

Annotated 2016 Continuing Education Policy

On November 1, 2016, CFP Board announced changes to sections of its Continuing Education (CE) policies that will become effective February 1, 2017. The chart below presents CFP Board's 2016 CE Policy beside notes identifying substantive changes that will take effect in 2017. For more information on CFP Board's CE policies, visit www.CFP.net/CE.

2016 Policy	2017 Policy	
<p>The following outlines in detail the continuing education (CE) requirements for CFP® certification. CFP® professionals agree to adhere to these requirements and are responsible for reviewing and understanding updates as they occur.</p>		
<p>Last Updated: June 1, 2016</p>		
<h2>Section 1: CE Hour Requirements</h2>	<p><i>Section 1 remains substantially the same.</i></p>	
<h3>Initial CE Reporting Period</h3>		
<p>The CE requirement is effective immediately upon initial certification, or after the 12th month following successful completion of the Exam, whichever comes first. The number of CE credit hours for newly-certified CFP® professionals is prorated from the date of the initial certification to the end date of the initial certification period. CFP® professionals are required to complete 30 CE credit hours each two-year reporting period:</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 28.00 credit hours of General CE• 2.00 credit hours of CFP Board-approved Ethics CE		
<h3>General CE</h3>		
<p>General CE credit is granted for completion of programs that cover CFP Board's Principal Knowledge Topics and do not fall under a topic exclusion. CFP Board strongly recommends that CFP® professionals complete pre-accepted CE programs that are registered with CFP Board by CE sponsors. Pre-accepted CE programs can be found using the Find a CE Program search tool (www.CFP.net/FindCE). Non-sponsor CE programs that have not been registered with CFP Board can be submitted for consideration of General CE credit, but submissions must still meet CFP Board's CE program requirements in order to be eligible for CE credit.</p>		

CFP Board-Approved Ethics CE

Every CE reporting period, CFP® professionals must complete a CFP Board-approved Ethics CE program. Exceptions are not made. A list of CFP Board-approved Ethics CE programs can be found using the [Find a CE Program](#) search tool, and selecting the option to limit the search to CFP Board-approved Ethics CE programs.

Earning CE Credit Hours

CE credit hours must be earned during the current reporting period, which ends on the last day of a CFP® professional's renewal month. Excess CE credit hours may not be applied to subsequent reporting periods. CE credit hours earned for any one program may not be split between two reporting periods. CFP® professionals can receive credit for completing any given CE program once within their two-year reporting period; credit will not be granted for duplicate completions.

Section 2: CE Program Requirements

Section 2 remains substantially the same.

CE programs must meet the following criteria to be eligible for CE credit:

- Addresses one or more topics listed in CFP Board's [Principal Knowledge Topics](#).
- Contributes to the professional competency of participants in providing financial planning to clients.
- Are developed and/or conducted by persons qualified in the subject matter and in instructional design.
- Includes content that is current and accurate.
- Are designed to be at least 50 minutes in length.

Ethics CE programs have [additional requirements](#). In order to be eligible for Ethics CE credit, a program must be pre-approved by CFP Board.

Program Topic Exclusions

CE credit will not be accepted for programs with content pertaining to practice management, public accounting, computer hardware and software, marketing or prospecting, sales, specific company or product presentations, or any other topic not included in the list of CFP Board's [Principal Knowledge Topics](#).

CFP Board defines practice management as a focus on the planning, development and management of a CFP® professional's business operations, including topics such as office management, business model design, budgeting processes, leadership training, and other activities that do not directly contribute to the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed for a CFP® professional to provide competent and ethical financial planning to clients.

Section 3: Live Program Standards

CFP Board defines Live Programs as educational sessions in which the instructor or presenter conducts the program in real time; the instructor and students are engaged in the educational program at the same time.

- Examples (non-inclusive): in-person sessions, live webinars, live seminars, sessions at conferences, structured discussion groups, teleconferences, and college/university courses.

