VIRGINIA NURSES ASSOCIATION
CONTINUING EDUCATION APPROVAL COMMITTEE

Criteria for Single Educational Activity and Approved Providers

The 2009 American Nurses Credentialing Center’s Commission on Accreditation criteria and the operational requirements which must be used by applicants to plan and implement approved continuing education are outlined in this document.
# Criteria for Single Educational Activity and Approved Providers

**Table of Contents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1). Single Educational Activity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANCC Criteria</td>
<td>3-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operational Requirements</td>
<td>5-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Requirements After Approval</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring Requirements of Repeat Activities</td>
<td>9-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2). Approved Providers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANCC Criteria</td>
<td>11-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operational Requirements</td>
<td>18-22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Requirements After Approval</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3). References</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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VIRGINIA NURSES ASSOCIATION
CONTINUING EDUCATION APPROVAL COMMITTEE

CRITERIA FOR SINGLE EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITY APPLICANTS

DEFINITIONS: The ANCC Commission on Accreditation uses several terms that may need clarification. These are criteria, key elements, required evidence, and operational requirements. Criterion/criteria is defined as a standard on which a judgment of decision may be based. Key elements are those components that characterize the criterion. Required evidence refers to that material which must be submitted that demonstrates the meeting of the criterion and key elements. Operational requirements are the requirements that must be implemented by an organization throughout the period of approval. The following section discusses the ANCC Educational Design Criteria (ANCC, 2009).

I. ANCC Educational Design Criteria

Criterion: Continuing education activities are assessed for need, designed, planned, implemented and evaluated in accordance with professional education standards, adult learning principles, ethics, regulatory and credentialing requirements, and organizational policy.

A. Key Elements:

1. Assessment of learner needs: Continuing education activities are developed in response to, and with consideration for, the unique education needs of the organization’s target audience.

2. Qualified planners and faculty: The education activity is planned by at least one designated nurse planner—an RN with a baccalaureate degree or higher in nursing—and one other planner. The planning committee should have representation from all of the following areas: relevant content expertise, the target audience and responsibility for adherence to ANCC accreditation criteria. Each member of the planning committee should represent at least one of these areas and may represent multiple areas. The planning committee assures that faculty member qualifications are adequate and appropriate for the activity. The nurse planner should have education or experience in the field of education or adult learning, be oriented to the ANCC accreditation criterion, and be actively involved in planning and analysis of the evaluation of the activity.

3. Effective design principles: Each education activity has an identified purpose and educational objectives for the learner. Each education activity has content that is congruent with its purpose and education objectives. Teaching/learning strategies are congruent with objectives and content. Objectives, content and teaching/learning strategies are developed in response to the needs assessment.

4. Awarding contact hours: Contact hours are determined in a logical and defensible manner, consistent with the objectives, content, teaching/learning strategies, and target audience. One contact hour = 60 minutes. Contact hours may NOT be rewarded retroactively. If rounding is practiced, contact hours should be rounded down to the nearest 1/10th or 1/100th.

5. Activity evaluation: There is a clearly defined method for evaluating the effectiveness of each CE activity, including learner input.
6. **Accreditation statement:** The official approval statement (or pending approval statement for advertisements) should be used in all communications, marketing materials, certificates and other documents. The accreditation statement should stand alone (must start and end on a line separate from other text).

7. **Documentation of completion:** Participants should receive written documentation of completion. The document of completion should identify the name of the participant, name and address of the applicant/organization providing contact hours, title and date of the activity, official accreditation statement and number of contact hours awarded.

8. **Commercial support guidelines:** The educational activity must be separate from promotional activities. Commercial support must not influence the design and scientific objectivity of the educational activity.

9. **Conflict of interest guidelines:** All planners, presenters, content specialists and contributors must complete conflict of interest disclosure statements and disclose the presence or absence of any potentially biasing relationships of a personal, financial or professional nature in relation to the educational activity. Conflicts of interest must be resolved prior to the planning, implementing and evaluating of the activity.

10. **Disclosures provided to activity participants:** Disclosures will be made to participants, prior to the activity or at the time of the activity. Disclosures made verbally at an activity will need to be documented by a representative in the audience. The following disclosures must be made to learners: disclosure of purpose, goal and objectives of the activity; notice of requirements for successful completion (participants notified of requirement for successful completion); conflicts of interest; disclosure of relevant financial relationships and mechanism to identify and resolve conflicts of interest; sponsorship or commercial support; non-endorsement of products; off-label use and expiration date for awarding contact hours for enduring materials.

11. **Recordkeeping:** Documents for all activities are kept in a secure and confidential manner for 6 years.

12. **Co-providership:** Designation of responsibilities will need to be established when a co-providership exists.

**B. Required Evidence:**

1. Describe the process of activity planning (including the needs assessment, determination of target audience, objectives, content, teaching/learning strategies), identifying the Nurse Planner(s) and all other persons who participated in the planning process. Document content expertise of planners/presenters/content specialists/contributors. Describe how the planning committee ensures presenters/content specialists/contributors are qualified.

2. Identify the activity’s purpose, learner objectives, and related content.

3. Describe the teaching/learning strategies to be used in the activity, including resources, materials, delivery methods and learner feedback.

