

THE CONTINUING COMPETENCE RULE 21 NCAC 48G .0112 WAS UPDATED 3-3-09. ALL OTHER RULES REMAIN AS POSTED 1-8-09.

SECTION .0100 – LICENSURE RENEWAL; CONTINUING COMPETENCE (MAR 3, 2009)

21 NCAC 48G .0105 DEFINITIONS

As used in this Subchapter, the following definitions apply:

- (1) “Approved provider” means an entity that been approved by the Board to provide continuing competence activities for licensees as provided in the Rules in this Section.
- (2) “Clinical Practice” means physical therapy consultation or patient care/client management or the supervision thereof.
- (3) “Contact Hour” means at least 50 consecutive minutes of engagement in a continuing competence activity. Two segments of at least 25 consecutive minutes each is equivalent to one contact hour. Breaks and meals are not included in contact hours.
- (4) “Continuing Competence” means the licensee’s ongoing activities to augment knowledge, skills, behaviors, and abilities related to the practice of physical therapy.
- (5) “Continuing Education” means courses of study designed to provide learning experiences for physical therapy licensees.
- (6) “Documentation” means evidence of completion of continuing competence activities.
- (7) “Jurisprudence Exercise” is an online set of questions concerning the Physical Therapy Practice Act, Board rules and Position Statements.
- (8) “Licensee” means a physical therapist or physical therapist assistant licensed in North Carolina.
- (9) “Peer-reviewed” means judged by an independent panel of experts having special knowledge or skills in a particular field of study.
- (10) “Point” means a unit of continuing competence.
- (11) “Registered” means enrollment in a continuing competence activity.
- (12) “Reporting period” means a two-year period commencing on January 1 during which the licensee must complete all continuing competence requirements.

History Note: *Authority G.S. 90-270.26(3a);
Eff. January 1, 2009.*

21 NCAC 48G .0106 CONTINUING COMPETENCE REQUIREMENT

- (a) For individuals licensed prior to January 1, 2009, during each reporting period thereafter, each physical therapist must accumulate 30 points, and each physical therapist assistant must accumulate 20 points of continuing competence activities to be eligible for license renewal.
- (b) For individuals whose date of initial licensure is after January 1, 2009, commencing on January 1 following the date of initial licensure, each physical therapist must accumulate 30 points and each physical therapist assistant must accumulate 20 points of continuing competence during the reporting period to be eligible for license renewal.
- (c) Up to 10 extra points earned during one reporting period may be carried over to the next reporting period.

History Note: *Authority G.S. 90-270.26(3a);
Eff. January 1, 2009.*

21 NCAC 48G .0107 STANDARDS FOR CONTINUING COMPETENCE ACTIVITIES

The Board shall approve continuing competence activities which meet the following standards and provisions:

- (1) They have intellectual or practical content based on best available scientific evidence and the primary objective is to increase the participant's professional competence and proficiency as a licensee;
- (2) They constitute learning experiences dealing with matters directly related to the practice of physical therapy or patient welfare;
- (3) Live instruction, mechanically or electronically recorded, reproduced or transmitted material, other electronic media, or a computer website accessed via the Internet are used;
- (4) Continuing competence materials are prepared, and activities conducted, by an individual or group qualified by practical or academic experience in a setting physically suitable to the educational activity of the program or clinical experience and, when appropriate, equipped with suitable writing surfaces or sufficient space for taking notes;

- (5) Written materials are distributed to all attendees at or before the time a course is presented. These may include scientific materials based on written references printed from a computer presentation, computer website, or other electronic media. A written agenda, objectives or outline for a presentation satisfies this requirement when written reference materials are not suitable or readily available for a particular subject;
- (6) The provider remits costs as required by Rule .0112 of this Subchapter and keeps and maintains attendance records of each continuing competence experience sponsored by it in North Carolina; and
- (7) For activities that are directed to more than one discipline, or are directed primarily to another health care discipline, the Board is satisfied that the content of the activity would enhance physical therapy skills or aid in the practice of physical therapy.

