

Continuing Education (CE) Rule Changes – Effective January 1, 2018

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The Iowa Board of Nursing, on July 11, 2017, adopted new continuing education rules applicable to all Iowa licensed nurses and Iowa board approved providers of nursing continuing education. Changes to the Iowa Administrative Code (IAC) 655 Chapter 5, Continuing Education chapter will become effective January 1, 2018. The new rules may be found by visiting the *Iowa Administrative Bulletin*, pages 623-631, published September 13, 2017. See this link: <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/aco/bulletin/09-13-2017.pdf>

The following table summarizes the changes and pertinent details for nurse licensees and approved providers:

Topic	Rationale
Definitions section	Clarified and added definitions for better descriptions of concepts.
Contact hour change from 50 to 60 minutes	<p>This change brings Iowa rules in line with the American Nurses Credentialing Center's (ANCC) unit of measurement. ANCC is an exemplar agency from which the IBON rules stem. The 50 minute measurement was instituted over 40 years ago when the initial chapter 5 rules were developed, and were based on the formal education semester hour.</p> <p>Effective 1/1/2018, approved providers will award one contact hour for 60 minutes of instruction.</p> <p>For licensees who currently use ANCC self-study coursework, this change will not affect them.</p> <p>Over a three-year period the contact hour award change means licensees will take six extra hours of CE, if the licensee takes only Iowa approved courses. With the changes, Iowa is still in line with other states for CE hour requirements. Additionally, nurses are still in line with the CE requirements for other healthcare professions in the state.</p>
Contact hours are defined in both the approved provider and licensee sections of the rules	Adding the contact hour measurement to both sets of rules clarifies it for all audiences.
Requirement that all licensees (e.g. 2 or 3 year license) need to have 36 contact hours of CE	Eliminates the confusion of 24 contact hours for the first licensure period and then 36 contact hours for all subsequent renewals. Reinstatements will also require 36 contact hours of CE. Currently, licensees may let their license lapse and then only need 12 hours, instead of 36, to renew. The new rule prevents this practice. Licensees, audit staff, enforcement staff, providers, and educators will find this continuity easier to remember and follow.
Expanded the list of acceptable approved providers	Increases the agencies from which licensees may earn their CE credit. Awarding of credit is no longer limited to Iowa-only agencies. See the 655 IAC chapter 5 rule for what is allowed.
Added that ANCC providers without Iowa approval may offer coursework in Iowa without co-sponsorship of an Iowa approved provider	<p>This change removes the restrictions that out-of-state providers who are approved by ANCC also need to go through the steps of finding an Iowa approved provider to hold coursework in the state. Iowa nurse licensees will now be able to count their ANCC credits, earned in Iowa, towards their license renewal. This will also simplify and improve the audit process.</p> <p>Most ANCC certification requirements are extensive. By accepting current certifications related to practice roles, the Board believes these adequately meet the CE requirements of the law.</p>
Removed the restriction that webinars from out of state must be co-sponsored by Iowa approved providers	With internet access the norm, instead of the exception, this change brings the rules in line with acceptable CE delivery methods and allows ANCC providers approved in other states to offer CE credits to Iowa nurses.
Condensed the provider section of the rule	Removed process and procedure information from the rule, to be moved to the Board's website. Provider renewals are still required – but moving the procedural-type information from rules will allow staff to update processes as needed without going through the rules promulgation to make process changes.
Provided specific lists of acceptable courses and certifications by which to earn CE	Removed basic life support (BLS) and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) from acceptable courses to earn CE. BLS and CPR are seen as basic training. CE content should be education that is above that learned in basic nursing education. Advanced life-saving courses may be offered for nursing CE, at the approved provider's discretion. Areas that have caused confusion in the old rules have been updated for better clarification.
Changed the attempts for submissions for approved provider status from three to two within one year of filing	With the new processes and procedures being posted on our website, providers should be able to make application and get approval in two attempts. The CE Committee and Board staff supplies extensive feedback for providers with each submittal response.
Moved from philosophy, goals and objectives to mission, vision and values, along with strategic planning, in the new provider applications	Mission, vision and values are seen in the ANCC exemplar. Mission vision and values are common business terms and are now frequently used in the healthcare industry. Strategic plans are common in business use, as well. Philosophy, goals and objectives are similar in nature to mission, vision and values but in a slightly different format.
Mechanism to assess the practice gap for approved providers	If changes are needed in the standard of care, a problem is identified in practice, or an improvement opportunity is identified, an educational intervention may be in order. Approved providers need to have the data to validate the need to plan an educational activity. The practice gap is the "difference between the current state of practice and the desired state of practice" (ANCC, 2016, page 24). Approved providers need to have a process in place to indicate how they will determine the learning needs of nurses to fill the practice gaps.

The Iowa Board of Nursing and staff recognizes the chapter 5 changes will require a period of transition and education. We are committed to working with all parties to assure the new rules are followed and met. If you have questions, please email laura.hudson@iowa.gov.

Resources:
American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC). (2015). *2015 ANCC Primary Accreditation Approver Application Manual*. Silver Spring, MD: American Nurses Credentialing Center.