PSNA
Pennsylvania State Nurses Association

Approved Provider Manual

Department of Professional Development

Pennsylvania State Nurses Association Approver Unit is accredited as an approver of nursing continuing professional development by the American Nurses Credentialing Center's Commission on Accreditation.

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3605 Vartan Way – Suite 203
Harrisburg, Pa 17110

717-798-8915

Email: apply@psna.org
Website: www.psna.org

Contents

Introduction

This manual provides instructions on how to become an Approved Provider of Nursing Continuing Professional Development (NCPD) through the Pennsylvania State Nurses Association.

1. Information in this document is obtained from the *2015 Primary Accreditation Approver Application Manual*, published by the American Nurses Credentialing Center and also reflects revisions of American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) Accreditation in NCPD criteria and requirements for providers of NCPD.
2. The Approved Provider Unit (APU) must have the authority to assess, plan, implement, and evaluate NCPD activities and operate APUs using ANCC Accreditation Program criteria.
3. The APU is responsible to assess, plan, implement and evaluate NCPD activities. They are NOT authorized to approve activities developed by others without involvement of an Accredited Approver Unit.
4. Commercial entities cannot be providers or joint providers of NCPD activities.
5. Employees of commercial entities cannot be planners or presenters for activities in which the content is related to the products or services of the company.

Approval as a provider of NCPD is recognition of a Provider Unit's (PU) capacity to demonstrate excellence in providing evidence-based content based on ANCC criteria. Your organization, upon achieving approval as an APU, is authorized to assess, plan, implement, and evaluate NCPD activities according to the criteria and award contact hours for those activities. The APU may offer an unlimited number of educational activities during the three-year period of approval. Provider Units do not have the authority to approve their own or anyone else's activities.

> The terms "*approved*," "*application*," or "applicant" should never be used in connection with any NCPD activity the APU plans and presents.

NCPD activities provided by the APU must be related to professional development of the nurse. Activity content should enable the learner to acquire or improve knowledge, skills and/or practice beyond basic knowledge and enhance professional development or performance as a nurse.

NCPD activities include but are not limited to courses, seminars, workshops, lecture series, distance learning activities (audio/video conferences), web-based enduring materials, journal clubs, learner directed independent study activities or point of care learning. Knowledge and use of adult learning principles should be reflected in all aspects of the educational design.

Section I: The Application Process

Step 1: Approved Provider Eligibility

A Provider Unit is defined structurally and operationally as the members of an organization who support the delivery of NCPD activities. The Provider Unit may be a single focused organization devoted to offering NCPD activities or a separately identified unit within a larger organization. The Provider Unit may be placed within the education/professional development department of a hospital or school of nursing.

The applicant applying for approval is the Provider Unit, not the organization. Provider Units assess learners' needs and plan, implement, and evaluate NCPD activities according to the Pennsylvania State Nurses Association guidelines, which are based on ANCC accreditation criteria.

Provider Units are responsible for developing individual education activities and awarding contact hours to nurses for use in fulfilling their own goals for professional development, licensure, and certification. Each NCPD activity is led by a Nurse Planner (NP) in collaboration with at least one other planner. Contact hours may not be awarded for activities developed without the direct involvement of a NP. PUs may jointly provide activities, but they may not approve activities.

To be eligible to apply for Approved Provider status, an organization must:

Be one of the following:

- ANA Organizational Affiliate
  - Constituent and State Nurses Association (C/SNA) of the American Nurses Association (ANA)
  - College or University
  - Healthcare Facility
  - Health-Related Organization
  - Multidisciplinary Educational Group
  - Professional Nursing Education Group
  - Specialty Nursing Organization
- Be operational for a minimum of six months prior to application
- Be administratively and operationally responsible for coordinating the entire process of assessing, planning, implementing, and evaluating NCPD activities
- **Not** be an ineligible company (an entity that produces, markets, resells, or distributes healthcare goods or services consumed by or used on patients or an entity that is owned or controlled by an entity that produces, markets, resells, or distributes healthcare goods or services consumed by or used on patients).
- Identify one NP who will act as the Primary Nurse Planner (PNP) and serve as the liaison between the Pennsylvania State Nurses Association and the APU.
- The PNP must:
  - Hold a current, unrestricted license as an RN and a baccalaureate degree or higher in nursing
  - Have authority within the organization to ensure compliance with ANCC accreditation criteria
  - Be accountable to the Accredited Approver Program Director (AAPD) at PSNA for all APU activities
  - Ensure that all NPs in the APU hold current valid licenses as RNs with a baccalaureate degree or higher in nursing
  - Be responsible to orient, educate, and monitor all APU NPs to ensure that each NCPD activity has a qualified NP who is an active participant in the planning, implementing, and evaluation process
- The target audience for at least 51% of the APU's educational activities must be within or contiguous to the unit's geographic region (see http://www.hhs.gov/about/agencies/iea/regional-offices/ for map).
- Compliance is required with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations that affect the organization's ability to meet PSNA's guidelines.
- Disclose previous denials, suspensions, and/or revocations received from other ANCC Accredited Approver Units and/or other accrediting /approving organizations.
- **Initial applicants** must contact the AA-PD at apply@psna.org and have completed the process of assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation for at least three separate individual

educational activities within the last 12 months that have been approved by the Pennsylvania State Nurses Association or another ANCC Accredited Approver that:
- o Demonstrate active involvement of a NP
- o Shows adherence to current ANCC accreditation criteria
- o Were each a minimum of one hour (60 minutes) in length were not jointly provided

Step 2: The Application Process

Approved Provider Application/Required Documentation

Step 1: Download the Approved Provider Application from www.psna.org.