History Note: Authority G.S. 90-270.26(3a);
Eff. January 1, 2009.

21 NCAC 48G .0108 APPROVAL OF PROVIDERS AND ACTIVITIES

- (a) The Board shall approve a provider if it is satisfied that the provider's programs have met the standards set forth in Rule .0107 of this Section.
- (b) Once a provider is approved, the continuing competence activities sponsored by that organization are approved for credit and no application must be made to the Board for approval.
- (c) The following organizations are approved providers:
 - (1) Any agency or board responsible for licensing individuals to practice physical therapy in the United States or Canada;
 - (2) The American Physical Therapy Association (APTA), including any Sections, credentialed residencies and fellowships and its accrediting subsidiary;
 - (3) State Chapters of APTA;
 - (4) The Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy (FSBPT), and any accrediting subsidiary;
 - (5) Any providers approved or accredited by the agencies or organizations listed in Subparagraphs (1) through (4) of this Paragraph;
 - (6) Physical therapist and physical therapist assistant programs approved by an agency recognized by either the U.S. Department of Education or the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation; and
 - (7) The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, North Carolina Division of Public Health and North Carolina Area Health Education Centers with regard to activities directly related to physical therapy.
- (d) The Board may at any time revoke the approval of a provider for failure to satisfy the requirements of Rule .0107 of this Section. The Board may evaluate an activity presented by an approved provider and, upon a determination that the activity does not satisfy the requirements of Rule .0107 of this Section, notify the approved provider that any presentation of the same activity is not approved for credit. The notice shall be sent by the Board to the approved provider within 30 days after receipt of the notification. The approved provider may request reconsideration of the decision by submitting a letter of appeal to the Board's Executive Director within 15 days of receipt of the notice of disapproval.
- (e) Any organization not approved as a provider that desires approval of a course or activity to be offered in North Carolina shall apply to the Board at least 60 days prior to the date the activity is scheduled. Required information includes the name and address of the activity provider, the date, location and schedule for the activity, a description of the qualifications of the presenters and the content of the activity, including written materials. An activity shall be approved if notice of denial is not furnished to the organization within 30 days of the scheduled activity. An applicant denied approval of a program may request reconsideration of the decision by submitting a letter of appeal to the Board's Executive Director within 15 days of receipt of the notice of disapproval.
- (f) A licensee desiring approval of a course or activity that has not otherwise been approved shall apply to the Board at least 30 days prior to the date the activity is scheduled. The licensee shall furnish the name and address of the activity provider, the date, location and schedule of the activity and a description of the qualifications of the presenters and the content of the activity, including written materials. An activity shall be approved if notice of denial is not furnished to the licensee within 10 days of the scheduled activity. An applicant denied approval of a program may request reconsideration of the decision by submitting a letter of appeal to the Board's Executive Director within 15 days of receipt of the notice of disapproval.

(g) For continuing competence activities offered for credit in this State, the providers shall furnish to the Board the assigned activity code number assigned by the Board and a list of all licensees completing the activity, including full name and license number, within 90 days of the completion of the approved activity.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 90-270.26(3a);
Eff. January 1, 2009.*

21 NCAC 48G .0109 Continuing Competence Activities

(a) Continuing Education activities are eligible for points as follows:

