

2024

Approved Provider Policy Handbook

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American Association of
NURSE PRACTITIONERS®

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1. INTRODUCTION

American Association of Nurse Practitioners® (AANP) Approved Providers have demonstrated the ability to design, implement and evaluate continuing education (CE) activities for nurse practitioners (NPs) without constant or close supervision. Approved Providers may include but are not limited to individuals, associations, organizations, educational institutions and other entities that provide CE to NPs. Approved Providers are permitted to develop and provide an unlimited number of NP CE activities during the approval period. An AANP Approved Provider does not have the authority to approve for AANP credit activities developed by other entities.

2. PURPOSE

To establish and maintain guidance for Approved Providers who develop and accredit their own high-quality CE for NPs.

3. DEFINITIONS

The following terms are beneficial to enhancing one's understanding of this policy:

Accreditation Criteria: The requirements that must be met to be approved for AANP accreditation.

Accreditation Review: The review process for the AANP Approved Provider accreditation is performed by staff in the AANP Accreditation Conference and Education Department (ACE).

Accreditation Statement: The standard statement that must appear on all AANP-accredited CE activities and associated materials. There are two variations of the AANP Accreditation Statement: one for the activities for which the approved provider is the sole provider and one for the activities that the approved provider is a joint provider. For more information, see section 10.0.

Accreditor: An organization that awards CE credit for an educational activity, if approved.

Activity: A CE activity is an educational offering that is planned, implemented and evaluated in accordance with the AANP Accreditation Criteria, Standards and Accreditation Policies.

Activity Sponsor or Provider: AANP defines the accreditation applicant as the activity's sponsor or provider, which is the institution or the organization providing the CE activity. When activities receive commercial or other external funding, the grantor is designated as the funder or supporter — not the sponsor or provider. An ineligible entity may not serve as the sponsor or provider of an AANP-approved activity.

Blended On-Demand Activity: An activity offered live or as a live webinar on a specific date, recorded and offered to participants for up to nine months after the live presentation. This activity may not be repeated.

Commercial Support: Monetary or in-kind contribution given by an ineligible entity for the support of an educational activity or project.

Conflict of Interest: AANP considers financial relationships (in the 24 months immediately preceding the date of the proposed activity) to create conflicts of interest (COIs) in CE when individuals have both the opportunity to influence the content of a CE activity and have a financial relationship with

an ineligible entity. AANP requires anyone able to influence or control the CE content to disclose any financial relationships with an ineligible entity in the 24 months preceding the date of the proposed activity (not the submission date).

Contact Hours: One AANP contact hour of CE (1.0 CH) is equivalent to 60 minutes of learning. Contact hours, CE units (CEUs) and continuing medical education (CME) are **not interchangeable or synonymous**. The terms “CEU” and “CME” should not be used in relation to AANP-approved CE credit.

CE Series: Multi-component activity where all pieces build on one another or are specific to a single disease process. The same set of learners would be enrolled for the entirety of the program. Examples include specialty certificate programs and NP fellowship or residency programs. This activity would have a single AANP-assigned activity ID with one CE certificate.

Eligibility of Entities (previously termed Commercial Interest): To ensure that accredited CE has scientifically justified recommendations and is fair, balanced and free of commercial bias, AANP has aligned with the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) Standards. AANP reserves the right to determine which entities and activities are awarded AANP accreditation.

Entities that may be accredited (eligible entities) or that participate in accredited activities include those whose mission and function incorporate providing clinical services directly to patients; educating health care professionals; or serving as a fiduciary to patients, the public or population health; and other entities that are not otherwise ineligible. Examples include:

- Ambulatory procedure centers.
- Blood banks.
- Diagnostic labs that do not sell proprietary products.
- Electronic health records companies.
- Government or military agencies.
- Group medical practices.
- Health law firms.
- Health profession membership organizations.
- Hospitals or health care delivery systems.
- Infusion centers.
- Insurance or managed care companies.
- Nursing homes.
- Pharmacies that do not manufacture proprietary compounds.
- Publishing or education companies.
- Rehabilitation centers.
- Schools or universities with NP programs.
- Software companies.

Ineligible entities that **may not** be accredited include those whose primary business is producing, marketing, selling, reselling or distributing health products used by or on patients. Examples include:

- Advertising, marketing or communication firms whose clients are ineligible entities.
- Bio-medical startups that have begun a governmental regulatory approval process.

- Compounding pharmacies that manufacture proprietary compounds.
- Device manufacturers or distributors.
- Diagnostic labs that sell proprietary products.
- Growers, distributors, manufacturers or sellers of medical foods and dietary supplements.
- Manufacturers of health-related wearable products.
- Pharmaceutical companies or distributors.
- Pharmacy benefit managers.
- Reagent manufacturers or sellers.

Owners and Employees of Ineligible Entities: The owners and employees of ineligible entities are considered to have unmitigable financial relationships. They must be excluded from participating as planners or faculty and must not be allowed to influence or have any control of the educational activity planning, delivery or evaluation.

Enduring Activities: Enduring activities are accessible over an extended period, allowing for independent study. Enduring activities may stand alone. Those developed from a live meeting **must** have a separate application. Applications involving enduring activities must include a statement and supporting documentation regarding how the credit request was determined (see Section 6.0). Examples include monographs, journal supplements, CDs or online activities.

Evaluation: A formal evaluation of each CE activity is essential for maintaining or improving the quality of future activities. Evaluation measures need to be developed during activity planning and linked to the objectives. Methods used to evaluate the learner's achieved outcome level may include one or more of the following items:

- Commitment to change — Learner reflection or identification of planned change.
- Another instrument designed to collect data on changes in learner knowledge or performance that can be attributed to the activity.

