

Continuing Education Policy for Certified Surgical Assistants (CSAs)



Policy Overview

Certified Surgical Assistants (CSAs) are required to participate in Continuing Education Units (CEUs) to ensure their ongoing educational development and to uphold the highest standards of surgical patient care. These high standards are established by the profession to demonstrate its commitment to quality care. The National Surgical Assistant Association's (NSAA) Certification Board, recognized by the National Commission for the Certification of Surgical Assistants (NCCSA), is the authoritative body for approving CEU programs for CSAs. This includes the processing and maintenance of CEU credits, subject to NCCSA audit and verification.

Certification Authority

The NCCSA holds the responsibility for all certification processes, including determining examination eligibility criteria, setting examination fees, establishing renewal requirements, and managing renewal fees. The NSAA's Continuing Professional Development and Education Committee collaborates with the NCCSA to develop the Continuing Education Policies for CSAs.

Organizational Continuing Education Mission and Goals

NSAA Continuing Education Mission

The NSAA is dedicated to supporting quality surgical patient care by promoting the completion of CEUs. This assures the public, certifying bodies, and other health professionals that CSAs maintain current standards in surgical assisting.

Definition of Continuing Education Unit

A CEU is defined as formal and structured learning aimed at enhancing the competency of CSAs to foster the development of the surgical assisting profession.

NSAA Continuing Education Goals

1. Regularly analyze and update CEU policies to reflect policy changes and current trends.
2. Develop and deliver CEU programs that improve the knowledge and skills of CSAs.
3. Evaluate the effectiveness of CEU offerings in meeting the needs of CSAs.
4. Assess CEU offerings from other organizations and businesses to ensure compliance with NSAA CEU policies.

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Role and Responsibility of the NSAA

The National Surgical Assistant Association (NSAA) recognizes and establishes CEU credits as the standard for all CEU programs and products completed by Certified Surgical Assistants (CSAs). The NSAA Continuing Professional Development and Education Committee is responsible for reviewing CEU programs and enduring materials to ensure adherence to NSAA CEU policies. Only CEU programs and enduring materials approved by the NSAA are authorized to award CEU credits to CSAs.

Definitions

Program

A CEU program is defined as a live educational event, including but not limited to healthcare facility-sponsored in-services, conferences, seminars, symposiums, or workshops, where CSAs attend CEU lectures.

Enduring Material

Enduring material refers to non-live educational offerings, including but not limited to:

- CEU articles delivered in hard copy or electronically, accompanied by a post-article CEU exam
- Healthcare facility mandatory education tests online
- Recorded CEU lectures viewed online with a post-lecture CEU exam

Live Event

A live event includes 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 where attendance can be verified through a certificate or transcript.

Responsibility of the CSA

CSAs are responsible for ensuring that 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 approved enduring material activities can be applied toward CSA recertification.

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Submitting Your CEU Credits to NSAA

Member Requirements

All Continuing Education Units (CEU) credits reported must be accompanied by verifying documentation (e.g., certificate of completion, attendance verification forms). CEU documentation can be submitted via fax or scanned and sent as an email attachment to NSAA. NSAA processes all CEU credit records at least one month prior to recertification dates.

Once your CEU credits are verified and processed, NSAA will update and post all approved CEU credits to your profile in the Members Area of the NSAA website. This serves as proof that your CEU credits have been verified, processed, and recorded by NSAA.

Fees

Member:

- Submission of CEUs with verifying documentation: No Charge

Non-Member:

- **CE processing Fee:** \$100.00
- **Re-Certification Fee:** \$ 600.00
- **Total:** \$700.00

Late Fees

- **Late Processing Fee:** \$50.00
- **Overdue Certification Renewal:** \$100.00

Submission Deadline and Timeliness

- Members are required to submit all necessary CE documentation no later than **30 days** prior to their certification renewal due date. This deadline is established to ensure adequate processing time and prevent any disruption in certification status. Any CEU documentation submitted within 14 days prior to the certification renewal due date shall be classified as a late submission. A late fee of \$50 will be imposed for submissions received during this period. This fee is in addition to the standard renewal fee.

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Payment of Late Fee

- The late fee must be paid in order for CEU documentation to be processed. Non-payment of the total amount, including the late fee, will result in a suspension of the member's certification status until all dues are settled.

