

Rule 4.1 CONTINUING EDUCATION

A. Philosophy

Continuing education means instruction and learning which fosters the enhancement of general or specialized social work practice, values, knowledge, and skills.

B. Definitions

1. Continuing Education: The continuing education offerings for each discipline (social workers and marriage and family therapists) are approved independently. Licensees should NOT assume that an approved offering for one discipline is also approved for the other discipline. The MBOE website maintains separate lists of approved continuing education offerings for social workers and marriage and family therapists. The Board shall credit continuing education for social workers as follows. Parts of programs which meet the criteria set forth in these rules and regulations (relating to Types of Continuing Education and Criteria for Approval of Continuing Education Activities) shall be credited on a one-for-one basis with one clock-hour credit for each one clock-hour spent in the continuing education activity. Time devoted to registration, organizational business, breakfasts, luncheons, dinners, or other refreshments shall not be counted as instructional or continuing education credit time. When there is a luncheon speaker, only the time of the speaker's presentation may be calculated for continuing education credit. Forty (40) clock hours are required each renewal period.
2. DESIGNATED PROVIDERS (DPs): are organizations or institutions determined by the MS Board of Examiners SW Continuing Education Committee (SWCEC) to meet the standards for continuing education. These organizations hold standing by application, review and approval for a two (2) year period of time, during which they must consistently comply with all requirements. Complaints and random audits by MBOE members or their designees may result in removal from the status at any time and may prohibit renewal. Organizations who are approved for this status shall have their DP number and dates of approval on all documentation, and will be listed with this information for public review and continuing education resources on the MBOE website (www.swmft.ms.gov) and any publications therein.

Only those organizations that have previously held three successful programs approved for social worker continuing education by the Board, SWCEC, or its designee may apply for DP status. Applications for DP status may be obtained from the Board's office or through the Board's website at www.swmft.ms.gov.

The following organizations are automatically approved for social worker continuing education by the MBOE and do not need to complete DP application process for program approval:

- a. Any program approved by the national NASW office, or any NASW Chapter;
- b. American Association for Marriage & Family Therapy or any of its state chapters;
- c. Any state chapter of Council on Social Work Education approved schools of social work (In order for continuing education offerings to be approved by this type of designated provider, the school of social work must be actively engaged in the planning and presentation of the offering);
- d. Association of Social Work Boards or any state licensing board affiliated with;
- e. International Association of Social Workers or any program approved by member countries; or
- f. International Federation of Schools of Social Work and member schools.

SWCEC reserves the right to void approval of a specific program that has been previously granted approval by any of the above listed organizations or the current DP listing, should content and speaker be determined upon review to contain content that is not post-baccalaureate level or is in serious conflict with social work values and education.

Organizations that are approved for Designated Provider status must be actively engaged in the planning, development and presentation of the continuing education programs they provide. Co-Sponsorship will not be accepted.

C. Continuing Education Requirements for Renewal

Forty hours of approved continuing education is required for each renewal period. The applicant will submit a listing of that period's earned hours with an attestation statement that the list is true and correct. (See Part 1902, Chapter 4, Rule 4.2, B)

1. LSWs will not submit continuing education at the first renewal.
2. LMSWs holding no previous license will not submit at the first renewal. LMSWs upgrading from LSW will submit at the first renewal period.
3. LCSWs will submit at first renewal as they are upgrading from LMSW status.
4. Carryover: Ten continuing education hours may be carried over from one renewal to the next. The continuing education hours must have been obtained within the six months immediately prior to the current renewal date.
5. Four (4) hours of approved professional ethics are required for each licensee for each renewal period. Beginning July 1, 2011, all licensees must have met this requirement in order to renew.
6. Two (2) hours of cultural diversity/multicultural issues/cultural competency are required. Beginning July 1, 2011, all licensees must have met this requirement in order to renew.
7. Probationary Status: Part 1902, Chapter 2, Rule 2.6, B

D. Acceptable Formats for Continuing Education

Continuing education offerings must consist of subjects relevant to social work practice and not related to the specific administrative procedures of any single agency or organization.

All offerings, except those from designated providers, must be pre-approved PRIOR to the offering. For information about pre-approval, see Part 1902, Chapter 4.

Acceptable ways of acquiring continuing education credits include the following:

1. Academic courses taken from a regionally accredited college or university or a school in candidacy for CSWE status, related to the licensee's social work practice, may be submitted for review and consideration for approval to the SWCEC. These course materials must be submitted prior to taking the course or immediately after enrollment. If approved, documentation of successful completion of the course must be submitted for final approval. One graduate academic semester hour successfully completed (a grade of "B" or better) shall be equivalent to five (5) continuing education hours.
2. Social Work academic courses taken from a CSWE accredited school of social work at a level beyond the licensee's current academic status are acceptable for continuing education. These courses do not need to be submitted to the SWCEC for prior approval. One graduate academic semester hour successfully completed (a grade of "B" or better) shall be equivalent to five (5) continuing education hours.
3. Instructors teaching a class at a CSWE accredited school of social work may submit documentation to be calculated at ten (10) hours per hour of class credit. This approval will only be honored for classes taught the first time.
4. Continuing Education programs provided by organizations listed in Part 1902, Chapter 4, Rule 4.1, B (2) shall be considered an acceptable mode of acquiring continuing education hours.
5. Approved workshops, institutes, conferences, or other continuing education programs sponsored by official national, regional, state social work or social welfare related organizations shall be considered an acceptable mode of acquiring continuing education hours. Note: Provider organizations are responsible for obtaining approval for credit PRIOR TO conducting the activity. (See Part 1902, Chapter 4, Rule 4.1, F)
6. Staff Development: Approved public or private agency staff development programs that contribute to the enhancement of social work practice, skills, or knowledge and are not primarily procedural or administrative, shall be considered an acceptable format for acquiring continuing education credits. (See information about prior approval, Part 1902, Chapter 4, Rule 4.1, F)
7. Individual Activities: Activities, including workshops and presentations, planned by an individual must be approved by

SWCEC in advance. No more than twenty (20) approved continuing education hours of this type will be accepted in a given licensure renewal period.

- a. Publication of a Professional Social Work Paper: The initial publication shall be acceptable for twenty (20) continuing education hours. Presentation of a professional social work paper for the first time at an approved professional conference shall be acceptable for five (5) continuing education hours or twice the approved continuing education hours for the session, provided the written paper is submitted with the request. The published paper must be submitted to the SWCEC within six (6) months of publication accompanied by copy of the publication medium (journal, book, professional magazine) and a completed CE application form.
- b. Presenter: Participation as the sole presenter, leader, or teacher of an approved workshop or conference shall be acceptable for three times the approved continuing education hours for the session.
- c. Panelist: Participation as a panel member for an approved workshop or conference shall be acceptable for two times the approved continuing education hours for the session.
- d. Facilitator: Facilitating, moderating, or presiding over an approved workshop or conference shall be acceptable for the approved continuing education hours for the session.
- e. Self-Directed Learning Projects and/or Distance Learning/Internet (Online) Learning Courses: Continuing education hours for distance learning/internet learning courses will only be granted for courses offered by Designated Providers, MBOE exempt providers or by prior approval by the SWCEC on a per case basis. The SWCEC will grant continuing education hours only after completion of the course and proof of successful completion of post-test, course examination, and/or evaluation from the online course provider.

Self-directed learning projects are projects intended to increase knowledge and shall be documented by means of a paper, annotated bibliography, etc. Projects intended to

increase skill development shall be documented by means of audio or audiovisual tapes. Credit for self-directed learning projects may be granted provided the project is completed and approved PRIOR TO the current license expiration date. Projects not completed and approved by the license expiration date can be considered for the licensee's next renewal period. Self-directed learning project proposals should be submitted nine months prior to the expiration date of licensure to allow sufficient time for review, project completion and approval. Reading a book, preparing a paper in a graduate course, case, or consultation shall not meet the requirements for this activity. No more than twenty (20) continuing education hours may be accrued per renewal period as a result of self-directed learning projects.

E. Approval Procedures for Continuing Education

Application for prior approval of workshops, staff development, individual activity, self directed learning projects, or other categories requiring prior approval must be made, in writing, to the Board. The SWCEC must review all continuing education activities for approval, except for those of the designated providers, or those approved or sponsored as indicated in section B above.) All applications for review should be received by the Board Office by the 10th of the month prior to the month in which the event will be held.

Continuing Education Committee
Mississippi BOE for Social Workers & Marriage and Family Therapists
Social Work Discipline Specific Committee
P.O. Box 4508
Jackson, MS 39296-4508
601-987-6806
www.swmft.ms.gov

Licensees should contact SWCEC for specifics about applications submitted for approval.

Note: Retroactive Approvals will not be considered by SWCEC after any provider offering.

F. Reporting Procedures for Continuing Education

Provider Responsibility: It is the responsibility of each provider of continuing education to: 1) verify attendance of attendees at all conference sessions when credit is being requested. 2) provide the Board or the

Board's designee with a verified list of participants, and 3) provide the attendee with a written statement, verification, or certificate of attendance at the conclusion of an offering.

