

Georgia Department of Public Health
Guidelines for Implementation of
Continuing Competence—Evidence of Active Nursing Practice
(O.C.G.A. § 43-26-9)

Introduction

In 2013, Georgia law was amended to require licensed nurses to complete continuing competency/education requirements as a condition of licensure renewal. These requirements become effective as part of the 2016 renewal cycle (any license expiring on or after January 31, 2016). Licensees may select one of the options delineated on the attached Georgia Board of Nursing document (Attachment A) to fulfill the continuing competency or education requirements as a condition of licensure renewal.

The intent of the above referenced legislation is to help assure that licensed nurses in Georgia maintain competency in their practice through ongoing learning and development in the nursing profession. Priority should be placed on all nurses choosing Options 1, 2, 3 or 5 to meet the continuing competency requirement, since these options involve formal education or training. The Office of Nursing within the Department of Public Health is approved by the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) as a provider of Continuing Education. The Department submits an application and fee to the ANCC every five years to maintain status as an approved provider. As an approved provider, the Office of Nursing provides a mechanism for districts, counties and state offices to submit applications for training programs to be approved for Continuing Education credit at no fee to the respective district, county or state office. The Office of Nursing provides technical assistance to districts, counties and state offices regarding the continuing education application process.

In 2015, the Georgia Board of Nursing approved a request to allow Public Health Nurses, who meet the *Georgia Department of Public Health Continuing Competency Requirements for Public Health Nurses Who Practice under Nurse Protocol Agreements*, (Attachment B) to use Option 4 to meet the competency requirements. The Option 4 allows Public Health Nurses (Registered Professional Nurses and Advanced Practice Registered Nurses) to submit verification of competency using the respective form found in Attachment A. The form requires an employer/representative to verify that the licensee has practiced at least five hundred (500) hours during the biennial renewal period and has performed his/her duties competently. The use of Option 4 does not mandate the employer/representative to approve the use of Option 4. It is up to each district to decide whether Option 4 may be used by public health nurses within the district.

Steps for Implementation of Option 4

1. Since the employer is not mandated to approve the use of Option 4 for any licensed nurse to meet licensure renewal requirements, each district should inform the licensed nurses within the district the extent to which the use of Option 4 is going to be allowed to be used by nurses within the respective district (e.g., allowed for certain nurses who meet the district's specified criteria, allowed for any nurse, or not allowed at all).
2. Regardless of the extent to which a district allows the use of Option 4 to meet licensure requirements, the district should inform new nurse employees about the district's policy regarding the use of Option 4 during the onboarding process.
3. If Option 4 is allowed to be used by nurses in a district, there must be documentation to support that the nurse has worked at least 500 hours during the biennial renewal period and that the nurse has met the criteria regarding practice under nurse protocol during the biennial renewal period, as delineated in the Attachment B.
4. If Option 4 is allowed to be used by nurses in a district, the district should specify the appropriate agency representative who will sign the Board of Nursing verification form found in Attachment A.
5. If the Option 4 is not allowed in a district, the nurses must choose one of the other options delineated in Attachment A to meet licensure renewal requirements of the Georgia Board of Nursing.



Georgia Board of Nursing

Continuing Competency/Education Plan Options for Registered Nurses

Licensees may select one of the following options to fulfill the continuing competency/education requirements. Licensees should submit all documentation to CE Broker using the instructions contained on the Board's website. Licensees who submit a renewal application and do not complete the continuing competency requirements will be considered to have submitted an incomplete renewal and the license will not be renewed.

Please Select From One Of The Following Five Options				
The selected option must be completed during the biennial renewal period				
Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5
<p>Completion of thirty (30) continuing education hours by a Board approved provider [O.C.G.A. § 43-26-9(b.1)(1)].</p> <p>Please submit transcripts or certificates of completion documenting thirty (30) continuing education hours completed during the biennial renewal period. Transcripts and certificates should include the provider's approval or accreditation information and the number of contact hours awarded.</p> <p>Please visit the Board's website at www.sos.ga.gov/plb/nursing for a list of acceptable providers.</p>	<p>Maintenance of certification or recertification by a national certifying body recognized by the Board. [O.C.G.A. § 43-26-9(b.1)(2)].</p> <p>Please submit evidence of certification during the biennial renewal period.</p> <p>Please visit the Board's website at www.sos.ga.gov/plb/nursing, click on "Licensure" and view the Continuing Education Packet for a complete list of Board approved certifying bodies.</p>	<p>Completion of an accredited academic program of study in nursing or a related field as recognized by the Board [O.C.G.A. § 43-26-9(b.1)(3)].</p> <p>Course of study must be a minimum of two credit hours. Acceptable areas of study include respiratory therapy, informatics, health care administration, and business administration.</p> <p>Please submit transcripts showing completion of course(s) during the biennial renewal period. Please include course description(s).</p>	<p>Verification of competency by a health care facility or entity licensed under O.C.G.A. §31-7 or by a physician's office that is part of a health system and at least five hundred (500) hours practiced as evidenced by employer certification on a form approved by the Board [O.C.G.A. § 43-26-9(b.1)(4)].</p> <p>Please have your employer complete the verification of competence/active practice form.</p>	<p>Completion of a Board approved reentry program or graduation from a nursing education program [O.C.G.A. § 43-26-9(b.1)(5)].</p> <p>Please submit documentation of completion of a Board approved reentry program or graduation from an approved nursing education program within the biennial renewal period.</p>



Georgia Board of Nursing
Acceptable Providers for Continuing Education
for Registered Nurses or Licensed Practical Nurses

Acceptable continuing education may be taken in a conventional classroom setting, through online courses, professional journals, correspondence or independent study.

