

Continuing Education

Handbook – Revised 2020



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www.NVRA.org

NATIONAL VERBATIM REPORTERS ASSOCIATION CONTINUING EDUCATION HANDBOOK

TABLE OF CONTENTS

GENERAL RULES AND PROCEDURES

Introduction	3
Continuing Education Requirements to Maintain Certification	3
Grace Period	4
Maintenance of Records	4
Excess Credits	4
Revocation of Certification Status.....	4
Appeals	5
Inquiries	5

CE CREDIT AWARDS

I. Continuing Education Credit Criteria	
A. Events Preapproved by NVRA.....	6
B. Events Presumed Approved by NVRA.....	6
C. Events Not Preapproved by NVRA	7
D. Automatic Credit Awards.....	7
E. Professional Service Experience Credits	7
F. Pro Bono Activities.....	8
II. Credit Hours Allowed by Type of Activity	
A. Seminars	8
B. Certification Attainment and Certification Seminar	8
C. Teaching.....	8
D. Technology Training	9
E. Academic Courses.....	9
F. Professional Service Experience	10
G. Pro Bono Activities.....	10
III. Activities Acceptable for CE Credits.....	11
IV. Activities Not Acceptable for CE Credits	12

GENERAL RULES AND PROCEDURES

The continuation of an individual's education beyond the basic preparation for his or her profession is widely recognized as a valuable asset. Continuing Education (CE) is required in most professions as a method by which members of the profession maintain licensure and keep abreast of issues and changes in their respective fields. It is of vital importance to court reporters that they, too, remain aware of issues and changes in their profession. To that end, many states and court reporter associations require continuing education for members to retain licensure and/or certification.

Since work as a court reporter, CART/Captioner, scopist or transcriptioner encompasses fields of endeavor through the reporting of testimony in virtually any area, both the opportunity and the need for education are vast. In order to maintain the level of expertise to be considered certified by the National Verbatim Reporters Association (NVRA), the absorption of new information throughout one's reporting career is necessary.

Continuing Education is defined as participation in an organized learning experience under responsible, qualified direction and instruction. CE requirements provide a means of maintaining the status NVRA's credentials:

- Certified Verbatim Reporter (CVR)
- Certified Verbatim Reporter – Master (CVR-M)
- Certified Verbatim Reporter - Steno (CVR-S)
- Registered CART Provider (RCP)
- Registered CART Provider - Master (RCP-M)
- Registered Broadcast Captioner (RBC)
- Registered Broadcast Captioner - Master (RBC-M)
- Certified Legal Transcriptionist (CLT)
- Certified Legal Scopist (CLS)

Holders of these certifications are responsible for providing a high level of reporting service to the legal community and CART and captioning services to the broader community. Participation in CE programs helps the professional reporter, CART provider, or captioner maintain and improve the quality of the services rendered.

NVRA offers its continuing education program as a required standard for NVRA-certified reporters worldwide. This handbook will be periodically updated as additional knowledge and experience are gained concerning the CE process.

In addition to offering its own program of continuing education, NVRA encourages and supports its state affiliate associations in their efforts to promote opportunities for continued learning for their members. Further, governmental agencies and proprietary and commercial vendors offer a wealth of information to voice and stenographic professionals through sponsored information and training programs. All these groups and organizations provide avenues for learning through which certified professionals may increase their knowledge as it relates to the court reporting, CART, and broadcast captioning professions and may stay informed of advances, technological and otherwise, related to their field.

Continuing Education Requirements to Maintain Certification

Higher Level Certifications:

The higher-level certifications of Certificate of Merit (CM, CM-S) and Realtime Verbatim Reporter (RVR, RVR-M, RVR-S, RVR-M-S) may not be earned unless the member has first earned the CVR designation or the NCRA RPR designation. Maintenance of the CM and RVR depend on maintenance of the CVR or RPR as verified by submission of proof of credential with dues renewal. It follows, therefore, that holders of these certifications must also earn CE credits.

The CE credit requirement applies to all members holding the basic certifications beginning on the date the certification is attained. **Certified members must maintain continuous membership in NVRA as well as acquire 20 CE credits during each two-year cycle in order to maintain certification.** Retired and Honorary members are exempt from the CE requirement.

To gain basic certification, one must pass the written knowledge test and all required sections of the skills test as outlined in the NVRA Study Guide and the appropriate Rules, Policies, and Procedures Manual. On the date of attainment of certification, 10 CE credits will be awarded.