Faculty or Speaker: A qualified activity's faculty member or speaker must have expertise based on education and experience related to the topic and population covered. For example, a gerontological provider should not be faculty on a topic specific to pediatric patients. Pharmacology content must be presented by a prescriber (e.g., NP, PA, MD, DO, ND), Pharm.D., pharmacist or pharmacologist. Employees of ineligible entities may not serve as faculty or planners if the content the employee controls relates to the business lines or products of the commercial interest employer. An employee of an ineligible entity may be allowed to serve as faculty or planner if the content controlled by the employee is not related to the business lines or products of the ineligible entity. Faculty includes moderators and poster presenters.

Independent Peer Review: A documented critical evaluation must be performed by a peer who is a qualified expert in the same content area that is being reviewed. **The peer reviewer must not be associated with the provider or the planning committee and must be independent of the activity being reviewed. The peer reviewer must have no conflict of interest.** Independent peer reviewers must provide documentation that supports their qualification as an expert in the content area and must meet other requirements, such as submitting a completed disclosure form.

Jointly Provided Activity: An activity that is planned, implemented and evaluated by the AANP Approved Provider and another entity.

Joint Providership: AANP Approved Providers may jointly provide educational activities with other educational entities. The AANP Approved Provider will be referred to as the provider, and the other entity will be referred to as the joint provider. The jointly providing entity may not be an ineligible entity. The AANP Approved Provider must take responsibility for the activity when it is presented in collaboration with a nonaccredited entity or other non-AANP accredited providers. If there are two or more AANP Approved Providers developing the activity, one entity will be identified as the provider and the others will be joint providers. The provider will have final responsibility for adhering to AANP Standards and Policies. The AANP Approved Provider must use the appropriate accreditation statement (see Section 10.0: Approval). **An ineligible entity cannot take the role of the nonaccredited entity in a joint providership relationship.**

NP CE: Providing CE for NPs is a systematic, structured, accredited educational process designed to enhance the knowledge and skills of NPs and influence professional performance and evidence-based practice. NP CE goes above and beyond basic NP academic education to assist the NP as they continue to learn. CE excludes activities designed for the promotion of specific products, services or devices. **No promotional activities may occur during CE events. This includes the distribution of product brochures or product information in conjunction with handouts. No slides or handouts developed by an ineligible entity may be used during presentations.**

NP CE Content: Acceptable content for NP CE includes information to assess, diagnose, manage and treat multiple illnesses and conditions in primary care and specialty areas; wellness; disease prevention; health promotion; legislative or policy issues affecting health care and practice; conversational foreign language relevant to health care; and business or practice management. Self-improvement and exercise or stress-reduction technique topics must be supported by measurable objectives that describe how the content will ultimately benefit or improve patient outcomes. Personal finance and life support courses – to include basic life support (BLS), neonatal resuscitation program (NRP), pediatric advanced life support (PALS) and advanced cardiac life support (ACLS) – are not acceptable for NP CE credit.

Objectives: Learning objectives must be written in observable, measurable terms to allow the learner to precisely assess their proficiency in achieving knowledge immediately after the completion of the activity. A minimum of two to three learning objectives for a session lasting up to one hour, with more objectives for longer sessions, is required for accreditation. Objectives for pharmacology credit must indicate more than an incidental mention of drugs. Please review the information in the Pharmacology content section below.

Pharmacology Content: Pharmacology CE is designed to enhance the learner's ability to prescribe and monitor patients on pharmacotherapy. It includes topics such as pharmacokinetics and clinical applications of drugs. Pharmacology credit must be supported by an activity's objectives and detailed content. The incidental mention of drugs or a pharmacological treatment does not qualify for pharmacology credit. Pharmacology content must be presented by appropriate faculty. Review information about faculty or speaker above.

Posttest: A posttest is a set of questions successfully answered by the participant at the end of the activity, prior to completing the evaluation. Posttests are not mandatory; however, they can be used as a determination of learning at the end of an activity. The posttest should include one or two questions per measurable objective. The activity's host organization will determine the pass rate for the posttest using the AANP pass rate of 70% as a guide.

Relevant Financial Relationship(s): AANP aligns with the ACCME's definition of a relevant financial relationship, which is one in which the individual benefits by receiving any amount of compensation that creates a COI. A relevant financial relationship must not have occurred in the 24-month period preceding the time that the individual accepted a role influencing or controlling the content of an AANP-accredited activity. Benefits from these relationships include salary, royalty, intellectual property rights, consulting fee, honoraria for promotional speakers' bureau, ownership interest (e.g., stocks, stock options or other ownership interest, excluding diversified mutual funds) or other financial benefits. These benefits are usually associated with employment, management position, independent contractor (including contracted research) consulting, public speaking, teaching, participation on an advisory committee or review panel, board membership and other activities from which remuneration is received or expected.

Speakers' Bureau: Speaking on behalf of a pharmaceutical or medical device company to promote the company's product is considered marketing by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). These presentations consist of using materials or content created or prepared by the company and may include specific training on the product as part of the participation. This differs from accredited education, in which the educational content must be independent of any ineligible entity influence and must be fair and balanced without promotion of specific products or services.

Supporter: See eligibility of entities, commercial support and activity sponsor or provider.

Virtual: These are activities that are presented online. The activity can be live or prerecorded and hosted on a website. It can be presented via an online meeting platform, such as Zoom, Teams or Webex.

Webinar: A webinar is a virtual activity that is presented at a specific time and may be repeated. It may be live or prerecorded.

4.0 ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

AANP Accreditation Standards are consistent with guidance from the ACCME, FDA, Office of Inspector General (OIG) and the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA).

Standard 1: Independence

1. CE providers must ensure that all decisions are made completely free of ineligible entity control or influence. The following items and related decisions will receive an elevated amount of scrutiny:
 - Determination of educational need.
 - Determination of objectives.
 - Selection of individuals or organizations that will be in a position to control or influence the content (e.g., faculty, content experts, activity chair and planners).
 - Content development.
 - Selection of educational method and content delivery.
 - Evaluation of the activity.
2. The use of an educational activity or material developed by an ineligible entity is prohibited.
3. An ineligible entity cannot serve as a partner in a joint provider relationship.
4. An ineligible entity is not eligible for AANP accreditation.

