Continuing Education Frequently Asked Questions

Professional Counselors, Marriage & Family Therapists, Addiction Counselors and Psycho-Educational Specialists Continuing Education, Chapter 36, Regulations 36-13 and 36-14

Refer to the website at [https://www.llr.sc.gov/POL/Counselors/PDFS/CONTINUING%20EDUCATION%20GUIDELINES.pdf](https://www.llr.sc.gov/POL/Counselors/PDFS/CONTINUING%20EDUCATION%20GUIDELINES.pdf) for more detailed information regarding the “Continuing Education Guidelines”.

Continuing Education Questions

What are the minimum CE requirements for the biennial renewals?

For those holding an- associate license:
You are not required to earn continuing education during your provisional licensure period. However, the board strongly encourages Associates to obtain continuing education hours.

For single license holders:
Persons holding one license as a Professional Counselor, Marriage & Family Therapist or Psycho-Educational Specialist must complete forty (40) contact hours* of formal/informal continuing education, of which a maximum of 15 hours can be completed with informal education. Of the 40 required hours, thirty-four (34) hours must be related to their respective professional license and six (6) hours must be specific to ethical standards* related to their respective professional license during every two-year licensure period.

* Persons holding only one license may complete both formal and informal types of continuing education with a maximum of 15 hours of informal education.

* For the 2019 CE cycle you will be asked if 6 out of your 40 contact hours covered ethics in your discipline. This includes any CE that contained information regarding ethics; the CE does not need to contain ethics in the title or be specified in the CE certificate.

For multiple license holders:
Persons licensed both as professional counselors and marriage and family therapists must complete fifty (50) hours of formal continuing education during every two-year licensure period as a condition of renewal of their licenses. Of the fifty (50) hours, six (6) hours must be specific to ethical standards* related to their respective professional license and at least twenty-two (22) hours must be related to each discipline.

* For the 2019 CE cycle you will be asked if 6 out of your 40 contact hours covered ethics in your discipline. This includes any CE that contained information regarding ethics; the CE does not need to contain ethics in the title or be specified in the CE certificate.

For licensed supervisors:
Persons licensed as professional counselor supervisors or marriage and family therapy supervisors must complete ten (10) hours of formal continuing education in supervision of their discipline during every two-year licensure period as a condition of renewal of their license. Persons licensed both as professional counselor supervisors and marriage and family therapy supervisors must complete ten (10) hours of formal continuing education in supervision, at least five (5) hours of which must be in supervision of each discipline.
How may CE’s can I take online?
For any given license or combination of licenses, you can complete up to 50% of your continuing education hours online.

Does it matter if the online continuing education hours for formal education are synchronous or asynchronous?
No, as long as the activity follows the definition of formal education, which requires it be structured and sponsored by a certifying body, then delivery method does not matter.

What is the difference in “formal” education and “informal” education for Professional Counselors and Marriage & Family Therapists?
**Formal Education:** Any structured educational activity sponsored by a professional certifying body appropriate to your discipline or one that has been granted approval by the board prior to the training. Examples of appropriate certifying bodies include but are not limited to: NBCC, AAMFT, APT, NAADAC, and SCAADAC. Formal education can be taken online.

**Informal Education:** These educational activities are not structured or supervised but which are used by licensees to enhance professional development. Only those holding a single license are eligible for informal education hours. The maximum number of informal hours is fifteen (15) during each two-year licensure period.

*Note: Informal education cannot be used if you have multiple licenses.*

Some examples of informal continuing education are:

- First time presentation of a paper, workshop, or seminar for a national, regional, statewide, or other professional meeting may be approved for a maximum of five (5) continuing education hours.
- Published paper in a referred journal may be approved for a maximum of five (5) continuing education hours and may be used only once.
- Preparation of a new or related course for an educational institution or organization may be approved for a maximum of five (5) continuing education hours.
- Individual self-study to include online studies that are not structured or sponsored by a certifying body, audio-visual materials, reading of professional journal or books, or participation in professional study and discussion groups.