The initial three-year cycle began January 1, 1997. Six subsequent three-year cycles have commenced and run continuously until December 31, 2014. Beginning January 1, 2015, the CE cycle was shortened to two years.

Persons attaining certification during the first year of a two-year cycle must complete 10 CE credits during the next year of the cycle. Persons attaining certification during the second year of a two-year cycle will be considered to have fulfilled the CE requirements for that cycle.

Example: In the two-year cycle beginning January 1, 2019, 10 credits will be awarded at the time of certification. In order to fulfill all credit requirements for the cycle, additional credits must be earned as follows:

Certifications earned during calendar year 2019 – 10 additional credits

Certifications earned during calendar year 2020 – 0 additional credits

Grace Period

If a member fails to meet the CE requirements to maintain certification within any two-year cycle, there shall be a **three-month grace period** (i.e. the first three months of the next cycle) in which the member may satisfy the deficiency. All CE credits earned during the grace period will be applied to the deficiency until satisfied. Once the deficiency has been satisfied, the member may begin earning the required 20 credits for the current two-year cycle. Credits applied to any deficiency from the previous cycle will not be available to meet the requirements of the current cycle.

Maintenance of Records

At the end of each two-year cycle, all records, except those related to carryover credits described under Grace Period above, will be transferred to an inactive database. Supporting paper documentation for certified members who have successfully completed the CE requirement for the cycle will be retained in storage for one additional cycle. Supporting paper documentation will be maintained in active files for those certified members earning credits in the grace period as described under Grace Period. Members are strongly encouraged to maintain their own records of CE credits.

Excess Credits

Up to 5 credits may be carried over to the next cycle.

Exemption of CE Requirements

Any certified member who has reached the age of 65 and has maintained 25 years of continuous membership with NVRA is exempt from the CE requirements outlined in this manual. You must request Exemption Status in writing to the NVRA Office.

Revocation of Certification Status

NVRA shall notify, in writing by certified mail, those members whose certification is in danger of revocation for not meeting the continuing education requirements. Such notification shall be postmarked at least 60 days in advance of the impending revocation date. Certification may be revoked for the following reasons:

- (1) failure to maintain continuous membership in NVRA,
- (2) failure to earn at least 20 CE credits during a cycle and the specified grace period, or
- (3) upon a decision by the Ethics Committee that revocation is appropriate as set out in Section 7.G. of the Grievance Procedures, Numbers 6 through 9.

Once the basic certification is revoked, certification may be restored only upon complying with NVRA's Reinstatement Procedures as outline in the Policies and Procedures Manual. A reinstatement fee in an amount to be determined by the Board shall apply to certified members who become more than thirty (30) days but less than ninety (90) days delinquent in renewing membership. After a ninety (90) day delinquency, certification will lapse and a member must retest in order to be certified, unless a waiver is granted by the Board. If certification is lost due to insufficient CE credits, any certification previously passed will remain on file with NVRA. Once the reinstatement procedures are followed, the full

or partial certifications previously achieved will be restored.

Within 30 days after the date of revocation of the basic certification, NVRA shall notify those members whose certifications have been revoked for any of the reasons stated above. Said notification shall be in writing and shall include an explanation of the appeal process. See Appeals, below, for further information regarding the process for application for reinstatement of basic certification once it has been revoked. From the time of such revocation, the member is no longer entitled to, and should not, use the certifications under any circumstances or in any application.

Appeals

Any revocation decision may be appealed in writing, addressed to NVRA Member Services at nvra@nvra.org. When the Notice of Appeal is received, those appeals which are based on continuing education deficiencies will be forwarded to the Continuing Education Chair for a decision by the full committee. The member will be notified via e-mail or in writing of the Continuing Education Committee's decision within 30 days.

Any further appeal must be made in writing by the member to the NVRA Board of Directors. The appeal must contain all pertinent documentation the appellant believes supports his/her appeal. The written appeal must be mailed or faxed within 30 days of the Notice of Decision of the full Continuing Education Committee. Appeals must be directed to NVRA Member Services, 629 N. Main Street, Hattiesburg, MS 39401 or to fax number 601-582-3354. The decision of the NVRA Board will be final.

