



CONNECTICUT
NURSES
ASSOCIATION

**Individual Education Activity
Guidelines and Resources
December 2020**

Guidelines adapted from ANCC Manual for Accreditation as a Provider of Continuing Nursing
Education 2015

This guideline and resource packet describes the application/approval process and will help ensure that all required criteria are met for an individual program. Please feel free to contact CNA for assistance at education@ctnurses.org at any time throughout the process. Applicants are expected to use the most current forms available on the CNA website: <https://ctnurses.org/Individual-CNE>

The ANCC accreditation system *does not authorize retroactive approval*. The CNA Professional Development will not review or approve a continuing education activity after it has begun to take place.

Upon approval, the Applicant agrees to adhere to all American Nursing Credentialing Center (ANCC) criteria: <https://www.nursingworld.org/organizational-programs/accreditation/primary-accreditation/>

Eligibility for Approval of Individual Nursing Education Activities

An Individual Activity Applicant must have a **registered nurse** who holds a current, unrestricted license (or international equivalent) and a baccalaureate degree or higher in nursing (or international equivalent) who functions as the Nurse Planner for the activity. The **Nurse Planner** is responsible for more than filling out the forms, and must be actively involved in the planning, implementing and evaluation of the activity. The Nurse Planner is responsible for ensuring that the educational activity is developed according to ANCC accreditation criteria and CNA Professional Development requirements. Contact hours will not be awarded for CNE activities developed without the direct involvement of a Nurse Planner.

Those interested in submitting an Individual Activity Application for approval must complete the eligibility verification process; and the activity must:

- meet the criteria for nursing education; building upon the educational and experiential bases of the professional RN for the enhancement of practice, education, administration, research, or theory development, to improve the health of the public and RNs' pursuit of their professional career goals.
- have a **Planning Committee** that includes at least 2 people: A Nurse Planner and a Content Expert. One individual may serve as both the Nurse Planner and the Content Expert; however at least 2 people must be involved in the planning process.
- have a **Nurse Planner** who is a registered nurse and hold a current, unrestricted nursing license (or international equivalent) AND a baccalaureate degree or higher in nursing (or international equivalent) AND is responsible for coordinating the process of planning, implementing and evaluating the CNE activity.
- have a **Content Expert** who has appropriate subject matter expertise for the educational activity being offered;
- **not** be a commercial interest as defined by the American Nurses Credentialing Center (see <https://www.nursingworld.org/~48cec7/globalassets/docs/ancc/accred-cecontentintegrity.pdf>)
- be in compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations that affect the organization's ability to meet ANCC accreditation criteria.

Educational Design Process

The Individual Activity Applicant must have a clearly defined process for assessing needs as the basis for the educational activity. The educational activity should be developed to address a professional practice gap, which is a change, problem, or opportunity for improvement in practice. The planning committee must analyze the professional practice gap and determine if the activity will address a gap in knowledge, skill, and/or practice. The planning committee then determines what the desired learning outcome is for the learner. CNE activities are designed, planned, implemented, and evaluated in accordance with adult learning principles, professional education standards, and ethics.

Identifying a Professional Practice Gap

The planning committee must identify the problem/opportunity/change that has created the need for this educational activity. The Nurse Planner must specify the process used to identify a problem in practice or an opportunity for improvement. Identify what is happening now (current state), explain what you want to see at the end of the program (desired state), and identify the content that must be delivered (gap) to improve and/or change practice.

| Current state | Desired state | Identified gap | Evidence to validate gap | Gap due to knowledge, skill and/or practice | Learning outcome | Method of evaluation |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|---|---|--|--|--|
| What is currently happening | What should be happening | Difference between what is and what should be | What evidence do you have to validate the current state | Why do you think the current state exists? What is the underlying or root cause? | What do you want learners to be able to do (demonstrate) as a result of participating in this activity | How are you going to measure (evaluate) that change? |

Evidence to support the Professional Practice Gap

Provide a brief summary of the evidence that supports this need to address this gap. Why is this program/workshop needed? Focus on the evidence that demonstrates the problem exists. For example, input from stakeholders, evaluation data, observation of areas needing improvement, or trends in literature.

