



ANCC NCPD Accredited Provider Policy and Operations Manual

Nursing Continuing Professional Development Accreditation



American Nurses Credentialing Center

NCPD Accredited Provider Policy and Operations Manual, Version 1.0 (2nd Ed.), July 1, 2025

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Nursing Continuing Professional Development Accreditation



ANCC NCPD ACCREDITED PROVIDER POLICY AND OPERATIONS MANUAL

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DISCLAIMER

Adhering to all of the processes within the *ANCC NCPD Accredited Provider Policy and Operations Manual* facilitates organizational accreditation but does not, in and of itself, guarantee achievement of accreditation.

NOTICE

Changes may be made to the ANCC NCPD Accreditation Program criteria and the *ANCC NCPD Accredited Provider Policy and Operations Manual*. Applicants and accredited organizations must confirm that they are using the most current edition of the *ANCC NCPD Accredited Provider Policy and Operations Manual* and other up-to-date resources to ensure that they are demonstrating adherence to the current ANCC NCPD Accreditation™ standards.

REFERENCE

ANCC. (2025). *NCPD accredited provider policy and operations manual: Version 1.0 (2nd Ed.)*. American Nurses Enterprise.

EFFECTIVE DATE – JULY 1, 2025

Accredited organizations and applicants are to use this manual effective immediately. All other manuals and memos are to be archived.

PREFACE

It is a distinct honor to present the updated Policy and Operations Manual for the ANCC Nursing Continuing Professional Development (NCPD) Accreditation Program, developed in collaboration with the Commission on Accreditation in Nursing Continuing Professional Development (COA-NCPD). This policy and operations manual outlines the most current Nursing Continuing Professional Development Accreditation policies and operational expectations for Accredited Providers. While the format and presentation have been refreshed, including the new American Nurses Enterprise branding, the foundational elements of the accreditation process remain grounded in evidence-based standards.

The ANCC COA-NCPD has completed a comprehensive review of the current ANCC Nursing Continuing Professional Development Accreditation criteria and requirements for Accredited Providers. Following this review, the COA-NCPD has approved significant revisions to the criteria, including updates to individual activity requirements. These updates are designed to enhance the quality and relevance of the continuing professional development activities offered by Accredited Providers, thereby benefiting both the providers and the nurses they serve. This is the first substantive update to the criteria since 2015.

These updates, a result of extensive stakeholder engagement, including feedback from our annual customer satisfaction survey; input from the ANCC NCPD Accreditation Program team, volunteer appraisers, and commissioners, and direct conversations held in various forums, reflect the evolving landscape of continuing professional development globally, address current workforce development needs, and provide greater clarity and alignment across accrediting bodies in the health professions.

The ANCC Nursing Continuing Professional Development Accreditation™ plays a vital role in supporting the lifelong learning needs of professional registered nurses by ensuring that continuing education activities are free from commercial influence and grounded in best practices. Accredited NCPD, as a reliable and trusted resource, enables nurses to sustain competence and advance their professional practice within an increasingly complex healthcare environment.

The governance of the ANCC Nursing Continuing Professional Development Accreditation Program is provided by the volunteer COA-NCPD. The COA-NCPD, as the governing body, is responsible for providing strategic direction for the development of criteria and making all accreditation decisions. Its members bring expertise from academia, education providers, leadership, and the interprofessional team and are comprised of domestic and international nursing organizations and government agencies. This structure ensures that the program is guided by the best practices and the latest developments in the field.

This updated manual also features a chapter dedicated to highlighting the structure, educational design, and outcomes that inform how the Accredited Provider should approach its expected functioning and activity planning while also contributing to improvements in nursing practice and patient or system outcomes.

On behalf of the ANCC Nursing Continuing Professional Development Accreditation program team and the COA-NCPD, we deeply appreciate your unwavering commitment to excellence and your invaluable contribution to this vibrant community of practice. The Power of Nursing™ is about leading learning.

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Joint Accreditation™ Programs, American Nurses Credentialing Center

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CHAPTER 1

OVERVIEW OF THE ANCC NCPD ACCREDITATION PROGRAM

Accreditation

The voluntary process by which a nongovernmental agency or organization appraises and grants time-limited accredited status to institutions and/or programs or services that meet predetermined structure, process, and outcome criteria.

The American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) Nursing Continuing Professional Development (NCPD) Accreditation™ Program recognizes organizations that have met established standards to provide NCPD that has a positive impact on nursing practice and/or patient outcomes. The ANCC NCPD Accreditation Program is committed to ensuring the integrity of the accreditation process through systematic, evidence-based evaluation of application materials submitted by qualified applicants for Accredited Provider status.

HISTORY AND STRUCTURE OF NCPD ACCREDITATION

Changes affecting nursing practice require registered nurses (RNs) to engage in a lifelong process of active participation in professional development that fosters growth and learning. Engaging in NCPD through educational activities and intervention enhances professional practice and ultimately improves the health of the public. The American Nurses Association (ANA), the national professional association of RNs, has emphasized the importance of professional development throughout its history.

ANCC's Accreditation Program originated in 1974 when the ANA House of Delegates approved a resolution to establish an accreditation program for Continuing Nursing Education (CNE) (Abruzzese & Hinthorn, 1987). The first formal accreditation review occurred the following year, and by the late 1970s, a model had been instituted to accredit CNE providers (DeSilets, 1998).

Over the past 50 years, the structure of the accreditation program has evolved. In 1991, ANCC became a separately governed and incorporated organization, and the accreditation activities originally housed in ANA were transferred to the ANCC and the accreditation program was called ANCC Primary Accreditation. Since that time, the ANCC Commission on Accreditation, now referred to as the ANCC Commission on Accreditation in NCPD (COA-NCPD), has governed the accreditation program.

The members of the COA-NCPD have expertise in nursing continuing professional development, adult education, research, standards setting, academia, competencies, and interprofessional continuing education.

In 2010, the ANCC Primary Accreditation Program collaborated with the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) and the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education to develop accreditation standards that addressed continuing education for the interprofessional team and began awarding Joint Accreditation to recognize organizations providing interprofessional continuing education for the healthcare team.

In 2017, Cox et al. noted that continuing professional development was preferred over continuing education because it captured more active modes of learning and articulated that lifelong learning is needed for growth and development. The authors also recognized that not all health professions have a graduate-level or terminal degree component, meaning that learning is neither fixed nor time bound (Cox et al., 2017). Given this evolution in lifelong learning, the COA-NCPD considered a program name change that signifies the growth and development of RNs throughout their career.

In 2019, the ANCC Primary Accreditation Program changed its name to the ANCC NCPD Accreditation™ Program to reflect the various types of educational content that are eligible for accreditation, and NCPD on a continuum. The program title change and the use of the term “nursing continuing professional development (NCPD)” does not negate the term “continuing nursing education (CNE)”, which is still acceptable for use when referring to educational activities.

In July 2019, ANCC successfully introduced an alternative method to awarding CE credit using an outcome-based CE model® (OB-CE®). The model was designed to integrate a learner/team-directed educational approach that incorporates performance/quality improvement expectations into a learning experience that can positively impact nursing and healthcare team practice, patient, system, and/or public health outcomes.

As healthcare becomes increasingly outcome driven, the OB-CE® conceptual framework specifically addresses the level of learner engagement, expectations for assessment and evaluation, and the potential impact on performance beyond self-report. All ANCC NCPD Accredited Providers are eligible to fully design, implement, and evaluate educational activities utilizing the OB-CE® model.

In December 2020, the ANCC COA-NCPD endorsed and adopted the new interprofessional Standards for Integrity and Independence in Accredited Continuing Education. ANCC endorsed and adopted the Standards for Integrity and Independence in Accredited Continuing Education to foster collaboration among the healthcare professions and to continue to ensure that accredited CE reflects quality and promotes trust on a global scale (ANCC, 2020).

ANCC Conceptual Model for Outcome-Based CE[®] Credit



BEHAVIORS

Impact on practice, patient, and/or system outcomes

JUDGMENTAL

Integrate into practice

ATTITUDES

Demonstrate in an education setting

BELIEFS

Apply knowledge and skills

VALUE

Articulate knowledge and/or skills

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

(e.g., culture, resources, institutional, structure, systems issues)

Outcome-Based Continuing Education Model © American Nurses Credentialing Center. All rights reserved.

All ANCC Accredited Providers are eligible to fully design, implement, and evaluate educational activities utilizing the OB-CE[®] model.

Accredited Provider

An eligible organization credentialed by ANCC after having submitted to an in-depth analysis to determine its capacity to provide quality nursing continuing professional development over an extended period of time.

In 2025, the COA-NCPD conducted an extensive review of the ANCC Nursing Continuing Professional Development Accreditation criteria. Leveraging their expertise and insights from recent literature, they updated the criteria to keep ANCC NCPD Accreditation at the forefront of continuing professional development. This revision seeks to preserve innovation while improving clarity by removing, refining, or streamlining unnecessary requirements, thereby reducing administrative burden and supporting high-quality educational design principles.



Today, ANCC’s NCPD Accreditation Program recognizes those organizations that have met the required standards to deliver NCPD. To achieve this recognition, an eligible organization engages in a comprehensive analysis of its structure, processes, and outcomes. ISO 9001:2015 is a worldwide standard that sets requirements for a strong quality management system. ANCC is the only nursing credentialing agency to attain ISO 9001:2015 certification.



FOUNDATIONAL DOCUMENTS

A variety of core foundational documents inform the evidence-based standards for applicant organizations and Accredited Providers. These documents include the following:

FROM THE AMERICAN NURSES ASSOCIATION

American Nurses Association. (2021). *Nursing: scope and standards of practice*. Washington, DC: American Nurses Association.

American Nurses Credentialing Center's Commission on Accreditation. (2020). *The value of accreditation for nursing continuing professional development: quality education contributing to quality outcomes*. Silver Spring, MD: American Nurses Credentialing Center.

FROM TEACHING-LEARNING PRINCIPLES, EDUCATION THEORY, PEDAGOGY, AND ANDRAGOGICAL LITERATURE

Bloom, B. S., Hastings, J. T., & Madaus, G. F. (1971). *Handbook on formative and summative evaluation of student learning*. McGraw-Hill.

Committee on Developments in the Science of Learning. (2000). *How people learn: Brain, mind, experience, and school*. National Academies Press.

Dickerson, P., & Graebe, J. (2018). Analyzing gaps to design educational interventions. *The Journal of Continuing Education in Nursing*, 49 (1), 4–6. <https://doi.org/10.3928/00220124-20180102-02>.

Freeth, D., Hammick, M., Reeves, I., & Barr, H. (2005). *Effective interprofessional education: Development, delivery & evaluation*. Blackwell Publishing, Ltd.

Graebe, J. (2019). Continuing professional development: Utilizing competency-based education and the American Nurses Credentialing Center outcome-based continuing education model®. *The Journal of Continuing Education in Nursing*, 50 (3), 100–102. <https://doi.org/10.3928/00220124-20190218-02>.

Harper, M. G., & Maloney, P. (Eds.). (2022). *Nursing professional development: Scope and standards of practice (4th ed.)*. Association for Nursing Professional Development.

Hodges, B. D., & Lingard, L. (Eds.). (2012). *The question of competence: Reconsidering medical education in the twenty-first century*. Cornell University Press.

Institute of Medicine. (2009). *Redesigning continuing education in the health professions*. National Academies Press.

Institute of Medicine. (2010). *The future of nursing: Leading change, advancing health*. National Academies Press.

Interprofessional Education Collaborative. (2023). *IPEC Core Competencies for Interprofessional Collaborative Practice: Version 3*. Washington, DC: Interprofessional Education Collaborative.



FOUNDATIONAL DOCUMENTS CONTINUED

- Kelly, M., & Moulton, J. (2021). The role of the ANCC Accredited Provider Program director in leadership and facilitating nurse planner learning. *The Journal of Continuing Education in Nursing*, 52 (6), 257–259. <https://doi.org/10.3928/00220124-20210514-02>.
- Mlambo, M., Silén, C., & McGrath, C. (2021). Lifelong learning and nurses' continuing professional development, a metasynthesis of the literature. *BMC Nursing*, 20 (1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12912-021-00579-2>.
- Moore, D. E., Green, J. S., & Gallis, H. A. (2009). Achieving desired results and improved outcomes: Integrating planning and assessment throughout learning activities. *Journal of Continuing Education in the Health Professions*, 29 (1), 1–15.
- Moulton, J. & Dickerson, P. (2022). Implementing the standards for integrity and independence in accredited nursing continuing professional development. *The Journal of Continuing Education in Nursing*, 53 (2), 52–54. <https://doi.org/10.3928/00220124-20220104-02>.
- Moulton, J., Richetti, D. A., & Dickerson, P. (2022). ANCC endorses and adopts the standards for integrity and independence in accredited continuing education. *The Journal of Continuing Education in Nursing*, 53 (1), 5–7. <https://doi.org/10.3928/00220124-20211210-03>.
- National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine 2021. *The Future of Nursing 2020-2030: Charting a Path to Achieve Health Equity*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/25982>.
- Pilcher, J., & Graebe, J. (2018). Strategies to promote learning and engage participants. *Journal of Continuing Education in Nursing*, 49 (5), 197–199. <https://doi.org/10.3928/00220124-20180417-02>.
- Price, S., & Reichert, C. (2017). The importance of continuing professional development to career satisfaction and patient care: Meeting the needs of novice to mid- to late-career nurses throughout their career span. *Administrative Sciences*, 7 (2), 17.
- Roy, J., & Graebe, J. (2025). The American Nurses Credentialing Center's outcome-based continuing education model: Competency-based education methodology in accredited nursing continuing professional development. *Practice Innovations*. 10(2), 120–131. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pri0000275>
- Roy, J., & Graebe, J. (2025). Nursing Continuing Professional Development and Active Learning Strategies. *The Journal of Continuing Education in Nursing*, 56 (4), 129–131.
- Schumacher, C., Shinnars, J., & Graebe, J. (2018). Evaluating the effectiveness of educational activities: Part one. *Journal of Continuing Education in Nursing*, 49 (6): 245–247. <https://doi.org/10.3928/00220124-20180517-02>.
- Sousa, D. A. (2011). *How the brain learns (4th ed.)*. SAGE Ltd.
- World Health Organization. (2010). Framework for action on interprofessional education & collaborative practice. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/framework-for-action-on-interprofessional-education-collaborative-practice>.

Nursing Professional Development

A specialized nursing practice that facilitates development and growth of nurses and other healthcare personnel along the continuum from novice to expert.

MISSION STATEMENT

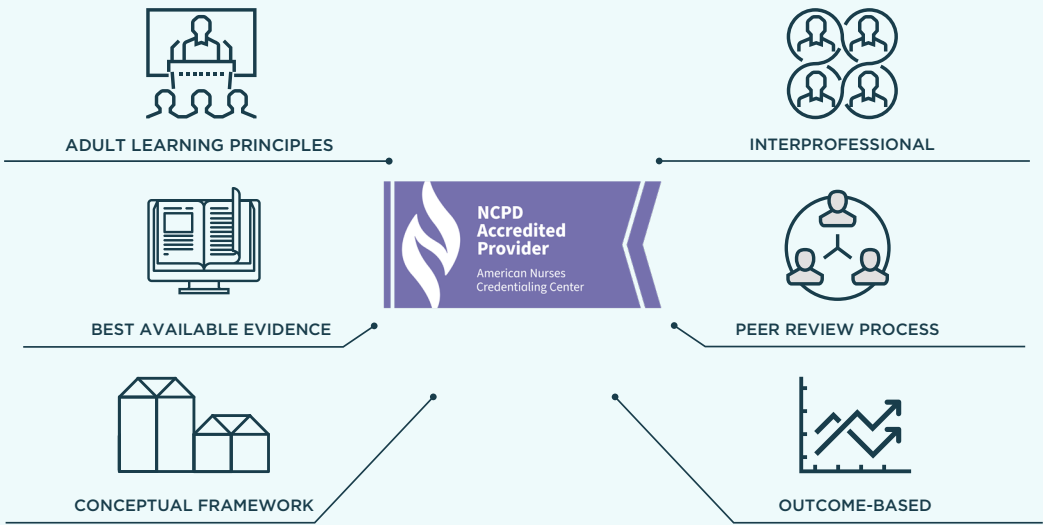
In November 2021, the COA-NCPD created its first mission statement as it relates to the ANCC NCPD Accreditation Program. This mission statement was developed to align with the ANCC and ANA Enterprise mission statements.

The mission of the ANCC NCPD Accreditation Program is to advance excellence in the profession of nursing and healthcare teams through evidence-based, outcome-driven, continuing professional development.

This mission statement underscores the guiding principles and core values of the ANCC NCPD Accreditation Program. Accredited organizations have chosen to adhere to rigorous, evidence-based standards in the conduct of their operations and the planning, implementation, and evaluation of learning activities. Quality nursing continuing professional development experiences enrich learning outcomes that support professional development and enhance ability to deliver quality care.

The ANCC NCPD Accreditation Program accredits organizations globally that demonstrate excellence in NCPD. Organizations seek ANCC NCPD Accreditation because it reflects a commitment to value, excellence, and quality. The ANCC NCPD Accreditation Program uses evidence-based standards for organizations developing NCPD. Educational activities are designed to improve the knowledge, competence (skill), practice performance, and/or patient/system outcomes of RNs and the healthcare teams in which they work. To achieve accreditation as

BENEFITS OF ANCC NCPD ACCREDITATION



an ANCC NCPD Accredited Provider, an eligible organization must also engage in a comprehensive analysis of its structure, processes, and performance outcomes using the ANCC NCPD Accreditation Conceptual Framework®. ANCC NCPD Accreditation for Providers recognizes national and international organizations that offer quality educational activities that meet the high standards of ANCC's accreditation criteria for NCPD.

