



LICENSEE

CONTINUING EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS AND FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



Board of Behavioral Sciences

California law requires all LCSW, LMFT, LPCC and LEP licensees to complete 36 hours of continuing education (CE), including specific coursework, prior to each “active status” license renewal. CE courses and records of completion must meet all requirements set in law. This document will provide you with all of the information you need in order to be in compliance with the Board’s CE requirements.

Please read carefully!
Failure to comply with all CE requirements may result in a citation and fine and/or disciplinary action against your license.

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A. CE REQUIRED FOR RENEWAL AND COURSE TIMING

Minimum Hours for Initial License Renewal (new licensees)

36 hours of CE, which includes specific coursework, must be completed with a Board-accepted provider during your first license **renewal period*** to renew with an Active status. Refer to the [Licensee CE Requirements Summary](#) for specific required coursework, and to section B below. Note: A newly licensed LEP may be required to complete 37 hours in total due to specific one-time course requirements.

Minimum Hours for Subsequent License Renewals (licensees renewing for the 2nd time and beyond)

All licensees are required to complete a minimum of 36 hours of CE, which must include six (6) hours of CE on the subject of Law and Ethics, taken from a Board-accepted provider during each and every **renewal period*** in order to renew with an Active license status.

Course Timing and *Definition of “Renewal Period”

All CE must be completed during your renewal period to count towards your CE requirements. A “renewal period” is the two-year period that spans from the first day after your license’s issue date or prior expiration date to your current license expiration date.

In addition, all required CE must be completed BEFORE submitting your renewal application as you will be required to certify completion at that time. Courses may be credited to only one renewal period and cannot be counted twice.

B. MANDATORY COURSES

Law and Ethics

As a condition of each and every renewal, ALL licensees are required to complete at least six (6) hours of CE in Law and Ethics. These hours count toward the overall 36-hour CE requirement.

One-Time Courses

Each license type has additional, **one-time** mandatory courses that must be completed. For a list of one-time mandatory courses, see the [CE Summary Chart for Licensees](#).

If a one-time course is taken from a Board-accepted provider during your renewal period, the course will count toward the 36 hours of CE required overall for renewal. If the one-time course was taken prior to your renewal period, the course will count toward your one-time coursework requirement but will NOT count toward your overall 36 hours of CE.

C. COURSE TYPES AND CONTENT

The Board does not approve specific CE courses and is not able to provide information about individual courses offered by providers. Refer to section D below for information on acceptable course providers.

Providers are required to ensure that the content of a course is relevant to the scope of practice for your license. Self-improvement courses and courses designed for non-practitioners are not acceptable.

To ensure that a course will count toward your CE requirements, you must ensure the provider is acceptable and maintain records of course completion (see section F for more information on course record requirements).

D. ACCEPTABLE CE PROVIDERS

CE must be taken from one of the types of Board-accepted providers listed below; otherwise, the course will not count toward your renewal requirements. See the Board's [website](#) under "Where to Find Courses" for more information.

- An accredited school, college or university that meets the accreditation requirements specified in [Business and Professions Code](#) section 4980.54 (LMFTs), section 4989.34 (LEPs), section 4996.22 (LCSWs), or section 4999.76 (LPCCs);
- A school, college or university approved by the California Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education;
- Board-recognized approval agency as indicated in [Title 16, California Code of Regulations section 1887.4.1\(a\)](#);
- A provider who has been approved by a Board-recognized approval agency; OR
- An organization, institution, association or entity that is recognized by the Board as a CE provider, as provided in [Title 16, California Code of Regulations section 1887.4.3\(a\)\(3\)](#).

Provider Complaints

If you have a complaint about a CE provider, you should first contact the provider of the course to resolve your concerns. If you are not satisfied with the outcome, contact the provider's approval agency and/or send your complaint in writing to the Board. Include the course name, date, location, the names of the instructor and provider, and specific details about your complaint.

E. ALTERNATIVE WAYS TO EARN CE

Teaching

If you have taught for a Board-accepted CE provider during your license renewal period, you may claim up to 18 hours of CE credit. You may claim the same amount of credit as an attendee would receive (up to 18 hours). You may only claim credit for teaching a course one time during a single renewal period.

BBS Enforcement Case Review

If you serve as an expert consultant performing enforcement case review for the BBS (including training), you will be awarded up to six (6) hours of Law and Ethics CE course credit. The Board will make an announcement when there is an opportunity for licensees to apply.

Serving as a BBS Subject Matter Expert (SME)

If you serve as a SME for exam development for the BBS, you will be awarded up to six (6) hours of Law and Ethics CE course credit. If you have been licensed for at least 1 year and are interested in contributing to the exam writing process, please send an email to bbsexamunit@dca.ca.gov and indicate in the subject line "SME Recruitment".

Participating in a Professional Law and Ethics Review Committee

If you participate in a professional organization's law and ethics review committee, you will be awarded up to six (6) hours of Law & Ethics CE course credit. For this activity to be credited, this activity must have been with a **mental health** professional organization, and documentation of participation must consist of a letter or certificate from the organization.

