

# Agricultural Pest Control Adviser (PCA)



Department of Pesticide Regulation  
Licensing & Certification Program  
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# PCA Background

- What is a PCA?
- About PCA License

# What is a PCA?

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- Any person who:
  - Offers recommendation on any agricultural use of pesticides,
  - Holds himself/herself as an authority on any agricultural use, or
  - Solicits services or sales for any agricultural use.
- PCAs specialize in pest management and recommend use of pesticides and other alternatives
- Provide written recommendations on agricultural use

# “Agricultural use” means:

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- The use of any pesticide, method, or device to control pests, or
- The use of any pesticide for regulating plant growth or defoliation of plants.
- It excludes the sale or use of pesticides in properly labeled packages or containers that are intended for:
  - Home use
  - Structural pest control
  - Industrial or institutional use
  - Controlling pests and diseases of animals under the written prescription of a veterinarian
  - Local districts or other public agencies operating under a cooperative agreement with the State Dept. of Health Services

# About the PCA License

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- The PCA license has specific minimum educational and/or technical experience requirements
- Must be approved prior to taking examination
- Once approved, the applicant must pass:
  - 1) Laws, Regulations, and Basic Principles exam
  - 2) At least one pest control category exam



**PCAMail@cdpr.ca.gov**

# Importance of PCAs in the Agricultural Field

- Why PCAs are Necessary
- PCA Statistics
- Types of Career Opportunities

# Why are PCAs Necessary?

- PCAs provide important, educational information about agricultural pesticide products and uses
- PCAs are focused in at least one area of pest management—very knowledgeable
- PCAs meet the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirement to ensure the use of pesticides is the best alternative based on site specifics

# PCA Categories

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- PCAs must pass **at least one** of the category exams and must be licensed in categories in which they will be making recommendations
- Categories include:
  - A. Invertebrates
  - B. Plant Pathogens
  - C. Nematodes
  - D. Vertebrates
  - E. Weeds
  - F. Defoliation
  - G. Plant Growth Regulators



# PCA License Statistics

(As of May 18, 2017)

Category	Category Name	# of Licensed PCAs
A	Insects, Mites & Other Invertebrates	3,395
B	Plant Pathogens	2,967
C	Nematodes	2,063
D	Vertebrate Pests	1,816
E	Weed Control	3,492
F	Defoliation	1,762
G	Plant Growth Regulators	2,343

# PCA Career Opportunities

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- Working for Industry
  - Agricultural Companies
- Working for Government
  - County
  - State
  - Federal
- Working for Hire
  - Most PCAs are self employed and work for growers

# How to Qualify for a PCA License

- Minimum Educational Requirements
- Core Areas of Study

[Click for PCA  
Application  
Packet](#)



# Minimum PCA Requirements

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- Three options to qualify for PCA license:
  - **Option 1:** Bachelor's degree + educational requirements
  - **Option 2:** Ph.D. only
  - **Option 3:** No degree + educational requirements + work experience

[Click for  
Minimum  
Qualifications  
\(3 CCR 6550\)](#)



# Option 1: Bachelor's Degree

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- **Bachelor's degree in:**
  - Agricultural Sciences
  - Biological Sciences
  - Natural Sciences
  - Pest Management
- + Educational requirements:
  - 42 semester/63 quarter units in core course areas
  - 2.0 GPA



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# Option 2: Doctoral Degree

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- **Doctoral degree in:**
  - Agricultural Sciences
  - Biological Sciences
  - Natural Sciences
  - Pest Management

**No specific  
course  
requirements**



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# Option 3: No Degree

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- **No degree, or**
  - **No degree in accepted area of study**
- + **Educational Requirements:**
    - 42 semester/ 63 quarter units in core course areas
    - 2.0 GPA
    - **24 months technical experience**



