

655—5.3(272C) Continuing education—providers.

5.3(1) Board authority. The board derives its authority under Iowa Code chapter 272C to establish requirements for becoming an Iowa approved provider and maintaining that status. The board also has the authority to audit approved providers.

5.3(2) Initial approval process for providers. Initial approval is granted upon the submission of required materials and the determination by the board or its representative that the materials fulfill the criteria for approved providers specified in subrule 5.3(4).

a. An application for Iowa provider approval, including the procedural instructions and requirements, is available on the board's Web site.

b. Upon receipt of three copies of the completed application materials, a review is held by a committee composed of at least three appointees of the board.

(1) The review is held at the board office within 60 days of receipt of the application.

(2) The committee review is based on the criteria specified in subrule 5.3(4).

(3) If the submitted materials meet the requirements, the committee shall approve the provider for five years and issue a provider number to the provider. The approved provider shall be notified by staff of the decision within two weeks of the committee review.

(4) If the committee finds submitted materials are incomplete or unsatisfactory, staff shall notify the provider applicant of the decision within two weeks of the committee review. The applicant is given the opportunity to meet the criteria and for an additional review to be held at the board office within six weeks of receipt of the revised application materials.

(5) If the applicant is unable to meet the criteria within two committee reviews or one year from the receipt of the initial application at the board office, whichever comes first, the committee shall recommend nonapproval at the next regularly scheduled board meeting.

(6) Notice of this recommendation of nonapproval shall be provided to the applicant by staff at least 30 days before the board meeting.

(7) The board shall make a decision regarding each recommendation of nonapproval at a board meeting.

c. A provider applicant who wishes to appeal the board's decision regarding nonapproval shall file an appeal within 30 days of the board's decision of nonapproval. A timely appeal shall initiate a contested case proceeding regarding the provider applicant's approval status. The contested case shall be conducted according to the provisions of Iowa Code chapter 17A and 655—Chapter 20. The written decision issued at the conclusion of a contested case hearing shall be considered final agency action.

d. A provider applicant who has been denied approved provider status may apply no sooner than one year after denial to become an approved provider by starting the initial approval process.

5.3(3) Reapproval process for approved providers. Reapproval is granted upon the submission of required materials and the determination by the board or its representatives that the materials fulfill the criteria for approved providers specified in this chapter.

a. The board staff shall send an application for reapproval to an approved provider six months before the expiration of the current approval. The completed application shall be submitted to the board office no later than three months prior to the expiration of the current approval.

b. Upon receipt of the application for reapproval, a review shall be made by board staff at the board office within 30 days of receipt of the application.

(1) The review is based on the criteria specified in subrule 5.3(4).

(2) If the submitted materials meet the requirements, staff shall issue a renewal of the approved provider status for a five-year period.

(3) If the submitted materials are incomplete or unsatisfactory, staff shall notify the provider of the decision within two weeks of the review. The provider shall be given the opportunity to meet the criteria within 30 days of the receipt of the board office notification. If the provider is unable to meet the requirements, staff shall recommend nonapproval at the next regularly scheduled board meeting.

(4) Notice of this recommendation of nonapproval shall be provided to the applicant at least 30 days before the board meeting.

(5) The board shall make a decision regarding each recommendation of nonapproval at the board meeting.

(6) A renewal applicant who wishes to appeal the board's decision regarding nonapproval shall file an appeal within 30 days of the board's decision of nonapproval. A timely appeal shall initiate a contested case proceeding regarding the provider applicant's approval status. The contested case shall be conducted according to the provisions of Iowa Code chapter 17A and 655—Chapter 20. The written decision issued at the conclusion of a contested case hearing shall be considered final agency action.

(7) A reapproval applicant who has been denied reapproval may reapply no sooner than one year after denial. The initial approval process must be followed to reapply.

5.3(4) *Criteria for approved providers.* Approved providers shall adhere to criteria indicative of quality continuing education for nurses. Provider approval applies to all programs regardless of geographic location.

a. Criteria related to appropriate subject matter. Appropriate subject matter for continuing education credits reflects both the educational needs of the nurse learner and the health needs of the consumer. 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 or self-care that is not scientifically supported.
- (2) Cardiopulmonary resuscitation and basic life support classes.
- (3) Orientation in-service activities.

c. Criteria related to operation of an approved continuing education providership. The provider shall:

(1) Have a consistent, identifiable authority who has overall responsibility for the operation of the providership. The authority shall be knowledgeable in administration and have the capability to organize, execute, and evaluate the overall operations of the providership.

