



## North Carolina State Hearing Aid Dealers and Fitters Board

---

### CONTINUING EDUCATION POLICY

Effective April 11, 2013

#### **SECTION .0201 CONTINUING EDUCATION DEFINITIONS**

The following definitions apply to the Continuing Education Policy:

- (1) **CE PROGRAM** – a continuing education presentation where attendance is monitored and the participants are required to be present, at one or more designated physical locations. The CE Program shall consist of sessions which may be eligible for Board-approved CEU credit. A CE Program may be televised or otherwise conducted via the internet only if participants must be at a designated location where attendance is monitored by the CE Program provider.
  - (2) **CEU ACCRUAL PERIOD** – the calendar year (January 1 through December 31) immediately preceding the March license renewal deadline.
  - (3) **CEU REPORTING DEADLINE** – the tenth (10th) day of January which immediately follows the CEU Accrual Period.
  - (4) **CEU VERIFICATION REPORT** – the form available on the Boardwebsite ([www.nchalb.org](http://www.nchalb.org)) for recording CEU credits earned to satisfy the license renewal requirement.
  - (5) **CONTINUING EDUCATION UNIT (CEU)** – the reporting unit used for calculating approved continuing education hours. One-tenth of a CEU (0.10) equals one hour of approved instruction. Ten hours of approved instruction equals 1.00 CEU credit. The Board-approved CEU credits are recorded to two decimal points (for example, a session conducted for 2 hours would be recorded as 0.20 CEU).
  - (6) **EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVE** – a statement of the working knowledge or understanding of presented content that a participant should attain upon completion of the session.
  - (7) **HOUR** – a full clock hour (60 minutes) of instruction and learning, excluding any time allowed for any other activity such as meals, breaks, or business or committee meetings.
-

- (8) PROGRAM APPLICATION – the Board’s official application for the purpose of program review for Board-approved CEU credit, which is available on the Board website ([www.nchalb.org](http://www.nchalb.org)).
- (9) PRESENTATION FORMAT – the teaching method utilized to impart information to the participants (for example, lecture, panel discussion, demonstration, practicum, or debate).
- (10) REPORT OF ATTENDANCE – the official attendance verification form entitled “Continuing Education Report of Program Attendance” which is available on the website in generic form and in specific form for approved programs and self-study.
- (11) SELF-STUDY – independently completed internet-based activities or events provided by the Board, or approved by the International Institute for Hearing Instruments Studies (IIHIS), American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), or American Academy of Audiology (AAA), for at least one hour of credit which include an internet-presented examination pertaining to the content of the Self-study session. Self-study may be:
  - (a) live, on-line presentations;
  - (b) prerecorded, downloaded presentations; or
  - (c) text-based, downloaded readings.
- (12) SESSION – an instructional or learning event, with at least two primary educational objectives pertaining to a single Board topic content category, and a specific period of time (i.e., clock hours) allotted for accomplishing the specified objectives.
- (13) TOPIC CONTENT CATEGORIES – a system to separate Board-approved sessions by content. “Category 1” is for amplification and hearing rehabilitation issues. “Category 2” is for hearing loss, regulations, and consumer-related issues. “Category 0” is assigned to unapproved sessions in a program when other sessions in the program are approved.

## **SECTION .0202 ANNUAL CONTINUING EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS**

- (a) A licensee shall complete and record with the Board at least ten hours (1.00 CEU credit) of Board-approved continuing education annually, including at least five hours (0.50 CEU credit) which are classified as Category 1 in accordance with Section .0203.
- (b) The CEU Accrual Period for each license renewal shall be the calendar year (January 1 through December 31) preceding license renewal. CEU credit cannot be carried over from one CEU Accrual Period to the next, even if the CEU credit earned exceeds the license renewal requirement.
- (c) A licensee may receive CEU credit for only one of the sessions when sessions with essentially identical content are presented at the same or different CE Programs during any two consecutive Board CEU Accrual Periods. A licensee completing the same Self-study during any two consecutive CEU Accrual Periods shall be granted CEU credit once. Essentially identical content shall be determined through the Board's review of the educational objectives, presenters, and content for each session as provided on the program application.
- (d) An individual passing the licensing exam during a CEU Accrual Period satisfies the continuing education requirement for the corresponding license renewal.