Step 2: Read the entire application to be sure you understand the requirements. *NOTE: It is the responsibility of the PNP to complete each section with assistance of NPs and other stakeholders.*

The following sections are required written documentation for Approved Provider applicants:
1. Organizational Overview (OO)
2. Approved Provider Criterion 1: Structural Capacity (SC)
3. Approved Provider Criterion 2: Educational Design Process (EDP)
4. Approved Provider Criterion 3: Quality Outcomes (QO)
5. Approved Provider Activity Submission Requirements

Organizational Overview (OO)

The OO component of the application process provides a context for understanding the organization of the APU. The applicant must submit the following documents and/or narratives:

Structural Capacity (SC)

OO1a. Demographics

Submit an executive statement summary of the Provider unit. This should include the functions of the PU, the mission, how the mission relates specifically to NCPD activities and its stakeholders, how the overall organization supports the PU and the impact PU has on the organization and/or its learners. This section has a 1,000-word limit.

OO2a. Lines of Authority and Administrative Support

Submit a **list** of the names and credentials of the PNP and NPs (if any) in the Provider Unit.

OO2b. Role Descriptions

Submit the PNP and NP role descriptions as outlined in the PSNA Approved Provider Manual, including qualifications and responsibilities.

Structural Capacity (SC)

The capacity of an APU is demonstrated by commitment, identification, and responsiveness to learner needs. Continual engagement in improving educational outcomes, accountability, and leadership. Applicants should write narrative statements that address each of the sections to show how SC is operationalized in the PU. Each section requires a description of the process and a specific example.

Commitment: The PNP demonstrates commitment to ensuring RNs' learning needs are met by evaluating PU goals in response to data that may include, but is not limited to, aggregate individual educational activity evaluation results, stakeholder feedback (staff, volunteers), and learner/customer feedback.

Describe and, using an example, demonstrate the following:

SC 1. The PNP's commitment to learner needs, including how APU processes are revised based on aggregate data, which may include but are not limited to individual educational activity evaluation results, stakeholder feedback (staff, volunteers), and learner/customer feedback

Accountability: The PNP is accountable for ensuring that all NPs in the PU adhere to the ANCC accreditation criteria.

Describe and, using an example, demonstrate the following:

SC 2. How the PNP ensures that all NP(s) are appropriately oriented/trained to implement and adhere to the ANCC accreditation criteria

Leadership: The PNP demonstrates leadership of the PU through direction and guidance given to individuals involved in the process of assessing, planning, implementing, and evaluating NCPD activities in adherence to ANCC accreditation criteria

Describe and, using an example, demonstrate the following:

SC 3. How the PNP and/or NP provides direction and guidance to individuals involved in planning, implementing, and evaluating NCPD activities in compliance with ANCC accreditation criteria.

Educational Design Process (EDP)

The PU has a clearly defined process for assessing needs as the basis for planning, implementing, and evaluating NCPD activities. Activities are designed, planned, implemented, and evaluated in accordance with adult learning principles, NCPD, and ethical standards.

Examples for the narrative component of the provider application (EDP 1-7) may be chosen from but are not limited to those contained in the submitted activity files. Evidence must demonstrate how the PU complies with each criterion.

Assessment of Learning Needs: NCPD activities are developed in response to, and with consideration for, the unique educational needs of the target audience.

Describe and, using an example, demonstrate the following:

EDP 1. The process used to identify a problem in practice or an opportunity for improvement (professional practice gap)

EDP 2. How the NP identifies the underlying educational need(s) (knowledge, skills, and/or practice) that contribute to the professional practice gap(s) (the underlying educational need(s) emphasizes addressing where the professional practice gap exists to determine appropriate intervention strategies)

Planning: In planning each educational activity, the NP must know how they will identify and evaluate a change in knowledge, skills, and/or practice prior to content development. Planning for each activity must be independent from the influence of ineligible companies.

Describe and, using an example, demonstrate the following:

EDP 3. How the NP identifies, and measures change in knowledge, skills, and/or practice of the target audience that are expected to occur as a result of participation in the educational activity

EDP4. The process to determine **relevant financial relationships** for all who will be in control of educational content. Explain your process for mitigating any relevant financial relationships and your process for disclosing these relationships.

Design Principles: The EDP incorporates best available evidence and appropriate learner engagement strategies.

