

The following are requirements to meet the Association of Social Work Boards' (ASWB) Approved Continuing Education (ACE) criteria.

Please review carefully with Course Planning Form. Direct remaining questions to hs-cppn@ucdavis.edu.

- **The ACE Social Work Consultant must be involved in the planning, implementation, and monitoring** of social work continuing education (CE) to ensure ASWB ACE standards are met. Please contact hs-cppn@ucdavis.edu to discuss. ASWB ACE credit cannot be awarded if Social Work Consultant is not involved in course planning and/or does not assess course as meeting standards.
- All ASWB ACE required information must be included in planning form.
- **CE providers must:**
 - Plan and implement programs and learning activities in response to an identified need
 - Designate the category of CE offering (clinical, ethics, cultural competency, or other) needed for certificates of credit if required by the jurisdiction where CE credit is being offered or as required by ASWB ACE for all approved individual courses/conferences
 - Define potential learners and the target audience, identifying educational level and any prerequisites for each CE activity and including that information on promotional materials
- **The content of all CE courses must be relevant** to evidence-based social work practice and reflect current peer-reviewed research, best practices, and the needs and scope of licensed social workers. Topics must be pertinent to social work theory, methods, and/or practice.
- **Course content should:** (1) help social workers better serve the public and support ongoing professional competence; (2) be understood as building on a degree in social work for someone currently practicing as a licensed social worker; and (3) be credible (i.e., empirical, peer reviewed, follows established research procedures) or address legal, ethical, or regulatory professional standards.
- Course offerings must be at least 60 minutes (1 hour) in length.
- The first 60 minutes of any course must be uninterrupted instruction.
- Credit cannot be offered for completing part of a course.
- **Values and Code of Ethics:** CE programs/courses must adhere to the social work profession's values and code of ethics. Courses must never discriminate against any individual or group based on gender, race, creed, national origin, sexual orientation, religion, age, organizational membership, or any other basis prohibited by law or counter to the social work profession's code of ethics. Courses must not require participants to accept or adhere to any religion, creed, or political principles. Refer to the [NASW Code of Ethics \(2021\)](#).
- **ASWB ACE Requirement on Cultural Awareness and Diversity:** CE content must promote cultural awareness and understanding of diversity such as defined in the [NASW Standards and Indicators for Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice, 2015](#). CE for professional practice and licensing should advance cultural competence within the profession, preparing social workers for culturally competent practice across the full spectrum of social work practice roles—direct practice, supervision, administration, policy, education, and research.
 - Cultural competence requires self-awareness, cultural humility, and the commitment to understanding and embracing culture as central to effective practice.
 - Diversity, more than race and ethnicity, includes the sociocultural experiences of people inclusive of, but not limited to, national origin, color, social class, religious and spiritual beliefs, immigration status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, and physical or mental disabilities.
- **The Social Work Consultant** must be involved in (1) assessing the educational needs of social workers to inform course development, (2) reviewing or developing learning objectives, (3) planning the provider's continuing education courses, (4) administering and monitoring the provider's courses, (5) working with other staff to stay current on the CE requirements in all jurisdictions for which CE credit is offered, (6),

ensuring the provider infuses cultural awareness and diversity into courses and the overall program, (7) resolving grievances, and (8) evaluating the provider's courses and program.

