



## **CONTINUING EDUCATION POLICY**

The *Continuing Education Policies for the CSA* is provided for CSAs as participating in Continuing Education Units (CEU). CSAs must adhere to these high standards, established by the profession to ensure the ongoing educational development of individual practitioners and to demonstrate to the public the profession's commitment to providing the highest level of quality surgical patient care. The National Surgical Assistant Association's (NSAA) Certification Board (NCCSA) is recognized by the National Commission for the Certification of Surgical Assistants (NCCSA) and is the responsible authority for the approval of CEU programs for the CSA, including responsibility for CEU credit processing and maintenance, which is subject to NCCSA audit or verification.

The NCCSA is the responsible authority for all aspects of the certification process including examination eligibility criteria, examination fees, renewal requirements and renewal fees. The NSAA's Continuing Professional Development and Education Committee and the NCCSA work collaboratively on the development of the *Continuing Education Policies for the CSA*.

### **ORGANIZATIONAL CONTINUING EDUCATION MISSION & GOALS**

#### **NSAA Continuing Education Mission**

NSAA supports quality surgical patient care by promoting the completion of continuing education units to assure the public, certifying bodies and other health professionals that CSAs are maintaining current standards in the field of surgical assisting.

#### **Continuing Education Unit Definition**

A CEU is formal and structured learning to enhance the competency of the CSA in order to foster the development of the surgical assisting profession.

#### **NSAA Continuing Education Goals**

NSAA will:

1. Analyze and up-date the CEU policies on a periodic basis to reflect policy changes and current trends.
2. Develop and deliver continuing education units that improve the knowledge and skills of the CSA.
3. Evaluate the effectiveness of the CEU offerings in meeting the needs of the CSA.
4. Evaluate the CEU offerings of other organizations and businesses to determine their meeting the NSAA CEU policies.



## **Role and Responsibility of the NSAA**

NSAA recognizes and establishes the CEU credit as the standard for all CEU programs and products that are completed by the CSA. The NSAA Continuing Professional Development and Education Committee is assigned the responsibility for reviewing CEU programs and enduring materials for adherence to the NSAA CEU policies. Only those CEU programs and enduring materials approved by NSAA will be allowed to award CEU credits to the CSA.

## **Definitions of Program, Enduring Material and Live Event**

### **Program**

A CEU program is defined as a live program including but not limited to health care facility sponsored in-service, conference, seminar, symposium or workshop in which the CSA attend CEU lectures.

### **Enduring Material**

Enduring material is defined as a non-live offering, including but not limited to, CEU articles delivered hard-copy or electronically that has a post-article CEU exam; health care facility mandatory education tests online; viewing a recorded CEU lecture on-line, CD, or other electronic means that has a post-article CEU exam.

### **Live Event**

A live event can include professional events such as the annual NSAA conference, State Association workshops or conferences, ACS Clinical Congress, other medical conferences, hospital or surgery center in-services, vendor workshops, or live online webinars in which attendance can be verified (**via certificate or transcript**).

### **Responsibility of CSA**

It is the responsibility of the CSA to know if a CEU program or enduring material offered by a business or organization is approved for CEU credits. Only CEU credits earned by attending approved programs or completing an enduring material activity can be applied towards a CSA recertification.

## **SUBMITTING YOUR CEU CREDITS TO NSAA**

### **Member**

You **must** include verifying documentation of all CEU credits reported (e.g., certificate of completion, attendance verification forms). CEU documentation can be sent by FAX or scanned and sent as an E-mail attachment to NSAA. NSAA processes all CEU credit records at least one month prior to recertification dates.

After your CEU credits are verified and processed, NSAA will update all approved CEU credits and they will be posted in their profile found in the Members Area of the NSAA website. This is proof that your CEU credits were verified, processed and recorded by NSAA.

### **Fees**

*Member:*

- Submission of CEUs with verifying documentation: **No Charge**

### ***Important Notice***

If NSAA membership lapses for more than 60 days the CEU credits earned while a member will be maintained and recorded by NSAA; however, CEU credits earned as a non-member are subject to a non-member processing fee when submitted to NSAA.

### **Appeals Process**

NSAA will review possible exceptions to the CEU policies on a case-by-case basis. To appeal a decision concerning the denial of CEU credit(s) a written petition for reconsideration must be sent to the NSAA's Continuing Professional Development and Education Committee. If the original decision is upheld, a second appeal may be made to the NSAA Board of Directors who will make the final decision.

## **Methods to earn CEU credits and documentation**

CEU credits can be earned through the following methods:

1. Health care facility mandatory education
2. Health care facility sponsored in-services
3. Attending professional physician organization programs
4. Writing for health-related publications
5. Instruction of health professionals
6. College credit
7. Lecture
8. Clinical demonstration
9. Completion of enduring material activities.

