

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 satisfactory completion of continuing education requirements during a specified time period.

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

“*Continuing education*” means planned, organized learning acts designed to maintain, improve, or expand a licensee’s knowledge and skills in order for the licensee to develop new knowledge and skills relevant to the enhancement of practice, education, or theory development to improve the safety and welfare of the public.

“*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 that meets standards for approval criteria in the rules.

“*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.

[ARC 6985C, IAB 4/19/23, effective 5/24/23]

**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 shall be required to complete a minimum of 40 hours of continuing education approved by the board; a minimum of 30 hours shall be directly and primarily related to the clinical application of physical therapy.

*b.* Requirements for physical therapist assistant licensees. Each biennium, each person who is licensed to practice as a physical therapist assistant in this state shall be required to complete a minimum of 20 hours of continuing education approved by the board; a minimum of 15 hours shall be directly and primarily related to the clinical application of physical therapy.

**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 anytime 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)** Hours of continuing education credit may be obtained by attending and participating in a continuing education activity. These hours must be in accordance with these rules.

**203.2(4)** 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.

**203.2(5)** It is the responsibility of each licensee to finance the cost of continuing education.

[ARC 9328B, IAB 1/12/11, effective 2/16/11; ARC 1659C, IAB 10/15/14, effective 11/19/14]

**645—203.3(148A,272C) Standards.**

**203.3(1) General criteria.** A continuing education activity which meets all of the following criteria is appropriate for continuing education credit if the continuing education activity:

- a. Constitutes an organized program of learning which contributes directly to the professional competency of the licensee;
- b. Pertains to subject matters which 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 in attendance 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 5 hours of credit per page.

(9) Participating in professional organizations related to the practice of physical therapy, with 1 credit hour received for each six months of active service as an officer, delegate, or committee

member, for a maximum of 4 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 10 hours of credit for a physical therapist licensee and 5 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.

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**645—203.4(148A,272C) Audit of continuing education report.** Rescinded IAB 12/17/08, effective 1/21/09.

**645—203.5(148A,272C) Automatic exemption.** Rescinded IAB 12/17/08, effective 1/21/09.

**645—203.6(272C) Continuing education exemption for disability or illness.** Rescinded IAB 12/17/08, effective 1/21/09.

**645—203.7(148A,272C) Grounds for disciplinary action.** Rescinded IAB 12/17/08, effective 1/21/09.

**645—203.8(272C) Continuing education exemption for disability or illness.** Rescinded IAB 9/14/05, effective 10/19/05.

**645—203.9(148A,272C) Reinstatement of inactive practitioners.** Rescinded IAB 9/14/05, effective 10/19/05.

**645—203.10(272C) Hearings.** Rescinded IAB 9/14/05, effective 10/19/05.

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

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<sup>◇</sup> Two or more ARCs