(2) Have an organizational chart to delineate lines of authority and communication within the providership, including any other cooperative or advisory committees. The organizational chart must illustrate the reporting structure of the providership within the parent organization, if applicable.

(3) Develop and implement mission, vision and values statements specific to the providership, and a strategic plan for their implementation.

(4) Maintain financial integrity so that participants receive the continuing education for which they have paid.

(5) Maintain participant and program records.

(6) Demonstrate and guarantee active nursing participation in the planning and administration of informal offerings. Nursing participation shall be documented in a written statement of policy, in denotation on the organizational chart, and in planning minutes.

(7) Develop a subject matter plan which indicates the mechanism of assessing the practice gaps of the nurse learner and describes how the provider shall meet the appropriate subject matter criteria as specified in subparagraphs 5.3(4) "a"(1) to (6).

(8) Demonstrate planning for each offering that includes a statement of purpose and measurable and observable learning outcomes. The outcomes shall address the educational needs and shall result in narrowing or closing the identified practice gap(s).

(9) Provide notification to licensees of the availability of informal offerings. A brochure or written advertisement shall be developed for all informal offerings other than learner-designed self-study, and an electronic copy shall be sent to the board prior to each offering. The brochure or written advertisement shall accurately describe the activities by including the date, time, and location of the informal offering, a statement of purpose, educational objectives, the intended audience, credentials of instructors, the amount of continuing education credit to be awarded, and, if applicable, costs and items covered by the fee and refund policy. The board-approved provider number shall appear on the brochure or written advertisement.

(10) Structure the program content and learning experience to relate to the stated purpose and objectives. Program content shall cover one topic or a group of closely related topics. Current, relevant, scientifically based supportive materials shall be used.

(11) Develop policies and procedures for verification of satisfactory completion of the activity by each participant. Policy shall include a system for verification of satisfactory completion, the control methods to ensure completion and a method to inform participants that completion of the offering is required prior to the awarding of credit. The provider may make an exception and award partial credit in extreme emergency conditions. The provider may award credit to other members of the providership who attend but do not serve as organizers during the actual offering. The provider may base the verification of satisfactory completion of an extended course on the participant's meeting the course objectives rather than on the number of sessions attended. The provider may award credit to a nurse for learner-designed self-study such as lecture development, research, preparation of articles for publication, development of patient care programs or patient education programs, or projects directed at resolving administrative problems.

(12) Develop policies and procedures for management of continuing education programs, including registration procedures, tuition refund, and enrollee grievances.

(13) Assign credit according to a uniform measure of credit: One contact hour equals 60 minutes. Credit shall not be awarded for courses less than one contact hour.

(14) If desired, cosponsor an offering provided by a nonapproved provider. When cosponsoring is pursued, the approved provider is responsible for ensuring that all criteria are met. A cosponsorship contract or letter of agreement shall delineate responsibilities of all parties, which include the approved provider awarding the credit and maintaining the program and participant records. Cosponsoring is not acceptable for learner-designed self-study.

(15) An approved provider shall notify the board within 30 days of changes in the administrative authority or address of the providership, or the provider's inability to meet the approved provider criteria.

d. Criteria related to record system and maintenance of continuing education programs. The provider shall:

(1) Maintain participant records for a minimum of four years from the date of program completion. The participant records shall include the name of the licensee, license number, contact hours awarded, titles of offerings, and dates of offerings. The record system policy and procedure shall provide for secure storage and retrieval of the participant records, shall limit employee access and shall describe security measures. Upon request from an individual nurse or the board, individual attendance and information regarding each offering shall be available within two weeks after the request. If individual nurses are assessed a fee for this retrieval service, the fee shall be specified. The board may not be charged for record retrieval requests.