- **Course Content:**

- **Acceptable course content** areas include topics that clearly fall within the scope of practice for social workers and are directly applicable and relevant to social work practice, relating clearly to one or more of the following social work educational areas. These include, but are not limited to:
 - Theories and concepts of human behavior in the social environment
 - Social work practice, knowledge, and skills, which may include social work research, programs, or practice evaluations; social work agency management or administration; development, evaluation, and implementation of social policy; and/or social work generalist or clinical practice
 - Diversity, social justice, social work ethics
 - Individuals, couples, families, and/or children, such as mandatory reporting, human development and behavior, gender/gender identity, sexuality, family systems, issues of poverty, diagnosis/assessment, new approaches to treatment, social work research, social work clinical or nonclinical practice, social work with individuals, or social work ethics
 - Human development, diversity, and behavior in the environment, such as cultural competency, diversity issues, LGBTQI issues, multiculturalism, gender/gender identity, disabilities, issues of poverty, domestic violence, psychotherapy, psychology, aging, gerontology, substance abuse and addiction, medical social work, psychopharmacology, diagnosis/assessment, HIV/AIDS, trauma, sexual abuse/assault, death and dying, grief, spirituality, new approaches to treatment, social work research, social work clinical practice, social work ethics, or social work with individuals
 - Communities and groups, such as social work with organizations, social justice, theories and methods of social change, social work with communities, social work system interface, social work communication, international issues, economic issues, issues of poverty, social work research, social work nonclinical practice, or social work ethics
 - Professional relationships, values, and ethics, such as professional impairment, mandatory reporting, professional competency, therapeutic relationships, psychotherapy, psychology, research/practice evaluation, boundary issues, confidentiality, client rights, dual or multiple relationships, billing practices, conflicts of interest, sexual misconduct, fraud, social work supervision, risk management, service delivery, spirituality, social work research, social work ethics, or social work clinical supervision
 - Public administration and policy, such as social policy, grants/funding, organizations, social work system interface, international or economic issues, issues of poverty, or social work ethics
 - Practice administration specific to social work or general behavioral health fields, such as record keeping, informed consent, law, service delivery, billing practices (ethical), fraud, ethical practice development, or social work ethics
- **Questionable course content areas** include touch therapy (e.g., Reiki), insurance billing (e.g., Medicare, Medicaid, etc.), compassion fatigue, yoga, and mindfulness.
- **Unacceptable course content areas** include, but are not limited to:
 - Exam prep, self-help, self-development, personal growth/enrichment, general leadership or management, topics that are primarily procedural or oriented towards business practices, marketing or growing a practice/business, generating income, billing/coding, office management, supervisory sessions, technology enhancement, staff orientation, company-specific policies or procedures, CPR, infection control, interpreter training, commercial content, topics outside the social worker scope of practice, coaching (courses that discuss coaching in general and do not require the participant to be a licensed mental health or health care professional), promotion of sexual orientation change efforts as a

therapeutic method (sometimes called “conversion therapy”), or any political and religious content restriction.

- **Note:** training that applies to leaders in any field, even when helpful to social workers in management roles, is not considered acceptable for social work CE credit unless the course includes learning objectives specific to social workers.

- **Bibliography/Course Content must be reviewed and updated regularly:**

- Course bibliographies must be regularly reviewed and updated with current references to demonstrate validity and currency even when the course content and materials do not require a change
- Courses that include enduring materials (e.g., recorded video or online reading-based material) must list in promotional materials the date the course was created, reviewed, or updated.
- Asynchronous distance learning (self-paced) courses based solely on enduring materials that cannot be updated, such as a book or article not created by the CE provider, must use course material published within the past five years. Providers must either retire courses with material published more than five years prior or add current written material.
- The bibliography must include all sources used in the creation of the course, including information from websites, books, journals, articles, reports, charts, videos, etc. Most of the references must come from peer-reviewed journals, unless no journal articles are available for the content area(s) being covered in the course. In that case, other references must prove the course relates to current evidence-based practice or best practice for the social work profession.
- The bibliography is to be provided to participants during the course as participants must have access to the bibliography to determine the credibility and source of information and to learn more from sources. The bibliography’s entries must follow APA format.
- At least 50%, or five of the references cited, whichever is less, must reflect research published within the past five years. The bibliography must be updated regularly to ensure courses meet this requirement.
- If the bibliography includes writings the course instructor authored, it must also include relevant, current references from writings of other authors.
- If a reference is from a website that lists no specific date of creation, then the date the CE provider last retrieved the information must be included in the bibliography.

- **Multidisciplinary courses:**

- CE providers may offer courses for social work CE credit that were originally developed for other professions if they include content appropriate for social workers and meet ACE standards.
- **Such courses must be revised** so the course materials, learning objectives, promotional materials, etc., are inclusive of social workers.
- CE providers must not offer a course for social work CE that was created for another profession and that includes learning objectives and content that are inappropriate for social workers or are geared specifically to another profession or professions.
- For example, a course on end-of-life care developed for nurses may include content that would be valuable to a social worker who is part of a multidisciplinary team. If the course content, course materials, learning objectives, and promotional materials specifically address the nurse’s role, the ethics of nursing professionals and end of life care, or a nurse’s scope of practice, then it would be too focused on the nursing profession to be offered by a CE provider for social work CE credit.

- **Learning Objectives:**

- Courses must use measurable learning objectives, which are clear and concise written statements defining the knowledge, skills, and abilities a learner should be able to demonstrate following the learning experience. Objectives allow the course planner(s) and CE provider to assess and improve future learning and course quality.

