



INNOVATION FOR A HEALTHIER PLANET

Office of the Provost

# CONTINUING EDUCATION POLICY AND REPORTING GUIDELINES

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## PREAMBLE

The University of New England (UNE) Continuing Education policy and guidelines are informed by national best practices in the design, development, delivery, and evaluation of non-credit continuing education and professional development activities. UNE's regional accreditor, the New England Commission on Higher Education (NECHE), does not offer a formal policy addressing continuing education. As a result, these recommendations are informed by guidelines set forth by the Southern Association of Schools and Colleges (SASC), the National Council on Continuing Education and Training (NCCET), and standards promulgated by the International Accreditation for Continuing Education and Training (IACET).

These policies and guidelines do NOT apply to continuing education programming governed, approved, and awarded by professional disciplinary organizations, such as the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (AACME), the American Osteopathic Association (AOA), the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE), the American Dental Association (ADA) Commission for Continuing Education, and the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC). Rather, these policies and guidelines are intended to inform the process, review, and award of institutionally-based UNE continuing education.

In addition, these policies do NOT apply to already established processes and guidelines relating to the UNE non-credit Badging program. More information about UNE badging can be found at: <https://www.une.edu/une-badging-program>

## DEFINITION OF INSTITUTIONAL CONTINUING EDUCATION, CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION, AND CONTINUING EDUCATION UNIT (CEU)

Continuing education refers to professional development in which the participant, typically someone who has already completed vocational training or a formal academic degree, pursues additional study to enhance knowledge and/or skills in a focused area. Continuing education programming does not confer academic credit, and customarily culminates in the award of either a Certificate of Completion (CoC) or Continuing Education Units (CEUs).

A CoC is an institutionally-generated document that signifies successful completion of a formal, structured program of study.

Continuing Education Units (CEUs) reflect a common measurement employed in continuing education. The CEU represents the participant time investment in a structured non-credit continuing education experience. The SASC, NCCET, and IACET uniformly define the CEU as representing ten (10) contact hours of participation. The structured experience may take many forms, including a formal course, seminar, retreat, practicum, or self-study. The contact hour customarily reflects 50 minutes of active student engagement. Ten (10) contact hours = 1 CEU. CEUs are ordinarily expressed in tenths. Fractions of 50 minutes or greater are commonly rounded up. Fractions from 30-49 minutes are commonly rounded down. Fractions below 30 are commonly discarded.

## PURPOSE STATEMENT

The purpose of this handbook is to ensure continuity with the national guidelines and best practices surrounding the administration of continuing education programming. These guidelines are intended to: 1) provide uniform application of continuing education across UNE, 2) outline the foundation for a central institutional record keeping and reporting system, and 3) assure a uniform approach to quality assurance in non-credit bearing studies.

These guidelines serve to codify the principles and practices surrounding educational activities that lead to the award of institutional CoC or CEUs. National best practices instruct that high-quality continuing education experiences are characterized as possessing responsible sponsorship, capable direction, and qualified instruction.

“Responsible sponsorship” includes an institutional administrative structure capable of organizing and directing the activity as well as maintaining a permanent record of each individual learner who completes professional development. At UNE, the College of Professional Studies (CPS) serves as the institutional sponsor and administrative record keeper for all approved UNE continuing education offerings.

“Capable direction” refers to sufficient administrative leadership, staff, and institutional infrastructure to engage in program planning/development, enroll learners, manage and implement the offering, and secure evaluation. The evaluation process must reflect a multi-tier framework addressing both individual participation and overall program quality. At UNE, CPS serves to provide the requisite capable direction for continuing education programming.

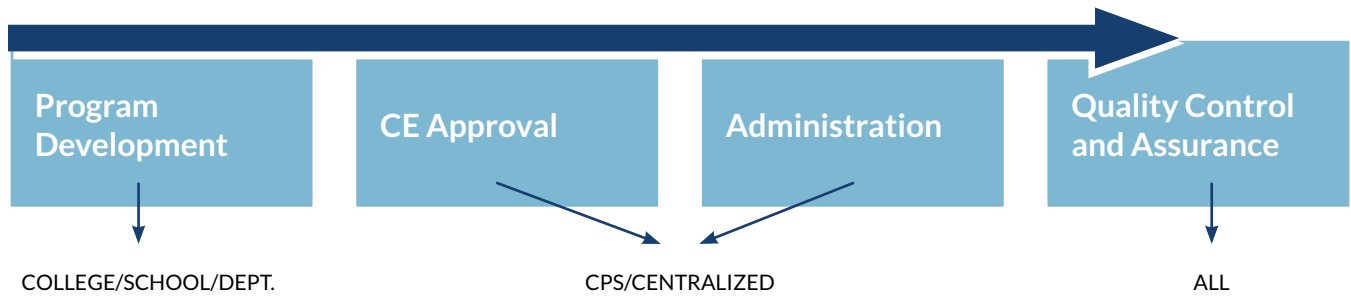
“Qualified instruction” addresses facilitator competence and qualifications, establishment of relevant and measurable learning outcomes, appropriate pedagogical strategies, and assessment of evaluation of learning. At UNE, colleges/schools/departments proposing continuing education programs identify and provide oversight regarding faculty and qualified instruction practices.

