

California Board of Registered Nursing Continuing Education Program Instructions for Providers

California Department of Consumer Affairs

2004 Revision

Welcome to the Continuing Education Program of the Board of Registered Nursing. These Instructions are designed to assist potential and current continuing education providers (CEPs) to understand the requirements set forth in the relevant statutes and regulations regarding California's mandatory Continuing Education Program. This program became effective July 1, 1978. Statutory authority is found in Sections 2811.5 and 2811.6 of Chapter 6, *Business and Professions Code*. The regulations governing this program are found in Title 16, Division 14, Sections 1450 to 1459.1, *California Code of Regulations (CCR)*. A copy of these regulations is attached for your use. The instructions do not reflect all information included in the regulations; you must be in compliance with the regulations.

You are urged to retain these Regulations and Instructions in your files for frequent reference and to obtain updates as necessary. If additional information is needed, please call Continuing Education Program staff at (916) 322-3350.

organizational structure, or the person responsible for coordinating the continuing education course(s). If you sell your business, the CEP number is *not* transferable. The new owner must submit a new application to the BRN.

Provider Qualifications

Any individual or group who has the resources to provide continuing education for registered nurses and agrees to adhere to the laws and regulations covering this Program may apply for provider approval. A provider number can be issued to an individual, partnership, corporation, association, organization, organized health care system, educational institution, or governmental agency.

Renewal Process

The CEP number expires two years from the date of initial issuance. As a courtesy to you, a renewal notice is mailed to the address on record approximately three months prior to the expiration date. Failure to receive a renewal notice does *not* relieve you of the responsibility to renew your provider number in a timely manner.

Approval Process

Complete the forms included in the provider approval packet and submit them along with all the other required documents and a check or money order for the application fee to the Board of Registered Nursing (BRN). Please note, the application fee is an earned fee and is not refundable should you choose not to complete the application process or your application does not meet the Board's requirements. The information to be submitted includes:

A delinquent fee is added to the regular renewal fee when the renewal form and fee are received after midnight of the renewal date.

A CEP provider number that has expired and has not been renewed for two years or more will be retired and you must submit a new application for review and issuance of a new provider number.

Courses cannot be offered under your provider number once it has expired.

Course Content

It is important to note that the BRN approves continuing education providers, not individual courses. Each CEP is expected to offer course content and utilize instructor who meet the requirements of Sections 1456 and 1457, Title 16, of the *California Code of Regulations*.

The content of all continuing education courses must be relevant to the practice of registered nursing and must be:

- ❖ Related to the scientific knowledge and/or technical skills required for the practice of nursing, or
- ❖ Related to direct and/or indirect patient/client care.

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- ❖ Application Form
- ❖ Course Information and Instructor Information Form(s)
- ❖ Proposed Flyer or Brochure
- ❖ Sample Certificate of Completion

These documents and the application fee must be received by the BRN at least *four to six weeks* prior to the issuance of a BRN provider number to allow adequate review and processing time. Careful preparation of the required documents will facilitate the review process. A printed certificate containing your continuing education provider (CEP) number will be mailed to you when the application has been approved.

The BRN must be notified *within 30 days* of any change in mailing address,

Learning experiences are expected to enhance the knowledge of registered nurses at a level **above that required for licensure**.

It is the responsibility of the provider to clearly state through the course description, course objectives, and outline how the course content relates to the practice of nursing.

Acceptable Course Content

Examples of general courses meeting BRN requirements are:

- ❖ Theoretical content related to scientific knowledge for the practice of nursing.
- ❖ Advanced courses in physical, social and behavioral sciences. Some examples are:
 - Physical sciences- pathophysiology and psychology courses related to subspecialties in nursing
 - ❖ Social sciences - physical or cultural anthropology, sociology of the family, and social structure change
 - ❖ Behavioral sciences- psychology courses including abnormal psychology, child psychology, and mental health
- ❖ Required basic courses in physical, social, and behavioral sciences for RN's who are obtaining a baccalaureate or graduate degree or specialty certification may also meet the BRN's requirements.
- ❖ Courses where the primary focus is recent scientific knowledge applied to direct or indirect patient/client care.
- ❖ Content related to Direct Patient/Client Care can include but not be limited to:
 - ❖ Advanced courses on any type of patient monitoring equipment (fetal, cardiac, respiratory, etc.)
 - ❖ Patient education strategies
 - ❖ Certification/recertification skills such as: advanced life support (ALS), audiology, etc.
 - ❖ Skills courses (stoma care, etc.)
 - ❖ Cultural and ethnic diversity
 - ❖ Foreign languages (conversational) and sign language
 - ❖ Therapeutic interpersonal relationship skills with patients/clients
 - ❖ Courses in any specialty area of nursing practice, including