ASWB Approved Continuing Education Instructions Sheet

- Learning objectives serve as the foundation for planning, instruction, and assessment of a learning experience and define the expected goal of the course.
- Learning objectives must be written clearly to help participants understand how the course is related to their educational goals and focus their attention on specific aspects of the course content.
- Learning objectives must use demonstrable verbs or action words that are measurable. They must state what the learner will demonstrate.
- ACE does not accept verbs that cannot be demonstrated such as “appreciate,” “believe,” “understand,” “learn,” or “know.” Make sure learning objectives are measurable or observable. They should not describe how the learner will learn or what the instructor will teach.
- The effectiveness of the course in helping participants meet the learning objectives must be assessed.
 - The required course evaluation must allow participants to rank learning objectives.
- Learning objectives that were originally written for audiences from other professions must be revised to include social workers and the social work profession.
- **Content Level:** The activity content level must be accurately identified.
 - **Beginning** level courses introduce learners to a content area; include information about a condition, treatment method, or issue; and involve learning and comprehending content.
 - **Intermediate** level courses provide information that builds on knowledge practitioners with some experience already have. These courses focus on skill-building or adding knowledge, possibly following a brief overview of basic information, and involve using information in concrete situations and understanding the underlying structure of the material.
 - **Advanced** level courses provide content for participants who have been working in the content area and have a clear understanding of the issues. These courses cover and address the complexities involved in the work and involve synthesizing material to create new patterns or structures or evaluating material for a specific purpose.
 - Note: The identification of content level is related to the content of the course, not to the target audience. If an experienced social worker is learning new material, for example, it would be appropriate for that social worker to participate in a beginner level course.
- **Instructor Qualifications:** Instructors or presenters must have appropriate qualifications and provide a resume/CV and proof of licensure demonstrating these. Instructors must also provide a bio statement for promotional materials.
 - Instructors or presenters must have professional qualifications in good standing with their professional regulatory board, if applicable, and meet one or more of these criteria:
 - Be a faculty member of an accredited undergraduate or graduate school of social work
 - Have specialized graduate or postgraduate training in the subject being taught
 - Have extensive experience including no less than five years of practical application or research in the subject taught
 - Instructors or knowledgeable staff delivering distance learning courses must be available to communicate with participants and be proficient at using technology to communicate subject matter effectively.
 - Instructors must be assigned to teach topics specifically relevant to the social work scope of practice in which they have training and experience.
 - With few exceptions, instructors must be members of a licensed profession such as social work, psychology, nursing, medicine, or law. Individuals who are not licensed professionals in any field are usually not considered acceptable instructors for social work CE courses unless the provider can provide justification for the use of an unlicensed instructor, which must first be approved by ACE before instructing. If one of your instructors is not a member of a licensed profession, contact CPPN to facilitate ACE approval.

ASWB Approved Continuing Education Instructions Sheet

- To ensure compliance with ACE standards, if an unlicensed instructor is desired for presenting a course or session for social work CE credit, CPPN must be contacted in advance.
- **Instructional Materials:** Instructional materials must be appropriate and high-quality.
 - Instructional materials (e.g., training manuals, handouts, outlines, background materials, audiovisual aids, bibliography, etc.) must enhance participants' understanding, be appropriate to their learning level, and be professional.
 - Materials initially developed for audiences other than social workers must be carefully reviewed and modified as necessary in consultation with the CE provider's social work consultant or, if applicable, the social work planner.
 - Course instructors and material must not promote commercial bias or interest.
 - CE providers must ensure and attest that program materials do not infringe upon or otherwise violate intellectual property or privacy rights, including copyright, trademark, and license rights. Providers must either own the materials used or be permitted by law to use them, consulting with legal counsel if needed. ACE may require a provider to show proof of usage rights in the form of written permission. It is ultimately the responsibility of the CE provider, however, and not ASWB, to ensure compliance with all applicable laws for all continuing education courses offered for ACE credit.
- **CE Credit:**
 - Breaks of any kind (coffee, lunch, dinner, etc.) and registration/check-in time must not be included in the CE credit determination. Breaks must, however, be included on the timed agenda on promotional material.
 - Introduction of the speaker(s) may be included as part of the course and CE credit. However, introductions lasting more than a few minutes—such as time for the entire group of participants to introduce themselves to each other—may *not* be included in CE credit calculations.
 - If CE credit is offered for time spent completing the posttest, the course must be pilot tested.
 - Courses, including distance learning courses, must provide a minimum of one hour of instruction in one block of time. If a recording of any kind is used as a self-paced, distance learning course, it must contain at least one hour of recorded material to be offered for CE credit.
- **Pilot Testing:** Required for all distance learning courses, synchronous or asynchronous, in which CE credit is offered for the time it takes to complete a course posttest
 - Pilot testing is the process of presenting a course in its entirety, including posttesting, to a sample group of pilot testers under conditions similar to those under which it is offered to learners. This is done to assess the suitability, utility, and clarity of course content and structure and to determine the length of time the average participant needs to complete a course so that an accurate amount of CE credit is assigned.
 - When a pilot test is required, CE providers must follow the ACE-approved pilot test procedure.
 - All required pilot tests must ask for the exact amount of time, in minutes and hours, that it took to complete the education portion of the course and the posttest.
 - Pilot testing is recommended as best practice when developing courses in any format to assess
 - Suitability, utility, and clarity of course content and structure
 - Overall course validity
 - To create a pilot test, CE providers may use the pilot test questions—or questions similar to them—found linked below. All pilot tests must also include instructions to the pilot testers. Additional questions may be added
 - Pilot test instructions: view [here](#).
- **Posttesting:** Used to assess participant learning and course quality
 - A standard posttest (or a posttest alternative as allowed) to demonstrate knowledge is required for all distance learning formats and encouraged for all other courses.

