

## NCSWCLB POSITION STATEMENT ON CONTINUING EDUCATION

### **Purpose:**

The Board has prepared this position statement to assist social workers in recognizing the importance of continuing education (CE) in maintaining professional competence, and understanding the standards enforced by the Board through Statute and regulation (Code). The primary focus in selecting appropriate CE activities should be quality improvement; specifically, improved client and social work practice outcomes through improved service delivery.

These governing requirements for CE outlined in the NC Administrative Code [21 NCAC 63 .0401] are posted on the Board's website at [www.ncswboard.org](http://www.ncswboard.org).

### **Verification of CE Activities:**

The Board does NOT pre-approve CE Providers or courses. In considering learning opportunities for obtaining CE credit, social workers are required to participate in training activities that can be **verified** by the Board in the event the social worker's continuing education hours are audited. Acceptable verification may consist of a signed certificate of completion or attendance that identifies the sponsoring organization, name of facilitator or trainer, course title, training format (identified location, home study, or online), date(s) attended, hours of credit, and the participant/attendee's name.

### **Maintaining Records of CE Activity:**

Pursuant to the NC Administrative Code [21 NCAC 63 .0507], social workers must maintain records to fulfill their professional responsibilities. The Board recommends maintaining CE documentation for a minimum of three years in the event your Renewal is selected for a Continuing Education Audit.

### **What is Required by Statute and Regulation:**

- CE is ***required*** for maintaining social work certification and licensure in North Carolina.
- At least 40 contact (clock) hours of CE is required for each full renewal cycle (two years). For renewal cycles less than two years, please refer to the section on "Exceptions" below.
- A minimum of 4 hours of continuing education focused on ethics related to social work practice and ethical decision-making is required for each renewal cycle.
- No more than half (20 hours) of the CE hours submitted for each renewal cycle may be obtained through distance education. Distance learning activities are described under 21 NCAC 63 .0401(c).

### **Exceptions:**

- An ***initial*** certificate or license issued for a period ***less than two years*** requires only 30 hours of CE activity, of which at least 4 hours must satisfy the ethics training requirement. Social Workers should seek clarification from the Board office if they are unsure of the number of CE hours they are required to have during their first renewal cycle.
- LCSWA licensees in their second or third renewal cycle and eligible to apply for LCSW licensure may also require less than 40 hours of CE. The amount of CE required for transitioning to LCSW licensure during renewal periods that are less than two years may be calculated on a prorated basis (see below).

### **Prorated CE for Transitioning from LCSWA to LCSW (Applicable to LCSWA licensees ONLY):**

It is not uncommon for an associate licensee to need to renew the LCSWA license beyond the initial two year licensure period in order to acquire the required 2 years/3000 hours of supervised clinical practice; however, often the amount of additional time needed to fulfill these requirements is less than two additional years.

LCSWA licensees who are ready to apply for LCSW less than two years into their current renewal period may document CE on a pro-rated basis. For pro-rated CE, consider the following:

Licensure Period in months	Total CE Required	Ethics Hours Required	Licensure Period in months	Total CE Required	Ethics Hours Required	Licensure Period in months	Total CE Required	Ethics Hours Required
1	2	1	9	15	2	17	28	3
2	3.5	1	10	16.5	2	18	30	3
3	5	1	11	18	2	19	31.5	4
4	7	1	12	20	2	20	33	4
5	8.5	1	13	21.5	3	21	35	4
6	10	1	14	23	3	22	36.5	4
7	12	2	15	25	3	23	38	4
8	13.5	2	16	26.5	3	24	40	4

**What Constitutes Acceptable CE Activities:**

The Continuing Education Requirements are outlined in the NC Administrative Code [21 NCAC 63 .0401] and may include:

- Academic social work courses taken for credit or audit.
- Agency based staff development, seminars, institutes, workshops, mini courses or conferences provided they are **oriented to social work practice, values, skills and knowledge**. (emphasis added)
- Cross-disciplinary offerings from medicine, law, and the behavioral/social sciences or other disciplines provided such offerings are **related to social work practice, values, skills and knowledge**. (emphasis added)
- Formal study groups where the topic is clearly related to social work practice, values, skills and knowledge. Participants (not the leader/facilitator) may receive CE credit.
- Distance education (online courses, live or taped non interactive webinars, home study courses) offered by ASWB or NASW-NC approved providers. No more than half (maximum of 20 hours) of the required CE hours submitted for each renewal cycle may be obtained through distance education.
- Live synchronous audio-video broadcasts allowing for real time interaction between the instructor and participants attending through electronic means shall not be considered distance learning activities. These broadcasts may be reported as an attended training activity, but this format must be verifiable in the event of a CE audit.
- A maximum of six (6) contact hours may be credited during a single renewal cycle for continuing education activities focused on practitioner self-care and well-being. This activity must be an organized learning event and verifiable as described above.
- A maximum of five (5) contact hours may be credited during a single renewal cycle for presenting a training focused on social work practice provided the Board receives confirmation from the organization identifying the licensee as the presenter, confirming the title and date of the presentation, the length of the presentation and number of participants attending. The presentation must occur within the renewal cycle.

**What are NOT acceptable CE Activities:**

- Self-directed learning projects.
- Supervision and case consultation.
- Identical programs completed within the same renewal cycle.
- Job orientation or training directed at procedural mandates such as health and safety practices, new hir training and compliance training.
- Therapy
- Distance learning activities (online courses, live or taped non interactive webinars, home study courses) offered by anyone other than an ASWB or NASWNC approved provider.