Underlying Educational Need

A practice gap can occur in **knowledge, skills, or practice**:

- A gap in **knowledge** occurs when the participant *does not know*
- A gap in **skills** occurs when the participant *doesn't know how*
- A gap in **practice** occurs when the participant *is not able to show or do in practice*

Measurable Learner Outcomes

The Nurse Planner is responsible for developing the desired learning outcome/s for participants in the target audience. A learning outcome is written as a statement that reflects what the learner will be able to do as a result of participating in the educational activity. There may be more than one learning outcome for an educational activity, or it is acceptable to have one overarching learning outcome measure for the activity. Please note that the learning outcome measure is not a list of objectives for your activity.

The learning outcome:

- follows from the Professional Practice Gap and addresses the identified educational needs (knowledge, skills, and/or practices)
- uses verbs that describe an action that can be observed or measured
- determines the content and learner engagement strategies,
- is observable and measurable by the identified evaluation method within the activity time frame
- identifies the metric used to determine success, or achievement in narrowing or closing the gap
- may be assessed over the short term or long term.

Examples:

- At least 90% of participants will demonstrate knowledge of xyx by scoring 100% on the post-test.
- At least 80% of participants will self-report knowledge gain related to the use of aromatherapy.
- 100% of participants demonstrate the correct procedure to use the new XYZ pump.
- At least 90% of learners will raise their hand to indicate that they learned at least one new communication strategy to use with families in end-of-life care.

Evidence-based content and references

Whether planning is for a new activity, or an existing activity that is being revised, the content must be based on current evidence/references, the majority of which is from the last 5-7 years. While seminal articles may be included, the references used to develop content must be current to ensure that learners have the most up-to-date education on a particular topic. A lengthy list of references is not required.

Learner engagement strategies

Engagement occurs when participants are actively involved in the learning process. While 'teaching' can occur when a speaker presents knowledge or data, this format does not ensure that 'learning' occurs. Power point and lecture are teaching tools. The following are examples of learner engagement strategies:

- Integrating opportunities for dialogue
- Providing time for questions and answers
- Including time for reflection
- Analyzing case studies
- Utilizing games and/or technology to include participant participation
- Presenting problems to work on in small groups before, during, or after the session

Awarding Contact Hours

Contact hours are determined in a logical and defensible manner and are awarded to participants for those portions of the educational activity devoted to the learning experience and evaluation of the activity. **One (1) contact hour = 60 minutes.** No fewer than 0.5 contact hours can be awarded for an educational activity. If rounding is desired in the calculation of contact hours, the provider can round to the nearest 1/4th hour. Educational activities may also be conducted "asynchronously" and contact hours awarded at the conclusion of the activity. Contact hours may not be awarded retroactively

Evaluation

The Nurse Planner determines the components and method of evaluation that should follow from the identified gap and desired learning outcomes. Evaluation may be formative and integrated within the educational activity, or summative at the conclusion of the educational activity. Evaluation methods include assessment of change or growth in knowledge, skills, and/or practices of the target audience.

Following conclusion of the educational activity, the Nurse Planner and/or Planning Committee review summative evaluation data to assess the impact of the educational activity, determine whether outcomes were achieved, and determine how results may be used to guide future educational activities as applicable.

Methods to collect data, including identification of metrics must be included to explain how aggregate data is/will be summarized and used to plan future programming. Evaluation can be conducted in various ways, including through observation of participants in engagement strategies throughout the program, post-test, performance in a simulation or other skill demonstration, end of program discussion, verbal or written response to specific questions, etc. An evaluation form can be used but is not a requirement.

Conflicts of Interest

A conflict of interest exists when an individual is in a position to control or influence the content of an educational activity and has a financial relationship with a commercial interest organization, the products or services of which are pertinent to the content of the educational activity. A commercial interest company/organization is one that produces, markets, resells, or distributes healthcare goods/services consumed by or used on patients.

*When the educational content of the activity is NOT related to any healthcare products or services consumed by or used on patients (ex. Leadership Development, Preceptor Development, Legislative Advocacy, Workplace Violence) then there is **no potential for a conflict of interest**, and only biographical information needs to be collected from your planners and speakers. Please contact the CNA office if there is a question of whether the activity falls in this category.*

For all other activities, the Nurse Planner is responsible for identifying, resolving and documenting the process for conflicts of interest during the planning and implementation of an educational activity. The Nurse Planner may engage the individual with the identified conflict of interest to participate in the resolution process through actions such as having the individual sign a speaker agreement outlining expected practice or submitting/revising presentation materials, but the Nurse Planner must be actively engaged in the resolution process and is ultimately accountable for compliance.

