

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. How do I obtain continuing education?

- A. *Requirements can be met in one of the following three ways:*
- *15 practice-focused contact hours from a national or state continuing education approval body recognized by ASBN,*
 - *Maintenance of certification or recertification by a national certifying body recognized by ASBN,*
 - *Completion of an academic course in nursing or related field.*

The most common method of meeting the requirements is by obtaining contact hours. These hours can be obtained through home study, nursing journals, Internet sources, or by attending workshops. For a list of upcoming workshops, Internet websites, and a list of accreditation organizations/approval bodies and approved certifications visit www.arsbn.org, under the Continuing Education option.

Q. I hold a current RN license and a current LPN license. How many continuing education hours will I need?

- A. *Whether you are an LPN, RN and/or have advanced practice licensure, if you are meeting the requirement by contact hours, you only need 15 contact hours every renewal cycle (2 years).*

Q. I received my first (initial) Arkansas license in November, 2009. My birthday is in March and I understand that to get into the Arkansas biennial renewal cycle, my license will need to be renewed in March, 2010, only five (5) months after my initial license. How many continuing education contact hours will I be required to have?

- A. **None.** *If the first renewal cycle is less than 24 months, there is no continuing education requirement for that first renewal period. This is true for persons who received their initial license by endorsement or examination and the first renewal period is less than two years.*

Q. I have information about an upcoming workshop that is in my practice area, but how do I know if the provider is approved by the Board?

- A. *Before attending a continuing education activity, confirm through the providers advertising material that they have had the program properly accredited through one of the accepted approval bodies/accrediting organizations recognized by the ASBN. The accreditation statement listing the approval body should appear on advertising material and **must be on the certificate of completion**. The approval body/accrediting organization is not the company or business offering the educational activity. (i.e. CME Resource is accredited as a provider of continuing nursing education by the American Nurses Credentialing Center's Commission on Accreditation). The example above illustrates the approval body as the American Nurses Credentialing Center's Commission on Accreditation. Visit our website, www.arsbn.org, under Continuing Education for a list of approved approval bodies/accrediting organizations that are recognized by the ASBN.*

Q. I don't know how many contact hours I have obtained since my last renewal. Does the Board of Nursing keep up with my hours?

- A. **No.** *It is the licensee's responsibility to maintain the record. These records must be original certificates of attendance, contact hour certificates, transcripts or grade slips. If audited, you will be notified by mail to submit copies as evidence. Records of continuing education must be maintained for a minimum of two (2) consecutive renewal periods or four (4) years. (Chapter 2, Section VII.D.3.)*

Q. Since I will not be sending my continuing education certificates to the ASBN, how will I verify to the ASBN that I have completed the continuing education requirements?

- A. *The licensee must declare at time of renewal that he/she has completed the continuing education requirements. The renewal will not be processed without this declaration. (Chapter 2, Section VII.A.)*

Q. What happens if I get audited and I don't have appropriate continuing education hours?

- A. *You will be allowed 90 days to meet the continuing education requirement. After 90 days, you will be assessed a late fee and receive a letter of reprimand which is reported to a national and federal disciplinary data bank. The second occurrence of non-compliance may result in further disciplinary action. (Chapter 2, Section VII, B. D. and I.)*

- Q. Although I haven't worked, my license has been active for years. When I renew my license, how many continuing education contact hours do I need?**
- A. *15 contact hours during the two-year period immediately preceding the renewal date. (Chapter 2, Section VII.C.3.a)*
- Q. My license is on inactive status. How many continuing education contact hours do I need?**
- A. *You are not required to have continuing education if your nursing license is inactive. (Chapter 2, Section VII.C.2.)*
- Q. I have not worked in nursing for the past eight years and I would like to re-enter nursing practice. My license is on inactive status (or expired). What do I need to do?**
- A. *To renew your license you must have completed twenty (20) practice-focused contact hours within the past two years and complete a Board approved refresher course or an employer competency orientation program. You must obtain a temporary permit to practice while taking the refresher course or competency orientation program. This temporary permit is only valid for attendance in the refreshed course or orientation program. You cannot "work" on this permit. (Chapter 2, Section VII.C.3.b. & 4)*
- Q. What is the difference between CEU's and contact hours?**
- A. *Both CEU's and contact hours are measurements for continuing education. One contact hour is equal to 0.1 CEU. Ten contact hours are equal to 1 (one) CEU.*
- Q. I am an LPN going back to nursing school. Will any of my courses count for continuing education contact hours?**
- A. **Yes. Completion** of nursing courses, (i.e. Introduction to Nursing, O.B., Peds, Medical Surg.) will be accepted as continuing education. (Chapter 2, Section VII.C.1.d.) **No prerequisites**, (i.e. Chemistry, Micro. Biology, Anatomy & Physiology, General Psychology) count as continuing education. **One completed (nursing course) college semester hour with a grade of C or better during licensure period will be equivalent to 15 contact hours.** RN's returning to nursing school can also count completed nursing courses as continuing education. **Nursing programs utilizing clep-testing format (i.e. Excelsior College) cannot be counted for continuing education hours.**
- Q. I have ACLS training. Will this count as continuing education?**
- A. *American Heart Association advanced life support courses for various age groups (ACLS, PALS, NRP, PEARS) are acceptable as continuing education. The ASBN will allow ten (10) contact hours for initial training or retraining if it occurs during the two-year timeframe immediately preceding license renewal. (Chapter 2, Section VII, E.1) **CPR does not count for continuing education.***
- Q. I did not receive a certificate of completion for my ACLS training. What proof do I need?**
- A. *A copy of the ACLS, PALS, NRP or PEARS card will suffice as proof of completion. The class roster is not adequate.*
- Q. My employer requires that I complete STABLE training. Can I count this for continuing education?**
- A. **Yes.** *The ASBN will allow 9.3 contact hours for initial training or retraining if it occurs during the two (2) year timeframe immediately preceding license renewal.*
- Q. I am planning to take the Trauma Nurse Core Course (TNCC) offered through the Emergency Nurses Association (ENA). Will this count as continuing education?**
- A. *Advanced training courses with established curriculum recognized by an ASBN approved approval body are acceptable as continuing education. The ENA is listed as an approved approval body on the ASBN website. The courses that they have approved and oversee - e.g. Trauma Nurse Core Course (TNCC), Emergency Nursing Pediatric Course (ENPC) are accepted as continuing education. (Chapter 2, Section VII, E.1)*
- Q. I am required to complete radiology continuing education. Can I use this for renewal of my nursing license since I take X-Rays as part of my job.**

