

Frequently Asked Questions

This document is a guide in the process of NJSNA continuing nursing education in NJ. It should be used as a reference, not a replacement for the 2015 NJSNA Continuing Education Approval Manual. Please see www.njsna.org for more information.

General Information

What is American Nurses Credentialing Center's Commission on Accreditation (ANCC COA)?

- ANCC COA is responsible for establishing standards for continuing nursing education for the nursing profession.
- The ANCC COA system for accreditation of continuing nursing education is a voluntary recognition process in which an organization submits an in-depth self-study to determine the capacity of the organization to approve quality continuing nursing education activities over an extended period of time.
- The New Jersey State Nurses Association (NJSNA) is accredited as an approver of continuing nursing education by the American Nurses Credentialing Center's COA.

Why have the ANCC COA criteria changed?

- The American Nurses Credentialing Center's Commission on Accreditation addresses the professional growth of the registered nurse. Changes in nursing practice require registered professional nurses to engage in a life-long process of learning.
- The criteria are based on standards that guide nurse educators in designing, providing and evaluating continuing nursing education.
- ANCC revises criteria at multiple intervals, often as frequently as every two years. Accordingly, NJSNA must comply with ANCC's written guidance, and hold providers of nursing CE accountable to same.
- ANCC is committed to helping nurses identify and resolve gaps in practice through the CE process, and in addition, develop and affect learning outcomes in a positive way. The 2015 standards reflect this process.

What is the role of New Jersey State Nurses Association (NJSNA) Approver Unit?

- NJSNA Approver Unit is responsible for approving continuing nursing education programs throughout the State.
- The unit consists of the Committee on Continuing Education and three review teams which are composed of volunteers with expertise in education, nursing, allied health and adult learning.
- NJSNA Review Team members review the applications, both educational activities and provider units.
- NJSNA Review Teams meet quarterly; Review Team 1 meets in North Jersey, Review Team II meets in Central Jersey, and Review Team III meets in South Jersey.

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TYPES OF APPLICANTS

Individual Educational Activity Application – Refers to an educational activity that is a planned, organized effort aimed at accomplishing educational objectives. Approval for an individual activity is valid for **two years** from the date approved.

Provider Application – Refers to an individual, institution, organization, or agency responsible for the development, implementation, evaluation, financing, record keeping, and quality of continuing nursing education. Applicants for approved provider status are required to have an established and implemented method (e.g., policies and procedures) for delineating how the approved provider operates. Approval for an Approved Provider unit is good for **three years** from the date of approval.

ACTIVITY TYPE

- **Provider-directed, provider-paced: Live (in person or webinar)**
 - 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, and chooses the content of the learning activity, the method by which it is presented, and evaluation methods (examples include live activities, live webinars).
- **Provider-directed, learner-paced: Enduring material**
 - An educational activity in which the provider controls the content of the learning activity, including the learning outcomes based on a needs assessment, the content of the learning activity, the method by which it is presented, and the evaluation methods. Learners determine the pace at which they engage in the activity. (examples include print article, self-learning module/independent study).
 - **How do I calculate the number of contact hours for a learner paced activity?**
 - A pilot study is the recommended way to determine the appropriate number of contact hours to be awarded.
 - Must be conducted with 3-4 people who represent the target audience
 - Contact hours must be determined in a logical and defensible manner, consistent with the objectives, content, teaching-learning strategies, target audience and evaluation process.
 - Once the number of contact hours is determined, then the pilot tester(s) may be awarded credit
 - The basis for awarding contact hours offered must be determined i.e., pilot testing.
- **Blended Activity**

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Getting Started with NJSNA's Approver Program

How do I get started?

- First, applicant must complete the "Eligibility Form" and submit payment to Kortnei Jackson at KJackson@njsna.org. The form is reviewed by the Education Coordinator to ensure criteria is met. Once deemed eligible, the NJSNA Continuing Nursing Education (CNE) Approval Manual and application will be sent to the Primary Nurse Planner (PNP) of the applicant
- The internal process of completing the application is done by the PNP and other nurse planners.
- Upon completion of the application, documents are submitted to NJSNA Approver Unit to begin review process.
- All individual applications require 90 days in advance for processing. Application's received less than 90 days before the program date will incur a late fee in addition to the application fee.
- All Approved Provider Applications are to be received according to the Quarterly Review Cycles. Please note that the review process will take approximately 120 days. Please make sure that applications are received to meet noted cycles. If applications are not received in a timely fashion, the review process will be delayed for your application.

