ContinuingProfessionalEducation(CPE)Guide

CPCM | CFCM | CCCM

Program Year
2016–2017

NCMA
NATIONAL CONTRACT MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

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INTRODUCTION

Through its three designations—the Certified Federal Contracts Manager (CFCM), Certified Commercial Contracts Manager (CCCM), and Certified Professional Contracts Manager (CPCM))—NCMA is setting standards for contracts management. Contracting professionals have the opportunity to have their education, experience, training, and knowledge validated by NCMA's certification process.

TWO CATEGORIES OF CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION (CPE)

The first category is *Qualifying CPE*. To qualify for an NCMA designation, a CPCM candidate must earn 120 hours of CPE. A candidate for the CFCM or CCCM must earn 80 hours of CPE. The general rule is that Qualifying CPE must be earned no earlier than 10 years from the date of application for certification. This rule does not apply when advanced degrees are substituted for CPE.

The second category is *Recertifying CPE*. To retain the NCMA CPCM, CFCM, and CCCM designations, a certificate holder must complete at least 60 hours of CPE in government or commercial contract management topics or related technical subjects every five years.

The individual certificate holder has the responsibility to comply with the NCMA CPE requirements. Individual designees are responsible for (1) seeking opportunities for CPE, (2) successfully completing CPE programs and activities, (3) maintaining documentation of the CPE hours completed for reporting to the board if requested, and (4) monitoring their own progress toward meeting the CPE requirements.

EXPIRATION OF CPE

Qualifying CPE hours will not be considered if they are more than 10 years old. This restriction does not apply when advanced degrees are substituted for qualifying CPE. Recertifying CPE must be earned within the five-year recertification cycle.

ACCEPTABLE PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

NCMA does not establish detailed criteria for CPE programs; however, it does require that CPE contribute to the designated contract manager's professional proficiency and professional growth. To determine if programs contribute to professional proficiency and to facilitate documentation, the following criteria for CPE programs may be considered as appropriate.

A. For Both Group and Individual/Self-Study Programs
1. An agenda or outline is prepared in advance and retained by the program sponsor that indicates the name(s) of the instructor(s); the subject(s)/topic(s) covered; the date(s) and length of the program; and when appropriate, the program's learning objectives and any prerequisites.
2. The program is developed by individuals qualified or experienced in the topic/subject matter.
3. Program materials are technically accurate, current, and sufficient to meet the program's learning objectives.
4. The program is reviewed, when appropriate, by other qualified or experienced individuals. The nature and extent of any review may vary depending on characteristics of the program.
5. Evaluations of the program are obtained from instructors and participants, when appropriate.

The following programs and activities qualify for CPE hours provided they are in acceptable topics and subjects as previously discussed.

B. Group Programs
(where attendance records are maintained and where the program is presented by a qualified instructor or discussion leader)
1. Internal training programs (courses, seminars, and workshops).
2. The portion of a contract management organization staff meeting in which a structured educational program is used to provide staff with knowledge regarding topics and subjects such as those included here. Informal discussions of current events in the contract management profession do not qualify for CPE hours.
3. University and college courses (credit and noncredit).
4. Education and development programs presented at conferences, conventions, meetings, seminars, and workshops of professional organizations. For example, the NCMA World Congress, Government Contract Management Symposium, and education programs presented at monthly chapter meetings.
5. Training programs presented by other contract management organizations, educational organizations, foundations, and associations. For example, education and training programs sponsored by NCMA, NCMA's individual chapters, ISM, NIGP, etc.

C. Individual Study Programs

(where participants are required to register for the program and the program sponsor provides evidence, such as a certificate or other document, of satisfactory completion)

1. Correspondence courses, self-study guides, and workbooks.
2. Courses given through CDs or DVDs and via the Internet.
3. Online CPE sponsored by NCMA or other allied organizations.
4. NCMA's audio seminar series.

D. Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA) and Federal Acquisition Certification-Contracting (FAC-C) Certifications

Candidates for NCMA certification programs who have earned a DAWIA or FAC-C contracting certification Level I or higher may submit proof of that certification in fulfillment of all CPE requirements. Recertification applicants whose DAWIA or FAC-C certifications are current are not required to provide additional documentation of the 60 hours of CPE required for recertification.

