

Renewal Documentation

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Reprinted, with permission, from Certification Communications Newsletter – May 2005

Most certification programs require some form of renewal, approximately 80%, which usually consists of obtaining continuing education and remaining a practitioner. Renewal is established at specific intervals often within a 3-5 year timeframe. Frequency is a policy decision and dependent upon how rapidly conditions of practice change and the necessity to remain current.

For example, medical related designations may require annual renewal, and practitioners are expected to be constantly in a state of acquiring updated information. However, typically designates are allotted more time to complete renewal requirements, which affords the opportunity to attend courses and reduces the administrative burden for staff since they do not have to constantly engage in distribution and verification of renewal documents for each designate on an annual basis.

Although the total number of continuing education hours for renewal varies per designation depending upon the interval followed, i.e., number of years allocated, there is certain similarity on an annual basis. For practical and logistical reasons, most programs require 15-30 contact hours per year, which should be equivalent to one or two continuing education courses (one full day course equals 6 contact hours over one, two, or three days; and/or one evening seminar equals 1-2 contact hours nightly with bi- or tri-weekly presentations over one or two months).

There could be many sources, or providers, such as: primary association, chapters or divisions, related associations, universities, community colleges, corporations (employers), government agencies, private training organizations, and other individuals. Thus, for consistency the association should indicate, if possible, that the method of hours assessment should be similar for their participants in those approved courses.

In most instances, the national association is the essential approved provider, but depending upon the volume of designates and number of hours required, it might be realistic to accept other sources to ensure adequate national coverage throughout the year.

In most continuing education programs a “document of completion” is issued, which is based only upon attendance. Rarely, if ever, are examinations given in conjunction with continuing education courses, and the document is issued for 80%-90% participation.

Regardless of the course provider, a document of completion should be given to each participant stating the topic, faculty, dates, and hours. A determination of contact hours (actual clock hours of attendance) is recommended for assessment and consistency. The original document is given to course participants after the conclusion of the program, either during the last hour or by mail.

Some associations vest the responsibility of retaining such course records with each participant. Participants receive their official document from the course provider, and when it is time for certification renewal, they send copies of the certificate with their application as supportive documentation. Furthermore, such official certificates facilitate the verification process.