How much does the approval process cost?

- The fees related to the approval process vary on the type of application submitted, the amount of contact hours being offered, and the NJSNA membership status of the Primary Nurse Planner (PNP).
 - Manual- \$100 (members of NJSNA); \$200 (non-members of NJSNA)
 - Application fee - See pages 23-24 in the 2015 NJSNA CNE Approval Manual for a detailed list of fees.

What is the review process?

- Applications are sent to reviewers at least three weeks prior to the next scheduled review team meeting. Each application is reviewed independently by two members of the Review Team.
- NJSNA's Education Coordinator conducts an internal review process based on comments from review team members.
- NJSNA's Education Coordinator provides recommendation to the Nurse Peer Review Leader (NPRL) for final action. This process ensures objective assessment of all applications. The NPRL is actively involved in evaluating each Approved Provider applicant and Individual Activity Applicant to evaluate adherence to the NJSNA criteria.
- All applicants are notified by email of the Review Team/Education Coordinator/NPRL decision. Applicants whose applications do not meet NJSNA criteria will be notified of the deficiencies.

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- Applicants have 30 days from the receipt of deferral email to submit requested information.
- If requested information is correct, approval will be granted.

I have a program that is less than a month away, can I get approval for this program?

- It is recommended that all applicants abide by the 90 day review cycle for Individual applications and Quarterly review cycle for Approved Providers
- Due to the high volume of applications received there is no guarantee that applications can be reviewed within a month.

How long is my approval status?

- If you are applying for contact hours for an educational activity, the approval period is for two years.
- If you are applying as an Approved Provider, the approval period is for three years.

Contact Hours

Are my contact hours honored around the country?

- Yes, ANCC COA accreditation is recognized by most state licensing Boards of Nursing.
- To be sure, contact your Board of Nursing or credentialing organization

What is the correct terminology for contact hours?

- When referring to NJSNA/ANCC approved continuing nursing education, the correct terminology is “contact hours” not CEU. Continuing Education Unit (CEU) is the term used by the International Association of Continuing Education and Training (IACET) system - NOT the ANCC system.

How do you calculate contact hours?

- The appropriate measure by which an approved learning activity is awarded credit is the contact hour. A contact hour is 60 minutes of an approved, organized learning activity.
- The minimum number of contact hours to be provided is 0.5.
- Contact hours must be calculated in a logical and defensible manner.
- Credit is **NOT** given for introduction, breaks or meals.
- Credit is awarded for question and answer periods and scheduled evaluation time

Can you round contact hours up or down?

- No. Contact hours are given for the actual continuing nursing education time applied for.

Can nursing students receive certificates for contact hours?

- Yes. Students can keep them for their personal professional records.

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How do you give contact hours for poster sessions?

- Contact hours can be given for poster sessions as long as they are continuing nursing education and all documents are completed using NJSNA criteria as described in the NJSNA CNE Approval Manual. It is noted that participants generally spend 5-7 minutes per poster. 10 posters = 60 minutes/1 contact hour.

Can partial credit be given for an educational program?

- This is up to the sponsoring agency to determine if partial credit will be given.
- If it is, the information must be included in the marketing material and the Nurse Planner must announce that partial credit will be given at the beginning of the program and how the partial credit is earned.

I have physicians, social workers, and nurses attending one of my educational programs.

Can I give a certificate to all in attendance?

- Yes, certificates may be given to other professionals. The certificates can be presented to their certifying agency, who will determine acceptability of the certificate as proof of professional education.

Can contact hours be awarded if the approval period has expired?

- No, contact hours may not be awarded after the end of the approval period.
- Retroactive approval for an educational activity that has already taken place is not permitted.
- For contact hours to be awarded, approval must be granted prior to the presentation of an educational activity.

Practice Gaps and Learning Needs

What is a professional practice gap?

- A professional practice gap occurs when a change has been made to a standard of care, a significant problem exists in an organization, there is a relevant trend that needs to be addressed or there is a prominent change in regulatory guidance or accreditation standards.
- The professional practice gap is analyzed as to the key factors needed for changes, and an action plan includes an educational solution to achieve the desired state.

How do I analyze a practice gap?

- A root cause analysis is a common way to analyze a professional practice gap to identify key contributing factors to the poor outcome that has been occurring.
- Learning needs can also be established through surveys, feedback on previously provided educational programs.