occupational health nursing, school nursing, office nursing, etc.

- ❖ Content related to **Indirect Patient/Client Care** can include but not be limited to:
 - ❖ Nursing administration or management, nursing education, or nursing research
 - ❖ Statistics
 - ❖ Quality assurance
 - ❖ Legal aspects of nursing
 - ❖ Assertiveness
 - ❖ Teaching multi-ethnic students and staff
 - ❖ Retention of nurses in the health care delivery system, including cross training
 - ❖ Current trends in nursing and health care
 - ❖ Establishing a professional nursing business or independent practice
 - ❖ Courses related to publishing for professional journals or books
 - ❖ Instructor courses in CPR, basic life support (BLS), and advanced life support (ALS)
- ❖ Other courses:
 - ❖ Courses that deal with grief, human sexuality, kinesiology, nutrition, crisis intervention, counseling, stress reduction, burnout syndrome, advanced nursing courses, advanced pharmacology, advanced EKG/dysrhythmia, and advanced IV therapy.

These Courses Will be Accepted

- ❖ Courses approved by appropriate state, regional, and national health professional associations as well as other professional health licensing boards in and out of California provided the content meets the Board's requirements as specified in Title 16, CCR, Section 1456. ***These courses will be accepted for continuing education purposes.***
- ❖ Courses approved by the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) regional accrediting bodies when these courses are taken *out-of-state*.
- ❖ Courses offered *in California* by out-of-state organizations, associations,

corporations, individuals, etc. **MUST** have a BRN approved CEP number.

- ❖ Regular academic courses from regionally accredited colleges or universities, both in and out-of-state, that meet the requirements of Title 16, CCR, Section 1451.2 do not require a California BRN provider number. A course taken from these providers requires documentation (certificate, letter of completion, transcript, etc.), specifying the name of the nurse, title of the course, date completed, and the number of hours or units granted.
- ❖ Preparation required for initial certification *or* recertification by a national organization and as a specialty nurse automatically counts as 30 contact hours after the certification/recertification status is granted by the national organization.
- ❖ Course and conferences offered in other countries may receive continuing education contact hours if a CEP chooses to develop an independent study with the nurse(s) and determines that the course and faculty meet BRN requirement. The CEP would maintain files just as for any other course (e.g. course/conference objectives, vitae, etc.) and use its CEP number on the certificate of completion.

Unacceptable Course Content

- ❖ Courses which focus upon self-improvement, changes in attitude, self-therapy, self-awareness, weight loss, and yoga
- ❖ Economic courses for financial gain, e.g., investments, retirement, preparing resumes, and techniques for job interviews, etc.
- ❖ Courses designed for lay people
- ❖ Liberal arts courses in music, art, philosophy, and others when unrelated to patient/client care
- ❖ Orientation programs—orientation meaning a specific series of activities designed to familiarize employees with the policies and procedures of an institution
- ❖ Courses which focus on personal appearance in nursing
- ❖ CPR and BLS courses, basic EKG/dysrhythmia courses, and basic IV courses that are similar to those used to

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certify licensed vocational nurses to start IV's.

Course Requirements

The program or course content must be relevant to both the educational needs of the registered nurse and health needs of the consumer. The content must be current and designed to include recent developments in the subject area being taught.

Course offerings must be at least one hour in length. If it is an academic course, the nurse must be enrolled for credit. The nurse must meet all class requirements.

