

**CONTINUING EDUCATION IN NURSING:**  
**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

*If I am a program chair for my chapter, how do I find out about obtaining continuing education credit for programs?*

- a) Contact ANCC COA's Accreditation Specialist at 800-284-2378 or visit their website at [www.nursingworld.org/ancc](http://www.nursingworld.org/ancc). Get a list of ANCC COA accredited approvers. Explain your situation and discuss your options. To whom may you apply for approval?
- b) Phone the state board of nursing according to where your chapter is administratively operational. If that is hard to identify, call the state board according to where most of your programs are to be implemented. Will your programs be affected by mandatory continuing education? Once you identify to whom you may apply, what is their application procedure; what criteria do they use for approval; what are the deadlines for submission; what is the cost?

*What is the most common meaning or definition of continuing education?*

For the individual, it is professional development meaning a lifelong process of active participation in learning activities to enhance practice and expertise. Participation in continuing education is one hallmark of a professional. As a process, it consists of learning activities intended to build upon the educational and experiential bases of the professional for the enhancement of practice, education, administration, research or theory development to the end of improving benefits received by the clients contracting for the professional's services.

*When should someone be concerned about whether a continuing education program or activity offers credit?*

- a) If they are licensed in a state with mandatory continuing education for license renewal.
- b) If they are certified and renewal is by accumulation of so many continuing education credits at intervals.
- c) If they have an employer who chooses to use validation of participation in continuing education as a condition for promotions or continued employment.

*How can a person know if they are licensed in a state with mandatory continuing education, what the state will recognize for license renewal; or if they are certified, what the certifying organization will recognize for certification renewal?*

The only way to be sure is to check with the state board of nursing where they hold their license and/or with the certifying organization. It is up to the licensee or the certified person to be informed and accountable about what is necessary for them to maintain a license or certification; and what is recognized by a state board or certifying organization for renewal. They should not expect a program sponsor to do this for them -- there are over 13 states with mandatory continuing education, all with different requirements; and over 30 certifying organizations for various nursing roles and specialties.

*Why don't all national providers of continuing education get provider numbers from each state with mandatory continuing education?*

There are issues of cost and efficiency. About one-third of the states have mandatory continuing education. Most states that give provider numbers to continuing education sponsors upon application, require an application fee of at least \$200. The direct cost for one provider would be a minimum of \$2200 for one to two years, plus the indirect costs of staff or others completing multiple applications in addition to postage, and so on.

*What is the simplest way of assessing the maximum value of a continuing education program?*

- a) Does it match the individual's learning needs and career goals?
- b) Is it under qualified instruction?
- c) Are program goals/objectives listed in publicity?
- d) Do topics and titles listed in publicity materials provide concept descriptions, that is, do they know what they are going to get as a result of your registration?
- e) Do they need continuing education credit for licensure or certification, and is it provided?

*If state boards and certifying organizations all have different requirements, is there one type of credit with more value than another?*

No one type of continuing education credit meets all requirements. However, sponsors accredited by the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) Commission on Accreditation (COA) or programs approved by an accredited approver of ANCC COA have the most reciprocity of recognition across state boards of nursing and certifying organizations. Board provider numbers (BRNs) usually do not have reciprocity.