ANCC NCPD Accreditation requires that each organization have a graduate-prepared professional RN providing leadership over the planning, implementing and evaluating of each NCPD activity. Further, the standards require that content is designed to be outcome-driven, based on the best available evidence, and free of bias and influence. Novakovich (2017) noted a measurable difference in how learners perceived the quality of ANCC accredited NCPD activities, citing impact to practice as a key differentiator.

A set of core values is fundamental to
the ANCC NCPD Accreditation Program.



INTEGRITY
COMPETENCE
MENTORING
ACCOUNTABILITY
RESPONSIVENESS
QUALITY
INNOVATION
INTERPROFESSIONALISM

- Maintain the **integrity** of the accreditation process through a consistent, fair, and honest application of Accreditation Program criteria;
- Promote and maintain **competence** in relation to standards, criteria, and components of lifelong learning;
- Foster an effective and thorough **quality** peer-review process for all applicant organizations;
- **Mentor** organizations responsible for providing or approving NCPD to ensure the delivery of high-quality educational activities;
- Maintain a high level of **accountability** and **responsiveness** to the community of interest in the accreditation process;
- Value and encourage **innovation** in the accreditation process and in the delivery of nursing continuing professional development; and
- Promote **interprofessional** activities by entities that hold accreditations for more than one health-related profession and where nursing is a major participant.

THE ANCC NCPD ACCREDITATION CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK®

The ANCC NCPD Accreditation Conceptual Framework® is based on the quality improvement framework of Donabedian's triad (structure, process, and outcome) (Donabedian, 1966). The original Donabedian framework of structure, process, and outcome measures is a well-accepted strategy for evaluation of healthcare quality. Donabedian's work would later underscore the principles within healthcare quality performance indicators — the Quadruple Aim (formerly referred to as the Triple Aim). Although Donabedian's work focused primarily on healthcare quality in hospitals, the model is also applicable to the design, implementation, and evaluation of quality in nursing continuing professional development. The Donabedian model for accreditation is designed around the core principle that education is a contributor to the professional development of the RN.

The accreditation criteria are organized by the domains in Donabedian's framework, drawing the connection between the triad and the ANCC NCPD Accreditation criteria requirements. Three criteria domains within the conceptual model address structural capacity, educational design process, and quality outcomes. These domains provide the framework within which accredited organizations design, implement, and evaluate nursing continuing professional development activities. Accredited organizations also have the accountability and responsibility for establishing and working to achieve outcomes within their educational activities. The Donabedian conceptual model for NCPD accreditation demonstrates the synergy between an organization's operational improvements and the impact of professional development that is determined by the accredited organization in relation to its overall mission and strategic plan.

Criteria within the domain of Structural Capacity

(structure domain) are used to evaluate the infrastructure of an organization and its capacity to function as an Accredited Provider.

Criteria within the domain of Educational Design Process (process domain) are used to evaluate the quality of educational planning, implementation, and evaluation.

Criteria within the domain of Quality Outcomes (outcome domain) are used to evaluate the impact of NCPD on the professional practice of nursing and/or patient outcomes.



CHAPTER 2

ANCC NCPD ACCREDITATION PROGRAM POLICIES

This chapter outlines the policies for applicants and Accredited Providers, including eligibility, application process and requirements, accreditation decisions, appeals, terminations, annual reporting, and responsibilities of the Accredited Provider.

Eligibility

An applicant's ability to meet the requirements established by ANCC as a prerequisite to evaluation for accreditation or reaccreditation in order to be considered qualified to apply for accreditation.

POLICY 1

ACCREDITED PROVIDER ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Organizations interested in attaining accreditation must complete the Intent to Apply Application and meet all **eligibility** requirements. Applications received from organizations that do not meet eligibility requirements will be rejected without substantive review. For steps on how to apply, refer to Chapter 5: The Accreditation Application Process. An organization can only become an Accredited Provider if it meets the structural and operational components of the Accredited Provider as outlined below.

To be eligible to apply to become an Accredited Provider, an applicant must:

- Be one of the following:
 - American Nurses Association organizational affiliate,
 - College or university,
 - Constituent and State Nurses Association (C/SNA) of the ANA,
 - Federal Nursing Service (FNS),
 - Healthcare facility,
 - Health-related organization,
 - Multidisciplinary educational group,
 - Professional nursing education group,
 - Specialty nursing organization (SNO), or
 - National nursing association/organization.
- Be administratively and operationally responsible for coordinating the entire process of planning, implementing, and evaluating NCPD activities in compliance with ANCC NCPD Accreditation Program criteria;

Accredited Provider Program Director

A registered nurse who holds a current, active license with no practice restrictions (or international equivalent) and a graduate degree, with either the baccalaureate or graduate degree in nursing (or international equivalent), who has the authority within an Accredited Provider to ensure adherence to the ANCC NCPD Accreditation Program criteria in the provision of NCPD.

- Have the infrastructure in place to operate as an Accredited Provider;
- Be in compliance with all applicable international, federal, state, and local laws and regulations that affect the Accredited Provider’s ability to meet ANCC NCPD Accreditation Program criteria;
- Be in compliance with ethical standards as identified in the ANA Code of Ethics for Nurses and ethical standards for business operations;
- Not be an ineligible company as defined in the glossary and the Standards for Integrity and Independence in Accredited Continuing Education;
- Be operational using ANCC NCPD Accreditation Program criteria for a minimum of six months prior to application; and
- Have completed, **if an initial applicant**, the process of assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation **for at least three separate educational activities** provided at separate and distinct events within the past 12 months:
 - With the direct involvement of a Nurse Planner,
 - That adhere to the accreditation criteria,
 - That were each a minimum of one hour (60 minutes) in length (contact hours may or may not have been offered), and
 - That were not jointly provided.

Accredited Provider Program Director Role and Responsibility Description

Licensure and Educational Requirements

- Is an RN with a current, unrestricted nursing license (or international equivalent), meaning that they have an active RN license with no practice restrictions;
- Holds a graduate degree; and
- Holds a baccalaureate degree or higher in nursing (or international equivalent).

AP-PD Role and Responsibility Competencies

- Compliance Oversight: Demonstrates the authority to ensure the Accredited Provider operates in full compliance with the ANCC NCPD Accreditation Program criteria, addressing all operational aspects of the organization.

Nursing Continuing Professional Development (NCPD) 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, with the end goal of improving the health of the public or an RN's pursuit of their professional goals.

- **Operational Accountability:** Ensures adherence to the ANCC NCPD Accreditation Program criteria in all facets of nursing continuing professional development activities, maintaining alignment with organizational operations as an **Accredited Provider**.
 - Demonstrates a thorough understanding of the ANCC NCPD Accreditation Program criteria.
 - Ensures all educational activities adhere to the standards for planning, implementing, and evaluating continuing professional development activities.
 - Maintains documentation to support compliance with accreditation requirements.
 - Identifies professional practice gaps and analyzes the underlying causes.
 - Selects appropriate established competencies from professional sources that align with the professional practice gap and underlying educational need of an educational activity.
 - Develops measurable learning outcomes aligned with the identified practice gaps, underlying educational needs, and identified professional competencies.
 - Designs and implements assessment methods to assess learning outcomes and program effectiveness.
 - Analyzes evaluation data to demonstrate impact on professional practice and opportunities for improvement for future activities.
 - Demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of the Standards for Integrity and Independence in Accredited Continuing Education and effectively incorporates these standards into the planning and implementation of accredited educational activities.
- **Nurse Planner Development:** Leads the orientation and fosters the ongoing competence of Nurse Planners, ensuring alignment with the ANCC NCPD Accreditation Program criteria.
- **Credential Verification:** Ensures each Nurse Planner is a registered nurse with a current, unrestricted nursing license (or international equivalent) and possesses a baccalaureate degree or higher in nursing (or international equivalent).
- **Criteria Compliance in Educational Activities:** Ensures all Nurse Planners have a thorough understanding of the ANCC NCPD Accreditation Program criteria and maintain accountability for adherence throughout the planning, implementation, and evaluation of educational activities.
- **Advocacy:** Advocates for appropriate resources to successfully adhere to ANCC NCPD Accreditation criteria and provide high-quality continuing education.

Nurse Planner

A registered nurse who holds a current, unrestricted nursing license (or international equivalent) and a baccalaureate degree or higher in nursing (or international equivalent) who is actively involved in all aspects of planning, implementation, and evaluation of each NCPD activity. The Nurse Planner is responsible for assessing whether appropriate educational design principles are used and processes are consistent with the requirements of the ANCC NCPD Accreditation Program.

Nurse Planner Role and Responsibility Description

- The Accredited Provider may have nurses who participate in or support the delivery of NCPD. Nurses within the organization who are designated to facilitate planning, implementing, and evaluating educational activities are defined as **Nurse Planners**.

Licensure and Education Requirements

A Nurse Planner must:

- Be a registered nurse who holds a current, unrestricted nursing license (or international equivalent); this means that they have an active RN license with no practice restrictions;
- Hold a baccalaureate degree or higher in nursing (or international equivalent); and
- Be competent in applying the evidence-based educational design process to independently plan, implement, and evaluate NCPD activities for the Accredited Provider.

Nurse Planner Role and Responsibility Competencies

- Demonstrates a thorough understanding of the ANCC NCPD Accreditation Program criteria.
- Ensures all educational activities adhere to the standards for planning, implementing, and evaluating continuing professional development activities.
- Maintains documentation to support compliance with accreditation requirements.
- Identifies professional practice gaps and analyzes the underlying causes.
- Selects appropriate established competencies from professional sources that align with the professional practice gap and underlying educational need of an educational activity.
- Develops measurable learning outcomes aligned with the identified practice gaps, underlying educational needs, and identified professional competencies.
- Designs and implements assessment methods to assess learning outcomes and program effectiveness.
- Analyzes evaluation data to demonstrate impact on professional practice and identify opportunities for improvement for future activities.
- Demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of the Standards for Integrity and Independence in Accredited Continuing Education and effectively incorporates these standards into the planning and implementation of accredited educational activities.

AP-PD and Nurse Planner Eligibility Requirements for International Applicants and Accredited Organizations

Applicants outside the US for the ANCC NCPD Accreditation Program must demonstrate that the Accredited Provider Program Director and Nurse Planner(s) (if any) meet eligibility requirements for academic preparation and licensure (or international equivalent).

If the baccalaureate degree (or higher) in nursing was obtained outside the United States, the Accredited Provider Program Director and Nurse Planner(s) (if any) do not need to have the degree evaluated for comparability to US degree requirements.

If the Accredited Provider Program Director and Nurse Planner(s) (if any) are educated outside the United States and do not hold a baccalaureate (or higher) nursing degree, they must have their credentials evaluated for comparability to US degree standards through the TruMerit™.

ANCC will not accept verification documents from other credential-evaluating organizations.

POLICY 2

ACCREDITED PROVIDER STRUCTURE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Accredited Provider is defined structurally and operationally as the members of the organization that support the delivery of NCPD activities. The Accredited Provider may be a single-focused organization devoted to offering nursing continuing professional development activities or a separately identified unit within a larger organization. If the Accredited Provider is within a larger organization, the larger organization is defined as a multifocused organization. It is important to note that the applicant is the organization applying to become accredited.

The responsibilities of an Accredited Provider include:

- Planning, implementing, and evaluating educational activities in adherence to accreditation criteria and awarding contact hours to support professional development.
- Ensuring that all accredited educational activities are planned, implemented, and evaluated with the involvement of a Nurse Planner.
 - Accredited Providers may not approve educational activities that have been planned by other organizations.
 - Accredited Providers may jointly provide educational activities with other eligible organizations.

POLICY 3

LEGAL AND REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

Applicant and accredited organizations must comply with all international, federal, state, and local laws and regulations that affect the ability of an organization to meet ANCC NCPD Accreditation Program criteria.

- Violations of such laws or regulations render an organization ineligible for accreditation or to reapply to maintain accreditation.
- Accreditation may be suspended or revoked if an accredited organization is found to be in violation of such laws or regulations.

POLICY 4

NCPD ACCREDITATION APPLICATION

Once the ANCC NCPD Accreditation Program Office verifies eligibility and confirms accreditation cycle date, the applicant may proceed with the application process (see table below). Organizations are responsible for meeting the application requirements, including application fees. Applicants will be invoiced by the ANCC, and fees must be paid in full within thirty (30) days of receipt of the invoice. Accreditation decisions and accreditation status may be withheld, suspended, and/or revoked for any outstanding invoices. The most up-to-date accreditation fees can be found on the ANCC NCPD Accreditation program website.

ACCREDITATION CYCLE TIMELINE AND DUE DATES

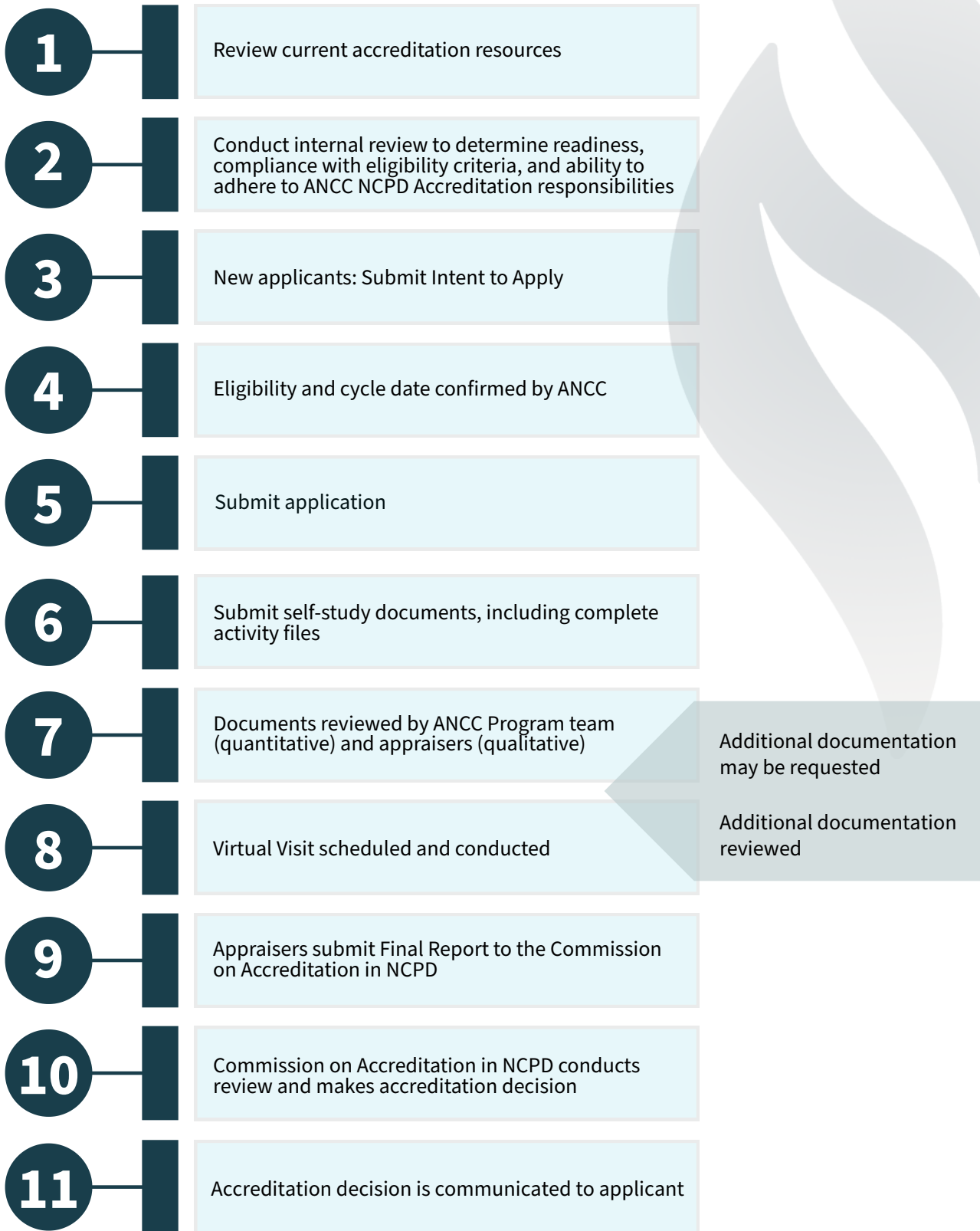
	MARCH CYCLE	JULY CYCLE	NOVEMBER CYCLE
APPLICATION DUE	NOVEMBER 1	MARCH 1	JULY 1
SELF-STUDY AND ACTIVITY FILE DOCUMENTATION DUE	MARCH 1	JULY 1	NOVEMBER 1
VIRTUAL VISIT	MARCH 15–JUNE 15	JULY 15–OCTOBER 15	NOVEMBER 15–FEBRUARY 15
FINAL DECISION	JUNE 1–SEPTEMBER 1	OCTOBER 1–JANUARY 1	FEBRUARY 1–MAY 1

POLICY 5

INSUFFICIENT DOCUMENTATION SUBMISSION

Each self-study and activity file submission will go through a quantitative and qualitative review process with the ANCC NCPD Accreditation Program team and appraisers. **If the submitted documentation demonstrates that >50% of the self-study and activity file documentation is missing, the organization will be notified by the ANCC NCPD Accreditation Program team, and the review will not continue.** The application fee is nonrefundable. Applicants may reapply once sufficient evidence can be produced to demonstrate compliance with ANCC NCPD Accreditation Program criteria. An additional application fee will apply.

ANCC NCPD Accreditation Process



POLICY 6

ACCREDITATION DECISION(S)

Upon completion of the application process, the COA-NCPD will make an accreditation decision. The accreditation decision will be communicated in a letter emailed to the Accredited Provider Program Director. Types of accreditation decisions are detailed below.

Accreditation

Applicants that demonstrate compliance with the NCPD accreditation criteria will be awarded accreditation. New applicants will be awarded a term of two years and reaccrediting organizations will be awarded a term of four years.

Accreditation with a Progress Report

Applicants that have not fully demonstrated compliance in its self-study and activity file documentation will receive accreditation (for a 2- or 4-year term) with a progress report. The Accredited Provider will be required to submit documentation to reflect changes that have been made within the organization to bring the organization into full compliance with ANCC NCPD Accreditation criteria. If an organization cannot be fully accredited, a **progress report** may be requested, which may result in an inability to award contact hours.

Provisional Accreditation with a Progress Report

Applicants that have provided sufficient evidence to demonstrate partial compliance with the accreditation criteria and/or activity file documentation will receive provisional accreditation for a period of 12 months with a required progress report. The provisionally accredited organization will be required to submit evidence to demonstrate that changes have been made within the organization to bring the organization into full compliance with ANCC NCPD Accreditation criteria. The COA-NCPD will reassess provisional status following review of the requested documentation and make a determination for full accreditation, accreditation with a progress report, or denial of accreditation at that time. If an organization cannot be fully accredited, a **progress report** may be requested, which may result in an inability to award contact hours.

Accreditation Denial

Applicants that do not provide sufficient evidence of compliance with the accreditation criteria will be denied. Applicants will receive a final summary of findings that outline the deficiencies. Applicant organizations may reapply once they have addressed deficiencies and can provide sufficient evidence to demonstrate compliance with ANCC NCPD Accreditation Program criteria. The application fees are nonrefundable.



NOTE: Applicants and Accredited Providers that are denied accreditation and are in good standing with the ANCC may reapply per the timeline determined by the COA-NCPD. An organization is considered in good standing when it has met all financial obligations and has not violated ANCC NCPD Accreditation criteria or policies.

POLICY 7

PROGRESS REPORTS

Progress reports will be submitted by Accredited Providers in response to deficiencies identified by the COA-NCPD during the accreditation review process. Progress report requirements will be outlined in the accreditation decision letter. Organizations must demonstrate successful resolution of all deficiencies noted in the progress report requirements by the due date(s) noted on the accreditation decision letter.

- Progress report requirements will be communicated to the applicant organization in the COA-NCPD Accreditation decision letter. A due date for submission of the progress report will be established.
- Progress report requirements must be submitted by the due date to the email address outlined in the COA-NCPD decision letter. Failure to submit your progress report by the assigned due date will result in an additional progress report assignment and an additional progress report fee.
- Progress reports may be:
 - Accepted in full: no additional information required — progress report requirement complete.
 - Partially accepted: additional information required — progress report requirement partially met, additional submission, additional fee, and new due date established.
 - Not accepted: additional information required — progress report requirement not met, additional submission, additional fee, and new due date established.
- Accredited Providers required to submit multiple progress reports must demonstrate progressive improvement in adherence to accreditation criteria.
- A progress report fee invoice will be included with the COA-NCPD decision letter and must be remitted within thirty (30) days of receipt.
- Failure to demonstrate adherence to the accreditation criteria through submission of three progress reports over a reasonable period of time as determined by the COA-NCPD may result in suspension or revocation of accreditation.

POLICY 8 RECONSIDERATION PROCESS

The COA-NCPD ensures that organizations seeking accreditation have the opportunity to request reconsideration of an accreditation decision. The reconsideration process provides an applicant organization or an Accredited Provider with the opportunity to have the accreditation decision or adverse accreditation decision reviewed for reconsideration by the Reconsideration Committee prior to requesting an appeal. An adverse accreditation decision may include provisional accreditation, denial of accreditation and suspension, or revocation. An organization must have completed the accreditation process prior to requesting reconsideration.

Reconsideration Process

- The applicant must submit a reconsideration request in writing within 10 business days following notification of the adverse decision.
- The request for reconsideration must briefly state the reasons the applicant would like the decision to be reconsidered.
 - This request must include each deficient criterion with a reconsideration rationale including the areas in the activity files or examples that the applicant would like the COA-NCPD to reconsider.
 - The reconsideration will be based on the information and evidence provided during the initial adverse accreditation decision.
 - No new evidence may be submitted to support a reconsideration request.
- The reconsideration request is completed by the Reconsideration Committee, which is made up of members of the COA-NCPD Executive Committee, with the Senior Director of Accreditation serving as a facilitator.
- The Reconsideration Committee will complete a thorough review of the primary documentation — the entire self-study, activity files, and additional evidence (if submitted during the appraisal process) that were submitted at the time of the review.

- Once the reconsideration review is completed, the Reconsideration Committee will provide a summary of findings and a recommended motion to the entire COA-NCPD.
- Motions are ratified on the fourth Monday of every month.
- Once initiated, the turnaround time for a reconsideration review is approximately thirty (30) to sixty (60) days.

Key Considerations

- Applicants may not request reconsideration of eligibility requirements, criteria upon which the ANCC NCPD Accreditation Program is based, the scoring rubric, the setting of passing scores, or appraisers’ conclusions regarding the evaluation of the applicant’s written documentation.
- The COA-NCPD will not reconsider areas that have been improved or are being improved as a result of the appraisal review and/or accreditation decision.

POLICY 9

APPEALING AN ADVERSE ACCREDITATION DECISION

The COA-NCPD ensures that applicants seeking accreditation have the opportunity to appeal an adverse accreditation decision. An adverse accreditation decision may include suspension, revocation, or denial of accreditation. Organizations wishing to appeal must have completed the accreditation process. Applicants may not appeal eligibility requirements, criteria upon which the ANCC NCPD Accreditation Program is based, the scoring rubric, the setting of passing scores, or appraisers' ANCC NCPD conclusions regarding the evaluation of the applicant's written documentation.

Applicant and accredited organizations may appeal an adverse accreditation decision on the grounds that the initial adverse decision was based on an erroneous understanding of the facts or that NCPD failed to follow its policies and procedures. The applicant must submit an appeal in writing within ten (10) business days following notification of the adverse decision. The appeal must briefly state the reason(s) the applicant contests the decision. There is a nonrefundable appeal fee. For further information regarding the appeal process, please contact the ANCC NCPD Accreditation Program Office.

POLICY 10

VOLUNTARY TERMINATION

Accredited Providers may voluntarily terminate their accreditation at any time. **Accredited Providers that elect to terminate accreditation must notify ANCC, in writing, at least thirty (30) days in advance.**

The written notice of voluntary termination must contain:

- The effective date of voluntary termination — which must be at least thirty (30) days after the date that appears on the written notice;
- The reason for voluntary termination; and
- The Transition Plan (see Transition of Services).

On or before the date on which voluntary termination is effective, the organization must cease:

- Offering contact hours;
- Referring to itself in any way as an ANCC NCPD Accredited Provider;
- Using the ANCC NCPD Accreditation statement; and
- Using ANCC intellectual property, including but not limited to trademarks, trade names, and logos.

This notice must be sent by email to **accreditation@ana.org**. Confirmation of receipt will be provided.



NOTE: Accredited Providers that voluntarily terminate accreditation in good standing with ANCC may reapply at any time. An organization is considered in good standing when:

- It has met its financial obligations;
- Its accreditation has not been suspended or revoked; and
- It is adhering to ANCC NCPD Accreditation criteria.

POLICY 11

SUSPENSION AND REVOCATION

An organization's accreditation may be suspended and/or revoked as a result of:

- Violation of any international, federal, state, or local laws or regulations that affect the organization's ability to adhere to ANCC NCPD Accreditation criteria or ethical standards;
- Failure to maintain compliance with ANCC NCPD Accreditation criteria or requirements;
- Failure to remit annual fees, application fees, and other invoiced fees;
- COA-NCPD investigation and verification of written complaints or charges by consumers or others;
- Refusal to comply with a COA-NCPD investigation; or
- Any of the following:
 - Misrepresentation;
 - Misuse of the ANCC NCPD Accreditation statement; or
 - Misuse of ANCC intellectual property, including but not limited to trademarks, trade names, and logos.

Organizations whose accreditation has been suspended or revoked must **immediately cease**:

- Offering contact hours;
- Referring to themselves in any way as ANCC-accredited;
- Using the ANCC NCPD Accreditation statement; and
- Using ANCC intellectual property, including but not limited to trademarks, trade names, and logos.

The Senior Director of the ANCC NCPD Accreditation Program or designee will notify the Accredited Provider in writing of suspension or revocation of accreditation. Suspension is not a prerequisite to revocation. At its sole discretion, the COA-NCPD may revoke accreditation without first suspending accreditation.

Organizations that have had their accreditation status suspended or revoked will be removed from the ANCC Directory of Accredited Providers. If an Accredited Provider believes that suspension or revocation is improper, the organization (appellant) may submit an appeal in writing. Please see Policy 9 and contact the ANCC NCPD Accreditation Program Office for further information regarding the appeal process. Accredited Providers that have had their accreditation status revoked may not apply for ANCC NCPD Accreditation for two years from the date of revocation. Organizations seeking accreditation after revocation are considered new applicants.

POLICY 12

REINSTATEMENT

Suspended organizations may apply for reinstatement within 120 days of the suspension date. To apply for reinstatement of accreditation, the Accredited Provider must submit documentation demonstrating violation correction and pay the reinstatement fee. Reinstatement may be granted if the suspended organization adequately demonstrates full adherence to the ANCC NCPD Accreditation Program criteria and requisites upon reinstatement. Accredited Providers that have been reinstated may be required to submit progress reports to the COA-NCPD and may incur progress report fees.

- Suspended organizations that fail to apply for reinstatement within 120 days shall have their accreditation revoked.



NOTE: Accredited Providers that have had their accreditation status revoked may not apply for ANCC NCPD Accreditation for two years from the date of revocation. Organizations seeking accreditation after revocation are considered new applicants.

POLICY 13

TRANSITION OF SERVICES

Organizations that voluntarily terminate their accreditation status or have their accreditation suspended or revoked must submit a written Transition Plan, which includes:

- A detailed explanation of how learners can obtain activity participation records after the date of termination, suspension, or revocation, including contact information and length of time that records will be available; and
- A complete list of all activities scheduled to take place after the date of termination, suspension, or revocation, including:
 - Activities that have been planned but not yet implemented, and
 - All enduring materials:
 - A detailed explanation of how such activities will be canceled, and/or
 - A detailed explanation of how participants will be notified, prior to the activity, that contact hours will not be awarded.
- Remit all invoiced fees.
- Submit its NCPD activity summary, if applicable.

POLICY 14

NOTIFICATION OF EVENTS

Accredited organizations and organizations with pending applications must notify the ANCC NCPD Accreditation Program within seven (7) business days of the occurrence or discovery of:

- Significant changes or events that impair their ability to meet or continue to meet ANCC NCPD Accreditation Program requirements or make them ineligible for accreditation or reaccreditation;
- Loss of status as a C/SNA of the ANA;
- Any event that might result in adverse media coverage related to the delivery of NCPD; and
- Change in eligible company status.

The Accredited Provider Program Director or designee must notify the ANCC NCPD Accreditation Program Office within thirty (30) days of any change in the accredited organization affecting accreditation or information submitted in accreditation application materials, including but not limited to:

- Changes that alter the information provided in the application, including change of address or name;
- A decision not to submit self-study written documentation after application;
- Change in Accredited Provider Program Director;
- Suspension, lapse, revocation, or termination of the nursing license of the Accredited Provider Program Director or Nurse Planner(s);
- Change in ownership; and
- Indication of potential instability (e.g., labor strike, reduction in force, bankruptcy).

This notice must be sent by email to accreditation@ana.org. Confirmation of receipt will be provided.

POLICY 15

ANNUAL REPORTING

To monitor compliance with the ANCC NCPD Accreditation Program criteria, all ANCC NCPD Accredited Providers are required annually to submit:

- Demographic information;
- An annual NCPD activity summary; and
- A completed Annual Impact survey.

If, for any reason, an Accredited Provider is unable to submit the required documentation within the required time frame, it must contact the ANCC NCPD Accreditation Program Office as soon as possible. If the ANCC NCPD Accreditation Program Office does not receive the required documents by the required due date and the organization fails to notify the ANCC NCPD Accreditation Program Office regarding the delay, ANCC NCPD accreditation status may be suspended or revoked. The Accredited Provider will receive written notification from the Senior Director of Accreditation.

POLICY 16

ABSENCE OF ACCREDITED PROVIDER PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Currently accredited or applicant organizations applying to become reaccredited or initially accredited must have a qualified Accredited Provider Program Director (AP-PD) who has primary responsibility for the organization's adherence to the ANCC NCPD Accreditation criteria. **If the accredited or applicant organization does not have an Accredited Provider Program Director, the organization is not eligible to apply for ANCC NCPD Accreditation.** If, during the application or accreditation review period, the Accredited Provider Program Director terminates in the position within the organization (i.e., resigns, retires, is removed, or similar), the organization will be deferred to a later review cycle until such time that the organization can demonstrate the new Accredited Provider Program Director has been oriented and integrated into the organization. Deferral fees will be applied.

POLICY 17

ACCREDITED PROVIDER PROGRAM DIRECTOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

In the event that the Accredited Provider Program Director takes a leave of absence greater than thirty (30) days, the organization must notify the ANCC NCPD Accreditation Program team with the name and credentials of the qualified individual who has been appointed to cover the role of the Accredited Provider Program Director in their absence. This interim Program Director must meet the AP-PD eligibility requirements.

POLICY 18

MERGERS AND ACQUISITIONS

The ANCC NCPD Accreditation Program does not permit the transfer of accreditation from one organization to another. Accreditation is not a commodity; therefore, it cannot be bought, sold, or transferred. The accreditation is attached to the organization that is accredited as a provider.

- The Accredited Provider needs to remain intact if it is moved within the corporation.
 - An Accredited Provider may be a part of the new company as an Accredited Provider if the people, structure, and processes have not been altered.
- Once accreditation status is terminated, accreditation of educational materials is no longer valid. The new company will need to complete the application process and become a provider itself, if it wishes to be an Accredited Provider.
- An organization may sell educational content but cannot attach the ANCC name, ANCC contact hours, or any reference to the ANCC or accreditation status with that content.

It is the Accredited Provider's responsibility to determine that the organization they are engaging in a merger or acquisition with is **not an ineligible organization**.

POLICY 19

LATE FEE, BOOKMARKING, EXTENSION, OR WITHDRAWAL

Application Late Fees:

- Reaccrediting organizations that do not submit the application by the application due date will incur a late fee.
- Applications will not be accepted thirty (30) days after the application due date. Organizations will be removed from the cycle and will be offered the opportunity to defer to the next review cycle (deferral fee will apply) or withdraw from the application process (application fees will not be refunded).

Deferral Fees:

- A deferral fee will be assessed if the applicant or reaccrediting organization is deferred by the program or requests a deferral to the next cycle.
- The request may not exceed one (1) review cycle.

Documentation Late Fee:

- A late fee will be assessed if the organization fails to submit the self-study and activity files by the due date.
- **Documentation will not be accepted thirty (30) days after the documentation submission due date.** Organizations will be offered the opportunity to defer to the next review cycle (deferral fee will apply) or withdraw from the application process (application fees will not be refunded).

Incorrect Bookmarking Fee:

- A fee will be assessed if the organization fails to submit the self-study and the selected activity files in a pdf document, with accurate bookmarks.

Withdrawal Fee:

- Applicant organizations that withdraw from the review cycle after submitting their application or self-study documents will forfeit the full application fee.

Ineligible Organization:

- If the review of the self-study submissions reveals that the applicant organization is ineligible for accreditation, an administrative fee will be assessed, and the remainder of the application fee will be returned to the applicant organization.

POLICY 20

ANNUAL FEES

All accredited organizations shall pay an annual fee to ANCC. **All annual fees, regardless of fee structure, will be due by the designated date — within thirty (30) days of the date on the invoice — each calendar year.** Organizations failing to remit the annual fee within thirty (30) days of the due date will not be considered in good standing, will be assessed a late fee, and will be removed from the Directory of Accredited Organizations. If an organization fails to remit the annual fee within ninety (90) days, its accreditation will be suspended.

POLICY 21

DATA USE

By submitting an application, applicants and Accredited Providers give ANCC and its NCPD Accreditation Program permission to use their demographic and outcome data for reporting, marketing, and research purposes, such as:

- Describing characteristics of Accredited Providers anonymously and in the aggregate;
- Identifying benchmarks that Accredited Providers meet to inform programmatic decisions about applicant requirements; and
- Analyzing trends or addressing other ANCC-defined or approved research questions.

All data received by ANCC will remain confidential and will be reported only in aggregate form unless permission is granted by the accredited organization to share data specific to an organization.

POLICY 22

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

The ANCC NCPD Accreditation Program will not accept applications containing information that is confidential under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) or other laws and regulations. Applications containing such confidential information will be rejected. If confidential information is used in the narrative or as an exhibit, all identifying information must be redacted to comply with such laws.

POLICY 23

USE OF ANCC ACCREDITATION LOGO

After an organization is accredited by the ANCC COA-NCPD, the organization may use the ANCC NCPD Accreditation logo in promotional materials. NCPD Accredited organizations shall use the ANCC NCPD Accreditation logo in accordance with the following:

- The ANCC NCPD Accreditation logo must be smaller than the accredited organization's own logo;
- The ANCC NCPD Accreditation logo is placed in a less prominent position than the accredited organization's own logo; and
- The ANCC NCPD Accreditation logo must be used only in association with ANCC accredited nursing continuing professional development or when referring to the organization as an ANCC NCPD Accredited organization.

Organizations failing to adhere to this policy will be notified by the ANCC NCPD Accreditation Program Office and be granted thirty (30) days to comply with these requirements. Accredited organizations that violate this policy and procedure more than once jeopardize their status as an ANCC NCPD accredited organization.

POLICY 24

RECORDKEEPING

Activity file records must be maintained in a retrievable file (electronic or hard copy) accessible to authorized personnel for **six years**. Accredited organizations are responsible for maintaining documentation of full activity files that demonstrate compliance with ANCC NCPD Accreditation criteria regardless of method of recordkeeping (i.e., manual, electronic).

POLICY 25

JOINT PROVIDERSHIP

Accredited Providers may jointly provide educational activities with other organizations. The jointly providing organization **cannot be an ineligible company**. The Accredited Provider is referred to as the provider of the educational activity; any other provider is referred to as a joint provider. In the event that two or more organizations are accredited, one will assume responsibility for adherence to the ANCC NCPD Accreditation and is the provider; the others are referred to as the joint providers. Materials associated with the educational activity, such as marketing materials, advertising, agendas, and certificates of completion, must clearly indicate the Accredited Provider that is awarding contact hours and is responsible for adherence to the ANCC NCPD Accreditation. The ANCC Accredited Provider is the organization that the ANCC will hold accountable and responsible for adherence and compliance with the ANCC NCPD Accreditation criteria.

CHAPTER 3

ACCREDITED PROVIDER ACCREDITATION CRITERIA

The ANCC NCPD Accreditation criteria ensure that accredited NCPD is designed to be relevant, practice-based, effective, based on valid content, and independent of commercial influence. The criteria reflect the values of our NCPD community and respond to the evolving healthcare environment.

Adherence to ANCC Nursing Continuing Professional Development (NCPD) Accreditation™ criteria empowers Accredited Providers to deliver high-quality NCPD that drives improvements in nursing practice and helps nurses and healthcare teams optimize the care, health, and wellness of patients and the systems in which they work.

The ANCC NCPD Accreditation criteria offer a framework for planning, implementing, and evaluating NCPD activities that are designed to result in improvements in knowledge, skill, and practice, and/or patient and system outcomes. Accredited Providers must comply with the accreditation criteria.

The following five sections are required to be implemented and adhered to by both **new applicants and current Accredited Providers** to maintain their accreditation status:

- Organizational Overview (OO);
- Structural Capacity (SC);
- Educational Design Process (EDP);
- Quality Outcomes (QO); and
- Performance in Practice Activity Files.

It is the Accredited Provider Program Director's (AP-PD) responsibility to ensure that the Accredited Provider adheres to and complies with the ANCC NCPD Accreditation criteria as set forth by the COA-NCPD.

This chapter includes the accreditation criteria, required elements, and reflection questions that may be used to assist in assessing the Accredited Provider processes and replying effectively to the criteria within the self-study documentation.

ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

OO1: Provide an executive statement or high-level strategic summary of the Accredited Provider (should be less than 1,000 words).

Required Elements:

- ☐ Provide an overview of the Accredited Provider.
- ☐ Identify the mission of the Accredited Provider as it relates to its NCPD educational activities.
- ☐ Discuss the impact of ANCC NCPD Accreditation on the organization and its learners.

Guiding Considerations:

- Who supports NCPD Accreditation in the organization?
- What is the mission or goal of NCPD Accreditation in the organization?
- Does NCPD Accreditation support specific initiatives and strategic goals within the organization?

QO2a: Submit a list including names, credentials, and roles of the Accredited Provider Program Director (AP-PD) and Nurse Planner(s) (if applicable).

Required Elements:

- ☐ Include a list with the names, credentials, and roles of the AP-PDs and Nurse Planners in the Accredited Provider.

OO2b: Attest that the Accredited Provider Program Director and Nurse Planner(s) (if applicable) meet the eligibility requirements outlined in the ANCC NCPD Accredited Provider Policy and Operations Manual.

Required Elements:

- ☐ Attest to the AP-PD meeting eligibility requirements outlined in the role and responsibility descriptions.
- ☐ Attest to the Nurse Planner(s) meeting eligibility requirements outlined in the role and responsibility descriptions.



NOTE: This will be “Not Applicable” if the organization did not have Nurse Planners at the time of initial accreditation or during the accreditation term limit** before reaccreditation.

**The accreditation term limit is defined as the duration of time for which the organization is accredited.

002c: Attest that the Accredited Provider Program Director and Nurse Planner(s) (if applicable) understand and adhere to the required roles and responsibilities outlined in the ANCC NCPD Accredited Provider Policy and Operations Manual.

Required Elements:

- ☐ Attest to the AP-PDs adhering to the roles and responsibilities outlined in the roles and responsibilities description.
- ☐ Attest to the Nurse Planners adhering to the roles and responsibilities outlined in the roles and responsibilities description.



NOTE: This will be “Not Applicable” if the organization did not have Nurse Planners at the time of initial accreditation or during the accreditation term limit** before reaccreditation.

**The accreditation term limit is defined as the duration of time for which the organization is accredited.

STRUCTURAL CAPACITY

SC1: Submit the Accredited Provider’s NCPD mission statement and a brief narrative that demonstrates the alignment of the mission statement to the expected outcomes of its educational program in terms of impact or changes in knowledge, skill, and/or practice (no more than 500 words).

Required Elements:

- ☐ Provide the Accredited Provider’s NCPD mission statement.
- ☐ Describe how the mission statement aligns with the expected outcomes in terms of impact or changes in knowledge, skill, and/or practice.

Guiding Considerations:

- What is the NCPD mission statement?
- What are the expected outcomes of your overall educational programming?
- What are you measuring, in aggregate, to demonstrate the impact of your educational activities on knowledge, skills, and/or practice?

SC2: Describe how the Accredited Provider Program Director was oriented to the role, how competence is evaluated, and how the AP-PD engages in professional development opportunities to ensure adherence and compliance with ANCC NCPD Accreditation criteria.

Required Elements:

- ☐ Describe how the AP-PD was oriented.
- ☐ Describe how the AP-PDs competence is assessed.
- ☐ Describe how the AP-PD engages in professional development opportunities and how it improves or enhances the role of the AP-PD.

Guiding Considerations:

- What processes and resources were used to orient the AP-PD to their role?
- What criteria or benchmarks are used to evaluate the AP-PD's competence in their role?
- How does the AP-PD stay updated on changes in ANCC NCPD Accreditation criteria?
- How does participation in professional development activities enhance the AP-PD's ability to fulfill their role?

SC3: Describe the process the AP-PD uses for onboarding, orienting, monitoring compliance, and supporting professional development for Nurse Planners.

Required Elements:

- ☐ Discuss how the AP-PD onboards and orients new Nurse Planners to the roles and responsibilities outlined in the Nurse Planner Role and Responsibility Description*.
- ☐ Discuss how the AP-PD provides ongoing compliance monitoring and supports professional development for the Nurse Planners based on the roles and responsibilities outlined in the Nurse Planner Role and Responsibility Description*.



NOTE: This will be “Not Applicable” if the organization did not have Nurse Planners at the time of initial accreditation or during the accreditation term limit** before reaccreditation.

**The accreditation term limit is defined as the duration of time for which the organization is accredited.

Guiding Considerations:

- What steps are included in the onboarding process to introduce new Nurse Planners to their roles and responsibilities?
- What processes or tools (e.g., audits, regular meetings) are used by the AP-PD to monitor Nurse Planners' compliance with their roles and responsibilities?
- What professional development opportunities are offered to Nurse Planners to enhance their competence?

EDUCATIONAL DESIGN PROCESS

EDP1: The provider describes the process for identifying professional practice gaps to address a problem in practice or an opportunity for improvement or enhancement.

Required Elements:

- ☐ Describe the process used to identify problems in practice or opportunities for improvement or enhancement.
- ☐ Discuss how Nurse Planners analyze the professional practice gaps to determine if this is a problem that can be impacted by education.
- ☐ Describe the process for identifying appropriate evidence to determine the existence of a professional practice gap.
- ☐ The documentation in the activity files aligns with and reinforces the narrative provided in the self-study.

Guiding Considerations:

- What steps are included in your process for identifying professional practice gaps?
- How do Nurse Planners evaluate whether an identified gap can be addressed effectively through education?
- What data sources (e.g., surveys, performance metrics, patient outcomes, feedback from learners) are used to identify problems in practice or opportunities for improvement?

EDP2: The provider describes the process for identifying the underlying educational needs (knowledge, skill, and/or practice) that contribute to the professional practice gap(s).

Required Elements:

- ☐ Describe the process for determining if the educational activity should focus on knowledge, skill, and/or practice.
- ☐ The documentation in the Activity Files aligns with and reinforces the narrative provided in the self-study.

Guiding Considerations:

- What steps are involved in analyzing the professional practice gap to identify the underlying educational needs of knowledge, skill, and/or practice?
- How do you determine if the educational activity should focus on increasing knowledge?
- What criteria do you use to decide if the educational activity should focus on building or improving skills (if applicable)?
- How do you determine if the gap is related to practices or application in real-world settings (if applicable)?

EDP3: The provider describes the process for identifying the competencies that align with the identified professional practice gap and underlying educational needs (knowledge, skill, and/or practice).

Required Elements:

- ☐ Discuss how the Nurse Planner finds established professional competencies.
- ☐ Discuss how the Nurse Planner chooses the appropriate competencies that align with the accredited educational activity's professional practice gap and underlying educational needs.
- ☐ Describe how the Nurse Planner ensures alignment between the professional practice gap, the underlying educational need, and the identified competencies.
- ☐ The documentation in the Activity Files aligns with and reinforces the narrative provided in the self-study.

Guiding Considerations:

- What resources or references does the Nurse Planner use to identify established professional competencies?
- What process is used to select competencies that directly address the professional practice gap and underlying educational need(s)?
- How do you review the relationship between the professional practice gap, educational needs, and the selected competencies for alignment?

EDP4: The provider describes the process for developing learning outcome(s) that are aligned to the professional practice gap, underlying educational needs (knowledge, skill, and/or practice), and identified competencies.

Required Elements:

- ☐ Describe the process for how the Nurse Planner develops measurable learning outcome statements.
- ☐ Describe how the Nurse Planner ensures alignment between the professional practice gap, underlying educational need(s), competencies, and outcome statement.
- ☐ The documentation in the Activity Files aligns with and reinforces the narrative provided in the self-study.

Guiding Considerations:

- What steps does the Nurse Planner follow to develop learning outcome statements?
- What methods or tools are used to validate that the outcomes can be objectively assessed?
- How do you review the relationship between the professional practice gap, underlying educational needs, the selected competencies, and learning outcomes for alignment?

EDP5: The provider describes the process for choosing assessment method(s) that measure changes in learner knowledge, skill, and/or practice expected from participating in the educational activity.

Required Elements:

- ☐ Describe the process used to choose the appropriate assessment method.
- ☐ Describe how the Nurse Planner ensures that the assessment method measures a change in knowledge, skill, and/or practice that aligns with the professional practice gap, underlying educational need, competencies, and outcome statement.
- ☐ The documentation in the Activity Files aligns with and reinforces the narrative provided in the self-study.

Guiding Considerations:

- How do you determine which assessment method(s) to use for a specific educational activity?
- How do you verify that the chosen assessment method measures the intended change in learner knowledge, skills, and/or practice?
- How do you ensure that the assessment method aligns with the professional practice gap, underlying educational need, identified competencies and outcome statement(s)?

EDP6: The provider describes the process for identifying appropriate active learning strategies to promote learning and actively engage learners in educational activities.

Required Elements:

- ☐ Describe how the Nurse Planners select appropriate active learning strategies.
- ☐ Discuss how active learning strategies align with the underlying educational need.
- ☐ The documentation in the activity files aligns with and reinforces the narrative provided in the self-study.

Guiding Considerations:

- How do you select active learning strategies for an educational activity?
- How do you ensure the selected active learning strategies align with the underlying educational need?
- How do you ensure the selected active learning strategies are appropriate for the learning environment of the activity?

EDP7: The provider describes the process of analyzing individual activity assessment data to create a summative evaluation.

Required Elements:

- ☐ Discuss how the Nurse Planner analyzes individual educational activity data to determine whether the activity successfully achieved the desired outcomes (changes in knowledge, skill, and/or practice).
- ☐ Describe how the Nurse Planner analyzes individual educational activity data to guide future activities.
- ☐ The documentation in the Activity Files aligns with and reinforces the narrative provided in the self-study.

Guiding Considerations:

- What process do you use to analyze assessment data from individual educational activities?
- How do you determine whether an educational activity achieved the desired outcomes?
- How do you use the results of your analysis to inform future educational activities?

EDP8: The provider describes the process used to develop activities/interventions that comply with the Standards for Integrity and Independence in Accredited Continuing Education (CE), which includes the responsibility to:

- **Standard 1:** Ensure content is valid.
- **Standard 2:** Prevent commercial bias and marketing in accredited continuing education.
- **Standard 3:** Identify, mitigate, and disclose relevant financial relationships.
- **Standard 4:** Manage commercial support appropriately (if applicable).
- **Standard 5:** Manage ancillary activities offered in conjunction with accredited continuing education (if applicable).

Required Elements:

- ☐ Describe how the Nurse Planner ensures that the content of CE activities meets all four elements of Standard 1.
- ☐ Describe how the Nurse Planners ensure that the content of accredited CE activities and the accredited CE program meet expectations of elements 1 AND 2 of Standard 2.
- ☐ Does the Nurse Planner share the names or contact information of learners with an ineligible company or its agent? [State YES or NO]
 - If yes, describe the process, and provide an example(s) of the mechanism(s) used to obtain the explicit consent of individual learners.
- ☐ Describe the process for collecting information from all planners (including the Nurse Planner), faculty, and others in control of educational content about all financial relationships with ineligible companies for activities.
- ☐ Does the organization use employees or owners of ineligible companies in its accredited CE activities? [State YES or NO]
 - If yes, describe how you meet the expectations of Standard 3.2 (a-c).

- ☐ Describe the process used to determine which financial relationships are relevant to the educational content.
- ☐ Describe the methods/steps used to mitigate all relevant financial relationships appropriate to the role(s) of activity planners, including the Nurse Planner.
- ☐ Describe the methods/steps used to mitigate all relevant financial relationships appropriate to the role(s) of presenters and authors.
- ☐ Describe what the Nurse Planners do to ensure that learners are informed of the presence or absence of relevant financial relationships and that all relevant financial relationships have been mitigated.
- ☐ Does the organization accept, or plan to accept, commercial support [defined as financial or in-kind support from ineligible companies]? [State YES or NO]
 - If yes, describe how the organization meets the expectations of all four elements of Standard 4.
- ☐ Does the organization offer ancillary activities, including advertising, sales, exhibits, or promotion, for ineligible companies and/or nonaccredited education in conjunction with your accredited CE activities? [State YES or NO]
 - If yes, describe how the organization meets the expectations of all three elements of Standard 5.
- ☐ The documentation in the Activity Files aligns with and reinforces the narrative provided in the self-study.

QUALITY OUTCOMES

QO1: The provider analyzes the results of its overall NCPD activities to determine the degree to which it meets its NCPD mission, and the expected results articulated in terms of knowledge, skill, and/or practice changes.

Required Elements:

- ☐ Identify at least one of the expected results regarding changes in knowledge, skill, and/or practice the Accredited Provider identified during the accreditation term that impacted the professional development of nurses and/or patients, the organization or the health system.
- ☐ Describe the metric(s) by which you measured the achievement of the expected result.
- ☐ Describe the initiatives implemented to reach this expected result during the accreditation term.
- ☐ Describe how the results were analyzed and conclusions reached in relation to the achievement of the expected results.

Guiding Considerations:

- What was one of the expected results related to changes in knowledge, skill, and/or practice that your Accredited Provider aimed to achieve during the accreditation term (shared in SC1)?
- What metrics did you use to measure the achievement of the expected results?
- What initiatives or activities were implemented to achieve the expected results?
- How did you analyze the data collected to assess the achievement of the expected results?
- What conclusions were drawn based on the analysis?

Q02: The provider evaluates its operations as an Accredited Provider and its overall effectiveness, including identifying the metrics used to measure success.

Required Elements:

- ☐ Identify at least one operational quality improvement outcome for the NCPD program during the accreditation term.
- ☐ Describe the metric(s) by which you measured the achievement of the outcome.
- ☐ Describe the operational quality improvement initiative implemented to reach this outcome during the accreditation term.
- ☐ Describe how the results were analyzed and conclusions reached in relation to the achievement of the operational quality improvement initiative.

