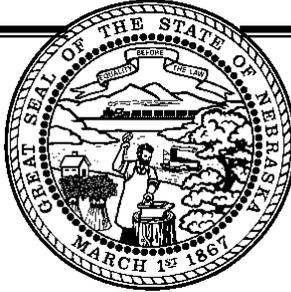


**STATE OF NEBRASKA
BOARD OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTANCY**

December 2017

Notice: Guidance Document

This guidance document is advisory in nature but is binding on an agency until amended by such agency. A guidance document does not include internal procedural documents that only affect the internal operations of the agency and does not impose additional requirement or penalties on regulated parties or include confidential information or rules and regulations made in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act. If you believe that this guidance document imposes additional requirements or penalties on regulated parties, you may request a review of the document.



**STATE OF NEBRASKA
BOARD OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTANCY**

January 2017

Continuing Education Guidelines

The Guidelines contain the Board's most current continuing education requirements which are effective January 2017. Please retain this document for future reference.

You should apply to the Board office for PRE-APPROVAL of any courses you plan to complete to be sure that the credit will qualify for continuing professional education. A **Program Qualification Form** is attached to these Guidelines for your use in submitting courses for approval to the Board or available on our website http://www.nbpa.ne.gov/cpe_menu.htm. Programs selected should contribute directly to the permit holder's professional competency to practice public accountancy. The Board recommends, but does not require, that any permit holder performing audits, reviews or compilations obtain a minimum of forty percent (40%) of the required hours in accounting and auditing subjects. **ALTHOUGH NOT A REQUIREMENT, THE BOARD DECIDED 16 HOURS (20%) OF SELF DETERMINED PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT COURSES THAT RELATE TO THE CPA'S CURRENT EMPLOYMENT CAN BE REPORTED AS LONG AS THE REMAINING 64 HOURS (80%) ARE COMPLETED IN TECHNICAL AREAS DIRECTLY RELATED TO THE PRACTICE OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTANCY.** Staying abreast of the technical aspects of the profession should always be of first consideration for CPE. However, courses in personal development are not discouraged and assist in developing a better manager, employee, and well rounded person.

The CPE Report of Attendance is due to the Board by January 31. Failure to submit the report will not allow the permit holder to renew their permit. If a permit holder does not meet the continuing education requirements for permit issuance, they must write to the Board prior to January 31 stating the reasons the CPE could not be completed. If the Board office does not receive a letter or report from an individual by the January 31st deadline, the individual is subject to the signing of a Stipulation and Consent Order which will include an administrative fee or a hearing before the Board.

PLEASE RETAIN A COPY OF YOUR CPE REPORT FOR YOUR PERMANENT CPE RECORDS.

**CPE MUST BE EARNED BY DECEMBER 31st
AND
REPORTED BY JANUARY 31st!**

CONTINUING EDUCATION GUIDELINES
(Effective May 2016)

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CONTINUING EDUCATION GUIDELINES

I. BASIC REQUIREMENTS

- A. Applicants for the renewal of an active permit shall have completed 80 hours of acceptable continuing education within the preceding two calendar years. CPE taken in a calendar year must be reported by January 31 of the following year.
- B. The Board of Accountancy shall have authority for good cause to waive the requirement. (see Board Rule Chapter 8.009.04)
- C. All holders of an active permit to practice public accountancy are required to comply with the continuing education requirements.
- D. Inactive Registrants and “Inactive-Retired” certificate holders are not required to report continuing education.
- E. The applicant for renewal of an active permit to practice shall, by January 31st of each year, provide a report of the continuing education in which he or she has participated in the preceding calendar year. If a permit holder has a valid reason they cannot report by January 31, they shall communicate the reason to the Board in writing before January 31.