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# Technical Experience

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- **24 months** technical experience working:
  - For a licensed PCA
  - For a pest management specialist (farm advisor, commercial/private applicator, or dealer)
  - As a field sweeper, field checker, or scout
  - In field or lab research relating to pest control
- In agricultural pest control activities for a federal, state, or county entity
- As a QAL employed by a licensed pest control business
- As a licensed structural pest control operator or field representative
- As a farm operator for agricultural pest control
- As a certified crop advisor



# Core Course Areas

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**42 Semester / 63 Quarter Units**

**Required for Options 1 and 3**

- 1) Physical & Biological Sciences
- 2) Crop Health
- 3) Pest Management Systems & Methods
- 4) Production Systems
- 5) Electives

[Click for PCA  
Core Course  
Requirements  
Form](#)



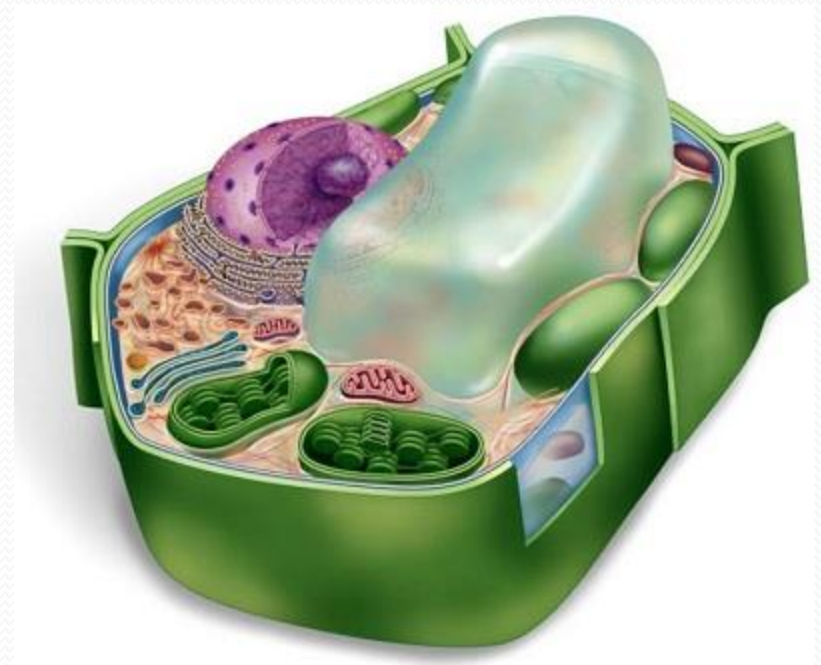
# 1. Physical & Biological Sciences

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## 12 Semester / 18 Quarter Units

- Includes courses such as:

- Inorganic Chemistry
- Organic Chemistry
- Biochemistry
- Plant Biology/Botany
- Ecology
- Biology
- Genetics
- Plant Physiology
- Zoology



# 2. Crop Health

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**9 Semester / 13.5 Quarter Units**

- **Includes courses such as:**
  - Plant Pathology
  - Entomology
  - Soils
  - Irrigation
  - Weeds/Weed science
  - Vegetative Management
  - Plant Nutrition & Fertility
  - \*Non-traditional courses



# 3. Pest Management Systems & Methods

**6 Semester / 9 Quarter Units**

- **Includes courses such as:**

- Plant Pathology
- Entomology
- Weed Science
- Biological Control
- Pesticides
- Alternative Cropping Systems
- \*Non-traditional courses



**Requirement:**

One course emphasizing Integrated Pest Management (IPM) principles

Work experience  
may be used

# 4. Production Systems

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## 6 Semester / 9 Quarter Units

- Includes courses such as:
  - Horticulture
  - Viticulture
  - Forestry
  - Agronomy
  - Crop Production
  - Animal Production
  - Vegetable or Fruit Science
  - \*Non-traditional courses



Work experience  
may be used

# 5. Electives

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## 9 Semester / 13.5 Quarter Units

- Includes any of the courses listed in:
  - Crop Health
  - Pest Management Systems & Methods
  - Production Systems