Conflict of Interest forms need to be completed and submitted with your activity application by anyone that can influence the program content. It is critical that all individuals in a position to control content of an educational activity are provided with the definition of a commercial interest organization prior to disclosing relevant relationships. If the Nurse Planner has an actual or potential conflict of interest, he or she should recuse himself or herself from the role as Nurse Planner for the educational activity. This includes but is not limited to nurse planners, content experts, speakers and/or presenters. Please note that completion of the Conflict of Interest form does not always ensure that no conflict is present.

The Nurse Planner is also responsible for informing learners of the presence or absence of conflicts of interest for all individuals in a position to control content of the educational activity through the disclosure process. Conflict of Interest Forms must be submitted for each individual in a position to control the educational content (e.g. planners, presenters, faculty, authors, and/or content reviewers). Forms can be found on the Individual Activity Webpage

Commercial Support

The Individual Activity Applicant must adhere to the American Nurses Credentialing Center's *Content Integrity Standards for Industry Support in Continuing Nursing Educational Activities* at all times: <https://www.nursingworld.org/~48cec7/globalassets/docs/ancc/accred-cecontentintegrity.pdf>

Commercial interest organizations may provide monetary funding or other support (Commercial Support) for continuing nursing educational activities in accordance with the fundamental principles that:

1. Commercial support must not influence the planning, development, content, implementation, or evaluation of an educational activity.
2. Receipt of Commercial Support must be disclosed to learners.

Commercial Support may be used to pay for all or part of an educational activity and for expenses directly related to the educational activity, including but not limited to travel, honoraria, food, support for learner attendance, and location expenses. Commercial Support may be used to support more than one educational activity at the same time or multiple activities over a period of time. Commercial Support includes:

- Financial Support—money supplied by a commercial interest organization to be used by a provider for expenses related to the educational activity. Financial support may be provided as an unrestricted grant, educational grant, donation, or scholarship; and
- In-kind Support—materials, space, or other nonmonetary resources or services used by a provider to conduct an educational activity, which may include but are not limited to human resources, marketing services, physical space, equipment such as audiovisual components, and teaching tools (for example, anatomic models).

The Individual Activity Applicant must have a signed, written agreement if commercial support is accepted. Organizations providing commercial support may **not** provide or co-provide educational activities. A Commercial Support Agreement must be included with the activity application for each organization providing support.

Documentation of Completion

Participants must receive written verification of their successful completion that includes, at a minimum:

- Title and date of the educational activity
- Name and address of provider of the educational activity (Web address acceptable)
- Participant name
- Number of contact hours awarded
- Individual Activity approval statement

A sample must be included in the activity application. Applicants may use the CNA sample template or create their own ensuring that all required elements are included

Approval Statement for Individual CNE Activities

The approval statement must be provided to learners prior to the start of every professional development activity and on each certificate of completion. The approval statement must be displayed clearly to the learner, stand alone on its own line of text, and be written exactly as indicated by the Accredited Approver. A copy of the marketing material be submitted with the activity application

Marketing prior to approval: If marketing materials are released prior to approval AND after an application has been submitted, the following statements may be used:

This activity has been submitted to the Connecticut Nurses Association for approval to award contact hours. The Connecticut Nurses Association is accredited as an approver of nursing continuing professional development by the American Nurses Credentialing Center's Commission on Accreditation.

Marketing after approval: If the marketing material is to be released after approval is received, then use the following statement:

This nursing continuing professional development activity was approved by Connecticut Nurses Association, an accredited approver by the American Nurses Credentialing Center's Commission on Accreditation.

