

AANP

American Association of
NURSE PRACTITIONERS®

2020

**AANP Approved Provider
Policy Handbook v.2020.2**

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

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 organizations 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 the activities developed by other entities for AANP credit.

2.0 PURPOSE

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

3.0 DEFINITIONS

The following terms are AANP's definitions related to accreditation:

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

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

Activity Sponsor/Provider: The activity sponsor/provider is the institution or organization requesting AANP accreditation for their activity. A commercial interest may not serve as a sponsor or provider of an AANP accredited activity. When activities receive commercial or other external funding, the grantor is designated as the "funder" or "supporter", not the sponsor/provider.

Commercial Interest: AANP aligns with the ACCME definition, of a commercial interest which is any entity producing, marketing, re-selling, or distributing health care goods or services consumed by, or used on, patients. **A commercial interest is not eligible for AANP accreditation and may in no manner interfere with a CE activity.** This definition does not include most non-profit, government organizations, or non-health care organizations. Clinical service providers who provide services directly to patients do not fall within AANP's definition of commercial interests. Organizations. However, non-profit organizations that advocate for commercial interests are not eligible for AANP accreditation.

Commercial Support: Monetary or in-kind contribution given by a commercial interest for the support of an education activity or project.

Conflict of Interest: Occurs when an individual or entity can derive personal or financial benefit from their ability to control CE activity content. AANP considers financial relationships (in the immediately preceding twelve (12) months) to create conflicts of interest in CE when individuals have both the opportunity to influence the content of a CE activity and have a financial relationship with a commercial interest. AANP requires anyone able to influence or control the CE content to disclose any financial relationships with commercial interest of their own and/or their spouse/partner in the preceding twelve (12) months. Examples of someone's ability to influence or control CE content include but are not limited to using commercial logos, promoting their company, books, materials in their presentation. See definition of *Relevant Financial Relationship(s)* for additional information.

Continuing Education (CE) Series: May consist of either 1) a multi-component activity where all pieces build on one another or are specific to a single disease process; or 2) an activity that is repeated but remains the same in content for each offering.

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

Enduring Materials: Enduring materials are activities that “persist” and are accessible over an extended period, allowing for independent study.

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

Independent Peer Review: A documented critical evaluation performed by a peer that 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, as well other requirements such as 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 a commercial interest. 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*). **A commercial interest cannot take the role of the nonaccredited entity in a joint providership relationship.**

NP CE and CE Content: A systematic and structured accredited educational process designed to enhance the knowledge and skills of NPs to influence professional performance and evidence-based practice. NP CE goes beyond basic NP academic education and assists NPs with the continuation of their education. Examples of acceptable content for NP CE include, but are not limited to: information to manage and treat multiple illnesses and conditions in primary care and specialty areas; wellness; prevention; health promotion; legislative/policy issues affecting healthcare and practice; conversational foreign language relevant to healthcare; and business/practice management. Self-improvement and exercise or stress reduction technique-

topics must be supported by measurable objectives which 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. CE excludes activities designed for promotion of specific products, services, or devices. **No promotional activities may occur during CE events. This includes distribution of product brochures or product information in conjunction with handouts. No slides or handouts developed by a commercial interest may be used during presentations.**

Pharmacology Content: Pharmacology CE is designed to enhance the learner's ability to prescribe and/or monitor patients on pharmacotherapy. It includes topics such as pharmacokinetics and clinical applications of drugs. An activity's objectives and detailed content must support pharmacology credit. Incidental mention of drugs or a pharmacological treatment does not qualify for pharmacology credit.

Provider Statement: The standard statement issued by AANP that must appear on all AANP Approved Provider CE activities and associated materials (See *Section 10.0: Approval*).

Relevant Financial Relationship(s): Aligns with ACCME's definition of a relevant financial relationship. This occurs when an individual benefits by receiving any amount of compensation that creates a conflict of interest and that occurred in the twelve-month period preceding the time that the individual accepted a role influencing or controlling the content of an AANP accredited activity. Benefits from the financial relationship(s) include, but are not limited to, 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 benefit. These financial benefits are usually associated with roles such as employment, management positions, independent contractors (including contracted research), consulting, speaking and teaching, advisory committee or review panel participation, board membership, and other activities from which remuneration is received, or expected.

Speakers' Bureau: Promotional speaking for a pharmaceutical or medical device company to promote the company's product(s). This type of speaking is considered marketing by the Food and Drug Administration and does not constitute accredited CE. The presentation consists of using materials created/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 commercial interest influence and must be fair and balanced without promotion of specific products/services.