Guiding Considerations:

- What was one operational quality improvement (QI) initiative for the NCPD program that occurred during the accreditation term?
- What metrics did you use to measure the achievement of the QI initiative?
- What initiatives or activities were implemented to achieve the QI initiative?
- How did you analyze the data collected to assess the achievement of the QI initiative?
- What conclusions were drawn based on the analysis?

ACTIVITY FILE DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS:

The following section outlines the documentation requirements for the activity file or performance in practice files. For more information, for each element, beyond documentation requirements, see the Educational Design Process Chapter.

Activity Types:

- **Live:** Live activities can be in person or web-based and have no expiration date. The provider is expected to periodically evaluate repeated live activities to determine if the practice gap still exists and ensure the underlying educational need remains applicable to the target audience. Content should be evaluated regularly to ensure it is the most current evidence. Live activities may be repurposed into enduring activities. If they are repurposed, they will need to have an expiration date. The NP will also need to consider learner engagement and evaluation strategies that might be different with the transition from live to enduring formats.
- **Enduring:** Enduring material is provider-directed and learner-paced. Enduring materials should have an expiration date based on the content of the material. Providers must review content of any enduring material at least every three years or more frequently if there are new developments in the content field.
- **Blended:** Blended activities involve a “live” component in combination with a provider-directed, learner-paced component. The learner-paced component can be an integral part of the blended activity or can exist on its own as enduring material.

NCPD Activity File Requirements

- ☐ Title of activity
- ☐ Location of activity
- ☐ Type of activity format (e.g., live vs. enduring)
- ☐ Nurse Planner name and credentials
- ☐ Date live activity was presented OR for ongoing enduring activities, date first offered and subsequent review dates
- ☐ Identify the target audience
- ☐ Description of professional practice gap **(EDP1)**
- ☐ Evidence that validates the professional practice gap **(EDP1)**
- ☐ Educational need(s) that underly the professional practice gap (knowledge, skill, and/or practice) **(EDP2)**
- ☐ The established professional competency(ies) and the professional source that developed the competency(ies) **(EDP3)**
- ☐ Desired learning outcome(s) **(EDP4)**
- ☐ Description of the assessment method **(EDP5)**
- ☐ Active learning strategies used **(EDP6)**
- ☐ Description of the evidence-based content **(EDP8 Standard 1)**
- ☐ References or resources used to support the evidence-based content **(EDP8 Standard 1)**
- ☐ Attestation that the activity meets the expectations of all three elements of Standard 2 **(EDP8 Standard 2)**
- ☐ Number of contact hours awarded for the activity, including the method of calculation
 - If the activity is longer than three hours, an agenda must be provided for the entire activity
- ☐ Documentation of completion and/or certificate:
 - Title of the educational activity
 - Date of the educational activity
 - Name and address of the provider of the educational activity (web address or email address is acceptable)
 - Number of contact hours awarded
 - Accreditation statement
 - Space for participant's name

- ☐ Demonstration of identification and mitigation of financial relationships with ineligible companies for all individuals in a position to control content (planners, presenters, faculty, authors, and/or content reviewers) **(EDP8 Standard 3)**
 - If applicable, include:
 - Name of individual
 - Evidence that the individual is provided with the definition of an ineligible company
 - A list of financial relationships, within the past 24 months, in any amount that exists between the individual and the ineligible company (if any)
 - If not applicable (due to exceptions outlined in the Standards for Integrity and Independence in Accredited Continuing Education Standard 3):
 - Include a statement in planning documentation that financial relationships were not identified and mitigated because the educational activity was exempt
 - Provide a list of the names and credentials of all individuals in position to control
- ☐ Evidence of mitigation of relevant financial relationships with ineligible companies (if applicable) **(EDP8 Standard 3)**
- ☐ Commercial support agreement with date (if applicable) **(EDP8 Standard 4)**
- ☐ Evidence of disclosures to learners:
 - Accreditation Statement of the provider awarding contact hours
 - Criteria for awarding contact hours statement
 - Presence or absence of relevant financial relationships for all individuals in a position to control content (if applicable) **(EDP8 Standard 3)**
 - Expiration date statement (if applicable, for enduring education only)
 - Joint Providership statement (if applicable)
 - Commercial Support (if applicable) **(EDP8 Standard 4)**
- ☐ Summative Evaluation **(EDP7)**

NCPD ACTIVITY FILE REQUIREMENT		REQUIRED ELEMENTS
TITLE OF ACTIVITY		
Location of activity	<input type="checkbox"/> In-person events: Include city, state, country <input type="checkbox"/> Virtual and online enduring: Indicate “online” for the activity location.	
Type of activity format	Indicate if the activity is live, enduring, or blended.	
Nurse Planner name and credentials	<input type="checkbox"/> Nurse Planner name <input type="checkbox"/> Credentials of Nurse Planner	
Date or date range	<input type="checkbox"/> If live, it must include the date the activity was first offered and subsequent offering dates, if applicable. <input type="checkbox"/> If an enduring activity, it must include the date the activity was first offered, subsequent review dates, and the expiration date.	
Identify the target audience	<input type="checkbox"/> The target audience must include the registered nurse, but may also include other members of the healthcare team.	
Description of professional practice gap	<input type="checkbox"/> What is the problem or opportunity that needs to be addressed by this activity?	
Evidence that validates the professional practice gap	<input type="checkbox"/> What data (quantitative, qualitative, anecdotal) supports the need for this educational activity? <input type="checkbox"/> Data can come from a number of sources, including, but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Survey data from stakeholders, target audience, and subject matter experts — Input from stakeholders (learners, managers, healthcare team) — Evidence from quality studies and/or performance — Improvement activities to identify opportunities for improvement — Evaluation data from previous activities — Trends in literature — Direct observation <p>◆ It is not sufficient to state that the evidence to support the professional practice gap is that there was a “request” or that the education is “mandated.”</p>	

NCPD ACTIVITY FILE REQUIREMENT	REQUIRED ELEMENTS
Educational needs that underlie the professional practice gap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Indicate the underlying educational need: Knowledge, skill, and/or practice. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — What do the learners not know (knowledge)? — What do the learners not know how to do (skill)? — What is the learners unable to implement or integrate into their practice setting (practice)?
The established professional competencies and the professional source that developed the competencies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Identify the professional competencies that have been identified from a professional source (i.e., a specialty organization, ANA scopes and standards, a state practice act). <input type="checkbox"/> Identified competencies must align with the professional practice gap and the underlying educational need(s). <input type="checkbox"/> Identify the professional source that developed the competencies.
Desired learning outcome(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Provide a measurable learning outcome that demonstrates what learners should know, show, or do upon completing the activity. <input type="checkbox"/> Learning outcome(s) must align with the professional practice gap, underlying educational need(s), and identified competencies. An outcome must be identified to address each underlying educational need. ◆ Learning outcomes are distinct from learning objectives.
Description of the assessment method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> A description of the method that will be used to assess/measure achievement of the learning outcome(s) and demonstrate a change in knowledge, skills, and/or practice as a result of the educational offering. <input type="checkbox"/> Assessment methods must align with the professional practice gap, underlying educational need(s), identified competencies, and learning outcome(s). An assessment method must be selected to measure each outcome. ◆ The intent to change practice is not an acceptable short-term or long-term assessment method for measuring impact or change in practice.
Active learning strategies used	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Provide the active learning strategies that were incorporated into the educational activity. <input type="checkbox"/> Active learning strategies must be congruent with the activity format and the underlying educational need. ◆ Q&A is not considered an active learning strategy.

NCPD ACTIVITY FILE REQUIREMENT	REQUIRED ELEMENTS
Description of the evidence-based content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Describe the content of the educational activity. <input type="checkbox"/> May use a table, an outline format, an abstract, a detailed agenda, or a narrative response.
References or resources used to support the evidence-based content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Identify and include the best available evidence reference(s) that support the content of the educational activity. <input type="checkbox"/> References are not required to be provided in APA format. However, references should include adequate detail to ensure that the information referenced can be located (i.e., page number, date, standards number). ◆ External URL links to resources are not acceptable. ◆ Having an expert speaker is not sufficient to support evidence-based content. Published references must also be present.
Attestation that the activity meets the expectations of all three elements of Standard 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Provide an attestation statement within the activity documentation that states the activity meets the requirements outlined in Standard 2.
Number of contact hours awarded for the activity, including the method of calculation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Provide the number of contact hours awarded, and the method of calculation must be defensible. ◆ If the activity is longer than three hours, an agenda must be provided for the entire activity.
Documentation of completion and/or certificate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Title of the educational activity <input type="checkbox"/> Date of the educational activity (if enduring, include the actual date that the learner has completed the activity) <input type="checkbox"/> Name and address of the provider of the educational activity (web address or email address is acceptable) <input type="checkbox"/> Number of contact hours awarded <input type="checkbox"/> Accreditation statement <input type="checkbox"/> Space for the learners name ◆ Initial applicants must submit a sample certificate of completion for each educational activity, that includes the accreditation statement to be used once accreditation is attained. The certificate should include all the required elements outlined above.

NCPD ACTIVITY FILE REQUIREMENT	REQUIRED ELEMENTS
<p>Demonstration of identification and mitigation of financial relationships with ineligible companies for all individuals in a position to control content as outlined in Standard 3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>If applicable, for <u>each individual</u></i> in a position to control content, include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The names of individuals and their roles in planning the activity. ▪ A list of financial relationships, within the past 24 months, in any amount that exists between the individual and the ineligible company (if any). ▪ The form, tool, or mechanism used to collect information regarding financial relationships. ▪ The form/tool/mechanism must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Evidence that the individual is provided with the definition of an ineligible company. — Evidence of the financial relationships with ineligible companies that has been collected for the past 24 months. <input type="checkbox"/> <i>If not applicable</i> (due to exceptions outlined in Standard 3): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Include a statement in planning documentation that financial relationships were not identified and mitigated because the educational activity was exempt. ▪ Provide a list of the names and roles of all individuals in a position to control content.
<p>Evidence of mitigation of relevant financial relationships with ineligible companies as outlined in Standard 3 (if applicable)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> If a relevant financial relationship is identified, document the mitigation strategy implemented.
<p>Commercial support agreement with date as outlined in Standard 4 (if applicable)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> If applicable, provide a dated copy of the commercial support letter of agreement (LOA) with the ineligible company that was executed prior to the start of the accredited education. <input type="checkbox"/> The commercial support agreement must align with the requirements outlined in Standard 4.
<p>Evidence of appropriate management of ancillary activities in conjunction with the activity, as outlined in Standard 5 (if applicable).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Marketing materials associated with the activity in which advertising or marketing for or on behalf of ineligible companies is permitted. <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Evidence to demonstrate that the accredited education is separated in space and/or time from nonaccredited ancillary activities (i.e., exhibits or nonaccredited education).

EVIDENCE OF DISCLOSURES TO LEARNERS:	
Accreditation Statement of the provider awarding contact hours	<input type="checkbox"/> Must be written as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> [Name of Accredited Provider] is accredited as a provider of nursing continuing professional development by the American Nurses Credentialing Center's Commission on Accreditation.
Criteria for awarding contact hours statement	<input type="checkbox"/> Clearly outline what is expected of the learners in order to earn contact hours.
Presence or absence of relevant financial relationship identification and mitigation statement as outlined in Standard 3 (if applicable)	<input type="checkbox"/> If a relevant financial relationship is identified, the statement includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name of individual with relevant financial relationship Name of ineligible companies with which they have a relevant financial relationship(s) The nature of the relationship(s) A statement that the relationship has been mitigated <input type="checkbox"/> If a relevant financial relationship is not identified, the statement includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A statement indicating no relevant financial relationships were identified for all individuals in a position to control content.
Enduring activity expiration date statement (if applicable)	<input type="checkbox"/> The expiration date must be shared with learners and cannot be more than three years from the initial date the activity was offered.
Joint Providership statement (if applicable)	<input type="checkbox"/> A statement that the activity is jointly provided, which includes the names of the organizations engaged in joint providership. <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure it is communicated to the learners that the Accredited Provider is awarding contact hours. <input type="checkbox"/> The Accredited Provider awarding contact hours must be identified in the accreditation statements on the certificate of completion and in the disclosure to learners.
Commercial Support statement as outlined in Standard 4 (if applicable)	<input type="checkbox"/> The name(s) of the ineligible company(ies) that gave commercial support. <input type="checkbox"/> The nature of the commercial support, if it was in-kind. Disclosure must not include the corporate or product logos, trade names, or product group messages for ineligible companies.

EVIDENCE OF DISCLOSURES TO LEARNERS:

For all disclosure statements:

- ☐ The activity file documentation must include evidence of how the disclosures were provided to learners.
- ☐ Initial applicants must prepare and submit sample disclosures to learners for each educational activity that contains the accreditation statement, to be used once accreditation is attained. The disclosures must include all the applicable disclosure statement requirements.

Summative Evaluation

- ☐ A post-activity analysis of the educational activity assessment data that demonstrates if the educational activity successfully changed the knowledge, skill, and/or practice of the learners.
- ☐ An analysis of individual educational activity assessment data to guide future activities.

CHAPTER 4

STRUCTURE, EDUCATIONAL DESIGN PROCESS, AND OUTCOMES

As discussed in the early chapters of this manual, the ANCC NCPD Accreditation criteria and conceptual model are based on the Donabedian model for quality of Structure, Process, and Outcomes. This chapter outlines the Structural Capacity, Educational Design, and Quality Outcome requirements outlined in the ANCC NCPD Accreditation™ criteria. This chapter discusses the ANCC NCPD Accreditation criteria that will guide an Accredited Provider to create an NCPD program that has sufficient structure and resources, an evidence-based process for designing education, and a continuous improvement process that evaluates effectiveness and quality.

SECTION 1: Structural Capacity

A strong structural foundation is essential for Accredited Providers to deliver high-quality NCPD. The structural capacity criteria ensure that the Accredited Provider has the necessary alignment, leadership, and training to maintain compliance with accreditation criteria while fostering meaningful learning experiences. The three key components of structural capacity – mission alignment, program director competency, and Nurse Planner training – work together to create a sustainable and effective NCPD program that drives measurable improvements in nurses' knowledge, skills, and/or practice.

Mission Statement:

At the heart of every Accredited Provider is its NCPD mission statement. This statement serves as a guiding principle, or North Star, shaping the provider's approach to NCPD and defining the impact it seeks to achieve (expected results). A clearly defined mission is the foundation for all educational activities and Accredited Provider initiatives. While identifying a mission and expected results, Accredited Providers must critically evaluate its intended impact and capabilities in relation to assessing changes in

knowledge, skills, and/or practice. By continuously considering how well their educational offerings support the NCPD mission, Accredited Providers can maintain focus on producing tangible changes in knowledge, skill, and/or practice.

Accredited Provider Program Director Leadership:

Leadership is another critical component of structural capacity, with the Accredited Provider Program Director (AP-PD) playing a pivotal role in ensuring the program's success. The effectiveness of an Accredited Provider is influenced strongly by the competence of its leadership, making it essential that AP-PDs receive thorough orientation, ongoing assessment, and professional development. A well-prepared AP-PD understands the accreditation criteria, oversees compliance, and fosters a culture of continuous learning within the organization. Additionally, investing in the onboarding and continual competence of the AP-PD leads to improved succession planning and continued success for the organization's NCPD program.

Nuse Planner Competency:

Beyond leadership, the support and development of Nurse Planners are essential to sustaining program quality and compliance. Nurse Planners play a crucial role in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of accredited NCPD activities. Without a structured onboarding process and continuous support, Accredited Providers may struggle to meet

accreditation standards, potentially compromising the integrity of the program. A well-defined approach to onboarding, compliance monitoring, and professional growth enhances the effectiveness of individual Nurse Planners and strengthens the overall program by fostering a culture of accountability and excellence.

SECTION 2: Educational Design Process



The educational design process criteria (EDP 1-7) must align with the Standards for Integrity and Independence in Accredited Continuing Education.

The educational design process (EDP) criteria are the operational expectations for Accredited Providers; moreover, the EDP must be adhered to in performance in practice, also referred to as activity files. The activity level is where the Accredited Providers demonstrate adherence to the EDP principles, as they are fundamental to high-quality nursing continuing professional development (NCPD). Accredited Providers must ensure that these expectations are met and that the ANCC NCPD Accreditation criteria are applied consistently.

NCPD is designed to improve the professional practice of nursing and to positively impact patient, system, and/or population outcomes. NCPD activities are defined as “learning activities intended to build upon the educational and experiential bases of the professional nurse for the enhancement of practice, education, administration, research, or theory development, to the end of improving the health of the public and nurses’ pursuit of their professional career goals.”

Within an accreditation framework, the following principles of high-quality educational design are employed:

- Incorporating the active involvement of a Nurse Planner in the planning process;
- Addressing a professional practice gap (change in standard of care, problem in practice, or opportunity for improvement);
- Analyzing educational needs (knowledge, skills, and/or practices) of registered nurses and/or healthcare team members that underlie the problem or opportunity (why the problem or opportunity exists);
- Identifying competencies that align with the identified professional practice gap and underlying educational need(s);
- Identifying one or more learning outcomes to be achieved by learners participating in the activity;
- Evaluating achievement of learning outcomes, using strategies that actively involve the learner in the educational activity and are congruent with the educational needs and desired learning outcomes; and
- Ensuring educational activities adhere to the Standards for Integrity and Independence in Accredited CE.

