

California law requires all LCSW, LMFT, LPCC and LEP licensees to complete continuing education (CE) prior to each active status license renewal. There are certain legal requirements that CE courses must meet in order to be accepted, as well as retention requirements for proof of completion. This document will provide you with all of the information you need to be in compliance with your CE requirements.

Please read carefully! Failure to comply with all CE requirements may result in a citation and fine and/or disciplinary action against your license.

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OVERALL HOURS REQUIRED FOR RENEWAL

You are required to complete a minimum of 36 hours of CE prior to each and every renewal. This includes the first renewal of your initial license. Please note that a newly licensed LEP may be required to complete 37 hours in total due to specific one-time course requirements (see the [CE Summary Chart for Licensees](#)).

All CE must be completed during your renewal period (the period between your license's prior expiration date (or initial issuance date), and the date your renewal application is submitted) in order to count. You must have your CE completed **BEFORE** submitting your renewal application as you will be required to certify completion. Courses may be credited to only one renewal period, and cannot be counted twice.

MANDATORY COURSES

Law and Ethics

ALL licensees are required to complete at least six (6) hours of CE in Law and Ethics during the period between your license's prior expiration date (or initial issuance date), and the date your renewal application is submitted as **a condition of each and every renewal**. These hours count toward the total 36-hour requirement.

One-Time Courses

Each license type has additional, **one-time** mandatory courses that must be completed. For a list of one-time mandatory courses, see the [CE Summary Chart for Licensees](#).

If these courses were taken during the period between your license's prior expiration date (or initial issuance date), and the date your renewal application is submitted, a qualifying course will count toward your overall CE requirement. If these courses were taken prior to that time period, qualifying course will count toward your one-time coursework requirement, but will not count toward your 36 hours of CE.

COURSE TYPES AND CONTENT

The Board does not approve specific CE courses, and has no information about individual courses offered by providers.

Providers are required to ensure that the content of a course is relevant to the scope of practice for your license. Self-improvement courses and courses designed for non-practitioners are not acceptable.

To ensure that a course will count toward your CE requirements, you must ensure the provider is acceptable and maintain records of course completion.

Licensees may obtain all CE hours through interactive, electronic means. This includes online, teleconferencing and video.

ACCEPTABLE PROVIDERS

CE must be taken from one of the types of Board-accepted providers listed below; otherwise the course will not count toward your renewal requirements.

- An accredited school, college or university that meets the accreditation requirements specified in [Business and Professions Code §4980.54](#) (for LMFTs), §4989.34 (for LEPs), §4996.22 (for LCSWs), or §4999.76 (for LPCCs);
- A school, college or university approved by the California Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education;
- Board-recognized approval agency as provided in [Title 16, California Code of Regulations section 1887.4.1\(a\)](#);
- A provider who has been approved by a Board-recognized approval agency; OR
- An organization, institution, association or entity that is recognized by the Board as a CE provider, as provided in [Title 16, California Code of Regulations section 1887.4.3\(a\)\(3\)](#).

Provider Complaints

You should first contact the provider of the course to resolve your concerns. If you are not satisfied with the outcome, contact the provider's approval agency and/or send your complaint in writing to the Board. Include the course name, date, location, the names of the instructor and provider, and specifics about your complaint.

ALTERNATIVE WAYS TO EARN CE

Teaching

You may claim a maximum of 18 hours each renewal period for teaching a course, if taught for a Board-accepted CE provider. You can claim the same amount of credit as an attendee would receive (up to 18 hours). You may only claim credit for teaching a course one time during a single renewal period.

BBS Enforcement Case Review

If you serve as an expert consultant performing enforcement case review for the BBS (including training), you will be awarded up to six (6) hours of Law and Ethics CE course credit. The Board will make an announcement when there is an opportunity for licensees to apply.

Serve as a BBS Subject Matter Expert (SME)

If you serve as a SME for exam development for the BBS, you will be awarded up to six (6) hours of Law and Ethics CE course credit. If you have been licensed for at least 1 year and are interested in contributing to the exam writing process, please send an email to bbsexamunit@dca.ca.gov and indicate in the subject line "SME Recruitment".

Participate in a Professional Law and Ethics Review Committee

If you participate in a professional organization's law and ethics review committee, you will be awarded up to six (6) hours of Law & Ethics CE course credit. **On or after July 1, 2023**, in order for this activity to be credited, this activity must have been with a **mental health** professional organization, and documentation of participation must consist of a letter or certificate from the organization.

Completion of a BBS Occupational Analysis Survey

A licensee who completes an occupational analysis (OA) survey in full for the BBS **on or after July 1, 2023** will be credited with six (6) hours of CE. An OA is a comprehensive study of a profession that is performed approximately every five (5) years. Licensees complete a survey, the results of which help to determine the important tasks that are currently performed by practicing licensees. Results of the OA are used to develop a current description of practice, including core competencies, which help to form the basis for development of licensing examinations. The Board will make an announcement when there is an opportunity for licensees to participate.

MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

Course Hours Equivalency

1 hour of instruction = 1 CE hour

1 semester unit = 15 CE hours

1 quarter unit = 10 CE hours

Dual Licensees

If you have more than one license with the BBS, you may apply CE hours to both IF the subject matter relates to both scopes of practice. CE earned for other licenses may be applied to your BBS-issued license if taken from a BBS-accepted provider and the subject matter relates to your license's scope of practice.

Supervisors of Associates and MFT Trainees

You may apply your supervisor course training hours to your CE requirement as long as the training has been taken from a Board-accepted CE provider **with one exception**:

A course on law and ethics designed specifically to meet supervisor training requirements **cannot** be accepted toward meeting the six-hour law and ethics course required of all licensees each for renewal period. However, such a course **does** count toward the overall 36-hour CE requirement.

Recordkeeping

You must maintain documentation of completed CE courses (certificates, transcripts, etc.) for at least two (2) years after the license renewal period during which you took the courses. **DO NOT** submit your course certificates with your renewal. The Board will not retain them, and you will need them in the event of an audit.

The Board does not manage or track CE courses for licensees. Providers do not submit certificates to the Board. If a certificate has been misplaced, you must contact the CE provider for a replacement.

CE Audits

The Board may audit your records to verify completion of CE. If you are selected for audit, you will be notified in writing and shall submit documentation of courses (or allowed alternative CE methods) completed. If audited, a prompt response is important.

Reminder: Failure to comply with CE requirements may result in a citation and fine and/or disciplinary action against your license.

CE WAIVERS

The following licensees are NOT required to complete CE for renewal:

- Your license status is “Inactive” or “Retired.”
- You were granted a waiver by the Board **prior to** your license’s expiration date. The Board may only grant a waiver if a licensee meets the specific, limited criteria set forth in law. For information on obtaining a waiver, please see the *CE Waiver* form on the BBS website:

[Request for CE Exception](#) and [Verification of Disability or Medical Condition](#) (if needed)

Laws Referenced

Business and Professions Code sections 4980.54, 4989.34, 4996.22 and 4999.76.
Title 16, California Code of Regulations sections 1887 through 1887.11.0.