- (1) A registered attendee at courses or conferences offered by approved providers earns one point for each contact hour, and the maximum number of points allowed during any reporting period is 29. Credit shall not be given for the same course or conference more than once during any reporting period. The licensee shall submit the Certificate of Attendance issued by the approved provider.
- (2) For registered participation in an academic course related to physical therapy offered for credit in a post-baccalaureate program unless the course is required for licensure, one class hour earns one point, and the maximum number of points allowed during any reporting period is 29. The licensee must obtain a letter grade of "C" or better or "P" if offered on a Pass/Fail basis. Credit shall not be given for the same course more than one time. The licensee shall submit the course description published by the approved provider.
- (3) For attendance or participation in an activity related to physical therapy for which no assessment is received, two contact hours earns one point, and the maximum number of points allowed during any reporting period is five. Credit shall not be given for the same activity more than one time. The licensee shall submit a certificate of completion, or if that is not available, a summary of the objectives of the activity and the time spent in the activity.
- (4) For registered participation in a course offered by an approved provider by videotape, satellite transmission, webcast, DVD or other electronic media for which an assessment is received, one hour of participation earns one point, and the maximum number of points allowed during any reporting period is 10. Credit shall not be given for the same course more than once during a reporting period. The licensee shall submit a certificate of completion and assessment results furnished by the approved provider.
- (5) For participation in a study group consisting of at least three licensees involved whose purpose is to advance the knowledge and skills of the participants related to the practice of physical therapy, two hours of participation in the study group earns one point, and the maximum number of points allowed during any reporting period is five. The licensee shall submit a biography of each participant, a statement of the goals of the study group, attendance records for each participant, assignments for each participant and an analysis by each participant specifying the knowledge and skills enhanced by participating in the study group.
- (6) For participation in a home study program designed to advance the knowledge and skill of the participant related to the practice of physical therapy, three hours of home study earns one point, and the maximum number of points allowed for home study during any reporting period is five. The licensee shall submit a description of the plans and objectives of the home study, an analysis of the manner in which the plans and objectives were met, and a certification of the time spent on the project.
- (7) For participation in continuing education required by credentialed residencies and fellowships, one point is granted for each contact hour and the maximum number of points for each reporting period is 29. The licensee shall submit the certificate of attendance issued by the APTA credentialed residency or fellowship.

(b) Points are awarded for Advanced Training as follows:

- (1) For fellowships conferred by organizations credentialed by the American Physical Therapy Association ("APTA") in a specialty area of the practice of physical therapy, 10 points are awarded for each full year of clinical participation, up to a maximum of 20 points for this activity. The licensee shall submit the certificate conferred on the licensee.
- (2) For completion of a residency program in physical therapy offered by an APTA credentialed organization, 10 points are awarded for each full year of clinical participation, up to a maximum of 20 points for this activity. The licensee shall submit evidence that all requirements of the residency program have been met.