E. Other Professional Activities

(subject to the limitations discussed later under "Determining Compliance")

1. Serving as a speaker, instructor, or discussion leader at group programs, such as NCMA conferences, that qualify for CPE hours.
2. Publishing articles and books or developing CPE courses on topics and subjects that qualify for CPE hours and that contribute directly to the author's professional proficiency. For example, writing an article published in *Contract Management* magazine.
3. Candidates who have earned certifications through the Project Management Institute (PMI), the Institute for Supply Management (ISM), or the National Institute for Government Purchasing (NIGP) may substitute those certifications for any qualifying CPE requirement.

ACCEPTABLE TOPICS AND SUBJECTS

CPE that would satisfy the NCMA Certification Program's requirements should be in topics or related technical subjects applicable to contract management areas. Examples of such topics and subjects include, but are not limited to, the following:

- accounting principles and standards
- analytical procedures
- assessment of management controls
- audit of contract compliance/costs
- best practices in contracts management
- budgeting
- business law
- business
- compliance with laws and regulations
- computer science
- computer security
- contract auditing
- contract management
- contract planning or analysis
- contract related fraud
- cost accounting
- data analysis
- economics
- earned value mgt
- electronic data processing
- evaluation design
- contract auditing

- contract management
- contract management systems
- contract planning or analysis
- contract types
- contract-related fraud
- disputes resolution
- investigations
- financial reporting
- forecasts and projections
- industrial engineering
- information resources management
- information technology
- intellectual property
- interviewing techniques
- legal issues
- market research
- mathematics
- operations research
- oral and written communications
- patents

- performance or operations
- performance measurement and reporting
- principles of management & supervision
- probability
- process reengineering
- productivity
- program evaluation
- proposal/solicitation development
- public policy and structure
- quality assurance/ control
- report writing
- risk assessment
- statistics
- strategic planning
- termination of contracts
- value engineering

Instruction in topics and subjects that meet the CPE requirements of other professional organizations (the ISM or the NIGP, for example) would satisfy the CPE requirement, providing that the CPE maintains or enhances professional proficiency in contract management.

The NCMA designee is initially responsible for ensuring that a topic or subject qualifies as acceptable CPE. For instance, there are CPE programs that include a wide variety of topics and subjects that may contribute to maintaining or enhancing the professional proficiency of some

designees, but not others. Determining what topics and subjects are appropriate for individuals to satisfy the CPE requirement is a matter of professional judgment. Among the considerations in exercising that judgment are the individual's experience, the contract management area(s) in which he or she works, and the responsibilities he or she assumes in performing contract management functions.

UNACCEPTABLE TOPICS AND SUBJECTS

Examples of programs/activities or topics/subjects that do not qualify for CPE hours include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Informal on-the-job training;
2. Basic or elementary courses in topics and subjects in which the NCMA designee already has the necessary knowledge and skills that served as the initial basis for qualification as an NCMA designee;
3. Programs that are not designed to maintain or enhance contract managers' professional proficiency, but are designed for the general public, such as résumé writing, improving parent–child relations, personal investments, money management, and retirement planning;
4. Sales-oriented programs that demonstrate office equipment;
5. Programs restricted to an organization's administrative operations, such as how to prepare time and attendance reports or internal administrative reporting responsibilities;
6. Business sessions at professional organization conferences, conventions, or meetings;
7. Participation as a member of a committee of a professional organization; and
8. Preparation and presentation time for repeated presentations within the renewal cycle.

DEFICIENCY MAKEUP

Designees who have not completed the required number of CPE hours for any renewal cycle will have six months (January 1–June 30) immediately following the end of the renewal cycle to make up the deficiency. Any CPE hours completed toward a deficiency in one cycle should be documented in the CPE records and may not be counted toward the requirements for the next.

