

**University of Cincinnati College of Nursing
Ohio Board of Nursing Approver Unit (OBN-011-93)**

**APPROVER UNIT
POLICY MANUAL**

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The University of Cincinnati College of Nursing is authorized by the Ohio Board of Nursing to accept applications for approval of Continuing Nursing Education (CNE from Ohio and out-of-state sponsors). Organizations or individuals interested in providing approved CNE may submit the appropriate application (attached). This manual provides policies, guidelines and directions.

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VISION AND MISSION OF THE COLLEGE OF NURSING

The College of Nursing, an integral part of the University of Cincinnati, has a mission to develop nurse leaders who are empowered to generate, explore, and apply nursing knowledge for evolving health care environments. This mission is consonant with that of the University. The College's vision is "through the creative leveraging of technology, the college of nursing will lead the transformation of health care in partnership informed by the people we serve". The Faculty is committed to promoting program excellence and exerting influence in the delivery of community focused health care. To this end, the Faculty prepares beginning and advanced practitioners of professional nursing to engage in practice, education, service, and research.

The Faculty is committed through its educational mission to: (1) be a model of best student-centered education in practice, research, service, and policy that is recognized as the leader in cutting edge and inter professional education, (2) be a model of best research in selective areas that is recognized for being cutting edge and inter professional, (3) lead in service that impacts the health of the community (local to global), (4) maximize human, financial, and environmental resources, and (5) transform the environment and culture to reflect the core values, strategic priorities and norms of the College of Nursing.

The Faculty advocates ongoing efforts to maintain the College's mission as a leading college of nursing through furthering excellence in nursing education, by recruiting and retaining a diverse high quality student population, and by attracting scholarly faculty with a broad base of expertise. The Faculty sustains a commitment to the College's mission as a research institution and as a community force providing leadership for meeting health care needs.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the College is to provide education and service and engage in research and scholarship. A comprehensive approach to collegiate nursing education is manifested in the undergraduate, graduate, and continuing education programs of the College. More specifically, the Faculty aims to provide: (1) education to prepare beginning and advanced practitioners for diverse populations; (2) opportunities for advancing nursing science; (3) education for practicing nurses to maintain, improve, and expand their competencies; and (4) service and expertise to the broader community of health care consumers. Fulfillment of the purpose of the College occurs through consistent attention to the beliefs, which the Faculty holds about people, the environment, health, and nursing, as well as beliefs about nursing education.

APPROVER UNIT PHILOSOPHY

The Approver Unit is based in the Continuing Education Department of the College of Nursing. As an integral part of the college, the Approver Unit supports the mission and purpose of the College by providing education for practicing nurses. The Approver Unit furthers the competence and professional development of nurses through peer review and approval of quality planned learning experiences.

SCOPE OF APPROVER UNIT ACTIVITIES

The Ohio Board of Nursing (OBN) Approver Unit at the University of Cincinnati College of Nursing will accept applications from Ohio sponsors and out-of state sponsors. The Unit will

review the following types of educational activities for content related to nursing practice, Ohio's Category A requirement, advanced pharmacology, and human trafficking:

- **Synchronous learning:** Traditional, teacher-facilitated continuing education activities (e.g. workshops, conferences, seminars, courses, series, and symposia) for nurses where learners experience the education simultaneously in person or via a distance learning format (e.g., webinar). To qualify as synchronous learning, learners need to have the capacity to ask questions and receive responses during the activity time (e.g, through telephone, chat, email).
- **Asynchronous learning:** Independent study continuing education activities for nurses may take the form of computer, web, audiovisual, or paper based presentation.

The Department for Continuing Education also participates in the University's Center for Professional Development that promotes interdisciplinary continuing education for the health professions.

POLICIES

I. CONTACT HOURS

- A. The official Unit of measure for awarding continuing education credit is the contact hour. A contact hour is sixty minutes of planned classroom, clinical or faculty-directed or independent study continuing education activity.
- B. Credit is computed by counting minutes spent in actual learning activities.
- C. The minimum number of contact hours to be awarded is one. Partial credit may be awarded after the first full contact hour.
- D. The number of contact hours must be stated on all advertising after approval and on the certificates given to participants.
- E. Participants will be awarded a certificate of attendance stating the approved number of contact hours upon the completion of the offering.
- F. Participants will be given a list of the approved learning outcomes for synchronous learning activities.