Standard 2: Fair and Balanced Content

1. All activities bearing AANP accreditation must be designed and implemented to provide a fair and balanced coverage of the topic, with content presented from more than one perspective.
2. The educational activity must not promote the specific business interest of an ineligible entity. During their presentations, faculty may not promote or sell products or services that serve their professional or financial interests.
3. Generic names must be used throughout the educational activity. If a brand or trade name is used in print, the generic name must also be included. For example, generic (Trade). Pharmacologic content must include a balanced range of therapeutic options or identify that it is the only option available.
4. Any planned discussion of the off-label, experimental or investigational use of drugs or devices must be disclosed. This information must be repeated at the time the discussion occurs within the activity.
5. Activity evaluations must include a measurement of any perceived commercial or other bias related to the educational activity. These evaluations must also include a measurement of whether the content presented is fair and balanced.

Standard 3: Disclosure Related to Potential COI

1. Any individual in a position to influence or control of the educational content must disclose any relevant financial relationships (see definition of relevant financial relationships) prior to the approval of AANP CE credit.
2. Learners must be informed of relevant financial relationships. In the absence of any financial relationship, learners must be informed that no financial relationship exists.

Standard 4: Mitigation Related to COI

1. Before the educational activity is implemented, CE providers must have a mechanism in place to identify and appropriately mitigate all COIs.
2. Prior to implementation of the educational activity, CE providers must document that anyone in a position to control the educational activity content has disclosed all relevant financial relationships to the CE provider.
3. If any individual in a position to control the content of the educational activity refuses or fails to disclose relevant financial relationships, that individual must be disqualified, and a replacement must be identified.

Standard 5: Appropriate Use of Commercial Support

1. CE providers must make all decisions regarding the use and disbursement of commercial support independently and free from commercial influence.
2. A written, signed agreement detailing the terms, conditions and purposes of the commercial support – and which adheres strictly to the rules and restrictions governing commercial support as outlined in this handbook – must exist between the commercial supporter and the CE provider. If additional educational partners exist, a similar agreement is required between them and the CE provider. Ineligible entities are prohibited from engaging in joint providership for accredited activities. Joint providership enables eligible entities to work with other eligible entities to deliver accredited CE.

3. CE providers must have policies and procedures in place governing the appropriate use and disbursement of any commercial support, including honoraria and reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses for planners, faculty, joint providers and partners.
4. Social events or meals must be conducted appropriately without competing with or taking precedence over the educational events.

Standard 6: Acknowledgment of Commercial Support

1. All commercial support or other support (financial or in-kind) must be acknowledged to the learners prior to the delivery of educational content.
2. Acknowledgment of the support must be included on any activity announcements, invitations or marketing materials. Should funding be pending at the time of printing or publishing these materials, a statement regarding the potential funding must be included. For example, "This educational activity may receive support through an educational grant from a commercial interest." The appropriate acknowledgment of any commercial support must be provided at the time of the educational activity.

Standard 7: Separation From Promotion

1. Commercial exhibits or advertisements must not influence CE content or interfere in any way with the CE presentation or materials, nor can they be a condition that influences commercial support.
2. Product promotion or product-specific advertisement or marketing of any type is prohibited in the same space before, during or after a CE activity.
3. During accredited activities presented digitally or online, learners must be able to engage in the accredited material presented without having to click through, watch, listen to or be presented with product promotion or product specific advertisement.
4. Educational content developed by an ineligible entity **may not** be used during a CE activity. This includes the distribution of product brochures or product information in conjunction with educational activity handouts.
5. Use of an ineligible entity's or commercial supporter's logo on CE activity materials is prohibited.

5.0 ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

The following eligibility requirements must be met for an AANP Approved Provider to be considered for accreditation or reaccreditation:

- The applicant's philosophy of CE must be consistent with NP education and with AANP's standards for accreditation (See Section 4.0: AANP Accreditation Standards).
- The applicant must sign and acknowledge their understanding and intention to abide by the AANP Approved Provider Policy Handbook and Accreditation Standards.
- At least one master's- or doctorate-prepared NP must be involved in the planning and evaluation of each activity bearing AANP credit to ensure the activity is consistent with the current or potential scope of professional practice and desirable attributes of NPs. The qualifications of this individual(s) must be further established through the submission of a curriculum vitae.
- The applicant must have established policies demonstrating the means to efficiently implement a CE program. These policies must also specify provider accountability and indicate adherence to AANP Accreditation Standards and criteria for NP CE.

- The provider must demonstrate their familiarity with the guidance provided by the FDA, OIG, PhRMA and ACCME on industry-supported, accredited activities.
- If the reaccreditation applicant has had prior disciplinary action, not including termination, in the previous approval period, the applicant must have met all reinstatement criteria as specified for application consideration (See Section 11.0: Audits).

6.0 ACCREDITATION CRITERIA

Certain criteria are universally expected by AANP, as well as by certification and regulatory bodies, when considering the appropriateness and quality of an educational activity.

Avoidance of Commercial Promotion and Influence

AANP recognizes the contribution of commercial funding in supporting professional CE, including NP CE. However, it is crucial that commercial support have no influence on the determination of specific program needs, development of objectives, specification of content and selection of faculty. Commercial interests must not manipulate or shape CE activities.