Supporter: See definitions for *Commercial Interest*, *Commercial Support*, and *Activity Sponsor/Provider* on pg. 3.

4.0 AANP ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

AANP Accreditation Standards are consistent with guidance from the ACCME, FDA, OIG, and PhRMA.

Standard 1: Independence

1.1 CE providers must ensure that all decisions are made completely free of commercial interest, control, or influence. The following items and related decisions will receive an elevated amount of scrutiny: 1) the determination of educational need; 2) the determination of objectives; 3)

selection of individuals or organizations which will be in a position to control or influence the content (e.g., faculty, content experts, activity chair, and planners); 4) content development; 5) selection of educational method/content delivery; and 6) evaluation of the activity

- 1.2 The use of an educational activity and/or material developed by a commercial interest is prohibited.
- 1.3 A commercial interest cannot serve as a partner in a joint provider relationship.
- 1.4 A commercial interest is not eligible for AANP accreditation.

Standard 2: Fair and Balanced Content

- 2.1 All activities bearing AANP accreditation must be designed and implemented to provide a fair and balanced coverage of the topic.
- 2.2 The educational activity must not promote the specific business interest of a commercial interest.
- 2.3 Generic names must be used throughout the activity. Trade names may be used in parentheses with the generic name. Any planned discussion of off label, experimental, or investigational use of drugs or devices must be disclosed; this information must be repeated at the time the actual discussion occurs within the activity.
- 2.4 Activity evaluations must include measurement of any perceived commercial or other bias related to the educational activity. Activity evaluations must include measurement of whether the content presented is fair and balanced.

Standard 3: Disclosure Related to Potential Conflict of Interest

- 3.1 Any individual who is in a position to have influence or control of the educational content must disclose any relevant financial relationships (see definition of *Relevant Financial Relationships* on pg. 5) prior to the approval of AANP CE credit.
- 3.2 Activity Participants/learners must be informed of relevant financial relationships or in the absence of any financial relationship informed that none exists.

Standard 4: Resolution Related to Conflict of Interest

- 4.1 CE providers must have a mechanism in place to identify and appropriately resolve all conflicts of interest prior to the implementation of the educational activity.
- 4.2 CE providers must document that anyone that is in a position to have control of the education activity content has disclosed all relevant financial relationships to the CE provider prior to the implementation of the education activity.
- 4.3 Any individual that is in a position to control the content of the education activity who refuses or fails to disclose relevant financial relationships will be disqualified and a subsequent replacement must be identified.

Standard 5: Appropriate Use of Commercial Support

- 5.1 CE providers must make all decisions regarding the use and disbursement of commercial support independently, free from commercial influence.
- 5.2 A written, signed agreement detailing the terms, conditions, and purposes of the commercial support, which adheres strictly to the rules and restrictions governing commercial support as set forth in this Handbook, must exist between the commercial supporter and the CE provider, as well as between any additional educational partners and the CE provider, if applicable.

- 5.3 CE providers must have policies and procedures in place governing the appropriate use and disbursement of commercial support to include honoraria and reimbursement of out of pocket expenses for planners, faculty, co-providers, and partners, if applicable.
- 5.4 Social events or meals must be conducted without competing with or taking precedence over the education events.

Standard 6: Acknowledgment of Commercial Support

- 6.1 All commercial support or other support (financial or in-kind) must be acknowledged to the learners prior to education content delivery.
- 6.2 Acknowledgement 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 (e.g., *This educational activity may receive support through an educational grant from a commercial interest*). Appropriate acknowledgement of any commercial support received will be provided at the time of the education activity, if applicable.

Standard 7: Separation from Promotion

- 7.1 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.
- 7.2 Product promotion or product-specific advertisement or marketing of any type is prohibited in the same space before, during, or after a CE activity.
- 7.3 Education content developed by a commercial interest may NOT be used during a CE activity. This includes distribution of product brochures or product information in conjunction with handouts.
- 7.4 Use of a commercial interest or commercial supporter's logo on CE activity materials is prohibited.

5.0 ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

The following eligibility requirements must be met for Approved Provider reaccreditation consideration:

1. 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*).
2. The applicant must sign and acknowledge understanding and intention to abide by the AANP Approved Provider Policy Handbook and Accreditation Standards.
3. At least one Masters or Doctorally-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 submission of a curriculum vitae.
4. 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 NPCE.
5. The provider must demonstrate familiarity with the guidance provided by the FDA, OIG, PhRMA, and ACCME on industry-supported, accredited activities.

