

Continuing Education

Hours Required

Thirty-six hours of continuing education (CE) are required for each two-year renewal period; however:

- ▶ Initial licensees are required to complete only 18 hours of CE for their first license renewal. Your license is termed an "initial license" when it has been issued to you for the first time and you have not yet renewed it.
- ▶ Individuals who have been placed on inactive status, or who were granted an exception by the board, are not required to complete CE for license renewal.

The board will grant exceptions if, during your previous renewal period:

- ☞ you resided in another country for at least one year;
- ☞ you were absent from California due to military service for at least one year; or
- ☞ you or an immediate family member, for whom you have primary responsibility, suffered from a substantial disability.

For information on obtaining an exception, please access our website (www.bbs.ca.gov) or contact the board office at (916) 574-7830.

Inactive license

A licensee may request that his or her license be placed on inactive status by making a written request to the board or by checking the inactive box on the renewal application.

Reactivation of inactive license

To reactivate an inactive license, you must complete the required 36 CE hours; submit the additional fees and statement certifying the completion of CE to the board. **Courses may be credited to only one renewal period, and cannot be counted twice.**

Mandatory Courses

▶ Spousal or Partner Abuse

All licensees are required to complete a seven-hour one-time course in spousal/partner abuse assessment, detection, and intervention strategies

including community resources, cultural factors, and same gender abuse dynamics.

▶ Law & Ethics

All licensees are required to complete at least six hours of CE in the area of Law and Ethics **as a condition of each renewal**. The six hours shall be considered part of the 36 hour CE requirement.

▶ Aging and Long-Term Care

All licensees are required to complete a three-hour continuing education course in aging and long-term care. The course could include, but is not limited to, the biological, social, and psychological aspects of aging.

▶ HIV/AIDS

All licensees are required to complete a course at least seven hours in length and cover the characteristics and method of assessment and treatment of people who live with HIV/AIDS.

If you have equivalent teaching or practice experience, you do not need to take the course. **IF** you are audited, you will need to provide certificates, transcripts or a certification from your employer of your experience in the area of the requirement. The only exception is the Law & Ethics course. Law & Ethics must be taken for each renewal.

▶ All mandated courses are one-time only courses and are required for your first renewal. However, if you have taken any of the mandated courses in the past, you are not required to repeat it. The only exception is the Law & Ethics course. Law & Ethics must be taken for each renewal.

Providers

CE must be taken from **acceptable providers**. A provider that is board-approved must advertise its provider approval number (**PCE #####**). Accredited and approved universities are also acceptable providers of continuing education and are not required to have an approval number. Please visit http://www.bbs.ca.gov/app-reg/qualify_schools.shtml for a list of schools. Courses taken from an unacceptable provider will not count towards your CE compliance.

Course Content

The board does not approve specific CE courses. To ensure that a particular course will count toward fulfilling your CE requirements, it is important to:

▶ Make sure the provider has a valid PCE number, or is an accredited or approved university

A valid PCE number confirms that a provider is approved to offer courses for MFTs and LCSWs. A list of providers with a valid PCE number, that includes the provider's location, is available on the board's Web site. A list of accredited and approved schools is also available on the Web site.

▶ Keep copies of your certificates.

The board does not manage or track CE courses for licensees. Providers do not submit certificates to the board on behalf of licensees. If a certificate has been misplaced, contact the CE provider for a replacement copy.

A licensee cannot apply for, or petition to have a CE course approved. Providers must apply for, and be approved **BEFORE** any course will count toward the LCSW or MFT CE requirement.

The board does not have any information about individual courses offered by providers. Because the board does not approve specific CE courses, we cannot process requests from licensees for approval of a particular CE course. Providers are required to ensure that the content of a course is relevant to the practice of marriage and family therapy or social work. Self-improvement courses and courses designed for non-practitioners do not count.

Effective February 1, 2003, licensees may obtain all of their hours of required continuing education through interactive, electronic means. This includes online, teleconferencing and videotape viewing.

Self-study courses

A self-study course is coursework you do at your residence, office, or other private location. It can include audiotapes and booklets. As with any other CE courses, self-study courses must be obtained from board-approved providers or accredited or approved universities. One half of the required CE hours can be earned through self-study.

List of providers

A list of providers is available on the board's website (www.bbs.ca.gov) in the Forms & Publications section, and a list of accredited and approved schools is available in the Applicant/Registrant section. Contact the approved providers or accredited or approved universities directly for course information.

License Renewal

The board will send you a courtesy renewal notice approximately 3 months before your license expires. It is your responsibility to renew your license in a timely manner, whether or not you receive the courtesy renewal notice.

To renew your license, submit the appropriate fee, mark either box A for active or box B for inactive status, read the conviction statement, mark the appropriate box and sign the statement under penalty of perjury. Please note that the correct fee, continuing education, conviction information, and signature are all a part of the renewal process. If any portion of the required information is incomplete or postmarked after the expiration date of the license, your license will expire and a delinquency fee will be required to complete the renewal process.

It takes approximately four to six weeks to process license renewals.

You must have your CE completed BEFORE you submit your renewal fee and application.

Any individual who practices in a licensed capacity with an inactive or expired license is subject to criminal, administrative and /or disciplinary action.

Record Keeping

You need to keep proof of your completed coursework (certificates, transcripts, etc.) for at least four years after the license renewal for which you took the course. **Do not** submit your course certificates with your renewal application.

Miscellaneous Information

Hours per course

1 hour of instruction = 1 CE hour
1 semester unit = 15 CE hours
1 quarter unit = 10 CE hours

Double Counting Hours

If you have both MFT and LCSW licenses, you may apply CE hours to both if the course meets the CE guidelines and the subject matter relates to both scopes of practice.

Hours earned for other professional licenses may be applied to your MFT or LCSW license if the provider is approved by the board and the subject matter relates to the MFT or LCSW scope of practice.

Audits

The board conducts audits of licensee's continuing education. If you are audited, you will be notified in writing to submit copies of your CE certificates or course documentation as proof of compliance with the board's Licensing Laws and Regulations.

If you are audited, a prompt response is necessary. Failure to comply with the board's audit may result in disciplinary action against your license.

Teaching

If the course meets all other CE guidelines, you may claim CE credit for teaching a course. You will receive the same amount of hours as a course attendee would. However, you can claim credit for teaching a course only one time during a single renewal period.

Provider complaints

You should first contact the provider of the course to resolve the matter. If you are not satisfied with the outcome, send your complaint in writing to the board office. Include the course name, date, and location, the names of the instructor and provider, and specifics about your complaint.

MFT & LCSW

Continuing Education and License Renewal Information



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