II. TYPES OF PROGRAMS WHICH QUALIFY

The overriding consideration in determining whether a specific program qualifies is that it shall be a program of learning directly related to the **practice of public accountancy** including, but not limited to information or skills reasonably calculated to be utilized by a participant in the practice of public accountancy. Courses should contribute to professional development and technical competence of a permit holder. **Pre-approval of the program by the Board is encouraged through the use of a “Program Qualification Form” (See page 8 of these Guidelines).**

THE BOARD CURRENTLY ACCEPTS COURSES APPROVED BY THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION STATE BOARDS OF ACCOUNTANCY (NASBA) AND THE QUALITY ASSURANCE STANDARDS (QAS). To review the approved sponsors go to www.nasba.org

- A. **Formal Programs** (Code “F” on report) requiring class attendance shall qualify if, (i) the program is conducted by a qualified instructor; (ii) the attendee must maintain a record of registration and proof of attendance; (iii) the program is at least one hour (50 minute period) in length; (iv) an outline of the program with a detailed timeline is prepared in advance; and (v) the program contributes directly to the professional skills and competence of the permit holder. The following are deemed to be acceptable as formal programs:
 1. Professional development programs of national and state professional societies.
 2. Technical sessions at meetings of national and state professional societies and chapters.
 3. Webinars/Internet based learning in a formal setting with periodic demonstration of participation or the ability to ask questions of the instructor.
 4. Formal, organized, in-firm educational programs. Firm meetings will qualify only if the program is conducted by a qualified instructor, AND an outline of the program with a detailed timeline is prepared in advance and preserved. **Program must consist of at least 50 minutes of continuous instruction.** Portions of such meetings devoted to administrative and firm matters cannot be included to count as CPE.
 5. Programs in other organizations (accounting; professional; appropriate private sector). Dinner, luncheon and breakfast meetings of recognized accounting organizations may qualify, if they meet the appropriate requirements and have at least one hour of presentation on professional topics.

6. Blended Learning – involves combining internet and digital media with traditional classroom methods that require physical presence of both teach and students.

- B. Self-Study Programs** (Code “S” on report) which require registration and provide evidence of satisfactory completion. Permit holders claiming credit for such courses may be required to furnish evidence of satisfactory completion of the course.

Nano learning will be considered a form of self-study, therefore would be limited to no more than 40 hours during a licensing period. Nano learning will be reported to the Board in 50 minute increments. 50 minutes must be earned from the same sponsor. Certificates of completion issued by a sponsor must be available by request.

No more than 40 hours during a licensing period or 60 hours for a reinstatement period shall be represented by self-study courses or programs. A certificate of completion designating the number of hours must be attached before any credit will be allowed.

- C. University and college courses** (Code “C” on report) require

(i) the program must be conducted by a qualified instructor; (ii) the attendee must maintain a record of registration and proof of attendance (iii) an outline of the course; and (iiii) the course contributes directly to the professional skills and competence of the permit holder. Credit will be granted as follows:

1. Each semester hour credit shall equal 15 hours CPE credit. A quarter hour credit shall equal 8 hours. **No more than 40 hours during a licensing period or 60 hours for a reinstatement period shall be given for college credit. The course must be completed with a passing grade before credit is allowed.**
2. Non-credit short courses: contact hours only; must obtain a signed statement of attendance from instructor.

- D. Service on technical committees of professional organizations** (Code “CT” on report). Participation in technical committee meetings of recognized professional societies will qualify, if the subject matter has relevance to the practice of public accountancy, and must be at least one hour in length. **No more than 16 hours will be allowed for any renewal or reinstatement period.**

- E. Instruction or Presentation of Programs** (Code “I” on report). Credit for one hour of continuing education will be awarded for each hour completed as an instructor or discussion leader to the extent that the particular activity contributes to the professional competence of the permit holder as it relates to the practice of public accountancy. Credit as an instructor, discussion leader, or speaker will be allowed for any meeting or engagement provided that the session is one which would meet the continuing education requirements of those attending. The credit allowed an instructor, discussion leader or speaker will be on the basis of a maximum of two hours for subject preparation for each hour of presentation. **No more than 40 hours for preparation and instruction will be allowed for any renewal or 60 hours for a reinstatement. No more than 40 hours for preparation and instruction of a college or University course will be allowed for any renewal or reinstatement.** Repetitious presentations of the same material within the renewal period will not be counted. Credit for permit holders attending not as instructors, discussion leaders, or speakers is limited to the

actual meeting time. **A total of no more than 10 hours may be granted for updating material for previously presented courses.**