II. ATTENDANCE FOR SYNCHRONOUS LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- A. Participants must be present during the offering for a minimum of 80% of classroom or clinical time in order to receive continuing education credit. Sponsors may make exceptions when make-up assignments are feasible.
- B. Partial credit for an activity may be granted, at the sponsor's option, if the participant attended portions of the offering that can reasonably stand alone as a continuing education activity and meets the minimum of sixty minutes required for one contact hour.

- C. Credit for an activity may be granted one time for instructors of the continuing education activity if the instructor is offering the continuing education activity for the first time since development of the activity.
- D. For programs specifically designed for continuing education on the “statues and rules pertaining to the practice of nursing” in Ohio, the following statement should be included with the number of contact hours; “**___contact hours of this continuing education activity meet the one hour Category A requirement and directly relates to Chapter 4723.24(C)(1)(c) of the Ohio Revised Code and the rule of the OBN as set forth in Rule 4723-14-03**”
- E. For programs specifically designed for continuing education on “Advanced Pharmacology” the following statement should be included with the number of contact hours; “**___contact hours of this continuing education activity meet the one hour Advanced Pharmacology requirement and directly relates to Chapter 4723.486 of the Ohio Revised Code and the rule of the OBN as set forth in Rule 4723-09-07**”
- F. For programs specifically designed for continuing education on the “recognition and handling of human trafficking victims” (Ohio Administrative Code: 4723-14-03), the following statement should be included with the number of contact hours; “**___contact hours of this continuing education activity meet the one hour Human Trafficking recommendation and directly relates to Chapter 4743.07 of the Ohio Revised Code and the rule of the OBN as set forth in Rule 4723-14-03**”

** Rules are available on the OBN website: <http://nursing.ohio.gov> and Ohio Administrative Code website: <http://codes.ohio.gov/oac/4723>*

III. DISTRIBUTION OF MATERIALS

- A. The Approver Unit will provide application forms and an instructional manual for use by sponsors and individuals, upon request. There is no charge for one copy of the manual and application forms distributed by email. The materials may be duplicated by applicants.
- B. Information regarding offerings by the Approver Unit is distributed via paper or electronic flyers for each offering and publication in local papers, at appropriate professional meetings and at various health care facilities depending upon the topic of the offering and the target audience.

IV. PROCESS FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION APPROVAL AND REAPPROVAL

- A. Approval

Organizations or individuals (applicants) seeking approval for offerings or independent studies shall submit a completed application and payment of the submission fee. Fees and completed applications should be received a minimum of 60 days before the activity. If the applicant is unable to meet this time frame they should contact the Continuing Education Department to determine if a shorter review timeframe is possible prior to submitting the application.

Peer reviewers will determine compliance with Approval Unit and Ohio Board of Nursing Standards, and recommend one of the following actions:

Approval for a period of two years following the date of the initial activity with provision of an approval number to the applicant.

1. Revision on resubmission of the application once within 25 working days from the date of notification of the need for revision; or
2. Denial (applicant may appeal an adverse decision. See the appeal policy and procedure on page 8).

Written notification of approval decisions will be sent via e-mail or fax within 30 calendar days of receipt of the application. There are no additional fees for review of revisions or appeals.

B. Application Fee

1. Fee schedule for new applications:

Hours of Continuing Education Reviewed	Before Deadline (60 or more days prior to activity date)	After Deadline (30-59 days prior to activity date)
1.0 – 3.9	\$200	\$300
4.0 – 7.9	\$300	\$450
8.0 – 11.9	\$400	\$600
12.0 – 15.9	\$600	\$900
16.0 – 19.9	\$800	\$1,200
20.0 or more	\$50 per whole hour	\$100 per whole hour

2. Fee schedule for application renewals:

Hours of Continuing Education Reviewed	Before Deadline (60 or more days prior to activity expiration)	After Deadline (30-59 days prior to activity expiration)
1.0 – 7.9	\$100	\$200
8.0 – 15.9	\$200	\$400
16.0 or more	\$300	\$600

C. Conflict of Interest and Consumer Support of Offerings

1. All presenters will complete and sign a conflict of interest form. The form can be sent to the _____ via fax, mail, or e-mail. Forms must be signed in ink, not typed using cursive font.
2. A disclosure statement regarding conflict of interest will be completed for those offerings in which any of the speakers could be considered to have a potential conflict of interest.
3. The primary purpose of a CE activity is not to promote the sale of items or services.