Additional Late Fee for Submissions Past the Certification Renewal Due Date

- An additional late fee of \$100 will be charged for overdue submissions. This fee is cumulative with the initial late fee, resulting in a total additional charge of \$150.

Certification Status and Reinstatement

Members submitting overdue documentation will experience a lapse in their certification status. Certification will not be reinstated until all applicable fees have been received.

Waiver of Late Fees

- Requests for a waiver of late fees due to extenuating circumstances must be submitted in writing, with accompanying documentation, at the earliest opportunity. The NSAA Board of Directors will review waiver requests on a case-by-case basis. The decision of the Board is final.

Notification of Fees

- Members will receive notification of assessed late fees via email. This notification will include the total amount due, inclusive of any standard and late fees, and the final payment deadline.

Enforcement and Compliance

- The NSAA reserves the right to enforce this policy strictly and to take appropriate actions to ensure compliance. Members failing to comply with this policy may face suspension or revocation of their certification until all outstanding obligations are satisfied.

Review and Amendments

- This policy will undergo periodic review and may be amended by the NSAA Board Directors as deemed necessary. Members will be notified of any changes to this policy.

Important Notice:

If NSAA membership lapses for more than 30 days, CEU credits earned during membership 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.

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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 credits, a written petition for reconsideration must be submitted to 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, whose decision will be final.

Methods to Earn CEU Credits and Documentation

CEU credits can be earned through the following methods:

1. Mandatory education at healthcare facilities
2. Healthcare facility-sponsored in-services
3. Attending professional physician organization programs
4. Authoring health-related publications
5. Instructing health professionals
6. Earning college credits
7. Delivering lectures
8. Conducting clinical demonstrations
9. Completing enduring material activities
10. Educational Podcasts, Live Webinars.

Additionally, participation in NSAA's Standing Committees, the following Ad-Hoc Committees, and completion of volunteer assignments may be eligible for CEU credit if they 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
6. NCCSA's Exam Analysis and Review Committee

Important Notice

All CEU activities must be relevant to surgical practice to qualify for CEU credits.

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NSAA CEU Credit Values

1. **Standard CEU Credits:** One CEU credit is awarded for every 50-60 minutes of activity when attending a program or viewing a recorded CEU lecture and completing the post-lecture CEU exam.
2. **Partial CEU Credits:** NSAA accepts partial CEU credits. The CEU activity must be a minimum of 30 minutes (0.5 CEU credits). Partial CEU credits are awarded in 30-minute increments beyond the initial 30 minutes. For example, an activity lasting one hour and fifteen minutes will be awarded 2.0 CEU credits.
3. **Combined Lectures:** When feasible, lectures at CEU programs will be combined to award the maximum number of CEU credits, provided the lectures are related by subject matter. For instance, several 20-minute lectures at an orthopedic seminar will be combined to determine the total CEU credits accepted by NSAA.
4. **Publication Credits:** CSA authors of CEU articles published in health-related magazines, journals, or CSA Node will be awarded 4 CEU credits per 2,000 typed words. Partial CEU credits are awarded in increments of 500 words, e.g., 2,500 words equals 5 CEU credits. The article must be a minimum of 2,000 typed words. The word count excludes the post-article CEU exam, reference page, and bibliography.
5. **Independent Study Credits:** CEU articles or courses offered for independent study must be a minimum of 1,000 words. CEU credits are awarded as follows:
 - 1,000-1,999 words: 0.5 CEU credits
 - 2,000-2,499 words: 1.0 CEU credits
 - 2,500-2,999 words: 1.25 CEU credits
 - 3,000-3,499 words: 1.5 CEU credits
 - 3,500-3,999 words: 1.75 CEU credits, and so forth.

The word count excludes the post-article CEU exam, reference page, and bibliography.