Describe and, using an example, demonstrate the following:

EDP 5. How content of the educational activity is developed based on best available current evidence (e.g., clinical guidelines, peer-reviewed journals, experts in the field) to foster achievement of desired outcomes

EDP 6. How strategies to promote learning and actively engage learners are incorporated into educational activities

Evaluation: A clearly defined method that includes learner input is used to evaluate the effectiveness of each educational activity. Results from the activity evaluation are used to guide future activities.

Describe and, using an example, demonstrate the following:

EDP 7. How summative evaluation data for an educational activity are used to analyze the outcomes of that activity and guide future activities

Quality Outcomes (QO)

The APU must demonstrate how its structure and processes result in positive outcomes for itself and for RNs participating in its educational activities. The Provider Unit engages in an ongoing evaluation process to analyze its overall effectiveness in fulfilling its goals and operational requirements to provide quality NCPD.

Provider Unit Evaluation Process: The APU must evaluate the effectiveness of its overall functioning as a PU.

Describe and, using an example, demonstrate the following:

QO 1. The process utilized for evaluating the overall effectiveness of the Provider Unit in carrying out its work as a provider of NCPD

QO 2a. Identify at least one QO the Provider Unit has established and worked to achieve over the past 12 months to improve Provider Unit operations. Identify the metrics used to measure success in achieving that outcome.

Examples of QOs might include, but are not limited to:

Changes in format of activities in response to learner feedback

Cost savings for the Provider Unit or stakeholders in response to analysis of financial data

- Volume of participants
- Satisfaction of learners, staff, and/or volunteers in response to feedback surveys

QO 2b. Using one of the QOs identified in QO2a, explain how the most recent evaluation process (QO1) resulted in the development and/or improvement of an identified outcome for PU operations, including how that outcome was measured and analyzed. Provide an example.

Example:

Aggregate data from feedback surveys of all attendees indicated a desire to have more online activities. This led to the development of an outcome to increase the percentage of online activities by 10% from one year to another. Plan was developed to determine which activities were most appropriate for online presentation and activities were developed. The number and quality of the activities were measured through further feedback surveys.

Value/Benefit to Nursing Professional Development: The PU shall evaluate data to determine how the PU, through the learning activities it has provided, has influenced the professional development of its nurse learners. Nursing professional development is defined as "The lifelong process of active participation by nurses in learning activities that assist in developing and maintaining their continuing competence, enhancing their professional practice, and support achievement of their career goals" (Nursing Professional Development: Scope and Standards of Practice, ANA, 2016).

Examples of professional development outcomes include, but are not limited to:
- Changes in leadership skills certification
- Nursing care delivery
- Improved patient outcomes
- Professional practice behaviors
- Changes in nursing practice

Describe and, using an example, demonstrate the following:

QO3a. Identify at least one QO the PU has established and worked to achieve over the past twelve months to improve the professional development of nurses. Identify the metrics used to measure success in achieving that outcome.

QO3b. Using one of the outcomes identified in QO3a, explain how the most recent evaluation process (QO1) resulted in the development and/or improvement of an identified outcome to improve the professional development of nurses, including how that outcome was measured and analyzed. Provide an example.

Submitting Your Application

All information must be organized within the outline on the Approved Provider Application form, with sections clearly titled and pages numbered. Be sure to follow the outline and complete all sections, typing directly on the form.

1. The following documents must be included and submitted in the following order:
    a. Self-Study complete with required attachments (on one form)
    b. Three (3) complete Individual Activity files (one pdf per activity)
2. **Submit the Self-Study and 3 provided activities to apply@psna.org.**
    a. PLEASE NOTE – If your application is not submitted correctly you will be asked to resubmit and will be charged a RESUBMISSION FEE of 250.00.
    b. Expectations of the application: (EMAIL the following in ONE EMAIL to apply@psna.org):
        i. ONE PDF Labeled "Self-Study"
        ii. ONE PDF Labeled "Activity 1"
        iii. ONE PDF Labeled "Activity 2"
        iv. ONE PDF Labeled "Activity 3"
3. Ensure that all documentation reaches the Pennsylvania State Nurses Association before the deadline (three months before expiration of your current provider status if renewing).
4. Send the application fee. Fees must be submitted prior to review and **application does not guarantee approval.**

Application Review Process

Step 1: Upon receipt of your application and required forms, a quantitative review will be completed to determine that all elements are present in the application.

NOTE: Missing documentation will be requested and must be submitted within three weeks from the request. *Failure to submit the requested documentation will result in immediate denial. The application will not be sent for review by the Nurse Peer Reviewer (NPR) until this step is complete.*

Step 2: The application is sent to the NPR to complete an independent qualitative review.

Step 3: Once the NPR review is complete it is sent to the AA-PD who conducts the final qualitative review.

Step 4: The final decision is made by the AA-PD based on evidence of adherence to the criteria.