Work experience  
may be used



# \*Non-Traditional Courses

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- May receive 3 semester/4.5 quarter units for **Crop Health, Pest Management, or Production Systems**
- Documentation required
  - Course description/ documentation from instructor
  - Justification of course category
- Courses include:
  - Senior Project
  - Internship
  - Thesis
  - Cooperative Work Experience
  - Independent Study
  - Enterprise Project
  - Dissertation

# Work Experience

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- Work experience can only be used **once**
- Can receive up to 3 semester/ 4.5 quarter units for **12 months** of work experience relating to:
  - Pest Management Systems & Methods,
  - Production Systems, or
  - Electives.
- **This cannot be counted toward the 24 months of technical experience needed for option 3.**



# How to Check if Your Courses are DPR Approved

- DPR Website
- Is Your School Not Listed?
- Helpful Tips

# Approved PCA Courses - Online

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**LICENSING**

- A-Z Licensing Index
- Current Licensees
- License Types and Requirements
- Exam Schedule
- Study Materials
- Continuing Education
- Fees
- Forms

## College Courses Approved to Meet the PCA Minimum Education Requirements

[Back to Agricultural Pest Control Adviser \(PCA\)](#)

The Approved Courses page only includes courses from those colleges that submitted courses to DPR for review. If you attended a college, completed a course, or are planning to take a course that is not listed on the Approved Course page, please email DPR at [PCAmail@cdpr.ca.gov](mailto:PCAmail@cdpr.ca.gov) with the college name, course title, course code number, course curriculum, number of semester/quarter units, and which core category you feel it belongs in. DPR will review the course information and get back to you with a determination or may request additional information.

The courses listed are those that DPR felt best complemented a PCA's typical scope of work and met the requirements of Section 6550 of the California Code of Regulations which describes the PCA minimum education qualifications.

**UPDATED** [List of Approved PCA Courses](#)

Note: Colleges and courses may be added by DPR if applicable, or courses may be deleted if the curriculum is revised.

For more information, please contact:  
Department of Pesticide Regulation's PCA Program  
Email: [PCAmail@cdpr.ca.gov](mailto:PCAmail@cdpr.ca.gov)

# Approved Courses

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- Not all colleges are listed
- DPR is still growing the list
- Note that community colleges are listed by district

***Is your college listed?***

# If Your College Is Not Listed...

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- Compare your courses to similar colleges
  - Most colleges have similar course titles

## *Still unsure?*

- Check the PCA core course requirements form ([PR-PML-085](#)) for example courses per core area

## *Still unsure?*

- Email DPR at  [PCAMail@cdpr.ca.gov](mailto:PCAMail@cdpr.ca.gov)

# How to Submit PCA Courses for DPR Approval

- Current list of colleges
- Importance of submitting courses
- Process to submit courses
- Communication with DPR

# List of Colleges Online

The screenshot shows the California Department of Pesticide Regulation (CDPR) website. The header includes the CA.GOV logo, the text 'California Department of Pesticide Regulation', and navigation links: 'About DPR', 'Join E-Lists', 'A-Z Index', and 'Contact Us'. A search bar is present with 'DPR' and 'California' filters. The main navigation menu includes 'HOME', 'PROGRAMS', 'DATABASES', 'NEWS/PUBLICATIONS', and 'QUICK LINKS'. The left sidebar is titled 'LICENSING' and lists: 'A-Z Licensing Index', 'Current Licensees', 'License Types and Requirements', 'Exam Schedule', 'Study Materials', 'Continuing Education', 'Fees', and 'Forms'. The main content area is titled 'Approved PCA Courses' and contains the following text: 'Back to College Courses Approved to Meet the PCA Minimum Education Requirements', 'Back to Agricultural Pest Control Adviser (PCA)', 'DPR's list of college courses that are currently approved to meet the requirements for...', 'University of California', 'University of California, Davis', and a list of courses: 'Physical and Biological Sciences, PDF (87 kb)', 'Crop Health, PDF (78 kb)', 'Pest Management Systems and Methods, PDF (75 kb)', and 'Production Systems, PDF (83 kb)'. Below this is 'California State University', 'Cal Poly State University, Pomona', and another list of courses: 'Physical and Biological Sciences, PDF (88 kb)', 'Crop Health, PDF 75 kb)', 'Pest Management Systems and Methods, PDF (74 kb)', and 'Production Systems, PDF (80 kb)'. The DPR logo is at the bottom left of the page.