Inquiries

Any inquiries regarding CE credits earned and posted or upcoming seminars and events may be addressed to NVRA Member Services. Questions regarding approval of credits or the status of requests for credit that are not yet approved may also be addressed to NVRA Member Services.

In addition, members can check their own CE status on the NVRA Web site by using their NVRA member password. CE questions may also be posed using contact forms obtainable on the Website. Contact forms will be collected regularly and distributed to the appropriate persons for response.

At any time, members may request an official transcript of CE credits earned to date in the current cycle using the Request for Transcript Form (page 15). One official transcript will be provided yearly to all certified members at no charge. There will be a \$5.00 charge for each additional official transcript.

For a list of events, sponsors, and courses currently preapproved by NVRA, please visit the Web site at www.nvra.org. Online courses are also available through the Web site.

CE CREDIT AWARDS

All programs approved by NVRA for continuing education credit shall have as their purpose the advancement, extension, and enhancement of the knowledge and professional skills of the attendees in the practice of court reporting, CART, or broadcast captioning. The content of all programs approved for credit must be relevant to the needs of verbatim reporters and other voice professionals. Persons developing and/or presenting programs must be qualified by education and/or experience to teach the subject matter of the program. The purpose of approved continuing education offerings shall be the professional, rather than personal, growth and development of the certified member.

1. Continuing Education Credit Criteria

A. Events Preapproved by NVRA

NO FORM NEEDED: Documentation is submitted for you by the event host.

A preapproved event is one hosted by NVRA or hosted by an entity which has sought and been granted NVRA approval. Such events may be hosted by state or national associations or by proprietary or commercial vendors.

A standardized system for seminar registration, attendance control, and reporting is in place. Upon approval of the event, instructions for submission will be provided by member services. Failure to promptly complete the attendance form with identifying information and evaluation information or failure to turn in the attendance form to the event host at the end of the event may result in no award of credit for that event.

In some cases, hosts of preapproved CE events may provide signed certificates rather than attendance forms to the attendees. The event host is responsible for transmitting a list of attendees, accompanied by evaluation forms, to NVRA when attendance forms are not provided. Questions about receiving credit for preapproved events for which attendance forms are not provided should be addressed to the event host.

CE credit for events **PREAPPROVED** by NVRA will be obtained through the use of seminar attendance forms. These forms will be submitted to NVRA Member Services by the seminar provider. The member need not submit any forms or paperwork to obtain credit for preapproved events. In general, preapproved events are listed on the NVRA Website and are announced in eVoice. If there is a question about the status of a specific event, please contact NVRA Member Services for clarification.

B. Events Presumed Approved by NVRA

FORM NEEDED: Individual Request for Credit; \$25 payment required

Events presented by career institutes, training centers, and other local entities will not be presumed approved. Events presented by accredited institutions of higher learning such as colleges and universities, community colleges, and technical schools will be presumed approved since they are approved by accredited institutions provided the course work covers appropriate subject matter.

Events presented by governmental agencies and state bar associations will be presumed approved.

CE credit for events **PRESUMED APPROVED** by NVRA will be granted upon submission of the following **WITHIN 60 DAYS OF THE EVENT:**

1. An Individual Request for Credit form available on the NVRA Website.
2. An official verification of attendance
3. An agenda showing the number of hours for each segment of a course or seminar
4. A detailed description of the material covered in the seminar or course
5. Payment of a nonrefundable \$25 evaluation fee

C. Events Not Preapproved by NVRA

FORM NEEDED: Individual Request for Credit; \$25 payment required

Events not preapproved by NVRA may be eligible for an award of credit. Approval of such events will be determined upon submission of all required documentation and payment of a nonrefundable \$25 evaluation fee.

Credit will be awarded only for the first completion of a specific seminar or course offering during any one cycle. Subsequent attendance at the same seminar or course during the same cycle will not receive credit. For example, attending approved technology training from a proprietary or commercial vendor in any given year will be granted CE credit. Attending the same approved training in the same year or a subsequent year during the same cycle will not be granted CE credit.

CE credit for events **NOT PREAPPROVED** by NVRA may be granted upon evaluation after submission of the following **WITHIN 60 DAYS OF THE EVENT**:

1. An Individual Request for Credit form available on the NVRA Website.
2. An official verification of attendance
3. An agenda showing the number of hours for each segment of a course or seminar
4. A detailed description of the material covered in the seminar or course
5. Payment of a nonrefundable \$25 evaluation fee

D. Automatic Credit Awards

NO FORM NEEDED: Documentation is submitted for you by the event host.