- (3) For specialty certification or specialty recertification by the American Board of Physical Therapy Specialization ("ABPTS"), or its successor organization, 20 points are awarded upon receipt of such certification or recertification during any reporting period. The licensee shall submit evidence from ABPTS that the certification or recertification has been granted.
 - (4) For a physical therapist assistant ("PTA"), Advanced Proficiency designation by the APTA for the PTA earns 19 points. The licensee shall submit evidence from APTA that the designation has been awarded.
- (c) Achieving a passing score on the FSBPT's Practice Review Tool ("PRT") earns 10 points. Taking the PRT without achieving a passing score earns five points. The licensee shall submit the certificate of completion and performance report. Points shall be awarded only one time for any specific practice area.
- (d) Clinical Education Activities are eligible for points as follows:
- (1) For completion of a course offered by an approved provider for a licensee to become a Credentialed Clinical Instructor recognized by APTA, one course hour earns one point, and the maximum number of points awarded during any reporting period is 29. The licensee shall submit a credential certificate issued by the approved provider. Credit for completing the same course shall be given only one time.
 - (2) For enrollment in a course offered by APTA for a licensee to become a Credentialed Clinical Instructor Trainer, one course hour earns one point, and the maximum number of points awarded during any reporting period is 29. The licensee shall submit a Trainer certificate issued by APTA. Credit for completing the same course will be given only one time.
 - (3) For serving as a Clinical Instructor for a physical therapist or physical therapist assistant student, resident or fellow for a period of at least 80 hours, 40 hours of direct supervision earns one point, and a maximum credit of eight points is allowed during any reporting period. The licensee shall submit verification of the clinical affiliation agreement with the accredited educational program for the student supervised and a log showing the number of hours spent supervising the student.
- (e) Presenting or teaching for an accredited physical therapy educational program, a transitional Doctor of Physical Therapy ("DPT") program, an accredited program for health care practitioners licensed under the provisions of Chapter 90 of the North Carolina General Statutes, or a state, national or international workshop, seminar or professional health care conference earns two points for each hour of presentation or teaching. The licensee shall submit written materials advertising the presentation or teaching, or other evidence of the date, subject and goals and objectives of the presentation and any written materials prepared by the licensee. A maximum of six points is allowed during any reporting period, and credit shall not be given for teaching or presenting the same subject matter more than one time.
- (f) Research and published books or articles are eligible to accumulate up to a maximum of 15 points as follows:
- (1) Submission of a request to a funding agency for a research grant as a Principal or Co-Principal Investigator earns 10 points. The licensee shall submit a copy of the research grant, which must include the title, an abstract, the funding agency and the grant period. Points shall be awarded only one time during any reporting period.
 - (2) Having a research grant funded as a Principal Investigator or Co-Principal Investigator earns 10 points. The licensee shall submit a copy of the research grant, which must include the title, an abstract, the funding agency, the grant period and documentation of the funding received and for what period. Points shall be awarded only one time during a reporting period.
 - (3) Service as a Grants Reviewer earns one point for each two hours of grant review and a maximum of five points may be earned. The licensee shall submit a description of all grants reviewed and any reports generated in connection with the reviews, including the dates of service, the agency for whom the review was performed and the hours spent on the grant review. Points shall be awarded only one time during any reporting period.
 - (4) The author or editor of a book dealing with a subject related to the practice of physical therapy earns 10 points. The licensee shall submit a copy of the published book and a list of consulted resources. Points shall be awarded only one time during any reporting period.
 - (5) The author or editor of a chapter in a book dealing with a subject related to the practice of physical therapy earns five points. The licensee shall submit a copy of the published book and a list of consulted resources. Points shall be awarded only one time during any reporting period.
 - (6) The author of a published peer-reviewed article relating to the practice of physical therapy earns 10 points. The licensee shall submit the article, names and employers of the reviewers and a list of consulted resources. Points shall be awarded only one time during any reporting period.

- (7) The author of a published non peer-reviewed article relating to the practice of physical therapy earns three points. The licensee shall submit the article and a list of consulted resources. Points shall be awarded only one time during any reporting period.
 - (8) The author of a peer-reviewed abstract for a poster or presentation related to the practice of physical therapy to a professional health care group earns five points for a presentation, up to a maximum of 15 points during any reporting period, and credit for the same poster or presentation shall not be awarded more than one time. The licensee shall submit a copy of the poster or presentation and a list of consulted resources.
- (g) Clinical practice is eligible for points as follows:
- (1) For each year that a licensee is engaged in full-time clinical practice, three points shall be awarded. The licensee shall submit certification from the licensee's employer(s) or documentation of practice hours as owner of a practice that clinical practice during the year reached or exceeded 1750 hours.
 - (2) For each year that a licensee is engaged in part-time clinical practice, two points shall be awarded. The licensee shall submit a certification from the licensee's employer(s) or documentation of practice hours as owner of a practice that clinical practice during the year reached or exceeded 1000 hours.
 - (3) For each year that a licensee is engaged in clinical practice for at least 200 hours, one point shall be awarded. The licensee shall submit a certification from the employer(s) for whom the services were performed or documentation of practice hours as owner of a practice.
- (h) Professional Self-Assessment earns five points for completion of an approved Reflective Practice Exercise. This exercise shall be approved if it is a process for a licensee to evaluate current professional practice abilities, to establish goals to improve those abilities, to develop a plan to meet those goals and to document that the objectives are being accomplished. The licensee shall submit evidence of completion of all elements of the Reflective Practice Exercise. Points shall be awarded only one time during any reporting period.
- (i) Workplace Education is eligible for points as follows:
- (1) Presentation or attendance at an in-service session related to the practice of physical therapy, including health care issues related to the practice of physical therapy, is allowed. The licensee shall submit a roster or certificate of attendance signed by a representative of the employer. Two hours of in-service earns one point. A maximum of five points may be earned during any reporting period. Credit for the same in-service shall not be granted more than one time.
 - (2) Presentation or attendance at an in-service session devoted to general patient safety, emergency procedures, or governmental regulatory requirements is allowed. The licensee shall submit a roster or certificate of attendance signed by a representative of the employer. Two contact hours of in-service are equivalent to one point, which is the maximum credit that shall be granted during any reporting period. Credit for the same in-service shall not be granted more than one time during any reporting period.
- (j) Professional Service is eligible for points as follows:
- (1) Participation in a national physical therapy or interdisciplinary (including physical therapy) organization as an officer or chair of a physical therapy services committee or physical therapy services task force member for at least one year earns five points for each full year of participation, up to a maximum of 10 points during any reporting period. The licensee shall submit organizational materials listing the licensee's participation, a statement of the responsibilities of the position and a summary of the activities of the licensee.
 - (2) Participation in a state physical therapy or interdisciplinary (including physical therapy) organization as an officer or chair of a physical therapy services committee for at least one year earns four points for each full year of participation, up to a maximum of eight points during any reporting period. The licensee shall submit organizational materials listing the licensee's participation, a statement of the responsibilities of the position and a summary of the activities of the licensee.
 - (3) Participation in a local or regional physical therapy or interdisciplinary (including physical therapy) organization as an officer or chair of a physical therapy service committee for at least one year earns two points for each full year of participation, up to a maximum of four points during any reporting period. The licensee shall submit organizational materials listing the licensee's participation, a statement of the responsibilities of the position and a summary of the activities of the licensee.

