

655—5.2(272C) Continuing education—licensees.

5.2(1) Board authority. The board derives its authority under Iowa Code chapter 272C to establish continuing education requirements as a prerequisite to obtain a current license and to establish an audit system to ensure compliance.

5.2(2) Requirements. To renew a license, the licensee shall verify the completion of 36 contact hours or 3.6 CEUs of credit or an exemption to the continuing education requirements. The hours shall be completed between the effective date and the expiration date of the license. The cost of continuing education is the responsibility of the licensee.

5.2(3) Accumulating hours or credit.

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

(1) One contact hour = 60 minutes of didactic instruction, work on learner-designed self-study, and clinical or laboratory practicum in an informal offering.

(2) One CEU = 10 contact hours.

(3) One academic semester hour = 15 contact hours.

(4) One academic quarter hour = 10 contact hours.

b. Continuing education credit will not be accepted for the same course more than once within a license period.

c. Continuing education credit shall not be carried over to a future license period.

d. Approved make-up credit shall not be used more than once.

5.2(4) Appropriate subject matter.

a. Appropriate subject matter for continuing education credits reflects the educational needs of the nurse learner and the health needs of the consumer. Appropriate subject matter is limited to offerings that are scientifically founded and predominantly for professional growth. The following areas are deemed appropriate subject matter for continuing education credit:

(1) Nursing practice related to health care of patients/clients/families in any setting.

(2) Professional growth and development related to nursing practice roles with a health care focus.

(3) Sciences upon which nursing practice, nursing education, or nursing research is based, e.g., nursing theories and biological, physical, behavioral, computer, social, or basic sciences.

(4) Social, economic, ethical and legal aspects of health care.

(5) Management of or administration of health care, health care personnel, or health care facilities.

(6) Education of patients or patients' significant others, students, or personnel in the health care field.

b. Continuing education credit shall not be awarded for the following:

(1) Self-help and self-care that are not scientifically supported.

(2) Cardiopulmonary resuscitation and basic life support classes.

(3) Orientation in-service activities.

c. Academic offerings shall meet the qualifications of appropriate subject matter as specified above or meet the requirements of a nursing education program which extends beyond the education completed for the original nursing license. The licensee shall retain a transcript exhibiting a passing grade for each academic offering.

5.2(5) Options for continuing education. The following are options to complete continuing education requirements:

a. Informal offerings by the following entities:

(1) Board-approved providers.

(2) Other approved providers from state boards of nursing that have mandatory continuing education requirements.

(3) American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) Commission on Accreditation.

(4) National League for Nursing (NLN).

(5) National Federation of Licensed Practical Nurses Continuing Education (NFLPN) and the NFLPN Education Foundation.

(6) National Association for Practical Nurse Education and Service, Inc. (NAPNES).

b. National certification or recertification which is related to the practice of nursing and is current at the time of a license renewal. The national certification or recertification shall be recognized as 36 contact hours of continuing education.

c. Completion of a board-approved nurse refresher course. Hours of participation will be recognized as contact hours of continuing education.

d. Participation as a preceptor for a nursing student or employee transitioning into a new clinical practice area, for a minimum of 120 hours in a one-to-one relationship as part of an organized preceptorship program. A licensee shall maintain documentation issued by the institution supervising the student or employee demonstrating the objectives of the preceptorship and the hours completed. A preceptorship shall be recognized as 12 contact hours of continuing education.

e. Completion of a nurse residency program. A residency program shall be recognized as 36 contact hours of continuing education.

f. Academic offerings provided by the following entities:

- (1) Community colleges.
- (2) Public and private colleges and universities.
- (3) Governmental academies.

5.2(6) Documentation. Licensees are required to keep the following documentation, as applicable, for a period of four years: certificates of attendance, letters verifying special approval for informal offerings from nonapproved providers, transcripts, proof of certification and documentation of compliance with an exemption. The certificates of attendance shall include licensee name, course date, course title, awarded hours, and provider approval information.

5.2(7) Special approval process. An informal offering from a nonapproved provider or an organization not specified in subrule 5.2(5) shall be accepted when the offering is specially approved by the board for an individual licensee. A licensee shall obtain special approval from the board staff, prior to the completion of the licensure period, in order to receive credit acceptable to fulfill the requirements. Special approval requires submission of a completed application and a brochure, advertisement, or course description and a certificate of attendance for the offering. Course content shall meet the qualifications of appropriate subject matter as specified in subrule 5.2(4). The licensee shall retain the approval letter from the board staff and the certificate of attendance received from the nonapproved provider. A denial of approval may be appealed to the board within 30 days of the denial.

5.2(8) Exemptions to continuing education. A licensee shall be exempt from continuing education requirements if the licensee:

a. Served honorably on active duty in the United States military services during the license period. A licensee who claims this exemption shall retain evidence of active duty to be presented upon request.

b. Possesses a current license to practice in another state that has mandatory continuing education requirements, so long as the license is active and the licensee resides in a state other than Iowa at the time of renewal or reactivation.

c. Worked as a registered nurse or licensed practical nurse for the government or foreign service or in missionary work, if the licensee was assigned to duty outside of the United States during the relevant time period. A licensee who claims this exemption shall retain evidence of employment outside of the United States to be presented upon request.

d. Had a physical or mental disability or illness during the relevant time period and applied for an extension of time to complete continuing education requirements or for a medical exemption from the continuing education requirements. An application is available upon request and requires the signature of a health care provider who can attest to the existence of a disability or illness during the license period. The application form shall be submitted prior to license expiration. A licensee shall not claim an extension of time or exemption from continuing education requirements on a license renewal application pursuant to this rule unless and until the licensee has received approval. A licensee who obtains approval shall retain a copy of the written approval to be presented upon request.

5.2(9) Failure to meet requirement or qualify for an exemption. A licensee who fails to meet continuing education requirements or qualify for an exemption prior to license expiration cannot renew the license and has the following options:

a. Complete the continuing education requirements or qualify for an exemption during the late renewal period. The licensee may be required to submit to an audit of continuing education following the late renewal and may be reaudited in the next renewal period when late credit has been accepted. Continuing education credit shall not be used more than once.

b. If the licensee does not renew within 30 days after license expiration, the license shall be placed on inactive status. An inactive license may be reactivated pursuant to 655—subrule 3.7(5).

5.2(10) *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 of exemptions for the period of licensure being audited. Verification for satisfactory completion of the audit includes legible copies of certificates of attendance, transcripts, proof of certification, documentation of special approval of informal offerings from nonapproved providers, documentation of compliance with exemptions in subrule 5.2(8), or other appropriate documentation.

b. The licensee must submit verification of completion of the mandatory reporter training course approved by the Iowa department of public health in the previous five years as specified in 655—subrule 3.7(3).

c. Verification must be submitted within 30 days after the date of the audit notification. An 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 the board office notification. The licensee may be reaudited during the next renewal period when make-up credit has been accepted. The make-up credit shall not be reused for the current renewal period.

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

f. Failure to complete the audit satisfactorily or falsification of information may result in board action as described in 655—Chapter 4.

g. Failure to notify the board of a current mailing address will not absolve the licensee of the audit requirement.

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