

ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION	ACAF Academic Affairs
POLICY NUMBER	ACAF 1.72
POLICY TITLE	Continuing Education Units
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

The continuing education unit (CEU) is intended to serve all interests in noncredit continuing education whether public or private and whether individual, institutional, organizational, governmental or societal. It is a standardized measure of noncredit continuing education activity without regard to age of participants, subject matter, program format, or instructional methodology. The CEU permits individuals to accumulate a uniform record of activity for future reference. This policy establishes a standardized framework for awarding and managing CEUs.

DEFINITIONS AND ACRONYMS

Approved programs: Approved noncredit continuing education programs must align with the university's mission, meet established quality standards, have a narrowly defined target audience, and offer a relevant learning objective.

Contact hours: Program contact hours are calculated by totaling the number of contact minutes (spent on approved activities) and dividing by 60.

Continuing education unit (CEU): A CEU is a standardized measure of individual participation in an organized continuing education experience under sponsorship by an appropriate authority, with instruction, direction, and evaluation by qualified personnel. CEUs are awarded for programs that meet established quality standards, are aligned with the university's mission, and provide valuable learning experiences.

Calculation: CEUs are calculated by dividing the number of contact hours by 10. CEUs are expressed in tenths. Partial increments are rounded to the nearest tenth. Approved CEU programs should be offered for no less than one contact hour (.1 CEUs). Examples: 15 contact hours equate to 1.5 CEUs; six contact hours equate to .6 CEUs.

Sponsoring units: USC departments, non-profit, government, or corporate/business/private organizations may submit a CEU program form to CEC in order to have instructional programs certified for University of South Carolina CEUs for a variety of educational or training purposes.

POLICY STATEMENT

The University of South Carolina values continuing education and awards CEUs to individuals who successfully complete approved noncredit programs. CEUs can be used to demonstrate a commitment to lifelong learning, improve professional competencies, document qualifications (e.g., licensure, certification, or registration), and/or prepare for career advancement.

All significant post-secondary learning experiences for which degree credit is not earned should be recognized through the use of the CEU, thus avoiding the term “noncredit” and reserving the term “credit” for those learning activities which generally lead to a degree or diploma.

CEUs should be issued to all participants of approved programs. Participants and sponsors may not opt out of CEUs or issue CEUs to some, but not all, participants. Rather, the use of CEUs for documentation purposes is based solely on the satisfactory completion of the stated program requirements.

This policy addresses the approval process for awarding CEUs on behalf of the University of South Carolina and reporting requirements for continuing education activity measured by alternative units (e.g., Continuing Medical Education (CME), Continuing Legal Education (CLE), etc.).

PROCEDURES

A. Administrative Responsibility and Oversight

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

1. All colleges, schools and divisions of the university must seek prior approval of CEU activity through CEC.
2. CEC serves in the capacity of a clearinghouse and record repository for continuing education activity and provides appropriate reporting to the Office of Institutional Research, Assessment, and Analytics. CEU procedures for documentation and recordkeeping are aligned with the standard practices of the University of South Carolina for credit-bearing programs and with generally accepted best practices.
3. The sponsoring unit of any continuing education activity is responsible for ensuring the quality of the educational experience is of high caliber and reflects the mission of the institution, in compliance with policy [ACAF 1.70 Continuing Education Activity](#).
4. The Provost determines fees associated with approval of CEU courses and providing continuing education support services. Each sponsoring unit may determine fees charged for enrollment in continuing education activity and is responsible for payment of processing fees to CEC.

B. Program Approval

1. CEU program applications must be submitted and approved prior to the offering of each individual program, course, activity or event. Applications must be submitted to CEC at least 30 business days before the start date of the program. Applications will be reviewed and a decision rendered within 10 business days of submission.
 - a. Renewal applications for programs, activities, and events previously approved for CEU documentation must be submitted at least 15 business days prior to the new start date of the program.
2. Approved programs will be provided with an official university tracking number and statement authorizing the issuance of documentation to participants. The statement will include the activity code, number of CEUs, and number of contact hours approved by CEC.
3. Criteria for program approval for awarding CEUs:

- a. A university academic or business unit sponsor;
 - i. Non-profit, government, or corporate/business/private organizations may seek sponsorship from CEC.
- b. A statement identifying the program's alignment with the university's mission;
- c. Evidence of a needs assessment and statement of need defining why it is important for the university to engage in the continuing education activity;
- d. Identification of program content level;
- e. Content well organized and presented in a sequential manner, and documentation of intended curriculum, as approved by the department chair and dean;
- f. Documentation of instructional personnel well qualified by education and/or experience;
- g. A statement of learning objectives and desired outcomes;
- h. Clearly defined requirements for satisfactory completion;
- i. Provision for verification of individual attendance and completion of objectives;
- j. Provision for assessment of learning of each individual participant appropriate to the material presented;
- k. Documentation and description of an appropriate method of delivery;
- l. Primary audience identified through the use of a Standard Industry Code (SIC) or Standard Occupational Classification (SOC);
- m. Provision for advance participant registration, which will include information required for recordkeeping and reporting;
- n. Participants allowed to evaluate the program;
- o. Program approved for awarding CEUs prior to being presented;
- p. Number of actual contact hours delivered correlates to the quantity of CEUs pre-approved to be issued.
- q. Statement and example (if appropriate) of individual participation documentation practices, if documentation other than an official CEC document is approved.

C. Participant Registration and Documentation

- 1. Sponsoring units may work with CEC to collect registration information and fees or may elect to manage registration independently.
 - a. Programs collecting participant, exhibitor, and/or sponsorship fees, must comply with policy [ACAF 1.73 Conference Related Activities](#).

D. Reporting

- 1. Documentation of program participants must be submitted to CEC by the sponsoring unit within 14 days of program completion. Submissions may be completed electronically or via an alternative approved format. Information to be submitted:
 - a. Participant's name
 - b. Participant's contact information
 - c. Student ID
 - d. CEU award status
- 2. Summary reporting of alternative units (e.g., CMEs and CLEs) is required from those colleges and schools authorized or qualified to issue units other than CEUs. These schools are responsible for maintaining detailed program and participant information that complies with the standards outlined by their accrediting bodies, which may vary from

the documentation outlined in this policy. These entities do not seek or receive approval on individual programs through CEC.

Program documentation to be provided to CEC for inclusion in university reporting:

- a. Program date(s)
- b. Program title
- c. Number of contact hours
- d. Type of unit (e.g., CME, CLE, etc.)
- e. Number of participants

RELATED UNIVERSITY, STATE AND FEDERAL POLICIES

[ACAF 1.70 Continuing Education Activity](#)

[ACAF 1.71 Noncredit Certificate Programs](#)

[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	Policy updated to better align with industry best practices.