6. The reaccreditation applicant with prior disciplinary action (not to include termination) in the previous approval period must have met all re-instatement criteria as specified for application consideration (see *Section 11.0: Audits*)

6.0 Approved Provider 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/Influence

AANP recognizes the contribution of commercial funding in supporting professional continuing education, including NP CE. However, it is crucial that commercial support have no influence on the determination of specific program need, development of objectives, specification of content, selection of faculty, or otherwise can 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 commercial interest entities. Each provider must have a process in place, which is consistent with the rules and restrictions set forth in this Handbook and reviewed with each reaccreditation, through which to identify and resolve any potential conflict of interest 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 incidental mention of broad classes of drugs.
3. Employees of commercial interests may NOT serve as faculty/speaker or planner if the content the employee controls relates to the business lines and/or products of the commercial interest employer. See also definition of Faculty/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 a fair and balanced coverage of all topics addressed. Product advertising is prohibited in enduring educational materials. If disclosures suggest potential conflict of interest and/or potential introduction of bias, the conflict must be resolved prior to implementation of programming.
6. When sponsorship/grants are received from product manufacturers or vendors, it is the provider's responsibility to ensure that 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, & 7.
7. Providers are required to disclose to program participants any current or prior twelve (12) months significant financial support or relationships between the provider, planner(s), or faculty/presenter(s) and commercial groups. Commercial support for any aspect of an educational program (meal service, honoraria, etc.) must be disclosed to learners. However, acknowledgements must be free of product-specific information.

AANP CE Credit

1. **Contact Hours:** The AANP contact hour of CE (1.0 CH) is the equivalent to sixty (60) minutes of learning. Contact hours and continuing education units (CEUs) are not interchangeable or synonymous; the term “CEU” should not be used in relation to AANP-approved CE credit.
2. **Minimum credit:** AANP CE activity will not provide less than 0.25 contact hours (fifteen (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 in introductory remarks, breaks, product exhibits, or post activity evaluation.
4. **Experiential Learning Credit:** In addition to didactic presentation, experiential learning can be an excellent means of promoting 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 experience which is designed to promote the development of specific skills and behaviors. Examples include, but are not limited to, relevant time spent in guided/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 evidenced based to receive CE credit. Providers and sponsors of AANP educational activities may be asked provide evidence to support individual activities upon request. Individual coaching and mentoring sessions are not considered for CE credit by 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 fifteen (15) minutes (0.25 CHs) per segment of educational content exceeding four (4) hours. Live webinars are considered similar to enduring activities, requiring a post-test separate from the evaluation to be completed successfully.
6. **Credit for poster sessions:** CE credit may be approved for poster sessions held in conjunction with “live” activities of at least one (1) contact hour in duration. The formula used to determine actual poster session credit awards 0.1 contact hour per two (2) posters (i.e., 3 minutes/poster).
7. **Credit for print enduring:** Credit for print-pieces must be based on the Mergener formula (preferred), or an alternate formula (i.e., *a priori*). A Mergener formula calculator is located online at <http://touchcalc.com/calculators/mergener>.
8. **Credit for online enduring:** 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 to complete the post-test.
9. **Credit for post-test completion:** Although post-test questions provide a final opportunity to reinforce learning for an enduring CE activity, post-test 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 post-test assessment is limited to no more than one and one half (1.5) minutes per question. The amount of credit awarded for post-test completion should represent no more than twenty-five (25) % of the time required to otherwise complete the activity or fifteen (15) minutes per activity, whichever is less.
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) or Pharm.D., or pharmacist/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 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*). In the event that credit is rescinded, the provider must contact learners to inform them that the specific CE is not valid. Examples for which credit may be withdrawn include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Failure of the planners or faculty to disclose relationship with a commercial 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

1. The content of the educational activity must demonstrate an enhanced level of learning and, in clinical topics, promote improvements in the quality of healthcare established by evidence-based practice.
 - a. The educational activity must be based on an identified CE need for nurse practitioners.
 - b. Faculty/speaker presenting the accredited activity will possess the appropriate education level and experiential knowledge in the topic presented (see definition for *Faculty/Speaker* on pg. 4).
 - c. Examples of acceptable content for NP CE includes information to assess, diagnose, manage, and treat multiple illnesses and conditions in primary care and specialty areas; wellness; prevention; health promotion; legislative/policy issues affecting healthcare and practice; conversational foreign language relevant to healthcare; and business/practice management. Self-improvement and exercise or stress reduction technique-topics must be supported by measurable objectives which 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.
2. The educational activity must include measurable participant learning objectives describing anticipated change in knowledge, skills, or attitude.
 - a. For activities with multiple sessions, units, chapters, etc., the objectives must be specific for each separate portion of the activity.
 - b. For pharmacology credit, measurable objectives related to the pharmacology content must be included.
3. Faculty must disclose any discussion of off-label, experimental, or investigational use of drugs or device, along with a description of the evidence in support of the use.
4. For any potential source of bias or conflict identified, the provider must take measures to ensure that content is fair and balanced and provide a notation to describe the measures taken. Options for conflict resolution include:
 - a. Limit speaker and session to content not including therapeutic options.
 - b. Add a second speaker (without any commercial relationships) to present the content on therapeutic options.
 - c. 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. Total number of contact hours (including pharmacology hours)
 - d. Name and credentials of each speaker/faculty member
 - e. Disclosures for each speaker/faculty member and activity planner(s)
 - f. Statement of COI resolution, if indicated
 - g. Course evaluations tool
 - h. Any commercial or third-party funding/programs support
2. Enduring/Independent Study CE Activities:
 - a. Include all above information required for didactic/traditional activities
 - b. Method used to determine contact hours (Mergener formula or length of video)
 - c. Post-test questions

