

**FAQs ON MANDATORY CONTINUING EDUCATION (CE)
FOR REGISTERED NURSES**

Now that the CE regulations are final, what do I need to do about getting my CE?

Check the expiration date on your current license. Then find the date in the table when your CE is due.

- 1) Look for CE offerings from Board-approved providers (*) occurring in the time frames indicated in the table below for your expiration date.

For example: If your license will expire on April 30, 2012 you will need to complete 30 hours of Board approved CE between May 1, 2010 through April 30, 2012.

If your expiration date on your RN license is:	You must complete 30 hours of Board approved CE from:
October 31, 2011	11/1/09 through 10/31/11
April 30, 2012	5/1/10 through 4/30/12
October 31, 2012	11/1/10 through 10/31/12

- 2) Complete all 30 hours of CE in the time frame for your renewal period. Any CE hours completed outside or your biennial renewal period as listed above may not be used towards the required 30 hours. If you obtained more than the 30 hours in your renewal period you cannot “carry over” the extra hours to your next renewal period.
- 3) Keep all certificates for the CE you have completed for at least 5 years. Make sure that each of the certificates has the required information – your name, the course title, the number of CE hours awarded, the date(s) of the activity, the provider(s) of the activity and the name of the organization which approved the activity. In lieu of CE certificates it is acceptable for your employer to use an electronic database (log) to track your CE hours. The information that would normally be found on a certificate needs to be on the database and must be a log of only your CE hours. The log of your CE hours needs to be in a format that can be sent to the board if you are audited.
- 4) When it comes time to renew your license, answer the renewal question “YES or “NO” about completion of the required 30 hours CE. This can be done on either the paper or the electronic format for license renewal.
- 5) DO NOT submit your CE certificates at the time of license renewal. If you are randomly selected for audit, instructions will be provided to you at that time.

NOTE: You are not required to keep CE activity information, such as a syllabus or outline, however this information may be requested at the time of audit if information on the CE certificate is incomplete.

If I am a school nurse, an LDN or a CRNP, will I need to complete additional 30 hours of CE for my RN license?

School nurses, who as Certified Education Specialists are required to obtain continuing professional education under the Public School Code of 1949, shall be permitted to submit evidence of current certification as a Certified Education Specialist under the Pennsylvania Department of Education. If you are not a Certified Education Specialist, you will need to complete the 30 CE hours required for all RNs. In lieu of meeting this requirement, Certified Registered Nurse Practitioners (CRNPs) and Licensed Dietitian-Nutritionists (LDNs), can fulfill the CE requirements for their respective certification or license.

What type of CE is acceptable?

Acceptable CE must be relevant to patient care or professional nursing in a general or specialty area and enhance the knowledge and application of the physical, social, biological and behavioral sciences. (Registered Nurse Rules and Regulations §21.133). Advanced life support courses such as Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS), Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS) or Advanced Trauma Life Support (ATLS) may be used towards the 30 hours of CE, but may be used only ONCE during a 2 year renewal cycle.

What type of CE content is unacceptable?

Unacceptable CE course content is any non-professional course content related to the following: (This list is not all-inclusive.)

- Self-improvement
- Change in attitude
- Financial gain
- Courses designed for lay persons
- BLS (Basic Life Support)
- Mandatory annual education on facility specific policies unrelated to nursing practice
- Employment orientation programs *such as fire safety, FMLA (Family Medical Leave Act), etc.*

How is academic coursework counted towards CE?

Academic nursing credits are as follows:

- 1 trimester unit=12 CE hours
- 1 quarter unit=10 CE hours
- 1 semester unit=15 CE hours

For academic purposes, one unit is equivalent to one academic course. CE hours are per course, not per the number of credits given for the course. These academic CE hours are the same regardless of whether you are a full time, part time, Associate, Baccalaureate, Masters or Doctorate level student. Any academic courses taken must pertain to nursing. CE hours will be accepted for academic courses completed within your biennial renewal period.

(*Who are Board-approved providers of CE?

The following CE activities that meet the requirements of §21.133 (relating to continuing education content) for RNs are approved:

- Activities sponsored by a Board-approved professional nursing or CRNP education program
- Activities sponsored by an accredited professional nursing, CRNP, Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist, Clinical Nurse Specialist or Nurse Midwifery education program
- Activities sponsored by accredited hospitals and health care facilities
- Activities sponsored by hospitals and health care facilities licensed by the Department of Health or the Department of Public Welfare
- Activities sponsored by regionally accredited institutions of higher education
- Activities sponsored by National nursing, medical, osteopathic and other health care professional organizations and their state and regional affiliates
- Activities sponsored by National trade organizations, associations and their affiliated groups and state and regional affiliates
- Activities approved by National nursing, risk management, health care quality and patient safety organizations
- Activities sponsored by Federal and state agencies
- Activities approved by a Board in another jurisdiction

NOTE: If the CE activity is from one of the above Board-approved providers, the course content would need to meet the requirements in Section 21.133 pertaining to continuing education content in order to count towards the required 30 CE hours.

I found a course that I would like to take but it is not sponsored by a Board approved provider of CE. Will the course count toward my required 30 hours of CE? To request approval of an activity please refer to Section 21.134(b) of the Rules and Regulations for a list of information that would need to be submitted to the Board. This request must be submitted along with the required fee (\$75 per CE hour requested) at **least 90 days** prior to the date of the course to allow the Board sufficient time to review the request.

Can I earn continuing education hours for academic teaching, lecturing or precepting?

The Registered Nurse Rules and Regulations do not address the RN using academic teaching, lecturing or precepting as acceptable activities for obtaining continuing education hours. The Board of Nursing discussed this topic at a meeting on April 3, 2009 and determined that at this time with the current regulations CE will not be accepted for academic teaching, lecturing or precepting. The Board noted it will revisit this topic in two years.

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