directors and administrators have also been identified. The TAP System partners will actively recruit individuals with a variety of early childhood experiences and knowledge to become Certified Technical Assistance Providers. Each partner will provide oversight, support, and training for Certified Technical Assistance Providers in their employ and facilitate their use of the reporting system. They will also support professional development opportunities for our state's Certified Technical Assistance Providers, so that they can most effectively deliver technical assistance.

¹ Shonkoff, Jack P., Phillips, Deborah. Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development. *Zero to Three*, April/May 2001. Pp 4-7.

² Hanft, Barbara. State Technical Assistance Initiatives for IDEA Part B Programs. November 2001.

SOUTH CAROLINA EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE SYSTEM

I. Purpose

Provide a statewide system of certification and professional development to include all providers of technical assistance (TA) to early childhood educators and programs (clients).

A. Key Goals

1. Empower early childhood teachers and directors to improve the quality of learning environments for young children;
2. Define the uniform core knowledge and competencies needed to work with young children;
3. Provide professional development opportunities to meet the needs of the state's early care and education technical assistance providers;
4. Provide support for the overall administration and management of early care and education programs; and
5. Ensure consistency, accountability, and coordination for the provision of TA to educators of young children.

B. Definition of Technical Assistance

Technical Assistance is an array of services (off and on site, varying in duration, products and processes) to program staff for the purpose of equipping the early childhood workforce with knowledge, skills and attitudes to provide high quality experiences for children.

It is defined as a multi-level process offering a range of assistance which includes targeted guidance, consultation, modeling, and support that will strengthen the quality of care being provided to infants, toddlers, preschool, and school age children. TA shall be provided in a manner and at a level that meets the needs of the client, the individual situation and the identified goals agreed upon by the TAP and the client. TA shall be based on one of the following criteria:

- Director/teacher self identified needs
- Program or environmental assessment
- Department of Social Services (DSS) licensing report
- ABC Program Monitoring report.

II. Components of System

A. Technical Assistance Network

The TAP Network is an interagency cadre of persons certified by the South Carolina Center for Child Care Career Development (CCCCD) to offer technical assistance to educators of young children. These persons shall be referred to as Technical Assistance Providers (TAP). TAP shall conduct technical assistance in accordance with their level of certification and any areas of in-depth training as documented in the certification process with CCCCCD.

1. Resources to support the network
 - a. Early Childhood Education Coursework
 - b. TAP Professional Development Opportunities
 - c. Mentoring TAP
 - d. Online reporting tool
 - e. DSS Networking List/Serv
 - f. Childcare Coordination Teams

B. Management of TAP System

CCCCD shall oversee management of the TAP System to include the following actions:

1. Recruit qualified individuals as defined by Part IV to serve as TAP;
2. Identify courses appropriate for TAP certification and ongoing professional development;
3. Provide annual professional development opportunities for TAP;
4. Identify training and education regarding practices and trends important to the provision of effective and supportive TA;
5. Manage TAP reporting system; modify as needed to monitor impact;
6. Provide state and regional reports as needed; and
7. Maintain the oversight and management of the Certified Technical Assistance Provider Registry to include a system to maintain, update, and distribute upon request, the list of certified TAP to include levels of certification and related areas of in-depth training.
8. Serve as a point of entry for information about the System and referral to appropriate partners depending on interest and need expressed by potential clients.

C. Partner Agencies

The Department of Social Services, Division of Child Care Services includes the ABC Child Care Program, the Child Care Licensing Program, and the Head Start Collaboration Office. The ABC Child Care Program is a statewide system that administers payments to providers for child care services, and provides support for an array of projects and activities designed to improve the level of quality in child care facilities. The Child Care Licensing Program is responsible for the licensure and enforcement of laws and regulations applicable to child care facilities. The Head Start Collaboration Office's responsibilities include working closely with the local Head Start programs and other agencies involved in the care and education of young children to help facilitate service coordination and partnership development. ABC Special Needs Program is the statewide agency that provides assistance to child care programs identifying children for further evaluation and for inclusion strategies for children with differing needs and abilities. First Steps to School Readiness is the state's only entity focused exclusively on increasing school readiness outcomes for all children ages 0 to 5. Every South Carolina County has a First Steps office that identifies local needs and collaborative opportunities to help our state's youngest learners be better prepared for school. The Center for Child Care Career Development is the statewide professional development entity housing the South Carolina Child Care Training System, the T.E.A.C.H.® Scholarship Program, the Certified Technical Assistance System, the South Carolina Early Care and Education Credentialing System and other initiatives designed to improve the quality of child care programs through the professional development of teachers and administrators.

