

The provisions of this § 21.126 adopted December 10, 1982, effective December 11, 1982, 12 Pa.B. 4236; amended September 20, 1985, effective September 21, 1985, 15 Pa.B. 3345; reserved December 25, 1987, effective December 26, 1987, 17 Pa.B. 5329. Immediately preceding text appears at serial page (103882).

CONTINUING EDUCATION

§ 21.131. Continuing education.

(a) *Requirement of continuing education.* A registered nurse seeking licensure renewal shall complete 30 hours of continuing education approved by the Board during the biennial period immediately preceding the application for renewal in accordance with section 12.1 of the act (63 P.S. § 222) and this subchapter. At least 2 of the 30 hours shall be completed in approved continuing education in child abuse recognition and reporting requirements in accordance with § 21.508(b) (relating to child abuse recognition and reporting—mandatory training requirement). The Board will not renew a license of a registered nurse who fails to verify compliance with the continuing education requirement. A registered nurse whose license is not renewed by the expiration of the biennial period may not engage in the practice of professional nursing until the continuing education requirements are satisfied and the license has been renewed, reinstated or reactivated.

(b) *Exception.* An applicant applying for initial licensure in this Commonwealth will not be required to meet the continuing education requirement on the first renewal immediately following licensure, except for the mandatory continuing education in child abuse recognition and reporting required under § 21.508(b).

(c) *Board audits; proof of completion.* The Board may perform audits on registered nurses to determine compliance with the continuing education requirements. A registered nurse shall retain documentation of the registered nurse's completion of continuing education for at least 5 years. A registered nurse shall comply with a request for submission of documents verifying the registered nurse's completion of continuing education. The following documents shall be retained and submitted upon request:

(1) For attendance at continuing education programs or courses, the registered nurse shall retain the certificate of attendance provided by the program or course provider.

(2) For academic courses taken from an accredited college or university, the registered nurse shall retain the transcript issued by the educational institution.

(3) For publication of a textbook or article, the registered nurse shall retain a copy of the published item, including the date of publication.

(4) For a research project, the registered nurse shall retain a copy of the research abstract, letter from the institutional review board granting approval for the research project and list of primary and co-investigators.

(5) For school nurses, evidence that the nurse's certification by the Department of Education is current.

(d) *Reinstatement of lapsed license or reactivation of inactive license.* A registered nurse seeking to reinstate a lapsed license or reactivate an inactive license shall file an application for reinstatement or reactivation and submit, or cause to be submitted, documentation to demonstrate that the licensee completed 30 hours of continuing education, including at least 2 hours in approved child abuse recognition and reporting in accordance with § 21.508(b), within the biennial period immediately preceding application.

(e) *Reinstatement of suspended license.* A registered nurse seeking to reinstate a suspended license shall submit, or cause to be submitted, documentation to demonstrate that the registered nurse completed 30 hours of continuing education, including at least 2 hours in approved child abuse recognition and reporting in accordance with § 21.508(b), within the biennial period immediately preceding application for reinstatement.

(f) *Carry over.* Continuing education hours may not be carried over from one biennial renewal period to the next.

(g) *Waiver.* A registered nurse may request a waiver of the continuing education requirement because of serious illness, military service or other demonstrated hardship. The registered nurse shall submit the request and any supporting documentation to the Board in writing at least 90 days prior to the registered nurse's license expiration date unless an emergency or hardship occurs within the 90-day period. The Board will grant, deny or grant in part the request for waiver.

(h) *Disciplinary action authorized.*

(1) Failure to complete a minimum of 30 hours of continuing education in a biennial period in accordance with subsection (a) will subject the registered nurse to discipline under section 13(b) of the act (63 P.S. § 223(b)) in accordance with the schedule of civil penalties in § 43b.18a (relating to schedule of civil penalties—nurses). A second or subsequent violation will subject the registered nurse to discipline under section 14(a)(3) of the act (63 P.S. § 224(a)(3)).

(2) A registered nurse who has not completed a minimum of 30 hours of continuing education shall make up the deficiency within 6 months of receiving notice of the deficiency.