Credits are automatically awarded for the following:

1. Attainment of CVR, CVR-S, CM, CM-S, RVR, RVR-S, RVR-M, RVR-M-S, RCP, RCP-M, RBC, RBC-M, CLT, or CLS.
2. Attendance at a CE seminar held in conjunction with an NVRA testing event for which credit is otherwise allowed.

Please do not submit Individual Request for Credit forms for the automatic credit awards.

E. Professional Service Experience Credits

FORM NEEDED: Individual Request for Credit; NO payment required

During a two-year cycle, 5 CE credits can be earned through professional service experiences. Service activities would include, but are not limited to, NVRA board or committee service, state association board service, assisting with testing, speaking to students at career day type events, touring students through courthouse facilities, interning students.

CE credits earned under the PROFESSIONAL SERVICE EXPERIENCE **CREDIT** category may be granted upon evaluation after submission of the following **WITHIN 60 DAYS OF THE EVENT**:

1. An Individual Request for Credit form available on the NVRA Website.
2. A detailed description of the event or service
3. An official verification of participation in the event or service

Professional Service Experience credits earned for NVRA board service, NVRA committee service, assistance with NVRA testing, and writing for NVRA publications will continue to be automatically credited without further action by the member.

F. Pro Bono Activities

FORM NEEDED: Individual Request for Credit; NO payment required

During each calendar year, up to **5 CE credits** can be earned for Pro Bono activities. CE credits earned for **PRO BONO** activities will be granted upon evaluation, after submission of the following **WITHIN 60 DAYS OF THE EVENT**:

1. An Individual Request for Credit form available on the NVRA Website.
2. A detailed description of the parties' names, dates of service, beginning and ending times, and pages of transcript provided.
3. A signed verification from the recipient or his/her official representative that includes a description of services and acknowledgment that the services were provided at no charge to the recipient. The certification must be written on the recipient's or his/her official representative's letterhead.

There is no evaluation fee required for Pro Bono credit requests.

2. Credit Hours Allowed by Type of Activity

A. Seminars

A seminar shall consist of one or more individual classes or modules. CE credits may be earned by attendance at seminars conducted by NVRA, preapproved by NVRA, or presumed approved by NVRA. Credits may also be earned by attendance at seminars which have not been preapproved by NVRA **subject to approval by the Continuing Education Committee and payment of the current evaluation fee.**

An NVRA member's record will be updated with the approved number of CE credits upon receipt of an attendance form or a list of attendees from the seminar host or an Individual Request for Credit form accompanied by all required documentation and fees, if any. CE credit will not be awarded for any seminar attended or activity undertaken before attainment of the CVR, with the exception of credit for the CVR Seminar, which will be automatic at the time of attainment of CVR. (See Continuing Education Requirements to Maintain Certification, page 3).

One CE credit will be awarded per hour of instruction, unless changed based on review of the seminar by NVRA. A maximum of 10 CE credits may be earned at any one event with the exception of the NVRA Annual Convention.

B. Certification Attainment and Certification Seminar

CE credit will be awarded on the following basis:

1. Attaining CVR, CVR-S, CM, CM-S, RVR, RVR-S, RVR-M, RVR-M-S, RCP, RCP-M, RBC, RBC-M, CLT, or CLS

C. Teaching

CE credit will be awarded for the following teaching activities:

1. Presenting a seminar or class of at least one hour's duration to court reporters, lawyers, law students, paralegals, or any related group, on any aspect of court reporting or topic directly related or pertinent to court reporting, or presenting a seminar or class of at least one hour's duration to CART providers, broadcast captioners, those interested in those professions, or any related group: **3 CE credits. Should the seminar be of significantly longer duration, additional credits may be sought up to a maximum of 6 CE credits. Repeat presentations of the same seminar do not earn additional CE credits.** Application for credit must be accompanied by a detailed course description and evaluation forms from attendees.

2. Participating as a panelist at any seminar of at least one hour's duration conducted or approved by NVRA: **2 CE credits. Repeated participation in the same seminar does not earn additional CE credits.** Application for credit must be accompanied by a detailed course description and evaluation forms from attendees.
3. Teaching a Certification Seminar of at least one hour's duration: **2 CE credits**, with a maximum of 4 CE credits from this source per year.

