

ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION	ACAF Academic Affairs
POLICY NUMBER	ACAF 1.71
POLICY TITLE	Noncredit Certificate Programs
SCOPE OF POLICY	USC Columbia and Palmetto College Campuses
DATE OF REVISION	August. 11, 2025
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE	Office of the Provost

PURPOSE

This policy establishes a framework for the administration, approval, and recognition of noncredit certificate programs (NCCPs). This policy ensures the quality and consistency of NCCPs, providing participants with structured learning pathways and formal acknowledgment of their achievements through continuing education units (CEUs).

DEFINITIONS AND ACRONYMS

CEU: Continuing education unit

CLE: Continuing legal education

CME: Continuing medical education

NCCP: Noncredit certificate program is a means of recognizing successful completion of multiple, pre-approved continuing education unit (CEU) courses which have been purposefully joined together and sequenced to provide a comprehensive overview of a particular subject.

POLICY STATEMENT

A. Administrative Responsibility and Oversight

The University of South Carolina, as an educational institution awarding CEUs, assumes administrative responsibility through the Office of the Provost via the Office of Continuing Education and Conferences (CEC) for all programs in which faculty or staff are applying for a noncredit certificate to be awarded to program participants.

1. All colleges, schools and divisions of the university must seek prior approval of CEU and NCCP activity through CEC.
 - a. The School of Medicine, College of Pharmacy, and College of Nursing are authorized to issue CMEs on behalf of the university. The Joseph F. Rice School of Law provides legal education in the form of CLEs. These schools maintain additional professional accreditation and are responsible for the collection of program records that meet the accrediting standards set forth by their individual accrediting bodies. Summary program documentation and participant counts, including program dates, titles, contact hours, and the number of participants, must be provided to CEC for inclusion in university reports.

2. CEC will serve in the capacity of a clearinghouse and record repository for CEU and NCCP activity; will maintain documentation on curriculum and qualification of instructors and will be the reporting entity for university CEU and NCCP activity.
3. The sponsoring unit of any CEU or NCCP educational activity is responsible for ensuring the quality of the educational experience is of high caliber and reflects the mission of the institution.
4. CEC (through the Office of the Provost) is vested with sole authority and exclusive right on behalf of the university to issue documents bearing the title “Continuing Education Unit” or “Noncredit Certificate” or bearing the appearance of an official certificate related to each approved program.
5. The Provost determines fees associated with approval of NCCPs and issuing related documents. Each sponsoring unit may determine fees charged to students for enrollment in noncredit activities and is responsible for payment of processing fees.

B. Criteria for Program Approval

Each component CEU course is subject to [ACAF 1.72 Continuing Education Units](#). Departments interested in offering NCCPs should consult CEC to determine eligibility for designing such programs and to initiate approval.

1. Each CEU course which comprises a NCCP must be approved by CEC prior to seeking approval of the NCCP.
2. Each NCCP must be approved by CEC prior to the start date of the program.

C. Program Formats

1. The format for each CEU course that comprises the NCCP should be specified in the application for that course. It is not necessary for all courses in the NCCP to be offered in the same format.

PROCEDURES

- A. NCCP applications may be obtained through CEC and must be submitted at least 30 business days prior to the start date of the program and approved prior to the actual start date.
- B. Applications may be renewed at any time by submitting a renewal application at least 15 business days prior to the new start date of the program.
- C. Information from the NCCP application is used to generate participant certificates; therefore, it is important to be accurate when completing the application. Incomplete application information will delay approval of the application.

RELATED UNIVERSITY, STATE AND FEDERAL POLICIES

- [ACAF 1.70 Continuing Education Activity](#)
- [ACAF 1.72 Continuing Education Units](#)
- [ACAF 1.73 Conference Related Activities](#)

HISTORY OF REVISIONS

DATE OF REVISION	REASON FOR REVISION
December 1, 2005	New policy approval
December 1, 2014	Policy updated due to reorganization and to eliminate outdated language.
August 11, 2025	Updated formatting to better align content.