Step 5: Possible outcomes are as follows:
- **Approval with distinction for three years**: Evidence supports exemplary work of the PU in adherence to criteria
- **Approval for three years:** Evidence supports the ability of the PU to adhere to criteria
- **Provisional approval for up to one year:** Evidence supports the need for close monitoring of the PU to ensure adherence to criteria. If monitoring demonstrates improvement and success in demonstrating adherence to criteria, approval will be extended for the balance of the approval period. Failure to demonstrate this during a provisional approval will result in suspension or revocation of approval.
- **Denial:** Evidence demonstrates that the applicant is not in adherence to criteria and has not recognized deficiencies or established plans to address those deficiencies. An organization whose application has been denied does have the right to appeal the decision. The appeal

procedure is available from the NPRL upon request. If you receive a denial notification letter you must wait 12 months to submit a new application. During this time, you can apply to provide individual activities.

Approval Decision Process

You will be notified in writing of the approval decision by the AA-PD. If additional information is required details of those requirements as well as due dates will be specified.

You will receive a certificate of Approved Provider status once your PU is approved for your records.

You will receive instructions for annual reporting as required by ANCC/Pennsylvania State Nurses Association.

Section II: Education Design Process

This section describes the process of planning, implementing, and evaluating educational activities according to ANCC guidelines and criteria. Applicants must ensure that all expectations are met and the APU offers individual activities that adhere to ANCC accreditation criteria.

Activities planned must address:
- Professional practice gap
- Proof of active involvement on the part of the NP
- Underlying educational need (K/S/P)
- Identified learning outcomes
- Learning strategies
- Content based on best and most current available evidence
- Must be independent from the influence of any CIO

Activity Types

Provider-Directed, Provider-Paced: The provider controls all aspects of learning in this type of activity. The provider determines the learning outcomes based on a professional practice gap and selects content for the learning activity based on the best evidence, chooses appropriate learning strategies and identifies methods for collecting and analyzing evaluation data. (Examples include live activities and live Webinars.)

Provider-Directed, Learner-Paced: The provider controls the content of the learning activity, including the learning outcomes based on a needs assessment and gap analysis, the content of the learning activity based on best evidence, chooses appropriate learning strategies, and identifies methods for collecting and analyzing evaluation data. The learner determines the pace at which the learner engages in the learning activity. (Examples include print articles, online courses, e-books, and self-learning modules/independent studies.)

Learner-Directed, Learner-Paced: With guidance from the NP, the learner takes initiative and identifies his/her own learning needs, formulates learning outcomes, chooses and implements learning strategies and evaluating learning outcomes. The learner also determines the pace at which they engage in the activity.

Blended Activity: Activities that involve a "Live" component in combination with a provider-directed, learner-paced component.

Steps to Designing Your Activity

Description of Professional Practice Gap: NCPD activities are developed in response to, and with consideration for, the unique educational needs of the target audience. The process of planning begins with the identification of a practice problem or an opportunity for improvement. The NP analyzes data to identify the professional practice gap, the difference between the current state, and the desired state of practice. Once a gap is identified, the NP selects individuals to assist with planning an educational activity.

Planning Committee: Planning committees must have a minimum of one NP and one content expert to plan each educational activity. The NP must be an RN with a current unrestricted nursing license and hold a baccalaureate degree or higher in nursing. The NP is knowledgeable about the NCPD process and is responsible for adherence to ANCC accreditation criteria. One planner (content expert) needs to have appropriate subject matter expertise for the educational activity being offered. If additional individuals, such as faculty, presenters, or authors, will be creating or delivering content for the educational activity, planning committee members must identify the needed qualifications of the individuals chosen.

Faculty/presenters/authors must have documented qualifications that demonstrate their education and/or experience in the content area they are developing or presenting. Expertise in subject matter may be evaluated based on characteristics such as education, professional achievements and credentials, work experience, honors, awards, professional publications, or similar.

Evidence to Validate the Professional Practice Gap: The evidence that validates a professional practice gap is a description of the current state of practice and how one's practice could be better. Sources of supporting evidence that validate the professional practice gap and support the underlying educational need include, but are not limited to:
- Request for the education
- Input from audience members
- Improvement of previously presented activities
- Based on evaluations of previous educational activities
- Review of research
- Quality improvement

Identifying Underlying Educational Needs: The NP and planning committee analyze the data to identify the root causes of the professional practice gap. This group conducts a needs assessment to determine the underlying educational needs, what the nurses do not know (knowledge deficit), do not know how to do (skill deficit), or are not able to do in practice (practice deficit). Once the educational need has been identified the NP and planning committee identify the target audience for the learning activity and formulate learning outcomes.

Learning Outcomes: The learning outcome is a written statement of what the learner will know (knowledge), be able to demonstrate (skills), or apply in their practice (practice) as a result of completing the educational activity. Learning outcomes must be observable and measurable and address the knowledge, skills and/or practices that contribute to the professional practice gap. The learning outcomes can be evaluated over the short term or long term.

Evidence-Based Resources: The NP and planning committee work in collaboration with all members of the planning team. This includes presenters, authors, and content experts. Content should be chosen

based on the most current available evidence and address the educational need as well as the learning outcomes. Evidence to support the content of the activity can be found in:
- Current evidence-based practices
- Peer-reviewed journals
- Current clinical guidelines
- Content experts
- Current best practices

Learner Engagement: As part of the design process, the planning committee will develop strategies to engage the learners. This can include but is not limited to Q&A sessions (during or at the conclusion of the activity), reflection, dialogue, case study analysis, role play, and group work. This active learner engagement can be used as a formative assessment by providing immediate feedback.