ASWB Approved Continuing Education Instructions Sheet

- The posttest must be assessed during the course's pilot test and administered to each participant wishing to receive CE credit.
- The standard posttest must include 10 questions (multiple choice or true/false) for the first CE hour and five more for each additional CE hour.
- True/false questions may not comprise more than half the questions on a standard posttest.
- An essay-question posttest, accompanied by a scoring rubric demonstrating objectivity and impartiality, may be used as an alternative to a standard posttest for asynchronous (self-paced) and noninteractive synchronous (live) distance learning courses.
- For interactive, synchronous (live) distance learning courses, discussion questions, interactive discussion, interactive polling, or a question-and-answer session may be embedded within course as an alternative to a standard posttest. Discussion questions may be used only for courses in which distance learning technology is used to monitor participation and interaction is ensured through sound instructional design.
- **Distance Learning:**
 - The Social Work Consultant determines whether the jurisdiction in which CE is being offered accepts CE credit earned through distance learning courses. As of September 2022, California accepts CE credit earned through distance learning.
 - Communication must be available between participants and instructors.
 - Communication time and methods must be designated so that participants can communicate with an instructor or knowledgeable staff member regarding subject matter guidance, correction, grading, comments, or problem resolution. The method of communication must be included in promotional material.
 - Instructors delivering distance learning courses must be proficient in using technology to communicate subject matter effectively.
- **Conferences:** Sessions that offer ACE credit must be clearly identified.
 - Each conference session must:
 - Adhere to all ACE standards.
 - Have at least 60 minutes of uninterrupted instruction time.
 - Have learning objectives (overall conference objectives are recommended but optional).
 - List the following in the conference brochure and on promotional material: description, learning objectives, instructor bio(s), number of CE credits offered, target audience, practice/content level, and agenda for each session longer than two hours.
 - Include its own individual bibliography that is available to attendees by request.
 - Promotional materials must:
 - List which sessions are offered for ACE credit. (This is especially important when some sessions are not relevant to social workers or are not being offered for ACE credit.)
 - List course completion requirements for receiving CE credit, including attestation and completing evaluations for each session and the overall conference.
 - Include the ACE provider or course approval statement(s) with the last sentence adjusted for conference use.
 - Certificates of credit must:
 - Include the name of the conference.
 - Consist of either a separate certificate for each session or a single certificate for the whole conference. Whole conference certificates must include a list of sessions the social worker fully attended and indicate the following for each: session title, number of credits, type of credits (if required by jurisdiction), date, and ACE provider or course approval statement with the last sentence adjusted for conference use.