EDUCATIONAL DESIGN PROCESS ELEMENTS

Content Reviewer:

An individual selected to evaluate an educational activity during the planning process or after it has been planned but prior to delivery to learners for content quality, bias, and any other aspects of the activity that may require evaluation.

Educational Content

What Content Is Eligible?

It is the expectation that for all NCPD activity planning, the Accredited Provider will adhere to the ANCC educational design process and activity file requirements. Content chosen for educational activities must address a gap in knowledge, skill, and/or practice and must be evidence-based or based on the best available evidence, and the educational activity must be planned independently from the influence of ineligible companies. Content is intended to build upon the educational and professional development of the RN. Content areas may include but are not limited to faculty development, leadership, research, practice theory, onboarding, practice transitioning, shared governance, wellness and self-care, team training, skill-based training (BLS/ACLS), quality, and performance improvement. Additionally, NCPD content may be derived from academic curricula. Educational content must align with the Standards for Integrity and Independence in Accredited Continuing Education Standard 1, and Accredited Providers are responsible for ensuring that education is fair and balanced and that any clinical content presented supports safe, effective patient care (ACCME, 2020).

Content developed by an ineligible company may NOT be used in accredited educational activities. Content for NCPD activities must include supporting best available evidence-based references. There is no minimum number of references. Organizations are responsible for determining what is “best available” evidence. The ANCC NCPD Accreditation criteria do not define a time frame associated with the best available current evidence or define the number of references required for an activity. Stating that the speaker is an expert does not meet the requirement for an evidence-based reference. It is up to the Nurse Planner and expert to identify written resources that support the expert knowledge.

If there is a concern that the content is not based on best available evidence, a **content reviewer** can be utilized to ensure validity and integrity within the educational activity.

Planning Committee Involvement in Content Development

Content for the educational activity may be chosen by the Nurse Planner and Planning Committee, or it may be selected by others participating in the educational activity, such as individual speakers or authors. It is the responsibility of the Nurse Planner and Planning Committee to ensure that content is based on the most current evidence, which may include but is not limited to evidence-based practice, literature/peer-reviewed journals, clinical guidelines, best practices, and content experts' experiences. If there is concern that the content selected is not based on best available evidence or may be biased within the educational activity, the Nurse Planner and Planning Committee may choose to engage a content reviewer who is not a member of the Planning Committee. The purpose of a content reviewer is to provide an independent and expert evaluation of content to ensure best available evidence is presented, the content is balanced, and the content is not promotional or biased. The Nurse Planner is responsible for ensuring that all individuals in a position to control content are evaluated for relevant financial relationships with ineligible companies prior to the start of planning the activity per the Standards for Integrity and Independence in Accredited Continuing Education. This includes content reviewers.

Previously Developed Content

Content that has previously been developed may also be identified as appropriate to include within the educational activity. If previously developed content is incorporated, the Nurse Planner is responsible for:

- **Professional Practice Gap**
Ensuring that previously developed educational content validates the current professional practice gap.
- **Evidence Supporting the Professional Practice Gap**
Ensuring that the previously developed content is up to date, evidence-based, and meets current practice standards or guidelines.
- **Learning Outcomes**
Developing learning outcomes independent of any prior outcomes or objectives for the content and/or providing evidence to support why the previously developed learning outcomes do not require modification, based on the needs of the target audience for the activity being planned.
- **Assessing and Analyzing for Content Integrity**
 - Ensure the previously developed content is permissible for use.
 - Ensure the previously developed content is objective and unbiased and excludes any promotional influence.

The Nurse Planner and Planning Committee may not provide a previously developed educational activity and award contact hours without complying with all elements of the NCPD Accreditation educational design criteria.

Target Audience

The target audience is defined as specific registered nurse learners and may include other healthcare team members the educational activity is intended to impact.

Accredited Providers are not permitted to provide accredited educational activities without the RN being a represented member of the target audience.

Professional Practice Gap

The process of planning begins with identifying when NCPD might be a desired intervention to address a change that has been made to a standard of care, a problem that exists in practice, or an opportunity for improvement. Once an educational intervention is determined to be appropriate, a Nurse Planner is engaged to begin the planning process.

The Nurse Planner starts by analyzing data to validate the need for the educational activity. This analysis forms the basis of a professional practice gap, or the difference between the current state of practice and the desired state of practice. It is important to note that a professional practice gap may exist for RNs or healthcare teams regardless of the practice setting. Professional practice gaps are not limited to clinical practice and may also exist in areas of professional work such as administration, education, and research.

The Nurse Planner (who may also be the Accredited Provider Program Director) is the only individual who is required to be part of the planning process for an accredited educational activity.

The planning committee is made up of all individuals who have been identified as influencing the educational content and making planning decisions for the activity.

Underlying Educational Needs

When the professional practice gap has been identified, the Nurse Planner and Planning Committee conduct an analysis to determine the underlying educational needs of registered nurses or members of the healthcare team who contribute to the gap. The Nurse Planner and Planning Committee evaluate what registered nurses or members of the healthcare team do not know (knowledge deficit), do not know how to do (skill deficit), or are not able to do in practice (practice deficit). A backward-planning process as described by Moore, Green, and Gallis (2009) is a useful method for determining the educational needs and targeting the educational activity appropriately to address the gap.

In addition to identifying the underlying educational need of the target audience, it is essential to evaluate what the educational activity intends to address. For instance, if the content and assessment methods of an activity are focused on knowledge and skill development without addressing or measuring a change in practice, practice should not be identified as part of the underlying educational need.

Competence

The foundational abilities required for nursing practice in a given context.

Competency

The ability to apply knowledge, skills, and/or abilities, including intellectual behaviors that are required to meet performance and outcomes in professional practice in a given context (Dodge, Bushway, & Long, 2018).

Competency Identification

The American Nurses Credentialing Center NCPD Accreditation program defines **competence** as “the foundational abilities required for nursing practice in a given context,” and **competency** as “the ability to apply knowledge, skills, and/or abilities, including intellectual behaviors that are required to meet performance and outcomes in professional nursing practice in a given context” (Dodge, Bushway, & Long, 2018, p.1).

Identifying competencies for ANCC Accredited NCPD educational activities is a thoughtful process that aligns educational offerings with the ever-changing needs of the nursing profession and healthcare demands. The process begins, prior to activity file development, with understanding the overarching goals of the NCPD Program.

Once that understanding is confirmed, an organization may identify key competencies that align with these goals and are reflective of the desired practice for the program’s target audience. These competencies reflect both clinical skills, such as patient management, and nonclinical skills, like communication and leadership. Consideration is also given to shifts in healthcare policies, technological advancements, and evolving patient needs. As these factors change, so do the competencies required to address emerging challenges, making regular updates critical to staying relevant.

Validating competencies to bridge the professional practice gap is foundational in developing accredited education. Competencies establish a clear purpose for educational activities and serve as a planning and instructional design framework. Identifying these competencies early ensures that every aspect of the educational strategy aligns to deliver targeted learning (Graebe & Roy, 2025).

Competencies and learning outcomes must be clearly defined, measurable, and achievable for educational activities aimed at demonstrating impact or improvements in knowledge, skills, and practice. Providers should transparently link competencies to real-world applications, offering actionable examples like patient interactions or team collaboration. Breaking competencies into smaller, practical skills helps nurses relate them to daily practice, promoting meaningful integration into their roles.

Competency selection also considers nurses’ diverse learning styles and professional stages. New nurses may require different competencies than seasoned professionals. Incorporating varied educational methods, such as simulations, case studies, and peer discussions, can accommodate these differences, facilitating deeper understanding and engagement.

By identifying competencies first, educators create a solid foundation for setting precise learning outcomes. A backward design approach ensures alignment between competencies, learning activities, and assessments, preparing learners to demonstrate mastery effectively. This alignment is key to purposeful and learner-centered educational experiences.

Ultimately, the goal of selecting competencies for ANCC Accredited NCPD activities is to ensure that educational content is relevant, actionable, and forward-looking. These efforts empower nurses to maintain and enhance their competence while adapting to the dynamic demands of healthcare systems.

Competency-based learning is the cornerstone of professional excellence, fostering patient trust and high-quality care. As the expectations of nursing evolve, so must the educational systems that support, challenge, and drive innovation in practice. ANCC's NCPD Accreditation criteria emphasize a competency-based approach to education, ensuring purposeful, learner-centered, and impactful learning experiences.

- Accredited Providers are encouraged to not develop its own competencies but rather it should be identifying established competencies from professorial sources that align with the professional practice gap.
- It is not the expectation that each educational activity will determine competency, unless the Accredited Provider makes that determination. The competencies are used to develop the measurable learning outcomes and support the activity's relevance for the target audience.

Learning Outcome(s)

From the identified professional practice gap underlying educational need, the Nurse Planner and Planning Committee develop the desired learning outcome for participants and identified professional competencies in the target audience. A learning outcome is written as a statement that reflects what the learner will be able to do as a result of participating in the educational activity. The learning outcome must be measurable and align to how the outcome will be evaluated. The outcome addresses the educational needs (knowledge, skills, and/or practices) that contribute to the professional practice gap. Achieving the learning outcome results in narrowing or closing the gap. There may be more than one learning outcome for an educational activity. If the activity addresses more than one underlying educational need, there should be an outcome that addresses each of the underlying needs of the learners.

OUTCOMES	OBJECTIVES
A statement describing the overall goal for learners at the end of the educational activity.	Defines the content of an education activity.
Must be quantifiable and able to be measured.	Highlights the topics that will be discussed during the presentation.
Is based on the professional practice gap, underlying educational need, and identified competencies.	Is focused on content delivery.

Assessment Methods

The Nurse Planner and Planning Committee determine the assessment method that will be used to evaluate the desired learning outcome of the educational activity. The assessment method should measure the achievement of the desired learning outcome. Assessments may be formative and integrated within the educational activity. Assessments are also summative at the conclusion of the educational activity. Assessment methods include assessment of change in knowledge, skills, and/or practices of the target audience. Change in knowledge, skills, and/or practices may or may not occur based on a variety of factors, but evaluation should assess for impact or change. Assessments may also include collecting data that reflects barriers to learner change.

Assessments may include but are not limited to both short- and long-term methods, as illustrated below.

KNOWLEDGE	SKILL	PRACTICE ASSESSMENT METHODS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Polling▪ Multiple choice▪ True or false▪ Verbal response▪ Written tests▪ Self-report	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Return demonstration▪ Case study▪ Role play▪ Simulation▪ Essay demonstrating application of knowledge and skill▪ Computer-based simulation scenarios	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Long-term report of actual change in practice▪ Change in quality outcome measure▪ Observation of performance in practice



NOTE: The intent to change practice is not an acceptable short-term or long-term assessment method for measuring impact or change in practice.

Active Learning Strategies

Evolving beyond engagement strategies, active learning strategies engage students in the learning process, encouraging them to participate actively in acquiring knowledge, developing skills, and practicing competencies.

Active Learning Strategies

Evolving beyond engagement strategies, active learning strategies **engage students in the learning process**, encouraging them to participate actively in acquiring knowledge, developing skills, and practicing competencies. Active learning is any activity in which the learner participates in or interacts with the learning process instead of passively taking in the information. Learners perform better when allowed to engage with the information they are actively learning. (Theobald et al., 2020).

Active learning encourages conversation and debate, while passive learning encourages active listening and paying attention to detail. Examples of active learning include tabletop exercises, simulations, think-pair-share exercises, jigsaw discussions, and pausing for guided reflection during lectures.

Educators can effectively address competencies, learning outcomes, and underlying educational needs by incorporating active learning strategies into educational activities to foster deeper engagement, skill development, and competency attainment among learners. By integrating **active learning strategies** – like discussion, problem-solving, and self-quizzing – learners will retain information longer, build deeper understanding, and become more engaged learners. (Savin et al., 2023).

Another consideration with active learning is the importance of minimizing distractions. Multitasking during learning significantly increases the time required to acquire knowledge and results in less adaptable learning outcomes. This occurs because multitasking engages brain regions that are less effective for retaining information, thereby making it more difficult to recall facts and apply learned material. Additionally, research by Sana, Weston, and Cepeda (2013) demonstrated that students who utilized laptops during lectures scored lower on assessments. Moreover, students seated within the direct view of multitasking peers also exhibited lower test scores than those not exposed to such distractions. These findings underscore that multitasking impairs not only the individual engaging in the activity but also those in their immediate environment.



NOTE: Q&A, post-tests, PowerPoint presentations, and videos are not considered active learning strategies.

Summative Evaluation

Following the conclusion of the educational activity, the Nurse Planner and/or Planning Committee must follow a clearly defined method that includes analysis of learner input and a summary of data that is used to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the educational activity. The summative evaluation data is an analysis that is used to determine the impact of the educational activity in achieving the desired learning outcome and how its results are used to guide future educational activities as applicable.

Reminder: The summative evaluation process includes two elements:

- Evaluate data to determine the impact of the educational activity in achieving the desired outcome.
- Evaluate data to guide future educational activities.

The Standards for Integrity and Independence in Accredited Continuing Education

The Standards for Integrity and Independence in Accredited Continuing Education (the Standards) were established by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) through a collaborative, two-year effort involving open dialogue and consensus-building with the health professions' continuing education (CE) community, including the ANCC. They have been endorsed and adopted by the ANCC along with eight other accrediting bodies from multiple health professions. The Standards serve as a foundational framework to ensure that accredited continuing education activities maintain the highest level of ethical and educational quality. The Standards are designed to safeguard the integrity of educational content, promote independence from commercial interests, and prioritize the needs of learners and the public.

The Standards are available to all Accredited Providers **online** and should be reviewed and understood by Accredited Providers to ensure that processes align with the expectations put forward in the Standards.

The Standards include five key elements:

- **Standard 1:** Ensure Content is Valid
- **Standard 2:** Prevent Commercial Bias and Marketing in Accredited Continuing Education
- **Standard 3:** Identify, Mitigate, and Disclose Relevant Financial Relationships
- **Standard 4:** Manage Commercial Support Appropriately (if applicable)
- **Standard 5:** Manage Ancillary Activities Offered in Conjunction with Accredited Continuing Education (if applicable)

Key terms to understand:

- **Ineligible company:** A company whose primary business is producing, marketing, selling, reselling, or distributing healthcare products used by or on patients. (ACCME, 2020).
- **Financial Commercial Support:** Money supplied by an ineligible company to be used by a provider for expenses related to the educational activity. Financial support may be provided as an unrestricted grant, an educational grant, a donation, or a scholarship. (ACCME, 2020).
- **In-kind Commercial Support:** Materials, space, or other nonmonetary resources or services from an ineligible company used by a provider to conduct an educational activity, which may include but are not limited to human resources, marketing services, physical space, equipment such as audiovisual components, and teaching tools (for example, anatomic models). (ACCME, 2020).
- **Relevant Financial Relationship:** When an individual has a financial relationship with an ineligible company and the educational content is related to the business lines or products of the ineligible company (ACCME, 2020).

Standard 1: Ensure Content Is Valid

Standard 1 applies to all accredited continuing education.

Accredited providers are responsible for ensuring that their education is fair and balanced and that any clinical content presented supports safe, effective patient care.

1. All recommendations for patient care in accredited continuing education must be based on current science, evidence, and clinical reasoning, while giving a fair and balanced view of diagnostic and therapeutic options.
2. All scientific research referred to, reported, or used in accredited education in support or justification of a patient care recommendation must conform to the generally accepted standards of experimental design, data collection, analysis, and interpretation.
3. Although accredited continuing education is an appropriate place to discuss, debate, and explore new and evolving topics, these areas need to be clearly identified as such within the program and individual presentations. It is the responsibility of Accredited Providers to facilitate engagement with these topics without advocating for, or promoting, practices that are not, or not yet, adequately based on current science, evidence, and clinical reasoning.
4. Organizations cannot be accredited if they advocate for unscientific approaches to diagnosis or therapy, or if their education promotes recommendations, treatment, or manners of practicing healthcare that are determined to have risks or dangers that outweigh the benefits or are known to be ineffective in the treatment of patients.

Standard 2: Prevent Commercial Bias and Marketing in Accredited Continuing Education

Standard 2 applies to all accredited continuing education.

Accredited continuing education must protect learners from commercial bias and marketing.

1. The Accredited Provider must ensure that all decisions related to the planning, faculty selection, delivery, and evaluation of accredited education are made without any influence or involvement from the owners and employees of an ineligible company.
2. Accredited education must be free of marketing or sales of products or services. Faculty must not actively promote or sell products or services that serve their professional or financial interests during accredited education.
3. The Accredited Provider must not share the names or contact information of learners with any ineligible company or its agents without the explicit consent of the individual learner.

Standard 3: Identify, Mitigate, and Disclose Relevant Financial Relationships

Standard 3 applies to all accredited continuing education.

Many healthcare professionals have financial relationships with ineligible companies. These relationships must not be allowed to influence accredited continuing education. The Accredited Provider is responsible for identifying relevant financial relationships between individuals in control of educational content and ineligible companies and managing these relationships to ensure they do not introduce commercial bias into the education. Financial relationships of any dollar amount are defined as relevant if the educational content is related to the business lines or products of the ineligible company.

Accredited providers must take the following steps when developing accredited continuing education. Exceptions are listed at the end of Standard 3.