Criteria for Awarding and Calculating Contact Hours: During the planning phase, it is the responsibility of the planning committee to determine how the participants of the activity will successfully complete it to earn contact hours. Successful completion for both live and enduring material should be defined within the activity, and be consisted with the learner engagement strategies. Criteria for completion is based on the format of the activity and needs to indicate what constitutes successful completion. The rationale for the method of determining successful completion and whether any partial credit is being awarded. Criteria for successful completion may include but is not limited to:
- Attendance at the entire event of activity
- Attendance for a predetermined percentage of the event
- Attendance at one or more sessions
- Completion and submission of an evaluation
- Achieving a passing score on a post-test or a successful return demonstration

Contact hours are determined and awarded to participants for those portions of the activity devoted to the learning experience and time spend evaluating the activity. One contact hour = 60 minutes. If rounding is desired in the calculation it must be rounded to the nearest quarter (up or down). For example, 2.80 would be 2.75 CH. 2.95 would be 3.0 CH. Timeframes must match and support the hour calculation for live activities. For enduring materials, print, electronic, etc., the method for calculating the contact hours must be identified. Some examples are pilot studies or Mergener formula.

The planning committee must determine how participation in the activity will be verified. The attendance/participation verification may include, but is not limited to, sign-in sheets, registration forms, signed attestation by a participant verifying completion, and/or collection of online registration data.

Evaluation Method: A clearly defined method that includes learner input is used to evaluate the effectiveness of each activity is needed. The planning committee must decide the method of evaluation that will be utilized. The evaluation should be reflective to the desired learning outcome of the educational activity and reflect a change in the underlying educational need of knowledge, skills or practice. Evaluation may be formative during the learning activity, as well as summative, at the conclusion of the activity. Evaluations may include both short-term and long-term methods.

Examples of short-term evaluation methods:
- Evaluation of intent to change practice
- Active participation in the activity

- Post-test
- Return demonstration
- Case-study analysis
- Role-play

Examples of long-term evaluation methods:
- Self-reported change in practice
- Data collection related to a QO measure
- Observation of performance
- Return on investment

After evaluation is completed, a summative evaluation is generated. The planning committee and/or the NP review the summative evaluation to assess the activities overall effectiveness and identify how the results of the activity will guide future activities. *The summative evaluation must be included in each activity file.*

Relevant Financial Relationships

Step 1: BEFORE you begin planning your education, collect information from ALL members of the planning committee and all faculty and others who would be in a position to control content. Ask them to provide information about ALL of their financial relationships with ineligible companies over the previous 24 months. *There is no minimum financial threshold; individuals must disclose all financial relationships, regardless of the amount, with ineligible companies.*

- Ensure you use this definition: Ineligible companies are those whose primary business is producing, marketing, selling, re-selling, or distributing healthcare products used by or on patients.
- **HINT**: *Use the Template for Collecting Information about All Financial Relationships from Planning committee, faculty and others.*

Step 2: REVIEW all relationships and exclude owners and employees of ineligible companies from participation as a nurse planner, and faculty or other roles unless the educational activity meets one of the exceptions listed below:

NOTE: If the exception(s) exist for members of the planning committee, and all faculty, and others who would be in a position to control content – go to step 3.

There are only three exceptions that allow for owners and/or employees of ineligible companies to participate as planners or faculty in NCPD activities:
1. When the content of the activity is not related to the business lines or products of their employer/company.
2. When the content of the activity is limited to basic science research, such as pre-clinical research and drug discovery, or the methodologies of research, and they do not make care recommendations.
3. When they are participating as technicians to teach the safe and proper use of medical devices, and do not recommend whether or when a device is used.

Mitigation of Relevant Financial Relationships

Step 3: Determine which financial relationships are **relevant** to the content of the NCPD activity, mitigate those relevant financial relationships to prevent commercial bias, and **disclose** the presence or absence of all relevant financial relationships to learners prior to the activity.

Hint: Use the ***Worksheet for the Identification and Mitigation of Relevant Financial Relationships of Planners, Faculty and Others*** to implement mitigation strategies appropriate to their role(s) in the educational activity.

Disclosures of Relevant Financial Relationships

Before the learner engages in the education, **disclose** to learners the presence or absence of relevant financial relationships for all persons in control of content.

Hint: Use the ***Examples of Communicating Disclosure to Learners*** to share all of the appropriate information before the activity.

Approved Provider Statement: The approval statement is the mark of an ANCC-accredited or approved organization. All Approved Providers are required to provide the official statement to learners prior to the educational activity and on the certificate of completion. The Approved Provider statement must be displayed clearly to the learners and worded correctly according to the 2020 ANCC Accreditation Manual. The official ANCC Approved Provider statement should read as follows:

> (Name of Approved Provider) is approved as a provider of nursing continuing professional development by Pennsylvania State Nurses Association, an accredited approver by the American Nurses Credentialing Center's Commission on Accreditation.

