

Continuing Competency FAQ's



How Can I Find Out More About Continuing Competency?

- Join our Listserv at:
<http://tinyurl.com/ye4pyhp>
- Talk to your employer
- Attend the town meetings
- Frequent updates on our website
- Check out our rules in progress:
<http://tinyurl.com/29dwbky>



Washington State Department of Health
Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission
310 Israel Rd SE, P.O. Box 47864
Olympia, Washington, 98504-7864
www.doh.wa.gov/nursing



**Public Health – Always Working for
a Safer and Healthier Washington**

Frequently Asked Questions

When will the program begin?

- Starting on January 1, 2011 all licensed nurses must begin documenting continuing competency.

Who needs to participate in continuing competency?

- All nurses in Washington State must comply.

What do I need to do to comply?

- Collect documentation of 531 hours of active nursing practice within the previous 36-month review period.
- Keep documentation to show completion of 45 hours of continuing education.
- Self Assessment and reflection (for personal use only)
- Attest you have met continuing competency requirements. You must do this every three years, when you submit your renewal.

What do I do with the documents I create?

Keep documents in a safe, readily accessible location. You may choose to keep a notebook with hard copies or a computer-based file with electronic documents. If you are selected for audit by the Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission, you will need to provide this documentation in a timely manner.

If I am audited, what do I send to NCQAC?

- Verification you have actively practiced at least 531 hours in the past 36 months. This can be in a paid and/or unpaid position.
- Documents verifying completion of 45 hours of continuing nursing education.

What happens if I don't meet the active practice requirement?

- Nurses who have not practiced for 36 months or more, or who have not met the 531 hour requirement in 36 months, may apply for *Inactive* license status. You may need to complete a commission-approved nurse refresher course or other commission-approved remediation prior to applying for an active license and returning to practice from inactive status

What happens if I don't comply?

- The commission will first offer technical assistance for nurses found to be non-compliant. Nurses who continue to fail to meet the program's requirement will be subject to disciplinary action. This includes fines, completion of remedial activities and/or denial of re-licensure.

What will the program cost?

- Each nurse is responsible for all costs related to compliance. This includes attending continuing education courses and satisfying certification requirements.

Who will be audited?

- The unit responsible for monitoring compliance will develop a system for random audits for all nurses and routine audits for nurses in the NCQAC discipline system. We will initiate the audit process with a request to provide documentation and evidence of compliance. We will start the audit process three years from January 1, 2011.

What if I'm not working?

- Volunteer
- Provide home care for a family member
- Flu shot clinics
- Parish nurse
- Community clinic

What counts for continuing education?

- Certifying process
- Authoring or publishing
- Health care presentations
- Independent study or research
- Nursing research project