

655—5.2 (152) Continuing education — licensees.

5.2(1) Board authority. The board derives its authority under Iowa Code chapter 272C to create continuing education requirements as a prerequisite to obtain a current license and an audit system to ensure compliance. Rules relating to the continuing education and licensing of registered nurses and licensed practical nurses are found in this chapter; rules relating to the continuing education and licensing of advanced registered nurse practitioners are found in nursing board rules, 655—Chapter 7.

5.2(2) Requirements. To obtain a registered nurse or licensed practical nurse license for the next renewal period, the licensee shall verify the completion of continuing education requirements or exceptions to the requirements, as outlined in subrule 5.2(3).

a. Thirty-six contact hours or 3.6 continuing education units (CEUs) shall be required for renewal of a three-year license. Twenty-four contact hours or 2.4 CEUs shall be required for renewal of a license which was issued for less than three years as a result of one of the following:

- (1) Examination.
- (2) Endorsement into Iowa from another state.
- (3) Reactivation from inactive status.

b. The hours specified in paragraph “a” shall be completed in the license period for which the license was issued. Credit will not be accepted for a duplication of informal or formal offerings within a license period.

c. Continuing education credits from a previous license period including all make-up credit shall not be used, nor shall credits be accumulated for use in a future licensure period.

d. Units of measurement used for continuing education courses shall be as follows:

- (1) 1 contact hour = 50 minutes of didactic instruction, work on learner designed self-study, and clinical or laboratory practicum in an informal offering.
- (2) 1 CEU = 10 contact hours of instruction.
- (3) 1 academic semester hour = 15 contact hours of instruction.
- (4) 1 academic quarter hour = 10 contact hours of instruction.

e. To be approved for continuing education credit, formal offerings shall meet the qualifications of appropriate subject matter as specified in subrule 5.3(2), paragraph “a,” or be required toward meeting the requirements of a nursing education program which extends beyond the education completed for the original nursing license. Questions about whether particular formal offerings will be approved may be directed to the board office. A denial of approval may be appealed to the board within one month of the denial. The licensee shall retain a transcript exhibiting a passing grade for each formal offering or verification of attendance for offerings which are audited.

f. To be approved for continuing education credit, informal offerings shall meet the qualifications of appropriate subject matter as specified in subrule 5.3(2), paragraph “a.” There are no restrictions on amount of credit acquired through learner designed or provider designed self-study. The licensee shall retain a certificate to verify completion of each informal offering.

(1) Informal offerings shall be accepted when offered by board-approved providers or when guided by board-approved providers in learner designed self-study. All learner designed self-study and all offerings within Iowa including distance education technology, e.g., satellite programming, shall be sponsored by a board-approved provider to be acceptable.

(2) Informal offerings attended outside of Iowa or offered as self-study, including Internet self-study, shall be accepted when recognized by other state boards of nursing with mandatory continuing education requirements or offered by the American Nurses’ Association, National League for Nursing, National Federation of Licensed Practical Nurses, National Association for Practical Nurse Education and Service, Inc. These informal offerings shall be in accordance with the continuing education standards as follows:

1. American Nurses' Credentialing Center Manual for Accreditation as a Provider of Continuing Education in Nursing in effect in 2001 and the Manual for Accreditation as an Approver of Continuing Education in effect in 2001.
2. National League for Nursing criteria and guidelines of the International Association for Continuing Education and Training in effect in 2000.
3. National Federation of Licensed Practical Nurses Continuing Education Department policies and procedures in effect in 1997.
4. National Association for Practical Nurse Education and Service, Inc. (NAPNES) Criteria for Approval of Continuing Education in effect in 2000.

(3) Informal offerings offered from nonapproved providers outside of Iowa or an organization not specified in subrule 5.2(2), paragraph "f," subparagraph (2), whether it be a self-study course, an Internet self-study course, or a live presentation attended outside of Iowa, shall be accepted when specially approved by the board for an individual licensee. A licensee shall obtain special approval from the board office in order to receive credit acceptable to fulfill the requirements. The special approval application form is available from the board office upon request. Special approval requires submission of a completed application and a brochure, advertisement, or course description prior to the completion of the licensure period. Course content shall meet the qualifications of appropriate subject matter as specified in subrule 5.3(2), paragraph "a." The licensee shall retain the approval letter from the board office, in addition to the certificate of attendance received from the nonapproved provider. A denial of approval may be appealed to the board within one month of the denial.

g. Activities not specified in subrule 5.2(2), paragraph "e" or "f," shall be considered appropriate for continuing education credit only after approval has been obtained in writing from the board.

5.2(3) Exceptions to the requirements in subrule 5.2(2), paragraph "a." A waiver of continuing education requirements or extensions of time within which to fulfill the requirements may be granted on an individual basis. Specific instructions are available from the board office for the following:

a. A licensee shall be deemed to have complied with the continuing education requirements during periods that person serves honorably on active duty in the military service as specified in Iowa Code section 272C.2(3). The continuing education credit requirements shall be waived; however, a licensee who claims this exception shall retain evidence of active duty to be presented upon request from the board.

(1) A licensee who served on active duty for the entire license period or through the end of the license period shall be exempt from the requirement of continuing education credits.