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/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 education activity must include:
 - a. An item to assess whether learners perceived any commercial bias in the program's content. If perceived commercial bias is detected, the provider must document actions taken to prevent perceived bias in future programs.
 - b. An item to assess if the content presented is fair and provides a balanced presentation including multiple aspects of the topic.
 - c. If learning objectives were met.
 - d. Faculty experiential knowledge on the topic.
2. In addition to evaluating individual educational activities, approved providers must have a sufficient and objective plan in place through which the overall CE program is evaluated, at

least annually. The policy identifying the method(s) used to evaluate the overall program must include indications of how evaluation outcome will be used to revise policies and procedures and to improve the future program.

Record Maintenance

For a period of at least six (6) years from the conclusion of the activity, the Provider must maintain complete and accurate copies of the following records for each activity: (a) A roster identifying all participants; (b) A list of all authors and presenters, and objectives for the content presented by each author/presenter; (c) The program content description; (d) The attendee/participant evaluation summary; (e) The program's promotional and marketing materials; (f) The program agenda and materials distributed to participants; and (g) Credit awarded. Records may be maintained in hard copy or electronic format.

- a. When an activity is provided on multiple occasions, records for all iterations must be maintained at least six (6) years after the last presentation.
- b. 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, implementation, and evaluation of the activity.
 - c. determining and awarding credit; and
 - d. maintaining all records associated with the activity.
2. If approached by an entity seeking credit for an activity that is already planned and/or developed, the Provider must refer the entity to an accrediting body, such as AANP. **While AANP Approved Providers may partner with other organizations in 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 Approved Provider.**
3. In the case of a collaboration or partnership in which AANP credit is awarded, the 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 Provider as a provider/sponsor of the activity, rather than imply that the Provider has reviewed and/or accredited the activity.
4. A commercial interest **cannot** take the role of the nonaccredited entity in a joint providership relationship.
5. **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 Approved Provider may not approve an activity for another entity.**
6. Approved Providers who jointly provide activities will be required to submit all jointly provided activities they have accredited with AANP credit annually for review during their anniversary month. (The middle of the accreditation period)
7. Approved Providers who jointly provide activities will be subject to a mid-accreditation review to maintain their approved provider status. All 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 non-refundable review due at that time.

8.0 APPLICATION SUBMISSION AND REVIEW PROCESS

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

9.0 REACCREDITATION

The Approved Provider will be placed on a quarterly reaccreditation schedule based on the Provider's approval month. The Provider will be notified via email at the beginning of their designated quarter of the Provider's upcoming expiration. The reaccreditation application is due at least six (6) 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/reaccreditation applicants is two (2) years, beginning with date of emailed approval.**

You are Approved:	Your Quarter is:	Reaccreditation Application Due:	Your Anniversary Date:
January 1 – March 31	1 st Quarter	February 15	March 31
April 1 – June 30	2 nd Quarter	May 15	June 30
July 1 – September 30	3 rd Quarter	August 15	September 30
August 1 – December 31	4 th Quarter	November 15	December 31

Approved Providers must complete the online application at <https://www.aanp.org/education/ce-accrreditation> and upload all required documents every two years as requested. Approved Providers who jointly provide activities must upload all jointly provided activities to the Joint Providers application annually:

1. **Reaccreditation Applicant:** Current Providers will be emailed reaccreditation information ninety (90) calendar days prior to the end of their approval period. The reaccreditation application is due at least six (6) weeks prior to the end of a Current Provider's approval period to ensure adequate review time of the application. Any reaccreditation applications that are received within the six (6) week period 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, 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 non-refundable. ALL jointly provided activity information, including all required activity components (Live or enduring) such as certificate of completion, evaluation examples, and results of the evaluation, must be submitted via the online application.
2. **Joint Provider Mid Accreditation Review:** All 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 non-refundable review fee due at that time.