CE credit hours are determined using the following criteria:

1.00 CE credit hour per 50 minutes of instruction time; 0.50 CE credit hours per 25 minutes. Submissions must contain at least 50 minutes of instruction/presentation time. CE credit hours are rounded down to the nearest half CE credit hour.

- For example, a 75-minute program is eligible for 1.50 CE credit hours.

Section 4: Self-Study Program Standards

CFP Board defines Self-Study Programs as those in which the instructor and student are separated by time and location, or programs for which the student engages in the learning activity without an instructor. Self-Study Programs must include an assessment scored by the provider.

- Examples (non-inclusive): pre-recorded audio/video programs, recorded webcasts, self-paced online courses, printed material.

Section 3 remains substantially the same.

*The evaluation of coursework completed to fulfill the requirements for preparation and/or maintenance of **designations or licenses** related to the financial planning process will fall in this category.*

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CE credit hours are determined using the following criteria:

Self-Study program hours are reviewed and accepted based on a two-part requirement.

1. *EITHER* using a **pilot test** of the representative completion time* with a minimum of five participants *OR* using the following **word count formula**: $[(\# \text{ of words} / 180) + \text{actual duration time of any audio/video in minutes}] / 50 = \text{CE Credit Hours}$.
 - 1.00 CE credit hour per 50 minutes of average completion time; 0.50 CE credit hours per 25 minutes. Programs must be eligible for at least 1.00 CE credit hour. CE credit hours are rounded down to the nearest half CE credit hour.
2. Evidence of satisfactory completion, including an assessment/examination scored by the program provider.
 - The assessment/examination must contain at least 10 questions per full CE credit hour (Example: a 1.50 CE credit hour program must include an assessment containing at least 10 questions).
 - A passing score is 70% or higher (80% or higher for Ethics CE programs).

*Exam time may not be included in the average completion time.

Section 5: CE for College Level Courses

Section 5 remains substantially the same.

Non-sponsor CE programs that have not been registered with CFP Board, both Live and Self-Study, offered by colleges and universities (including community colleges) may be submitted for CE credit provided they meet CFP Board's [CE program requirements](#). Both college credit and non-college credit courses may be submitted for consideration of General CE credit. CE credit awarded for completion of a college course may not exceed 28.00 CE credit hours during any reporting period.

CE credit hours are determined using the following criteria:

15.00 CE credit hours per one semester unit of credit. 10.00 CE credit hours per one quarter unit of credit. For non-credit courses, the standard live CE credit hour quantification method

should be used (1.00 CE credit hour per 50 minutes of instruction time. For example:

- A 1 semester credit course is eligible for 15.00 CE credit hours.
- A 2 quarter credit course is eligible for 20.00 CE credit hours.
- A non-credit course with 750 minutes of instruction is eligible for 15.00 CE credit hours.

Section 6: Teaching and Authorship Standards

CE credit for teaching and/or authorship may not exceed 50 percent of the total CE credit hours required during any reporting period. In a majority of instances, the maximum CE credit for teaching/authorship is 15.00 CE credit hours per reporting period. These activities are reported online using the Non-Registered CE Self-Reporting form. There is no fee for self-reporting teaching/authorship CE credit.

Teaching

CFP Board defines teaching as speaking, instruction or acting as a discussion leader. CE will be awarded for the first presentation only; CFP® professionals may not receive CE credit for subsequent presentations of the program within their two-year CE reporting period. CFP® professionals may not receive attendance CE credit for a program that they have received teaching CE credit for.

To receive teaching CE credit, the CFP® professional must document the following:

- Topics addressed are consistent with those in CFP Board's [Principal Knowledge Topics](#).
- Verification from the institution or organization of role, responsibilities, presentation dates and times.
- Evidence that presentation was directed to financial services professionals.

Teaching Credit Exclusions

CE credit is not granted for presentations designed primarily for persons not engaged in financial services (ex. presentations to the general public, presentations for marketing purposes,

Section 6 has been revised to more clearly define criteria to be used in determining what Teaching and Authorship activities qualify for CE credit.