## **SECTION .0203 CONTENT CATEGORIES**

- (a) Sessions assigned to Category 1 or Category 2, as described herein, satisfy the continuing education requirement for license renewal. Category 0 sessions, as described herein, do not satisfy any part of the continuing education requirement.
- (b) Category 1 is for amplification and hearing rehabilitation issues, and shall be assigned to continuing education sessions which are comprised of the following topics:
  - (1) hearing aid technology: instrument circuitry and acoustic performance data;
  - (2) earmold or shell coupling systems: design, selection, modifications, and ear impressions;
  - (3) hearing aid selection procedures, verification, fitting and adjustment techniques, and servicing or repairs; and
  - (4) aural rehabilitation using amplification: auditory training, hearing aid orientation and counseling techniques, hearing aid validation techniques.

- (c) Category 2 is for hearing loss, regulations, and consumer-related issues, and shall be assigned to continuing education sessions which are comprised of the following topics:
- (1) biological, physical, and behavioral bases underlying normal and pathological hearing processes;
  - (2) detection, assessment, or monitoring of hearing impairment (i.e., measurement techniques and test interpretation), including intraoperative monitoring;
  - (3) cochlear implants or implantable hearing devices;
  - (4) central auditory processing;
  - (5) assistive listening devices, including FM Systems and ancillary wireless devices;
  - (6) techniques for development of speech and language in children with hearing loss, or augmentative and alternative communication strategies for children or adults with hearing loss;
  - (7) cerumen management, dizziness, or tinnitus as it directly pertains to persons with hearing loss;
  - (8) hearing impaired consumers' views of the hearing health care industry and consumer complaints;
  - (9) infection control issues for the hearing health care profession;
  - (10) professional conduct and regulatory issues pertaining to the fitting and selling of hearing aids, and
  - (11) hearing aid business practices such as hearing aid office management, sales contracts, and hearing aid marketing or industry trends.
- (d) CATEGORY 0 shall be assigned to all unapproved sessions in a continuing education program, including sessions comprised of the following programs, activities and topics:
- (1) financial planning unrelated to the fitting or programming of hearing instruments;
  - (2) computer training unrelated to the fitting or programming of hearing instruments;
  - (3) employment contracts;
  - (4) balance mechanism or tinnitus, if not directly pertaining to persons with hearing loss;
  - (5) cerumen management, if not directly pertaining to persons with hearing loss;
  - (6) training designed for license examination preparation;

- (7) factory tours, poster sessions, open forum sessions, and poster-type sessions conducted at a CE Program where participants are free to determine the amount of time that they interact with multiple presenters; and
- (8) all other topics not listed as approved for Category 1 or Category 2.

#### **SECTION .0204 CE PROGRAM APPLICATION**

- (a) Any individual or program sponsor may submit a program application to the Board to request Board-approved CEU credit for a CE program. The person designated on the Board's program application as the program's applicant shall receive all Board communication related to program submission and approval.
- (b) The applicant shall complete and submit a duly made application prior to the Board's evaluation of the program for approval. A duly made application shall consist of responses to all information requested on the application form, the required application fee of \$40.00, a copy of the published program announcement and the published time-ordered program agenda listing the exact time that each session begins and ends, which sessions are divided into parts, and scheduled breaks.
- (c) The Board shall use the initial duly made application to determine Board-approved CEU credit for the program. The initial program applicant shall be responsible for the accuracy of the submitted information. The initial applicant shall possess the right to appeal the decision of the Board. If a subsequent application for the same CE program is received by the Board from another applicant, then the Board shall respond by providing either a copy of the Board's written notification of approval or denial of the initial application, or written notice of the status of the initial application.
- (d) A program sponsor may seek prior approval for a CE Program or submit a program application after the CE program date. CE Program sessions shall not be advertised as "approved by the Board" until Board approval is granted. Prior to Board approval, published announcements shall state that "sessions have been submitted for approval."
- (e) The Board will accept one program application for a series of CE Programs in compliance with all of the following criteria:
  - (1) initial program starting date is more than 30 days after the Board receives submission of the duly made application;

- (2) identical content shall be presented at each program on different dates or at different locations during the same calendar year; and
- (3) all program dates and locations are listed on the application.
- (f) The Board shall not accept a program application for a series of identical CE Programs submitted subsequent to the starting date of a program in the series to be approved. Each program that has already occurred shall require a separate application. Future program dates in the series may be combined on one application as set forth in subparagraph (e) of this Section.
- (g) A licensee shall submit to the Board a signed Report of Attendance with the program application when seeking Board approval for a program subsequent to the program date.
- (h) The program sponsor shall submit to the Board a program application with a roster of licensees who attended a CE Program when seeking Board approval for a program subsequent to the program date.
- (i) The deadline to submit a program application shall be the tenth day of January following the calendar year in which the program was offered.

