

ALBERTA COLLEGE OF PARAMEDICS

CONTINUING COMPETENCE PROGRAM MANUAL

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Revision History

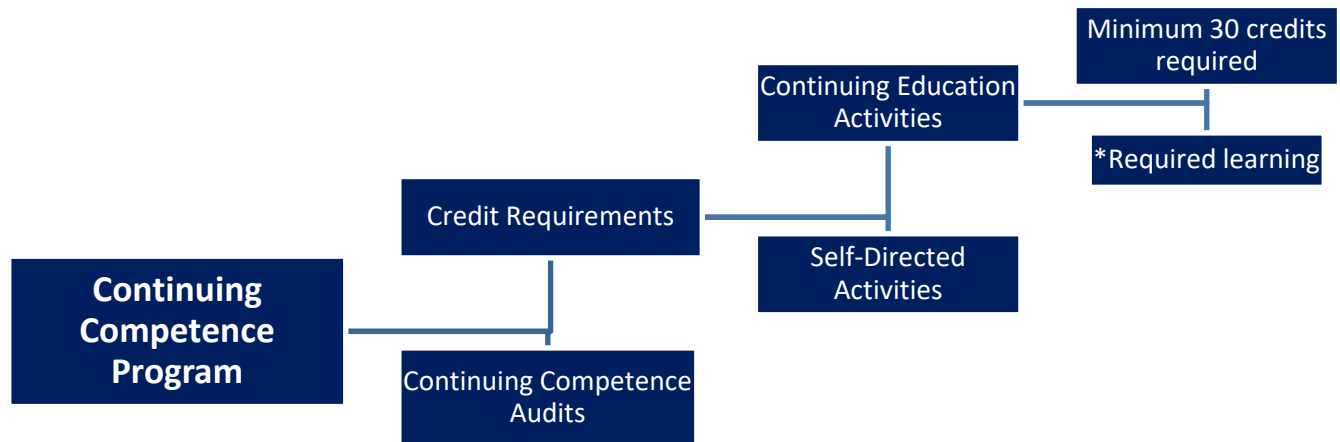
Version Date	Summary of Changes
March 2025	Editorial and content changes to improve clarity
June 2024	Editorial and content changes to improve clarity
April 2023	Content changes to include new approvals by Competence Committee
July 2022	Editorial and content changes to improve clarity
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January 2020	Updated style, terminology and branding
October 2019	Added content to self-directed learning section, provided more information on audit process, added to FAQs
October 2018	Original Document

DEFINITIONS

ACP	Advanced Care Paramedic
Approved Continuing Education Activities	Activities directly related to paramedicine in Alberta that have met the continuing education standards or program standards, including but not limited to: • Alberta approved paramedic programs & refresher programs • Approved continuing education courses • Approved advanced medical & trauma certifications • Curriculum development for Alberta approved paramedic programs & approved continuing education courses • Post-secondary programs or university/college courses directly related to the paramedicine profession
Approved Paramedic Program	A program that has met the College's approval standards for an education program
CC	Continuing Competence
College	College means the Alberta College of Paramedics; the corporation that regulates the profession of paramedicine in Alberta, established in accordance with and with the full authority as outlined in the HPA.
Continuing Education (CE) Activities	Continuing education activities are college-approved activities that meet the College's <i>Continuing Education Standards</i> .
Council	The governing committee of the College. Council means the Council of the College, established under section 5 of the HPA.
Education Program	An Alberta paramedicine educational program of study, at the level of Emergency Medical Responder (EMR), Primary Care Paramedic (PCP) or Advanced Care Paramedic (ACP).
EMR	Emergency Medical Responder
HPA	<i>Health Professions Act</i> , R.S.A. 2000, c. H-7
NOCP	National Occupation Competency Profile
PCP	Primary Care Paramedic
PPR	Paramedics Profession Regulation, developed in accordance with the HPA
Self-directed (SD) Activities	Activities that do not meet the College's <i>Continuing Education Standards</i> , but a regulated member chooses for themselves to meet a personally identified need

INTRODUCTION

Every profession regulated under the *Health Professions Act* (HPA) is required to maintain currency in their practice, as well as enhance and expand their knowledge and skills through a Continuing Competence (CC) program. The CC program fosters individual improvement and growth of professional practice, enhancing the level of service and care provided to Albertans.



