

YOUR OWN EDUCATION PLAN: CHOOSING THE BEST CONTINUING EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

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No matter where you are on the learning continuum line from novice to advanced, you need to continually update your genealogical education and skills. Choosing the best options for you takes matching the right opportunities to your needs and some thoughtful planning.

Just like a research plan, a plan for continuing your genealogical education is extremely helpful and should be revisited often. Planning your personal sequence of events according to your available time and money should take into consideration your current experience level along with any other commitments you may have, whether personal or business. Some events can be attended concurrently but others might need to be sequential. Staying abreast of new opportunities helps to keep your education plan current.

Assessing your best learning situations

- What is your experience level?
 - Are you a genealogical beginner, intermediate, or advanced?
 - What is your comfort and level of experience with computers?
- What do you need to learn?
 - Specific topics to address weaknesses or fill in your knowledge base
 - Specific techniques (i.e., transcribing, abstracting, evidence analysis?)
 - Specific skills for an upcoming project (writing, database management?)
- Learning style?
 - Do you learn better interacting with an instructor and asking questions (auditory learner)? Does it matter if it is face-to-face or virtual interaction?
 - Do you desire direct feedback? Individual comments or just correct answers?
 - Do you need visuals as well as reading prepared material (visual learner)?
 - Do you need hands-on experiences (tactile learner)?
- Smorgasbord or full meal?
 - Do you want to taste a little bit of various topics in your experience?
 - Do you want to delve deeply into one topic?

- Instructor-led, peer-led, or self-study?
 - Do you need the discipline of instructor-led instruction?
 - Do you enjoy working with others in a cooperative learning environment?
 - Do you have the discipline and desire for self-guided study?
- Length of time commitment?
 - What else is going on in your life during the length of the learning experience?
 - Can you devote the time needed to fully take advantage of the opportunity?
- Travel flexibility?
 - Can you travel to places with learning events?
 - Do you have periodic commitments or ones which keep you fully homebound?
 - Can arrangements be made so that you can be away?
 - Can you “piggy back” other purposes for the travel, such as research or business?
- Cost?
 - What is the cost-benefit ratio?
 - Learning what you need most, and have an application for, saves time and money spent on things you may already know or cannot soon use.
 - Scholarships are available for some opportunities.

POPULAR LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

INSTITUTES

- Institute of Genealogy and Historical Research (IGHR) at Samford University; ten courses held each June, four of which are offered every year and the others on rotation; registration is taken in January. <http://www4.samford.edu/schools/ighr/index.html>
- National Institute on Genealogical Research (NIGR) at the National Archives in Washington, DC; one course limited to 40 students held in July; registration is taken in February. <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~natgenin>
- Salt Lake Institute of Genealogy; multiple courses held in January for one week; most topics rotate each year; registration opens the summer before. <http://www.infouga.org>

CONFERENCES

- National Genealogical Society Annual Conference most often held in May each year in various cities. <http://www.NGSgenealogy.org>
- Federation of Genealogical Societies held in August or September each year in various cities. <http://www.FGS.org>
- APG Professional Management Conference held before the FGS conference; single day of professional issues and Skillbuilding. <http://www.APGen.org>
- Brigham Young University Conference on Family History and Genealogy; four days multi-track in July in Provo, Utah. <http://ce.byu.edu/cw/cwgen>
- Brigham Young University Conference on Computerized Family History and Genealogy; two days in March. <http://ce.byu.edu/cw/cwcompu>
- Family History Expos monthly conferences or research trips, <http://www.fhexpos.com>

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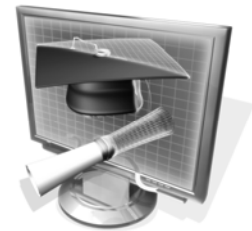
- New England Regional Conference held in April of odd years in various New England cities; multi-track; special interest group discussions. <http://www.NERGC.org>
- Southern California Genealogical Society Jamboree held in June each year in Burbank; multi-track; many hands-on workshops. <http://www.SCGSgenealogy.com>