4. Describe the process to be used to judge successful completion and the rationale for
selecting that criteria, verify completion of the education activity and how learners will be informed of the requirements for completion.

5. Identify the number of contact hours to be awarded with supporting documentation.

6. Submit a copy of the certificate to be awarded upon completion of the education activity.

7. Describe the method to be used to evaluate the activity and category of evaluation. Submit a copy of the evaluation form(s). Describe how the evaluation data will be used.

8. Submit copies of promotional materials developed for the CE activity.

9. For educational activities that will receive commercial support, describe how the integrity of the activity will be maintained and precautions taken to prevent bias in the educational content.

10. Document conflict of interest disclosures and describe how conflict of interest was resolved.

11. Describe method used to inform activity participants of disclosures.

12. Describe how required records will be maintained.

13. Describe how provider unit responsibilities are assigned and maintained with co-provided activities.

II. Operational Requirements

The applicant for the activity must agree to:

1. Use the ANCC Commission on Accreditation (ANCC COA) education design criterion as provided by the VNA to plan and implement all CE activities.

2. Maintain responsibility for the following when/if activities are co-provided with non-approved providers or non-accredited providers:
   a. Determination of the educational objectives and content
   b. Selection of the content specialist planners and activity presenters/content specialists/contributors
   c. The awarding of contact hours, as appropriate, to the individual successfully completing the educational activity
   d. Record keeping procedures
   e. Evaluation methods and categories
   f. Management of any commercial support or sponsorship

   **Note:** A provider unit nurse planner must be the person directly involved and responsible for assuring that ANCC COA educational design criteria as provided by the Virginia Nurses Association CEA Committee are used to plan and implement the activity.
When co-providing an educational activity with *non-approved providers or non-accredited providers*, tasks involved in planning, implementing, and evaluating the activity may be shared; however, the final responsibility and accountability to insure that the criteria are met remain with the approved provider. A written co-provider agreement confirms these arrangements.

If two or more *approved providers co-provide*, one of the approved providers must take primary responsibility for the above 5 items. The co-provider agreement must clearly specify which approved provider will assume this responsibility.

If co-providing with an *ANCC accredited provider*, the accredited provider assumes responsibility for the above 5 items.

Co-providing continuing education is not to be confused with approval of continuing education for other agencies or within your own organization, if the provider unit nurse planner was not actively involved in the planning of the event.

3. Maintain records for each activity for 6 years in a secure and confidential manner. Records should include information on the following:
   a. Planning:
      - Description of the target audience
      - Method and findings of the needs assessment
      - Names, titles and expertise of the activity planners, presenters/content specialists/contributors
      - Conflict of interest disclosure statements from planners and presenters/content specialists/contributors. Resolutions of conflict of interest
      - Purpose, objectives, content, instructional strategies, delivery methods, learner feedback mechanisms and resources used
      - Method used to verify participants
      - Notice to learners of how successful completion will be measured
      - Marketing and promotional activities
      - Responsibilities if co-provided and signed co-provider agreement
      - If applicable, documentation of how content integrity was maintained for an educational activity receiving commercial support and signed commercial support agreement. Maintain records detailing the receipt and expenditure of commercial support.
   b. Implementation
      - Title, location and date of the activity
      - Copy of evaluation tools, including the summative evaluation
      - Participant names and unique identifier information (i.e. automatically generated number, password code, month and date of birth, address, employee ID number)
      - Sample certificate of completion
• Number of contact hours awarded
• Documentation of disclosure (verbal or written)

c. All correspondence with the Virginia Nurses Association, including VNA approval number for the activity
d. Any changes made to the activity during its approval period

4. Verify participation and requirements for successful completion of the educational activity, and identify how learners are informed of these expectations prior to the activity. **Note:** Requirements for successful completion of each activity need to be determined as part of the event planning process. Participants need to be made aware of the requirements for successful completion prior to participation in the event. The provider must determine how participation will be verified (sign-in sheets, return of post-tests, etc).

5. Provide participants who successfully complete the education activity with written verification of completion which includes the following:
   a. Name of learner
   b. Number of contact hours awarded
   c. Name and address of the applicant of the educational activity
   d. The title and date of the educational activity

   **Official approval statement:**
   This continuing nursing education activity was approved by the Virginia Nurses Association, an accredited approver by the American Nurses Credentialing Center's Commission on Accreditation.

6. Maintain timely communication with the VNA by providing any reports requested and inform the VNA of any changes to the activity.

7. Use appropriate language for the activity approval on all communications, marketing materials & certificates of attendance.