Credit for completing part of a course (continuing education or academic) may NOT be granted. Thus if a person attending the course leaves before the course is over, the certificate of completion cannot be issued. Some CEPs who offer multiple day courses often break the course into several segments and provide contact hours for each segment successfully completed.

Course Objectives

Course objectives describe measurable behaviors or outcomes the student will demonstrate or achieve upon completion. An example of a student's behavioral objective or outcome is as follows:

"Upon completion of this program, the nurse will be able to: a. Describe the latest treatment options used for patients with _____. b. Assess a patient for the three most common objective or subjective symptoms of _____. c. Evaluate the patient's response to treatment of _____, etc."

Instructor's goals are NOT behavioral objectives or outcomes. For example:

"To inform the student about the latest advances in the treatment of patients with _____" is a goal of the instructor, not an instructional objective.

Providers are required to clearly state the overall course objectives or have a clear, concise course description in brochures and other advertisements so participants will know *in advance* what they can expect to learn.

Course Evaluations

Instructors can decide how or if they want to determine whether registered nurses understand the content of the class or seminar they attended. Home study courses should have some method of verifying that the course was read.

As part of the evaluation process, it is recommended that all courses are evaluated for at least the following:

- ❖ The extent to which the course met the objectives.
- ❖ The applicability or usability of new information.
- ❖ The adequacy of the instructor's mastery of the subject.
- ❖ The appropriateness of teaching methods used.
- ❖ Efficiency of the course mechanics (room, space, lighting, acoustics, audiovisuals, handouts, etc.)
- ❖ Other comments.

Instructor Requirements

The requirements for registered nurse and non-registered nurse instructors are noted in Title 16, *CCR*, Section 1457.

Registered nurse instructors need to have a current valid license, be free from any disciplinary action by the Board, and be knowledgeable, current, and skillful in the subject matter as demonstrated by a baccalaureate or higher degree from an accredited college or university and validated experience in the subject matter, or experience in teaching similar subject material within the past two years, or at least one year's experience within the last two years in the specialized area in which they are teaching.

Non-nurse instructors must be currently licensed or certified in the area of expertise and show evidence of specialized training in the subject area and have at least one year's experience within the past two years in the practice of teaching of the specialized area to be taught.

Please review the Regulations for additional information about instructor qualifications.

Additional Requirements

In California, "continuing education contact hours" is the term used. Contact hours cannot be awarded for courses completed prior to the provider receiving a BRN CEP number. Contact hours are calculated as follows:

- ❖ Each contact hour is at least 50 minutes of instruction in an organized learning experience.
- ❖ Courses less than one hour (60 minutes) in duration will not be approved.

- ❖ Each hour of theory equals one continuing education contact hour.
- ❖ Each three hours of course-related clinical practice will be accepted as one continuing education contact hour.
- ❖ One continuing education unit (CEU) is equal to 10 continuing education contact hours.
- ❖ One academic quarter unit is equal to 10 continuing education contact hours.
- ❖ One academic semester unit is equal to 15 continuing education contact hours.

Proof of Attendance

Providers must issue a document, such as a certificate, grade slip, or transcript to each licensee to show that the individual has met the established criteria for successful completion of a course. A grade slip or transcript will be accepted in lieu of a certificate for those enrolled in an approved academic course.

A document indicating successful completion must contain all the information listed in Title 16, *CCR*, Section 1458(b). **A statement indicating that the certificate must be retained by the licensee for a period of four years after the course ends is required on the certificate of completion.**

The provider is responsible for filling in ALL information on certificates. Distributing blank certificates violates Title 16, *CCR*, Section 1458(b). Documents of completion must be issued to attendees within ninety (90) days after conclusion of the course.

Advertisement

Information used by CEPs to advertise continuing education courses must include the information noted in Title 16, *CCR*, Section 1459. CEPs are reminded about the following provisions:

- ❖ The full statement "Provider approved by the California Board of Registered Nursing, Provider Number ____ for ____ contact hours" must be included in all advertisements.
- ❖ The provider's policy regarding refunds (including time lines) for non-attendance by the registrant must be stated.
- ❖ A clear, concise description of the course content, objectives, or both, is required.
- ❖ Provider name must be that which is on file with the BRN.