4. If any commercial support is provided for an educational activity, the CE provider will maintain control of the educational content and disclose to attendees all financial relationships, or lack of any financial relationships, between the commercial supporter or sponsor and the continuing education provider or presenter, and ensure that arrangements for commercial exhibits will not influence the planning of, or interfere with the presentation of, educational activities.

D. Withdrawal of Applications

1. Withdrawal of an application within ten days of the postmark date on the application packet. Notification of withdrawal of the application must be in writing via fax, email, or mail. The application fee will be returned less \$50 for administrative costs.
2. Withdrawal of an application after ten days from the postmark date on the application packet. There will be no refund. The sponsor may submit a revised application within six months for no additional fee.

E. Repeating an offering within the two-year approval period

Within two years from the date of the initial activity, offerings may be repeated provided the plan is unchanged or changes in educational design and faculty are minor. The sponsor must notify the Approver Unit in writing prior to the activity, stating the approval number, proposed additional dates and locations for the offering, and any proposed changes. There is no fee for repeat of an offering within the approval period.

F. Reapproval of an offering after expiration of the two-year approval period

Applicants seeking reapproval of a previously approved program may submit one copy of the application. Reapproval will be considered only when changes in educational design and faculty are minor. A statement indicating the approval number should be attached to the updated application. The Approver Unit will respond within ten working days of receipt. If changes are major (e.g. different outcomes, principal faculty, or program title), the program cannot be reapproved and must be submitted as a new activity for approval. The reapproval process must be completed prior to the offering of the continuing education activity for which the two year time period has expired.

G. Incomplete or inappropriate applications

The Director of the Approver Unit for Continuing Education may return an application and fee to a sponsor within ten working days of receipt without sending it to peer reviewers if it is incomplete, if it is not consistent with the mission of the UC College of Nursing, the activity promotes the sale of items or service rather than education, or fails to disclose commercial support or conflict of interest.

H. Appeal of an approval decision

1. To appeal an action of the OBN Approver Unit, a sponsor must notify the Director of the Approver Unit in writing of the desire to have the action reevaluated.

2. The Director will refer the sponsor's application, with copies of the original peer review evaluations and recommendations to a new peer reviewer for review and recommendation. The Director will notify the sponsor of the decision of the Approver Unit within 20 working days of the request for reconsideration.

I. Retroactive approval

Retroactive approval of continuing education activities will not be considered.

J. Record keeping for applications

The Approver Unit and sponsor shall retain records of all applications submitted for approval or reapproval for a period of six years.

V. PEER REVIEW FOR APPROVAL

A. Offerings submitted from sponsors external to the college of Nursing

1. All offerings must be approved prior to date of offering.
2. The Director of the Approver Unit shall serve as the reviewer for continuing education offerings submitted from sponsors external to the College. If the offering being reviewed is beyond the Director's scope of expertise, faculty with the required expertise will be recruited as peer reviewers for offerings.
3. Offerings accepted as peer reviewed and not requiring further peer review are:
 - a. Applications from a national organization for conference proceedings with a program committee on which at least two nurse educators serve.
 - b. Applications for offerings which are a component of a regionally or nationally developed project that has already undergone a peer review process as part of the project.

B. Offerings within the College of Nursing

1. Courses that are approved by the College's Curriculum Committee and are offered for both academic and continuing education credit will not undergo further peer review.
2. Continuing education programs developed by faculty will be reviewed by the Director of the Approver Unit or the Director's designee for approval.

C. Conflict of Interest

No individual who is presenting a faculty directed continuing education offering or is a member of the planning committee is permitted to serve as a peer reviewer.

VI. WITHDRAWAL OF APPROVAL BY THE APPROVER UNIT

- A. Sponsors must notify the Director within five days after an event or decision causing changes in educational design, faculty, or location of a proposed offering. The Director or Director's designee, may:
 - 1. Approve changes that do not significantly alter the offering; or
 - 2. Withdraw approval, pending peer review.
- B. If a sponsor does not notify the Approver Unit of significant faculty or education design changes, or if a sponsor does not adhere to OBN and Approver Unit policies, approval will be withdrawn. The sponsor may not repeat the offering.
- C. If approval is withdrawn before the activity, the sponsor must notify nurse participants and faculty by phone, email, or mail. All fees must be refunded to nurse participants upon request.
- D. The Approver Unit may withdraw approval of all scheduled offerings of a sponsor in cases of misrepresentation or fraud. The Approver Unit will not refund fees paid to the Unit by the sponsor and will not consider additional applications by that sponsor for a period of four years.