Documentation of Completion: A certificate of completion is awarded to any participant who successfully completes the requirements for the individual activity. This document must include:
1. Title and date of the activity
2. Name and address of the provider of the educational activity (Web address acceptable)
3. Number of contact hours awarded
4. Approval statement
5. Participant name

Disclosures: Prior to any activity, the learner must be given any and all required items regarding disclosures. In live activities, they must be given prior to any educational content. This can be provided in writing on a registration form/sign-in sheet, a poster at a conference room entrance, on a slide of a presentation, or verbally at the onset of an event. In enduring materials, it must be visible prior to the educational content. Disclosures always required include:
1. Approval statement of the provider responsible for the activity
2. Notice of requirements to receive contact hours for attending
3. Relevant Financial Relationships of anyone in a position to control content (if applicable)
4. Commercial support (if applicable)
5. Joint-Providership information (if applicable)

Commercial Support and Content Integrity

An ineligible company, as defined by ANCC, is any entity producing, marketing, selling, re-selling, or distributing healthcare goods or services consumed by or used on patients, or an entity that is owned or controlled by an entity that produces, markets, resells, or distributes healthcare goods or services consumed by or used on patients. Exceptions are made for nonprofit or government organizations, non-healthcare-related companies, and healthcare facilities.

The planning committee evaluates whether an educational activity has commercial support and, if so, how content integrity will be maintained, including what/how precautions should be taken to prevent bias in the educational content, and the methods that will be used to ensure full disclosure to activity participants.

Commercial Support: Ineligible companies may provide monetary funding or other support (Commercial Support) for continuing nursing educational activities in accordance with the fundamental principles that:
1. Commercial Support must not influence the planning, development, content, implementation, or evaluation of an educational activity.
2. Receipt of Commercial Support must be disclosed to learners.
3. Commercial Support may be used to pay for all or part of an educational activity and for expenses directly related to the educational activity, including but not limited to travel, honoraria, food, support for learner attendance, and location expenses. Commercial Support may be used to support more than one educational activity at the same time or multiple activities over a period of time.

Commercial Support is:
Financial Support—money supplied by an ineligible company can be used by a provider for expenses related to the educational activity. Financial support may be provided as an unrestricted grant, educational grant, donation, or scholarship; and

In-kind Support—materials, space, or other nonmonetary resources or services used by a provider to conduct an educational activity, which may include but are not limited to human resources, marketing services, physical space, equipment such as audiovisual components, and teaching tools (for example, anatomic models).

Content Integrity in the Presence of Commercial Support
Ineligible companies providing Commercial Support for continuing educational activities may not influence or participate in the planning, implementation, or evaluation of an educational activity. All of the following requirements to ensure content integrity must be satisfied by the provider when Commercial Support is accepted:
1. The ineligible company and Accredited Provider must have a written agreement setting forth the terms of the relationship and the support that will be provided. The written agreement will also reflect the requirements set forth in items 2–4 below.
2. All payments for expenses related to the educational activity must be made by the provider. The provider must keep a record of all payments made using Commercial Support funding. Commercial Support funds may be used only to support expenses directly related to the educational activity.
3. The provider is responsible for maintaining an accounting of expenses related to Commercial Support.

4. An ineligible company may not jointly provide educational activities.

Joint-Providership: Approved providers may work together to provide educational activities. Neither of the providers may be an ineligible company. The Approved Provider is referred to as the provider of the activity. The other organization is the joint provider. If both are Approved Providers, one must act as the provider and the other as the joint provider. Marketing materials, agendas, and certificates of the activity must indicate the provider awarding contact hours and therefore is the party that is responsible for maintaining adherence to the ANCC criteria.

Section III: Approved Provider Responsibilities

Approved Provider Responsibilities

The APUs are responsible to:
- Maintain adherence to all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations that affect the APU's ability to meet ANCC criteria.
- Identify a PNP who has overall responsibility for the APU's adherence to ANCC accreditation criteria, including orientation of other NPs and key personnel.
- Ensure that a qualified NP is an active participant in the assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation of each educational activity.
- Ensure that each learning activity planning committee have a minimum of a qualified NP and one other person to plan each activity; the NP to ensure adherence to criteria and at least one person with subject matter expertise related to the activity.
- Ensure that the NP is responsible and accountable to review mitigate any financial relationships with ineligible companies for anyone who is in a position to control content of the NCPD activity.
- Notify the Pennsylvania State Nurses Association in writing within seven business days of the discovery or occurrence of the following:
- Significant changes or events that impair the ability to meet ANCC/Pennsylvania State Nurses Association NCPD requirements or affect eligibility to remain an Approved Provider, including change in commercial interest status.
- Any event that might result in adverse media coverage related to the delivery of NCPD activities.
- Notify the Pennsylvania State Nurses Association within 30 days of any changes within the organization, including demographics (name, address, business Website), a decision to not re-apply as a PU, change in PNP, or a change in ownership of the organization.