ASWB Approved Continuing Education Instructions Sheet

- CE providers must require attendees to complete evaluations of each session they attended and of the overall conference.
- When nonconcurrent conferences are offered, it must be determined whether full attendance will be required or partial attendance allowed.
 - When full attendance is required:
 - Attendees must attend the entire conference from beginning to end and may earn only the full amount of CE credit offered.
 - Full attendance for the whole conference will be documented.
 - When partial attendance is allowed:
 - Attendees may choose which sessions to attend and earn CE credit only for those sessions they attended in full.
 - Attendance for each session will be documented.
- Poster sessions are not eligible for CE credit.
- **Evaluations:** must be used for every course offering CE credit and collected from every participant before awarding CE credit. These are analyzed and used to improve CE offerings.
 - Evaluations must include:
 - Course title and date
 - Participant name
 - Learning objective ranking (worded exactly as they appear in the promotional material)
 - Questions that allow participants to assess:
 - Whether the course met their expectations as outlined in the promotional material
 - Usefulness of the course content to their needs or interests
 - Currency of the content
 - Effectiveness of the course's supporting materials (e.g., handouts, teaching aids, visual aids, etc.)
 - Clarity and effectiveness of the instructor's/author's delivery
 - Responsiveness of the instructor (all in-person and synchronous distance learning [live] courses with interactivity)
 - Course registration process
 - Responsiveness of the administrative staff to questions or concerns
 - Adequacy of accessibility accommodations
 - Adequacy of the location/meeting space (in-person courses only)
 - Exact length of time, in writing, that it took the social worker to complete the course (all distance learning courses)
 - Course technology (all distance learning courses)
 - Comment box for participants to include additional feedback or suggestions
 - For conferences, evaluations are required for each session and the overall conference
- **Rosters:** participants must sign on official roster.
 - For in-person events, **at least one** of the following must occur:
 - Attestation: participants sign the following attestation statement on evaluation forms for each course/session: "The attendee signing below is requesting [number] CE credits for [title of the specific session attended] and attests that the attendee has been present for this entire session" with printed full name, course title, signature, and date of course.

ASWB Approved Continuing Education Instructions Sheet

Attestations must be returned no later than the end of the day that the session was offered or, for multi-day courses, attestations must be turned in each day (attestations may not be mailed), OR

- Sign-in/sign-out log: Rosters must use a sign-in/out log that includes attendees' first and last names, time in with signature and time out with signature or initials, OR
 - Room monitor: have a room monitor that checks attendees in and out.
- **Promotional material** must include:
 - Adequate and accurate information, and appear professional
 - Required course details:
 - Title, date, fees, location or distance learning delivery method description
 - Description
 - Learning objectives
 - Target audience
 - Instructor bio(s)
 - Outline or agenda with specific times and breaks
 - Amount of CE credit offered
 - CE credit type (if required by jurisdiction)
 - Registration deadline
 - Refund policy
 - Cancellation policy
 - Instructions for requesting accessibility accommodations
 - Complete ACE approval statement, which must not be altered in any way other than making adjustments for conferences as outlined by requirements
 - Other jurisdictional approvals, if any
 - Course completion requirements
 - Assignments, if any
 - When certificate is issued
 - Where and how to register
 - Contact information for questions, concerns, etc.
 - Identify educational level and any prerequisites for each CE activity
 - Distance learning must also include:
 - Detailed description of specific delivery method. Simply stating "online" is insufficient. Potential participants should know from reading the promo if they are reading course material, watching a recorded video, attending a live webinar, etc.
 - Course interactivity type: interactive or noninteractive
 - Description of how posttest and evaluation are given to participants and submitted
 - Date recorded or created, if asynchronous (self-paced)
 - System requirements
 - Posttest requirements (passing score and retest policy)
 - Communication method and time to communicate with an instructor or knowledgeable staff member
 - Certificates of completion with ACE credit cannot be issued to course instructors.

Complete ACE Provider Approval Statement (only to be used after course is approved):

UC Davis Health - Center for Professional Practice of Nursing, provider #1866, is approved as an ACE provider to offer social work continuing education by the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) Approved Continuing Education (ACE) program. Regulatory boards are the final authority on courses accepted for continuing education credit. ACE provider approval period: 5/20/2024 – 5/20/2025. Social workers completing this course receive [number] continuing education credits.

Conference approval statement adjustments:

- Concurrent conference and nonconcurrent conference where full attendance is not required:
 - Certificate of credit (change last sentence to...): The social worker participating in this conference received [number] continuing education credits.
 - Promotional materials (change last sentence to...): Social workers participating in this conference will receive up to [number of credits available for all sessions] continuing education credits.
- Nonconcurrent conference where full attendance is required:
 - Certificate of credit and promotional materials (change last sentence to...): Social workers participating in this conference receive [number] continuing education credits.

References

Association of Social Work Boards. (2019). *Approved continuing education (ACE) handbook*.
<https://www.aswb.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/ACE-Handbook-FINAL.pdf>

National Association of Social Workers. (2021). *Code of ethics*.
<https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English>

National Association of Social Workers. (2015). *Standards and indicators for cultural competence in social work practice*.
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