PQAS and Professional Development Requirements for Keystone STARS

What is Pennsylvania's Quality Assurance System (PQAS)?

> **Pennsylvania's Quality Assurance System (PQAS)** is designed to ensure quality professional development (PD) and technical assistance (TA) is provided to early childhood and school-age practitioners in Pennsylvania. Approved instructors are required to meet and maintain established qualifications, including educational achievements and professional development experience.

What is the benefit of taking PQAS approved professional development over non-PQAS approved professional development?

> When choosing a PQAS approved instructor, staff can be assured they will be receiving quality instruction from a content expert. All PQAS approved courses are listed in the PD Registry at www.papdregistry.org. In addition, all PQAS approved coursework that is taken by an individual will be included on their PD Learning Record in the PD Registry. This learning record is used by quality coaches and designators in the Keystone STARS designation process.

What are the expectations for professional development in Keystone STARS Performance Standards?

> Unless staff are actively enrolled in a CDA or academic program of study in Early Childhood Education or an equivalent degree, they are required to take professional development courses in order to meet the Professional Development and Staff Qualifications Performance Standards of Keystone STARS. (SQ 3.4.3 through SQ 3.4.9) In order to meet these indicators, the professional development taken must be provided by a PQAS approved instructor. The only exceptions are related to the vendor-specific tools of curriculum, developmental screening and observation-based assessment indicated in SQ 3.4.6, 3.4.7 and 3.4.8. (More information on these below)
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> The following chart lists the STARS Quality Indicators in the Professional Development and Staff Qualifications by number, topic area, PQAS requirement, as well as the corresponding Core Knowledge Competency (CKC):

SQ Quality Indicator	Topic Area	PQAS Required?	CKCs
SQ 3.4.3	Language development and academic achievement of children who are culturally and linguistically diverse	Yes	CKC 1 CKC 5
SQ 3.4.4	Social and emotional development of children	Yes	CKC 1 CKC 2
SQ 3.4.5	Positive interactions with children and families	Yes	CKC 3 CKC 5
SQ 3.4.6	Curriculum selected and in use by the program	Yes*	CKC 2 CKC 8
SQ 3.4.7	Developmental screening tool selected and in use by the program	Yes*	CKC 1 CKC 4

SQ 3.4.8	Observation-based assessment of children's development selected and in use by the program	Yes*	CKC 1 CKC 2 CKC 4 CKC 8
SQ 3.4.9	Special needs of young children	Yes	CKC 1 CKC 3 CKC 4 CKC 7

*Flexibility offered for this quality indicator. See below.

Please see the PA Keys website at www.pakeys.org for a thorough listing of PQAS approved courses that provide approved professional development in the above quality indicators. Coursework can take the form of face-to-face or online modules including those offered through Better Kid Care and other national approved organizations.

Is there a listing of PQAS approved courses that would apply to the Keystone STARS Performance Indicators of SQ 3.4.3 through SQ 3.4.9?

Currently professional development listed in the PD Registry is linked to the CKC areas rather than to specific Keystone STARS Performance Indicators as the indicators tend to change over time. In addition, as new courses are added to the PD Registry, any list would require consistent updates in order to complete. The chart above offers the CKC areas that relate to the current SQ quality indicators and can be useful when choosing courses to meet the SQ topic areas.

How do I find PQAS approved courses in the PD Registry?

All courses found in the PD Registry are PQAS approved and individuals are encouraged to find events posted on the Training Calendar by going to www.papdregistry.org. Once logged in, they can click the Training Calendar from the left menu.

Individuals may search by specific criteria such as:

- Keywords of Training
- Course Title
- City
- County
- Date range
- Knowledge Area
- CDA Content Areas
- Level
- Language
- Modality of training such as classroom, E-Learning, and online self-paced.

The Pennsylvania Key has created over 20 PQAS approved E-Learning Courses on various topics to meet your needs. To find these courses, check the "E-Learning" box at the bottom of the Training calendar and uncheck all other options. A list of these courses will allow you to register for the course and complete the course directly within the PD Registry for your convenience.

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How do I find PQAS approved instructors in the PD Registry?

PQAS approved instructors in your area can be found by logging into www.papdregistry.org and clicking on Training Calendar in the left menu. Click on the "Find Instructors" tab on the Training Calendar and search by:

- Name
- Core Knowledge Areas
- Age Group
- Training Language
- Training Counties
- Keyword of Trainings

Once you click "Search Instructors," a list of approved PQAS Instructors will be shown on the display.

What if I cannot find a specific course I am looking for in the PD Registry or if there are not any courses offered in my area?

If you are not finding a specific course in the registry, or courses in your area, you may contact a PQAS approved instructor and arrange to have PD provided "on-demand". To find a PQAS approved instructor use the instructions above and click on "Contact Instructor" to reach out to the instructor with your request.