## PROCESS FOR DEVELOPING CONTINUING EDUCATION OFFERINGS

The development of continuing education programs occurs at the individual college/school/department level. Colleges/schools/departments should propose continuing education offerings that reflect their expertise and align with the UNE policy and guidelines explicated in this handbook. Although programming will look different across the University, there are common criteria required in the development, review, and approval for all UNE continuing education.

The College of Professional Studies serves as the institutional sponsor. As such, CPS is responsible for the examination and formal appraisal of all proposed institutional continuing education offerings. Records

reflecting the program offering will be permanently archived and retrievable. The following visual depicts the process for developing continuing education at UNE:



## CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAM CRITERIA AND GUIDELINES

Best practices for high-quality continuing education reflect adherence to programmatic and administrative criteria.

### PROGRAMMATIC CONSIDERATIONS

Proposed continuing education offerings need to reflect the following criteria. Proposals will be reviewed by CPS for alignment, and offerings need to meet all criteria to qualify for the award of UNE CoC or CEUs. Applications must address the following:

1. Needs Analysis
  - a. The program is planned in response to an educational need or gap. The identified need for the offering should be thoroughly researched and well documented.
2. Learning Outcomes
  - a. The program should clearly identify the intended participant learning outcomes. Statements addressing the acquisition of new knowledge, skills, attitudes, or competencies should be clearly and measurably presented.
3. Qualified Instruction
  - a. The personnel involved in planning and delivering the program hold appropriate credentials and qualifications to provide the proposed instruction.
4. Content to be Included
  - a. Content to be covered in the program is clearly outlined.
  - b. Applications may include illustrative examples, such as proposed course handouts, weblinks, outlines, and/or promotional flyers.
5. Methods of Instruction and Learning Environment
  - a. The format and instructional methodologies used to deliver content and develop learner knowledge, skills, attitudes, and competency attainment are clearly described.
  - b. The learning environment (e.g., online, campus-based) should be well explicated.

## 6. Assessment of Learning Outcomes

- a. Approaches to determine participant achievement of learning outcomes are thoroughly detailed. Outcomes assessment may unfold during the CE session, at the conclusion of the offering, and/or after reflection on the experience. Participant demonstration of learning attainment may be accomplished in many ways and reflect various formats, to include but not limited to discussions and case studies, instructor observation, written or oral examinations, written reports, and participant reflections. Learners should be informed from the beginning as to what will be expected of them.

## 7. Program Evaluation

- a. Process for measuring quality and effectiveness of programming
  - I. Direct feedback from participants evaluating the quality of the program, associated instruction, and the extent to which intended learning outcomes were achieved. The evaluation process includes opportunity for learners to identify where to make improvements or adjustments in the program.
  - II. Feedback and reflection from program sponsors and instructor(s), appraising program delivery, selected learning activities, approaches to outcomes assessment, and overall instructional effectiveness. This internal evaluation process should also be informed by participant feedback, and should propose future alterations/adjustments for total quality improvement.

## 8. Award of Certificate of Completion or CEUs

- a. The application indicates the intent to award participants a CoC upon successful conclusion of study.
- b. The application details the number of contact hours/CEUs to be awarded to participants upon successful program completion. The calculation for the award of CEUs is clear.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE/SPONSORSHIP CONSIDERATIONS**

In addition to program criteria, best practices in continuing education formally address administrative processes.

## **CONTINUING EDUCATION LEADERSHIP**

CPS is the institutional sponsor for UNE Continuing Education. CPS will assign a lead for this endeavor from existing collegiate personnel. This role will oversee the administration and record keeping of continuing education activities at UNE (as defined in this handbook). This position will collaborate with a CPS team of project managers, researchers, and IT professionals to fulfill this function. This position will report to the dean of CPS to guide continuing education programming, strategy, and decision-making. Specific responsibilities include:

1. Continuing Education proposal review and approval.
2. Approval of CoC and CEU awards.
3. Development and maintenance of continuing education record keeping and related systems.

4. Primary contact for internal and external instructors of record who develop and provide UNE-approved continuing education.
5. Development and delivery of ongoing continuing education evaluations.
6. Regular reporting of continuing education activities and outcomes to internal and external stakeholders.