Teaching policy has been substantially changed.

Teaching is now defined as serving in the capacity of a faculty member or adjunct faculty member responsible for the planning and delivery of course material at the university level, where instruction and preparation time is equal to a minimum of 30 hours per quarter/semester.

CE will be granted using these guidelines: The CFP® professional is the primary instructor of the course; responsibilities include creating course syllabus, content and assessments; course focus is consistent with CFP Board's [Principal Knowledge Topics](#).

television and radio talk shows, and participation in financial literacy programs).

CE credit hours are determined using the following criteria:

2.00 CE credit hours per 50 minutes of instruction time; 1.00 CE credit hours per 25 minutes. Submissions must contain at least 50 minutes of instruction/presentation time. CE credit hours are rounded down to the nearest full CE credit hour. For example:

- Teaching a 75-minute program is eligible for 3.00 CE credit hours.

Authorship

CFP Board defines authorship as an activity with an end result of publication. CE is accepted for authoring published articles and books covering subjects consistent with those in CFP Board's [Principal Knowledge Topics](#) provided they contribute to the professional competency of the author, as well as for authoring CE programs accepted for CE credit.

To receive authorship CE credit, the CFP® professional must document the following:

- Topics addressed are consistent with those in CFP Board's [Principal Knowledge Topics](#).
- Book or article is published before CE is requested.
- Publication must have a minimum word count of 9,000.
- Verification from the publisher that the CFP® professional is the author.

Authorship of a CFP Board-approved Ethics CE program will be granted 2.00 Ethics CE credit hours.

Authorship Credit Exclusions

CE credit is not granted for short newspaper and magazine articles; Q&As and company newsletter articles for clients; articles intended for an audience not in financial services (ex. presentation to the general public, presentations for marketing purposes, television and radio talk shows, and participation in financial literacy programs).

CE credit hours are determined using the following criteria:

Authorship policy has been substantially changed.

Authorship activities are now defined as original work, scholarly contribution and/or research directly related to the development of papers, presentations or other materials that contribute to the financial planning body of knowledge.

Authorship CE will be granted using these guidelines: the CFP® professional is a primary or secondary author and listed as a writing contributor; the topic addressed is consistent with those in CFP Board's Principal Knowledge Topics and is directly or indirectly related to financial planning practice; outcome of original work, scholarly contribution and/or research has been accepted for publication and published within the dates of the reporting period.

Authors may receive CE credit for their research and writing time to the extent it maintains or improves their professional competence. 1.00 CE credit hour per 50 minutes of research/writing time. Submissions must contain at least 50 minutes of research/writing time. CE credit hours are rounded down to the nearest half CE credit hour. For example:

- Spending 750 minutes of research/writing time authoring a publication is eligible for 15.00 CE credit hours.

Section 7: Reporting CE

CFP® professionals can access up-to-date information regarding CE credit hours that have been reported for them by logging into their online account (www.CFP.net/login). CFP® professionals do not have to self-report CE credit hours for program completions reported to CFP Board directly by CE sponsors.

Pre-Accepted CE Programs

CE Credit Hours Reporting by CE Sponsors

CE sponsors are required to report completion of pre-accepted CE programs within four weeks of program completion. Upon receipt, it may take CFP Board 3-5 business days to upload the records to CFP® professionals' accounts. When CE credit hours are uploaded, an email notification from CFP Board is sent to the individuals receiving the credit.

Self-Reporting CE Credit Hours

A CFP® professional may also self-report registered programs through their online account in order to apply credit in advance of the four week time-frame allotted for CE sponsor reporting. CE sponsor-reported records will overwrite self-reported records in our system, which will prevent the CFP® professional from receiving duplicate credit.

Non-Sponsor CE

Non-sponsor CE programs not registered with CFP Board may be reported [online](#) for consideration of CE credit. A nonrefundable \$25.00 reporting fee is required for each non-sponsor CE program submitted. Programs will be reviewed to ensure they meet CFP Board's [CE requirements](#) prior to

Section 7 has been revised substantially.