8. Implement the ANCC Commission on Accreditation system of awarding credit:
   a. The appropriate measure of credit is the 60 minute contact hour.
   b. A contact hour is 60 minutes of an organized learning activity, which is either a didactic or clinical experience.
   c. The VNA has established that the minimum number of contact hours that will be awarded by the VNA will be 1.0.
   d. After the first contact hour, fractions or portions of the 60 minute hour should be calculated. For example, 120 minutes of learning experience = 2.0 contact hours.
   e. If rounding is desired in the calculation of contact hours, rounding down to the nearest 1/10th or 1/100th should be practiced. For example, 175 minutes of learning experience = 2.9 or 2.91 contact hours. Rounding up should not be practiced.
   f. Registration, welcome, introductions, orientation, breaks and viewing of exhibits are not included in the calculation of contact hours. Evaluation is considered part of the learning activity and needs to be included in calculation of contact hours. When calculating hours, include any pre and post tests, practice, discussion, and evaluation.
g. To calculate the number of contact hours, add the total number of minutes of allowed time and divide by 60.

h. **Note:** The Continuing Education Unit (CEU) system is NOT authorized by the ANCC Commission on Accreditation for use. This means contact hours, NOT CEUs, will be awarded. The 60 minute contact hour may be a classroom, clinical, or independent study experience. In the case of an independent study, it will be the responsibility of the provider to substantiate the rationale for determining the number of contact hours to be awarded. This may occur by means of a pilot test, calculation of number of pages/words, etc.

Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00 – 8:10</td>
<td>Welcome &amp; Introduction</td>
<td>10 minutes, not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:10 – 8:30</td>
<td>Pre-test</td>
<td>20 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:30 – 9:00</td>
<td>Talk # 1</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00 – 9:20</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>20 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:20 – 10:10</td>
<td>Talk # 2</td>
<td>50 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:10 – 10:25</td>
<td>Break</td>
<td>15 minutes, not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:25 – 11:15</td>
<td>Supervised Practice</td>
<td>50 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:15 – 1:55</td>
<td>Panel Discussion</td>
<td>100 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:55 – 2:10</td>
<td>Break</td>
<td>15 minutes, not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:10 – 3:00</td>
<td>Talk # 3</td>
<td>50 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:00 – 3:15</td>
<td>Questions &amp; Answers</td>
<td>15 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:15 – 3:30</td>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>15 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**350 minutes divided by 60 = 5.83 Contact Hours**

9. To ensure that all CE activities are free from bias, all presenters/content specialists/contributors and planning committee members must declare conflict of interest. **Note:** This information must be collected during the planning process and documented in the record keeping file for each activity. Learners must be informed if presenters/content specialists/contributors and planning committee members have conflicts of interest.

10. In the event that any form of commercial support is provided for an education activity, the applicant will maintain control of the education content and disclose to the learners all financial relationships or lack of, between the commercial supporter and the applicant or presenters/content specialists/contributors.

   a. Funds from a commercial source should be in the form of an education grant to the applicant of the education activity and must be acknowledged in printed material and brochures.

   b. Arrangements for commercial exhibits will not influence the planning of or interfere with the presentation of education activities.

   c. Learners will be made aware of the nature of all commercial support of all education activities.

   d. Education activities are distinguished as separate from endorsement of commercial products. When commercial products are present, participants will be disclosed that approved status refers only to its CE activities and does not imply ANCC COA & VNA endorsement of any commercial product (disclosure
of non-endorsement of products).

e. Education activities that present research conducted by commercial companies will be designed and presented with scientific objectivity.

f. Learners will be informed of any off label use of a commercial product that is presented in education activities. Off-label use refers to using a pharmaceutical agent for a purpose other than the purpose for which it was approved by the FDA.

g. Non-endorsement of products disclosure: Activity participants are advised that approval does not imply endorsement by the VNA or ANCC of any commercial products, service or company referred to in the activity nor of any company subsidizing costs related to the activity. A statement reflecting the fact that approval status refers only to the continuing education activity and does not imply ANCC commission on Accreditation or the Virginia Nurses Association approval or endorsement of any commercial product must be disclosed to participants. One example of this statement is: “This Continuing Nursing Education Activity is underwritten by an unrestricted educational grant from ABC Company. Approval as a provider refers to recognition of educational activities only and does not imply ANCC Commission on Accreditation or the Virginia Nurses Association approval or endorsement of any product”).

11. For repeat single educational activities: Adhere to the monitoring requirement established by the VNA, which includes a review of the educational design, management of commercial support, provision of appropriate disclosures to learners and assurance that all required items noted above are kept on file. It is understood that failure to submit or comply with these monitoring requirements can lead to a revocation of approval of the activity.

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### III. Additional Requirements After Approval

Once a single activity applicant is granted approval for contact hours for their activity, the applicant will receive an official letter from the VNA with an approval number. Please take note of this approval number for future correspondence with the VNA.

Applicants who are approved are required to submit a summative evaluation of their educational activity. If the activity is a repeat activity, a summative evaluation would need to be submitted after each time the activity is given. Please submit summative evaluations electronically to the VNA at vnacea@virginianurses.com.

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### IV. Monitoring Requirements of Repeat Activities

Applicants granted approval for contact hours, who indicated on their application that the educational activity will be a repeat activity, will be monitored by the VNA CEA Committee.