**SECTION .0205      CONTENT APPROVAL PROCESS**

- (a) The actual date of a program shall determine the CEU Accrual Period assigned by the Board to Board-approved CEU credit. The CEU Accrual Period runs from January 1 through December 31 for the renewal due in March of the following year. The Board shall deny CEU credit for a program if the program application does not list the date and location of the program.
- (b) In order for the Board to assign CEU credit, each program application received by the Board shall subdivide the CE Program into sessions which are classified according to the topic content categories set forth in Section .0203. The Board shall evaluate sessions for approval using the following criteria:
  - (1) the content of a session;
    - (A) educational objectives clearly demonstrate relevance to the fitting and selling of hearing aids;
    - (B) presentation enhances a practitioner's knowledge of issues relating to the fitting and selling of hearing aids; and

- (C) format includes time for questions and answers.
- (2) the length of each session and published breaks;
  - (A) no credit is offered for any session less than one full hour;
  - (B) for sessions lasting longer than one hour, 0.05 CEU credit shall be issued for each additional full half-hour increment (a session lasting one hour and 45 minutes shall be issued 0.15 CEU);
  - (C) any session lasting more than three hours shall include a published break, lasting at least 15 minutes, or the session shall be eligible for a maximum of 0.30 CEU credit;
  - (D) for every three hours of continuous presentation time (regardless of the number of sessions presented during that time interval), a published break must be provided in order for any additional program sessions to be eligible for CEU credit; and
  - (E) if a session is divided into parts, all such parts must pertain to the same Board topic content category. No single part may be of a duration of less than one hour. The session shall be clearly listed in the published program agenda as being divided into parts with attendance required at all parts in order to receive CEU credit. A session is considered to be divided into parts if there is a published break scheduled to interrupt the session during the CE Program.
- (3) the way in which attendance is monitored;
  - (A) the Board requires verification of attendance at each session of a CE Program;
  - (B) a speaker or facilitator must be present to actively interact with the participants and monitor attendance for sessions relying primarily on prerecorded (audio or video) materials or computer-generated presentations;
  - (C) there shall be an announced means for participants to ask questions during each session for all televised or telephone distance learning presentations; and

- (D) the published program announcement shall state that a program representative will be present at each distance learning site to monitor attendance.
- (c) The Board shall post the processing and approval status of an application on the Board website (www.nchalb.org). A CE Program Report of Attendance shall also be posted on the Board website for each approved CE Program, showing the Board-approved CEU credit for each session.

**SECTION .0206 APPEALS AND CE PROGRAM MODIFICATION**

- (a) Only the initial applicant shall possess the right to appeal the decision of the Board and may do so by submitting a written appeal prior to the end of the CEU Accrual Period for the program.
- (b) The program sponsor shall submit documentation regarding any modifications to an approved program to the Board within 30 calendar days after the CE Program completion date and shall notify program participants that approved CEU credit is subject to change due to modifications in the agenda.
- (c) The program sponsor shall write all program modifications in the appropriate section on the Report of Attendance and sign the form in the area designated for CE Program modifications if any session of an approved CE program is modified after publication of the program announcement or after submission of the program application to the Board.
- (d) The Board may modify its approval of sessions and the CEU credit allowed when a program is changed after receiving Board approval. The Board shall update the program status on the website to reflect CEU credit changes.
- (e) The program applicant shall submit a new program application if:
  - (1) the Board approved a CE Program for multiple dates and the content and/or duration of the CE Program changes after one or more of the approved program dates have occurred. The remaining program dates shall constitute a new CE Program; or
  - (2) the program sponsor offers a pre-approved CE Program on additional dates. The additional date(s) shall constitute a new CE Program, unless the program sponsor notifies the Board that a pre-approved program date has been cancelled and a



different date has been substituted, within 20 calendar days of the cancelled CE Program's date.