D. Assessment

The partners and TAP shall have a role in evaluating the TA System. The review shall focus on the TA System goals and process factors as indicated below.

1. Process Factors
 - a. Quality and availability of TAP
 - Number of TAP, statewide and by county or region;
 - Number of TAP by level of certification;
 - Number of TAP by areas of specialization.
 - b. Efficacy of TAP System:
 - Ease of use by potential candidates
 - Production of data needed for TA System operation and evaluation
 - Ease of use of reporting system by TAP

c. TA Services

- Number of providers and educators requesting services, include the following:
 - i. Name of county
 - ii. ABC status
 - iii. Years in business
 - iv. Type of TA requested
 - v. Age of children who would be affected by service.
- Number of educators receiving services
- Timeliness of service provision (date requested and date initiated)
- Information or materials used to support work with educators
- Length of time TA was provided
- Number of training sessions conducted (include topics)
- Extent that TA services met the needs of educators

III. Types of Technical Assistance

TA shall be based on the educator's self identified needs, results of a program administration or environmental assessment, licensing or program monitoring reports. These documents shall serve as the basis for work with educators (including administrative staff). TAP shall work with educators to develop and implement a quality improvement plan outlining goals and measurable objectives to be accomplished within a specified period of time. There are a number of effective technical assistance models that can be used by TAP to provide coaching, consultation, mentoring, or intervention according to the specific needs and desired outcomes of each situation. (See Addendum A) In this system, technical assistance can be identified as one of the following types:

- A. Type I **Issue-Focused** Consultation (on or off site) to provide information, materials or support regarding specific issues or areas of interest to facilitate an immediate change. Follow-up by the Technical Assistance Provider would be needed for maintenance to occur and be sustained.

- B. Type II **Guided** Consultation is based on the findings of an effective practice assessment and the subsequent development of a quality improvement plan with measurable results. Educators must participate in the guided action plan and agree to perform action steps as outlined to meet stated goals. At this level, TA shall enhance the quality of key target areas (such as learning centers, space and furnishings, or curriculum development) that will improve global program quality. Additionally, guidance shall be offered that will help to improve program monitoring scores, enable the educator to better meet licensing requirements, improve program administration or environmental assessment scores. Site visits conducted shall include information sharing, modeling, and mentoring developmentally appropriate environment or management practices. Measurable progress should be evident toward the goals as outlined in the improvement plan.

- C. Type III **Reflective Collaboration** Technical assistance that is long term, intensive consultation. Consultation is based on educator identified goals and shared assessments. Educators participate in the development of the plan and agree to perform action steps as outlined to meet stated goals. At this level, TA shall address identified issues and provide guidance and support for the purpose of ensuring sustainable long-term program quality improvement. Additionally, coaching, modeling, and mentoring developmentally appropriate and/or effective management practices will be conducted on site visits. Measurable progress should be evident toward the goal as outlined in the improvement plan. The educator assumes the maintenance of the developed improvement plan.

IV. Technical Assistance Providers' Qualifications and Responsibilities

- A. The TAP ability to establish a respectful and supportive relationship with educators of young children is inherent in successful technical assistance. Attributes of successful TAP include but are not limited to professional competence, knowledge of child development and early childhood education, relevant professional experience, good communication skills, and supportive interpersonal skills.

- B. Persons interested in becoming certified must submit a completed Certified Technical Assistance Provider application to CCCCD. This includes:
 - 1. Documentation of degree/ transcript (copy acceptable) showing degree awarded, and major;
 - 2. Professional resume or Curriculum Vita showing experience with young children;
 - 3. Two letters of recommendation from professionals in the Early Care and Education field commenting on ability to provide technical assistance; and
 - 4. Transcripts (copy acceptable) documenting coursework in Early Childhood Education if degree is not in Early Childhood Education or Child Studies/Development
 - 5. Documentation of in-depth, relevant, high quality training, of at least 15 hours.