As of 2009, the ANCC requires accredited approvers (the VNA CEA Committee) to have a monitoring process that is utilized for activities that are offered repeatedly (ANCC 2009 manual, p 54). As a result, single educational activity applicants who have indicated that their activity will be repeated over
the two year approval period are required to complete Form I: Single Educational Activity: Monitoring Repeat Activities, each and every time an activity has been given, yet before the next repeat activity. Applicants who will repeat their activities must complete Form I, the evaluation summary report and participant form and submit the appropriate documentation at minimum of 2 weeks prior to repeating the activity. Submissions are to be sent to the CE Coordinator at vnacea@virginianurses.com. Please indicate if changes will be made to the educational design, describe how commercial support/sponsorship was managed, identify how disclosures were made to learners, assure that records are kept on file and identify whether changes will be made as a result of the evaluations given on the activity. Note: Major changes will require resubmission with a new application. Failure to submit or comply with these monitoring requirements can lead to a revocation of approval of the activity.
DEFINITIONS: The ANCC Commission on Accreditation uses several terms that may need clarification. These are criteria, key elements, required evidence, and operational requirements. Criterion/criteria is defined as a standard on which a judgment of decision may be based. Key elements are those components that characterize the criterion. Required evidence refers to that material which must be submitted that demonstrates the meeting of the criterion and key elements. Operational requirements are the requirements that must be implemented by an organization throughout the period of approval. The following section discusses the ANCC criteria for approved providers (ANCC, 2009) and VNA criteria.

I. Establishment as a Provider Unit

The provider unit is responsible, operationally and administratively, for coordinating all aspects of continuing nursing education provided by the organization. A provider unit can be established as a single-focused organization or a distinct, separately identified unit within a complex, multi-focused organization.

A. Provider units that are part of a multi-focused organization should demonstrate that they are autonomous in providing continuing education and be operationally and administratively responsible for continuing nursing education (not the larger parent organization).

B. A commercial interest is not eligible to apply for approval as a provider. An entity is not a commercial interest if it is a government entity, non-profit 503c organization or a non-healthcare related entity. A commercial entity is “any entity either producing, marketing, re-selling or distributing healthcare goods or services consumed by or used on, patients or an entity that is owned or controlled by an entity that produces, markets, re-sells, or distributes healthcare goods or services consumed by, or used on, patients” (ANCC 2009 manual, pg 70). If a provider has a “sister company” that is a commercial interest, the provider can still apply to be approved provider, as long as the appropriate firewalls are in place to prevent influence from the “sister company.”

C. The provider unit must have at least one designated nurse planner (baccalaureate or graduate degree in nursing and education or experience in education) who is responsible for the adherence to the ANCC Accreditation criteria.

II. Operation as a Provider Unit

There are operational milestones provider units must meet in order to be eligible to apply to be an approved provider.

A. The provider unit must have been operational for at least 6 months.
B. The provider unit must have planned, implemented and evaluated at least 3 separate educational activities (at least 60 minutes in length). These activities can not be sessions at the same conference, nor co-provided activities. A designated nurse planner must be directly involved and adherence to the ANCC criteria are required for these activities.

C. Organizations that targeted more than 50% of their educational activities in the previous calendar year to nurses in multiple regions are not eligible to apply as an approved provider and must apply to the ANCC to be an accredited provider. Regions established by the Department of Health and Human Services (http://www.hhs.gov/about/regions) are used to assess single state or region vs. multiple regions. Organizations that target more than 50% of their educational activities in the previous calendar year to nurses in a single state or region (or state contiguous to that region) may apply to be an approved provider with a constituent member association, such as the Virginia Nurses Association. Approved providers are approved by constituent member associations, such as the VNA, whereas an accredited provider are accredited by the ANCC.

III. Approved Provider Criterion 1: Mission Statement

A. **Key Elements:**

1. The provider unit’s mission statement (beliefs and goals) are relevant and appropriate to prospective learners.

2. The organizational structure and lines of authority support the provider unit operations.

3. *The Scope and Standards of Practice for Nursing Professional Development* (ANA, 2010) are incorporated into the approved provider unit’s functions.

4. Operational requirements specified by the Virginia Nurses Association are incorporated into the functions of the approved provider unit. Refer to the list of operational requirements and their explanations on pages 17-22.

B. **Required Evidence:**

1. Describe the provider unit (and parent organization, if applicable).
   a. Submit a description of the provider unit, including size, geographical range, target audience(s), content areas and type of educational activities offered.
   b. If the provider unit is part of a larger multi-focused organization, explain how the provider unit as described in item (a) above “fits” within the larger organization.

2. State the beliefs and goals (mission statement) of the provider unit and, if applicable, describe the linkage with the larger multi-focused organization.
a. Submit the beliefs and goals of the provider unit. Be sure to clearly link the goals with needs of the prospective learners and larger organization, if applicable.

b. If the provider unit is part of a larger organization, explain how the goals of the provider unit are congruent with those of the whole organization.

c. In addition to the beliefs and goals, include the expected outcomes and how changes and outcomes will be measured.

d. Review the *Scope and Standards of Practice for Nursing Professional Development* (ANA, 2010) document to be sure your provider unit is incorporating these guidelines in both its goals and its functions.

3. Identify the provider unit’s lines of authority and organizational structure.
   a. Submit a description of the lines of authority within the provider unit.
      *Note:* This may be an organizational chart, or other format that shows the linkages within the provider unit and clearly shows how the provider unit is organized.
   b. Provide the name and credentials of each individual identified in the organizational chart.
   c. If the provider unit is part of a larger organization, provide an additional organization chart that identifies the provider unit and structural location in the total organization.