1. CE credit may not be awarded for activities designed to promote products, and CE activities cannot be influenced by ineligible entities. Each provider must have a process in place — consistent with the rules and restrictions set forth in this Handbook and reviewed with each reaccreditation — through which to identify and resolve any potential COI prior to the implementation of activities.
2. Individuals serving on an industry speakers' bureau may be considered as faculty if their clinical area(s) is other than the general focus of their speakers' bureau activities. For topics in the same clinical area as their speakers' bureau activities, faculty may be considered for content limited to areas such as disease prevalence, risk factors, diagnosis and pathophysiology (i.e., not including therapeutic options beyond an incidental mention of broad classes of drugs).
3. Employees of an ineligible entity **may not** serve as faculty, speakers or planners if the content the employee controls relates to the business lines or products of the ineligible entity employer. See also the definition of Faculty or Speaker.
4. Product advertising or other promotional materials may not be exhibited or circulated during CE activities or in the immediate CE activity space. For enduring activities, this applies to advertising or promotion on adjacent webpages or on content webpages. AANP Approved Providers are responsible for maintaining this standard.
5. Activities provided as CE must provide fair and balanced coverage of all topics addressed. Product advertising is prohibited in enduring educational materials. If disclosures suggest a potential conflict of interest or potential introduction of bias, the conflict must be resolved prior to the implementation of programming.
6. When sponsorship or grants are received from product manufacturers or vendors, it is the provider's responsibility to ensure the activity complies with the current guidance concerning industry-supported accredited activities, which is consistent with the rules and restrictions set forth in this Handbook. See also Standards 5, 6 and 7.
7. Providers are required to disclose to program participants any current, significant financial support or relationships between the provider, planners or faculty or presenters and commercial groups, as well as similar support or relationships that occurred within the prior 24 months. Commercial support for any aspect of an educational program (e.g., meal service, honoraria, etc.) must be disclosed to learners. However, acknowledgments must be free of product-specific information.

AANP CE Credit

- 1. Contact Hours:** Sixty minutes of learning is the equivalent of 1.0 CH of CE. Contact hours, CEUs and CMEs are not interchangeable or synonymous. The terms CEU and CME should not be used in relation to AANP-approved CE credit.
- 2. Minimum Credit:** AANP CE activity will not provide less than 0.25 CH (15 minutes of learning).
- 3. What Constitutes Credit:** Credit is awarded only for the educational presentation and for time devoted to questions and answers, which allows for open dialogue on the topic. AANP credit is not awarded for time spent on introductory remarks, breaks, product exhibits or post-activity evaluation.
- 4. Experiential Learning Credit:** In addition to didactic presentations, experiential learning can be an excellent means of promoting the acquisition of clinical skills and behaviors. While CE credit will be allocated for didactical portions of activities related to experiential learning, further credit will be allocated only for experiences that are designed to promote the development of specific skills and behaviors. Examples include but are not limited to relevant time spent in guided or supervised suturing and orthopedic assessment. CE credit is not allowed for experiential learning provided to the learner to replicate a patient experience, such as time spent in meditation or performing physical exercise. Experiential activities must be evidence-based to receive CE credit. Providers and sponsors of AANP educational activities may be asked to provide evidence to support individual activities. Individual coaching and mentoring sessions are not considered for CE credit from AANP.
- 5. Credit for Live Activities:** The maximum number of credits will be based on the actual amount of time spent on eligible content. When no breaks are designated, the provider will deduct 15 minutes (0.25 CH) per segment of educational content exceeding four hours, as well as 30 minutes for a meal break for activities that are six or more hours in length.
- 6. Credit for Poster Sessions:** CE credit may be approved for poster sessions held in conjunction with live or virtual activities of at least 1.0 CH in duration. The formula used to determine actual poster session credit awards 0.16 CH per two posters (i.e., five minutes per poster). There should be at least three posters (0.25 CH) submitted for credit. Poster credit applications must include each poster's title, the objective(s) and the presenter(s) name and credentials. Poster presenters are considered faculty and must complete a faculty bio and disclosure.
- 7. Credit for Enduring Print Activities:** Credit for print pieces must be based on the [Mergener formula](#) (preferred) or an alternate formula (i.e., a priori). Additionally, a printable version of the formula is available via the FDA.
- 8. Credit for Webinar, Virtual, On-Demand and Enduring Activities:** Credit for online activities must be based on the actual time it takes an individual to reasonably complete each required component of the activity, plus the time it takes to complete the post-test. If a post-test is used, the hosting organization must determine the passing score for the post-test and the number of questions per session objective. Post-test questions are to be based on the session objectives and may be true/false, multiple choice or narrative, per the organization's choice. There must be one or two questions per session objective. The level of difficulty should be at or above the application level of Bloom's Taxonomy or Depth of Knowledge 3 (DOK3) of Webb's Depth of Knowledge.
- 9. Credit for Posttest Completion:** Although posttest questions provide a final opportunity to reinforce learning for an enduring CE activity, posttest questions are intended as a method to validate participation in an activity, not to be a primary learning tool. Therefore, the amount of credit that can be awarded for time spent in any posttest assessment is limited to no more than 1.5 minutes per question. The amount of credit awarded for posttest completion may represent

up to 25% of the time required to otherwise complete the activity, or 15 minutes per activity, whichever is less. Successful completion by the participant will be determined by the AANP Approved Provider and must have a pass rate of at least 70% but may be more stringent.

- 10. Pharmacology Credit:** Pharmacology content must be identified in the activity description and supported by an activity's clearly defined and measurable objectives. Pharmacology content must be presented by a prescriber (e.g., NP, PA, MD, DO), Pharm.D. pharmacist or pharmacologist.
- 11. Claimed Credit:** Learners should claim credit only for the portion of the activity they attended and successfully completed.
- 12. Retroactive Credit:** AANP credit may not be awarded for any educational activities presented prior to the entity's notification of approved status or during a disciplinary suspension period.
- 13. Withdrawal of Credit:** AANP reserves the right to rescind credit (See Section 11.0: Audits). If credit is rescinded, the provider must contact learners and inform them that the CE is not valid. Examples for which credit may be withdrawn include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - a. Failure of the planners or faculty to disclose relationship with an ineligible entity.
 - b. Failure of the planner or faculty to disclose funding, support or other assistance received for the activity.
 - c. Changes in the educational objectives, content, faculty or methodology.
 - d. Evaluations indicating strong bias in content.
 - e. Promotional activities included in the same space as the CE activity.