*announced annually

The Continuing Competence program is broken down into two sections:

1. Credit Requirements
 - a. This section breaks down the credits required for each regulated member during a CC cycle and the two different types of activities that can be taken for credits
2. Continuing Competence Audits
 - a. This section covers the audit process that the College undertakes every year. Regulated members are required to participate in the audit if they are selected.

A member's participation in the CC program has a direct effect on their renewal eligibility. Non-compliance of the CC program requirements will result in disciplinary measures, up to and including suspension of the member's practice permit.

CONTINUING COMPETENCE CREDIT REQUIREMENT RULES

1. Participation in the CC program is mandatory for all regulated members on the general register, regardless of employment status or practice setting.
Exceptions:
 - (i) Regulated members on the provisional and courtesy register do not have credit requirements.
 - (ii) New regulated members added on the general register in the middle of a membership year, will have no credit requirements until they renew their registration.
2. The CC cycle follows the membership year from October 1 to September 30.
3. CC activities are divided into two activity categories in which credits can be achieved:
 - (i) Continuing Education activities
 - (ii) Self-directed activities
4. Regulated members must complete a minimum of 60 credits each CC cycle. At least 30 of those 60 credits must be earned in the category of Continuing Education activities to be eligible to renew their practice permit.
5. Members are able to fulfill both credit categories with only Continuing Education; however, Self-Directed activities cannot fulfill both credit requirements.
6. Continuing Education activities are generally assigned three credits for one hour of activity.
7. Self-directed activities are awarded credits based on each hour equaling one credit with a maximum of 30 credits per activity; however, **some activities are limited to 15 hours/15 Self-directed credits.**
8. Continuing competence credits exceeding the minimum 60 credits in one cycle cannot be carried over to the following continuing competence cycle.
9. The same or similar continuing competence activity cannot be claimed more than once for credits per CC cycle. For example, claiming a BLS certification course and a CPR-C certification course during the same cycle is not permitted.
10. Credits can be claimed for instructor (re)certification course(s) or research and/or curriculum development; however, subsequent teaching of the course cannot be claimed.
11. Credits cannot be claimed for practice hours (i.e. time spent carrying out the activities that regularly occur in the course of providing paramedicine services). This includes hours on-call as they are considered part of regular employment responsibilities/expectations, patient contacts, teaching and employment orientations.
12. If the minimum credit requirements are not fulfilled before renewal, eligibility for renewal will be denied until credit requirements are met and may result in suspension or cancellation of the practice permit.

13. Members on a leave of absence may be eligible for a credit adjustment for the time in which they are unable to practice.

14. Members on a leave of absence will be required to complete any required/mandatory activities.

Continuing Education (CE) Activities

CE activities are generally assigned three credits for one hour of activity.

Continuing Education (CE) activities are courses or professional development activities that meet the College's *Continuing Education Requirements*.

The College's Continuing Education Requirements outlines four conditions that must be met for an activity to be CE:

1. Inclusivity: available to all regulated members of the College. These activities cannot be opportunities exclusive to a select set of regulated members (e.g., employer training).
2. Content Quality & Applicability: applicable to the ongoing professional development of regulated members and provide quality education content for adult learners in paramedicine
3. Anticipated Outcome: a learning objective of the activity is clearly identified
4. Proof of Completion: regulated members receive proof of completion from the CE provider

A more detailed breakdown of the *Continuing Education Requirements* can be found on the College's website.

In addition to these requirements, all CE activities must offer skills and/or education for the purposes of expanding or refreshing the knowledge and/or skills of the paramedic practitioner who has already achieved entry to practice.