4. Operational requirements: Sign and submit the operational requirements form with your application.

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**IV. Approved Provider Criterion 2: Educational Design**

Continuing education activities are assessed for need, designed, planned, implemented and evaluated in accordance with professional education standards, adult learning principles, ethics, regulatory and credentialing requirements, and organizational policy. Three sample activities are to be submitted with the application, at least 1 hour in length. If the activity is 3 contact hours or 180 minutes or less, submit documentation for all contact hours. If the activity is greater than 3 contact hours, submit documentation for at least 3 contact hours and keep complete activity on file and accessible upon request. Educational design criteria specified by the Virginia Nurses Association are used in the assessing needs of, planning, implementation, and evaluating each continuing education activity.

**A. Key Elements Related to Sample Activities:**

1. *Assessment of learner needs:* Continuing education activities are developed in response to, and with consideration for, the unique education needs of the organization’s target audience.

2. *Qualified planners and faculty:* The education activity is planned by at least one designated nurse planner—an RN with a baccalaureate degree or higher in nursing—and one other planner. The planning committee should have representation from all of the following areas: relevant content expertise, the target audience and responsibility for adherence to ANCC accreditation criteria. Each member of the planning committee should
represent at least one of these areas and may represent multiple areas. The planning committee assures that faculty member qualifications are adequate and appropriate for the activity. The nurse planner should have education or experience in the field of education or adult learning, be oriented to the ANCC accreditation criterion, and be actively involved in planning and analysis of the evaluation of the activity.

3. **Effective design principles:** Each education activity has an identified purpose and educational objectives for the learner. Content is congruent with its purpose and education objectives; and teaching/learning strategies that are congruent with objectives and content. Each educational activity is developed based on a needs assessment and a method for verifying participation in an activity is determined. Criteria for judging successful completion of an activity are consistent with the learning goal, objectives, teaching and learning strategies. Objectives, content and teaching/learning strategies are developed in response to the needs assessment.

4. **Awarding contact hours:** Contact hours are determined in a logical and defensible manner, consistent with the objectives, content, teaching/learning strategies, and target audience. One contact hour = 60 minutes. Contact hours may NOT be rewarded retroactively. If rounding is practiced, contact hours should be rounded down to the nearest \( \frac{1}{10} \) or \( \frac{1}{100} \).

5. **Activity evaluation:** There is a clearly defined method for evaluating the effectiveness of each CE activity, including learner input.

6. **Accreditation statement:** The official approval statement should be used in all communications, marketing materials, certificates and other documents. The accreditation statement should stand alone (must start and end on a line separate from other text).

7. **Documentation of completion:** Participants should receive written documentation of completion. The document of completion should identify the name of the participant, name and address of the applicant/organization providing contact hours, title and date of the activity, official accreditation statement and number of contact hours awarded.

8. **Commercial support guidelines:** The educational activity must be separate from promotional activities. Commercial support must not influence the design and scientific objectivity of the educational activity.

9. **Conflict of interest guidelines:** All planners and presenters/content specialists/contributors must complete conflict of interest disclosure statements and disclose the presence or absence of any potentially biasing relationships of a personal, financial or professional nature in relation to the educational activity. Conflicts of interest must be resolved prior to the planning, implementing and evaluating of the activity.

10. **Disclosures provided to activity participants:** Disclosures will be made to participants, prior to the activity or at the time of the activity. Disclosures made verbally at an activity will need to be documented by a representative in the audience. The following disclosures must be made to learners: Disclosure of purpose, goal and objectives of the activity; notice of requirements for successful completion (participants notified of requirement for successful completion); conflicts of interest; disclosure of relevant financial relationships and mechanism to identify and resolve conflict of interest; sponsorship or commercial support; non-endorsement of products; off-label use and expiration date for awarding
contact hours for enduring materials.

11. **Recordkeeping:** Documents for all activities are kept in a secure and confidential manner for 6 years.

12. **Co-providership:** Designation of responsibilities will need to be established when a co-providership exists.

**B. Required Evidence for Sample Activities:**

1. Describe the process of activity planning (including the needs assessment, determination of target audience, objectives, content, teaching/learning strategies), identifying the Nurse Planner(s) and all other persons who participated in the planning process. Document content expertise of planners/presenters/content specialists/contributors. Describe how the planning committee ensures presenters/content specialists/contributors are qualified.

2. Identify the activity’s purpose, learner objectives, and related content.

3. Describe the teaching/learning strategies to be used in the activity, including resources, materials, delivery methods and learner feedback.

4. Describe the process to be used to judge successful completion and the rationale for selecting that criteria, verify completion of the education activity and how learners will be informed of the requirements for completion.

5. Identify the number of contact hours to be awarded with supporting documentation.

6. Submit a copy of the certificate to be awarded upon completion of the education activity.

7. Describe the method to be used to evaluate the activity and category of evaluation. Submit a summative evaluation from each presentation. Do not submit individual evaluation forms for each presentation. Describe how the evaluation data will be used.

