



NORTH DAKOTA BOARD OF NURSING

Requirements for Licensure Renewal – “Frequently Asked Questions”

Following is a series of frequently asked questions about the license renewal requirements in ND for licensed nurses. It has been prepared to help license holders better understand their responsibilities with respect to practice and continuing education requirements. Reading this is not a substitute for knowing what the nurse practices act (NDCC Chapter 43-12.1) and the NDAC rules of the Board of Nursing say about continuing education. It can, however, be a good resource that may help answer many of your questions.

Practice Requirements

Are there practice requirements for license renewal in North Dakota?

Yes, all individuals renewing a nursing license must meet or exceed 400 hours of nursing practice in the preceding four years. Hours practiced in another regulated profession cannot be used for nursing practice hours.

Continuing Education Requirements

Is continuing education (CE) required for license renewal in North Dakota?

Yes, all individuals renewing a nursing license must complete 12 contact hours of CE obtained within the preceding 2 years.

Am I required to obtain continuing education in specific areas?

No

What is the time frame for getting my continuing education?

CE must be completed within each 2 year renewal period. The continuing education is to be completed within the 2 years prior to the expiration date on the license.

How much continuing education should I get?

LPN, RN, APRN – Each person licensed as a Licensed Practical Nurse, a Registered Nurse, or an Advanced

APRN with Prescriptive Authority – Advanced Practice Registered Nurse with Prescriptive Authority must complete 15 contact hours of CE related to pharmacology. These 15 contact hours may fulfill the RN/APRN renewal contact hour requirements of 12 CE.

When do I need to begin completing the 12 contact hours of approved CE?

This requirement will need to be completed before you renew your nursing license. This requirement will remain in effect for each successive licensure renewal thereafter.

I completed 40 contact hours last licensure period and only needed 12. Does that mean that I can use the other 28 hours for this licensure period?

No! Contact hours do not carry over from one license renewal period to another. You must complete at least 12 contact hours of approved CE in each license renewal period in order to renew a license to practice nursing in North Dakota.

I am currently maintaining my certification in another health care profession. Can I use the continuing education to fulfill my license renewal requirements for contact hours?

Yes. The North Dakota Board of Nursing will accept, at face value, the number of hours awarded for an educational activity that has been approved for CE, provided it was approved by one of the following:

- The North Dakota Board of Nursing
- A health care regulatory board or professional organization of any state that is nationally accredited to approve CE.

Credit received for successful completion of a course taken through an accredited college or university may be used to meet the CE requirement.

Do I send my Continuing Education records to the Board?

No. Send your CE records ONLY if you have received a "Notice of Continuing Education Audit" from the North Dakota Board of Nursing.

Who keeps track of my Continuing Education?

You do!! As a professional, you are responsible for keeping track of your own CE records. You must keep your CE documents for at least 4 years. The Board may audit your CE records for up to 4 years.

Then how does the Board know I met the Continuing Education Requirement?

Each time you renew your license you MUST verify through attesting to the statement on the renewal form that you have completed the 12 contact hours. If your renewal application arrives in the Board office without this information, you will receive a "Notice of Continuing Education Audit".

But, I was just licensed in North Dakota for the first time!!

License by Exam - If you recently received your first license in North Dakota and took an examination to receive it, and this is your first renewal of that nursing license, you are NOT REQUIRED to have completed CE courses. You have met the requirement through your academic coursework and MUST verify through attesting to the statement on the renewal form.

License by Endorsement - If you recently received your first license in North Dakota and have moved from another state, you are considered to have received your license or certificate by "ENDORSEMENT". Even though this may be your first renewal of that license, you must complete the required number of contact hours of approved CE in order to renew it. You MUST verify through attesting to the statement on the renewal form that you have completed the 6 contact hours. Credit received for successful completion of a course taken through an accredited college or university may be used to meet the CE requirement.

I have had an active license in North Dakota for 10 months. Do I need to complete the entire amount of approved contact hours of CE to renew?

If you have held an active license for less than 12 months, you need to complete at least 6 contact hours of approved continuing education before renewing that license. Credit received for successful completion of a course taken through an accredited college or university may be used to meet the CE requirement.

Inactive License

I'm not working right now.

Whether you are working or not has no bearing on your CE requirement. The CE requirement is directly related to renewal of your license in ND.

I need to renew my license and am not able to complete the required number of contact hours. How can I renew my license?

The CE rules do not allow you to renew or reactivate your license without completing CE activities and you are not eligible for licensure.

I don't plan to renew my license. What do I need to do?

Inactive Status – If you do not renew your license it will be on "Inactive Status".

You may not work as a nurse if your license is on inactive status. There is an additional fee to reactivate a license from an inactive status.

Reactivation

How do I get my license back?

Reactivation- Any time your license is on inactive status, you may "reactivate" your license by:

- completing at least the minimum number of required contact hours of approved CE within 24 months immediately preceding reactivation of your license
AND
- meeting or exceeding four hundred hours of nursing practice in the preceding four years.

Contact the Board office for a Renewal/Reactivation form. The staff will assist you in reactivating your license.

If I complete a refresher course to reactivate my license, can I use the contact hours obtained for my next renewal cycle?

Yes, the refresher course contact hours can be used for the first renewal cycle after reactivation of your license.

What do I need to do if I have not practiced for four or more years in North Dakota?