(2) A licensee who served on active duty for a portion of a license period but is not on active duty at the time of renewal shall comply with continuing education requirements of Iowa for the remainder of the license period. The required hours are prorated at 12 contact hours per year for each period of 12 consecutive months when not on active duty.

b. A licensee shall be deemed to have complied with the continuing education requirements when that person, at the time of renewal, resides outside of Iowa and holds a current license to practice in a state other than Iowa which also has mandatory continuing education. The continuing education credit requirements shall be waived; however, a licensee who claims this exception shall retain evidence of the out-of-state license to be presented upon request from the board.

(1) A licensee who resides out of state for the entire license period or through the end of the license period and meets a state's continuing education requirements to maintain a current license shall be exempt from the requirements of continuing education credits.

(2) A licensee who resided out of state for a portion of a license period but is residing in Iowa at the time of renewal shall comply with continuing education requirements of Iowa for the remainder of the license period. The required hours are prorated at 12 contact hours per year for each period of 12 consecutive months of residence in Iowa.

c. A licensee shall be deemed to have complied with the continuing education requirements during periods that person is a government employee working as a registered nurse or licensed practical nurse and assigned to duty outside of the United States as specified in Iowa Code section 272C.2(4). The continuing education credit requirement shall be waived; however, a licensee who claims this exception shall retain evidence of government employment outside the United States to be presented upon request from the board.

(1) A licensee who is a government employee serving outside the United States for the entire license period or through the end of the license period shall be exempt from the requirement of continuing education credits.

(2) A licensee who is a government employee serving outside the United States for a portion of a license period, but is not in that status at the time of renewal, shall comply with continuing education requirements of Iowa for the remainder of the license period. The required hours are prorated at 12 contact hours per year for each period of 12 consecutive months when not in that status.

d. A licensee shall be deemed to have complied with the continuing education requirements during periods that person is in foreign service as a registered nurse or licensed practical nurse outside the United States where a current license is required. The continuing education credit requirement shall be waived; however, a licensee who claims this exception shall retain evidence of foreign service requiring licensure to be presented upon request from the board.

(1) A licensee who is serving in such a position for the entire license period or through the end of the license period shall be exempt from the requirement for continuing education credits.

(2) A licensee who is serving in such a position for a portion of the license period, but is not in that status at the time of renewal, shall comply with continuing education requirements of Iowa for the remainder of the license period. The required hours are prorated at 12 contact hours per year for each period of 12 consecutive months when not in that status.

e. A licensee shall be deemed to have complied with the continuing education requirements when that person at the time of renewal possesses evidence of certification in a specialty area of nursing practice for the advanced registered nurse practitioner as defined in rule 655—7.1(152). The continuing education credit requirements shall be waived; however, a licensee who claims this exception shall retain evidence of current certification by the national organization to be submitted upon request.

f. A licensee who has had a physical or mental disability or illness during the license period shall be eligible for a waiver. A waiver provides for an extension of time or exemption from some or all of the continuing education requirements. An application for a waiver is available upon request to the board office. The application requires the signature of a physician who can attest to the existence of a disability or illness during the license period. The application for a waiver shall be approved or denied depending on the disability or illness of the licensee. A licensee shall be notified of the decision. A licensee who obtains approval shall retain a copy of the waiver to be presented to the board upon request.

5.2(4) *Failure to meet requirements or conditions for exceptions to requirements.* The licensee who fails to meet the requirements or the conditions for exceptions has the following options:

a. If the requirements or the conditions for exceptions are met during the late renewal period, as defined in rule 655—3.1(17A,147,152,272C), the licensee may retain the license in an active status.

(1) To remain active, the licensee shall complete the continuing education requirements as specified in subrule 5.2(2) or 5.2(3) as well as other requirements specified in 655—subrule 3.7(4). The licensee shall be required to submit to an audit of continuing education following the late renewal. The licensee shall automatically be reaudited when late credit has been accepted.

(2) Failure to renew within 30 days after expiration shall cause the license to be placed on inactive status.

b. An inactive license as defined in rule 655—3.1(17A,147,152,272C) may be reactivated.

c. To reactivate a license, the licensee shall obtain 12 contact hours of continuing education within the 12 months prior to reactivation and complete the requirements specified in 655—subrule 3.7(5).

5.2(5) *Audit of licensees.* The board may select licensees for audit following a period of licensure.

a. The licensee must submit verification of compliance with continuing education requirements or exceptions for the period of licensure being audited. Verification for satisfactory completion of the audit includes legible copies of certificates of attendance, transcripts, special approval of informal offerings from nonapproved providers, or documentation of compliance with exceptions in subrule 5.2(3).

b. The licensee must submit verification of the requirement specified in 655—subrule 3.7(3).

c. Verification must be submitted within one month after the date of the audit. Extension of time may be granted on an individual basis.

d. If submitted materials are incomplete or unsatisfactory, the licensee shall be notified. The licensee shall be given the opportunity to submit make-up credit to cover the deficit found through the audit. The deadline for receipt of the documentation for this make-up credit is within 90 days of receipt of the board office notification. The licensee shall be reaudited during the next renewal period when make-up credit has been accepted.

e. Licensees are required to keep certificates of attendance, letters verifying special approval for informal offerings from nonapproved providers, transcripts, and documentation of compliance with exceptions for four years.

f. The board shall notify the licensee of satisfactory completion of the audit.

g. Failure to complete the audit satisfactorily or falsification of information shall result in board action as described in nursing board rules, 655—Chapter 4.

h. Failure to notify the board of a current mailing address will not absolve the licensee from the audit requirement; completion of an audit will be required prior to further license renewal.