Educational Content

- The content of the educational activity must demonstrate an enhanced level of learning and, for clinical topics, promote improvements in the quality of health care established by evidence-based practice.
 - The educational activity must be based on an identified CE need for NPs.
 - The faculty or speakers presenting the accredited activity will possess the appropriate education level and experiential knowledge in the topic presented (See the definition for Faculty or Speaker in Section 3.0 Definitions).
 - Acceptable content for NP CE includes information to assess, diagnose, manage and treat multiple illnesses and conditions in primary care and specialty areas; wellness; disease prevention; health promotion; legislative or policy issues affecting health care and practice; conversational foreign language relevant to health care; and business or practice management. Self-improvement and exercise or stress-reduction technique topics must be supported by measurable objectives that describe how the content will ultimately benefit or improve patient outcomes. Personal finance and life support courses to include BLS, NRP, PALS and ACLS are not acceptable for NP CE credit.
- The educational activity must include measurable participant learning objectives describing the anticipated change in knowledge, skills or attitude.
 - For activities with multiple sessions, units, chapters, etc., the objectives must be specific for each separate portion of the activity.
 - For pharmacology credit, measurable objectives related to the pharmacology content must be included.

- Faculty must disclose any discussion of the off-label, experimental or investigational use of drugs or devices, along with a description of the evidence in support of the use.
- For any potential source of bias or conflict identified, the provider must take measures to ensure content is fair and balanced and provide a notation to describe the measures taken. Options for conflict resolution include:
 - Limit speaker and session to content not including therapeutic options.
 - Add a second speaker, who holds no commercial relationships, to present the content on therapeutic options.
 - Replace the speaker with another qualified individual who is free of commercial relationships.

Required Activity Components

The following components must be considered and identified during the activity's planning phase:

1. Live Activities:
 - a. The basis for educational need.
 - b. Course outline, including objectives, content summary, related time periods and teaching methods.
 - c. The total number of contact hours, including pharmacology hours.
 - d. Name and credentials of each speaker or faculty member.
 - e. Disclosures for each speaker or faculty member and activity planners.
 - f. Statement of COI mitigation, if indicated.
 - g. Course evaluation tool.
 - h. Any commercial or third-party funding or program support.
1. Enduring Independent Study CE Activities:
 - a. All above information is required for traditional didactic activities.
 - b. The method used to determine contact hours (Mergener formula or length of video).
 - c. Posttest questions or appropriate evaluation questions that identify the learner's knowledge gained or intent to change practice as a result of the activity.

Certificate of Completion

1. A copy of the certificate of completion for AANP CE credit must be provided for participants who complete the CE activity.
2. Certificates of completion must not be issued to the participants until the AANP-accredited activity has concluded.
3. The content on the certificate must include:
 - a. Name of the participant.
 - b. Title of the educational activity.
 - c. Location of the educational activity.
 - d. Date of the educational activity.

- e. Name of person coordinating the activity.
- f. Sponsor or provider name.
- g. Total contact hour(s).
- h. Applicable pharmacology hours.
- i. The appropriate approval statement and logo (See Section 10.0: Approval).

Evaluations

1. Evaluations for each individual educational activity must include items to assess:
 - a. Whether learners perceived any commercial bias in the program's content. If a perceived commercial bias is detected, the provider must document the actions taken to prevent a perceived bias in future programs.
 - b. If the content presented is fair and provides a balanced presentation, including multiple aspects of the topic.
 - c. If learning objectives were met.
 - d. If the faculty demonstrated experiential knowledge on the topic.
 - e. For activities presented virtually or digitally or that are enduring, include questions that identify the learner's knowledge gained or their intent to change practice.
1. In addition to evaluating individual educational activities, AANP Approved Providers must have a sufficient and objective plan in place through which the overall CE program is evaluated annually. The policy identifying the method(s) used to evaluate the overall program must include indications of how evaluation outcomes will be used to revise policies and procedures and to improve the future program.

Record Maintenance

For a period of at least six years from the conclusion of the activity, the AANP Approved Provider must maintain complete and accurate copies of the following records for each activity:

- A roster identifying all participants.
- A list of all authors and presenters of enduring activities, as well as objectives for the content presented by each author or presenter.
- The program's content description.
- The attendee or participant evaluation summary.
- The program's promotional and marketing materials.
- The program agenda and materials distributed to participants.
- The credit awarded. Records may be maintained in hard copy or electronic format.
 - When an activity is provided on multiple occasions, records for all iterations must be maintained at least six years after the last presentation.
 - No information regarding NP attendees may be released to third-parties without the learner's permission.

7.0 JOINTLY PROVIDED ACTIVITIES

1. An AANP Approved Provider may **only** provide activities that they design and implement, including those involving joint providership. When jointly providing an activity, AANP Approved Providers must adhere to items in Section 6.0: Criteria and must be able to demonstrate their involvement in all phases of:
 - a. Determining the need for the activity and selecting the faculty.
 - b. Planning, implementing and evaluating the activity.
 - c. Determining and awarding credit.
 - d. Maintaining all records associated with the activity.