- (4) Participation as a member of a physical therapy professional organization committee involved with physical therapy services for at least one year earns one point for each full year of participation, up to a maximum of two points during any reporting period. The licensee shall submit organizational materials listing the licensee's participation, a statement of the responsibilities of the committee and a summary of the work of the committee.
 - (5) Participation in unpaid volunteer service to the general public related to physical therapy earns one point for at least 20 hours spent on service activities during each year, up to a maximum of two points during any reporting period. The licensee shall submit published materials describing the service activity.
 - (6) Membership in the APTA for one year earns one point. A point may be earned for each year of membership. The licensee shall submit proof of membership in the APTA.
 - (7) Membership in an APTA Section for one year earns one-half point. The licensee shall submit proof of membership in the APTA Section. Points shall not be awarded for membership in more than one Section.
- (k) During each reporting period, a licensee may complete an ethics exercise as directed by the Board. A certificate of completion shall be issued to a licensee at the conclusion of the exercise, at which time one point shall be awarded to the licensee.
- (l) During each reporting period, every licensee must complete a jurisprudence exercise provided by the Board. The jurisprudence exercise shall be available online at the Board's website, and a certificate of completion shall be issued to a licensee at the conclusion of the exercise, at which time one point shall be awarded to the licensee.

History Note: Authority G.S. 90-270.26(3a);
Eff. January 1, 2009.