Submit your  
PCA courses to  
[PCAMail@cdpr.ca.gov](mailto:PCAMail@cdpr.ca.gov)  
to be on this list!

[Click for PCA  
Course Lists](#)



# Why Submitting Courses to DPR is Important

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- Grows DPR's list of approved courses
- Helps students find approved courses easier
- Students can ensure they are taking DPR-approved courses
- Allows for students and professors to easily access course information in one location



# Course Approval Directions

The screenshot shows the website for the California Department of Pesticide Regulation. The header includes the CA.GOV logo, the department name, and navigation links for 'About DPR', 'Join E-Lists', 'A-Z Index', and 'Contact Us'. A search bar is present with 'DPR' and 'California' filters. The main navigation bar contains 'HOME', 'PROGRAMS', 'DATABASES', 'NEWS/PUBLICATIONS', and 'QUICK LINKS'. A left sidebar lists 'LICENSING' categories: A-Z Licensing Index, Current Licensees, License Types and Requirements, Exam Schedule, Study Materials, Continuing Education, Fees, and Forms. The main content area is titled 'Agricultural Pest Control Adviser (PCA)' and includes links to the licensing program, license requirements, and an email sign-up. Under 'New PCA Applicants', there are links to application packages, study materials, and exam schedules. A highlighted box contains a link to 'Directions on how to get a college course approved by DPR for PCA minimum education requirement, PDF (137 kb)'. At the bottom, contact information is provided for first-time applicants.

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- »» Forms

**Agricultural Pest Control Adviser (PCA)**

[Back to Licensing and Certification Program](#)  
[Back to License Types and Requirements](#)

Sign up to receive e-mail updates on DPR's Licensing Program activities.

**New PCA Applicants**

- »» [Complete application package, PDF \(183 kb\)](#)
  - »» Knowledge expectations
  - »» Study materials, PDF (299 kb)
- »» **UPDATED** [2017 Exam schedule, PDF \(102 kb\)](#)
- »» **UPDATED** [College courses currently approved to meet the PCA minimum education requirements](#)
- »» [Directions on how to get a college course approved by DPR for PCA minimum education requirement, PDF \(137 kb\) – For college staff or perspective PCA's use](#)

If you are a first time PCA applicant, or university or college staff member and have questions about the PCA application process, or have questions about the minimum education course requirements or how to get a course approved by DPR, please contact us at: [PCAmail@cdpr.ca.gov](mailto:PCAmail@cdpr.ca.gov)



# How to Submit a PCA Course

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- Send an e-mail to [PCAMail@cdpr.ca.gov](mailto:PCAMail@cdpr.ca.gov) with the following information
  - 1) **College Name**
  - 2) **Course Title**
  - 3) **Course Number**
  - 4) **Course Description**
  - 5) **Number of semester/quarter units the course receives**
  - 6) **The core course areas it belongs in**
    - Physical & Biological Sciences, Crop Health, Pest Management, or Production Systems

[Click Here for Directions](#)



# Stay Connected with DPR

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- Bookmark DPR's "Approved PCA Courses" web site.
  - Avoid inconsistent information and confusion
  - Contact us if your college's list needs to be revised
- Send an email if your school:
  - Changes a course description
  - Adds or removes a course
  - Renames a course
- We encourage your communication!

[Approved PCA Courses](#)



[PCAMail@cdpr.ca.gov](mailto:PCAMail@cdpr.ca.gov)

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