- C. Technical assistance providers who meet the following education and experience requirements may apply to become certified by CCCCD as part of the TAP System (See Addendum B)

1. Generalist I

Associate in Arts/Sciences Degree in Early Care and Education including at least *twenty-one semester hours of **core early childhood education courses and two years experience working with infants, toddlers or preschool children; and two letters of recommendation attesting to technical assistance skills and experience
or

Bachelor, Master, or Doctorate Degree in a field other than Early Childhood Education or Child Studies/Development with a minimum of *twelve semester hours **core coursework in Early Childhood Education and two years of experience working with infants, toddlers, or preschool children, and two letters of recommendation attesting to technical assistance skills and experience

This level of certification would be recommended for Type II Guided Technical Assistance.

2. Generalist I Candidate

Applicant meets the experience requirements for Generalist I, but does not fully meet the education requirements:

Bachelor, Master, or Doctorate Degree with at least six hours of ECE coursework- the applicant has two years to complete additional hours of ECE coursework to equal twelve hours of **core early childhood coursework. Alternative equivalency training may be considered for six of the twelve required hours. (See addendum C.) Applicant will qualify as a Generalist I with 6 academic hours and six hours of approved training, but must have 6 more academic hours to become a Generalist II.

Applicant who meets education requirements but does not fully meet the experience requirement can also qualify as a Generalist I Candidate: These applicants must work under the guidance of a TAP Mentor for up to one year and be recommended by the TAP Mentor.

3. Generalist II

Bachelor, Master, or Doctorate Degree in Early Childhood Education and two years experience working with infants, toddlers, or preschool children: and two letters of recommendation attesting to technical assistance skills and experience **or**

Bachelor, Master, or Doctorate Degree in another field with a minimum of *eighteen semester hours documented **core coursework in Early Childhood Education and two years experience working with infants, toddlers, or preschool children and two letters of recommendation attesting to technical assistance skills and experience.

This level of Certification would be recommended for Type II Guided Technical Assistance and some Type I Issue Focused Technical Assistance.

4. Generalist II Candidate

Applicant meets the experience requirements for Generalist II, but does not fully meet the education requirements:

A Bachelor, Master, or Doctorate Degree in another major with at least 12 hours of **core ECE coursework- has two years to complete additional hours of ECE core coursework to total 18 hours. Alternative equivalency training may be considered for six of the eighteen required hours. (See addendum C.)

*Courses must be three semester hours or four quarter hours **Early Childhood Education** classes taken for academic credit at a two year/four year college or university accredited by the appropriate regional accrediting body as approved by the US Department of Education or the Council on Higher Education Accreditation.

** Core Early Childhood Education courses are those that meet core knowledge content areas of child growth and development, curriculum, curriculum activities and materials, health and safety practices, child guidance, observation and assessment, and program administration and supervision.

Applicant who meets education requirements but does not fully meet the experience requirement must work under the guidance of a TAP Mentor for a period of up to one year and be recommended by the TAP Mentor.

5. *Generalist III*

Applicant has been certified as a G II for two years. The G III applicant must submit completed training in each of the competency domains, with the combined training hours being a total of ten hours. All training must have been attended within the last five years. The Applicant must also have completed an approved five day training on a reflective collaboration model for providing technical assistance. Documentation of training should be submitted to CCCC.

This level of certification would be recommended for Type III Reflective Collaboration Technical Assistance as well as Types I and II.

6. *Specialist*

Associate, Bachelor, Master, or Doctorate Degree with National Certification for that specific discipline and two years of relevant work experience in that specific area. Disciplines for which specific degrees are not available, may be evaluated with significant work training and experience for a minimum of two years.

This level of certification would be recommended for Type I Issue focused Technical Assistance and could also work in collaboration with a Generalist on Guided TA.

7. *TAP Mentor*

A mentoring TAP is one who provides guidance, information and feedback for the TAP Candidate, as well as being a role model. The guidance provided helps Candidates improve their skills in working with early childhood program staff. It is recommended that the mentoring TAP not be the supervisor of the TAP Candidate.

a. Criteria for Mentoring TAP:

- Mentor must have been a Certified TAP (Generalist I, II, or III) for at least one year
- Mentor must attend a training regarding the roles and responsibilities of a mentor in the SC TAP System

b. Responsibilities of a Mentor:

- Mentor must have at least ten contact hours with the candidate including:
 - Three separate observations of the candidate delivering TA
 - Two face to face meetings with the candidate

- The remaining contact hours may be email, phone, or sharing resources
- Mentor must submit TAP Candidate reference form upon completion of mentoring

b. Responsibilities of the TAP Candidate

- TAP Candidate must make the original contact with the Mentoring TAP and arrange future contacts
- The TAP Candidate must secure permission /arrange for the mentor to observe candidate on site and to meet with the client.
- The TAP Candidate must participate in two face to face consultations with mentor and three observations by mentor.