Are licensees required to obtain CE specifically from Board approved sponsors or NBCC or AAMFT approved sponsors?
Yes, formal CE must be from a sponsor approved by the Board. However, any formal continuing education activity sponsored by NBCC, AAMFT, NAADAC or SCAADAC is automatically accepted for continuing education hours if is relevant to your area of practice and offers professional development in your profession. Other sponsoring organizations must first seek and obtain Board approval prior to offering the continuing education event. The Board regards it licensees as professionally responsible to determine what CE is appropriate for their continued professional development, and CE can be obtained anywhere in the United States, Canada or abroad, once the sponsoring entity is approved. Licensees should be careful and make their selections with organizations, etc. who have developed a history of providing quality educational experiences that comply with the requirements outlined in the Board regulations. If you are considering training in a specialized area, you should focus on the presenters’ specialized training/certification/registration in that particular area.

Can overages in CE hours be carried forward to a future renewal period?
No. CE hours may not be carried forward from the renewal period in which they were earned.

What is considered a contact hour or one (1) hour of continuing education?
Hour for hour contact with a teacher, instructor, trainer or supervisor shall be counted as one (1) contact hour. Hours shall be granted for actual time spent as a learner in a structured, educational format. Breaks, lunches, business meetings, and committee meetings may not be counted.
3 semester hour graduate level course = 45 contact hours (online or traditional format) 1 semester hour graduate level course = 15 contact hours (online or traditional format) 1 quarter hour graduate level course = 10 contact hours (online or traditional format)

**What are the documentation requirements?**

**Formal Education Requirements:**
It is the licensee’s responsibility to obtain and maintain CE documentation with their professional records for three years. Licensees will need documentation of attendance for renewal purposes. The original certificate of attendance or other written verification of attendance should reflect the sponsor’s name, date of training, title of training/course title, number of hours awarded and your name.

**Informal Education requirements:**
If you are submitting any informal CE’s, you must document those hours yourself by keeping copies of presentations, publications, proof of self-study, etc. You will be required to submit your CE documentation to the Board.

**What is the period for obtaining continuing education for the 8/31/19 license renewal period?**
CE documentation must be obtained from 9/1/17 to 8/31/19 for the August 31, 2019 deadline.

**What if this is my first renewal and I have not had my license for two full years, do I have to do 40 hours of continuing education?**
For those in their first renewal cycle following initial licensure, the Board will accept previous graduate coursework as your 40 hours of continuing education.

**Will the Board accept a “pass/fail” college course (graduate level 3 semester hour) for continuing education hours?**
Yes. You are responsible for papers and tests; it is reflected on a transcript and it shows that you have minimally passed the class. A 3 semester hour graduate level course is worth 45 hours of CE. If audited, you must provide an official transcript for these studies.

**Will the Board accept an “audit” college course (graduate level 3 semester hour) for continuing education hours?**
The audited course must be reflected on a transcript. An audit course consists of attending class with no responsibilities for papers or tests. An audit course is acceptable for continuing education purposes but it is not acceptable for obtaining a license.

**What continuing education is considered acceptable for licensed Psycho- Educational Specialists (LPES)?**
Continuing education credit may be awarded for documented completion of the following activities:

a) a minimum of twenty (20) continuing education hours in workshops, conferences, formal in-service training, college or university courses, which is considered face-to-face instruction/attendance

b) a maximum of twenty (20) continuing education hours in research and publications, supervision of associates, post-graduate supervised experiences, program planning/evaluation, self-study, and professional organizational leadership

c) a maximum of ten (10) hours may be awarded for unpublished research

d) a maximum of twenty (20) hours may be awarded for research and publication or presentation

e) a maximum of ten (10) hours may be awarded for articles published or posters presented (each project may be claimed only once)

f) a maximum of twenty (20) hours may be awarded for supervision of associates
g) no more than one (1) post-graduate supervised experience may be claimed in any renewal period

h) a maximum of fifteen (15) hours may be awarded for program planning/evaluation

i) a maximum of twenty (20) hours may be awarded for self-study (no more than one (1) activity may be counted per organization per year)

j) a maximum of ten (10) hours may be awarded in professional organization leadership

k) a maximum of 10 hours may be awarded for teaching and training activities which may be awarded only for the first time the content is taught

Are continuing education hours pro-rated for licensed Psycho-Educational Specialists (LPES), if they hold multiple licenses with this Board? (ex: hold a LPC license and a LPES license).
Yes. The Board pro-rates CE hours which can be 25 hours of CE per license type for each biennial renewal period for licensees who hold multiple licenses with this Board. When CE hours are pro-rated, all of the CE hours must be formal (face-to-face attendance) education.

How can I have additional questions answered on the requirements regarding continuing education?
Please refer to Regulation 36-13 at the following link: