

## **CONTINUING EDUCATION FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

To review the full text of the Continuing Education Rule 24.177.2105, go to: [www.pt.mt.gov](http://www.pt.mt.gov), click on “regulations” tab, click on “Administrative Rules”, click on “Chapter 177”, and arrow down to “ARM 24.177.2105 Continuing Education”.

### **1. Why is the reporting interval being changed?**

The Board recognizes that the CE rule has been confusing with the even/odd licensee process. In addition, the reporting interval is being changed to ALL licensees reporting CE hours/credits at the same audit year at the request of the Department of Labor. This change is necessary to improve compatibility with the Department computer system which was recently upgraded.

### **2. How many CE hours/credits do I need and by when?**

PTs and PTAs all need to have 30 hour/credits of qualified CE in each 24 month period prior to the renewal date on odd years. The next reporting period to obtain 30 hours/credits of qualified CE will be **April 1, 2017 through March 31, 2019**.

### **3. I just received my license. Do I have to complete CE this year?**

No, you are exempt for the first reporting period.

### **4. Can I get all of my CE hours/credits on-line?**

Yes, there is no limit to the number of online CE hours/credits that a licensee may report during a 2 year reporting cycle as long as 15 hours/credits of the online courses meet the requirements of category A.

### **5. Why is the Board increasing the number of CE hours/credits to 30 hours every 2 years?**

The Board notes that the purpose of requiring CE is to ensure that licensees remain up-to-date on current trends and changes in health care, in addition to increasing public protection. Additionally, on a national level, CE is moving toward a competency-based system. Therefore, the Board is amending this rule to align CE requirements with national standards of continuing competencies. Further this rule will address and clarify technical constraints of the Department CE audit process, and make obtaining CE more affordable, accessible, and less restrictive for licensees than current requirements.

The Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy (FSBPT) recommends 30 hours of continuing competence every 2 years with 15 of those units coming from certified activities. In addition, Montana’s Chapter of the APTA endorses increasing the number of CE hours/credits.

Renewal Chart				
Renewal Status	Renewal Payment Due	Required CE Hours /credits as of April 1, 2017	Required CE Hours /credits as of April 1, 2018	Required CE Hours/credits as of April 1, 2019
First time license renewal	Prior to license expiration (April 1) of each renewal period	None required	None required	None required
Renewals for PT/PTA with <b>odd</b> license number	Prior to license expiration (April ) of each renewal period	None required	None required (but you may want to start working on the required 30 CE)	30 qualified CE credits/hours Minimum 15 CE credits/hours from Category A
Renewals for PT/PTA with <b>even</b> license number	Prior to license expiration (April 1) of each renewal period	None required	None required (but you may want to start working on the required 30 CE)	30 qualified CE credits/hours Minimum 15 CE credits/hours from Category A
Expired licensees	Pay a renewal fee and a late fee	30 qualified CE credits/hours for reporting period 4/1/15 to 3/31/17	None required (but you may want to start working on the required 30 CE)	30 qualified CE credits/hours Minimum 15 CE credits/hours from Category A
Terminated licensees	You must reapply for licensure	None required	None required	None required

## 6. What is continuing competence?

The CE rule is written to ensure “continuing competence” which is defined by the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy (FSBPT) as: The lifelong process of maintaining and documenting competence through ongoing self-assessment, development and implementation of a personal learning plan, and subsequent reassessment. The Board recognizes that PTs and PTAs should have a wide variety of activities available to demonstrate their competence; and that demonstration of competence is not limited to traditional classroom-based education. The continuing competence model allows for a number of activities including residencies, fellowships, assessment tools, specialty exams, and research, as well as traditional CE opportunities.

## 7. What’s the difference between Category A and Category B qualifying continuing education hours/credits?

**Category A activities are considered to be certified.** Certified activities go through a process to determine if the activity meets a minimal threshold of required

criteria and how well the activity meets additional “desirable” criteria. A licensee must obtain **a minimum of 15** of the required 30 CE hours/credits per two-year cycle through Category A activities but may obtain all 30 hours/credits from Category A.

Category A Activities: 15 hour <u>minimum</u> CE requirement in each 2 year cycle beginning 4/1/2017 through March 31, 2019				
Activities approved or offered continuing education credits/hours by a national/state medical, PT or healthcare board or association i.e. APTA, FSBPT, MAPTA , an accredited medical, PT or healthcare education program, or a national, medical, PT or healthcare specialty society.***	Classroom Based	Online	Home study	Other
CE courses	Yes	Yes	Yes	
PT clinical specialty certification coursework	Yes	Yes	Yes	
PT clinical residency	Yes	Yes	Yes	Residency requirements
Post graduate PT coursework	Yes	Yes	Yes	Grade of “C” or higher or “pass” if “pass/fail” coursework

\*\*\*Links:

<http://www.fsbpt.org/>

<http://www.apta.org/>

<http://pt.fsbpt.net/aPTitude/public/info/home>

<http://pt.mt.gov> then click on “Services/Links tab then click on “Related Internet Links” OR <http://pt.mt.gov> then click on the “CE” tab.

**Category B activities:** Beginning April 1, 2017, **a maximum of 15** of the required 30 CE hours/credits may be obtained each 2 year reporting cycle from Category B. These activities are designed to allow continued competence through participation in “other meaningful activities” beyond traditional classroom instruction. Category B activities are not certified.