Recordkeeping

All records must be maintained and retrievable for six years.
Activity files must have the following components:
- Title and location of activity
- Type of activity format: Live or Enduring
- Date live activity presented, or for ongoing enduring activities, date first offered and subsequent review dates
- Description of professional practice gap
- Evidence that validates professional practice gap
- Educational need that underlies the professional practice gap
- Description of target audience
- Desired learning outcomes
- Description of evidence-based content with supporting reference or resources

- Learner engagement strategies used
- Criteria for awarding of contact hour

Description of evaluation method (evidence that change in knowledge, skills, and/or practices of target audiences was assessed)

Names and credentials of all individuals in a position to control content (planners, presenters, faculty, authors, and/or content reviewers) and must identify who fills the various roles

- Review and Mitigation of any financial relationships (any amount, for the past 24 months) for anyone in a position to control content of the NCPD activity.
- Number of contact hours awarded for activity and method of calculation (Provider must keep a record of the number of contact hours earned by each participant. If the activity is longer than three hours, agenda was provided for the entire activity.)
- Documentation of completion and/or certificate must include:
  - Title and date of the educational activity
  - Name and address of provider of the educational activity (Web address acceptable)
  - Number of contact hours awarded
  - Approved Provider statement
  - Participant name
- Commercial Support Agreement with signature and date (if applicable)
  - Name of the Ineligible company
  - Name of the Provider
  - Complete description of all the CS provided, including both financial and in-kind support
  - Statement that the company will not participate in planning, developing, implementing, or evaluating the educational activity
  - Statement that the company will not recruit learners from the education activity for any purpose
  - Description of how the CS must be used by the Provider (unrestricted use and/or restricted use)
  - Signature of a duly authorized representative of **the company** with the authority to enter the binding contracts on behalf of the company
  - Signature of a duly authorized representative of the Provider with the authority to enter the binding contracts on behalf of the Provider
  - Date on which the written agreement was signed
- Evidence of required information provided to the learners (Disclosures):
  - Approved Provider statement of provider awarding contact hours
  - Criteria for awarding contact hours
  - Relevant Financial Relationships for anyone in a position to control content (planning committee, presenters, faculty, authors, and/or content reviewers), including mitigation (if applicable)
  - Commercial support (if applicable)
  - Expiration date (enduring material only)
  - Joint-Providership (if applicable)
- Materials associated with this activity (marketing materials, advertising agendas, and certificates of completion) must clearly indicate the Provider awarding contact hours and responsible for adherence to the ANCC criteria
- Summative evaluation

Fees

Fees are to be submitted with the application materials and are not refundable once the process has begun. The Pennsylvania State Nurses Association reserves the right to change fees at any time without notice. Fees can be paid online with the application submission. Contact the Pennsylvania State Nurses Association (apply@psna.org) if you prefer to pay fees through check or money order. See the complete fee structure at www.psna.org.

Voluntary Termination

Approved Providers may voluntarily terminate their approval at any time. Approved Providers that elect to terminate accreditation must notify PSNA in writing, at least thirty days in advance.

The written notice of voluntary termination must contain:
- The effective date of voluntary termination (which must be at least thirty days after the date that appears on the written notice)
- The reason for voluntary termination

This notice may be sent by email with confirmation of receipt to apply@psna.org

On or before the date on which voluntary termination is effective, the organization must cease:
- Offering contact hours
- Referring to itself in any way as an Approved Provider
- Using an Approval Statement

Approved Providers that voluntarily terminate accreditation in good standing with PSNA may reapply at any time.

Suspension or Revocation

An organization may be placed on probation or its accreditation may be suspended and/or revoked as a result of:
- Violation of any federal, state, or local laws or regulations that affect the organization's ability to adhere to ANCC accreditation criteria
- Failure to maintain compliance with accreditation criteria
- ANCC investigation and verification of written complaints or charges by consumers or others
- Refusal to comply with an ANCC investigation
- Misrepresentation
- Misuse of the ANCC approval statement
- Misuse of ANCC or PSNA intellectual property, including but not limited to trademarks, trade names, and logos.

Suspended or revoked organizations must immediately cease:
- Offering contact hours
- Referring to themselves in any way as an Approved Provider of NCPD

The Accredited Approver Program Director will notify the Approved Provider Unit in writing of probation, suspension, or revocation of accreditation. Neither probation nor suspension is a prerequisite to revocation. Suspended organizations may apply for reinstatement within 120 days of the suspension date. To apply for reinstatement of approval, the Approved Provider must submit documentation demonstrating violation correction and the applicable reinstatement fee. Reinstatement may be granted if the suspended organization adequately demonstrates that it will fully adhere to the ANCC

Accreditation Program criteria and requisites upon reinstatement. Approved Providers that have been reinstated may be required to submit progress reports to PSNA or ANCC. Suspended organizations that fail to apply for reinstatement within 120 days shall have their approval revoked. Approved Providers that have had their approval status revoked may not apply for approval for two years from the date of revocation. Organizations seeking approval after revocation are considered new applicants. If an Approved Provider believes that suspension or revocation is improper, the organization (appellant) may submit an appeal in writing. Please contact the Pennsylvania State Nurses Association office for further information regarding the appeal process

Glossary (Defined by ANCC)

Accredited Approver Program Director (AAPD): A RN who holds a current, unrestricted nursing license (or international equivalent) and a graduate degree, with either the baccalaureate or graduate degree in nursing (or international equivalent), who has the authority within the organization to evaluate adherence to the ANCC Primary Accreditation Program criteria in the approval of NCPD.