- F. Published Articles, Books, etc.** (Code “P” on report). **No more than 16 hours of credit for preparation of materials for publication may be given on a self-declaration basis for any renewal or reinstatement period.**
- G. Ethics (Code “E” on report)** **A permit holder must complete 4 hours of ethic courses in every renewal period or reinstatement. The Board’s policy is to remain flexible with the types of ethics completed including general and professional ethics, Independence training, Circular 230 courses, Sarbanes Oxley course material, and other state specific required courses. You are not required to complete the 4-hour requirement within one course.**

III. CREDIT HOURS GRANTED

A. Acceptable Subject Matter and Programs

The purpose of continuing professional education is to assist the practitioner in maintaining professional knowledge and competence. Programs selected should contribute directly to his or her professional competency to practice public accountancy. Programs can be approved, partially approved or not approved for CPE credit based upon the relevance to the practice of public accountancy as determined by the Board.

Acceptable programs include those related to the performance or offer to perform professional services. The responsibility for substantiating that a particular program is acceptable and meets the requirements rests upon the permit holder and is subject to approval by the Board.

The Board currently accepts NASBA approved sponsors for acceptable subject matter and programs. To view the approved sponsors go to www.nasba.org.

B. Credit Hour Approval

The Board accepts .5 hour increments under the regulation below:

Chapter 8.002.06 *"Hour" shall mean fifty minutes of continuing participation in the program of instruction. Increments of 25 minutes (a half-hour) shall count towards participation after the completion of the first hour earned.*

Continuing education credit will be given with a minimum of 50 minutes constituting one hour. As an example, 100 minutes of continuous instruction would count for two hours. As an example, 75 minutes of continuous instruction would count for 1.5 hours. Travel time cannot be claimed. **Credit may not be claimed for advance reading, homework, etc.**

IV. WHAT IS A QUALIFIED INSTRUCTOR?

A qualified instructor or discussion leader is anyone whose background training, education or experience makes it appropriate for them to lead a discussion on the subject matter of the particular program.

V. EVIDENCE OF COMPLETION OF COURSE MATERIAL – RETENTION

Sole responsibility for documenting the requirements rests with the permit holder and evidence to support fulfillment of those requirements must be retained for a period of six years after the completion of educational courses. Satisfaction of the requirements could include but is not limited to the retention of attendance records and written outlines, and may be accomplished as follows:

- A. In the case of courses taken for scholastic credit in accredited two and four-year institutions (state, community or private) or high school districts, evidence of satisfactory completion of the course will be sufficient by attaching either a grade report or a transcript from the institution.
- B. In all other instances, the permit holder must retain an outline or program and evidence of Attendance/completion; i.e. sign-in sheet*, certificate of attendance or certificate of satisfactory completion, etc. In the case of non-credit courses taken in educational institutions, a signed statement of the hours of attendance must be obtained from the instructor.

* See attached a sample sign-in sheet

VI. CONTROLS AND REPORTING

A. Annual Reporting

The Board will notify permit holders on December 1 of each year their “Report of Continuing Education Attendance” is due to the Board **by January 31**. Permit Holders may submit CPE online to the Board throughout the year by reporting CPE to www.nbpa.ne.gov. Reporting and submitting CPE online meets the reporting requirement.

B. Verification

The Board will review information submitted by permit holders. If a permit holder does not meet the continuing education requirements for permit issuance, they must write to the Board prior to January 31 indicating a plan on how they will return to compliance. The decision of the Board on the amount of credit granted for participation in continuing education programs is final.

C. Audit Process:

Annually the Board will select permit holders at random for specific evidence of completion of required continuing professional education courses as reported by the permit holder. Those permit holders that have requested extensions previously shall come under the requirement to prove evidence of attendance/completion in the next reporting period. *Hours utilized within the extension request cannot be utilized in the permit holders next reporting period.* Be prepared to provide requested information to the Board office if selected. Refer to section V within these Guidelines.

D. Course Disapproval

An applicant has thirty (30) days from date of notification to request re-evaluation of disapproved courses.

