

EDUCATIONAL DESIGN PROCESS

This chapter outlines the process of developing and/or evaluating individual educational activities according to ANCC Accreditation Program criteria.

The educational design expectations described in this chapter and applicable at the individual activity level are fundamental to high-quality continuing nursing education. Accordingly, applicants must ensure that these expectations are met and that the ANCC criteria for accreditation are applied in such a manner as to ensure the applicant's Provider or Approver Unit offers individual educational activities that meet these criteria or approves other organizations and/or individuals that provide individual educational activities that meet these criteria.

ANCC's Accreditation Program specifies a comprehensive set of educational design criteria to ensure that individual education activities are effectively planned, implemented, and evaluated according to educational standards and adult learning principles.

CNE involves "systematic professional learning experiences designed to augment the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of nurses, and therefore enrich nurses' contributions to quality healthcare . . ." (ANA, 2010, p. 43). The knowledge, skills, or attitudes gained from CNE activities can be applied regardless of the activity participant's employer. See Figure 4 ("Awarding Contact Hours") and Table 3 ("Evaluating Activities for Awarding Continuing Education Credit").

In contrast, staff development activities are typically designed to enhance performance in participants' current job roles and are based on a specific facility's/organization's policies and procedures, equipment, and resources. When staff development learning activities convey new content knowledge that would be transferable to other job settings, the organization may be able to award contact hours. Some in-service programs, based on their content, may include new, transferable knowledge.

Staff development departments may offer both CNE activities and in-service activities. For instance, orientation programs are typically facility-specific or organization-specific. Contact hours may not be awarded for the employer-specific content.

Contact hours may not be awarded for review or refresher courses that focus on functioning in a particular facility or reinforcing basic knowledge. However, contact hours may be awarded for refresher courses that provide nurses re-entering the job market with advanced knowledge or a new skill set required to function in the role as an RN.

Types of activities:

- ▶ **Provider-directed, provider-paced:** The provider controls all aspects of the learning activity. The provider determines the learning objectives based on a needs assessment, the content of the learning activity, the method by which it is presented, and evaluation methods. (Examples include live activities and live Webinars.)
- ▶ **Provider-directed, learner-paced:** The provider controls the content of the learning activity, including the learning objectives based on a needs assessment, the content of the learning activity, the method by which it is presented, and the evaluation methods. The learner determines the pace at which the learner engages in the learning activity. (Examples include print articles, online courses, e-books, and self-learning modules/independent studies.)

contact hour

A unit of measurement that describes 60 minutes of an organized learning activity. One contact hour = 60 minutes.

continuing nursing education (CNE) activities

Those learning activities intended to build upon the educational and experiential bases of the professional RN for the enhancement of practice, education, administration, research, or theory development, to the end of improving the health of the public and RNs' pursuit of their professional career goals.

in-service educational activities

Activities intended to assist the professional nurse to acquire, maintain, and/or increase competence in fulfilling the assigned responsibilities specific to the expectations of the employer.

- ▶ **Learner-directed, learner-paced:** The learner takes the initiative in identifying his or her learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and material resources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes. The learner also determines the pace at which he or she engages in the learning activity. Learner-directed activities may be developed with or without the help of others, but they are engaged in by only one individual.