(2) Maintain program records for a minimum of four years from the date of program completion. Program records for all informal offerings, other than learner-designed self-study, shall include a brochure or advertising, roster of participants to whom credit was awarded, and a summary of the program including participant and provider evaluations. The approved provider shall submit records for one informal offering in the most recent year for renewal of the approved provider status. Program records for learner-designed self-study shall include the written agreement between the learner and provider, date of completion, and learner and provider evaluations.

(3) Furnish a certificate to each participant documenting the date the credit was earned. The front of the certificate shall display: participant's name, provider number, contact hours awarded, date(s) of

the offering, program title, and a reminder to the participant to retain the certificate for four years. A certificate issued by electronic means must be a print-only file.

e. Criteria related to faculty who teach informal offerings. The faculty shall:

(1) Be current, knowledgeable, and skillful in the subject matter of the offering by supplying evidence of further education in the subject. Such education shall be acquired through course completion or an advanced degree, experience in teaching in the specialized area within the three years preceding the offering, or one year of work experience in the specialized area within the three years preceding the offering.

(2) If applicable, be skillful in assisting a nurse in designing a learner-designed self-study program by having experience or education in course design.

(3) Include an actively licensed nurse if the subject matter is nursing or if the informal offering is learner-designed self-study.

(4) Utilize teaching methodologies appropriate to the subject, audience, and time allotment.

(5) Utilize current supportive materials by drawing from resources that are predominantly less than five years old unless the topic is of an historical nature.

(6) Not receive credit when teaching participants unless the faculty is presenting the offering for the first time. Faculty may receive partial credit for other presentations attended as part of the same offering.

(7) Not receive credit for learner-designed self-study from a provider which employs the faculty in the regular administration of the providership.

f. Criteria related to evaluation of continuing education programs. The provider shall include:

(1) A design for participants to assess achievement of program objectives, faculty effectiveness, and teaching-learning methodologies, resources and facilities for each offering.

(2) A summary evaluation process to assess the effectiveness of the offering and identify how results may be used to plan future offerings.

(3) A method of notifying the participants that the evaluation may be submitted directly to the board.

5.3(5) *Voluntary relinquishment of an approved providership.* An approved provider may voluntarily relinquish its provider number in one of two ways: Method one is to notify the board in writing that it no longer wants to be an Iowa approved provider. Method two is when an approved provider does not submit the required materials for reapproval or is unable to be located by the board, by certified mail, the board will consider that the provider has voluntarily relinquished its approved provider status.

a. When the approved providership has been voluntarily relinquished, the provider shall discontinue providing continuing education as an Iowa approved provider.

b. The provider shall maintain the records as required in subrule 5.3(4) for four years after the last credit was granted or shall transfer the records to the custody of the board.

c. The board staff shall notify other states which have mandatory nursing continuing education of the relinquishment of the approved provider status and the reason(s) for relinquishment.

d. The provider whose approved provider status has been voluntarily relinquished may apply to become an approved provider by starting the initial approval process.

5.3(6) *Audit of approved providers.* The board shall monitor approved providers for adherence to criteria as established in this chapter.

a. The board may order an audit of an approved provider or may audit as a result of a written complaint. A written complaint may be filed with the board against a provider for acts or omissions which indicate a failure to meet the criteria established in this chapter.

b. The board may revoke the approved-provider status for willful or repeated failure to meet one or more of the criteria specified in subrule 5.3(4).

c. A notice of revocation shall be issued to the provider. A provider who wishes to appeal the board's decision regarding revocation shall file an appeal within 30 days of the board's decision of revocation. A timely appeal shall initiate a contested case proceeding regarding the provider's revocation. The contested case shall be conducted according to the provisions of Iowa Code chapter

17A and 655—Chapter 20. The written decision issued at the conclusion of a contested case hearing shall be considered final agency action.

d. A provider whose approved-provider status has been revoked shall no longer advertise that the provider is an approved provider. The provider number shall no longer be used or appear in brochures, advertisements, certificates, or other materials.

e. A provider whose approved-provider status has been revoked shall maintain the records required in subrule 5.3(4) for four years after the last credit was granted or shall transfer the records to the custody of the board.

f. The board shall notify other states that have mandatory nursing continuing education of the revocation of the approved-provider status and the reason(s) for revocation.

g. A provider whose approved-provider status has been revoked may reapply no sooner than one year after the revocation of approval. The initial approval process must be followed to reapply.

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