E. Failure to Comply

If a permit holder is unable to meet the required Continuing Education hours by December 31, they must request an extension in writing indicating a plan on how they will return to compliance to the Board prior to January 31. An additional amount of time to complete the required CPE may be allowed. The required hours need to be completed by June 1st and the CPE hours utilized for the extension cannot be reported within the next reporting period.

If a permit holder does not report CPE by January 31st of their renewal period they will be subject to a stipulation/consent order as offered by the Board that will include a \$100 administrative fee or the permit holder may request a hearing before the Board. Failure to submit evidence of completion will not allow a permit holder to renew their permit.

F. Request for Waiver

The Board may waive compliance with the Rule for good cause shown in cases involving illness or other hardship or extenuating circumstances beyond the control of the permit holder (See Board regulations under Chapter 8.009.04).

VII. RECIPROcity

An individual who holds a valid and unrevoked certified public accountant certificate from another state or other political subdivision of the United States, or comparable certificate or degree issued by any foreign country, and who received a permit to practice in this state under the appropriate provisions of the Public Accountancy Act, will be required to comply with the continuing education requirement when their permit is next renewed and each succeeding renewal thereafter.

VIII. RE-ENTRY TO PUBLIC PRACTICE (REINSTATEMENT OF ACTIVE PERMIT)

An individual wishing to re-enter public practice or reinstate an active permit must satisfy the 120 CPE hour requirement including 4 hours of ethics prior to issuance of the permit to practice. The CPE must be taken in the prior three calendar years. For example, if an individual applies to reinstate in 2014, they would need 120 CPE hours in 2013, and/or 2012, and/or 2011. The hours used for reinstatement may not be used to renew their permit to practice. The calendar year requirement may be waived for good cause shown in cases involving illness or other hardship or extenuating circumstances beyond their control. For assistance with a reinstatement it is strongly recommended to contact the Board office.

To review the CPE rules within NAC Title 288- Chapter 8 go to www.nbpa.ne.gov. Questions and concerns regarding CPE can be directed to the Board's CPE Committee through the CPE Coordinator, Ms. Heather Myers at (402) 471-3595 or Heather.Myers@Nebraska.gov or Dan.Sweetwood@Nebraska.gov.

**STATE OF NEBRASKA
BOARD OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTANCY
P.O. Box 94725, Lincoln, NE 68509
www.nbpa.ne.gov**

**Program Qualification Form
USE A SEPARATE FORM FOR EACH QUALIFICATION REQUESTED**

A. Please answer items 1 through 12:

1. Name of requesting person/firm: _____

Organization of person/firm: _____

Certificate # (If applicable) _____ E-mail: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

2. Course Title: _____

3. Requested number of CPE hours of credit: _____

Note: Hours should be based on 50-minute hour and must be rounded DOWN to nearest whole number.

4. If all or part of this course contains ethics hours, record the # of hours requested here: _____

5. Date(s) of course/presentation: _____

6. Subject Matter: (Please circle all that apply)

Acct. & Auditing	Tax	Software Training	Management
Investments	Consulting	Personal Development	Fraud Insurance
Medicare/Medicaid	Human Resource	Ethics	Specialized Knowledge
Other: (please specify) _____			

7. Method of Delivery: (Please circle all that apply)

Formal (live)	Web-cast (interactive-formal)	Self Study	Web-cast (self-study)
Publication	Instruction/Presentation	College Course	Video-conference
Audio-conference	Tele-conference	Other: (please specify) _____	

8. Location of Course: _____

9. Sponsoring Organization: _____

10. Is the Sponsor registered with NASBA? Registry # Yes No

11. Business address of Sponsoring Organization: _____

12. Contact Person: _____ Phone #: _____

13. **ATTACH A STATEMENT ON HOW THIS COURSE RELATES TO YOUR PRACTICE OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTANCY. DESCRIBE HOW THE COURSE CONTRIBUTES TO THE PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL COMPETENCY OF A CPA IN PUBLIC PRACTICE.**

B. You **Must** Include:

- Course outline/syllabus Course timeline
 Name and background of Instructor/Speaker