WORKSHOPS

- Regional In-depth Genealogical Studies Alliance (RIGSA) held in October each year at one of the National Archives branches in Atlanta, GA, or Fort Worth, TX. <http://www.rigsalliance.org>
- Ohio Genealogical Society Summer Workshop held at the OGS Library in June or July each year. Lectures, hands-on exercises, after hours library lock-in. <http://www.OGS.org>
- BCG Educational Fund Workshop usually held the day before the NGS conference in May; two topics with hands-on exercises. <http://www.BCGcertification.org/educationfund/index.html>

COURSES

- Akamai University is a virtual university for many subjects and is currently unaccredited. <http://www.akamaiuniversity.us/index.html>
- Boston University Genealogical Research Certificate program. 14 weeks online, 14 weeks on campus, or 14 summer days on campus. Discount given to APG, NGS and NEHGS members. <http://professional.bu.edu/cpe/Genealogy.asp>
- Brigham Young University Family History undergraduate program resulting in a B. A., Family History. <http://familyhistory.byu.edu/academic/academic.html>
- Brigham Young University Family History Certificate program. Six 3-credit courses as required. <http://familyhistory.byu.edu/academic/certificate.html>
- Brigham Young University Independent Study. Students select specialized courses that center upon geographic areas or ethnic groups. <http://ce.byu.edu/is/site/courses/free.cfm>
- Heritage Genealogical College. Various non-accredited courses not affiliated with any university or college. <http://genealogy.edu>
- Monterey Peninsula College Family Research Studies Certificate of Achievement and Associate Degree www.mpc.edu/degrees/degreescertificates/pages/familyresearchstudiesgenealogy.aspx
- National Institute for Genealogical Studies, affiliated with the University of Toronto. On-line courses resulting in a certificate. <http://www.genealogicalstudies.com>
- University of Washington Certificate in Genealogy and Family History. Three terms (9 months). <http://pce.uw.edu/prog.aspx?id=3651>
- University of West Virginia e-courses. <http://eservices.wvu.edu/elearn/index.cfm#9>



GUIDED REPOSITORY TOURS

- The New England Historic Genealogical Society (NEHGS) offers various guided travel and research opportunities in such places as Ireland, Quebec, Salt Lake City and Boston. <http://www.newenglandancestors.org/events/tours.asp>

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- The National Genealogical Society (NGS) offers guided research trips to Salt Lake City. http://www.ngsgenealogy.org/cs/research_trips
- Individuals also sponsor guided tours to Salt Lake City, for example, John Michael Neil (<http://www.rootdig.com/slctrip.html>) and C. Ann Staley, CG, CGL and Margo Fariss Brewer (<http://www.ann-martrips.com>).

GUIDED AND PEER-LED STUDY

- Article discussion groups are a great way to examine a peer-reviewed journal article in a group setting. The Great Lakes Chapter of APG sponsors a monthly in-person meeting in Akron, Ohio and at the Ohio Genealogical Society annual conference; phone-in attendance is possible. The TGF email list supports a virtual live chat to discuss articles.
- National Genealogical Society, *American Genealogy: A Home Study Course*. Students pursue at their own pace sixteen lessons on CDs with optional grading and feedback. http://www.NGSGenealogy.org/cs/homestudy_course_cd
- NGS on-line topical courses (Federal Census, Special Census, Transcribing and Abstracting Records, Working with Deeds); Family History Skills course free to members. http://www.NGSGenealogy.org/cs/online_courses
- Pharos courses are self-study via emailed documents with on-line tutors available through arranged chat rooms. <http://www.pharostutors.com>
- The *Professional Genealogy* Study Group takes nineteen months to study the twenty-nine chapters of the book, create assignments which are peer-reviewed and have a monthly online chat with a group mentor. <http://www.progenstudy.org>