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- Deep dive data analysis can provide insight on trends. For example, an organization is struggling with falls with injury, and a close look at the data identifies that 5 falls in the last six months all occurred on 2 nursing units and all occurred on the 11pm to 7am shift. Data analysis is used to pinpoint and focus a potential educational solution.

How can I demonstrate that a learning outcome will address the practice gap?

- Linking back data from learners on how they will implement knowledge and skills in their day to day practice is one way to demonstrate that a learning outcome has been met.
- Survey processes with learners six months after the training to identify how often new knowledge and skills were actually applied in the practice setting is another way.
- Linking back data to specific learning outcomes is yet another method to assure that learning outcomes have been met.
 - For example, an intensive falls program with staff from 2 specific nursing units, and the night staff results in zero falls over a year after the training.
 - For example, NJSNA sees a drop in the number of deferred educational activity and provider applications as a result of the October annual workshop on CE.
- You must make sure that the action verbs used in describing your programmatic learning outcomes can be appropriately measured. The measurement device must be described.

Learning Outcomes, Behavioral Objectives, Evaluations

What are the similarities and differences between learning outcomes and behavioral objectives?

- A learning outcome is a written statement that reflects what the learner will be able to do as a result of participating in the educational activity.
- These are typically overarching outcome statements that must be measured.
- The action verbs used in the learning outcomes statements key the learner into the type of measurement that will occur.
- Behavioral objectives are also action statements, and have been required and used to evaluate the educational soundness of the activity. Many people mix up behavioral objectives and content outline.
- Though a content outline is still required in the NJSNA criteria, behavioral objectives are no longer a mandate.
- You **MUST** include learning outcomes in your educational activities and measure the extent to which these were met, in order to provide ANCC contact hours.

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Behavioral objectives seem an important part of the educational process, can we continue to use them now that ANCC does not require?

- Yes. There is no requirement, but in sharing the description of the program you can still provide these. Note, however, that the new educational planning table does not provide a place to include the behavioral objectives, just the content, timeframe, presenter/author, and methods to enhance learner strategies.
- Note: Speakers may submit planning documents listing behavioral objectives for their presentation. It is the responsibility of the Nurse Planner (NP) to ensure that the planning documents meet the 2015 criteria i.e., changing objectives to learning outcomes.

What is the required evaluation mechanism to secure NJSNA approved contact hours?

- The evaluation methods used in the CE activity must be appropriate to the action verbs used in the learning outcomes.
 - That is, if the outcome requires a test of knowledge, a pre and post-test might be the proper method.
 - If the outcome requires a demonstration of skill, a competency checklist might be in order.
 - If the learning outcome requires an intention to change practice, you must provide some way to assess this. A survey at the time of the training is one way. A survey six months hence is another.
 - If the learning outcome intends to influence patient care in a specific way, data collected on that outcome is a prominent method that can be used.

Disclosures

What is the correct approval statement to be placed on marketing materials?

- *“Approved Provider Name, XXXXX Organization, is an approved provider of continuing nursing education by the New Jersey State Nurses Association, an accredited approver, with distinction, of continuing nursing education by the American Nurses Credentialing Center’s Commission on Accreditation.”*
- **Individual Applicants**
 - *This continuing nursing education activity was approved by New Jersey State Nurses Association, an accredited approver, with distinction, by the American Nurses Credential Centers Commission on Accreditation.*

Where does the approval statement need to be displayed?

- The statement must be clearly displayed to learners
- The statement must be *correct*
- It must be on all materials that refer to the awarding of contact hours or continuing nursing education, including but not limited to:

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- Flyers, letters, emails, web sites, meeting notices, certificate of completions and brochures

What is the correct statement to place on marketing materials to announce a program, prior to receiving approval from NJSNA?

- *“This activity has been submitted to the New Jersey State Nurses Association for approval to award contact hours. New Jersey State Nurses Association is accredited as an approver, with distinction, of continuing nursing education by the American Nurses Credentialing Center’s Commission on Accreditation.”*

What is the Disclosure and/or Vested Interest form and who needs to sign it?

- This form has been replaced with the Biographical Data/Conflict of Interest form
- This form is used:
 - to collect limited biographical data,
 - to determine expertise of speakers/presenters/planners as it relates to the activity
 - to determine the extent to which there is or may be an actual or potential conflict of interest,
 - And/or to establish the extent to which a commercial interest may interfere with a fair and unbiased educational activity.
- **ALL** planners, speakers and presenters must sign a Biographical Data/Conflict of Interest Form. (This form can be found in the 2015 NJSNA CNE Approval Manual and must be completed early in the planning process.)
- Disclosure forms must be signed yearly for ongoing programs.