Category B Activities: 15 hour <u>maximum</u> CE requirement in each 2 year cycle Beginning April 1, 2017 through March 31, 2019
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<b>Courses or activities</b>  <b>*** not approved or offered***</b> by a National/State Medical, Physical Therapy or Healthcare Board or Association i.e. APTA, FSBPT, MAPTA , an accredited medical, PT or healthcare education program, or a national, medical, Physical Therapy or healthcare specialty board.	<b>Conversion</b>	<b>Cap per 2 year cycle</b>
CE courses	Classroom Based, Online, Home Study	15 hours per 2 year cycle
Teaching/lecturing principally for healthcare professionals, so long as teaching is not your primary profession	1 hour credit for 1 hour of lecture/teaching	5 hour max
Current (active) member APTA		1 hour
Performing as an APTA-certified clinical instructor in each 2 year cycle		5 hour max
Performing as clinical mentor in credentialed clinical residency or fellowship program		5 hour max
Serving as a Montana PT Board Member or on a recognized MT PT Board committee, MAPTA Board Member, or national APTA Board member, or FSBPT Board Member		5 hour max
Publishing in an area that pertains to PT, if publishing is not a requirement for your primary occupation.		5 hour max
Taking and passing the jurisprudence exam in each 2 year cycle		1 hour
Taking and passing the FSBPT's Practice Review Tool		1 hour

**8. My employer is putting on a mandatory training for all employees. Will this training count toward my CE requirement?**

Yes, if the training deals primarily with substantive physical therapy issues and complies with the CE rules. If it does not you or your employer may seek course approval through the FSBPT or MAPTA to qualify.

**9. If I complete more than 30 qualified hours/credits in the 2 year reporting cycle will the extra credits “roll over” to the next reporting cycle?**

No. The CE hours/credits must be completed during the 2 year renewal cycle and cannot be carried over or go back in time.

**10. How do I indicate that I have met the continuing education requirements?**

You will check a box on your renewal form indicating you have met the continuing education requirements. The Montana PT Board of Examiners will conduct random audits and may request copies of your CE activity/records as part of that process to verify completion of the CE requirements.

**\*\*\* Please do not send copies of your records unless they have been requested in writing by the Board as part of a random audit. \*\*\***

**11. How long should I retain my detailed CE documents and what should they include?**

CE documents should be retained for at least 3 years. According to the CE rule **ARM 24.177.2105 3c** “all acceptable continuing education courses must issue a program and a Certificate of Completion. Your “detailed records” should include:

Continuing Education Document Checklist	
Required Course Program Information	Requirements for Certificate of Completion
Full name and qualifications of course presenter	Official signature of the sponsor
Title of the presentation	The course name
Number of hours, date, and location of the presentation	The number of hours of continuing education obtained
The name of the sponsor	Date and location of the presentation
Description of the presentation format	

- Pursuant to ARM 24.177.2105 2a, each 60 minutes of instruction equals one continuing education hour/credit.

**12. Is there an easy way I can track my Continuing Competence and Education Activities?**

Yes. **aPTitude** is a **free** continuing competence resource for physical therapist and physical therapist assistant licensees offered by the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy (FSBPT).

**Licensees can use aPTitude to:**

- Maintain licensure information and record of CC/CE
- Securely store CC/CE completion documents
- Stay current with all CC/CE requirements and license renewal dates
- Be reminded of license renewal and CE/CC deadlines
- Track CC/CE completion progress for one or many states

- Find CC/CE courses and activities

Links: <https://pt.fsbpt.net/aPTitude/public/info/home>  
<http://mapta.com/>  
<http://www.apta.org/>  
<http://pt.mt.gov> then click on “Services/Links tab then click on “Related Internet Links” OR <http://pt.mt.gov> then click on the “CE” tab

**13. The Montana Board of PT does not pre-approve any activities or sponsors for CE hours/credits. Why not?**

The Board recognizes that the licensees are professionals. There are many offerings that meet the CE requirements. This leaves a lot of choices for licensees to select what is most relevant to their continued competency development and career. The Board does not want to be in the approval business. The process of approving continuing education courses would be too costly and burdensome for a board of this size.

**14. What activities are excluded and do not meet specific CE requirements?**

Examples of activities that are excluded from CE hours/credits include: staff meetings, regularly scheduled institutional activities such as rounds or case conferences, first aid courses, CPR courses, infection control, programs that promote a company or product, repeating or retaking an activity and/or coursework.

**15. Can I request an exemption from completion of all or a portion of my CE hours/credits during my renewal cycle because of extenuating circumstances i.e. a medically documented illness or military service assignment?**

No. However, written requests for a modest extension of time to complete the required CE, an explanation as to why you have not completed the required CE and a “plan of action” as to how you will complete the required CE, MAY be considered by the Board on an individual basis when provided with appropriate supportive documentation.

**\*\*\* Remember: failure to comply with the continuing education requirement may be grounds for disciplinary action. \*\*\***

**16. I am still confused, who can I talk to if I have questions?**

You may call 406-841-2300 and ask for the “Audit Unit” or email your question to [dlibsdp@mt.gov](mailto:dlibsdp@mt.gov).