SELF-INSTRUCTION

- Study major journals. Past issues available online to members of NGS and NEHGS.
- Study guide books, i.e., Val Greenwood's *Researcher's Guide to American Genealogy*.
- Listen to lectures on audio CD from Jamb, Inc.; syllabuses may be obtained from the sponsoring organizations if in stock. <http://www.jamb-inc.com>
- Ancestry.com's Learning Center videos at <http://learn.ancestry.com/LearnMore/videos.aspx>
- Join the APG and read the *APG Quarterly*.
- Webcasts from the 2009 Professional Management Conference are available at: http://www.apgen.org/publications/pmc_webcast.html
- Skill-building articles, self-tests, report and narrative compilation examples and instructional videos at <http://www.BCGcertification.org>.
- Read blogs or online articles and "e-mags."
- Research Classes online (and otherwise) at www.FamilySearch.org
http://www.familysearch.org/eng/library/education/frameset_education.asp?
- Self-paced informational slides (somewhat dated) comprising various topics at <http://www.genealogy.com/university.html?>
- New England Historic Genealogical Society seminars on various topics. http://www.newenglandancestors.org/events/online_seminars.asp
- Roots Television has several videos about genealogy and genealogical news. <http://www.rootstelevision.com>
- Research experience in a wide variety of records can be its own learning opportunity.

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SCHOLARSHIPS AND OTHER MONEY-SAVING TIPS

Strategies to save money on conferences include: register early, carpool to conferences closer to home, use frequent flier miles, share rooming expenses, stay further away at a cheaper hotel or camp at a state park, attend smaller or shorter conferences; browse just the free vendor hall and view any demos offered there, save a little each month toward your education fund, use tuition as birthday and Christmas gift ideas, take on sufficient client work to pay for learning opportunities.

Qualifying educational opportunities or organizations make the following scholarships available.

- The American Society of Genealogists (ASG) awards a scholarship of \$500 toward tuition and expenses for attendance at IGHR, NIGR or Boston University's Genealogical Research certificate program. http://www.fasg.org/asg_scholar_award.html
- Birdie Monk Holsclaw Memorial Scholarship for Samford University Institute of Genealogy & Historical Research (IGHR). Application is open to all genealogists and consists of a short resume listing genealogical experience and a 150-200 word essay describing how IGHR will help advance their genealogical research skills. Administered by the Colorado Council of Genealogical Societies, P.O. Box 40270, Denver, CO 80204.
- Brian W. Hutchison funded an endowment for an annual scholarship of up to \$500 to a Canadian resident for study in a recognized educational or credentialing program. Administered by Alberta Family History Society. <http://www.afhs.ab.ca/scholarship/>
- Dee Dee King, CG, sponsors scholarships to TGF list members (new in 2010). For more information see <http://www.ForensicGenealogyServices.com/GivingBack.html>.
- Donald Mosher Memorial Award for Colonial Virginia Research. While not actually a scholarship, this award of \$500 can go a long way toward continuing education. <http://www.bcgcertification.org/educationfund/#MOSHER>
- The National Genealogical Society (<http://www.ngsgenealogy.org/cs/competitions>) has several competitions including:
 - Family History Writing Contest (expense-paid trip to NGS conference)
 - Filby Award for Genealogical Librarianship (\$1,000)
 - Home Study Course Scholarship (full course)
 - Rubincam Youth Award (\$500, NGS Home Study Course, membership).
- The National Institute for Genealogical Research Alumni Association (NIGRAA) sponsors a \$500 scholarship to NIGR each year. <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~nigraa/>
- Walter Lee Sheppard, Jr., Prize awarded to an IGHR Advanced Course 4 "gold seal" winner for the cost of a BCG certification application submission.
- Jean Thomason Scholarship awarded for one course at IGHR to a qualifying library employee. http://www4.samford.edu/schools/ighr/IGHR_scholarship.html

STANDARDS

- *BCG Genealogical Standards Manual* (Orem: Ancestry Publishing, 2000): 27. "Continuing-Education Standards" 73 and 74.
- NGS Guidelines for Self-Improvement and Growth http://www.ngsgenealogy.org/galleries/Ref_Researching/gsselfImprovement.pdf

