

BOARD OF NURSING

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ON CONTINUING COMPETENCY REQUIREMENTS FOR HAWAII LPNs and RNs

November 2015

1. **What is continuing competency?**

“Continuing competency” means the long-term educational and professional process by which an individual undertakes and documents with verifiable evidence a personal learning plan that encompasses a periodic self-assessment of personal strengths and weaknesses as present in the individual’s practice as a nurse as well as a commitment to furthering the individual’s professional knowledge relating to the nursing field.

2. **Who is required to complete the continuing competency requirements?**

Unless you fall under one of the exemptions, all LPNs and RNs will be required to complete one of the learning activity options.

3. **Who is exempt from completing the continuing competency requirements?**

If a nurse licensee meets one of the following, they do not have to complete a learning activity as they are exempt from the continuing competency requirements:

- RNs who also maintain an active advanced practice registered nurse license with current national certification in their practice specialty;
- RNs and LPNs who also maintain current national certification, approved by the Board, in their practice role;
- A licensee who graduated or completed pre-licensure requirements from an accredited nursing program recognized by the Board, within 12 months prior to the renewal date of the licensee’s first renewal period. Provided that if a licensee graduated or completed pre-licensure requirements from an accredited nursing program more than 12 months but less than 2 years of the renewal date, the RN or LPN shall be required to obtain one of the following prior to the first renewal period:
 - a) 15 contact hours of continuing education;
 - b) 1 semester credit of post-licensure academic education related to nursing practice from an accredited nursing program;

- c) Completion of a board recognized nurse residency program; or
- d) Other learning activity options from an approved provider recognized by the Board.

4. What if I need an extension to complete the continuing competency requirement?

The Board may extend the deadline for compliance with the continuing competency requirements (completion of a learning activity option) on a case-by-case basis. Prior to the expiration of the license, a nurse licensee may submit a written request for an extension and any documentation to substantiate the reason(s) for the extension based on the following:

- a) Illness, as certified by a physician or osteopathic physician licensed under chapter 453 or advanced practice registered nurse licensed under chapter 457 in the jurisdiction in which the licensee was treated; or
- b) Military service under extended active duty with the armed forces of the United States.

5. When do I have to start taking one of the learning activities? In other words, when does this take effect?

Starting on July 1, 2017, all LPNs and RNs may start completing one of the learning activity options in order to renew his/her license by June 30, 2019. You will have 2 years to complete the learning activity you choose.

6. What are the learning activity options I am able to choose from?

Starting July 1, 2017, you may start taking one of the following activities that must be completed by June 30, 2019 in order to renew your nurse license for the 2019-2021 biennium:

- a) National certification or recertification related to your practice role;
- b) 30 contact hours of continuing education activities;
- c) Completion of a Board approved refresher course;
- d) Completion of a minimum of 2 semester credits of post-licensure academic education related to nursing practice from an accredited nursing program;
- e) Participation as a preceptor for at least one nursing student or employee transitioning into new clinical practice areas for at least 120

hours in a one-to-one relationship as part of an organized preceptorship program, provided that you may precept more than one student or employee during the 120 hours that shall be evidenced by documentation of hours completed and objectives of the preceptorship by the institution supervising the student;

- f) Completion as principal or co-principal investigator of a nursing research project that is an institution review board project or evidence-based practice project that has been pre-approved by the Board;
- g) Authoring or coauthoring a peer reviewed published nursing or health-related article, book, or book chapter;
- h) Developing and conducting a nursing education presentation or presentations totaling a minimum of 5 contact hours of actual organized instruction that qualifies as continuing education;
- i) Completion of a board-recognized nurse residency program; or
- j) A similar type of learning activity option recognized by the Board.

7. Can I take more than one learning activity option? Can I combine the learning activity options as long as it totals 30 hours?

No, you can only complete one learning activity option per biennium. You cannot combine hours of more than one learning activity option.

8. If I have an LPN and RN license, do I have to complete 2 learning activities, one for each license?

At its November 5, 2015 meeting the Board of Nursing determined that if an individual maintains more than one nurse license, i.e. LPN and RN, RN and APRN (no national certification), then the individual must complete one learning activity at the higher license level, i.e. LPN and RN, individual must complete learning activity for RN level, RN and APRN (no national certification), individual must complete one learning activity for APRN level.

9. Once I complete my learning activity option what do I need to submit to the Board?

Upon completion of one of the learning activity options, you must maintain your own copies. The Board may conduct an audit to determine compliance with one of the learning activity options. After the renewal period (June 30, 2019), the Board will be sending out letters to those individuals who were randomly selected. If you are selected, you will be required to submit documentation verifying completion of one of the learning activity options within 60 days of

notification by the Board. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action being taken against your nurse license(s).

10. **What if I'm not selected, do I have to keep my records to show compliance?**

Yes, you must maintain your records for at least 4 years or 2 previous bienniums as the Board may request your records anytime during this period.

11. **What if I don't complete one of the learning activity options and did not request an extension...can I still renew my nurse license?**

When you renew your nurse license in June 2019, you will be asked if you completed the continuing competency requirements in order to renew your nurse license...if you did not complete one of the learning activity options, you may not be able to renew your nurse license or you may have to renew "inactive". Submitting a false statement (swearing that you completed the continuing competency requirements when you did not) when you renew is grounds for disciplinary action against your nurse license.

12. **Can I still practice nursing with an "inactive" license until I complete the continuing competency requirements?**

No, you may not practice nursing with an "inactive" license. You will have to reactivate your license by submitting a reactivation application, applicable fees and documents verifying your completion of one of the learning activity options.

13. **Is my employer obligated to pay or give me time off to complete the continuing competency requirements?**

No, this was not addressed in the original bill. The reason for continuing competency is to ensure that in today's health care environment, knowledge of the latest developments in the profession is a crucial means by which nursing duties are safely and effectively fulfilled. New health care systems are emerging and redoubling the challenges of Boards to assure consumers that licensed nurses shall remain competent for the duration of their practice. This is a benefit for the individual nurse as well as the nurse's employer.