If I use a speaker who has presented previously, does this speaker still need to fill out a Biographical Data/Conflict of Interest form if asked to teach a different activity?

- Disclosure forms must be completed for EACH different educational activity.

A presenter will be discussing non-FDA approved use for a drug and this is noted in the disclosure form. Do my responsibilities as the provider of the activity end there?

- **No!** Participants must be informed if non-FDA approved use of a drug or device is discussed during a CNE activity.
- Nurse planner will monitor and document that criteria for disclosure have been met.

Joint Providership and Commercial Support

What is Joint-Providership?

- Co-providership was the old terminology and has been replaced with Joint Providership.
- Joint Providership is a formal agreement between two organizations to jointly develop an educational activity and must be planned, implemented and evaluated with direct

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- Involvement of the Nurse Planner(s). If both organizations are approved providers- then one organization will act as the provider and the other as the joint-provider. The nurse planner from the provider unit awarding the contact hours has responsibility for:
 - The joint-provider agreement
 - Learner outcomes
 - Selection of content experts and presenters
 - Recordkeeping
 - Determination of contact hours and evaluation methods
 - Managing commercial support and sponsorship
- There must be a written joint provider agreement between the two organizations

What is Commercial Support?

- Commercial support is financial or in-kind contributions given by a *commercial interest* which would pay for part or all of the costs related to the education activity.
- See the 2015 NJSNA CNE Approval Manual which explains this criteria when offering an education activity

Are vendors allowed to display in the classroom?

- No. All vendors must be located in a separate room.
- This is a separate business transaction between the provider unit/individual activities.

Recordkeeping

How long should I keep the records related to the CNE application?

- All records must be kept on file for six years for Approved Providers and individual applications.
- The Primary Nurse Planner is responsible for the record keeping

Conflict of Interest

What is a conflict of interest?

- An affiliation or relationship of a financial nature with a commercial interest organization that might affect a person's ability to objectively participate in the planning, implementation, or review of a learning activity.
- Conflict of Interest is any relationship that may lead to bias on the part of the planners, content experts and presenters.
- This includes any relationship held by the planners, presenters, content experts and spouses that could lead to financial benefit including but not limited to salary, consulting fees, stock ownership, speaking opportunities.
- Both actual and perceived conflict of interest must be identified and resolved.

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- For more information go to Addendum E (Ensuring Independence and Content Integrity) in the 2015 NJSNA CNE Approval Manual and the Biographical Data/Conflict of Interest Forms.

How is Conflict of Interest identified?

- Potential for conflict of interest should be evaluated at the planning stage and again prior to the activity
- It is the responsibility of the nurse planner and the planners, content experts and presenters to disclose conflict of interest
- Don't assume that because all speakers come from your organization that no conflict of interest exists; many individuals may serve as consultants to commercial organizations, pharmaceutical companies, accept gifts of stock, serve as board of trustee members to commercial organizations, or have family members who are investors.
- You must collect the disclosure form, which is also called the biographical/conflict of interest form early on in the planning stage.

How is Conflict of Interest resolved?

- The nurse planner must document the conflict of interest and its resolution
- Resolution of conflict of interest may be done by the following:
 - Removing the individual from participating in the activity
 - Documenting that the individual will not promote commercial interests
 - Documenting the individual has received and reviewed the provider unit's policy and procedure related to conflict of interest
 - Reviewing the slides/and/or handout materials in advance of the program to assure that they are free from bias
- Contact hours are not awarded for this part of the program
- Resolution is not limited to the above list

Provider Unit Questions

Who should apply for Approved Provider Status?

- An organization which is planning to offer a significant number of programs should consider becoming an Approved Provider.

What must an organization do, in order to be eligible to apply for Approved Provider Status?

- Have been administratively and operationally responsible for coordinating all aspects of the continuing nursing education activities provided by their organization for at least six months.
- Have a Primary nurse planner, who is a registered nurse who holds a current, unencumbered nursing license (or international equivalent) and a baccalaureate degree or

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- Higher in nursing (or international equivalent), and who has the authority within an Approved Provider Unit to ensure adherence to the ANCC/NJSNA criteria in the provision of CNE.
- Have assessed, planned, implemented and evaluated at least **three** separate educational activities. Activities must:
 - Have been at least one hour in length
 - Adhere to NJSNA criteria
 - Be provided independently, that is, not co-provided
 - Have adhered to ANCC accreditation criteria and
 - Be in compliance with all applicable Federal, State and Local laws and regulations

As an Approved Provider through NJSNA, I was recently asked if I could approve a program from an outside agency?