What options exist for vendor-specific tools such as curriculum (SQ 3.4.7), developmental screening (SQ 3.4.8), and observation-based assessment (SQ 3.4.9)?

In instances where a quality indicator speaks to a vendor specific tool including curriculum (SQ 3.4.6), developmental screening (SQ 3.4.7), and observation-based assessment (SQ 3.4.8), OCDEL recognizes the need for increased flexibility as these trainings can often be costly and hard to find when taken directly from the vendor.

For SQ 3.4.7, SQ 3.4.8, and SQ 3.4.9, all three topics should be in the specific curriculum or tool chosen and in use by, the program. Best practice would be for all participating staff to take this training directly from the vendor. However, when this is cost-prohibitive, other options are also acceptable. Please refer to the chart below.

Topics: • *Curriculum* • *Developmental Screening* • *Child Observation-Based Assessment*	**Accepted Professional Development**	**Additional PD Required**	**Documentation Required**
Option 1	Training directly from the vendor (excluding webinars).	No	a. Certificate of completion from vendor
Option 2	PQAS Training in the **specific** curriculum, screening tool or assessment tool. Dependent on vendor requirement instructor delivery.	No	a. Professional Development Learning Record- verified PQAS hours

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Option 3	Taking part in vendor-offered webinars in the specific curriculum, screening tool or assessment.	Yes PQAS training in the general topics of curriculum, developmental screening or child observation-based assessment*	a. Both the staff person and a member of the program leadership team should sign off on the screenshot/certificate of completion. AND b. Professional Development Learning Record-verified PQAS hours
Option 4	On-site information sharing to take place between a Master Teacher or Leadership Team Member and the individual staff person.	Yes PQAS training in the general topics of curriculum, developmental screening or child observation-based assessment	a. Sharing sessions should be structured, organized and documented with sign-offs from both the "trainer" and the staff. AND Professional Development Learning Record- verified PQAS hours

Examples include: *Assessment: Beyond the Basics of Observation and Data Utilization; Linking Standards, Curriculum Framework, and Assessment; Using Ages and Stages Questionnaires as a Screening Tool; Director Instructor Child Observation series.*

How do Act 48 credit hours relate to PQAS approved PD?

Act 48 credit hours do qualify as PQAS-approved PD for Keystone STARS designations. Some courses in the PD Registry have Act 48 credit hours associated with them allowing for those courses to appear on a staff person's PD Learning Record. For Act 48 coursework taken from outside the PD Registry, the individual will need to print out their PERMS information for review at the time of STARS designation.

At this time, all **online** courses offered by the Pennsylvania Key are Act 48 approved. If an individual has their PPID number listed in their profile, information is sent to PDE each month for those that have completed these courses to be awarded ACT 48 hours in their PERMS account. If they take any other type of course other than online that is ACT 48 approved in the PD Registry, they must complete a form at the face to face session and the instructor will send the information to PDE on their behalf to receive ACT 48 credits on their PERMS account.

What are the expectations for professional development taken to increase knowledge in other areas of Keystone STARS Performance Standards?

Providers may choose to take professional development in topics that are not specifically identified in the Staff Qualifications and Professional Development standards. As these indicators themselves do not require PD be taken as part of fulfilling the indicator, programs have flexibility in the type of PD taken to include non-PQAS approved PD. However, it should be noted that non-PQAS PD taken will not be captured in a provider's PD Learning Record in the PD Registry.

Examples of non-PQAS PD that may help providers in meeting Keystone STARS Performance standards are as follows:

Content Expert/Resource	Content	STARS Performance Standard(s)
Medical Professional	Health-related issues	FC.3.4.1 LM.3.4.10
Legal Professional	Legal issues	LM.2.2 FC.2.1 FC.2.4
Financial Services Professional	Business/Budget issues	LM.2.1 LM.3.4.7
Dietary Professional	Nutrition	Bonus

I know a great subject area expert, but they are not currently PQAS-approved. How can they become a PQAS approved instructor?

The Pennsylvania Key is always seeking to approve new PQAS trainers to share their knowledge in specific content areas with the field. Offering PQAS training hours guarantees quality trainings approved by the Pennsylvania Key. If you, or a trainer you have used in the past, are interested in becoming an approved instructor and sharing knowledge and expertise determined by your education and qualifications, please check out the PQAS page on the PA Keys website. https://www.pakeys.org/get-professional-development/pqas/. It is important to note that there are multiple PQAS approvals available including director, faculty , standardized, and professional development instructor.

What are the requirements for SQ 3.4.10 related to non-instructional staff and professional development?

In order to meet the professional development indicator of SQ 3.4.10, non-instructional staff do not have to receive PQAS PD. The program's leadership team should discuss appropriate trainings with the non-instructional staff and at minimum, share information related to developmentally-appropriate practice and appropriate child-adult interactions. In some cases, PQAS approved PD may be considered best practice and appropriate for non-instructional staff.

If you have additional questions, please contact us at registry@pakeys.org.

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