V. Certified Technical Assistance Providers' Responsibilities:

1. Work closely with program monitors, licensing specialists and other agencies or resource providers as appropriate to ensure that educators of young children receive the type and level of guidance appropriate to improve services;
2. Work closely with educators of young children to develop and implement a quality improvement plan. The improvement plan shall include key objectives, measurable results, and be time-limited;
3. Attend, within a three year period from certification date, three professional development trainings or conferences (with a minimum of 5 contact hours each) that enhance knowledge and skills regarding the care and education of infants, toddlers, preschool and/or school age children;
4. Attend, within a three year period from certification date, three professional development trainings or conferences (with a minimum of 5 contact hours each) that enhance knowledge and skills in providing technical assistance;
5. Send documentation of thirty hours of professional development as described in 3 and 4 above, to CCCCD every three years for certification renewal. TAP certification will not be renewed without documentation of Professional Development hours.
6. Maintain documentation of TA services through the online CCCCD TAP reporting system for all DSS sponsored technical assistance.
7. Follow all documentation of TA services procedures required by the TAP' sponsoring agency (employer).

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TYPES OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

TYPE I - Issue Focused

DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES	TA STEPS
<p>Issue-focused Content specific (Topical, Immediate, or Crisis Intervention)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivered for the purpose of providing information/support to address an identified area of interest or concern Delivered for the purpose of returning a situation to normal as soon as possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulatory requirements (opening a child care facility) Program Administration- student file organization for DSS Abuse/neglect referral-Education plan for “Back to Sleep” SIDS Nutrition Issues-Dietician-food program Licensing deficiency (ratios, staff schedules, staff issues, health & safety) Creating a child study team or child assessment portfolio for First Steps 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Rapid needs assessment Action Planning Directed implementation Re-assessment Maintenance
TYPE II-Guided		
DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES	TA STEPS
<p>Formal Assessment-based, targeting specific key areas that improve global program quality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivered for the purpose of improving assessment scores focused on a particular aspect of program quality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ERS-improve specific subscales Curriculum Model- Implement specific model in individual classroom ABC Program Standards- Improve scores by offering guidance in a specific standard or a specific classroom 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing relationship building Formal Assessment Guided Action Planning Shared implementation Post Assessment to demonstrate measurable progress Maintenance

TYPE III- Reflective Collaboration DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES	TA STEPS
<p>Provider identified goals and shared formal assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivered for the purpose of ensuring sustainable long-term program quality improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early Learning Standards-Implementing in classroom lesson plans Inclusion- Using sign language and other communication techniques to work with a child that is visually impaired Becoming accredited in national system 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Building an ongoing relationship with the Consultee Assessment Shared Action planning Shared implementation of the Action Plan Evaluation/post assessment of the plan Maintenance (Consultee assumes responsibility for maintenance of current plan)

CERTIFIED TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDER LEVELS

CERTIFIED TAP

EDUCATION:

AA in Early Childhood Education with at least 21 hours of ECE
OR

Bachelor or higher **degree** in major other than Early Childhood Education/Child Development with at least ***12 hours** of ****core ECE** coursework

EXPERIENCE:

Minimum of two years of professional experience with young children in an early childhood education setting

RECOMMENDATION:

Two letters attesting to technical assistance skills and experience

GENERALIST ONE (G1)

TAP CANDIDATE

APPLICANT WHO MEETS EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENT BUT DOES NOT FULLY MEET EDUCATION:

Bachelor or higher **degree** with ***six hours** of ****ECE** coursework –has **2 years** to complete ***six additional** hours of ECE ****core** coursework +

APPLICANT WHO MEETS EDUCATION REQUIREMENT BUT DOES NOT FULLY MEET

EXPERIENCE:

Must work under the **guidance** of Certified G1,G2,G3 TAP for a period of up to **one year** and be recommended by the TAP mentor.

