

Five FAQs About Nursing Professional Development

What is Nursing Professional Development?
Is it different from continuing nursing education?

Nursing Professional Development (NPD) is:

“A specialized nursing practice that facilitates the professional development and growth of nurses and other healthcare personnel along the continuum from Novice to expert.” (ANCC, 2015, p. 57)

Continuing nursing education (CNE) activities are:

“learning activities intended to build upon the educational and experiential bases of the professional RN and for the enhancement of practice, education, administration, research, or theory development, to the end of improving the health of the public and the art and pursuit of their professional career goals.” (ANCC, 2015, P. 55)

Nursing professional development is the specialty of nursing practice that provides continuing nursing education opportunities.

What is the type of credit awarded for continuing nursing education (CNE)?

Activities related to continuing nursing education award **CONTACT HOURS**. A contact hour according to the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) is “a unit of measurement that describes sixty minutes of an organized learning activity. One contact hour = sixty minutes.” (p. 54)

Nursing activities DO NOT AWARD CEUs! A continuing education unit (CEU) is an educational measurement utilizing criteria from the International Association for Continuing Education and Training. Please do not get these two measurements confused. Nursing activities award contact hours.

If you are taking college level nursing courses, generally, 10 contact hours = One academic quarter hour and 15 contact hours = One academic semester hour (multiple Boards of Nursing sites)

How do I award credit for the activities I present?

There are two options for activity approval to offer contact hours. First is for the person/entity planning the activity to choose an accredited approver organization such as a state nursing association or specialty nursing organization and complete the individual activity application.

Another option is available to those whose organization has been approved as a provider unit. Approved/accredited provider units plan, develop, offer, and evaluate their own activities. If your organization has a provider unit, seek the guidance of a nurse planner for your activity. Provider units may jointly provide activities with other organizations but the nurse planner must be involved from the very beginning of planning.

How do I know if an activity is approved and what difference does it make?

When you are considering an activity, look in the announcements or marketing materials for an approval statement. The official approval statement must be displayed clearly. For example:

“this continuing nursing education activity was approved by (name of accredited approver unit), an accredited approver by the American Nurses Credentialing Center’s Commission on Accreditation.”

In addition to the approval statement, you should also find the notice of requirements to receive contact hours the presence or absence of any conflicts of interest and any commercial support or joint providership. If the activity you are considering is provided through an enduring format such as print or web-based, you will also find an expiration date. ANCC approval is considered the gold standard, but the activity may also be approved by a specific Board of Nursing. ANCC approved activities are accepted in all states. Be sure you check with your specific state Board of Nursing for acceptance of non-ANCC approved activities.

What resources are available for more information?

- American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC)
- Association for Nursing Professional Development (ANPD)
- Individual State Boards of Nursing

Interested in learning more?

Contact Sharon@SharonTHinton.com or visit www.SharonTHinton.com.