

Veterinary Medical Board

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November 20, 2015

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To: Office of Administrative Law
Attention: Elizabeth A. Heidig, Senior Staff Counsel
Subject: OAL File No. CTU2015-0930-03
Veterinarian Continuing Education Waivers

I, Annemarie Del Mugnaio, am the Executive Officer of the Veterinary Medical Board, Department of Consumer Affairs. I am empowered and am making this certification pursuant to Title 1, California Code of Regulations, section 280.

I hereby certify that the Veterinary Medical Board will not issue, use, enforce, or attempt to enforce the attached Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) No. 29, as posted on the Veterinary Medical Board's website on November 20, 2015, which is the subject of the pending underground regulation petition. The Veterinary Medical Board intends to amend the FAQ to better conform to existing regulations.

Annemarie Del Mugnaio
Executive Officer
Veterinary Medical Board

OFFICE OF
ADMINISTRATIVE LAW

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Department of Consumer Affairs

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Veterinarian Continuing Education

MANDATORY CONTINUING EDUCATION FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS - VETERINARIAN

Veterinarians must certify that they have completed 36 hours of approved continuing education (CE) to renew their license to practice veterinary medicine in California. The answers to the following frequently asked questions are designed to help veterinarians understand CE requirements.

1. Who is required to take Continuing Education (CE)?

Effective January 2002, all California licensed veterinarians who are actively licensed in California.

2. When can I start accruing hours?

This depends on your license renewal date; CE hours must be earned two years prior to your license expiration date.

For example, if your license expires on January 31, 2014, you can accrue CE hours earned between February 1, 2012 and January 31, 2014.

3. How many hours are needed?

You are required to complete 36 hours of approved CE for each two-year license renewal period.

4. What is my license "renewal period"?

A license renewal period is two years and runs from the license expiration date to license expiration date. Your expiration date is shown on your license.

For example, if your license expiration date is May 31, 2014, the renewal period was June 1, 2012 through May 31, 2014. To renew your license in May 2014, you must have completed 20 hours of approved CE within the subsequent two-year time period.

5. How is CE related to my license renewal?

You must verify completion of 36 hours of approved CE before your license can be renewed. For the majority of veterinarians renewing their license, a mandatory signature on the renewal form is all that is required to verify completion of 36 hours of approved CE. There are different requirements if you are selected for a random CE audit.

6. What if I do not complete the CE by my license expiration date?

If you do not complete CE by your license expiration date, you may renew as inactive or wait to renew until you have completed the hours.

Waiting to renew your license until you have completed the CE hours may result in your license expiring and becoming delinquent. Licensees with an inactive or delinquent status must cease practice until such time as they complete the 36 hours of approved CE. It is ILLEGAL to practice veterinary medicine in California with an inactive or expired license.

7. Can I get an extension on my renewal if I have not completed the required hours?

No. There is no provision in the law to allow for an extension on a license renewal. The only options available are to renew as inactive or become delinquent until the CE hours are completed. You cannot practice veterinary medicine with an inactive or delinquent license.

8. Is CE a one-time requirement?

No, it is an ongoing requirement.

9. Can I count hours completed outside my renewal period?

No. The only exception is CE taken for a license that is inactive or delinquent; those renewals may only claim CE that was earned in the two-year period prior to renewal of that inactive or delinquent license.

10. What if a course begins in one renewal period but ends in another?

If you take a course that starts in one renewal period but ends in another, CE hours will count only towards the renewal period in which you completed the course. The only exception is CE taken for a license that is inactive or delinquent; those renewals may only claim CE that was earned in the two-year period prior to renewal of that inactive or delinquent license.

11. What are the CE requirements while residing outside of California?

If you reside outside of California, you have two options for meeting the CE requirement:

- A. There are a multitude of approved CE providers throughout the U.S., Canada and U.S. Territories that will allow you to still accrue CE. Information about providers can be found on the Board's web site under Approved Providers. The Board accepts courses approved by the American Association of Veterinary State Boards (AAVSB) as well as statutorily approved providers.
- B. You can renew your license as inactive by checking the inactive box on the renewal form and submitting it along with the regular renewal fee. It is ILLEGAL to practice veterinary medicine in California with an inactive license.

12. How does an inactive license affect CE and how can I renew an inactive license?

Licensees with inactive licenses:

- Renew the license biennially;
- Pay the regular renewal fee;
- Do not need to complete any hours of CE for renewal; and
- Are not allowed to practice in California while the license is inactive.

To renew your inactive license to active status you must complete 36 hours of CE in the two years immediately preceding the date you want to reactivate your license, submit proof of CE to the Board, and include a \$25 fee (that covers the cost of reprinting your newly active license).