## **SECTION .0207      RECORDING CEU CREDIT**

- (a) A licensee shall have proof of attendance in order to record CEU credit with the Board.
  - (1) For pre-approved CE Programs, the program sponsor shall provide each licensee in attendance with the approved CE Program Report of Attendance. At the conclusion of each session, the program sponsor's representative or the session speaker shall sign the CE Program Report of Attendance of each licensee in attendance in the space provided for attendance verification. An alternate verification procedure is allowed when a rubber stamp or initials are utilized by the program sponsor, as its means of verifying a licensee's session attendance and the signature of the program sponsor's representative is located at the bottom of each page of the Report of Attendance.
  - (2) If the CE Program is not pre-approved, the licensee shall print a generic CE Program Report of Attendance from the Board website and take it to the program to complete the session titles as listed on the program sponsor's agenda presented to participants on the day of the continuing education event. At the end of each session, the hand-written signature of the program sponsor's representative or the session speaker shall be obtained by the licensee on the Report of Attendance.
- (b) The program applicant shall submit a roster of licensees who attended a CE Program no later than 30 days following completion of a pre-approved CE Program.
  - (1) If the program applicant is recording CEU credit with the Board on behalf of licensees, the payment of the \$15.00 recording fee and an original Report of Attendance for each licensee shall accompany the submission of the roster.
  - (2) If licensees are responsible for recording CEU credit with the Board, including paying the recording fee, the program applicant shall provide the original signed Report of Attendance form to each licensee at the end of the program, and shall submit only the roster.

- (c) The Board shall accept the Board form entitled “Continuing Education Report of Program Attendance” for attendance verification when recording CEU credit. Certificates of attendance issued by any entity other than the Board may be rejected by the Board as proof of attendance or as verification of CEU credit earned.
- (d) A licensee shall record CE Program CEU credit with the Board by submitting all of the following:
  - (1) an electronic CEU Verification Report;
  - (2) an original Report of Attendance; and
  - (3) a recording fee of \$15.00 for each CE Program.
- (e) A licensee shall record Self-study CEU credit with the Board as set forth in Section .0208.
- (f) The Board accepts an electronic image of the Report of Attendance as the original Report of Attendance when submitted electronically in conjunction with a CEU Verification Report or a roster.
- (g) A licensee shall record sufficient Board-approved CEU credit to satisfy the continuing education requirement for license renewal by the CEU Reporting Deadline, which is the tenth day of January immediately following the CEU Accrual Period.
- (h) A licensee’s failure to record sufficient CEU credit with the Board by the CEU Reporting Deadline shall be grounds for disciplinary action.

**SECTION .0208 SELF-STUDY**

- (a) “Self-study”, as defined in Section .0201, may be completed to satisfy up to all ten hours of the continuing education requirement during each CEU Accrual Period.
- (b) Each Self-study event shall be operationally defined as a “session” and up to ten sessions completed in the same CEU Accrual Period may be reported on one Self-study Report of Attendance as a Self-study Program.
- (c) A licensee shall record Self-study CEU credit with the Board by submitting all of the following:
  - (1) an electronic CEU Verification Report;
  - (2) a completed Self-study Report of Attendance;

- (3) an official transcript listing the licensee's score of 80% or greater on an internet-presented examination pertaining to the content of the self-study activity; and
- (4) a recording fee of \$15.00 for each Self-study Program.
- (d) The Board accepts electronic images of the Self-study Report of Attendance and official transcript if submitted electronically in conjunction with the CEU Verification Report.

**SECTION .0209 CONTINUING EDUCATION RECORDS**

- (a) The Board shall maintain a cumulative record of the CEU credit recorded for each licensee during the three most recent CEU Accrual Periods.
- (b) A summary of recorded CEU credits may be viewed on the Board website ([www.nchalb.org](http://www.nchalb.org)). A request for a full copy of a licensee's CEU record, including copies of the original forms submitted for the three most recent CEU Accrual Periods, is subject to the provisions of North Carolina General Statute §132-6.
- (c) The Board shall destroy records of program applications and CEU credits reported to the Board five years after records are recorded by the Board.

Authority G.S. 93D-3(c); 93D-11; 93D-13