8. Submit copies of promotional materials developed for the CE activity.

9. For educational activities that will receive commercial support, describe how the integrity of the activity will be maintained and precautions taken to prevent bias in the educational content and written agreement.

10. Document conflict of interest disclosures and describe how conflict of interest was resolved.

11. Describe method used to inform activity participants of disclosures.

12. Describe how required records will be maintained.

13. Describe how provider unit responsibilities are assigned and maintained with co-provided activities.
C. **Additional Evidence Required Related to Educational Design:**

1. First time applicants: Submit a sample of the certificate to be awarded to the participants. The certificate must include all of the information as specified above under documentation of completion, as well as following the official approval statement for approved providers. **Note:** Provider units are not allowed to use a pending approval statement.

   *(Name of the approved provider) is an approved provider of continuing nursing education by the Virginia Nurses Association, an accredited approver by the American Nurses Credentialing Center's Commission on Accreditation.*

2. Recordkeeping: Records are maintained according to operational requirements. Describe the record keeping process, including storage, confidentiality and retrieval of records.

3. Co-provided activities: When activities are co-provided, give a general description of how responsibilities are assigned and maintained (i.e. address the co-provider agreement, how the designation of provider and co-provider roles would be determined based on status as an approved provider, accredited provider or non-approved provider).

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V. **Approved Provider Criterion 3: Unit Operations**

A. **Key Elements:**

1. At least one RN with a minimum of a baccalaureate in nursing is responsible for assessing needs, planning, implementing, and evaluating all continuing nursing education activities. **Note:** An approved provider may have more than one Nurse Planner. Each Nurse Planner must meet the minimum educational and experience requirements. The Lead Nurse Planner is responsible for assuring that all Nurse Planners are prepared, oriented and trained to meet the ANCC Accreditation Program requirements for that role.

2. There are sufficient human, material, and financial resources to carry out the administrative, educational and supportive functions of the approved provider unit.

3. The provider unit will adhere to all regional, state and national laws and regulations. Provider units must also operate the business and management polices and procedures of its continuing nursing education program (as they relate to financial affairs, human resources and legal obligations) so that its obligations and commitments are met. The provider unit must adhere to all reasonable ethical expectations in its provision of continuing nursing education and its business practices.

B. **Required Evidence:**

1. Provide documentation of the educational and experiential qualifications of the Nurse Planner(s). Submit a position description for the Lead Nurse Planner reflecting qualifications and functions and submit a description of how the Lead Nurse Planner assures other Nurse Planners are prepared, oriented and trained to function in that role. Submit biographical data forms and position descriptions for all Nurse Planners.
2. Provide biographical data and position descriptions that clearly identify qualifications and roles of all provider unit personnel (staff, volunteer, and/or consultant). Do not submit complete CVs.

   a. Submit a list, biographical data forms and position descriptions for everyone involved with the provider unit. **Note:** Position descriptions may be formal job descriptions, informal statements of the person’s role with the provider unit, or information obtained in association bylaws. Position descriptions should delineate the qualifications and roles for all provider unit personnel involved in the provider unit. The position description(s) should give an accurate picture of the roles assumed by the persons in the provider unit.

3. Describe the material resources which support the approved provider unit’s functions.

4. Describe sources of financial support and how financial support is projected through the period of approval. Do not submit detailed budget reports.

5. Submit a report describing the amount and frequency commercial support for educational activities are received.


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### VI. Evaluation Criterion

The approved provider unit is effective in fulfilling its beliefs, goals and functions and in providing quality continuing nursing education. A written plan for evaluation of the provider unit should be submitted.

#### A. Key Elements

1. Evaluation is systematic, ongoing and consistent with all ANCC Commission on Accreditation criteria and operational requirements for approved providers as specified by the Virginia Nurses Association.

2. The provider unit should have a plan in place to evaluate the effectiveness of the overall continuing nursing education program.

3. The Lead Nurse Planner should be involved in the evaluation of the provider unit and identify others that are involved in this process.

4. Evaluation data are used to confirm, expand and/or change provider unit operations.

5. The provider unit’s goals toward improvement include identifying strategies for working on targeted goals, evaluating progress toward goals and revising or establishing new goals.
B. **Required Evidence**

1. Describe the plan for implementation of a comprehensive provider unit evaluation. **Note:** This includes all aspects of provider unit functions, not just the individual learning activities carried out by the provider unit. This might include achievement of provider unit goals, resources, the planning process, etc.

2. Identify appropriate stakeholders involved in evaluating the provider unit. **Note:** This might include input at the individual activity and/or provider levels. This may include informal as well as formal data collection processes.

3. Describe how results of the evaluation process have been used to confirm, expand, and/or change approved provider unit operations. How you have used results of the evaluation process described in #1 and 2 above to strengthen the provider unit?

4. Describe how the provider unit’s goals for improvement have been addressed over the approval period, changes and progress made towards goals, new goals identified and operational plans for implementing goals.