Health Care Facility Sponsored In-Services

1. **Acceptance of In-Services:** In-services sponsored by health care facilities are eligible for CEU credits.
2. **Orientation Exclusions:** Health care facility orientation sessions are **not eligible** for CEU credits.
3. **Accepted Certifications:** Basic Life Support (BLS), Advanced Cardiovascular Life Support (ACLS), and Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS) are eligible for CEU credits. Live and regular CEU will be awarded for each certification.
4. **External Program Sponsorship:** If an employer sponsors or funds an employee to attend a conference, seminar, symposium, workshop, or any other CEU activity provided by an external organization, the program must receive prior approval for the CEU credits to be applicable towards CSA recertification.
5. **Documentation Requirements:** To receive CEU credits for an in-service, documentation must include a certificate of attendance signed by the health care facility's Clinical

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Educator or another authorized individual. The certificate should specify the total number of CEU credits awarded for the in-service, date and a signature confirming participation.

Non-Profit Professional Organizations

1. **CEU Credits Acceptance:** NSAA accepts CEU credits from live events (e.g., conferences, forums, symposiums, workshops), which must include AMA PRA Category 1 Credit(s)[™], provided by non-profit organizations accredited by the Accreditation Review Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME).
2. **Documentation Requirement:** To validate CEU credits, a certificate of attendance signed by the authorized representative of the non-profit professional organization is required. The certificate must specify the total number of CEU credits awarded for the program.

State Chapters of NSAA

1. **Program Approval:** State Chapters of NSAA that sponsor programs must complete the program approval process to ensure CSA participants receive approved CEU credits. Participants should confirm that a State Chapter program is approved prior to attendance.
2. **Documentation Requirements:** A certificate of attendance signed by the authorized representative of the State Chapter is required. The certificate should indicate the total number of CEU credits awarded for the program date and a signature confirming participation.

Writing for Health-Related Publications

1. When authoring a CEU article, it must be submitted to a health-related publication that utilizes a peer-review process to ensure the article meets the publication standards.
2. CEU credit will be awarded only for the initial publication of an article.
3. Four (4) CEU credits will be awarded for every 2,000 typewritten words. Partial CEU credits will be awarded in increments of 500 words; for example, 2,500 words will earn 5 CEU credits. The CEU article must be a minimum of 2,000 typewritten words. The word count excludes the post-article CEU exam, reference page, and bibliography.
Documentation requirements: CEU credits will be automatically recorded for CSAs who write CEU articles for the CSA Node. CSAs who write a CEU article for other magazines and journals must submit an official, published copy of the article, including the author's name, the name of the magazine or journal, the date of publication, and the volume number.

Activities of Standing Committees

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The activities undertaken by standing committees, as recognized by the National Surgical Assistant Association (NSAA), qualify as continuing education learning opportunities. These activities contribute to the professional development of Certified Surgical Assistants (CSAs) through their involvement. Eligible activities for CEU credits include, but are not limited to:

1. **Research and Authorship:** Engaging in the research and authorship of recommended standards of practice.
2. **Policy Development:** Conducting research and contributing to the development of continuing education unit (CEU) policies.
3. **Educational Document Creation:** Researching and authoring educational documents and forms, such as student evaluation forms and clinical rotation forms.
4. **Examination Item Development:** Involvement in the creation and review of high-stakes examination study guides by researching, drafting, and reviewing potential items, as well as evaluating existing items.
5. **Job and Task Analysis:** Contributing to the job and task analysis of the surgical assisting profession.
6. **Enduring Material Review:** Reviewing NSAA enduring material applications, with 5 CEU credits awarded upon completion of each application.

Instruction of Health Professionals

Criteria for awarding CEU credits to CSAs who provide instruction to health professionals the following guidelines apply:

1. **Exclusions:** CSAs who provide lectures or lab/clinical demonstrations as part of their regular job duties, including educators, preceptors, and medical sales representatives, are not eligible for CEU credits under this method. Additionally, CSAs who perform surgical duties as part of a traveling surgical team in a foreign country are not eligible for CEU credits.
2. **Eligible Instructional Activities:** CSAs are eligible to earn CEU credits by delivering lectures at CAAHEP accredited Surgical Assistant Programs, NSAA-approved CEU programs or an employer-sponsored in-service, or by serving as instructors during an NSAA-approved CEU workshop (e.g., wound closure workshop at a state chapter meeting).
3. **CEU Credit Allocation:** 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 preparation of the presentation. The lecture or workshop must last a minimum of 30 minutes. For example, a 45-minute lecture will result in a total of 2.75 CEU credits. If the same lecture is repeated at future programs, CEU credits will only be awarded for the duration of the lecture.