Additionally, participation on NSAA's Standing Committees, the following Ad-Hoc Committees, and completion of volunteer assignments acceptable for CEU credit, if they are determined to involve substantial contributions to professional efforts related to education, certification, and research:

1. CSA Study Guide Revision Panel
2. Conference Committee
3. Website Committee
4. Fellowship Specialty Councils,
5. NCCSA's Credentialing and Certification Committee, and
6. NCCSA's Exam Analysis and Review Committee

### ***Important Notice***

CEU activities in which CEU credits are earned must be relevant to the practice of surgical assisting.

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### **NSAA CEU Credit Values**

1. One CEU credit equals 50 - 60 minutes of activity when attending a program or viewing a recorded CEU lectures and completing the post-lecture CEU exam.
2. Partial CEU credits are accepted by NSAA. However, the CEU activity offered at the program or recorded lecture must be a minimum of 30 minutes (0.5 CEU credits). Partial CEU credits are accepted in 30-minute increments past the required minimum of 30 minutes. For example, an activity that is one hour and fifteen minutes will be awarded 2.0 CEU credits.
3. When possible, the lectures provided at CEU programs will be combined in order to award the maximum number of CEU credits as long as the lectures are subject related. For example, an orthopedic seminar offers several lectures that are 20 minutes in length; the lectures will be combined to determine the total number of CEU credits that will be accepted by NSAA.
4. CSA authors of a CEU article published in a health-related magazine, journal or *CSA Node* will be awarded 4 (four) CE credits per 2,000 type-written words. Partial CEU credits are awarded in increments of 500 words, e.g. 2,500 words equals 5 CEU credits.  
The CEU article must be a minimum of 2,000 type-written words.  
The word count does **not** include the post-article CEU exam, reference page, or bibliography.
5. Independent study CEU articles or courses offered to the CSA must be a minimum of 1,000 words. CEU credits are awarded as follows:
  - a. 1,000-1,999 words equals 0.5 CEU credits; 2,000 - 2,499 words equals 1.0 CEU credits; 2,500 - 2,999 words equals 1.25 CEU credits; 3,000 - 3,499 words equals 1.5 CEU credits; 3,500 - 3,999 words equals 1.75 CEU credits; and so forth.
  - b. The word count does **not** include the post-article CEU exam, reference page, or bibliography.

### **Health Care Facility Sponsored In-Services**

1. Health care facility in-services are accepted for CEU credits.
2. Health care facility orientation is **not** accepted for CEU credits.
3. BLS, ACLS and PALS are accepted for CEU credits.
4. If an employer sponsors or provides funds for an employee(s) to attend a conference, seminar, symposium, or workshop or complete any other type of CEU activity sponsored by an organization other than the employer, the program must be approved in order to have the CEU credits count towards CSA recertification.



5. Documentation requirement: A certificate of attendance signed by the health care facility's Clinical Educator or other approved individual. The total number of CEU credits to be awarded for the in-service should be printed on the certificate.

### **Non-Profit Professional Organizations**

1. NSAA accepts the CEU credits offered at live events (e.g., conferences, forums, symposiums, workshops), including *AMA P RA Category 1 Credit(s)*™, that are offered by non-profit organizations who are accredited by the Accreditation Review Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME).
2. Documentation requirement: A certificate of attendance signed by the individual designated to represent the non-profit professional organization. The total number of CEU credits to be awarded for the program should be printed on the certificate.

### **State Chapters of NSAA**

1. NSAA State Chapters who sponsor a program are required to complete the program approval process in order for CSA participants to receive approved CEU credits. Participants should verify that a State Chapter program is approved prior to attending the program.
2. Documentation requirements: A certificate of attendance signed by the individual designated to represent the State Chapter. The total number of CEU credits to be awarded for the program should be printed on the certificate.

### **Writing for Health-Related Publications**

1. When writing a CEU article to be published the magazine or journal must be a health-related publication. Additionally, the publisher must have a peer-review process in place in order to determine if the article meets the publishing standards of the magazine or journal.
2. CEU credit will only be awarded for the initial publication of an article.
3. Four (4) CEU credits are awarded per 2,000 type written words. Partial CEU credits are awarded in increments of 500 words, e.g. 2,500 words equal 5 CEU credits.
  - a. The CEU article must be a minimum of 2,000 type-written words.
  - b. The word count does not include the post-article CEU exam, reference page or bibliography.
  - c. Documentation requirement: The CEU credits will be automatically entered for CSAs that write CEU articles for the *CSA Node*. CSAs that write a CEU article for other magazines and journals must submit an official, published copy of the article that has your name printed as the author, name of the magazine or journal, date of publication, and volume number.



