

## **21 NCAC 53 .0603 CONTINUING EDUCATION**

(a) Continuing education is required for the renewal of licenses to ensure that licensed clinical mental health counselor associates, licensed clinical mental health counselors, and licensed clinical mental health counselor supervisors maintain their professional knowledge and competency in the field of counseling. Continuing education activities appropriate for the purpose of license renewal are those that are directed toward professionals in the mental health field and that focus on increasing knowledge and skills in the practice of counseling in one or more of the following content areas:

- (1) counseling theory;
- (2) human growth and development;
- (3) social and cultural foundations;
- (4) the helping relationship;
- (5) group dynamics;
- (6) lifestyle and career development;
- (7) appraisal of individuals;
- (8) diagnosis and treatment planning;
- (9) research and evaluation;
- (10) professional counseling orientation; and
- (11) ethics.

(b) Forty contact hours of continuing counselor education, including a minimum of three contact hours of ethics, shall be completed within the two-year license renewal period. However, in the cases of newly issued licenses in which the initial renewal period is less than two full years, 30 contact hours, including a minimum of three contact hours of ethics, shall be completed. Contact hours are defined as the number of actual clock hours spent in direct participation in a structured education format as a learner. Typically, one Continuing Education Unit (CEU) is equivalent to 10 contact hours. In a college or university graduate course, one semester hour of credit is equivalent to 15 contact hours and one quarter hour of credit is equivalent to 10 contact hours.

(c) Continuing counselor education provided by one of the following national organizations, their affiliates, or by a vendor approved by one of the following organizations shall be accepted by the Board for renewal purposes:

- (1) American Association of State Counseling Boards ([aascb.org](http://aascb.org))
- (2) American Counseling Association ([counseling.org](http://counseling.org));
- (3) Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification ([crrcertification.com](http://crrcertification.com)); and
- (4) National Board for Certified Counselors ([nbcc.org](http://nbcc.org)).

(d) Continuing counselor education provided by one of the following national organizations, their affiliates or by a vendor approved by one of the following organizations shall be approved for no more than 15 contact hours for any given renewal period as defined in Rule .0601 of this Chapter:

- (1) American Association of Christian Counselors ([www.aacc.net](http://www.aacc.net));
- (2) American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy ([www.aamft.org](http://www.aamft.org));
- (3) American Psychological Association ([www.apa.org](http://www.apa.org));
- (4) Employee Assistance Certification Commission ([www.eapassn.org](http://www.eapassn.org));
- (5) International Association of Employee Assistance Professionals in Education ([www.iaepe.org](http://www.iaepe.org));
- (6) National Area Health Education Center Organization ([www.nationalahec.org](http://www.nationalahec.org));
- (7) National Association for Pastoral Counseling and Psychotherapy ([www.napcp.ie](http://www.napcp.ie));
- (8) National Association of Social Workers ([www.socialworkers.org](http://www.socialworkers.org));
- (9) National Rehabilitation Association ([www.nationalrehab.org](http://www.nationalrehab.org)); and
- (10) The Association for Addiction Professionals ([www.naadac.org](http://www.naadac.org)).

(e) Evidence of completion of continuing counselor education shall consist of a certificate of attendance signed by the responsible officer of a continuing counselor education provider, and shall include date(s) of attendance, number of contact hours, name of attendee, name of course, and approved provider name or number. Licensees shall maintain such information for seven years following course completion; however, a licensee is only required to submit such information if audited by the Board. On the Renewal for Licensure Form, a licensee shall attest to having completed the required continuing counselor education within the current renewal cycle.

(f) The Board may conduct a random audit of a percentage of its licensees' continuing counselor education documentation for each renewal cycle, and licensees shall submit the requested information upon request of the Board. Failure to submit the required documentation shall result in disciplinary action by the Board.

(g) Continuing counselor education activities also acceptable for renewal of licensure are as follows:

- (1) Contact hours shall be awarded for academic credit gained during a renewal period from a regionally accredited institution of higher education for work done in a counseling or counseling-

related subject. A copy of a transcript or grade report is the required documentation. Documentation must contain the following information:

- (A) date(s) of attendance;
- (B) number of semester or quarter hours earned;
- (C) name of attendee; and
- (D) name or number of course.

Contact hours are as defined in Paragraph (b) of this Rule. Completion dates must fall within the renewal period.