(3) Notwithstanding any civil penalty assessed under paragraph (1), failure to provide the Board with documentation demonstrating the completion of 30 hours of approved continuing education within 6 months after receiving notice of a deficiency will subject the registered nurse to discipline under section 14(a)(3) of the act.

(4) Failure to comply with an audit request for continuing education documentation may subject a registered nurse to additional discipline under section 14(a)(4)(i) of the act.

Authority

The provisions of this § 21.131 issued under sections 2.1(k) and 12.1 of The Professional Nursing Law (63 P.S. § § 212.1(k) and 222); amended under sections 2.1(k) and 12.1(a) of The Professional Nursing Law (63 P.S. § § 212.1(k) and 222(a)); section 17.6 of the Practical Nurse Law (63 P.S. § 667.6); and 23 Pa.C.S. § 6383(b)(2).

Source

The provisions of this § 21.131 adopted July 11, 2008, effective July 12, 2008, 38 Pa.B. 3796; amended October 16, 2015, effective October 17, 2015, 45 Pa.B. 6196; amended March 25, 2022, effective March 26, 2022, 52 Pa.B. 1916. Immediately preceding text appears at serial pages (385152) to (385153).

Cross References

This section cited in 49 Pa. Code § 21.29 (relating to expiration and renewal of license).

§ 21.132. Continuing education hours.

(a) The Board will accept hours of continuing education as designated by an approved provider, so long as each hour is at least 50 minutes of activity and each 1/2 hour is at least 30 minutes of activity.

(b) For purposes of determining acceptable hours of continuing education for academic coursework, the following apply:

(1) One academic trimester course is equivalent to 12 continuing education hours.

(2) One academic quarter course is equivalent to 10 continuing education hours.

(3) One academic semester course is equivalent to 15 continuing education hours.

Authority

The provisions of this § 21.132 issued under sections 2.1(k) and 12.1 of The Professional Nursing Law (63 P.S. § § 212.1(k) and 222); amended under sections 2.1(k) and 12.1(a) of The Professional Nursing Law (63 P.S. § § 212.1(k) and 222(a)).

Source

The provisions of this § 21.132 adopted July 11, 2008, effective July 12, 2008, 38 Pa.B. 3796; amended October 16, 2015, effective October 17, 2015, 45 Pa.B. 6196. Immediately preceding text appears at serial page (351278).

Cross References

This section cited in 49 Pa. Code § 21.29 (relating to expiration and renewal of license); and 49 Pa. Code § 21.825 (relating to sources of continuing education).

§ 21.133. Continuing education content.

- (a) Continuing education must be relevant to patient care or professional nursing in a general or specialty area and enhance the knowledge and application of the physical, social, biological and behavioral sciences.
- (b) The Board may, for any given biennial license period and with adequate notice to registered nurses, require that up to 4 hours of continuing education be completed in designated topics.
- (c) Courses in areas related to the practice of professional nursing such as the following are acceptable:
 - (1) Human sexuality.
 - (2) Death, dying and grief.
 - (3) Foreign language relevant to health care.
 - (4) Therapeutic interpersonal relationship skills.
 - (5) Patient rights.
 - (6) Pharmacology.
- (d) Courses in areas impacting the practice of professional nursing, such as nursing administration, management, education, and diagnostic and procedural coding are acceptable.
- (e) Group or individual research, as the principal or co-principal investigator, if approved by the institutional review board of the sponsoring institution, is acceptable and will be credited in the year completed as 15 hours of continuing education.
- (f) Nonprofessional course content not directly related to patient care, such as courses in self-improvement, changes in attitude, financial gain, courses designed for lay people, basic life support or cardiopulmonary resuscitation, mandatory annual education on facility specific policies unrelated to the practice of professional nursing (such as facility leave policies) and employment orientation programs are not acceptable for meeting requirements for license renewal.