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4. Documentation Requirements:

- For NSAA-sponsored programs, such as the National Conference, forums, or workshops, CSAs do not need to submit documentation as proof of providing a CEU lecture or serving as a workshop instructor; NSAA will automatically record the CEU credits.
- For non-NSAA sponsored programs, including state chapter meetings, CSAs must submit a copy of the program agenda that includes their name as the presenter, the title of the presentation or workshop, and the duration of the activity.

Conducting Clinical Demonstrations

Criteria for awarding CEU credits to CSAs who provide in conducting clinical demonstrations under the auspices of the NSAA the following guidelines apply:

1. Professional Standards

- Clinical demonstrations must be conducted with the highest standards of professionalism, ensuring that the content is accurate, evidence-based, and relevant to the surgical assisting profession.
- Demonstrators must adhere to all applicable laws, regulations, and institutional policies regarding patient safety, confidentiality, and ethical practices.

2. Preparation

- CSAs and other personnel responsible for conducting clinical demonstrations must thoroughly prepare the materials and content to be presented. This includes understanding the clinical procedures, techniques, and equipment involved.
- Demonstrators must ensure that all necessary equipment and materials are available, properly functioning, and safely set up before the demonstration begins.

3. Educational Objectives

- Each clinical demonstration must have clearly defined educational objectives that align with the learning outcomes expected for the audience. These objectives should be communicated to participants at the beginning of the demonstration.
- The content of the demonstration should be tailored to the audience's level of expertise, ensuring that it is both challenging and accessible.

4. Demonstration Procedure

- The demonstration must be conducted in a systematic and logical manner, with clear explanations and step-by-step guidance.
- Demonstrators must encourage participant engagement through interactive questioning, hands-on practice (where applicable), and opportunities for discussion.
- Any deviations from standard procedures or the use of alternative techniques should be clearly explained and justified.

5. Safety and Compliance

- Demonstrators must prioritize safety at all times. This includes adhering to infection control protocols, using personal protective equipment (PPE) when necessary, and ensuring that all participants understand and follow safety guidelines.

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- Compliance with patient privacy and confidentiality is mandatory. Demonstrators must ensure that no patient-identifiable information is disclosed during the demonstration.
6. **Evaluation and Feedback**
- At the conclusion of the clinical demonstration, participants should be given the opportunity to evaluate the session. This feedback should be used to improve future demonstrations.
 - Demonstrators should also conduct self-evaluations to assess the effectiveness of their teaching and make necessary adjustments.
7. **Documentation**
- A record of the clinical demonstration, including the date, location, topics covered, and names of the demonstrators and participants, must be maintained for institutional records.
 - Any materials used in the demonstration, such as handouts, slides, or videos, should be archived in accordance with NSAA guidelines.
8. **Continuing Education Units**
- Clinical demonstrations conducted as part of an NSAA-approved program may qualify for continuing education credits (CEUs) for both demonstrators and participants. The eligibility and amount of CEUs awarded will be determined based on the duration and educational value of the demonstration.

Enduring Material

1. **Definition and Scope:** Enduring material refers to self-directed learning activities in which a Certified Surgical Assistant (CSA) independently engages in continuing education (CEU) activities that have been pre-approved for CEU credits.
2. **Accepted Formats:** Enduring materials encompass a variety of formats, including but not limited to:
 - CEU articles accompanied by a post-article exam, available in both hard copy and electronic formats.
 - Recorded lectures followed by a post-lecture exam, accessible online or through other media such as CDs, DVDs, video tapes, or other electronic means.
3. **Approval Verification:** Prior to commencing any enduring material activity, participants must confirm that the activity has been approved for CEU credits.
4. **Documentation Requirements:** CSAs are required to follow the guidelines outlined in the "Submitting Your CEU Credits to NSAA" document for submitting enduring material activities. Upon completion of an enduring material activity provided by an external business or organization, the CSA must submit the certificate of completion issued by the respective business or organization.

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Educational Podcasts and Live Webinars

Applies to all CSAs seeking to earn CEU credits through participation in educational podcasts and live webinars, as well as to providers of these educational formats who seek NSAA accreditation.