A. *Radiology is a separate allied health profession. However if the continuing education activity is a **nursing** topic, approved by an organization on the ASBN approved approval body list and meets all other requirements it may be used.*

Q. My advanced practice licensure requires me to get continuing education in order to recertify. Will this new requirement be in addition to my other continuing education contact hours?

A. **No.** *Certification or re-certification during the renewal period is acceptable to meet the ASBN requirements. (Chapter 2, Section VII.C.1.b.)*

Q. My hospital requires that I attend yearly in-services such as fire safety and infection control and that I maintain CPR training. Will that count as my continuing education?

A. **No.** *In-service programs and CPR training are not acceptable for continuing education. (Chapter 2, Section VII.G.)*

Q. What is the difference between in-service education and continuing education?

A. *As defined by the American Nurses Association in the 2000 **Scope and Standards of Practice for Nursing Professional Development**, in-service educational activities are “learning experiences provided in the work setting for the purpose of assisting staff members in performing their assigned functions in that particular agency or institution (p.24)”.*

Continuing education is “systematic professional learning experiences designed to augment the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of nurses and therefore, enriches the nurses’ contributions to quality health care and their pursuit of professional career goals”. (p.24)

Continuing education enhances practice, while in-service meets requirement needed to function in a specific work setting.

(For example:)

If the educational activity was to inform nurses about the concept of patient-controlled analgesia (PCA), the advantages/disadvantages, patient education, medications, dosage, side effects – this is continuing education.

If the educational activity was to inform nurses about policies related to use of PCA pump, documentation required, procedures to access medication, change-out/add medication or discontinue pump – this is in-service).

Q. My employer has required that I attend classes in computer technology. Can I count these hours for my continuing education contact hours requirement?

A. **No.** *The requirement is for nursing practice-focused continuing education. (Chapter 2, Section VII.C.1.a.)*

Q. I have worked in labor and delivery for the past five years, but I’m interested in gerontology. Will my attendance at a gerontology workshop count as my continuing education requirement?

A. **No.** *The requirement is for “practice-focused” continuing education. Your continuing education must be related to labor and delivery. (Chapter 2, Section VII.C.1.a.)*

Q. Can I count CME’s (continuing medical education) as my continuing education contact hours?

A. **Maybe.** *If the target audience for CME’s includes nurses, and the content is relevant to your practice area in nursing, it can be counted. (Chapter 2, Section VII.C.1.a)*

Q. I hold a license in other states that require continuing education. Can I use the contact hours earned in other states for Arkansas?

A. *You may if they meet the Arkansas State Board of Nursing’s approver and practice focused requirements. (Chapter 2, Section VII.E.)*

- Q. I attended a weeklong educational conference and received 30 continuing education contact hours. Can I use those hours to count for the next two license renewal periods?**
- A. *Continuing education contact hours beyond the required contact hours cannot be “carried over” to the next renewal period. (Chapter 2, Section VII.C.5.)*
- Q. I have information about an upcoming workshop that is in my practice area, but the approver of continuing education does not appear on your list. Can I take this workshop and use it for my continuing education contact hours?**
- A. *You may request an individual review for a non-approved workshop by submitting information containing the topic, agenda, presenters, content, and objectives, along with an ASBN application for individual review and fee. (Chapter 2, Section VII.H.)*
- Q. My license is suspended for six months because I have violated the Nurse Practice Act. How many continuing education contact hours do I need to reinstate my license?**
- A. *According to the regulations (Chapter 2, Section VII.C.3.a.i.) you must have completed twenty (20) practice-focused contact hours and meet any other conditions specified in the Board’s order.*
- Q. I would like to offer continuing education programs for nurses in Arkansas. Will the ASBN approve the programs I plan to provide?**
- A. *No. The ASBN will not approve programs for providers. The provider should seek approval from the ArNA or other ASBN approved approver bodies. (Chapter, Section VII)*
- Q. Do the contact hours offered by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing count for our contact hours?**
- A. *Yes. Their website is www.learningext.com and they offer a variety of programs.*

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