Commercial Support: This is financial or in-kind contributions given by a commercial interest that are used to pay for all or part of the costs of an educational activity. Commercial support must not influence the planning, content, implementation, or evaluation of any learning activity and must be disclosed to the learners.

Contact Hour: A unit of measurement that describes 60 minutes of an organized learning activity. One contact hour = 60 minutes.

Content Expert: An individual with documented qualifications demonstrating education and/or experience in a particular subject matter.

Content Reviewer: An individual selected to evaluate an educational activity during the planning process or after it has been planned but prior to delivery to learners for quality of content, bias, and any other aspects of the activity that may require evaluation.

Enduring Material: A non-live educational activity that lasts over time. Examples of enduring materials include programmed texts, audiotapes, videotapes, monographs, computer-assisted learning materials, and other electronic media that are used alone or with printed or written materials. Enduring materials can also be delivered via the Internet. The learning experience by the nurse can take place at any time and in any place rather than only at one time or in one place.

Gap Analysis: The method of identifying the difference between current knowledge, skills, and/or practices and the desired best practices.

Ineligible Company: Any company whose primary business is producing, marketing, selling, re-selling, or distributing healthcare products used by or on patients.

In-Kind Support: Non-monetary support (e.g., marketing assistance, meeting room, event registration assistance) provided by the giver to the taker. (In the accreditation community, the "taker" is the provider of NCPD.)

Joint-Providership: Planning, developing, and implementing an educational activity by two or more organizations or agencies.

Jointly Provided Activities: Educational activities planned, developed, and implemented collaboratively by two or more organizations or agencies.

Multi-Focused Organization (MFO): As defined by ANCC, the AU always functions within a larger organization, and the larger organization is defined as an MFO. The applicant applying for accreditation is the **AU**. The MFO is not the applicant. Therefore, all criteria that pertain to the applicant are demonstrated by the functions of the Primary Nurse Planner and the Nurse Planners of the AU.

Nursing Continuing Professional Development (NCPD): An educational activity that adds to a nurse's education to maintain and develop clinical and professional skills and knowledge in accordance with guidelines set forth by ANCC.

Nurse Peer Reviewer (NPR): A RN who holds a current, unrestricted license (or international equivalent) and a baccalaureate degree or higher in nursing (or international equivalent) who is actively involved in evaluating each Approved Provider or Individual Activity Applicant to evaluate adherence to the ANCC criteria.

Nurse Planner (NP): A RN who holds a current, unrestricted nursing license (or international equivalent) and a baccalaureate degree or higher in nursing (or international equivalent) who is actively involved in all aspects of planning, implementation, and evaluation of each NCPD activity. The NP is responsible for ensuring that appropriate educational design principles are used and processes are consistent with the requirements of the ANCC Primary Accreditation Program.

Outcome: The impact of structure and process on the organization as an approver and the value/benefit to nursing professional development. Also applies to AU assessment of an approved provider.

Outcome Measurement: The process of observing, describing, and quantifying the predefined indicator(s) of performance after an intervention designed to impact the indicator.

Planning Committee: At least two individuals responsible for planning each educational activity; one individual must be a NP and one individual must have appropriate subject matter expertise (content expert).

Position Description (AU): Description of the functions specific to the roles of Primary Nurse Planners and Nurse Planners that relate to the AU.

Position Description (Approved Provider Unit): Description of the functions specific to the roles of PNP and NPs (if any) that relate to the Approved Provider Unit.

Primary Nurse Planner (PNP): A RN who holds a current, unrestricted nursing license (or international equivalent) and a baccalaureate degree or higher in nursing (or international equivalent), and who has the authority within an Approved Provider Unit to ensure adherence to the ANCC Accredited Approver Unit and Accreditation Program criteria in the provision of NCPD.

Process: For Approved Providers, process is the development, delivery, and evaluation of NCPD activities. For Accredited Approvers, process is the evaluation of providers of NCPD and/or individual NCPD activities.

Provider Unit: Comprises the members of an organization who support the delivery of continuing nursing education activities.

Relevant Financial Relationship: Examples of financial relationships include employee, researcher, consultant, advisor, speaker, independent contractor (including contracted research), royalties or patent beneficiary, executive role, and ownership interest. Individual stocks and stock options MUST be disclosed; diversified mutual funds do not need to be disclosed. Research funding from ineligible companies MUST be disclosed by the principal or named investigator even if that individuals' institution reviews the research grant and manages the funds.

References

American Nurses Credentialing Center. (2020). Primary Accreditation Approver Application Manual. Silver Spring, MD; Author.