If approached by an entity seeking credit for an activity that is already planned or developed, the AANP Approved Provider must refer the entity to an accrediting body, such as AANP. **While AANP Approved Providers may partner with other organizations in the development and implementation of CE activities, they must be involved in all phases of the program planning, development, implementation and evaluation in order for the activity to be considered the work of the AANP Approved Provider.**

2. In the case of a collaboration or partnership in which AANP credit is awarded, the AANP Approved Provider must maintain a copy of the letter of agreement (LOA) as part of the activity file. The agreement must specify the responsibility of the provider to be involved in all phases of the activity, including maintenance of the activity records following the activity. Additionally, all activity material must clearly identify the AANP Approved Provider as a provider or sponsor of the activity, rather than imply that the provider has reviewed or accredited the activity.
3. An ineligible entity **cannot** take the role of the nonaccredited entity in a joint providership relationship.
4. **At no time may the AANP Approved Provider collect monies related to providing AANP credit. For example, learners can pay to participate in an activity, but the AANP Approved Provider may not approve an activity for another entity.**
5. AANP Approved Providers who jointly provide activities will be required annually to submit for review during their anniversary month (i.e., the middle of the accreditation period) examples of AANP-accredited activities provided with each joint provider.
6. AANP Approved Providers who jointly provide activities will be subject to a mid-accreditation review to maintain their approved provider status. All AANP Approved Providers who jointly provide activities must submit all activity information as requested during the approval month on an annual basis. There will be a nonrefundable review fee due at that time.

8.0 APPLICATION SUBMISSION AND REVIEW PROCESS

Effective January 5, 2017, AANP is not accepting applications for new AANP Approved Providers.

9.0 REACCREDITATION

The AANP Approved Provider will be placed on a quarterly reaccreditation schedule based on the provider's approval month. The provider will be notified of their upcoming expiration date via email at the beginning of their designated quarter. The reaccreditation application is due at least six weeks

prior to the end of the provider's approval period. AANP will complete the review by the last day of the provider's designated anniversary date. The approval period for current and reaccreditation applicants is two years, beginning with date indicated in the emailed approval.

You Are Approved:	Your Quarter Is:	Reaccreditation Application Is Due:	Your Anniversary Date Is:
January 1–March 31	First Quarter	February 15	March 31
April 1–June 30	Second Quarter	May 15	June 30
July 1–September 30	Third Quarter	August 15	September 30
August 1–December 31	Fourth Quarter	November 15	December 31

AANP Approved Providers must [complete the online application](#) and upload all required documents every two years as requested. Annually on the joint provider application, AANP Approved Providers who jointly provide activities must upload all jointly provided activities.

- **Reaccreditation Applicant:** Current providers will be emailed reaccreditation information 90 calendar days prior to the end of their approval period. The reaccreditation application is due at least six weeks prior to the end of a current provider's approval period to ensure adequate review time of the application. Any reaccreditation applications received within six weeks of the approval period's expiration are not guaranteed a timely review. Reaccreditation applicants who do not submit their applications within the noted deadline may not be given the opportunity to address or correct errors within their application. This is at the sole discretion of the reaccreditation reviewer. Reaccreditation applicants who provide activities jointly must complete a mid-term review of the jointly provided activities. Review fees are nonrefundable. Examples must be submitted from each entity with which the AANP Approved Provider provides activities. Jointly provided activity information — including all required activity components (live or enduring), such as the certificate of completion, evaluation examples and the results of the evaluation — must be submitted via the online application.
- **Joint Provider Mid-Accreditation Review:** All AANP Approved Providers who jointly provide activities must submit all activity information as requested annually during the approval month. Complete examples of activities provided with each joint provider and accredited with AANP credit must be submitted. This includes all planning, evaluation and posttest (if used) summaries, rosters and CE certificates awarded. There will be a nonrefundable review fee due at that time.

The applicant will be billed a nonrefundable review fee within three business days of the submitted application for reaccreditation. The review process will begin upon payment completion. The applicant will be contacted promptly to request any additional information or necessary clarification for the review process. Applications with significant deficiencies will be returned to the applicant via the application program, along with a list of the identified deficiencies.

After all deficiencies have been corrected, the packet can be resubmitted without incurring additional review fees. The review will be conducted within one month of receiving a complete application.

Notification of Provider Changes: AANP must be notified electronically via CEapps@aanp.org within 30 business days of any significant changes in the accredited approver organization or entity. Examples of significant changes include but are not limited to the administrator, address, NP planner(s) or changes in other provider status. For information regarding a change in ownership, refer to Section 13.0: Provider Status Changes.

10.0 APPROVAL

AANP Approved Provider applicants will be notified by email when their application reviews are complete and approved. **The approval period for reaccreditation applicants is two years, based on the applicant's anniversary date.**

AANP Approved Provider reaccreditation approval fees are due to AANP prior to the expiration of the provider's current term. If the approved provider has not paid the reaccreditation approval fees within 15 days after the expiration of their current approval period, their AANP Approved Provider status will be terminated.

An approval letter and certificate will be sent via mail and email to the designated contact on the application. The emailed document will include:

- The correct statement to be used on websites and activity documentation as an AANP Approved Provider.
- The AANP Approved Provider logo with instructions for use. This logo must be used unaltered and only with the accreditation statement. The size of the logo should be proportional to the accreditation statement. Providers must avoid any implication that AANP is involved in an individual activity in any way (e.g., as co-sponsor, partner, etc.).

Identification of AANP Approved Provider Status

All potential and actual participants of educational activities implemented by an AANP Approved Provider must be notified of the provider's status as an approved provider. The designated logo and statement must be included in all advertisements and activity documents, along with the provider's AANP provider number.

For AANP Approved Provider activities, the following statement must be filled in with the correct information and used as noted in this Handbook:

"(Provider Name) is accredited by the American Association of Nurse Practitioners® as an approved provider of nurse practitioner continuing education. Provider number: XXXXXX. This activity is approved for XX contact hour(s) (which includes XX hour(s) of pharmacology)."

For jointly provided activities, the following statement must be used:

"This activity has been planned and implemented in accordance with the Accreditation Standards of the American Association of Nurse Practitioners® (AANP) through the joint providership of (name of accredited provider) and (name of other entity). The (name of accredited provider that is assuming responsibility of the activity) is accredited by AANP as an approved provider of nurse practitioner continuing education. Provider number: XXXXXX. This activity is approved for XX contact hour(s) (which includes XX hour(s) of pharmacology)."

