

Continuing Education Rule Changes – Effective January 1, 2018

By Laura Hudson, Associate Director – Continuing Education/Workforce

The Iowa Board of Nursing, on July 11, 2017, adopted new continuing education rules applicable to all Iowa licensed nurses and Iowa board approved providers of nursing continuing education. Changes to the Iowa Administrative Code (IAC) 655 Chapter 5, Continuing Education chapter will become effective January 1, 2018. The new rules may be found at this link: <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/law/administrativeRules/rules?agency=655&chapter=5&pubDate=12-06-2017> . This information was first announced in the November, December 2017, January 2018 edition of the Nursing Newsletter.

The following table summarizes the changes and pertinent details for nurse licensees:

Topic	Rationale
Definitions section	Clarified and added definitions for better descriptions of concepts.
Contact hour change from 50 to 60 minutes	<p>This change brings Iowa rules in line with the American Nurses Credentialing Center’s (ANCC) unit of measurement. ANCC is an exemplar agency from which the IBON rules were developed.</p> <p>Effective 1/1/2018, Iowa approved providers of nursing continuing education (CE) will award one contact hour for 60 minutes of instruction.</p> <p>For licensees who currently use ANCC self-study coursework, this change will not affect you.</p> <p>Over a three-year period the contact hour award change means licensees will take six extra hours of CE, <i>if</i> the licensee takes only Iowa approved courses. With the changes, Iowa is still in line with other states for CE hour requirements. Additionally, nurses are still in line with the CE requirements for other healthcare professions in the state.</p>
Contact hours are defined in both the approved provider and licensee sections of the rules	Adding the contact hour measurement to both sets of rules clarifies it for all audiences. The term “CEU” will not be used by Iowa providers to award credit. Approved providers will award contact hours. However, licensees will still be able to use certificates with the term “CEU” listed that were earned prior to the rule change.

<p>Requirement that all licensees (e.g. 2 or 3 year license) need to have 36 contact hours of CE</p>	<p>Eliminates the confusion of 24 contact hours for the first licensure period and then 36 contact hours for all subsequent renewals. Effective 1/1/2018, all licensees need 36 contact hours of CE to renew. Licensees, audit staff, enforcement staff, providers, and educators will find this continuity easier to remember and follow.</p>
<p>Requirement to Reactivate Licenses</p>	<p>To reactivate an Iowa nurse license, 36 contact hours of continuing education, taken within the previous 36 months, must be documented and submitted along with other reactivation paperwork.</p>
<p>CE credit may be earned through the entire renewal period</p>	<p>Licensees have their full renewal period to complete CE requirements. The law still requires licensees to have all CE done before renewing one's license. No carry over credits are allowed to the next license renewal period.</p>
<p>Expanded the list of acceptable approved providers</p>	<p>Increases the agencies from which licensees may earn their CE credit. Awarding of credit is no longer limited to Iowa-only agencies. See the 655 IAC chapter 5 rule for what is allowed.</p> <p>Licensees may earn credit for precepting other nurses. Please work with your education department to document the time you spend as a preceptor. The rules are specific about the requirements.</p> <p>Licensees who take part in a nurse residency program may use completion of the residency program towards license renewal requirements. A certificate of completion of a residency course is required for documentation.</p> <p>Licensees who hold certification for a practice role may use their certification documentation for their license renewal. The certification must be current at the time of license renewal. (Note: An ACLS class is not a practice role certification. An example of a practice role certification is Med/Surg Certified Nurse, Emergency Room Certified Nurse, Wound/Ostomy Certified Nurse, Nurse Educator Certified, etc.).</p> <p>Most ANCC certification requirements are extensive. By accepting current certifications related to practice roles, the Board believes these adequately meet the CE requirements of the law.</p>

<p>Added that ANCC providers without Iowa approval may offer coursework in Iowa without co-sponsorship of an Iowa approved provider</p>	<p>This change removes the restrictions that out-of-state providers who are approved by ANCC also need to go through the steps of finding an Iowa approved provider to hold coursework in the state. Iowa nurse licensees will now be able to count their ANCC credits, earned in Iowa, towards their license renewal. This will also simplify and improve the audit process.</p> <p>Providers who are ANCC certified should still work with Iowa BON providers to arrange for courses that will be held in Iowa facilities.</p>
<p>Removed the restriction that webinars from out of state must be co-sponsored by Iowa approved providers</p>	<p>With internet access the norm, instead of the exception, this change brings the rules in line with acceptable CE delivery methods and allows ANCC providers approved in other states to offer CE credits to Iowa nurses. Additionally, any webinars that are approved by other boards of nursing in other mandatory CE states may also be used by Iowa licensees towards license renewal requirements.</p>
<p>Provided specific lists of acceptable courses and certifications by which to earn CE</p>	<p>Removed basic life support and cardiopulmonary resuscitation from acceptable courses to earn CE. BLS and CPR are seen as basic training. CE content should be education that is above that learned in basic nursing training. Advanced life-saving courses may be offered for nursing CE, at the approved provider's discretion.</p> <p>Licensees should check with their education departments to see what will be offered for credit.</p>

The Iowa Board of Nursing and staff recognizes the chapter 5 changes will require a period of transition and education. We are committed to working with all parties to assure the new rules are followed and met. If you have questions, please email laura.hudson@iowa.gov.

Resources:

American Nurses Credentialing Center. (2015). *2015 ANCC Primary Accreditation Approver Application Manual*. Silver Spring, MD: American Nurses Credentialing Center.