1. Eligibility for CEU Credits

- Educational podcasts and live webinars must be pre-approved by the NSAA to qualify for CEU credits.
- Content must be directly relevant to the surgical assisting profession and should contribute to the ongoing professional development of CSAs.

2. Content Standards

- The content of educational podcasts and live webinars must be evidence-based, up-to-date, and presented by qualified professionals with expertise in the subject matter.
- Educational objectives must be clearly defined at the beginning of each podcast or webinar, aligning with the learning outcomes expected for the audience.
- Live webinars should include opportunities for participant interaction, such as Q&A sessions, to enhance engagement and understanding.

3. Duration and CEU Allocation

- CEU credits will be awarded based on the actual time spent in the educational activity. Typically, one CEU credit is awarded per hour of instruction.
- For podcasts, the total duration must be verified, and for live webinars, attendance will be tracked to ensure participants are present for the full duration of the event.

4. Approval Process for Providers

- Providers of educational podcasts and live webinars must submit their content for NSAA approval in advance, including a detailed agenda, speaker qualifications, and educational objectives.
- The NSAA reserves the right to review, approve, or deny any application based on the relevance and quality of the content provided.

5. Participation Verification

- For live webinars, participants must register in advance and verify their attendance through an electronic tracking system.
- For educational podcasts, participants may need to complete a post-podcast assessment or quiz to demonstrate their understanding of the material presented.

6. Documentation Requirements

- Upon completion of an educational podcast or live webinar, participants must obtain a certificate of completion or other documentation from the provider that includes the participant's name, the title of the podcast or webinar, the date of completion, and the total duration of the activity.
- CSAs are required to submit this documentation following the procedures outlined in the "Submitting Your CEU Credits to NSAA" guidelines.

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7. Quality Assurance

- The NSAA will periodically review accredited podcasts and webinars to ensure ongoing compliance with content standards and educational objectives.
- Feedback from participants may be solicited to assess the effectiveness and relevance of the educational content.

Enforcement

Purpose

This policy outlines the enforcement measures that the National Surgical Assistant Association (NSAA) will implement to ensure compliance with established guidelines for educational activities and CEU accreditation.

Scope

This enforcement policy applies to all Certified Surgical Assistants (CSAs) participating in NSAA-accredited educational activities, as well as to providers of such activities.

Policy

1. Non-Compliance by Participants

- CSAs who fail to comply with NSAA policies regarding the participation in and submission of educational activities may face the following actions:
 - **Revocation of CEU Credits:** CEU credits earned through non-compliant activities may be revoked. This includes credits from activities where participants failed to meet attendance requirements, did not submit proper documentation, or engaged in unethical practices.
 - **Disqualification from Future Activities:** Repeated or serious violations may result in the disqualification of the CSA from participating in future NSAA-accredited educational activities. This disqualification may be temporary or permanent, depending on the severity of the violation.

2. Non-Compliance by Providers

- Educational providers found to be in violation of NSAA standards may face the following actions:
 - **Revocation of Accreditation:** Providers who offer educational activities that fail to meet NSAA's content standards, fail to provide accurate documentation, or engage in unethical practices may lose their accreditation status. Revocation of accreditation will result in the immediate cessation of CEU credits being awarded for any of the provider's activities.
 - **Prohibition from Future Accreditation:** Providers with revoked accreditation may be prohibited from applying for future accreditation of their educational activities with the NSAA. The duration of this prohibition will be determined based on the nature and severity of the violations.

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3. Appeal Process

- Individuals or providers subject to enforcement actions have the right to appeal the decision. Appeals must be submitted in writing to the NSAA within 30 days of receiving notice of the enforcement action.
- The NSAA will review the appeal and make a determination within 60 days. The decision of the NSAA on appeals is final.

4. Record-Keeping

- The NSAA will maintain records of all enforcement actions, including the nature of the violation, the enforcement measures taken, and any appeals filed. These records will be kept confidential but may be reviewed during the NSAA's annual policy review process.

5. Communication

- Enforcement actions will be communicated to the affected individuals or providers in writing, detailing the reasons for the action, the specific consequences, and any steps that can be taken to remedy the situation or appeal the decision.

Review

This enforcement policy will be reviewed annually by the NSAA executive board to ensure it remains effective and aligned with the association's mission to uphold high standards in surgical education and professional development.