- 1. Collect information:** Collect information from all planners, faculty, and others in control of educational content about all their financial relationships with ineligible companies within the prior 24 months. There is no minimum financial threshold; individuals must disclose all financial relationships, regardless of the amount, with ineligible companies. Individuals must disclose regardless of their view of the relevance of the relationship to the education. Disclosure information must include:
 - a. The name of the ineligible company with which the person has a financial relationship.
 - b. The nature of the financial relationship. Examples of financial relationships include employee, researcher, consultant, advisor, speaker, independent contractor (including for contracted research), royalties or patent beneficiary, executive role, and ownership interest. Individual stocks and stock options should be disclosed; diversified mutual funds do not need to be disclosed. Research funding from ineligible companies should be disclosed by the principal or named investigator even if that individual's institution receives the research grant and manages the funds.
- 2. Exclude owners or employees of ineligible companies:** Review the information about financial relationships to identify individuals who are owners or employees of ineligible companies. These individuals must be excluded from controlling content or participating as planners or faculty in accredited education. There are three exceptions to this exclusion – employees of ineligible companies can participate as planners or faculty in these specific situations:
 - a. When the content of the activity is not related to the business lines or products of their employer/company.
 - b. When the content of the accredited activity is limited to basic science research, such as pre-clinical research and drug discovery, or the methodologies of research, and they do not make care recommendations.
 - c. When they are participating as technicians to teach the safe and proper use of medical devices, and do not recommend whether or when a device is used.
- 3. Identify relevant financial relationships:** Review the information about financial relationships to determine which relationships are relevant. Financial relationships are relevant if the educational content an individual can control is related to the business lines or products of the ineligible company.
- 4. Mitigate relevant financial relationships:** Take steps to prevent all those with relevant financial relationships from inserting commercial bias into content.
 - a. Mitigate relationships prior to the individuals assuming their roles. Take steps appropriate to the role of the individual. For example, steps for planners will likely be different than for faculty and would occur before planning begins.
 - b. Document the steps taken to mitigate relevant financial relationships.
- 5. Disclose all relevant financial relationships to learners:** Disclosure to learners must include each of the following:
 - a. The names of the individuals with relevant financial relationships.
 - b. The names of the ineligible companies with which they have relationships.
 - c. The nature of the relationships.
 - d. A statement that all relevant financial relationships have been mitigated.

Identify ineligible companies by their name only. Disclosure to learners must not include ineligible companies' corporate or product logos, trade names, or product group messages.

Disclose absence of relevant financial relationships. Inform learners about planners, faculty, and others in control of content (either individually or as a group) with no relevant financial relationships with ineligible companies. **Learners must receive disclosure information, in a format that can be verified at the time of accreditation, before engaging with the accredited education.**

Exceptions: Accredited providers do not need to identify, mitigate, or disclose relevant financial relationships for any of the following activities:

1. Accredited education that is nonclinical, such as leadership or communication skills training.
2. Accredited education where the learner group is in control of content, such as a spontaneous case conversation among peers.
3. Accredited self-directed education where the learner controls their educational goals and reports on changes that resulted, such as learning from teaching, remediation, or a personal development plan. When accredited providers serve as a source of information for the self-directed learner, they should direct learners only to resources and methods for learning that are not controlled by ineligible companies.

Standard 4: Manage Commercial Support Appropriately

Standard 4 applies only to accredited continuing education that receives financial or in-kind support from ineligible companies.

Accredited providers that choose to accept commercial support (defined as financial or in-kind support from ineligible companies) are responsible for ensuring that the education remains independent of the ineligible company and that the support does not result in commercial bias or commercial influence in the education. The support does not establish a financial relationship between the ineligible company and planners, faculty, and others in control of content of the education.

- 1. Decision-making and disbursement:** The Accredited Provider must make all decisions regarding the receipt and disbursement of the commercial support.
 - a. Ineligible companies must not pay directly for any of the expenses related to the education or the learners.
 - b. The Accredited Provider may use commercial support to fund honoraria or travel expenses of planners, faculty, and others in control of content for those roles only.
 - c. The Accredited Provider must not use commercial support to pay for travel, lodging, honoraria, or personal expenses for individual learners or groups of learners in accredited education.
 - d. The Accredited Provider may use commercial support to defray or eliminate the cost of the education for all learners.
- 2. Agreement:** The terms, conditions, and purposes of the commercial support must be documented in an agreement between the ineligible company and the Accredited Provider. The agreement must be executed prior to the start of the accredited education. An Accredited Provider can sign on to an existing agreement between an Accredited Provider and a commercial supporter by indicating its acceptance of the terms, conditions, and amount of commercial support it will receive.

- 3. Accountability:** The Accredited Provider must keep a record of the amount or kind of commercial support received and how it was used, and must produce that accounting, upon request, by the accrediting body or by the ineligible company that provided the commercial support.
- 4. Disclosure to learners:** The Accredited Provider must disclose to the learners the name(s) of the ineligible company(ies) that gave the commercial support, and the nature of the support if it was in-kind, prior to the learners engaging in the education. Disclosure must not include the ineligible companies' corporate or product logos, trade names, or product group messages.

Standard 5: Manage Ancillary Activities Offered in Conjunction with Accredited Continuing Education

Standard 5 applies only when there is marketing by ineligible companies or nonaccredited education associated with the accredited continuing education.

Accredited Providers are responsible for ensuring that education is separate from marketing by ineligible companies – including advertising, sales, exhibits, and promotion – and from nonaccredited education offered in conjunction with accredited continuing education.

1. Arrangements to allow ineligible companies to market or exhibit in association with accredited education must not:
 - a. Influence any decisions related to the planning, delivery, and evaluation of the education.
 - b. Interfere with the presentation of the education.
 - c. Be a condition of the provision of financial or in-kind support from ineligible companies for the education.
2. The Accredited Provider must ensure that learners can easily distinguish between accredited education and other activities.
 - a. Live continuing education activities: Marketing, exhibits, and nonaccredited education developed by or with influence from an ineligible company or with planners or faculty with unmitigated financial relationships must not occur in the educational space within 30 minutes before or after an accredited education activity. Activities that are part of the event but are not accredited for continuing education must be clearly labeled and communicated as such.
 - b. Print, online, or digital continuing education activities: Learners must not be presented with marketing while engaged in the accredited education activity. Learners must be able to engage with the accredited education without having to click through, watch, listen to, or be presented with product promotion or product-specific advertisement.
 - c. Educational materials that are part of accredited education (such as slides, abstracts, handouts, evaluation mechanisms, or disclosure information) must not contain any marketing produced by or for an ineligible company, including corporate or product logos, trade names, or product group messages.
 - d. Information distributed about accredited education that does not include educational content, such as schedules and logistical information, may include marketing by or for an ineligible company.
3. Ineligible companies may not provide access to, or distribute, accredited education to learners.

ADMINISTRATIVE ELEMENTS WITHIN THE EDUCATIONAL DESIGN PROCESS

Criteria for Awarding Contact Hours

During the planning phase, the Nurse Planner will establish the criteria for successful completion for learners to be awarded contact hours. These requirements may include, but are not limited to, active engagement in the activity (e.g., completion of a group tabletop exercise), demonstrating proficiency on a post-test, completing a self-reflection assessment, or successfully performing a return demonstration. The criteria for successful completion should be realistic and practical, and appropriate for the underlying educational need, format of the educational activity, while aligning meaningfully with the learning outcomes.

Reminder:

- Speakers cannot earn contact hours for sessions they present. If they are presenting one or more sessions at a conference, but are also attending other sessions at that conference, they can earn contact hours for those sessions they attend as learners.
- Planning committee members may earn contact hours if they participate in the activity as learners.

Calculating Contact Hours

Contact hours are awarded to participants for those portions of the educational activity devoted to the learning experience and time spent evaluating the activity. Accredited Providers may refer to the contact hours as the following:

✓ ANCC contact hours

✓ ANCC CNE credit

✓ ANCC NCPD contact hours

Accredited Providers should not use the term “CEU.”

- CEU is a specific credit designation used by organizations accredited by International Accreditors for Continuing Education and Training (IACET). The conversion of 1 CEU into hours (time) is different than a contact hour.
- Contact hours are determined in a logical and defensible manner.
- If rounding is desired in the calculation of contact hours, the provider must round to the nearest quarter hour – up or down.

For live activities, one contact hour = 60 minutes. Time frames must match and support the contact hour calculation for live activities. An agenda must be provided for educational activities that are greater than three hours in length. Time for breaks and meals should be clearly delineated and **not included** in the total contact hours awarded.

For enduring materials (print, electronic, web-based, etc.), **the method** for calculating the contact hours must be identified. The method may include but is not limited to a pilot study, historical data, Mergener Formula, or complexity of content. Participants in a pilot study assist in determining the length of time required for completing an educational activity so the number of contact hours to award can be calculated. Those participants may be awarded contact hours once the number is determined. Contact hours may not be awarded retroactively except in the case of a pilot study.

Accredited Provider Statement

Accredited Providers are required to provide the official accreditation statement to learners prior to the start of each educational activity and on each certificate of completion. The official Accredited Provider statement must be displayed clearly to the learner and worded correctly.

The official ANCC NCPD Accreditation statement must be written as follows:

[Name of Accredited Provider] is accredited as a provider of nursing continuing professional development by the American Nurses Credentialing Center's Commission on Accreditation.

Certificate or Documentation of Completion

A certificate or documentation of completion **is awarded** to a participant who successfully completes the requirements for the education activity. Criteria for successful completion are determined by the provider and must be implemented as such.

The certificate of completion or document must include:

- Title and date of the educational activity;
- Date of the educational activity (if enduring, include the actual date the learner completed the activity);
- Name and address of the provider of the educational activity (web or email address is acceptable);
- Number of contact hours awarded;
- Accreditation statement; and
- Place for the learners name.

IMPORTANT: Initial applicants **must submit a sample certificate of completion for each educational activity** that includes the accreditation statement to be used once accreditation is attained. The certificate should include all of the required elements outlined on this page.

Required Disclosures Provided to the Learner

Learners must receive required disclosure statements prior to the start of an educational activity:

- In live activities, required information must be provided to the learner prior to initiation of the educational content.
- In enduring materials (print, electronic, or web-based activities), required information must be visible to the learner prior to the start of the educational content.
- Required information may not occur or be located at the end of an educational activity.
- Evidence of how the disclosures were provided to learners must be included in activity file documentation.

Required disclosures to learners include the following:

- Accreditation statement of the Accredited Provider awarding contact hours, and
- Criteria for successful completion in order to be awarded contact hours.

Additional disclosures to learners, if applicable:

- Presence or absence of relevant financial relationships for all individuals in a position to control content:
 - For individuals who have a relevant financial relationship, the following required information must be provided to learners:
 - The names of the individuals with relevant financial relationships,
 - The names of the ineligible companies with which they have relationships,
 - The nature of the relationships, and
 - A statement that all relevant financial relationships have been mitigated.
 - If no relevant financial relationship exists, the activity provider must inform learners that no relevant financial relationships exist for any individual in a position to control the content of the educational activity.
 - The presence or absence of relevant financial relationships does not need to be disclosed to learners if the activity meets any of the three exceptions outlined in Standard 3 of the Standards for Integrity and Independence in Accredited Continuing Education.
- Commercial Support: Learners must be informed if an ineligible company has provided financial or in-kind support for the educational activity.
- Expiration of enduring materials: Educational activities provided through an enduring format (e.g., print, electronic, web-based) are required to include an expiration date documenting the time period.
- Joint Providership: If the educational activity was jointly provided, this must be disclosed to learners.

Requirements for Reviewing Enduring Activities

Enduring activities are provider-directed, learner-paced activities. Enduring materials have an expiration date after which no contact hours may be awarded. **The expiration date of enduring material cannot exceed three years.** Providers must review content of enduring materials at least once every three years, or more frequently if indicated by new developments in the field specific to the enduring material.

Review of enduring material content should be conducted for:

- Accuracy of content,
- Current application to practice,
- Evidence-based practice,
- Validation of utilization of the most up-to-date accreditation criteria and accreditation statement, and
- Verification that the summative evaluation data is used to determine if the activity was effective and if revisions to the activity are needed.

Upon completion of the enduring material, ensure the following:

- The activity file is amended to reflect accreditation criteria updates,
- A new expiration date is established of no more than three years,
- The Accredited Provider has a process for ensuring that periodic summative evaluations are occurring to determine impact of the enduring activity, and
- Summative evaluations are completed at regular intervals (monthly, quarterly, or yearly) to determine if the activity was effective and if revisions to the activity are needed.

Converting Live Activities to Enduring Activities

Live activities, or portions of live activities, may be repurposed as enduring materials. If materials are converted, an expiration date is assigned to the enduring activity and this expiration date must be disclosed to learners before they engage in the educational activity.

- If a live activity is recorded and the recording (either entire event or portions of the event) is provided to the same group of learners who registered for the live event, this is considered the same activity. Considerations must be made to ensure that learner engagement strategies, evaluation methods, and criteria for awarding contact hours are appropriate for live and enduring activity types.
- If a live activity is recorded and the recording (either entire event or portions of the event) is provided to a new group of learners that did not register for the live event, this would be considered a new activity. Considerations must be made to ensure that learner engagement strategies, evaluation methods, and criteria for awarding contact hours are appropriate for live and enduring activity types.

Considerations for Conferences

When planning a larger NCPD activity or conference, follow the educational design process following the same principles with any educational activity. **Conferences may be planned as one NCPD activity with one overarching learning outcome.**

The description of the evidence-based content can include details on how the overall content facilitates learner achievement of the expected outcome for the conference. Detailed information about sessions, and individual session outcomes, are not required. An evaluation may be completed at the conclusion of the conference to evaluate whether the desired learning outcome was achieved.

SECTION 3: Quality Outcomes

The Quality Outcomes section of the self-study ensures that Accredited Providers not only deliver educational activities but also continuously assess the effectiveness and impact of the Accredited Provider. This section emphasizes the importance of meaningful metrics to evaluate the overall impact of the NCPD program and identify initiatives to impact quality.

To measure the impact of the Accredited Provider, organizations must analyze the aggregate results of the NCPD activities offered and determine whether the aggregate findings meet the NCPD's expected results in terms of impact on knowledge, skill, and/or practice, identified in the NCPD's mission. This process is key to assessing the degree to which its NCPD activities align with and fulfill the Accredited Provider's NCPD mission. The assessment and analysis guides Accredited Providers to continue to make strategic decisions that align with program goals and the impacts the organization aims to achieve through ANCC NCPD Accreditation. By integrating a structured analysis and evaluation into their processes, Accredited Providers can ensure that they contribute to sustained professional development and growth.

The Accredited Provider must also identify initiatives focused on improving operational effectiveness and committing to continuous quality improvement. This may involve a systematic review of internal processes, resource allocation, and strategic initiatives to identify opportunities to enhance efficiency, operations, or compliance with accreditation standards. Accredited Providers must identify a quality improvement initiative or key operational outcomes and establish performance metrics to track progress. By maintaining a continuous improvement mindset, Accredited Providers can ensure that their administrative processes, educational offerings, and strategic initiatives are effective and impactful. This commitment to quality enhances operational efficiency and reinforces the provider's ability to create meaningful professional development experiences for nurses.

CHAPTER 5

ACCREDITATION APPLICATION PROCESS

ANCC NCPD ACCREDITATION OVERVIEW

These steps can be followed for new and reaccrediting applicants:

ASSESS ELIGIBILITY

- Utilize the Eligibility Checklist to determine eligibility.
- Review the ANCC NCPD Accreditation criteria to determine readiness to apply.

BECOME AN APPLICANT

- Contact the ANCC NCPD Accreditation Program Office at accreditation@ana.org.
- Complete an “eligibility call” interview with a member of the ANCC NCPD Program Office.
- Program Office confirms the accreditation cycle date (March 1, July 1, or November 1).

VERIFICATION

- ANCC NCPD Accreditation Program Office verifies eligibility to apply.
- Submit a completed application and remit application fees.

DOCUMENT SUBMISSION

- Submit the program self-study and activity files by the assigned due date.

DOCUMENT REVIEW

- Appraisers will review the documentation.
- Additional evidence may be requested during this phase.
- Appraisers will meet virtually with organization in the virtual visit.

ACCREDITATION DECISION

- The Commission on Accreditation in NCPD (COA-NCPD) reviews the appraiser team’s final report and determines a final accreditation decision.

ACCREDITED TERM

- New applicants may be awarded accreditation for two years, and renewing applicants may be accredited for up to four years.

STEP ONE: ASSESS ELIGIBILITY

- Review the eligibility checklist below to determine if the organization is eligible and prepared to apply for ANCC NCPD Accreditation.