Disclosure Responsibilities

Learners must receive disclosure of required items prior to the start of an educational activity. In live activities, disclosures must be made to the learner prior to initiation of the educational content. In enduring activities, disclosures must be visible to the learner prior to the start of the educational content. Required disclosures may **not** occur or be located at the end of an activity. Evidence of the disclosures to the learner **must** be retained in the activity file. If a disclosure is provided verbally, documentation of both the type of disclosure and the inclusion of all elements must be documented. Required disclosures include:

1. Criteria for successful completion of the activity
Participants must have a clear understanding of the terms to successfully complete and receive contact-hour credit for the CNE activity

2. Conflicts of Interest
All planners, presenters, faculty, authors, and content reviewers must disclose any conflicts of interest related to planning of an educational activity which must also be disclosed to the participants. Disclosure must be relative to each educational activity. If a potential or actual conflict is identified, the nurse planner must include a mechanism for resolution.
3. Commercial Support (if applicable)
Participants must be informed if a commercial interest has provided financial or in-kind support for the educational activity
4. Joint Providership (if applicable)
Participants must be made aware of joint providership and the name of the company/organization.
5. Approval Statement
ANCC requires all professional development activities approved by an accredited approver to have this approval statement.

The sample Disclosures to Participants form can be adapted and completed for your CNE activity as long as all of the required elements are present. The template provided can be used; or information can be incorporated within activity, for example in marketing materials, on the sign in sheet or in a booklet.

Expiration of Enduring Material

Educational activities provided through an enduring format (e.g., print, electronic, Web-based) are required to include an expiration date documenting how long contact hours will be awarded. This date must be visible to the learner *prior to the start* of the educational content. The period of expiration of enduring material should be based on the content of the material but cannot exceed 2 years.

Minor changes to the activity may be made during the approval period, such as changes in faculty and alteration in agenda, as long as there is no alteration of the actual content or total time of the activity. The nurse planner is responsible for emailing CNA noting the changes.

Recordkeeping

The Individual Activity Applicant is responsible for maintaining documentation for each educational activity in a secure, confidential, and retrievable manner for 6 years. The criteria delineated under the provider's Educational Design Process (EDP) must be followed consistently during the period of approval and the recordkeeping files must include those items outlined above.

Joint Provided Activities

When an activity is jointly provided, the Individual Activity Applicant is referred to as the provider of the educational activity. The other organization(s) are referred to as the joint provider(s) of the educational activity. The joint-providing organization may not be a commercial interest or sponsor. The Individual Activity Applicant's Nurse Planner must be on the Planning Committee and is responsible for ensuring adherence to the ANCC accreditation criteria.

A Joint Provider Agreement, signed by both parties, must be submitted with the activity application for each organization that is a joint provider.

Glossary

Approval Period

The period of approval for an Individual Educational Activity is **2 years**; the activity may be repeated as often as desired during the approval period. Minor changes to the activity may occur during the approval period, such as changes in faculty and alteration in agenda, as long as there is no alteration of the total time of the activity. The nurse planner is responsible for emailing CNA noting the changes in the file.

Best Available Evidence

Choosing evidence (research) based resources on a hierarchy, with higher levels of the hierarchy consistent with a stronger evidence base. Resources should be no more than seven years old.

Bias

Tendency or inclination to cause partiality, favoritism or influence.

Commercial Interest

Any entity either producing, marketing, reselling, or distributing healthcare goods or services consumed by or used on patients; or an entity that is owned or controlled by an entity that produces, markets, resells, or distributes healthcare goods or services consumed by or used on patients.

Commercial Support

Financial or in-kind contributions given by a commercial interest that are used to pay for all or part of the costs of a CNE activity. Providers of commercial support may not be providers or co-providers of an educational activity.

Conflict of Interest

An affiliation or relationship of a financial nature with a Commercial Interest Organization that might bias a person's ability to objectively participate in the planning, implementation, or review of a learning activity. All planners, reviewers, and faculty/presenters/authors are required to complete Conflict of Interest forms.

Contact Hour

A unit of measurement that describes 60 minutes of an organized learning activity. One contact hour = 60 minutes.

Content

Subject matter of an educational activity that is based on the best available evidence and reflects the desired learning outcomes.

Content Expert

An individual with documented qualifications demonstrating education and/or experience in a particular subject matter. This expert may also be one of the two planners for an activity.

Content Reviewer

An individual selected to evaluate an educational activity during the planning process or prior to delivery for quality of content, potential bias, and any other aspects of the activity that may require evaluation.