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**VII. Operational Requirements for Approved Providers**

Operational requirements must be implemented by the Provider Unit throughout the period of approval. The Provider Unit may develop a policy and procedure manual to incorporate these requirements or simply use the signed Attestation Form as a guide to operations throughout the approval period. However, the signed Attestation Form must be submitted with the application. Adherence to the operational requirements will be assessed through review of application documents, as well as monitoring of the approved provider after approval is granted. Should there be a complaint about the provider or a need for review of the provider’s records during the approval period, the Virginia Nurses Association will use criteria and operational requirements to determine continued adherence to criteria.

Approved Providers will:

1. Use ANCC Commission on Accreditation (ANCC COA) educational design criterion as provided by the Virginia Nurses Association to plan and implement all continuing education activities.

2. Maintain responsibility for the following when/if activities are co-provided with non-approved providers or non-accredited providers:
   a. Determination of the educational objectives and content
   b. Selection of the content specialist planners and activity presenters/content specialists/contributors
   c. The awarding of contact hours, as appropriate, to the individual successfully completing the educational activity
   d. Record keeping procedures
   e. Evaluation methods and categories
f. Management of any commercial support or sponsorship

**Note:** A provider unit nurse planner must be the person directly involved and responsible for assuring that ANCC COA educational design criteria as provided by the Virginia Nurses Association CEA Committee are used to plan and implement the activity.

When co-providing an educational activity with *non-approved providers or non-accredited providers*, tasks involved in planning, implementing, and evaluating the activity may be shared; however, the final responsibility and accountability to insure that the criteria are met remain with the approved provider. A written co-provider agreement confirms these arrangements.

If two or more *approved providers co-provide*, one of the approved providers must take primary responsibility for the above 5 items. The co-provider agreement must clearly specify which approved provider will assume this responsibility.

If co-providing with an *ANCC accredited provider*, the accredited provider assumes responsibility for the above 5 items.

Co-providing continuing education is not to be confused with approval of continuing education for other agencies or within your own organization, if the provider unit nurse planner was not actively involved in the planning of the event.

3. Maintain records for each activity for 6 years in a secure and confidential manner and include the following essential information for each individual activity:
   a. Planning:
      - Description of the target audience
      - Method and findings of the needs assessment
      - Names, titles and expertise of the activity planners and presenters/content specialists/contributors
      - Conflict of interest disclosure statements from planners and presenters/content specialists/contributors. Resolutions of conflict of interest.
      - Purpose, objectives, content, instructional strategies, delivery methods, learner feedback mechanisms and resources used
      - Method used to verify participants
      - Notice to learners of how successful completion will be measured
      - Marketing and promotional activities
      - Responsibilities if co-provided and signed co-provider agreement
      - If applicable, documentation of how content integrity was maintained for an educational activity receiving commercial support and signed commercial support agreement. Maintain records detailing the receipt and expenditure of commercial support.
   
   b. Implementation
      - Title, location and date of the activity
      - Copy of evaluation tools, including the summative evaluation
      - Participant names and unique identifier information (i.e. automatically generated number, password code, month and date of birth, address, employee ID number).
• Sample certificate of completion
• Number of contact hours awarded
• Documentation of disclosure (verbal or written)

c. All correspondence with the Virginia Nurses Association, including VNA approval number for the activity

d. Any changes made to the activity during its approval period

4. Verify participation and requirements for successful completion of the educational activity, and identify how learners are informed of these expectations prior to the activity. 
   Note: Requirements for successful completion of each activity need to be determined as part of the event planning process. Participants need to be made aware of the requirements for successful completion prior to participation in the event. The provider must determine how participation will be verified (sign-in sheets, return of post-tests, etc).

5. Provide participants who successfully complete the education activity with written verification of completion which includes the following:
   a. Name of learner
   b. Number of contact hours awarded
   c. Name and address of the applicant of the educational activity
   d. The title and date of the educational activity
   e. Official approval statement:

   (Name of the approved provider) is an approved provider of continuing nursing education by the Virginia Nurses Association, an accredited approver by the American Nurses Credentialing Center's Commission on Accreditation.

6. Maintain timely communication with the VNA by providing any reports requested and inform the VNA of any changes to the activity.
   a. Reports of data requested by VNA CEA Committee.
   b. Timely submission of annual reports to the VNA due on June 1st of every year.
   c. Within 30 days, information about change in 1). Name, ownership, or structure of the organization, or 2). Change in the nurse planner(s), or 3). Change in the name of the contact person. A new biographical form will be submitted with each new person. Any new Nurse Planner must sign this attestation statement.
   d. Information about termination of approved provider activities, within 30 days of the decision to terminate.

7. Use appropriate language for the activity approval on all communications, marketing, materials & certificates of attendance. The following approval statement must be on the certificate:
   (Name of the approved provider) is an approved provider of continuing nursing education by the Virginia Nurses Association, an accredited approver by the American Nurses Credentialing Center's Commission on Accreditation.