The applicant will be billed a nonrefundable review fee within three (3) business days of the submitted application for reaccreditation. The review process will begin upon completed

payment. The applicant will be contacted promptly to provide 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.

Once all deficiencies have been corrected, the packet can be submitted once more without incurring additional review fees. The review will be completed within one month of receipt of a complete application.

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

10.0 APPROVAL

Approved Provider applicants will be notified by email when their application reviews are complete and approved. **The approval period for reaccreditation applicants is two (2) years**, based on the applicant's anniversary date.

Approved Provider reaccreditation approval fees are due to AANP prior to the expiration of their 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 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 (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 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 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).”

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/or a full access login to all online activities for auditing. The Provider will submit all information maintained on the select activities via email to CEApps@aanp.org within four (4) weeks.

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

12.0 DISCIPLINARY PROCESS

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

If AANP can conclude upon completion of the investigational process 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 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:

- I. 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 and/or 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 with basic information about the investigation and 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/regulations that affects the Provider's ability to maintain Standards
 - Misrepresentation and/or misuse of AANP accreditation logos and statements provided by AANP
 - Multiple written complaints by consumers/others or investigations regarding the Provider
 - Dishonest or unethical conduct or conduct reflecting unfavorably on AANP's professional image.
- II. The Provider has ten (10) business days to respond via email with delivery and read receipt enabled to ceapps@aanp.org. 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-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.
 - III. If the Provider denies the complaint allegations, a 15 business day period will be provided for the Provider to supply the documentation or evidence to support the rebuttal via email with delivery and read receipt enabled to ceapps@aanp.org. AANP has 15 days from the date of receipt to review the denial documentation and issue a response and/or decision. A formal hearing will not be held. The Provider will be promptly notified of AANP's response/decision via certified mail.

Disciplinary Procedure

If, after 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:

- I. **Probationary Status:** if the Provider is found to be noncompliant with AANP Standards and Policies, but the offense is deemed, in consideration of such Standards and Policies, minor by AANP, the Provider will be placed on probation for a period of no less than 90 calendar-days and no more than 1 year. Requests for a shorter probation period will not be considered. While on probation, AANP Provider status is maintained and the Provider may continue to provide CE activities and award AANP credit. During this time the Provider must demonstrate correction of the error(s) through compliance with random documentation and/or 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, and/or has had additional policy violations during the probationary period. A failed probation will lead to automatic termination from the Approved Provider program.
 - c. Repeat offense The Provider completes a mandated probation and has another complaint/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.
- II. **Suspended Status:** if the Provider is determined noncompliant with AANP Standards and Policies and the offense is deemed, in consideration of such Standards and Policies, a moderate violation by AANP that does not meet the standards for automatic termination, the Provider will be placed on suspension for ninety (90) calendar days. During this time, the Provider must demonstrate correction of the error(s) through compliance with random documentation and/or 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 the AANP webpages and other documentation during this period. In addition, the following statement must also appear on all activity marketing and/or 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”.

During this time, the Provider must demonstrate correction of the error(s) through compliance with documentation and/or audit requests during the ninety (90) calendar day suspension period at the discretion of AANP. 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, and/or has failed to pay the post-suspension reinstatement fee. Noncompliance with any of the suspension rules will lead to automatic termination from the Provider program.
 - c. Repeat offense: The Provider has successfully completed one mandated suspension but has violated AANP’s Approved Provider Policy/Standards once more during their two-year approval period through the AANP complaint investigation process. In this situation, the Provider will automatically be terminated from the program.
- III. **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 major, in consideration of AANP Standards and Policies by AANP, 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/statement**

The terminated Provider will be removed from all AANP listings on the AANP webpages and other documentation. Providers whose approval status has been removed may not re-apply 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* on pg. 22). There will be no pro-rated refund for a terminated Provider.

Appeal Process

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 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 Providers 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 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 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.

American Association of Nurse Practitioners
ATTN: Education Department
5901 Vega Ave. Suite200
Austin, TX 78735

Include in the written notification:

- 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 must remove AANP 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 which includes:

- A complete list of all approved activities for the last 6 years with AANP credit. This includes expired activities, current activities, and activities in planning.
- Full explanation of how these activities will be cancelled (removal of AANP credit).

- Detailed explanation of how participants will be notified of removal of AANP credit for all current activities.
- 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

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 – name, email, phone, fax
- Change in staff – specifically, 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. Suite200
Austin, TX 78735