The attendee's verification must include the following information:

- a. Name of attendee
- b. Name of offering
- c. Date of offering
- d. Provider's name
- e. Location of offering
- f. Signature of organizer/sponsor or designee
- g. Amount of approved continuing education hours awarded

Licensee Responsibility: It is the sole responsibility of the licensee to: 1) obtain verification of attendance documenting continuing education offerings; 2) provide proof of participation in approved continuing education offerings to the Board; 3) provide attestation of having completed continuing education; and 4) maintain for four (4) years their own records and official verification of the continuing education files for the licensees. Failure to substantiate the number of approved credits submitted or to submit documentation for a sufficient number of approved continuing education credits will result in a license not being renewed.

G. Random Audit of Continuing Education Documents

1. The Board will annually audit or cause to be audited a minimum of ten percent (10%) of the continuing education reports accompanying the renewal applications. Licensees whose reports are audited will be required to provide a copy of the official documentation of their continuing education activities. If a licensee fails to provide the Board in a timely manner (not to exceed thirty {30} days from the date of the notice informing the licensee) with official documentation of the total hours listed on their renewal application, the license will be subject to suspension following written notification from the Board and will remain suspended pending further Board action.
2. If, during the audit, the Board finds unacceptable any of the documented continuing education hours and the licensee does not have sufficient acceptable hours remaining for that renewal period, the Board, at its discretion, may renew the license under the conditions that the continuing education hours will be obtained within six (6) months of the notice of deficiency. Continuing education hours acquired to meet the deficiency may not be

applied to any other renewal period. If the licensee does not rectify the deficiency within that six (6) month period, the license will be subject to disciplinary action.

H. Re-evaluation of Continuing Education

A licensee who feels that evidence of continuing education was appraised incorrectly by the Board, may make a written request for re-evaluation to the Board within thirty (30) days of the Board's finding. Verbal requests will not be honored.

I. Waiver of Continuing Education Requirements and Request for Extension of Time to Complete Continuing Education Requirements

1. The Board may waive continuing education requirements to a licensee who was not engaged in the practice of social work during a given continuing education renewal period on an individual basis for reasons of hardship, such as severe illness, disability, military service or other good cause. Any waiver will be granted solely in the discretion of the Board.
2. The Board may extend the time within which to fulfill continuing education requirements to a licensee during a given continuing education renewal period on an individual basis for reasons of hardship, such as severe illness, disability, military service or other good cause. Any waiver or extension of time will be granted solely in the discretion of the Board.
3. A licensee must submit a written request for a waiver of, or extension of time within which to fulfill, continuing education requirements. The request must be made in writing, under penalty of perjury, and must set forth with specificity the reasons for requesting the waiver or extension and, in the case of the waiver request, the portion of the renewal period during which the licensee was not engaged in the practice of social work. The licensee shall submit to the Board all documentation in support of the request for waiver or extension and such additional information or documentation as the Board may request in support of the waiver or extension.
4. Waivers of the minimum continuing education requirements may be granted for up to one-half of the forty (40) hours of continuing education required for any two-year (biennial) renewal period. Extensions of time may be granted by the Board for a period not to exceed one (1) calendar year. The grant of an extension by the Board will result in the renewal of a license based on the condition that the

licensee completes the continuing education requirement by the deadline established by the Board.

5. A waiver of continuing education requirements granted pursuant to this section shall be effective only for the biennial period in which such waiver is granted. If the condition(s) which necessitated the waiver continues into the next biennial period, a licensee who seeks another waiver must apply to the Board for a renewal of such waiver for the new biennial period.
6. If an extension of time is granted, the license will be placed on active status but the license shall be automatically changed to inactive status at the end of the extension period unless the licensee satisfies the continuing education requirement prior to that time. When the license is placed on inactive status, the licensee shall cease all activity requiring a license.
7. A licensee shall apply for a waiver or extension of continuing education requirements no later than 30 (thirty) days prior to the end of the biennial licensing period for which the waiver or extension is requested. All requests shall be sent to the office of the Board, by certified mail, return receipt requested.
8. An extension of time shall not be granted to any licensee who obtained an extension in the immediately preceding renewal or reporting period in which the licensee held an active license, except in the case of a licensee who is unable to complete the requirements due to military service commitment pursuant to a combat or national emergency assignment.
9. The Board may, as a condition of any extension or waiver granted, require the licensee to make up a portion of the continuing education requirement in the manner determined by the Board.

Source: Miss. Code Ann. §73-53-11(1)(c), (k), (m), (n) and (s) (Supp. 2011).