Authority

The provisions of this § 21.133 issued under sections 2.1(k) and 12.1 of The Professional Nursing Law (63 P.S. § § 212.1(k) and 222); amended under sections 2.1(k) and 12.1(a) of The Professional Nursing Law (63

Source

The provisions of this § 21.133 adopted July 11, 2008, effective July 12, 2008, 38 Pa.B. 3796; amended October 16, 2015, effective October 17, 2015, 45 Pa.B. 6196. Immediately preceding text appears at serial pages (351278) and (335539).

Cross References

This section cited in 49 Pa. Code § 21.29 (relating to expiration and renewal of license); and 49 Pa. Code § 21.134 (relating to continuing education sources).

§ 21.134. Continuing education sources.

(a) The following continuing education activities that meet the requirements of § 21.133 (relating to continuing education content) for registered nurses are approved:

- (1) Activities sponsored by a Board-approved practical or professional nursing program or a Nationally accredited graduate nursing program.
- (2) Activities sponsored by an accredited professional nursing, CRNP, Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist, Clinical Nurse Specialist or Nurse Midwifery education program.
- (3) Activities sponsored by accredited hospitals and health care facilities.
- (4) Activities sponsored by hospitals and health care facilities licensed by the Department of Health or the Department of Public Welfare.
- (5) Activities sponsored by regionally-accredited institutions of higher education.
- (6) Activities sponsored by National nursing, medical, osteopathic and other health care professional organizations and their state and regional affiliates.
- (7) Activities sponsored by National trade organizations, associations and their affiliated groups and state and regional affiliates.
- (8) Activities approved by National nursing, risk management, health care quality and patient safety organizations.
- (9) Activities sponsored by Federal and state agencies.
- (10) Activities approved by a Board in another jurisdiction.

(b) The Board may approve other sources of continuing education on a case-by-case basis after the provider or registered nurse seeking approval submits the following:

- (1) Full name and address of the provider.
- (2) Title of the activity.
- (3) Date and location of the activity.
- (4) Faculty qualifications.
- (5) Schedule of the activity, including, for activities with multiple presenters, the title of each subject, lecturer and time allotted.

- (6) Hours of continuing education.
 - (7) Method of certifying and assuring attendance, and draft of certificate of attendance to be provided to course participants, as applicable.
 - (8) Course objectives.
 - (9) Curriculum.
 - (10) Target audience.
 - (11) Program coordinator.
 - (12) Instruction methods.
 - (13) Evaluation methods, including participant evaluation and activity evaluation.
 - (14) Other information requested in writing by the Board.
- (c) Requests for approval of a continuing education activity under subsection (b) shall be submitted at least 90 days prior to commencement of the activity and shall be accompanied by the fee in § 21.5 (relating to fees).
- (d) Upon approval of a continuing education activity under subsection (b), the Board will determine the number of continuing education hours awarded for the activity.
- (e) A separate application and fee, as set forth in § 21.5, shall be submitted whenever a change is made to information submitted under subsection (b), except for information related to a change in date or location, or both, of the activity under subsection (b)(3).
- (f) A continuing education provider shall award a certificate of attendance to professional nurses who complete the continuing education activity. The certificate must contain the information listed in subsection (b)(1)—(3) and (6) and the name of the individual to whom the certificate is awarded.
- (g) Distance learning continuing education is acceptable for completion of all 30 continuing education hours required for license renewal.

Authority

The provisions of this § 21.134 issued under sections 2.1(k) and 12.1 of The Professional Nursing Law (63 P.S. § § 212.1(k) and 222); amended under sections 2.1(k) and 12.1(a) of The Professional Nursing Law (63 P.S. § § 212.1(k) and 222(a)).

Source

The provisions of this § 21.134 adopted July 11, 2008, effective July 12, 2008, 38 Pa.B. 3796; amended October 16, 2015, effective October 17, 2015, 45 Pa.B. 6196. Immediately preceding text appears at serial pages (335539) to (335540) and (363467).

Cross References

This section cited in 49 Pa. Code § 21.5 (relating to fees); and 49 Pa. Code § 21.29 (relating to expiration and renewal of license).

Subchapter B. PRACTICAL NURSES