8. Implement the ANCC Commission on Accreditation system of awarding credit:
   a. The appropriate measure of credit is the 60 minute contact hour.
b. A contact hour is 60 minutes of an organized learning activity, which is either a didactic or clinical experience.

c. The ANCC allows a minimum of 0.5 contact hours to be awarded and provider units are allowed to award a minimum of 0.5 contact hours.

d. After the first contact hour, fractions or portions of the 60 minute hour should be calculated. For example, 120 minutes of learning experience = 2.0 contact hours.

e. If rounding is desired in the calculation of contact hours, rounding down to the nearest $1/10^\text{th}$ or $1/100^\text{th}$ should be practiced. For example, 175 minutes of learning experience = 2.9 or 2.91 contact hours. Round up should not be practiced.

f. Registration, welcome, introductions, orientation, breaks and viewing of exhibits are not included in the calculation of contact hours. Evaluation is considered part of the learning activity and needs to be included in calculation of contact hours. When calculating hours, include any pre and post tests, practice, discussion, and evaluation.

g. To calculate the number of contact hours, add the total number of minutes of allowed time and divide by 60.

h. **Note:** The Continuing Education Unit (CEU) system is NOT authorized by the ANCC Commission on Accreditation for use. This means contact hours, **NOT CEUs**, will be awarded. The 60 minute contact hour may be a classroom, clinical, or independent study experience. In the case of an independent study, it will be the responsibility of the provider to substantiate the rationale for determining the number of contact hours to be awarded. This may occur by means of a pilot test, calculation of number of pages/words, etc.

Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Minutes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00 – 8:10</td>
<td>Welcome &amp; Introduction</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:10 – 8:30</td>
<td>Pre-test</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:30 – 9:00</td>
<td>Talk # 1</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00 – 9:20</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:20 – 10:10</td>
<td>Talk # 2</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:10–10:25</td>
<td>Break</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:25 -11:15</td>
<td>Supervised Practice</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:15 – 1:55</td>
<td>Panel Discussion</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:55 – 2:10</td>
<td>Break</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:10 – 3:00</td>
<td>Talk # 3</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:00 – 3:15</td>
<td>Questions &amp; Answers</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:15 – 3:30</td>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>350</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**350 minutes divided by 60 = 5.83 Contact Hours**

9. To ensure that all CE activities are free from bias, all presenters/content specialists/contributors and planning committee members must declare conflict of interest. **Note:** This information must be collected during the planning process and documented in the record keeping file for each activity. Learners must be informed if presenters/content specialists/contributors and planning committee members have conflicts of interest.

10. In the event that any form of commercial support is provided for an education activity, the approved provider will maintain control of the education content and disclose to the learners all financial relationships or lack of, between the commercial supporter and the applicant or presenters/content specialists/contributors.
a. Funds from a commercial source should be in the form of an education grant to the applicant of the education activity and must be acknowledged in printed material and brochures.

b. Arrangements for commercial exhibits will not influence the planning of or interfere with the presentation of education activities.

c. Learners will be made aware of the nature of all commercial support of all education activities.

d. Education activities are distinguished as separate from endorsement of commercial products. When commercial products are present, participants will be disclosed that approved status refers only to its CE activities and does not imply ANCC COA & VNA endorsement of any commercial product (disclosure of non-endorsement of products).

e. Education activities that present research conducted by commercial companies will be designed and presented with scientific objectivity.

f. Learners will be informed of any off label use of a commercial product that is presented in education activities. Off-label use refers to using a pharmaceutical agent for a purpose other than the purpose for which it was approved by the FDA.

g. Non-endorsement of products disclosure: Activity participants are advised that approval does not imply endorsement by the VNA or ANCC of any commercial products, service or company referred to in the activity nor of any company subsidizing costs related to the activity. A statement reflecting the fact that approval status refers only to the continuing education activity and does not imply ANCC commission on Accreditation or the Virginia Nurses Association approval or endorsement of any commercial product must be disclosed to participants. One example of this statement is: “This Continuing Nursing Education Activity is underwritten by an unrestricted educational grant from ABC Company. Approval as a provider refers to recognition of educational activities only and does not imply ANCC Commission on Accreditation or the Virginia Nurses Association approval or endorsement of any product.”

11. Approved providers provide continuing education activities and cannot approve their own or another organization’s activities. Providers can only provide activities in which the provider unit nurse planner(s) assume(s) an active role in the entire process, from planning through evaluation. Providers can never approve activities.

12. Adhere to the monitoring requirement (annual report) established by the VNA, which includes a review of the approved provider’s educational design, management of commercial support, provision of appropriate disclosures to learners, and assurance that all required items noted above are kept on file. It is understood that failure to submit or comply with these monitoring requirements can lead to a revocation of approval as a provider.

13. All nurse planners are required to adhere to these operational requirements and have a signature on file.
VIII. Additional Annual Report and Monitoring Instructions after Approval Granted to Approved Providers

The VNA CEA Committee implemented changes to the reporting requirements for approved providers after approval is granted. In an effort to reduce the volume of documentation required at the end of an approved provider’s renewal period, approved providers are required to submit documents annually, due on June 1st. These documents include an Annual Report Form (Form H) and a sample activity given in the previous approval year.

All activities given in the previous approval year should be listed on the Annual Report Form (if a program is a repeat activity, list the activity each and every time it is offered on the form). Only a brief statement regarding the results of the summary evaluation is required on the Annual Report Form. The sample activity should include a completed CEA application, bioforms, certificate, advertisements, evaluation form and other accompanying documents. The documentation must be representative of the programs offered during the year and a different program is to be submitted each year.

References