D. Technology Training

NVRA encourages members to utilize the latest available technologies whenever possible and recognizes the fact that technology is constantly changing. While NVRA applauds the efforts of members to stay current and to fully utilize the technology they possess, NVRA recognizes that there must be limits to the number of CE credits a member can obtain through technology training from vendors.

CE credit will be awarded on the following basis:

1. **Seminars.** In general, technology vendors seek NVRA pre-approval for their seminars and credits are awarded to the extent announced in advance. On occasion, however, seminars may not have been preapproved. In those cases, individuals must apply for credit as for any other non-preapproved event. Credit will be determined based on the number of hours of actual seminar attendance, minus such time as is devoted to actual system training or individual work on a member's computer system and subject to the general limitations for seminars. *CE credit will not be granted for repeated attendance at the same preapproved seminar in any one year.*
2. **One-on-one Training.** This training offered by vendors is not considered preapproved. CE credit is limited to **6 CE credits** per cycle from this source. Credit will not be granted for repeated individual training sessions in any one cycle.
3. **User groups.** For purposes of this program, gatherings of users of the same technology to further their understanding of same and to share their experiences will be defined as user groups. In order to receive CE credit, the following requirements must be met:
 - a. An agenda of the meeting must be submitted no later than 10 days prior to the gathering.
 - b. Each individual seeking CE credits must submit the following:
 - i. An Individual Request for Credit form
 - ii. Minutes of the meeting, including a list of attendees
 - iii. \$25 evaluation fee

Upon receipt of the above, CE credit will be granted on the basis of **1 CE credit** per hour, with a maximum of **6 CE credits** from this source per cycle.

E. Academic Courses

CE credits will be awarded on the following basis unless changed based on review of the course by NVRA: *Please submit paperwork to NVRA as set forth on page 6 (B), "Events Presumed Approved."*

1. Completing an academic or technical course in a subject matter which would otherwise qualify for CE credit with a grade of C or better at an accredited college or university within the current cycle:
 - Semester course: **6 CE credits**
 - Trimester course: **5 CE credits**
 - Quarter course: **4 CE credits**
2. Successfully completing an adult education course at an accredited school or program if the course otherwise meets NVRA criteria for award of credits: **1 CE credit for every 2 instruction hours, up to a maximum of 6 CE credits per course.**
3. Completion of a degree program from an accredited college or university:
 - Bachelor of Arts or Science: **10 CE credits**

- Master of Arts or Science: **20 CE credits**
- Ph.D. or other terminal degree: **30 CE credits**

CE credits will not be awarded for completion of a degree program if credits have already been awarded for individual courses taken as part of the same degree program.

Credits will not be awarded for course work in non-appropriate subject matters. CE credits for academic achievement will be awarded upon presentation of a certified transcript.

F. Professional Service Experience

A maximum of **5 credits** per cycle may be earned for professional service. CE credits will be awarded for professional service experience on the following basis. *Please submit paperwork to NVRA as set forth on page 7 (E), "Professional Service Experience Credits."*

1. Service to NVRA or state associations:
 - NVRA board of directors for one year: **2.5 (2½) CE credits**
 - State assn. board of directors for one year: **2 CE credits**
 - Chairing a committee for one year: **1.5 (1½) CE credits**
 - Serving on a committee for one year: **1 CE credit**
2. Writing an article of at least 500 words related to court reporting published in an NVRA publication or other journal or magazine: **1 CE credit**
3. First place in the National Realtime Competition: **2 CE credits**
4. Administration of an NVRA certification test: **4 CE credits**
5. Writing test scripts submitted and accepted by the Skills Test Writing Committee Chair: **2 CE credits per test**
6. Mentoring/Interning:
 - Mentoring novice reporters for a minimum of 4 months: **2 CE credits.**
 - Interning reporting students for a minimum of 1 month: **1 CE credit**
7. Other outreach to novices and students: Activities such as speaking at career day type events, conducting tours of courthouse or other workplace, hosting a student or novice at workplace for a day, speaking to court reporting students about one's work, and other like activities: **.5 (½) CE credits**
8. Other activities may be deemed to qualify for Professional Service Experience credits. Please contact NVRA Member Services to request a determination.