Any APRN, RN, or LPN who has not actively practiced in North Dakota for four years or more must meet the following requirements before a license to practice is issued:

1. Complete the relicensure application
2. Pay the renewal fee
3. Provide to the board for approval, proof of one of the following:
 - a. Practice as a licensed RN or LPN which meets or exceeds 400 hours with the preceding four years in another state, territory or country. Verification of employment is to be submitted.
 - b. Completion of a refresher course in nursing within the preceding year.
 - c. Successful completion of a clinical nursing course in a board-recognized program to further nursing education.
 - d. Other evidence the licensee wishes to submit which would provide proof of nursing competence.

Approved Continuing Education

How do I know if a particular educational activity is acceptable to the North Dakota Board of Nursing as approved CE?

The North Dakota Board of Nursing will accept, at face value, the number of hours awarded for an educational activity that has been approved for CE, provided it was approved by one of the following:

- The North Dakota Board of Nursing
- A health care regulatory board or professional organization of any state that is nationally accredited to approve CE.

I am taking college courses. Can I use these courses to meet my CE Requirement?

Yes. Credit received for successful completion of a course taken through an accredited college or university may be used to meet the CE requirement. This is called "Academic Credit" and translates into contact hours as follows:

- 10 contact hours = One academic quarter hour
- 15 contact hours = One academic semester hour

I can't always get to the classes when they are offered. Can I get my CE at home?

Yes, many individuals receive CE through independent study activities. Independent studies may be taken through mail order courses or the internet. There is no limit to the number of contact hours you may obtain through independent study.

CAUTION!! It is up to you to make sure that the educational activities you choose are acceptable to meet the CE requirement to renew your license. Look at the advertising for the course/function - approval should be mentioned.

I took a course that met the requirements for continuing education of another board of nursing. Does that mean it is approved CE?

No. Approval is a formal process that involves review of the program components. Meeting a requirement alone is not approval.

The educational activity I took was not approved for CE.

The Board does not retroactively approve courses for CE. It is the responsibility of the course provider to get the activity approved for CE before you take it. If the educational activity was not approved for CE or you did not receive academic credit, you will not receive credit toward the CE required to renew your license.

I'm required by my employer to take CPR. Does that count?

No, not all educational activities completed are acceptable as CE. The following is a list of activities that DO NOT MEET the CE requirement in ND:

- Basic Life Support classes;
- CPR classes;
- Repetition of any educational activity with identical content and objectives within a single reporting period;
- Agency specific orientation or in-service programs;
- Self-directed independent study activities that have not been approved for CE;
- A personal development activity;
- Community service or volunteer practice;
- Board-ordered CE;
- Membership in a professional nursing organization;
- Professional meetings or conventions except for those portions approved for CE.

Audit Information

How long should I keep my continuing education records?

Records must be kept for at least 4 years.

What records should I keep?

Documentation of completion of CE activities should be supplied to you by the provider of the activity. Upon audit, you will be required to send photocopies of documents that contain all of the following information:

- Your name;
- Title of the education activity or course;
- Code or course number;
- Date of program completion;
- Name of the provider/instructor;
- Name of the organization which approved the program for CE;
- Contact hours or number of credits.

For academic credit, an official college transcript or grade report showing your name, the name of the school, the number of credits received, and the dates attended is also acceptable.

What is an AUDIT?

The Board monitors compliance with the CE requirement through an audit system. If you are audited, you will be mailed a "Notice of Continuing Education Audit" and asked to send photocopies of your CE records to the Board. It is important that you send COPIES of the actual documents received upon completion of the education activities attended. Information received in the Board office in response to an audit of your continuing education records will not be returned to you. You should keep your original documents. The time period for which you are being audited will be stated in the "Notice of Continuing Education Audit".

What does "NOT ELIGIBLE TO RENEW" mean?

Failure to respond to or to satisfactorily complete an audit of your CE records will result in your records being marked "NOT ELIGIBLE TO RENEW". Individuals whose records are marked "NOT ELIGIBLE TO RENEW", will be required to provide proof of having completed up to 12 hours of approved CE within the previous 24 months (1 renewal period) Individuals whose records are marked "NOT ELIGIBLE TO RENEW" will not be sent another application to renew a license or certificate in North

Dakota until the audit requirements are satisfied. You may not practice nursing care without a current valid license.

What other states have mandatory continuing education?

The following states have a mandatory continuing education requirement as prerequisite to license renewal.

Alabama	Alaska
Arkansas	California
Delaware	District of Columbia
Florida	Iowa
Kansas	Kentucky
Louisiana	Massachusetts
Michigan	Minnesota
Nebraska	Nevada
New Hampshire	New Mexico
Ohio	Rhode Island
Texas	Utah
West Virginia	Wyoming

NEED MORE INFORMATION?

For further information on the Board's rules on Continuing education requirements for renewal and reactivation please refer to NDAC Section 54-02-05-06 Reactivating a license or Section 54-02-05-08 Continuing education requirements for license renewal or visit the North Dakota Board of Nursing website at www.ndbon.org and click on Licensure or call the Board office at 701-328-9777. These rules are available in hard copy from the Board by requesting the law and rules and submitting a check in the amount of \$20.00 payable to North Dakota Board of Nursing or by accessing our web site at : www.ndbon.org/publications

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