13. Where can I take CE courses?

There are a multitude of approved CE providers throughout the U.S., Canada and U.S. Territories. Information about providers can be found on the Board's web site under Approved Providers. The Board accepts courses approved by the American Association of Veterinary State Boards (AAVSB) as well as statutorily approved providers.

14. Can I get a list of CE providers?

Information about providers can be found on the Board's web site under Approved Providers.

15. What records should I be keeping and for how long?

You need to keep proof of your completed CE coursework for at least four years.

16. Do I turn in proof of coursework when I renew my license?

No. For the majority of veterinarians renewing their license, a mandatory signature on the renewal form is all that is required to verify completion of 36 hours of approved CE. There are different requirements if you are selected for a random CE audit.

17. When do I need to turn in proof of my coursework?

The Board randomly audits licensees. If you are audited, you will need to submit proof of your course work (i.e. completion certificates, course logs, transcripts, etc.). Although you are required to keep CE records for at least four years, most audits ask for proof from your most recent renewal cycle.

18. What qualifies as a "CE course"?

A course is a form of systematic learning, relevant to the profession, and at least one hour in length. One hour is a minimum of 50 minutes. Once the initial 50-minute requirement is met, subsequent time earned can be counted in one half hour (25 minute) increments. Courses with a total of less than the minimum of 50 minutes will not count.

Approved CE courses can be delivered in a variety of modes, including actual class room settings, academic studies, extension studies, conferences, seminars, workshops, interactive online learning, and self-study courses.

The Board accepts courses approved by the American Association of Veterinary State Boards (AAVSB) as well as statutorily approved providers.

19. How does the Board define one hour?

For purposes of reporting mandatory CE, 50 minutes constitutes one hour. Courses must be a minimum of 50 minutes for the first hour. Once the minimum of 50 minutes is met, courses can then be counted in one half-hour increments. One half hour is defined as a minimum of 25 minutes.

20. What kinds of CE courses are acceptable?

Generally, courses relevant to veterinary medicine and approved by the Board are acceptable. Courses can cover scientific knowledge and/or technical skills, direct patient/client care, or indirect patient/client care.

21. What kinds of CE courses are not acceptable?

Courses designed for lay people or courses whose primary intent to promote the use of a commercial product or service are not acceptable.

22. What is a self-study course?

Self-study courses are performed at a licensee's residence, office, or other private location. Self-study includes viewing videotapes, listening to audio tapes, or journal reading, non-interactive online learning, etc. This also includes "correspondence online courses". Licensees self-certify these hours by listing the various type of self-study they have completed.

23. How many hours are allowed to come from self-study courses?

You can accrue up to 6 hours of your CE hours through self-study or non-interactive online courses.

24. How many hours are allowed to come from online education?

Online education hours are unlimited; however, at least 30 of those hours must be interactive online education.

25. Are there CE requirements for initial licensees?

Initial licensees are individuals who have been licensed in California for less than two years. There are no CE requirements for initial licensees.

26. How many hours can I earn per course?

Each provider sets the course hours. In general, you will earn one hour of CE for each 50 minutes of actual instruction. Once the minimum of 50 minutes is met, course credit can be given in half-hour increments. One half hour increment is defined as 25 minutes.

There are limitations of a maximum of 24 hours earned through practice management courses and a maximum of 16 hours while participating as a Subject Matter Expert (in the development of Board licensing examinations).

27. How many hours can I earn for academic courses?

1 semester unit = 15 CE hours
1 quarter unit = 10 CE hours

If audited, transcripts will be required to verify CE hours.

28. Can I get credit for teaching a CE course?

If a course is Board approved and meets CE guidelines, you may claim credit for the course. However, you can only claim credit for a course one time during a single renewal period.

29. Are there any provisions for a waiver of the CE requirements?

Yes. You can petition the Board for a waiver of CE requirements; however, there are only two specific provisions allowed for consideration of a waiver:

1. You were absent from California due to military service for at least one year; or
2. You or an individual for whom you have primary responsibility suffered from a substantial disability that prevented you from practicing and completing CE for at least one year in your current renewal period.

You must inform the Board as soon as you know you will need a CE waiver and will be required to submit evidence supporting your request.

30. How can I tell if a CE course will count?

CE providers must be approved either statutorily or by the AAVSB. It is the licensee's responsibility to find out whether the provider is approved prior to taking a course. Information about providers can be found on the Board's web site under Approved Providers.

31. Where can I complain if I feel there was something wrong with a CE course or course instructor?

You should first contact the provider of the course to resolve the matter. If you are not satisfied with the outcome, promptly send a written complaint to the Board office. Include the course name, date, and location, the names of the instructor and provider, and specifics about your complaint.

32. Do temporary licensees have to complete continuing education?

No. Only permanently licensed veterinarians are required to complete continuing education.

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