1. Any provider, recognized by a national credentialing body, offering certification in the licensed nurse's specialty area of practice.

Examples of National Nurse Credentialing/Certification bodies include but are not limited to:

- American Nurses Credentialing Center Commission on Certification (ANCC)
- Oncology Nursing Certification Corporation (ONCC)
- Board of Certification for Emergency Nursing (BCEN)

2. Any provider, recognized by a national credentialing body, recognized by the Georgia Board of Nursing in Rule 410-12-.12, offering certification to advanced practice nurses.

Examples of National Nurse Credentialing/Certification bodies include but are not limited to:

- American Nurses Credentialing Center Commission on Certification
- American Midwifery Certification Board
- National Board on Certification and Recertification of Nurse Anesthetists

3. Georgia Nurses Association ("GNA"), including offerings given by the GNA Continuing Education Provider/Approver Unit. Information regarding the Georgia Nurses Association can be found at:

- www.georgianurses.org

4. Area Health Education Centers (AHEC) in Georgia or any state AHEC that is a member of the National AHEC Organization. Information on Georgia AHEC can be found at: www.gru.edu/ahec

5. American Nurses Association (ANA), or ANY ANA affiliated state nurses association provider/approver unit

- ANA – www.nursingworld.org
- GNA – www.georgianurses.org

6. National League for Nursing (NLN)

- www.nln.org

7. National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN)

- www.ncsbn.org

8. Employer sponsored continuing education programs having a minimum of one course objective. Unless the program is accredited through one of the other bodies mentioned on this document, employer sponsored continuing education may only be used for up to 50% of total contact hours.

9. Any provider of professional continuing education for health care professionals.

Examples include offerings related to specialty areas of nursing practice such as research, case management, health policy, forensics, mental health, or complementary alternative therapies offered by bodies including but not limited to:

- Commission for Case Manager Certification (CCMC)
- Healthcare Quality Certification Board (HQCB)
- American Legal Nurse Consultant Certification Board (ALNCCB)

10. Professional Journals (i.e. *The American Journal of Nursing*, *Nursing 2013*, *Nursing Management* and *The Nurse Practitioner*) offering continuing education approved by appropriate bodies including but not limited to:

- American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) www.nursingworld.org/ancc
- American Association of Critical Care Nurses (AACN) www.aacn.org

11. Any provider recognized by another state board of nursing within the United States.

Activities NOT accepted as Continuing Education

Offerings designed for lay persons

Offerings less than 30 minutes in duration

On-the-job orientation

On-the-job training related to new policies, procedures or equipment

Other educational activities not sufficiently professional in character to reasonably qualify as continuing education.

Definition of Continuing Education Units and Contact Hours

The Georgia Board of Nursing accepts either contact hours or CEUs (in any combination) to fulfill the continuing education requirements of O.C.G.A. §43-26-9(b.1)(1)

- One Contact Hour is equal to 60 minutes of instruction.
- 0.1 CEU is equal to 60 minutes of Instruction.
- 1 CEU is equal to ten hours of instruction.

Submitting Documentation of Completion of Continuing Competency Activities

Licensees Submitting Documentation for Licensure Renewal - Documentation of completion of continuing competency activities should be submitted to CE Broker (www.cebroke.com) using the instructions contained on the Board's website (www.sos.ga.gov/plb/nursing).

Applicants for Reinstatement of Licensure - Documentation should be submitted to your licensing analyst.



Georgia Board of Nursing

Continuing Competence – Evidence of Active Nursing Practice

For Use By Registered Nurses Only

O.C.G.A. § 43-26-9(b.1)(4) provides that applicants for licensure renewal as a registered nurse may submit verification of competency by a health care facility or entity licensed under O.C.G.A. §31-7 or by a physician's office that is part of a health system. The licensee must have practiced at least five hundred (500) hours during the biennial renewal period and the employer must complete the certification form below.

Name	License Number
I certify that the above licensee has worked at least five hundred (500) hours during the period of _____ (MMYY) through _____ (MMYY) and has performed his/her duties competently.	
As the employer/employer representative, I verify that the facility or entity is licensed under O.C.G.A. §31-7 or is a physician's office that is part of a health system.	
Employer/Representative Name	Date
Employer/Representative Signature	Title
Name of Company	
Telephone	Email

You may also find it helpful to use this link (<http://dch.georgia.gov/gamap2care%C2%AE-find-facility>) to visit the website for the Georgia Department of Community Health. At that site, use the "Find a Facility" search tool to search for licensed health care related facilities licensed by that agency. If your facility is not licensed under O.C.G.A. § 31-7 and is not included on that site, you may not use Option Four to satisfy the continuing competency requirements.

Employees of the Georgia Department of Public Health may use this form to satisfy Option Four of the continuing competency requirements.

For licensees completing the license renewal process, this form should be submitted to CE Broker (www.cebroker.com) using the instructions contained on the Board's website (www.sos.ga.gov/plb/nursing).