

PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE DIVISION[645]

Notice of Intended Action

**Proposing rulemaking related to continuing education
and providing an opportunity for public comment**

The Board of Physical and Occupational Therapy hereby proposes to rescind Chapter 203, “Continuing Education for Physical Therapists and Physical Therapist Assistants,” Iowa Administrative Code, and to adopt a new chapter with the same title.

Legal Authority for Rulemaking

This rulemaking is proposed under the authority provided in Iowa Code chapter 148A and sections 147.36, 272C.3 and 272C.10.

State or Federal Law Implemented

This rulemaking implements, in whole or in part, Iowa Code chapters 17A, 147, 148A and 272C.

Purpose and Summary

Proposed Chapter 203 sets forth continuing education requirements for physical therapists (PTs) and physical therapist assistants (PTAs). It includes definitions related to continuing education, the required number of hours of continuing education that licensees are required to obtain, the standards that licensees need to meet, and the types of continuing education courses that are permissible. The intended benefit of continuing education is to ensure that licensees stay up to date with laws, rules, and industry standards and, as a result, provide high-quality services to Iowans.

Public comments were received during the November 21, 2023, public hearing on the Regulatory Analyses for Chapters 200 to 203. No changes from the Regulatory Analysis for Chapter 203 were made.

Fiscal Impact

This rulemaking has no fiscal impact to the State of Iowa.

Jobs Impact

After analysis and review of this rulemaking, no impact on jobs has been found.

Waivers

Any person who believes that the application of the discretionary provisions of this rulemaking would result in hardship or injustice to that person may petition the Board for a waiver of the discretionary provisions, if any, pursuant to 645—Chapter 18.

Public Comment

Any interested person may submit written or oral comments concerning this proposed rulemaking. Written or oral comments in response to this rulemaking must be received by the Department of Inspections, Appeals, and Licensing no later than 4:30 p.m. on February 14, 2024. Comments should be directed to:

Venus Vendoures Walsh
Division of Licensing
Iowa Department of Inspections, Appeals, and Licensing
6200 Park Avenue, Suite 100
Des Moines, Iowa 50321-1270
Phone: 515.242.6529
Email: venus.vendoures-walsh@dia.iowa.gov

Public Hearing

Public hearings at which persons may present their views orally or in writing will be held as follows:

February 13, 2024 2:30 to 2:50 p.m.	6200 Park Avenue Des Moines, Iowa Video call link: meet.google.com/jji-jaoj-uqy Phone numbers: tel.meet/yxd-hmkw-ppo?pin=1779851586643
February 14, 2024 2:30 to 2:50 p.m.	6200 Park Avenue Des Moines, Iowa Video call link: meet.google.com/jji-jaoj-uqy Phone numbers: tel.meet/yxd-hmkw-ppo?pin=1779851586643

Persons who wish to make oral comments at a public hearing may be asked to state their names for the record and to confine their remarks to the subject of this proposed rulemaking.

Any persons who intend to attend a public hearing and have special requirements, such as those related to hearing or mobility impairments, should contact the Department and advise of specific needs.

Review by Administrative Rules Review Committee

The Administrative Rules Review Committee, a bipartisan legislative committee which oversees rulemaking by executive branch agencies, may, on its own motion or on written request by any individual or group, review this rulemaking at its [regular monthly meeting](#) or at a special meeting. The Committee's meetings are open to the public, and interested persons may be heard as provided in Iowa Code section 17A.8(6).

The following rulemaking action is proposed:

ITEM 1. Rescind 645—Chapter 203 and adopt the following **new** chapter in lieu thereof:

CHAPTER 203
CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR PHYSICAL THERAPISTS
AND PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANTS

645—203.1(272C) Definitions. For the purpose of these rules, the following definitions shall apply:

“*Active license*” means a license that is current and has not expired.

“*Audit*” means the selection of licensees for verification of continuing education requirements.

“*Board*” means the board of physical and occupational therapy.

“*Continuing education*” means the same as the definition in Iowa Code section 272C.1.

“*Hour of continuing education*” means at least 50 minutes spent by a licensee completing an approved continuing education activity through live, virtual, online or prerecorded means where the instructor provides proof of completion by the licensee as set forth in these rules.

“*Inactive license*” means a license that has expired because it was not renewed by the end of the grace period. The category of “inactive license” may include licenses formerly known as lapsed, inactive, delinquent, closed, or retired.

“*Independent study*” means a subject/program/activity that a person pursues autonomously and that meets standards for approval criteria in the rules and includes a posttest.

“*License*” means license to practice.

“*Licensee*” means any person licensed to practice as a physical therapist or physical therapist assistant in the state of Iowa.

645—203.2(148A) Continuing education requirements.