### **Activities of Standing Committees**

Standing committees' complete activities recognized by NSAA as continuing education learning opportunities wherein the CSA learn through their contribution. The types of activities that could be awarded CEU credits include, but not limited to:

1. Research and authorship of recommended standards of practice.
2. Research and development of continuing education unit policies.
3. Research and authorship of educational documents and forms, e.g. student evaluation forms, clinical rotation forms.
4. Item writing and review for the development of a high-stakes examination or study guide, by researching, drafting, and reviewing potential items, or researching and reviewing currently developed items.
5. Contribution to a job and task analysis of the surgical assisting professions.
6. Review of NSAA enduring material applications (5 CEU credits will be awarded for the completion of each application)

### **Instruction of Health Professionals**

1. This method for earning CEU credits does **not** apply to those CSAs who provide lectures or lab/clinical demonstrations as part of their job duties, such as educators, preceptors and medical sales representatives. In addition, CSAs who perform their job duties as a member of a surgical team that travels to a foreign country to perform surgery for a limited amount of time is **not** accepted for CEU credits.
2. This method for earning CEU credits applies to CSAs that provide CEU lectures at an NSAA approved CEU program or employer sponsored in-service or serve as instructors during an NSAA approved CEU workshop, e.g. wound closure workshop at a state chapter meeting.
3. CSA presenters and instructors will receive CEU credits for the initial preparation and presentation of a topic. Two CEU credits will be awarded for the initial preparation of the presentation. The lecture or workshop must last a minimum of 30 minutes. For example, if a lecture lasts 45 minutes the CSA presenter would be awarded a total of 2.75 CEU credits. However, if the lecture is repeated at a future program CEU credits are only awarded for the length of the lecture.
4. Documentation requirement: For NSAA sponsored programs such as the National Conference, forums or workshops the CSA presenter or instructor does not need to submit documentation as proof of providing a CEU lecture or serving as a workshop

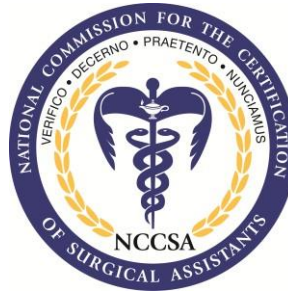


instructor; NSAA will automatically enter the CEU credits for the individual. However, CSAs that present a CEU lecture or serve as an instructor at a non-NSAA sponsored program including a state chapter meeting must submit a copy of the program agenda that includes their name as presenter and title of the presentation or workshop as well as length of the activity.

### **College Credit**

1. College courses to be submitted for CEU credits must be completed with a grade of "C" or better.
2. The courses must be completed at an institution that is accredited by an organization recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.
3. Surgical assistant college courses submitted for CEU credit(s) must be completed at an NSAA approved surgical assistant program.
4. General nursing and physician assistant college courses that are not specifically related to the medical surgical practice of surgical assisting will not be accepted for CEU credits.
5. The following is a list of broad college subjects to provide guidance as to the courses that could be accepted for CEU credit(s):
  - a. Advanced anatomy & physiology
  - b. Advanced microbiology
  - c. Advanced pathophysiology
  - d. Advanced pharmacology
  - e. Chemistry (including organic chemistry or biochemistry)
  - f. Physics
  - g. Sociology
  - h. Psychology (including clinical psychology and neuropsychology)
  - i. Teaching methods
  - j. Health care management and business
  - k. Healthcare human resources
  - l. Genetics
  - m. Embryology
6. College courses will be awarded 2 CEU credits for each semester hour completed.  
**Example:** A 3 college credit semester course:  $3 \times 2 = 6$  CEU credits.
7. College courses submitted as quarter hours will be converted to an equivalent number of semester hours; quarter hour  $\times 0.75 =$  semester hour.
8. Documentation requirement: Unofficial college transcript - **no exceptions made.**

**Recommendation:** Please submit a copy of the course description(s) from the college/university catalog.



### **Enduring Material**

1. Enduring material is self-directed learning in which the CSA independently completes CEU activity that is approved for CEU credits.
2. Methods of enduring materials include but are not limited to CEU articles and completing a post-article CEU exam that are offered hard-copy or electronically; viewing recorded lectures and completing a post-lecture exam that are offered on-line, CD, DVD, video tape or other electronic means.
3. Participants should verify that the enduring material activity is approved prior to completing.
4. Documentation requirement: CSAs must refer to *"Submitting Your CEU Credits to NSAA"* for information as related to submitting enduring material activities for CEU credits. Upon completion of an enduring material activity offered by another business or organization the CSA must submit the certificate of completion provided by the business or organization.