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It is requested that all study-tour courses that provide continuing education include the statement:

"BRN approval extends only to continuing education providers and does not include tour arrangements."

- ❖ Some health personnel choose to complete courses for skills that are NOT included in their scope of practice. For example, some health personnel may complete a course on IV therapy, including how to start an IV. This does NOT authorize these persons to add this skill to their practice if this function is not included in their current scope of practice. CEPs should prepare their advertisements so potential applicants are not misled. Failure to monitor this can lead to complaints of false advertising and possible removal of CEP approval.

Record Keeping

Each provider is required to maintain the following records for *each* course offered for a period of four (4) years in one location within the State of California or a place approved by the BRN. The requirements of Title 16, CCR, Sections 1454(d) and (f) include retaining:

- ❖ Course outline, date(s) and place(s) for each course given.
- ❖ Curriculum vitae or resumes for all instructors.
- ❖ Name and license number or other identification number of RNs taking each course.
- ❖ Record of any certificate issued to them.

Provider Policies

Each provider is required to have written policies, available upon request, describing:

- ❖ Refund policy regarding non-attendance.
- ❖ Notification process if course is cancelled.
- ❖ Time period within which the full or partial registration fee will be refunded.

Withdrawal of Approval or Denial of Application

The Board may withdraw its approval from a provider or deny an application for causes that include, but are not limited to, the following:

- ❖ Conviction of a felony or any offense substantially related to the activities of a provider.
- ❖ Failure to comply with any provision of Chapter 6, Division 2, of the *Business and Professions Code* and/or Chapter 14 of Title 16 of the *California Code of Regulations*.
- ❖ Any material misrepresentation of fact by a Continuing Education Provider or applicant in any information required to be submitted to the BRN.

The Board may withdraw its approval of a provider after giving the provider written notice setting forth the reason for withdrawal and affording a reasonable opportunity to be heard by the Board or its designee after thirty (30) days written notice of the specific charges to be heard. Should the Board deny the provider approval, the applicant has the opportunity to formally appeal the action to the Board within a thirty (30) day period.

General Information

After you become an approved CEP, it is not necessary to submit additional courses since you are expected to offer only those courses that meet the BRN's requirements. If you have any questions about the appropriateness of specific course content, please call CE Program staff for consultation.

Co-sponsoring a Course

When a course is sponsored by two or more CEPs, only one provider name and provider number can be used in connection with the course. That provider must assume responsibility for all applicable provisions of Title 16, CCR, Division 14, Article 5. The responsible provider's name and number must be stated in any advertisement and on the proof of attendance.

Instructor's Credit

Instructors can receive full credit for any courses they co-teach when they attend the whole course and complete all course requirements.

Independent or Home Study Courses

Approved providers may offer independent or home study courses. There is no limit to the number of contact hours that can be completed through

recommended that a description of the methodology used to grant contact hours for these courses be developed and kept on file by the CEP so that questions or complaints raised by those taking the course can be addressed by the BRN.

Audits of Providers

The BRN is authorized to audit records, courses, instructors, and related activities of a provider to assure compliance with the law and regulations. Desk audits of courses and the operation of providers are conducted by BRN staff. This can vary from random selection of providers to investigation of complaints. Site visits may be scheduled to a CEP's office.

The BRN will conduct random audits of advertising to assure that they are in compliance with the regulations. You are requested to respond to these audits by the dates specified in the audit notice.

Audits of Registered Nurses

Random audits of registered nurses are conducted regularly. CEPs are contacted to verify that each RN completed a specific course on a stated date. Your prompt response to the requested information is important to completing this audit process. Failure to comply with this request may lead to administrative action to withdraw your CEP number.

An approved provider accepts full responsibility for each course granting continuing education contact hours. This includes, but is not limited to: record keeping, content of advertisements, course content, issuing certificates, instructor qualifications, and all other related matters, as defined in Title 16, CCR, Division 14, Article 5.

If you have any questions about the Continuing Education Program, please contact the Sacramento office of the Board of Registered Nursing at 1625 N. Market Blvd., Ste. N217, Sacramento CA 95834, or call 916-322-3350.

www.rn.ca.gov