Program and course providers must first seek approval from the College before an activity can be recorded as CE. Continuing education providers seeking to have their course, conference or seminar approved as CE may complete the application on the College's website.

Preceptorship

The Competence Committee approved preceptorship of ACP and PCP students as an approved Continuing Education activity. Precepting ACP students is granted 20 credits per student to a maximum of three students. Precepting PCP students is granted 10 credits per student to a maximum of six students.

The Record of Preceptorship form for ACP and PCP students is available in the member portal.

A list of approved CE opportunities is provided in the member portal.

Self-Directed (SD) Activities

SD activities are assigned one credit for one hour of activity.

Self-directed (SD) activities are professional development activities identified by the individual member based on their specific interest and learning needs. These activities do not need to meet the College's *Continuing Education Standards*.

SD activities may pertain to current practice or future goals. This category encourages members to assess their proficiencies and limitations through self-reflection and self-awareness and engage in lifelong learning.

SD activities must provide intellectual and/or practical knowledge that is relevant to the member's specific practice setting, or to their professional and ethical obligations in the provision of care. Workplace training, certification courses, participation in a working group or committee, research and development are all examples of self-directed activities.

A list of accepted types of SD activities is provided in the College website and member portal.

RECORD RETENTION

Regulated members must retain verifying documentation for every CC activity recorded. As per the *Health Professions Act (HPA)*, members must retain this documentation for a minimum of five years after the end of the CC cycle in which the activity was recorded. For example, all documentation for the 2019-2020 CC cycle must be kept until the end of the 2024-2025 CC cycle.

Documentation

In the event of a competence audit or at the request of the Registrar, members must provide verifying documentation confirming their continuing competence records. Providing false or misleading information is considered unprofessional conduct. Supporting documentation must include the following:

- Activity provider name and/or branding
- Name of activity
- Regulated member's name
- Date completed
- Number of hours awarded

Clear examples of supporting documentation the College **will** accept are:

- Certificates of completion
- Activity logs
- Transcripts
- Letters of completion or attendance
- *Record of Attendance* form
- *Study/Review Summary* form
- Meeting minutes
- Developed materials including published articles

Receipts alone will **not** be accepted as valid course completion documentation.

Record of Attendance

The record of attendance form serves as supporting documentation for SD activities where formal certificates of completion is generally not provided. Examples of SD activities where members may utilize the record of attendance form include round table discussions and community enhancement.

The record of attendance form is to be completed at the same time the activity is occurring and should be retained in conjunction with any summary notes and/or speaking materials provided.

The Record of Attendance form is available in the member portal.

Study/Review Summary

If a member opts to claim credits for study/review, they will be required to compose a summarizing report which will serve as the supporting documentation. Study/Review credits fall under the Self-Directed category and are granted at one credit per hour for a max of 15 credits/hours. The summary must be completed on the Study/Review Summary form and adhere to the following requirements:

- Minimum 150 words
- Minimum of three references

The Study/Review Summary form is available in the member portal.

CONTINUING COMPETENCE (CC) AUDIT

Regulated members may be required to undergo an assessment to validate and evaluate their CC activities. This assessment is conducted through the CC audit process of a regulated member's CC activities recorded in previous CC cycles. Regulated members that are selected for a competence audit are required to participate as per section 3.4.2 of the Standards of Practice.

The audit process includes the following:

- Review of completed activities recorded
- Relevance of activities to the profession and/or member's practice
- Review of member's written evaluation
- Review of supporting documentation provided

All members selected to participate are required to produce supporting documentation confirming the completion of activities recorded on their profile in the member portal.

Selection

Audits are conducted through random selection of members, as well as direct selection as per the Competence Committee and/or the Registrar.

Reasons members would be selected through direct selection include, but are not limited to:

- Members with an active "Mandatory CC Audit Participation" condition on their practice permit
- Reinstated members

Notifications and Deadlines

The College will notify members that they have been selected for audit via email to submit documentation by a specified deadline. Selected members must submit their supporting documentation as part of the audit process. Additional information on the CC audit will be posted in the *CC Audit Guide* each year including specified audit notification and review dates and how to submit supporting documentation.

