

NC Board for Licensing of Geologists

Guidelines for Continuing Education (CE)

WHAT IS REQUIRED:

The North Carolina Board for Licensing of Geologists (the Board) requires each licensee to earn 12 Professional Development Hours (PDH) of Board-approved continuing education (CE) each license year (July 1 to June 30), as a condition of renewal.* If a licensee exceeds the annual requirement in any license year, up to 12 PDH may be carried forward to the next license year.

CE must be reported accurately and ethically and reflect the amount of CE allowable per these guidelines. Many CE providers are pre-approved and will communicate the amount of CE that can be reported by licensees for attendance/participation. If the number of hours are not designated by the provider, it is up to the licensee to report only those hours that are geological in nature.

*New licensees *by way of examination* are exempt from the CE requirement for their first license renewal. New licensees by comity are required to report 12 PDH with their first renewal. CE is not prorated for new licensees.

WHAT IS ACCEPTABLE FOR CE:

All CE must be approved by the Board. To count towards CE, the content of the course or activity must be technical in nature and must focus on geology or geologically related activities, at a level commensurate with the professional standing and activities of the licensee.

The Board has posted a List of Pre-Approved Providers for Continuing Education on its website. If you attend an event hosted by a pre-approved provider, you may claim credit without seeking approval from the Board, as long as the content of the course or activity is focused on geology and is technical in nature.

Courses offered by professional societies or continuing education providers that have not been pre-approved by the Board may be submitted for review and approval to the Board office from up to 90 days before, to no later than 180 days after the course is offered.

CE should be presented in an organized fashion by qualified individuals, such as subject matter experts, with the goal of enhancing the geologic knowledge of the participant. Examples include college courses, seminars, workshops, field trips, and virtual events.

Receptions, social events, and practice building activities (such as business courses, non-technical computer training, etc.) are generally unacceptable for CE. Service on boards or commissions and self-study are not acceptable for CE. Breaks and meals are not counted as CE unless there is an appropriate instructional element provided concurrently (e.g., lunch speaker or poster session).

A licensee may receive double credits for each hour spent teaching or presenting a geologic course or activity. Teaching credit is valid for teaching a course or seminar for the first time only; should the course be substantially revised, it can be submitted for approval as a new course. A licensee may receive up to six PDH for a published peer reviewed book or article. CE for teaching a course or authoring a paper must be approved by the Board before credit can be claimed by the licensee.

Annual training that is not strictly geologic but is required to perform your duties as a geologist, such as safety and regulatory training, *may* be eligible for partial credit. For example OSHA HAZWOPER and MSHA Mine Safety Training, when required to fulfill geological projects, will be credited at one quarter-hour per contact hour of training per year, up to 8 hours. Training for projects that are outside of the scope of geology, such as construction or engineering projects, may not be used to fulfill the CE requirement.

HOW TO CALCULATE CE:

For the purpose of determining CE hours, each Professional Development Hour (PDH) is defined as 60 contact minutes of instruction. If a course provider issues a certificate or provides CE using a continuing education unit (CEU) measure, it is the licensee's responsibility to convert CE earned to PDHs. For most providers that use CEUs, one CEU awarded equals 10 PDHs. Partial PDHs should be rounded to the nearest quarter of an hour.

HOW TO OBTAIN CE APPROVAL:

For an activity that was not offered by a pre-approved provider and has not yet been approved by the Board, a licensee or sponsoring organization may submit an Application for CE Approval, using the form found on the Board's website. Applicants must explain how the activity relates to geology and how the requested PDHs were calculated. An agenda or course description showing the content and contact hours of the activity must be submitted with the application and the relevant CE content clearly identified for Board review.

Conferences should be submitted as one activity. For conferences that include non-geologic content, or conferences with concurrent sessions, applicants should identify the sessions for which they are requesting CE either by clearly highlighting them directly on a program or brochure, or by enumeration on a separate list. Applications for CE Approval may be submitted within 90 days before to 180 days after the event occurs. Incomplete or illegible applications will be returned without review.

HOW TO DOCUMENT CE:

Each licensee is required to maintain a CE Activity Log using the form provided on the Board's website. The licensee shall list the title or subject of the activity, the provider of the activity, the date(s) of the activity, approval code, and the amount of PDHs claimed for each activity.

If the activity is organized by a pre-approved provider the approval code entered on the Activity Log will be the acronym for the provider, included parenthetically after the provider's name on the list posted on the Board website. For example, if the course or activity was sponsored by the American Association of Petroleum Geologists, the approval code would be AAPG.

In the case of activities not offered by a pre-approved provider, the Board, upon approving an activity, will provide a numeric approval code for the activity, which must be included on the Activity Log. The provider (or licensee requesting credit for the activity) should alert attendees to the existence of an approval code for each specific activity. The Board maintains a separate list of Board approved activities on its website. When reporting CE earned for attending conferences, list the conference as one activity on the Activity Log. If the number of PDHs is not provided by the sponsoring organization, estimate the total number of PDHs you attended that were focused on geology.

It is the responsibility of the licensee to obtain documentation that verifies the completion of all CE. In the event of a CE audit, any unverified hours will be forfeited. To document participation in CE activities, licensees should retain annual Activity Logs, registration receipts, brochures, attendance verification records such as certificates of completion, confirmation of hours, and other documentation confirming attendance.

Per the rules of the Board, Licensees should retain CE records for three years in case of an audit.

ANNUAL REPORT OF CE EARNED:

A summary of CE information is reported with and *required* for the annual license renewal. Do not send documentation of CE earned unless you have been requested to do so by Board Staff.

AUDIT OF CE:

The Board will perform an audit of up to ten percent of licensees each year. Those who are audited will be required to electronically submit documentation of their attendance or completion of CE. Preferred forms of documentation include attendance certificates provided by the sponsoring organization, confirmation of hours, letters of acknowledgement, or email confirmation of attendance. Other documentation may be approved by Board staff. Licensees who are not audited are not required to submit documents to the Board but should retain documentation for three years. Submission of incomplete information regarding CE earned will result in automatic audits of CE.

EXEMPTIONS:

New licensees *by way of examination* are exempt from the CE requirement for their first license renewal; these licensees will be required to report 12 hours of Board approved CE with their second license renewal. New licensees by comity are required to report 12 PDHs with their first renewal.

Licensed geologists serving in the armed forces eligible to an extension of the federal tax return deadline may request an extension of time to complete the CE requirements. Please see Internal Revenue Code 26 U.S.C. 7508 and NC NCAC 21 .0407 for more details.

Geologists experiencing illness, disability, or other extenuating circumstances may submit a written request with supporting documents to the Board, requesting an exemption from the CE requirement and/or an extension of the CE deadline.

Geologists on inactive status are not required to obtain or report CE hours. However, a geologist returning to active status is required to document 12 hours of Board approved CE in the fiscal year prior to reinstatement.

For complete information about the Board's CE requirements, please refer to NCGS 89E-5 (i) and 21 NCAC 21.0400. The Board has provided the following documents relating to CE on its website:

- *List of Pre-Approved Providers for CE;*
- *CE Approval Form;*
- *Instructions for completing CE Approval Form;*
- *CE Activity Log.*