MEASURING CPE HOURS

A CPE hour may be granted for each 50 minutes of participation in programs and activities that qualifies. At conferences and conventions, where individual presentations are less than and/or more than 50 minutes, the sum of the presentations should be considered as one total program. For example, two 90-minute, two 50-minute, and three 40-minute presentations equal 400 minutes, or eight CPE hours.

Sponsors of CPE programs should monitor their programs to accurately assign the appropriate number of hours. NCMA designees should earn CPE hours only for the actual time they attend the program. Preparation time for students participating in a CPE program is not counted.

Designees completing or teaching university or college noncredit courses should receive CPE hours based on the guidance previously mentioned. For designees completing university or college credit courses, each semester hour credit equals 15 CPE hours, and each quarter hour credit equals 10 CPE hours. Instructors for university or college credit courses should receive CPE hours based on the number of credit hours the university/college gives a student for successfully completing the course (a three-semester hour credit course x 15 CPE hours per semester hour = 45 CPE hours).

An instructor should not receive CPE hours for teaching a course more than once within the renewal cycle unless the course was changed significantly. The maximum number of CPE hours that may be granted to an individual as an instructor should not exceed 30 hours for any renewal cycle.

Participants in correspondence or individual study programs should be granted CPE hours when they satisfactorily complete the program. These programs generally should be pre-tested by the vendor or sponsor to determine the average completion time, and CPE hours should be granted in an amount equal to the average completion time.

For example, a correspondence course that takes an average of 600 minutes to complete should be granted 10 CPE hours.

Speakers, instructors (university/college noncredit courses), and discussion leaders at programs that qualify for CPE should receive CPE hours for preparation and presentation time to the extent the topic or subject matter contributes directly to their professional proficiency. One hour of CPE should be granted for each 50 minutes of presentation time, and up to two additional hours of CPE may be granted for advance preparation for each 50 minutes of their presentation.

For example, a discussion leader could receive up to 21 hours of CPE for a presentation of 350 minutes (seven hours for presentation and 14 hours for preparation). An individual should not receive CPE hours for either preparation or presentation time for repeated presentations that he or she makes within a renewal cycle, unless the topic or subject matter involved was changed significantly. The maximum number of CPE hours that may be granted to an individual as a speaker, an instructor, or a discussion leader should not exceed 40 hours for any renewal cycle.

Articles, books, or CPE courses written by designees on topics and subjects related to their expertise and/or work that contribute directly to professional proficiency will qualify for CPE hours in the year they are published. One hour of CPE should be granted for each hour devoted to writing articles, books, or course materials that are published. However, CPE hours for published writings should not exceed 20 hours for any renewal cycle.

MAINTAINING DOCUMENTATION

The designee is responsible for maintaining documentation of the CPE hours completed. Records should include the following information for each CPE program or activity attended or completed:

1. Sponsoring organization (NCMA or local chapter);
2. Location at which the program was given;
3. Title of the program and a brief description of its contents;
4. Dates attended for group programs or dates completed for individual study programs (e.g., July 2–6, 2016);
5. Number of CPE hours earned and evidence of attendance or completion. This might include the following:

    a. Record of the grade received for a university or college credit course;
    b. Outline and evidence of attendance or of having been the instructor or discussion leader from the program sponsor;
    c. Certificate or other evidence of completion from the program sponsor; or
    d. Copy of the published book, article, or course.

A copy of a current certificate indicating compliance with the DAWIA requirement for 80 hours of CPE every two years will suffice as evidence of having earned the required number of hours.

PREPARING CPE REPORTS

Designees are required to maintain records of CPE hours earned and provide supporting documentation on CPE hours completed.

EXEMPTIONS AND EXCEPTIONS

Designees who have achieved "lifetime certification status" are not required to earn CPE.

The NCMA director of certification may grant exceptions from the CPE requirements for a valid reason such as foreign residency, ill health, family leave, or military service. The certificate holder should fully describe the reasons for requesting an exception and submit it to the director of certification for a determination. The Certification Department will notify the designee of the decision and retain that documentation for an appropriate period of time.

RESERVATIONS AND APPEALS

The director of certification may waive any and all requirements on a case-by-case basis depending upon the extenuating circumstances that may be presented. In any such case, the director of certification's decision shall be final.