203.2(1) The biennial continuing education compliance period shall extend for a two-year period that begins on the sixteenth day of the birth month and ends two years later on the fifteenth day of the birth month.

a. Requirements for physical therapist licensees. Each biennium, each person who is licensed to practice as a physical therapist in this state will be required to complete a minimum of 40 hours of continuing education approved by the board.

b. Requirements for physical therapist assistant licensees. Each biennium, each person who is licensed to practice as a physical therapist assistant in this state will be required to complete a minimum of 20 hours of continuing education approved by the board.

203.2(2) Requirements of new licensees. Those persons licensed for the first time shall not be required to complete continuing education as a prerequisite for the first renewal of their licenses. Continuing education hours acquired any time from the initial licensing until the second license renewal may be used. The new licensee will be required to complete a minimum of 40 hours of continuing education per biennium for physical therapists and a minimum of 20 hours for physical therapist assistants each subsequent license renewal.

203.2(3) No hours of continuing education shall be carried over into the next biennium except for a new licensee. A licensee whose license was reactivated during the current renewal compliance period may use continuing education earned during the compliance period for the first renewal following reactivation.

645—203.3(148A,272C) Standards.

203.3(1) *General criteria.* Appropriate continuing education activity for purposes of license renewal will support each of the following:

- a.* Constitutes an organized program of learning that contributes directly to the professional competency of the licensee;
- b.* Pertains to subject matters that integrally relate to the practice of the profession;
- c.* Is conducted by individuals who have specialized education, training and experience by reason of which said individuals should be considered qualified concerning the subject matter of the program.

At the time of audit, the board may request the qualifications of presenters;

- d.* Fulfills stated program goals, objectives, or both; and
- e.* Provides proof of attendance to licensees including:
 - (1) Date, location, course title, presenter(s);
 - (2) Number of program contact hours; and
 - (3) Certificate of completion or evidence of successful completion of the course provided by the course sponsor.

203.3(2) *Specific criteria.*

- a.* Licensees may obtain continuing education hours of credit by:
 - (1) Attending workshops, conferences, or symposiums.
 - (2) Accessing online training, such as viewing interactive conferences, attending webinars, or completing online training courses.
 - (3) Completing an American Physical Therapy Association-approved postprofessional clinical residency or fellowship. A licensee will receive 1 hour of credit for every 2 hours spent in clinical residency, up to a maximum of 20 hours. Clinical residency hours may not be used for credit if the licensee is also seeking credit hours earned for postprofessional academic coursework in the same renewal period.

(4) Directly supervising students for clinical education if the students being supervised are from an accredited physical therapist or physical therapist assistant program and are participating in a full-time clinical experience (defined as approximately 40 hours per week, ranging from 1 to 18 weeks). One hour will be awarded for every 160 contact hours of supervision. A maximum of 8 hours for a physical therapist and 4 hours for a physical therapist assistant may be awarded per biennium. The physical therapist or physical therapist assistant must have documentation from the accredited educational program indicating the number of hours spent supervising a student.

(5) Presenting professional programs that meet the criteria listed in this rule. Two hours of credit will be awarded for each hour of presentation for the first offering of the course. A course schedule or brochure must be maintained for audit.

(6) Completing academic courses that directly relate to the professional competency of the licensee. Official transcripts indicating successful completion of academic courses that apply to the field of physical therapy will be necessary in order for the licensee to receive the following continuing education credits:

1 academic semester hour = 15 continuing education hours of credit

1 academic trimester hour = 12 continuing education hours of credit

1 academic quarter hour = 10 continuing education hours of credit

(7) Teaching in an approved college, university, or graduate school. The licensee may receive the following continuing education credits on a one-time basis for the first offering of a course:

1 academic semester hour = 15 continuing education hours of credit

1 academic trimester hour = 12 continuing education hours of credit

1 academic quarter hour = 10 continuing education hours of credit

(8) Authoring research or other activities, the results of which are published in a recognized professional publication. The licensee shall receive five hours of credit per page.

(9) Participating in professional organizations related to the practice of physical therapy, with one credit hour received for each six months of active service as an officer, delegate, or committee member, for a maximum of four hours of credit per biennium. Verification of participation must be provided by the professional organization to document the continuing education credit.

b. Continuing education hours of credit in the following topics are not considered to be directly and primarily related to the clinical application of physical therapy and therefore must not exceed a maximum combined total of ten hours of credit for a physical therapist licensee and five hours of credit for a physical therapist assistant licensee:

(1) Business-related topics, such as marketing, time management, government regulations, and other like topics.

(2) Personal skills topics, such as career burnout, communication skills, human relations, and other like topics.

(3) General health topics, such as clinical research, CPR, mandatory reporter training, and other like topics.

These rules are intended to implement Iowa Code section 272C.2 and chapter 148A.