G. Pro Bono Activities

A maximum of **5 credits** per calendar year may be earned for pro bono activities. CE credits will be awarded for pro bono activities. The work you do must be **at no charge** to the recipient, and may not include transcripts for indigent persons provided to or required by the court which are prepared in the normal course of employment. *Please submit paperwork to NVRA as set forth on page 8 (F), "Pro Bono Activities."*

1. Attendance at a deposition or hearing, with no takedown fee or appearance fee: **1 CE credit for each hour of reporting time.**
2. Transcription of the deposition or hearing, including providing the transcript at no charge to the recipient: **1 CE credit for each 20 pages of transcript.**

3. Activities Acceptable for CE Credit

Activities eligible for continuing education credit shall have some direct relevance to the professional development of the practicing court reporter, CART provider, or broadcast captioner. They must be led by an instructor, be interactive, and involve some assessment or evaluation. Listed below are some general guidelines to subject matters which are generally recognized as eligible for approval:

A. Language Skills

1. English or a foreign language
2. American Sign Language
3. Grammar
4. Punctuation
5. Proofreading
6. Spelling
7. Vocabulary
8. Linguistics, including regional dialects or colloquialisms
9. Etymology
10. Word usage

B. Academics

1. Medical terminology and abbreviations related to any medical or medically related discipline (e.g., anatomy, psychiatry, psychology, dentistry, chiropractic, podiatry)
2. Pharmacology
3. Surgical procedures and instruments, with emphasis on terminology and concepts likely to be encountered in litigation
4. Pathology and forensic pathology, including DNA and other terminology likely to be encountered in litigation
5. Legal terminology and etymology
6. Legal research techniques
7. Presentations on various legal specialty areas (e.g., torts, family law, environmental law, admiralty, corporate law, patent law)
8. History of legal systems
9. Technical subjects, with emphasis on terminology and concepts likely to be encountered during litigation (e.g., construction, accident reconstruction, insurance, statistics, product testing and liability, various engineering fields)

C. Case law, federal and state statutes, and regulations

1. Federal and state rules of civil and criminal procedure and rules of evidence
2. Codes of federal and/or state regulations
3. Presentations on legal proceedings (depositions, trials, federal and state appellate procedure, administrative proceedings, bankruptcy proceedings, workers' compensation proceedings)
4. Any changes to a, b, and c above as they affect the court reporter

D. Technology and business practices

1. Computer skills
2. Voice recognition technology
3. Videotaping, video conferencing
4. Reporting skills and practices (e.g., readbacks, marking exhibits, administering oaths)
5. Transcript production, formats, indexing, document management
6. Technological developments related to court reporting, realtime reporting, CART, or broadcast captioning
7. Office practices, office management, marketing, accounting, personnel practices, public relations
8. Financial management, retirement planning, estate planning
9. Partnerships, corporations, taxation, insurance

E. Professionalism and ethics

1. Standards of court reporting practice applicable to individual states or governmental entities
2. Professional comportment and demeanor as it relates to judges, attorneys, fellow reporters, witnesses, litigants, court and law office personnel, and the deaf and hard of hearing
3. Workplace decorum and appearance

4. Activities Not Acceptable for CE Credits

Activities that are not acceptable for continuing education credit awards include, but are not limited to, the following:

- A. Attendance at professional or association business meetings or similar meetings convened for the purpose of election of officers, policy making, or orientation unless such meetings include educational or professional development presentations that otherwise meet NVRA criteria for award of credits
- B. Leadership activities in national, state, or community associations and board or committee service beyond those allowed as professional service experience credits
- C. Attendance at entertainment, recreational, or cultural presentations
- D. Recreation, aerobics, massage, or physical therapy courses or practice or teaching of same
- E. Classes in the performing arts, studio arts, or crafts or teaching of same
- F. Tours of museums or historical sites
- G. Social events at meetings, conventions, and exhibits
- H. Visiting vendor exhibits or attending vendor demonstrations
- I. Jury duty
- J. Any event for which the attendee receives payment for attendance
- K. Any event which is part of the attendee's regular employment or is attended for the purpose of gaining employment
- L. On-the-job training or other work experience, life experience, previous work experience
- M. Independent writing of articles, books, papers, or reports or presentation of papers outside of a planned, directly supervised continuing education experience that fulfills CE criteria
- N. Continuing education required by any governing board as part of a disciplinary action.

Forms can be found online at www.nvra.org/Education