Logo:



11. AUDITS

AANP Approved Providers are subject to auditing at any time during their two-year approval period. Upon request, the provider will provide AANP a complete list of activities to review from a specified period and a full access login to all online activities for auditing. Within four weeks, the provider will submit all information maintained on the selected activities via the online application portal.

Failure to comply with AANP policies or to maintain appropriate records may result in disciplinary actions (See Section 12.0: Disciplinary Process).

12. DISCIPLINARY PROCESS

AANP reserves the right to review and investigate all complaints or credible evidence of any alleged violation(s) of the AANP Approved Provider Policy Handbook or Standards related to an AANP Approved Provider.

Upon completion of the investigational process, if AANP concludes that a violation has occurred, AANP may – in accordance with Section 12.0: Disciplinary Process – place the provider on probation, rescind specific credit offered by the provider, suspend the provider for a specified amount of time or fully terminate the AANP Approved Provider agreement. Probation and suspension are not prerequisites to termination. AANP may terminate without first implementing other disciplinary steps if it determines, in its discretion, that the severity of the violation warrants immediate termination. AANP may, subject to its discretion, extend any of the time periods for notice as provided for within Section 11.0: Audits.

Investigational Process

AANP must utilize the following process when determining if disciplinary action is appropriate:

1. AANP will review the complaint or alleged violation to determine if it relates to a violation of AANP's Approved Provider Policy Handbook, standards or professionalism while providing AANP-accredited activities.
 - a. If the complaint or alleged violation does not relate to the provider's compliance with AANP's Approved Provider Policy Handbook, standards or professionalism or if AANP does not qualify the complaint or alleged violation as valid, the investigational process will then be closed and no further action will ensue. A statement by AANP with rationale for the decision will be attached to the complaint or alleged violation and filed in the provider's electronic file. AANP shall notify the provider, via email with delivery and read receipt enabled, about the complaint or alleged violation investigated.
 - b. If AANP determines that the complaint or alleged violation does relate to the provider's compliance with AANP's Approved Provider Policy Handbook, standards or professionalism, then AANP will notify the provider via email with delivery and read receipt enabled. This notice of complaint will specify the allegation(s) and may include a request for additional clarification, documents or data from the provider for investigational purposes. The complainant will be notified – via email with delivery and read receipt enabled – of basic information about the investigation and a timeline for completing the investigation.

The provider must comply with any emailed request for information from AANP and participate in a review of any complaint or alleged violation of AANP's Approved Provider Policy Handbook. Violations may include but are not limited to:

- Failure to meet AANP Standards and Policies.
 - Violation of any local, state or federal laws or regulations that affect the provider's ability to maintain standards.
 - Misrepresentation or misuse of AANP accreditation logos and statements provided by AANP.
 - Multiple written complaints by consumers or others or investigations regarding the provider.
 - Dishonest or unethical conduct or conduct reflecting unfavorably on AANP's professional image.
2. The provider has 10 business days to respond via email to ceapps@aanp.org with delivery and read receipt enabled. In this initial response, the provider shall either admit to the allegations with intentions to comply with the investigation process or deny the allegations with intentions to submit documentation or evidence to support the denial. Failure to reply to the allegations within the 10-business-day period may lead to automatic termination of the provider in the program. The provider will then be notified via certified mail that a change of status to termination has occurred due to noncompliance with an AANP disciplinary investigation request.
 3. If the provider denies the complaint allegations, a 15-business-day period will be granted for the provider to supply the documentation or evidence to support the rebuttal via email to ceapps@aanp.org with delivery and read receipt enabled. AANP has 15 days from the date of receipt to review the denial documentation and issue a response or decision. A formal hearing will not be held. The provider will be promptly notified of AANP's response and decision via certified mail.

Disciplinary Procedure

If — after a review or investigation of the complaint, allegation or credible evidence — AANP determines probation, suspension or termination must be imposed, AANP must take the following actions to provide due process to the provider:

1. **Probationary Status:** If the provider is found to be noncompliant with AANP Standards and Policies, but in consideration of such Standards and Policies AANP deems the offense to be minor, the provider will be placed on probation for a period of no fewer than 90 calendar days and no longer than one year. Requests for a shorter probation period will not be considered. While on probation, AANP Approved Provider status is maintained, and the provider may continue to provide CE activities and award AANP credit. During this time the provider must demonstrate a correction of the error(s) through compliance with random documentation and audit requests during the probationary time period, made at AANP's discretion.

Upon completion of the probation period, the provider's probationary status shall be evaluated and determined as follows:

- a. **Successful Completion of Probation:** The provider has complied with all requests for information, has demonstrated the correction of the identified error(s) that induced probation, has not committed additional policy violations during the probationary period and has met the time agreement for the probation.

- b. Failed Probation:** The provider has been delinquent with or has failed to respond to requests for information, has not demonstrated the correction of the identified error(s) that induced probation during the specified probation period or has had additional policy violations during the probationary period. A failed probation will lead to automatic termination from the AANP Approved Provider program.
 - c. Repeat Offense:** The provider completes a mandated probation and has another complaint or violation of AANP Approved Provider Policy during the two-year approval period. In this situation, the provider will automatically be moved to suspension or termination status as deemed appropriate by AANP based on the offense.
- 2. Suspended Status:** If the provider is determined to be noncompliant with AANP Standards and Policies, and in consideration of such Standards and Policies AANP deems the offense to be a moderate violation that does not meet the standards for automatic termination, the provider will be placed on suspension for 90 calendar days. During this time, the provider must demonstrate correction of the error(s) through compliance with random documentation and audit requests during the suspension period at the discretion of AANP. The provider will be notified of suspension via certified mail with all conditions specified. **Suspended providers must immediately cease:**
- Offering contact hours.
 - Referring to themselves as an AANP Approved Provider in any way.
 - Using the AANP Approved Provider logo and statement.