- (2) Contact hours shall be awarded for publication activities limited to articles written by the licensee and published in peer reviewed journals, editing of a chapter in a book based on counseling or counseling related material, or authoring or co-authoring a published book on counseling or counseling-related material. Publication dates must fall within the renewal period. Required documentation is a copy of the cover page of the article(s) or book; copy of the copyright page denoting date of publication; or for a chapter in an edited book, a copy of the table of contents listing the chapter is also required. Ten contact hours shall be approved for each publication activity, and only 10. The maximum contact hours allowed during a renewal period is 10. Contact hours awarded for publication activities shall not be applied to the three contact hour requirement for ethics.
- (3) Contact hours shall be awarded for academic credit granted during a renewal period from a regionally accredited institution of higher education for work done toward the completion of a dissertation. "Required documentation" means a copy of a transcript or grade report showing credit earned during the renewal period. The maximum contact hours allowed during a renewal period is 10. Contact hours are as defined in Paragraph (b) of this Rule. Completion dates must fall within the renewal period. Contact hours awarded for dissertation shall not be applied to the three contact hour requirement for ethics.
- (4) Contact hours shall be awarded for supervised professional practice, as defined by Rule .0208 of this Chapter, that was received by the licensee during the renewal period. Contact hours shall not be granted for clinical supervision provided by the licensee to others. The maximum contact hours allowed during a renewal period for supervised professional practice is 10. "Contact hours" means the number of actual clock hours spent in direct, supervised professional practice. Required documentation is a letter from the qualified clinical supervisor, as defined by Rule .0209 of this Chapter, who provided the supervised professional practice verifying a licensee's participation in the activity. The letter shall confirm the dates of the activity, the number of participation hours, and the position or title and credential of the provider. Dates of activity must fall within the renewal period. Contact hours awarded for clinical supervision shall not be applied to the three contact hour requirement for ethics. Supervision quarterly reports as set forth in Rule .0702 of this Chapter may be submitted as supporting documentation.
- (5) Contact hours shall be awarded for the following leadership positions:
  - (A) officer of state, regional, or national counseling organization;
  - (B) editor or editorial board member of a professional counseling journal;
  - (C) member of a state, regional, or national counseling committee producing a written product; or
  - (D) chair of a major state, regional, or national counseling conference or convention.The leadership position must be occupied for a minimum of six months, and dates must fall within the renewal period. The required documentation is a letter of confirmation of the leadership position, the nature of the position or service rendered, and the signature of an officer of the organization. Ten contact hours shall be approved for each leadership position held, and only 10 contact hours are allowed during a renewal period. Contact hours awarded for leadership shall not be applied to the three contact hour requirement for ethics.
- (6) Contact hours shall be awarded for hours obtained in activities or workshops for which the licensee was a presenter. The dates of activities presented must fall within renewal period and focus on one or more of the approved content areas as set forth in Paragraph (a) of this Rule. The maximum contact hours awarded for presenting professional activities or workshops is five. Required documentation means an official letter of confirmation from the organization for which the licensee presented and shall contain the following information:
  - (A) date(s) of presentation;

- (B) name of presentation; and
- (C) length of presentation.

"Contact hours" means the number of actual clock hours spent presenting. Contact hours awarded for presenting shall not be applied to the three contact hour requirement for ethics.

(h) If documentation for continuing counselor education is not identifiable as dealing with counseling, the Board shall request a written description of the continuing counselor education and how it applies to the professional practice of counseling. If the Board determines that the education is not appropriate, the licensee shall be given 45 days from the date of notification to replace the hours not approved. Those hours shall be considered replacement hours and shall not be applied to the next renewal period.

(i) Licensed clinical mental health counselor supervisors shall meet all of the continuing counselor education requirements outlined in Paragraphs (a) through (h) of this Rule and in addition as part of those requirements, shall provide documentation of a minimum of 10 contact hours of continuing counselor education related to professional knowledge and competency in the field of counseling supervision. Continuing counselor education appropriate for the purpose of licensed clinical mental health counselor supervisor renewal is education directed toward professionals in the mental health field that focus on increasing knowledge and skills in the practice of counseling supervision, and that is completed during the renewal period.

*History Note: Authority 90-334(g),(h); 90-339(b);  
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