ANCC NCPD ACCREDITATION ELIGIBILITY CHECKLIST

- ✓ **Must be one of the following organization types:**
 - ☐ ANA organizational affiliate
 - ☐ College or university
 - ☐ Constituent or State Nurses Association (C/SNA) of the ANA
 - ☐ Federal nursing service
 - ☐ Healthcare facility
 - ☐ Health-related organization
 - ☐ Multidisciplinary educational group
 - ☐ Professional nursing education group
 - ☐ Specialty nursing organization
 - ☐ National nursing association/organization
- ✓ **Must have a qualified Accredited Provider Program Director (AP-PD) who:**
 - ☐ Is a registered nurse with a current, unrestricted nursing license (or international equivalent)
 - ☐ Holds a graduate/master's degree
 - ☐ Holds a baccalaureate degree or higher in nursing (or international equivalent)
 - ☐ Has authority within the Accredited Provider to ensure compliance with the ANCC NCPD Accreditation Program criteria that pertain to the operations of the organization as an Accredited Provider
 - ☐ Has responsibility for ensuring that the Accredited Provider adheres to the ANCC NCPD Accreditation Program criteria for all operational aspects of providing continuing nursing professional development activities and criteria that pertain to the operations of the organization as an Accredited Provider
 - ☐ Has responsibility for the orientation of all Nurse Planners in the organization with respect to the ANCC NCPD Accreditation Program criteria
- ☐ Has responsibility for ensuring each Nurse Planner is a registered nurse and holds a current, unrestricted nursing license (or international equivalent) and a baccalaureate degree or higher in nursing (or international equivalent)
- ☐ Has responsibility for ensuring each Nurse Planner understands the ANCC NCPD Accreditation Program criteria and is responsible for appropriately evaluating compliance with those criteria
- ✓ **Must be operational for a minimum of six months prior to application.**
 - ☐ Operational: Have a fully functional program for at least six months prior to applying, including offering NCPD activities in accordance with all ANCC NCPD Accreditation criteria.
- ✓ **Have completed at least three separate educational activities:**
 - ☐ With the direct involvement of a Nurse Planner
 - ☐ That adhered to the ANCC NCPD Accreditation Program criteria
 - ☐ That were each a minimum of one hour (60 minutes) in length (contact hours may or may not have been offered)
 - ☐ That were not jointly provided
- ⊘ **Ineligible companies are not eligible for accreditation.**
 - ☐ Ineligible company: Any entity whose primary business is producing, marketing, selling, reselling, or distributing healthcare products used by or on patients

Applicants must follow all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations that affect the PU's ability to meet ANCC NCPD Accreditation Program criteria.

STEP 2: BECOME AN APPLICANT

(For new applicants only, not required for reaccrediting organizations)

- Once an organization determines it is eligible and prepared to apply, it should email accreditation@ana.org expressing interest in becoming ANCC NCPD Accredited and setting up an **eligibility call**.
- On the eligibility call, an ANCC NCPD Accreditation team member will outline the application process, verify eligibility, and discuss the appropriate cycle to place the organization into (see the table below with the three yearly cycle dates).

	MARCH CYCLE	JULY CYCLE	NOVEMBER CYCLE
Application Due*	November 1	March 1	July 1
Self-Study Due	March 1	July 1	November 1
Virtual Visit Due	March 15–June 15	July 15–October 15	November 15–February 15
Final Decision	June 1–September 1	October 1–January 1	February 1–May 1

- After the eligibility call, the organization will receive a link to complete an “intent to apply.” This “intent to apply” **must be completed by the individual identified to be the Accredited Provider Program Director (AP-PD)**.
- Once the “intent to apply” is submitted, the ANCC NCPD Accreditation program will verify eligibility and communicate the following steps to the applicant.

STEP THREE: VERIFICATION AND APPLICATION

- The applicant or reaccrediting organization will submit an application in the Online Application Review System (OARS) on or before the assigned application due date.
- The application instructions will be emailed to the AP-PD before the assigned application due date.
- The application includes demographic information, eligibility questions, and a statement of understanding.
 - NEW APPLICANTS ONLY:** The applicant must upload a spreadsheet (provided by the ANCC NCPD Accreditation program) that outlines the activities planned, implemented, and evaluated by the applicant organization, using the ANCC NCPD Accreditation criteria. (See the eligibility checklist for more information about activity requirements for new applicants.)
 - REACCREDITING ORGANIZATIONS:** The organization’s NARS account must be updated, and all accredited activities offered in the past 12 months must be reported.
- Application Fee:** Once the application has been submitted, the invoice and payment instructions will be emailed to the AP-PD. Payment is due within 30 days and must be submitted before the self-study submission.
- Activity File Section:** Approximately 45 days after the application is submitted, organizations will be notified of the selection of the three activities that must be submitted with the self-study on the document submission due date.

STEP FOUR: DOCUMENT SUBMISSION

- On or before the assigned document submission due date, the applicant or reaccrediting organization must upload the Self-Study and the three selected activities into OARS.
- Each file (self-study, activity file 1, activity file 2, and activity file 3) must be uploaded a separate, bookmarked PDF document.
- Late fees and/or bookmarking fees will be assessed if the requested documentation is not received by the assigned due dates or if the documentation uploaded is not bookmarked appropriately.

SELF-STUDY GUIDELINES

- Use the latest template from the Learning Community.
- Responses must be clear and concise.
- Max length: 50 pages, PDF accurately bookmarked.
- External links will not be reviewed. Ensure all necessary documentation is included within the uploaded PDF.

ACTIVITY FILE GUIDELINES

- Must include three separate, bookmarked PDFs uploaded with the self-study.
- The mandatory activity file structured abstract form must be included for each activity selected; ensure that all applicable sections are fully completed.
- Gather and organize the required attachments, clearly labeling each with the corresponding bookmark number.
- Combine the activity file, structured abstract, and all required attachments into a single PDF file for each activity selected.
- Use bookmarks to identify each attachment within the file.
 - Incorrectly bookmarked files will be returned, requiring resubmission and incurring a fee.
- External links will not be reviewed. Ensure all necessary documentation is included within the uploaded PDFs.

**NEW IN
2025**

STEP FIVE: APPRAISAL PROCESS

- The assigned appraisal team will review the submitted documentation and request additional evidence, as needed.
- The organization and appraisers will schedule a Virtual Visit during which the appraisal team will clarify, verify, and amplify information from the self-study documents.
- The Accredited Provider Program Director must attend; other team members may join.
- Calls must not be recorded, and the use of AI note-taking is prohibited.
- Appraisers do not make accreditation decisions and cannot provide guidance or education on the Virtual Visit.

STEP SIX: COMMISSION ON ACCREDITATION REVIEW

- The COA-NCPD will review the appraiser team's final report and make an accreditation decision.
- This process may take one to four months from the Virtual Visit date.

STEP SEVEN: COMMUNICATION OF ACCREDITATION DECISION AND TERM

- Organizations will receive a communication from the ANCC NCPD Accreditation Program team with the Commission's accreditation decision.
- The communication will outline the accreditation term dates and the submission requirements for progress reports, if applicable.

VIRTUAL VISIT GUIDE

PURPOSE

- The accreditation Virtual Visit amplifies, clarifies, and verifies information from the self-study document. The Virtual Visit is your time to communicate with the appraisers and ensure they understand your self-study and activity file documentation. This is where you can show why your organization deserves accreditation.

DATE AND TIME

- Work with the appraisal team to coordinate a date and time that works for everyone.

ATTENDEES

- While the Accredited Provider Program Director (AP-PD) is required to attend, other team members of the Accredited Provider, including Nurse Planners, are encouraged to attend.
- The appraiser team will include the Team Leader and Team Member. There may also be an appraiser Team Candidate who is in the appraisal orientation process.

CONFERENCE CALL/VIDEO REQUIREMENTS

- The applicant is responsible for arranging the Virtual Visit at the applicant's expense through a conference phone line or virtual meeting platform.
- The AP-PD should communicate the call instructions to the appraisal team.

LENGTH OF VIRTUAL VISIT

- A Virtual Visit is typically scheduled for a two-hour window.
- The conference may take the whole two hours or could be shorter, depending on the amount of discussion and clarification needed.

AGENDA

- An agenda is sent two weeks prior to the Virtual Visit from the Appraiser Team Leader.

RECORDING THE VIRTUAL VISIT

- Recording of the Virtual Visit is prohibited. The use of AI note-taking is prohibited.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE AFTER THE VIRTUAL VISIT

- Appraisers may request additional evidence to be submitted during the Virtual Visit. Applicants have up to 72 hours to provide additional evidence.

ACCREDITATION DECISION

- Upon completion of the Virtual Visit, the appraisers submit a final summative written report to the COA-NCPD. COA-NCPD will review this final report and meet monthly to make accreditation decisions. It is not uncommon for there to be a two- or three-month waiting period to hear about accreditation decisions.
- After the Virtual Visit and submission of additional evidence, the appraisal team is no longer involved in the accreditation process. If you have questions about the status of your accreditation decision after the Virtual Visit, please reach out to the ANCC NCPD Accreditation Program Office.

When the appraisers ask questions during the Virtual Visit, they are seeking additional information or clarification about what was written in the self-study. Take time to really understand what the appraisers are asking to ensure your response is answering their question.

GLOSSARY

accountability	Responsibility for adherence to the ANCC NCPD Accreditation criteria as they apply to providing quality NCPD.
accreditation	The voluntary process by which a nongovernmental agency or organization appraises and grants accredited status to institutions and/or programs or services that meet predetermined structure, process, and outcome criteria (time-limited).
accredited provider	An eligible organization credentialed by the ANCC NCPD Accreditation program after having submitted to an in-depth analysis to determine its capacity to provide quality continuing education over an extended period of time.
accredited provider program director (AP-PD)	A registered nurse who holds a current, active license with no practice restrictions (or international equivalent) and a graduate degree, with either the baccalaureate or graduate degree in nursing (or international equivalent), who has the authority within an accredited organization to ensure adherence to the ANCC NCPD Accreditation criteria in the provision of NCPD.
active learning	An activity in which the learner participates in or interacts with the learning process instead of passively taking in the information.
active learning strategies	Evolving beyond engagement strategies, active learning strategies engage students in the learning process, encouraging them to participate actively in acquiring knowledge, developing skills, and practicing competencies.
best available evidence	Choosing evidence based on an evidence hierarchy, with higher levels of the hierarchy consistent with a stronger evidence base (Polit and Beck, 2008).
bias	Tendency or inclination to cause partiality, favoritism, or influence.
commercial bias	Favoritism or influence shown toward a product or company in relation to an educational offering.

commercial support	Financial or in-kind contributions given by an ineligible company that are used to pay for all or part of the costs of NCPD activity. Providers of commercial support may not be providers or joint providers of an educational activity.
commission on accreditation in nursing continuing professional development (COA-NCPD)	Appointed by and accountable to the ANCC Board of Directors, this body is responsible for the ANCC NCPD Accreditation decisions and criteria development. The COA-NCPD is composed of at least nine members selected from NCPD stakeholder communities and represents expertise from across the field of continuing education, including academia, educational companies, domestic and international nursing associations, and governmental organizations.
commitment	Duty or responsibility of those providing continuing education to meet learner needs, provide quality NCPD, and support the Accredited Provider NCPD goals and improvements.
competence	The foundational abilities required for nursing practice in a given context.
competency	The ability to apply knowledge, skills, and/or abilities, including intellectual behaviors that are required to meet performance and outcomes in professional nursing practice in a given context.
competency statement	The description of an expected level of performance that results from an integration of knowledge, skills, abilities, and judgment; the description is objective and measurable.
contact hour	A unit of measurement that describes 60 minutes of an organized learning activity.
content	Subject matter of an educational activity that is based on the best available evidence and reflects the desired learning outcomes.
content reviewer	An individual selected to evaluate an educational activity during the planning process or after it has been planned but prior to delivery to learners for content quality, bias, and any other aspects of the activity that may require evaluation.
continuing education unit (CEU)	The ANCC NCPD Accreditation program does not utilize this term when referring to the NCPD unit of measurement. The CEU is an educational measurement utilizing criteria of the International Association for Continuing Education and Training (IACET).

credentialing	A generic term for licensure, certification, and registration. It can also be used as a term for a voluntary recognition process under the auspices of private sector associations.
eligibility	An applicant's ability to meet the requirements established by ANCC as a prerequisite to evaluation for accreditation or reaccreditation in order to be considered qualified to apply for accreditation.
enduring materials	A non-live NCPD activity that lasts over time. Examples of enduring materials include programmed texts, audiotapes, videotapes, monographs, computer-assisted learning materials, and other electronic media that are used alone or with printed or written materials. Enduring materials can also be delivered via the Internet. The learning experience by the nurse can take place at any time and in any place rather than only at one time or in one place.
evaluation — formative	Systematic evaluation in the process of curricula construction, teaching, and learning for the purpose of improving any of these three processes (Bloom et al., 1971).
evaluation — summative	A method of assessing the worth of a program at the end of the program activities. A summative evaluation focuses on outcomes.
evidence-based practice	A way of providing healthcare that is guided by a thoughtful integration of the best available scientific knowledge with clinical expertise. This approach allows the practitioner to critically assess research data, clinical guidelines, and other information resources in order to correctly identify the clinical problem, apply the most high-quality intervention, and reevaluate the outcome for future improvement (www.ahrq.gov/topics/evidence-based-practice.html).
financial commercial support	Money supplied by an ineligible company to be used by a provider for expenses related to the educational activity. Financial support may be provided as an unrestricted grant, an educational grant, a donation, or a scholarship (ACCME, 2020).
gap analysis	The method of identifying the difference between current knowledge, skills, and/or practices and the desired best practices.
ineligible company	Organizations whose primary business is producing, marketing, selling, reselling, or distributing healthcare products used by or on patients (ACCME, 2020).

in-kind commercial support	Materials, space, or other nonmonetary resources or services from an ineligible company used by a provider to conduct an educational activity, which may include but are not limited to human resources, marketing services, physical space, equipment such as audiovisual components, and teaching tools such as anatomic models (ACCME, 2020).
interprofessional continuing education	Education that occurs when members from two or more professions learn with, from, and about each other to enable effective collaboration and improve health outcomes (www.jointaccreditation.org).
interprofessional education	“When students from two or more professions learn about, from, and with each other to enable effective collaboration and improve health outcomes” (WHO, 2010).
joint providership	Planning, development, and implementation of an educational activity by two or more organizations or agencies. The ANCC Accredited Provider is responsible for ensuring adherence to ANCC NCPD Accreditation criteria.
jointly provided activities	Educational activities planned, developed, and implemented collaboratively by two or more organizations or agencies. The ANCC Accredited Provider is responsible for ensuring adherence to ANCC NCPD Accreditation criteria.
leadership	The provision of direction and guidance to individuals involved in the process of assessing, planning, implementing, and evaluating NCPD activities in adherence to the ANCC NCPD Accreditation criteria.
learner-directed, learner-paced activity	An educational activity in which the learner takes the initiative in identifying 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 the learner engages in the learning activity.
multifocused organization	An organization that exists for more than the purpose of providing NCPD.
needs assessment	The process by which a discrepancy between what is desired and what exists is identified.

nurse planner	A registered nurse who holds a current, active license with no practice restrictions and a baccalaureate degree or higher in nursing (or international equivalent) who is actively involved in all aspects of planning, implementing, and evaluating each NCPD activity. The Nurse Planner is responsible for ensuring that appropriate educational design principles are used and that processes are consistent with the requirements of the ANCC NCPD Accreditation Program.
nursing activity reporting system (NARS)	The online platform utilized to store accurate demographic information for the Accredited Provider and utilized to complete the annual reporting activity data requirements annually.
nursing continuing professional development (NCPD)	A specialized nursing practice that facilitates the professional development and growth of nurses and other healthcare personnel along the continuum from novice to expert.
nursing continuing professional development (NCPD) activities	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, with the end goal of improving the health of the public or an RN's pursuit of their professional goals
online application review system (OARS)	The online platform used by the Accredited Provider Program Director to submit intent to apply, application, self-study, and activity file planning documentation as well as approve appraiser assignment and pay invoices.
outcome	The impact of structure and process on the organization as a provider and the value/benefit to nursing professional development.
outcome assessment	The process of observing, describing, and quantifying the predefined indicator(s) of performance after an intervention is designed to impact the indicator.
planning committee	The people who are responsible for making planning decisions for the educational content of the activity. The Nurse Planner is the only required person on a planning committee.
position description	Description of the functions specific to the roles of Accredited Provider Program Director and Nurse Planner that relate to the Provider Unit.
process	The development, delivery, and evaluation of NCPD activities.
progress report	A report submitted as required upon the accreditation decision that the provider must write to provide evidence of adherence to ANCC NCPD Accreditation criteria.

**provider-directed,
learner-paced**

An educational activity in which the provider controls the content of the learning activity, including the learning outcomes based on a needs assessment, and chooses the content of the learning activity, the method by which it is presented, and the evaluation methods. Learners determine the pace at which they engage in the activity (examples include print articles and self-learning modules/independent study). The provider controls the time, pace, and place of content delivery.

**provider-directed,
provider-paced**

An educational activity in which the provider controls all aspects of the learning activity. The provider determines the learning outcomes based on a needs assessment, and chooses the content of the learning activity, the method by which it is presented, and evaluation methods (examples include live activities and live webinars). The provider controls the time, pace, and place of content delivery.

**relevant financial
relationship**

When an individual has a financial relationship with an ineligible company and the educational content is related to the business lines or products of the ineligible company (ACCME, 2020).

resources

Available human, material, and financial assets used to support and promote an environment focused on quality NCPD and outcome measures.

specialty

A concentration in an area of nursing that has standards and that reflects a well-defined base of knowledge within the overall discipline of nursing.

**specialty nursing
organization (SNO)**

A national nursing body that has a majority of voting members who are RNs practicing in a specialized nursing area, as defined in the organization's governing documents.

structure

Characteristics of an organization, including commitment, accountability, and leadership, that is required to support the delivery of quality NCPD.

target audience

The specific registered nurse learners or healthcare team members the educational activity is intended to impact.

virtual visit

A conference between the applicant and the appraiser team via teleconference, telephone, or other electronic means to validate application findings. The appraiser team may request additional supporting evidence to seek clarification and verify compliance with accreditation criteria.

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