Completion of a BBS Occupational Analysis Survey

A licensee who completes an occupational analysis (OA) survey in full for the BBS will be credited with six (6) hours of CE. An OA is a comprehensive study of a profession that is performed approximately every five (5) years. Licensees complete a survey, the results of which help to determine the important tasks that are currently performed by practicing licensees. Results of the OA are used to develop a current description of practice, including core competencies, which help to form the basis for development of licensing examinations. The Board will make an announcement when there is an opportunity for licensees to participate.

F. COURSE RECORD REQUIREMENTS

You must maintain documentation of completed CE courses (certificates, transcripts, etc.) for at least two (2) years after the license renewal period during which you took the courses. DO NOT submit course certificates with your renewal. The Board will not retain them, and you will need them in the event of an audit.

The Board does not manage or track CE courses for licensees. Providers do not submit certificates to the Board. If a certificate has been misplaced, you must contact the CE provider for a replacement.

A record of course completion must include specific elements in order for it to be accepted by the Board, which includes all of the following:

- Licensee's name and license number or other identification number
- Course provider's name and address
- Board-recognized approval agency name, or a statement that the provider is an entity recognized by the Board to provide continuing education pursuant to section 1887.4.3
- Title of course
- Date of course
- Number of hours of CE credit
- Signature of course instructor, provider, or provider designee

G. MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

Course Hours Equivalency

1 hour of instruction = 1 CE hour

1 semester unit = 15 CE hours

1 quarter unit = 10 CE hours

Dual Licensees

If you have more than one license with the BBS, you may apply CE hours to the licenses IF the subject matter relates to the same scopes of practice and the courses are taken within each license's renewal period. CE earned for other licenses may be applied to your BBS-issued license if taken from a BBS-accepted provider and the subject matter relates to your license's scope of practice.

Supervisors of Associates and MFT Trainees

You may apply your supervisor course training hours to your CE requirement if the training has been taken from a Board-accepted CE provider **with one exception**:

A course on law and ethics designed specifically to meet supervisor training requirements **cannot** be accepted toward meeting the six-hour law and ethics course required of all licensees during each renewal period. However, such a course **does** count toward the overall 36-hour CE requirement.

CE Audits and Noncompliance

The Board may audit your records to verify completion of CE. If you are selected for audit, you will be notified in writing and shall submit documentation of courses (or allowed alternative CE methods) completed. If audited, a prompt response is important.

Failure to comply with CE requirements may result in a citation and fine and/or disciplinary action against your license. Fines typically range between \$150-\$1,500, but could be up to \$2,500. Additionally, citations and fines are reported to the National Practitioner Data Bank.

H. CE EXCEPTIONS AND WAIVERS

The following licensees are NOT required to complete CE for renewal:

- Your license status is “Inactive” or “Retired.”
- You were granted a waiver by the Board **prior to** your license’s expiration date. The Board may only grant a waiver if a licensee meets the specific, limited criteria set forth in law, and a *Request for CE Waiver* is submitted at least 60 days prior to the license’s expiration date. For more information on obtaining a waiver, please see the forms below:

[Request for CE Waiver](#) and [Verification of Disability or Medical Condition](#)

I. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Where can I find CE course providers?

See section D above titled “Acceptable Providers”.

2. How often do I need to take the 6-hour California law and ethics course?

You must complete this coursework during each renewal period.

3. I am a supervisor. What are my CE requirements?

Supervisors are required to complete 6 hours of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) during each renewal period. CPD may consist of a CE course for supervisors or other activities as specified in the [Summary of Supervisor Qualifications](#). If you plan to take a CE course for your CPD, please see section G above for more information.

4. What is a renewal period?

A “renewal period” is the two-year period that spans from the first day after your license’s issue date or prior expiration date to your current license expiration date.

5. If I have two license types with the Board, do I need to take 36 hours of CE for each license type?

No. You may apply your hours of CE to both licenses if the coursework you completed relates to both scopes of practice and the courses were taken during the renewal period for both licenses.

6. Am I required to submit proof of course completion?

Do not submit your record of course completion unless the Board requests it during an audit. Be sure to save your documentation in a safe place so that you have it easily accessible if audited. You will receive notification from the Board if you are selected for audit.

7. How long do I need to save my records of course completion?

You are required to save your records of course completion for at least two years from the date of the license renewal (expiration date) for which the course was completed.

8. How do I certify completion of CE?

You will be required to sign under penalty of perjury as part of your license renewal application that you have completed the coursework.

9. How can I avoid failing a CE audit?

Refer to the Board's publication [Stay Audit-Ready: Don't Let Continuing Education Requirements Catch You Off Guard](#).

Laws Referenced

Business and Professions Code sections 4980.54, 4989.34, 4996.22 and 4999.76.
Title 16, California Code of Regulations sections 1887 through 1887.12.