21 NCAC 48G .0110 EVIDENCE OF COMPLIANCE

- (a) Each licensee shall submit a completed Continuing Competence Compliance Form with an application for license renewal.
- (b) Licensees shall retain evidence of compliance with continuing competence requirements for a period of four years following the end of the reporting period for which credit is sought for an activity.
- (c) Documentary evidence for Continuing Education activities shall include the following for each activity:
 - (1) Name of approved sponsor;
 - (2) Name of accrediting organization;
 - (3) Title;
 - (4) Summary of content;
 - (5) Schedule;
 - (6) Location;
 - (7) Name and qualifications of each presenter;
 - (8) Date;
 - (9) Hours for presentation;
 - (10) Record of attendance or participation by sponsor; and
 - (11) Other information demonstrating completion of the activity.
- (d) The Board shall conduct random audits to ensure continuing competence compliance. Within 30 days from receipt of an Audit Notice from the Board, the licensee must furnish the Board with the documentary evidence required by the rules in this Subchapter showing completion of the points required for the audited reporting period.
- (e) Requests for extensions of time for up to an additional 30 days to respond to the Audit Notice shall be granted by the Board's Executive Director. For circumstances beyond the control of the licensee or for personal hardship, the Board shall grant an additional period of time to respond to the Audit Notice.
- (f) If the results of the audit show a licensee has not completed the required points, and the number of additional points needed by the licensee is 10 or less, the licensee shall complete the remaining points within 90 days from the date the Board notifies the licensee by certified mail of the deficiency. For circumstances beyond the control of the licensee or for personal hardship, the Board shall grant an additional period of time to respond to the Audit Notice.
- (g) Failure to respond to the Board's Audit Notice in a timely fashion, or failure to provide the necessary documentary evidence of compliance pursuant to this Rule shall subject the licensee to disciplinary action pursuant to 21 NCAC 48G .0601(a)(10).

History Note: Authority G.S. 90-270.26(3a);

Eff. January 1, 2009.

21 NCAC 48G .0111 EXEMPTIONS AND DEFERMENTS

- (a) To qualify for an exemption or deferment from the rules in this Subchapter, a licensee must furnish the applicable information required on the Continuing Competence Compliance Form.
- (b) A member of the United States Armed Services is exempt from compliance if on active duty for a period of at least 120 consecutive days. The reporting period shall commence on January 1 following the licensee's discharge from active duty.
- (c) The Board shall grant an exemption from completing applicable continuing competence requirements for up to two years to any licensee who becomes disabled or sustains a personal hardship that makes completion of continuing competence requirements impractical.
- (d) In cases of personal or family emergencies, the Board shall allow the licensee up to an additional one year to complete the applicable continuing competence requirements.
- (e) Upon written application to the Board, any licensee who is 65 years of age or older and is not engaged in practice or patient treatment shall be granted an exemption of up to two years from completing continuing competence requirements.
- (f) Other requests for partial exemptions or deferments for hardships or circumstances beyond the control of the licensee shall be granted by the Board upon written application of the licensee.
- (g) A licensee seeking an exemption or deferment pursuant to this Rule shall provide written documentation to the Board to support the exemption or deferment.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 90-270.26(3a);
Eff. January 1, 2009.*

21 NCAC 48G .0112 COSTS

- (a) There is no cost for approval of continuing competence activities offered by approved sponsors.
- (b) For a non-Approved provider seeking approval of a continuing competence activity offered to licensees in this State, the cost is one hundred fifty dollars (\$150.00) per activity.
- (c) For a licensee seeking approval of a continuing competence activity that is not offered by an approved sponsor, the cost is twenty-five dollars (\$25.00).

*History Note: Authority G.S. 90-270.26(7);
Proposed eff. March 3, 2009.*

21 NCAC 48G .0203 REVIVAL OF LAPSED LICENSE

- (a) A license that has been lapsed less than one year may be revived by payment of the revival of lapsed license fee and the current year's renewal fee and by completion of the revival form.
- (b) A license that has lapsed more than one year but less than five years may be revived by completion of the revival form, and:
 - (1) completing 30 units (if reviving a physical therapist license) or 20 units (if reviving a physical therapist assistant license) of continuing competence as provided in the Rules in this Subchapter,
 - (2) payment of the revival of lapsed license fee, and
 - (3) payment of the current year's renewal fee.
- (c) A license that has lapsed more than five years may be revived by completion of the application forms; and
 - (1) passing the "PT exam" (if trained as a physical therapist) or the "PTA exam" (if trained as a physical therapist assistant);
 - (2) compiling at least 500 hours within the period of one year in the following manner: between 50 and 200 class hours of course work (ie, refresher course, continuing education, pertinent college courses) approved by the Board as designed to demonstrate proficiency in current physical therapy theory and practice, and the remaining hours working as an aide under the supervision of a licensed physical therapist; or
 - (3) endorsement of a current license in another state as provided by 21 NCAC 48B .0102.

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