## **LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS**

The lead for continuing education is responsible for ensuring that the learning environment and supports are adequate for each program.

Online considerations – Programs are correctly migrated to the Learning Management System (LMS) and function as intended. Participants have the information needed to access these programs and a means for seeking technical support should questions arise. This information is clearly communicated to all participants.

In-Person considerations – Facilities (UNE and non-UNE) have adequate space and instructional tools for the program to function as intended. Participants have information in advance to access these spaces and can easily utilize technology and supports within the assigned location.

## **RECORD KEEPING**

CPS uses Salesforce as its customer relationship management (CRM) system. All data regarding continuing education will be permanently archived and retrievable through Salesforce. The retention of continuing education data is organized into two broad categories:

1. Program records
2. Participant records

Program records include all submitted proposal materials (as defined in this handbook) and any relevant correspondence. This includes the qualification/credentials of the faculty delivering instruction. This also includes data addressing program evaluation.

Participant records include the full name of learners, email addresses/contact information, and data addressing CoC and CEUs earned through successful program completion. All continuing education participants will register through UNE's Enrollment Rx system which ties directly into Salesforce.

## **PROGRAM COMPLETION AND THE AWARDED COC/CEUS**

Program attendance records, program completion records, and CoC/CEU award recommendations are the responsibility of the instructor of record who delivered the continuing education program. At the conclusion of the program, the faculty will report this data to the CPS lead for continuing education. A

standard form (see below) will be created to support uniform data collection across the various colleges/schools/ programs engaged in offering continuing education. This information is to be subsequently maintained in Salesforce.

|   | A   | B          | C         | D        | E        | F    | G     | H   | I     | J     |
|---|-----|------------|-----------|----------|----------|------|-------|-----|-------|-------|
| 1 | CID | First Name | Last Name | Address1 | Address2 | City | State | Zip | Phone | Email |
| 2 |     |            |           |          |          |      |       |     |       |       |
| 3 |     |            |           |          |          |      |       |     |       |       |
| 4 |     |            |           |          |          |      |       |     |       |       |
| 5 |     |            |           |          |          |      |       |     |       |       |
| 6 |     |            |           |          |          |      |       |     |       |       |

Salesforce will be used to generate a standard participant CoC/record of CEUs. Participants will receive an electronic file awarding a CoC/CEUs after successful program completion and submission of the required program evaluation. For an administrative fee, participants can make future requests for duplicate copies of these records.

## EVALUATION OF CONTINUING EDUCATION

A standard participant satisfaction survey will accompany every continuing education program. The survey will be automatically generated and digitally delivered to participants by CPS at the conclusion of a program. Participants who do not complete programmatic feedback are not eligible to receive a CoC or CEUs. Survey findings will be summarized and attached to the Approved Continuing Education program file in Salesforce.

In addition, a standard instructor survey will be sent to the faculty of record at the conclusion of the program. Findings will be summarized and attached to the Approved Continuing Education program file in Salesforce.

A comprehensive continuing education program review will occur annually between CPS continuing education staff and faculty engaged in continuing education programming. The program review will address relevancy/attainment of student learning outcomes, program quality, and assurance of consistency with the UNE brand. The process will include review and consideration of all survey responses, and feedback will be used enact changes/improvements to future programming.

A subsequent annual report will be created summarizing continuing education programming and outcomes. This program review will be shared with the UNE community to include the University Assessment Committee (UAC).

## REVIEW CHECKLIST FOR UNE CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAM APPLICATION

The checklist below provides a tool assisting program planners and continuing education leadership to affirm proposed continuing education program adherence with the UNE continuing education guidelines.

- \_\_\_\_. 1. The needs assessment for the program is clear and well-documented.
- \_\_\_\_. 2. The presentation of learning outcomes is clear, concise, and measurable. Learners are informed in advance as to the intended outcome from the program of study.
- \_\_\_\_. 3. The credentials of the instructor are verified and appropriate for the educational offering. Credentials of the instructor are to be permanently maintained on file.
- \_\_\_\_. 4. Methods of instruction are appropriate for the intended learning outcomes.
- \_\_\_\_. 5. The learning environment and any specialized requirements are well defined and appropriate.
- \_\_\_\_. 6. The content and topics for the continuing education program are clearly identified.
- \_\_\_\_. 7. Assessment processes to determine participant achievement of learning outcomes are varied and well explained.
- \_\_\_\_. 8. A method for securing participant feedback regarding the quality and effectiveness of the continuing education program is provided.
- \_\_\_\_. 9. A plan describing program appraisal by the faculty and administrative sponsor is clearly presented.
- \_\_\_\_. 10. The culmination of the award of CoC or CEUs is well described. If CEUs are being awarded, the calculation as to the number of units granted are consistent with SASC, NNCET, and IACET standards.