The suspended provider will be removed from all AANP listings on AANP webpages and other documentation during this period. In addition, the following statement must also appear on all activity marketing and webpages that the provider utilizes to display CE offerings:

“AANP has placed (Approved Provider) in a Suspended Status due to failure to comply with AANP Standards and Policies as an Approved Provider. This suspension is active until (date). No AANP credit may be awarded by this Provider until their Approved Provider status is reinstated by AANP.”

The provider must demonstrate correction of the error(s) at the discretion of AANP through compliance with documentation and audit requests during the 90-calendar day suspension period. The provider's suspension status shall be evaluated and determined as follows:

- a. Successful Completion of Suspension:** The provider has complied with all requests for information and specified conditions of suspension, has demonstrated the correction of the identified error(s) that induced suspension, has refrained from additional policy violations during the suspension period, has met the 90-day suspension timeframe and has paid the post-suspension reinstatement fee.
- b. Failed Suspension:** The provider has been uncooperative with or has failed to respond to requests for information, has not complied with the specified conditions of suspension, has not demonstrated the correction of the identified error(s) that induced the suspension period, has had additional policy violations during the suspension period or has failed to pay the post-suspension reinstatement fee. Noncompliance with any of the suspension rules will lead to automatic termination from the AANP Approved Provider program.
- c. Repeat Offense:** The provider has successfully completed one mandated suspension but subsequently violated AANP's Approved Provider Policy and Standards during their two-year approval period, as determined through the AANP complaint investigation process. In this situation, the provider will automatically be terminated from the program.

3. Termination: If the provider is found to be noncompliant with AANP Standards and Policies, has a repeat violation after a completed suspension or the offense is deemed by AANP to be major, in consideration of AANP Standards and Policies, the provider will be fully terminated from the program. The provider will be notified of termination via certified mail. **Terminated providers must immediately cease:**

- Offering contact hours.
- Referring to themselves as an AANP Approved Provider in any way.
- Using the AANP Approved Provider logo and statement.

The terminated provider will be removed from all AANP listings on AANP webpages and other documentation. Providers whose approval status has been removed may not reapply as an AANP Approved Provider. They must provide a detailed transition of services to maintain continuity of their programs that have AANP credit (See Section 13.0: Provider Status Changes, Transition of Services). There will be no prorated refund for a terminated provider.

Appeal Process

AANP Approved Providers may appeal probation, suspension or termination in writing via certified mail, postmarked within 10 business days of the notification of status change. The appeal will not include a hearing. AANP will only review the appeal on the grounds for appeal identified by the provider in the notice received. AANP may, in its discretion, request that the provider provide additional information, which may increase AANP's time period for response.

AANP will have 10 business days from the receipt of the appeal to accept or deny the appeal and provide supporting rationale for the decision. AANP will review the appeal as to: (1) material errors of fact or (2) failure of an AANP Approved Provider to apply or follow AANP published criteria, policies or procedures. The provider will be notified via certified mail of the decision. If reinstated, the provider's original anniversary dates remain in place and all reports and reaccreditations will remain on the same schedule.

AANP's decision upon completion of an appeals process is final and binding upon the provider.

13.0 PROVIDER STATUS CHANGES

Change in Ownership

If a current AANP Approved Provider undergoes a corporate change through a merger, acquisition or other change in ownership, the AANP Approved Provider status does not automatically transfer to the new owner. Prior to the change, AANP must be made aware of the change in ownership a minimum of 45 business days in advance. At the time of the transition, AANP will withdraw the AANP Approved Provider status, and any previously accredited activities with AANP CE credit will cease to be accredited.

Voluntary Withdrawal of AANP Approved Provider Status

Should the AANP Approved Provider chose to withdraw their provider status, a written notice must be sent to AANP at least 45 calendar days prior to the desired termination date. Notifications of voluntary withdrawal of AANP Approved Provider status must be sent to ceapps@aanp.org with confirmation receipt enabled — or by standard mail, either certified or with signature required, to the following address.

American Association of Nurse Practitioners
ATTN: Education Department
5901 Vega Ave. Suite 200
Austin, TX 78735

Include in the written notification:

- The effective date of the change.
- The reason for this change.
- A transition of service plan for activities offered with AANP credit.

On or before the date of the change, the provider must discontinue using the AANP Approved Provider statements of approval, stop providing AANP credit for all activities and remove AANP Approved Provider logos from all webpages and activity documentation.

Transition of Services

Discontinuation of services applies to voluntary suspension, enforced suspension and termination of AANP Approved Provider status. Providers must send a written transition plan that includes:

- A complete list of all approved activities for the last six years with AANP credit. This includes expired activities, current activities and activities in planning.
- A full explanation of how these activities will be canceled (i.e., removal of AANP credit).
- A detailed explanation of how participants will be notified of the removal of AANP credit for all current activities.
- An explanation of how participants can obtain their records for completed activities after the end date of the provider's status. This must include contact information and how long participants have access to these records.

Notification of Change

AANP Approved Providers must notify AANP immediately if there are any changes within the organization that affects their ability to provide CE under AANP Standards and Policies. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Address change.
- Contact change, such as name, email, phone number or fax number.
- Change in staff (i.e., the NP planner).
- Change in type of activities being offered.
- Any change that affects the provider's ability to maintain AANP CE Standards and adhere to AANP Policies.
- Any media coverage that has an adverse impact related to CE.
- Voluntary withdrawal as an AANP Approved Provider.

Send notifications of change to ceapps@aanp.org with confirmation receipt enabled or send standard mail as certified or signature required to:

American Association of Nurse Practitioners
ATTN: Education Department
5901 Vega Ave. Suite 200
Austin, TX 78735



American Association of NURSE PRACTITIONERS®



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NURSE PRACTITIONERS®