

Continuing Education Frequently Asked Questions

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

Refer to the website at www.llr.state.sc.us/pol/counselors for more detailed information regarding the “Continuing Education Guidelines”.

What are the minimum CE requirements for the biennial renewals?

Persons licensed as a Professional Counselor, Marriage & Family Therapist or Psycho-Educational Specialist must complete forty (40) contact hours of continuing education related to their respective professional license during every two-year licensure period. Those persons licensed as an Intern are exempt from CE requirements.

What is the difference in “formal” education and “informal” education for Professional Counselors and Marriage & Family Therapists?

Formal Education: The activity must involve *face-to-face instruction*. Some examples of formal education are:

- CE seminars
- Graduate level coursework
- Professional development pertaining to issues that will assist you in providing the most effective and up-to-date services for your client offered at your place of practice
- Live (inter-active) television (under supervision of the instructor/presenter or assisted instruction)
- Webcasts or webinars are acceptable as long as the live online educational presentation allows participating viewers to submit questions and comments (must be inter-active)
- Video or audio tape recordings may be used only as an adjunct to live face-to-face teaching or live television-assisted instruction
- Co-presenting a training class, ½ of the total hours can be used for yourself

Informal Education: The activities are not formally structured or supervised but which are used by licensees to enhance professional development. A maximum of fifteen (15) hours during each two-year licensure period may be obtained through informal continuing education.

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 use of on-line courses
- Audiovisual materials/television broadcasts/video tapes
- Reading of professional journals and books (keep copies of the book cover (front and back), title page, author/ bibliography, table of contents and the summary page describing contents of journal or book)
- Participation in professional study and discussion groups may be approved based on the number of hours engaged in the activity for a total of fifteen (15) hours during each two-year licensure period

**What is the number of CE hours required for multiple licenses?
(LPC, LMFT, LPES)**

Persons holding multiple licenses with the Board as a Professional Counselor, Marriage & Family Therapist and/or Psycho-Educational Specialist must complete twenty-five (25) contact hours of FORMAL continuing education PER LICENSE during every two-year licensure period as a condition of renewal of their licenses. Each 25 contact hours of CE per license must be related to each license type/discipline.

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 interns, 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 interns
- 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

What is the number of CE hours required for Supervisor licenses?

Persons licensed as a Professional Counselor Supervisor or Marriage & Family Therapy Supervisor must complete ten (10) hours of “supervision oriented” continuing education during every two-year licensure period for this license.

What is the number of CE hours required for multiple Supervisor licenses?

Persons holding multiple Supervisor licenses with the Board as a Professional Counselor Supervisor AND a Marriage & Family Therapist Supervisor must complete ten (10) hours of FORMAL “supervision oriented” continuing education during every two-year licensure period which must be at least five (5) hours in each discipline.

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?

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. If you are submitting any informal CE, you must document those hours yourself by keeping copies of presentations, publications, proof of self study, etc. The Board will conduct a random audit after the biennial renewal period. If you are audited, you will be required to submit your CE documentation to the Board at that time.

What is the time frame for obtaining continuing education for the 8/31/21 license renewal period?

CE documentation must be obtained from 9/1/19 to 8/31/21 for the August 31, 2021 deadline

What organizations/groups are considered "presumptively" approved for conferences, seminars and workshops?

Any formal CE activity sponsored by a professional counselor certifying body (such as NBCC), marriage & family therapy certifying body (such as AAMFT), NAADAC, or SCAADAC or one of its regional or state divisions, is automatically approved for continuing education, as long as it is relevant to your area of practice and offers professional development in your profession. The burden of demonstrating how the course contributes to your professional practice remains on each licensee.

Are licensees required to obtain CE specifically from Board approved sponsors or NBCC or AAMFT approved sponsors?

No, however the benefit of selecting a sponsor who has already been reviewed and approved by this licensing Board or NBCC or AAMFT is automatic acceptance for continuing education hours, as long as it is relevant to your area of practice and offers professional development in your profession. The Board regards it licensees as professionally responsible to determine what CE is appropriate for their continued professional development and it can be obtained anywhere in the United States, Canada or abroad. 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.

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.

Does the Board offer an “inactive” status for those licensees that do not want to renew on 8/31/21?

No. On September 1, 2021, the status will be changed from “active” to “lapsed” status if the license/s are not renewed by 8/31/2021. Licensees are allowed up to three (3) months to make a late renewal of a lapsed license and from four (4) months to two (2) years to reinstate their lapsed license. The renewal fee will be due along with a late fee or reinstatement fee.

If the license/s are lapsed 2+ years, an up-to-date application must be completed with the appropriate application fees. You must meet the licensing requirements that are in effect at the time of reapplication. You must also provide proof that you have passed the national exam by the national cutoff.

Is there any practice allowed on a “lapsed” license?

No. Licensees cannot practice with a lapsed license. Unlicensed practice, based on failure to renew, is grounds for disciplinary action.