CE Credit Hours Reporting by CE Sponsors:

CE Sponsor reporting will now be reported within 14 days of the course completion date.

CFP Board will upload files within 3 business days of receipt.

Self-Reporting CE Credit Hours:

Reference to four week time-frame will be updated as stated above.

Non-Sponsor CE: *The non-refundable fee for reporting non-registered programs will increase to \$40 per program.*

CFP Board will review online submissions within 2-3 business days.

acceptance. Program reviews will be completed within 5-7 business days of submission.

Documentation Required for Self-Reported Live Non-Sponsor CE:

CFP Board *may* request the following documentation:

- Certificate of Completion/Attendance or unofficial transcript showing successful completion of program.
- Program summary or description.
- Timed agenda with actual dates and times to verify topics, duration, meals, and breaks.

Documentation Required for Self-Reported Self-Study Non-Sponsor CE:

CFP Board *may* request the following documentation:

- Certificate of Completion or unofficial transcript showing successful completion of program and exam score.
- Official, detailed outline/syllabus or course description.
- A copy of the final assessment/examination provided by the CE provider or documentation from the CE provider verifying the number of assessment/examination questions.

Important Note: Self-Study CE programs must have 10 assessment questions per hour of CE credit. Exceptions are not granted.

Section 8: Record Keeping and Failure to Comply

Documentation Retention Requirement

Documentation for CE hours reported to CFP Board must be retained by the CFP® Professional for at least four years after program completion. At minimum, that documentation should include:

- Certificate of Completion/Attendance or unofficial transcript showing successful completion of program.
- Program summary or description.
- Timed agenda with actual dates and times to verify topics, duration, meals, and breaks (for Live Programs).

Only online submissions will be accepted; fax and mail submissions will be returned.

Section 8 remains substantially the same with one exception. Document retention is changed from four years to three years.

- A copy of the final assessment/examination provided by the CE provider or documentation from the CE provider verifying the number of assessment/examination questions (for Self-Study Programs).

Each CFP® professional is responsible for demonstrating full compliance with the CE requirement. CFP Board may at any time request documentation of any registered CE credits self-reported by the CFP® professional.

Unsupported, misstated or fraudulent reporting of CE credits is a violation of CFP Board's *Rules of Conduct* and may be grounds for disciplinary action up to revocation of the CFP® certification.

Section 9: Audits

CFP Board conducts random audits of CE credit hours reported to CFP® professionals' accounts for the most recent reporting period. When audited:

- The CFP® professional is notified of the audit and asked to send documentation of CE credit hours that were reported to CFP Board.
- The reported CE credit hours and any supporting documentation are reviewed by CFP Board, and a determination is made as to whether the hours are accepted or denied.
- The CFP® professional receives confirmation from CFP Board regarding the audit and any further action needed.

If any CE hours are revoked based on documentation submitted as part of the audit and a deficiency results, the CFP® professional will be given 90 days to report additional credit hours to fix the deficiency. Additional credit hours may be moved from the current reporting period, if accepted and/or must be reported by a CE sponsor or self-reported through the non-sponsor CE reporting process. The CFP® professional will remain authorized to use the CFP® marks during this 90-day period.

If the deficiency is not remedied, a deficiency notice will be sent to the individual. If the necessary credit hours remain unreported after the 90-day period, the individual will no longer be certified and will not be authorized to use the CFP® marks.

Section 9 remains substantially the same.

Section 10: Waivers

Requests for a waiver of the CE requirement due to extenuating circumstances are reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Written requests along with supporting documentation should be made to CFP Board through [the Policy Exception Request Form](#).

Section 11: Revisions

The Continuing Education Standards and requirements stated in these sections are subject to revision. Changes and additions are on CFP Board's website. Certificants are responsible for staying up-to-date and meeting the current standards.

Last Updated: June 1, 2016

Section 10 remains substantially the same.

Section 11 remains substantially the same.