VII. OHIO BOARD OF NURSING APPROVAL NUMBER ON ADVERTISING AND CORRESPONDENCE

- A. Advertising **prior** to approval

In conjunction with rule 4723-14 of the Ohio Administrative Code, all advertising must include a statement directing any interested party to contact the provider's program coordinator or delegate to obtain information regarding approval status. For example:

"Application has been submitted for continuing education contact hours for nurses. Please contact [INSERT - organization submitting application for approval and contact information], to obtain information regarding approval status."

This Approver Unit may not be named, nor endorsement implied, until the Unit notifies the sponsor of approval of an activity.

- B. Advertising **after** approval

All advertising and correspondence after approval must indicate, "___ continuing education contact hours for nurses approved by the Ohio Board of Nursing through the OBN Approver Unit at the University of Cincinnati College of Nursing (OBN-011- 93)."

VIII. RECORD KEEPING SYSTEM

A. Approver Unit

1. Records will be kept at the University of Cincinnati College of Nursing Continuing Education Program of each continuing education activity submitted to the OBN approver Unit.
2. Records will be retained for six years, in a retrievable form, available to authorized personnel.
3. A sponsor may request a copy of the record of its activity by supplying the date and title of the offering and a fee of \$25.00.
4. Records retained shall include:
 - a. A copy of each application with all attachments,
 - b. Documentation of the review and action taken on each application,
 - c. Copies of any letters stating Approver Unit decisions,
 - d. All other pertinent correspondence, and
 - e. All additional or clarifying information sent by providers.
5. Complaints must be made in writing and submitted to the attention of the Director of the Approver Unit. The complaint will be shared with the sponsor for an opportunity to respond in writing to the complaint. The Director of the Approver Unit will review both responses and notify each party of the decision within 20 working days.

B. Sponsors

All sponsors must retain the following records for six years in a safe, secure and accessible manner:

1. A complete copy of all application materials, including attachments;
2. All correspondence with this OBN Approver Unit;
3. A list of all attendees who were issued contact hours for each date the continuing education activity was offered and the number of contact hours granted to each attendee;
4. A summary evaluation for each activity, each time it was offered; and
5. Documentation of any changes made to the offering during its approval period.

All sponsors must submit a summary evaluation to this OBN Approver Unit of the achievement of the learning outcomes for each approved activity.

IX. COMPLAINTS REGARDING PROGRAMS OR OFFERINGS

- A. Complaints received about programs or offerings will be reviewed by the Director of the Approver Unit.
- B. Those complaints deemed to be of nature indicating that the OBN standards are not being upheld will be requested in writing from the individual lodging the complaint.
- C. Depending upon the nature of the complaint the Director of the Approver Unit will take one of the following actions after attempting to make a telephone contact with the sponsor of the program or offering to discuss the matter.
 - 1. Send a letter indicating immediate withdrawal of approval for the offering if there is evidence of misrepresentation or fraud; or
 - 2. Send a letter indicating that there is a failure to uphold a standard and requesting a plan for remedying the situation prior to any additional offerings.
- D. If the provider/sponsor wishes to contest the Director of the Approver Unit's decision regarding complaints and actions to be taken, the Director will seek consultation from an OBN staff member responsible for continuing education.

X. APPROVER UNIT EVALUATION PROCESS

The Approver Unit activities, procedures, and policies are evaluated annually at the time the OBN Approver Unit Report is due. Data are compiled regarding: (1) the number of externally sponsored offerings reviewed and approved or disapproved; (2) the number of internal offerings reviewed and approved or disapproved; and (3) the title, date, type of offering and number of contact hours awarded for each offering. The compiled data as well as the current policies and procedures are reviewed at that time by the Director. The Approver Unit submits reports to the OBN as required by rule 4723-14-12(A)(18).

The annual report becomes part of the College's permanent records. If concerns or issues noted in reviews are handled by a procedural revision it could result in a policy manual revision or solicitation of recommendation for enhancement from faculty or the Dean of the Approver Unit. The Director of the Approver Unit acts on the recommendations of the faculty and Dean to enhance the operations of the Approver Unit.