Review and Decision Process

Audits are conducted by College administration and members from the Competence Committee.

There are two possible outcomes of the audit:

- The member has *met* audit requirements
- The member has *not met* audit requirements

Decisions are based on the following criteria:

- Review of activities recorded
- Relevance of activities to the profession and/or member's practice
- Review of member's written evaluation
- Review of supporting documentation provided

All members must successfully complete the CC audit as part of the CC program.

False or Misleading information

Any member found to have intentionally provided false or misleading information will be referred to the Complaints Director. Examples of providing false or misleading information include, but are not limited to:

- Falsified records of completion
- Recording unverifiable activities
- Altering supporting documentation such as transcripts, certifications, letters, etc.

Penalties for providing false or misleading information

Upon first instance that false or misleading information was provided, the member will be issued a written warning and be required to participate in the CC audit for two consecutive years following the initial finding.

If at any point it is determined that false or misleading information is provided a second time, the member will be subject to a fine, issued a second warning and be required to participate in the audit for another two consecutive years from the second instance.

If at any point it is determined that false or misleading information is provided a third time, the member will be referred to the Complaints Director in accordance with Section 51.1(1) of the *Health Professions Act*.

Results

A notice will be issued no later than 30 days from the date of the committee review stating the outcome of the audit. If the outcome states not met, recommendations and/or requirements will be provided to the regulated member. Only when the requirements have been completed will the regulated member have met the CC audit.

Members that do not complete the requirements by the specified deadline outlined in their notice will be in non-compliance of the CC program.

In the event that audit requirements are not fulfilled before practice permit renewal, eligibility for practice permit renewal will be denied until the requirements are met and may result in the suspension or cancellation of the practice permit.

Failure to Comply

Any member who fails to comply with the submission of their documentation and/or any resulting directions to correct issues according to the timelines is in non-compliance of the CC program. Members in non-compliance of the CC program may have their practice permit suspended and/or cancelled until such times as the requirements are met.

Members who demonstrate a pattern of non-compliance of the CC program may be referred to the Competence Committee, Registrar and/or the Complaints Director.

CREDIT ADJUSTMENT FOR LEAVE OF PRACTICE

A credit adjustment is offered when a major event occurs in a regulated member's life resulting in them taking a leave from practice. Members who are taking a medical leave from practice can request a continuing competence credit adjustment.

Regulated members on a leave of absence can receive a credit adjustment for the time they are not in practice. The intent is to relieve some stress around continuing competence requirements while they work through the event.

Section 1(1)(s) of the HPA defines incapacitated as, "suffering from physical, mental or emotional condition or disorder or an addiction to alcohol or drugs as defined in the Pharmacy and Drug Act or other chemicals that impairs the ability to provide professional services in a safe and competent manner" this includes physical injury and mental crisis.

Short-term disability, long-term disability and stress leave are forms of medical leave.

A CC credit adjustment is granted for up to 18 months. In extreme circumstances, with the approval of the Registrar, this can be extended to a maximum of 24 months. Extreme circumstances commonly consist of regulated members who are receiving treatment for a severe physical injury, critical illness or mental health event. A leave of absence is not intended to be an indefinite part of one's registration.

For each month a member receives a CC credit adjustment, five credits will be deducted from required credits in the CC cycle in which the leave is taken.

Requesting a Credit Adjustment

Members can request an adjustment by accessing and completing the *Self-reported leave from practice - CC credit adjustment request form* found in the member portal.

- Regulated members are still required to complete annual registration renewal in order to keep an active permit.
- All request forms must be submitted by September 15 in order for College administration to review prior to the registration renewal deadline (September 30 at 4 pm).

Note: Requesting a credit adjustment does not impact, defer or delay any other College processes.

If an 18-month CC credit adjustment (maximum) was previously granted, regulated members must complete a full CC cycle (60 credits) prior to another adjustment being granted.