Planning Process: Determining Ability to Award Contact Hours

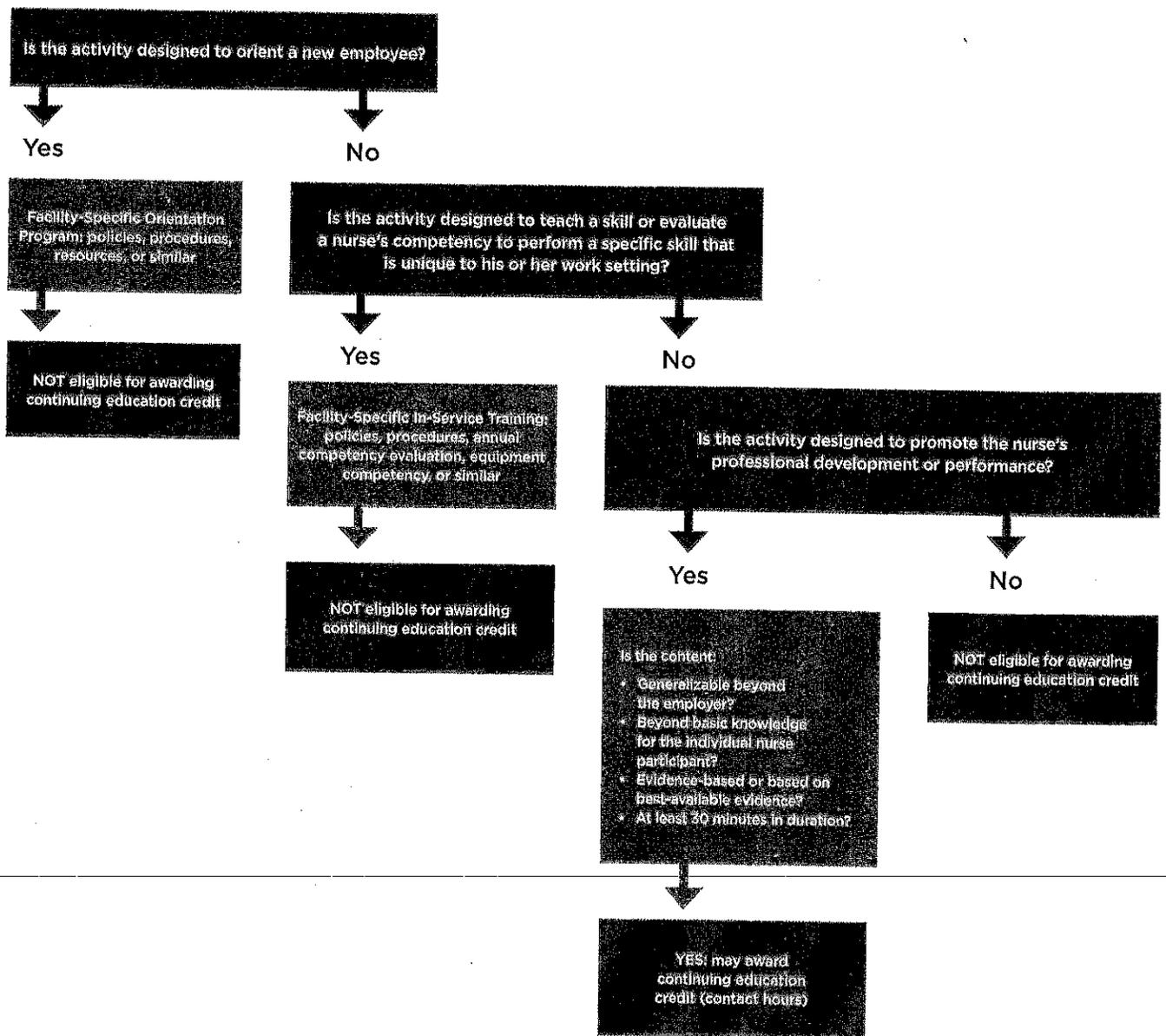


FIGURE 4. Awarding Contact Hours

ANCC Guidelines: Evaluating Activities for Awarding Continuing Education Credit

Educational activities must meet the following guidelines in order to be eligible for awarding of continuing education credit (contact hours):

- ▶ Content must be beyond basic knowledge
- ▶ Content must be generalizable regardless of employer of the nurse
- ▶ Content must enhance professional development or performance of the nurse

Determination of whether to award continuing education credit may be dependent on the learner, for example:

- ▶ If the course is the same course repeated every year for nurses, the nurse has taken the course previously, and no new content is included, it should not be classified as continuing education
- ▶ If the class is being offered to a new nurse and the content is new and is generalizable knowledge, it can be classified as continuing education
- ▶ If the class is being repeated to nurses who have taken the course previously and a portion is new and updated information, the new information can be classified as continuing education

Content must be:

- ▶ Evidence-based or based on the best-available evidence
- ▶ Presented without promotion or bias
- ▶ At least 30 minutes in duration

An educational activity may include content that is eligible for continuing education credit and content that is not eligible for continuing education credit. In that circumstance, continuing education credit may be awarded for the content of the activity that is appropriate, based on the guidelines stated above.

TABLE 3. Evaluating Activities for Awarding Continuing Education Credit

The fundamental basis for all CNE activities is the educational design process. This chapter outlines the required components of an individual education activity in accordance with ANCC accreditation criteria. Whether used by a provider to develop activities or by an approver to evaluate activities, the educational design process remains consistent.