

# Continuing Education General Guidelines

## Overview:

- (1) Maintain, improve or expand skills or knowledge of the practice of physical therapy
- (2) Contribute to the professional competency of the licensee by means of an organized activity with clearly described or outlined course content, dates or timelines for completion, and times of instruction or activity engagement expectations
- (3) Pertain to common subjects related to the practice of physical therapy and are based upon referenced scientific evidence; practice-based evidence; case studies; clearly identified anecdotal experience; current or proposed regulation of practice; accepted professional guidelines; policy documents; or best practices
- (4) Conducted by experts in the subject matter - individuals with special education, training, and experience,
- (5) Include stated program goals/objectives.
- (6) Identify target audience or describes prerequisite levels of experience
- (7) Describe requirements for successful progression or completion when using self- directed methods of learning (i.e., self-study, online, video, audio, teleconference, etc.). Self-directed methods of instruction may utilize a post-test but cannot result in a pass/fail grade
- (8) Include a certificate or other sufficient proof of completion -For a concurrent session conference that does not provide documentation of individual session(s) completed, each individual course attended must be verified by having a conference official or course instructor sign or stamp the session description in the conference program if the conference does not use an automated format that allows for individual course verification

## Requirements of all Therapists:

1. Each physical therapist and physical therapist assistant licensed to practice by this Board shall complete for each compliance period, a minimum of ten (10) hours of continuing education activities. One hour of continuing education is defined as 50 minutes of engagement in the continuing education activity. October 1 through September 30 of the next year shall constitute a compliance period.
  - (i) For licensure without examination, the applicant must demonstrate a total of twenty (20) hours of acceptable continuing education in the twenty-four (24) months prior to application.
  - (ii) Individuals licensed within one year of graduation from a CAPTE approved program will not be required to meet the continuing education requirement for initial licensure or the first renewal.
2. Beginning with the compliance period starting October 1, 2015, licensees shall begin retaining a record of completed courses for five (5) years, including an agenda, brochure or other documentation that substantiate how the activities meet the accepted general guidelines, as well as documentation to establish the completion of those activities Licensees shall provide the Board a copy of their records, or grant access to any online recording and reporting system-the licensee elects to use for purposes of the Board verifying completion of the continuing education requirements.

3. Continuing education hours earned by a physical therapist or physical therapist assistant in excess of ten (10) hours during a compliance period, may be carried forward into the next compliance period; but, no more than ten (10) hours may be carried forward.
4. Beginning with the compliance period starting October 1, 2015, licensees must complete at least two (2) hours of continuing education every fifth year on the topic of Alabama physical therapy jurisprudence, covering both the Practice Act and the Administrative Code. Both PTs and PTAs will be required to fulfill this requirement when renewing their license in years ending in zero (0) or five (5) (i.e., 2020, 2025, 2030, etc.). Individuals licensed without examination shall also complete this expectation as part of their continuing education requirements for initial licensure renewal.

**Non-traditional continuing education activities shall have the following credit values:**

1. Completion of physical therapy related academic coursework – awarded fifteen (15) hours of credit per semester hour completed
2. Participation in a physical therapy related clinical residency or fellowship program – awarded fifteen (15) hours of credit for each 1,000 hours completed
3. Completion of a physical therapy related specialty certification or recognition of advanced proficiency – awarded three (3) hours of credit for the initial certification or recognition and one (1) hour of credit for recertification or subsequent recognition
4. Publication in a peer-reviewed publication – awarded five (5) hours of credit for a book, three (3) hours of credit for a chapter or single author publication, or two (2) hours of credit for a multi-author publication.
5. Teaching or lecturing in a physical therapy related continuing education activity – awarded two (2) hours per hour taught. Teaching or lecturing in the academic setting is also included, if teaching is not the licensee's primary occupation
6. Once every five (5) years, a formal internal or external peer review of practice, with verification of acceptable practice – awarded three (3) hours of credit

**Limited non-traditional continuing education activities are also permitted by the Board but shall not exceed forty percent (40%) of a licensee's total annual continuing education requirement and shall have the following credit values:**

1. Publication in a peer-reviewed publication of an abstract, scientific review of a research paper, or book review - awarded one (1) hour of credit
2. Participation as a book or manuscript reviewer – awarded one (1) hour of credit
3. Database publication of a clinical practice guideline - awarded one (1) hour of credit
4. Authorship of a presented scientific poster or platform presentation – awarded one (1) hour of credit
5. Acting as the primary clinical instructor for CAPTE accredited PT or PTA program students – awarded one (1) hour for each 200 hours completed
6. Developing alternative media materials, including computer software, programs, and digital instructional materials – awarded one (1) hour for each project released for public access.

**Unacceptable activities for continuing education:**

1. Regularly scheduled education opportunities provided within the employment setting such as orientations, in-services, staff meetings, informal rounds, case conferences, equipment or procedural updates, CPR, blood-borne pathogens, etc.
2. Meetings for purposes of policy decisions
3. Non-educational meetings at annual conferences, chapter or organizational meetings
4. Entertainment or recreational meetings or activities
5. Committee meetings, holding office, serving as an organizational delegate
6. Visiting exhibits, poster presentations
7. Entry-level coursework, activities, or presentations made by the lay public or non- medical professionals
8. Activities of less than fifty (50) minutes duration

**Failure to Meet Requirement:**

1. No license will be renewed in the absence of satisfactory evidence that the required hours have been earned. The Board may consider exceptions in extenuating circumstances.
2. Upon audit, the licensee is responsible for demonstrating that the completed continuing education activities were of an acceptable nature. Should an audited activity prove to be unacceptable, the licensee will have sixty (60) days to successfully meet the continuing education expectations. Failure to meet the continuing education requirements within that timeframe will result in disciplinary action.
3. A licensee that is licensed without examination who is unable to document twenty (20) hours of continuing education activities in the twenty-four (24) months prior to application shall have one hundred twenty (120) days after the initial issuance of the license to successfully meet this requirement. This requirement is in addition to the annual renewal requirement of ten (10) hours. Failure to meet the continuing education requirements within that timeframe will result in disciplinary action.