+Alternative equivalency training may be considered for six hours of education.(See Addendum C)

*Courses must be three semester hours or four quarter hours **Early Childhood Education** classes taken for academic credit at a two year/four year college or university accredited by the appropriate regional accrediting body as approved by the US Department of Education or the Council on Higher Education Accreditation.

** Core Early Childhood Education courses are those that meet core knowledge content areas of child growth and development, curriculum, curriculum activities and materials, health and safety practices, child guidance, observation and assessment, and program administration and supervision.

CERTIFIED TAP

GENERALIST TWO (G2)

EDUCATION:

Bachelor or higher **degree** in Early Childhood Education/Child Development **or** Degree with other major and at least ***18 hours** of ****core ECE** coursework

EXPERIENCE:

Minimum of two years of professional experience with young children in an early childhood education setting

RECOMMENDATION:

Two letters attesting to technical assistance skills and experience

TAP CANDIDATE

APPLICANT WHO MEETS EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENT BUT DOES NOT FULLY MEET**EDUCATION:**

Bachelor or higher **degree** with ***twelve hours** of **ECE** coursework – has **2 years** to complete ***six additional** hours of **ECE **core** coursework+

APPLICANT WHO MEETS EDUCATION REQUIREMENT BUT DOES NOT FULLY MEET**EXPERIENCE:**

Must work under the **guidance** of Certified G1,G2,G3 TAP for a period of up to **one year** and be recommended by the TAP mentor.

+Alternative equivalency training may be considered for six hours of education.(See Addendum C)

*Courses must be three semester hours or four quarter hours **Early Childhood Education** classes taken for academic credit at a two year/four year college or university accredited by the appropriate regional accrediting body as approved by the US Department of Education or the Council on Higher Education Accreditation.

** Core Early Childhood Education courses are those that meet core knowledge content areas of child growth and development, curriculum, curriculum activities and materials, health and safety practices, child guidance, observation and assessment, and program administration and supervision.

CERTIFIED TAP

Generalist II (G2) for two years

Completed 10 total hours of training comprised of hours from each of the competency domains

Completed an approved 5 day training for providing collaborative technical assistance

GENERALIST THREE (G3)

TAP CANDIDATE

None

SPECIALIST

Education:

Associate, Bachelor, Master, or Doctorate Degree with professional certification in specific discipline

Experience:

Minimum 2 years work experience in that discipline

Recommendation:

Two letters attesting to technical assistance skills and experience

None

TAP MENTOR

- Mentor must have been a Certified TAP(Generalist I, II, or III) for at least one year
- Mentor must attend a training regarding roles and responsibilities of a mentor in the SC TAP System

Training Evaluated in Lieu of College Course Credit

General Guidelines

Any in-depth training on an early childhood topic area that is not designed specifically for parents and is conducted by a nationally recognized organization will be considered for replacement of core early care and education hours after the applicant has documented at least six core early care and education academic hours.

Training with at least 15 contact hours= 1 hour credit

Training with at least 30 contact hours= 2 hours credit

Training with at least 45 contact hours= 3 hours credit

The following courses have been evaluated according to the guidelines listed above. This is not an exhaustive list. Any training that meets the guidelines may be submitted for evaluation.

CDA

Initial Certification	3 hours credit
Currently Renewed	1 hour credit

High Scope

Lead Teacher Training	3 hours credit
Trainer of Teachers	3 hours credit

Creative Curriculum

5/6 day Training	2 hours credit
8 to 10 day training	3 hours credit
2 day Coaches training	1 hour credit

Parents As Teachers

Birth to Three (7 day)	3 hours credit
Preschool (3 to 5)	1 hour credit

ECERS or ITERS

3 day training Frank Porter Graham Training	1 hour credit
5 day training	2 hours credit
8 day intensive training	3 hours credit

PCAN

18 hour training	1 hour credit
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Program Administration Scale

3 day Reliability training	1 hour credit
3 day TA training	1 hour credit

Program for Infant Toddler Care (assumes no college credit given)

Modules 1 & 2 with Certification Papers	3 hours credit
Module 5 with Certification Papers	1.5 hours credit

Modules 3 & 4 with Certification Papers	3 hours credit
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