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	Experience Level			Learning Leadership				Time	On- line	In person	Cost		
	Beg- inner	Inter- mediate	Ad- vanced	Instructor	Lecturer	Peer	Self				Under \$100	\$100- \$500	Over \$500
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Akami University			•	•				2 or 4 years	•				•
Article discussion – APG GLC		•	•			•		∞		•	•		
Article discussion – TGF		•	•			•		∞	•		•		
APG Professional Management Conference		•	•		•			1 day		•		•	
BCG Education Fund workshop		•	•		•			1 day		•	•		
Boston University Genealogical Research Certificate		•	•	•				14 weeks	•	•			•
Boston University – Summer Intensive		•	•	•				14 days		•			•
BYU Family History Bachelor’s Degree	•	•	•	•				4 years		•			•
BYU Family History Certificate	•	•	•	•				2 years		•			•
BYU Independent Study	•						•	1 year	•		•		
Email lists (APG public, APG members, TGF)		•	•			•		∞	•		•		
FGS conference	•	•	•		•			4 days		•		•	
Heritage Genealogical College	•	•					•	1, 2, or 4 years	•				•
IGHR at Samford University	•	•	•	•				1 week		•		•	

Elissa Scalise Powell ©2010	Experience Level			Learning Leadership				Time	On- line	In person	Cost		
	Beg- inner	Inter- mediate	Ad- vanced	Instructor	Lecturer	Peer	Self				Under \$100	\$100- \$500	Over \$500
Monterey Peninsula College	●	●		●				2 years		●			●
NERG Conference	●	●			●			3 days		●			
NGS conference	●	●	●		●			4 days		●		●	
NGS HSC (2 opts.)	●	●				●	●	1 year	●			●	
NGS online topics	●						●	varies	●		●		
NIGR at NARA		●	●	●				5 days		●		●	
NIGS – Toronto	●	●	●	●				varies	●			●	●
OGS conference	●	●			●			3 days		●		●	
OGS workshop		●			●			5 days		●		●	
ProGen Study		●	●			●		19 mos.	●		●		
Repository Tours		●	●		●			1 week		●			●
Research experience	●	●	●				●		●	●			
RIGSA		●	●	●				5 days		●		●	
SLIG	●	●	●	●				5 days		●		●	
Self-study: audio lectures	●	●	●				●	∞			●		
So. Cal. Jamboree	●	●	●		●			3 days		●		●	
University of Washington	●			●				9 months		●			●
Webcast: APGen.org		●	●				●	1 hour each	●		●		
Website: BCGcertification.org		●					●	varies	●		●		
Website: FamilySearch.org	●	●	●				●	varies	●		●		

YOUR OWN EDUCATION PLAN SELF-ASSESSMENT WORKSHEET

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What is your experience level? (Circle one in each row.)

Genealogical:	Novice	Intermediate	Advanced
Computer comfort:	Need help at times	Adequate	Very comfortable

What do you need to learn?

Topics needed:	
Techniques needed:	
Skills needed:	

Learning style? (Circle one in each row.)

Instructor interaction	In person	On computer
Feedback:	Individual comments	Canned answers / comments
Visuals:	Illustrations really help me	I can picture the points otherwise
Hands-on:	Like to practice with homework	Theoretical info is good enough for me

Smorgasbord or full meal?

I like to:	Experience many topics in one opportunity	Delve deeply into one topic
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Instructor-led, peer-led, or self-study? (Rank the following three by preference: 1, 2, 3.)

	Instructor-led		Peer-group cooperative		Self study
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Timing of commitment? (List when you are busy and when you are free in a general year.)

Free times for me:	Days:	Weeks:	Months:
Busy times for me:			

Travel flexibility?

Travel	Flexible	Sometimes	Hardly ever
Impediments	Time	Money	Commitments
Resources for impediments:			

I can afford to? (Circle one in each row.)

Cost?	Free	\$1 to \$499	\$500 to \$999	\$1000 and over
How often?	Less than once a year	Once a year	Twice a year	More often

What Scholarships do you qualify for?

Name	Amount	Due Date	Requirement