Continuing Education Unit (CEU)

An educational measurement utilizing the criteria of the International Association for Continuing Education and Training. *The ANCC Accreditation Program and CNA do NOT utilize this term.*

Due Date

Applications MUST be submitted at least 6 weeks prior to the first activity date to allow adequate time for processing and review by the Approver Unit. Additional fees apply to expedited applications.

Educational (Learner) Outcomes

Derived from the overall purpose of the activity, educational (learner) outcomes are written statements that describe what the participant is expected to achieve as a result of participation in the educational activity. These statements describe knowledge, skills, and/or practice changes that should occur upon successful completion of the educational activity.

Enduring Materials

A non-live educational activity that continues over time. Examples of enduring materials include programmed texts, audio or videoclips, computer-assisted learning materials, or other electronic media that are used alone or with printed materials. Enduring materials can also be delivered via the Internet. The learning experience by the nurse can take place at any time and in any place.

Evaluation—Formative

Systematic evaluation in the process of curriculum construction, teaching, and learning outcomes for the purpose of improving any of these three processes.

Evaluation—Summative

Samples the entire range of outcomes associated over a long period and assessing student mastery of those skills.

Gap Analysis

The method of identifying the difference between current knowledge, skills, and/or practices and the desired best practices.

Individual Activity Applicant (“Applicant”)

An organization/individual which submits an application for the approval of contact hours for each individual activity offered. The activity may be sponsor-guided education (face-to-face) or an learner-guided independent study activity (web-based, video, etc.)

In-Kind Support

Nonmonetary support (e.g., marketing assistance, meeting room, event registration assistance) provided by the giver to the taker (In the accreditation community, the “taker” is the provider of CNE.)

Joint Providership

Planning, developing, and implementing an educational activity by two or more organizations or agencies.

Learner-Directed, Learner-Paced Activity

An educational activity engaged in by only one individual, in which the learner takes the initiative in identifying learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and material resources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes. The learner determines the activity pace and may develop the activity with or without the help of others.

Learner Engagement Strategies

Instructional methods and techniques that actively involve students in the learning process and are in accord with principles of adult learning.

Nurse Planner

A currently licensed RN with a baccalaureate degree or higher or international equivalent in nursing who is actively involved in all aspects of planning, implementation, and evaluation of each CNE activity. The Nurse Planner is responsible for ensuring that appropriate educational design principles are used and processes are consistent with the requirements of the ANCC Accreditation Program.

Nursing Continuing Professional Development (CNE) Activities

Those learning activities intended to build upon the educational and experiential bases of the professional RN for the enhancement of practice, education, administration, research, or theory development, to the end of improving the health of the public and RNs' pursuit of their professional career goals.

Outcome Measurement

The process of observing, describing, and quantifying the predefined indicator(s) of performance after an intervention designed to impact the indicator.

Planning Committee

At least two individuals responsible for planning each educational activity; at least one individual must be a nurse and at least one individual must have appropriate subject matter expertise.

Provider-Directed, Learner-Paced

An educational activity in which the provider controls the content of the learning activity, including the learning outcomes based on needs assessment, the content of the learning activity, the method by which it is presented, and evaluation methods. The learner determines the pace at which the learning activity is engaged (examples include print article, self-learning module/independent study).

Provider-Directed, Provider-Paced

An educational activity in which the provider controls all aspects of the learning activity. The provider determines the learning outcomes based on a needs assessment, the content, the method by which it is presented, and evaluation methods (examples include live activities, live webinars)

Relevant Relationship

A relationship with a commercial interest is considered relevant if the products or services of the commercial interest are related to the content of the educational activity.

Target Audience

The group for which an educational activity has been designed.

Selected References

American Nurses Credentialing Center. (2015). Primary accreditation approver application manual. Silver Spring, MD: Author.

Dickerson, P. (2019). Measuring activity and department/provider unit outcomes. *Journal of Continuing Education in Nursing* 50(8), 339-340.

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Harper, M., & Maloney, P. (2016). Nursing professional development: Scope and standards of practice. Chicago: Association for Nursing Professional Development.

Scheller, M. K. (2016). Developing outcome measures for a continuing education provider unit. *Journal of Continuing Education in Nursing* 47(7), 293-295.