- No. Approved Providers **DO NOT approve** activities.
- Approved Providers can only provide activities in which the provider Primary Nurse Planner(s) assume(s) an active role in the entire process, from planning through evaluation.

What is the responsibilities of a Primary Nurse Planner (PNP)?

- Terminology has changed from Lead Nurse planner to Primary Nurse planner
- The primary nurse planner (PNP) is a registered nurse who holds a current, unencumbered nursing license (or international equivalent) and a baccalaureate degree or higher in nursing (or international equivalent), and who has the authority within an approved provider unit to ensure adherence to the ANCC/NJSNA criteria in the provision of CNE.
- The PNP is responsible for the approved provider unit and is the liaison between the provider unit and NJSNA.

Miscellaneous

I am a Master's prepared RN consultant who was hired by a company to run their educational component. There are other nurses in administrative and clinical roles in the organization who assist me in planning nursing CE. Am I able to apply for contact hours?

- YES, an educational activity is planned by at least one (1) registered professional nurse with a baccalaureate degree or higher in nursing and at least one other registered professional nurse who has relevant content expertise and/or represents the target audience.

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I am not located in the State of New Jersey and wish to give contact hours to nurses in New Jersey. Am I able to do this?

- Yes. Contact hours may be awarded to nurses in NJ for continuing nursing education activities that are provided by an organization that is accredited by the American Nurses Credentialing Center's Commission on Accreditation as a provider of CNE
- You may also submit individually to NJSNA.

My hospital has recently merged with another hospital. Both of our hospitals have Approved Provider units. Our provider status ends soon and the approval period of the other hospital ends next year. How do we handle this?

- This is a decision made by the leadership of the organization.
- Once a decision is made, there is an option to have two separate units or one provider unit
- If the decision is made to have one provider unit the Approved Provider number of the unit that has the longest term can be used.
- **NJSNA must be contacted regarding changes related to the administration of the provider unit within 30 days.**

NJSNA is part of many Advisory Committees; can they be responsible for the educational component of the organization?

- NJSNA is part of several Advisory Committees. Although NJSNA is part of many Advisory Committee's, the sponsoring agency remains responsible for applying for contact hours.
- Approval of a continuing nursing education activity for contact hours **DOES NOT** imply joint providership or endorsement of the activity by the New Jersey State Nurses Association.
- **No statements regarding joint providership or endorsement can appear on any marketing materials without written permission.**

I have a CNE activity that was approved by NJSNA. How many times can it be presented?

- There is no limit on the number of times the CNE activity may be presented during the two-year approval time period.
- 90 days prior to the expiration of your activity, a new application must be submitted. NJSNA will issue a new approval number.

May a power point presentation be used as part of the application process?

- Power Point **does not** replace the education planning table.

Can I award contact hours for previously developed content i.e., BLS, ACLS or PALS?

- Yes, contact hours may be awarded for initial certification, advanced skilled courses such as ACLS and PALS.
- Content that has been previously developed may be incorporated into educational activities for continuing nursing education credit when the following criteria are met. The provider must have written policies and procedures regarding the appropriate use of previously

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- Developed content in educational programs. The policies and procedures must delineate the responsibilities of the nurse planner and planning committee, including, but not limited to:
 - Conduct a needs assessment of the target audience, justifying the need to offer said course.
 - Develop a minimum of two new learning outcomes, which must be independent of any previously developed objectives for the content.
 - Identify previously developed educational content that meets the learning needs of the target audience.
 - Possess evidence that the previously developed content is current, evidence-based, meets current standards or practice guidelines.
 - Provide evidence of revisions/deletions/additions required for the previously developed content OR evidence stating why previously developed content did not require any revisions/deletions/additions.
 - Ensure the previously developed content is objective and unbiased; and excludes any promotional influence.
 - If possible, if previously developed content was approved by the American Nurses Credentialing Center's Commission on Accreditation Program, obtain a copy of the approval.
- Examples include: Basic Life Support, Advanced Cardiac Life Support and Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner
- The Nurse Planner and Planning Committee may not approve a previously-developed educational activity and award continuing nursing education credit without complying with these guidelines. Failure to adhere to these guidelines may result in loss of approval status.
- Contact hours can be awarded for Instructor courses including BLS, ACLS, PALS or similar.

Revised May 2011; July 2, 2013; October, 2016; April, 2017