



Getting people moving

American Council on Exercise® (ACE) Professional Education

Continuing Education Provider Program and Services Manual: Becoming an ACE-Approved Education Provider

Version: 2026

Prepared by: ACE Professional Education

Contact: educationprovider@acefitness.org

Website: www.acefitness.org

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Section 1: Overview of ACE Continuing Education

Provider Program and Services

Why become an ACE Continuing Education Provider?

ACE Continuing Education (CE) Providers are critical to the high-quality, continued education of health and exercise professionals around the world. Share your expertise with thousands of health and exercise professionals by becoming an ACE Continuing Education Provider. Whether you offer distance learning courses, live webinars, workshops, or conferences, we'll help you get recognized by professionals seeking Continuing Education Credits (CECs) to maintain their credentials.

By becoming an ACE CE Provider, your approved courses will be added to the [Trusted Provider](#) page of the ACE website and will allow ACE Professionals to earn CECs for completing your course. ACE Professionals are required to earn a minimum of 2.0 CECs (20 hours of continuing education) every 2-year renewal cycle to maintain their credential(s) and often refer to the list of trusted providers when selecting their CE courses.

Please note, ACE approves individual CE courses, not organizations. Each course requires a unique course application.

What is the difference between an ACE CE Provider and an ACE Partner?

An ACE CE Provider offers ACE-approved CE courses. ACE also offers various partner programs, as described below.

Partner program opportunities may be available to:

- **Fitness Facilities and Health Clubs:** These partnerships are designed to equip your staff with industry-leading certifications and training focused on sustainable behavior change.
- **Education Institutions:** These partnerships are designed for colleges, universities, and training institutions seeking to integrate industry-recognized health and fitness education into their academic programs.
- **International Partners:** ACE works with established education providers and organizations around the world to expand access to trusted health and fitness education within local and regional markets.
- **Corporate Wellness and Healthcare Organizations:** ACE can equip your corporate wellness staff with the skills to drive real health improvements. Keep

- your staff certified and up to date, ensuring lasting benefits for both your employees and your business such as reduced sick days, increased productivity, and engaging employees in a healthier lifestyle.
- **ACE's Remarketing/Partner Program:** This is a more integrated partnership with CE providers in which ACE licenses, hosts, markets, and distributes select partner courses directly within the ACE ecosystem, providing expanded exposure, streamlined learner access, operational support, and the opportunity to generate ongoing revenue through a shared revenue model.
 - o Please note, an ACE CE Provider's course may also become an ACE Partnered course, but it requires the completion of separate application and approval processes.

Our Professional Education Services Team will be unable to assist with partner-related questions, but the [Contact Us](#) form at [becoming an ACE Partner](#) will get you connected with the right team.

Section 2: Confirm Course Eligibility

To be eligible, the provider must ensure the course meets the following requirements.

Provider must adhere to the following:

- [ACE Education Partner and Provider Code of Ethics](#)
- [Continuing Education Provider Agreement](#)
- [Continuing Education Provider Policies and Procedures](#)

Course content must fall within the [ACE Scope of Practice](#) for exercise professionals.

- For example, content containing language or information about diagnosing, prescribing, treating injury/disease, rehabilitating, or counseling would NOT be approved.
- Below are the exam content outlines, which provide the scope of practice for each of ACE's National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA)-accredited certifications, as well as the ACE Position Statements on Nutrition Scope of Practice and Nutritional Supplements for all health and exercise professionals:

- [Personal Trainer](#)
- [Group Fitness Instructor](#)
- [Health Coach](#)
- [Medical Exercise Specialist](#)
- Position Statements:
 - [Nutrition Scope of Practice](#)
 - [Nutritional Supplements](#)

Content must be delivered in a structured learning environment, but depending on the type of course it may include both synchronous (live) activities or asynchronous (self-study) activities.

- Examples of activities that ACE does NOT consider to be structured learning include:
 - Keynote presentations
 - Poster sessions
 - Master classes
 - Motivational or self-help classes
 - Breaks and lunches
 - Networking or social hours
 - Panel discussions, roundtables, and symposiums
 - Q&A sessions
 - Time spent learning assessments, handing out certificates, taking group photos, or registering for a course
 - Homework (aside from reading or watching required learning material)

NOTE: Some exceptions may be made for conference sessions (keynote speakers, panels, Q&As, etc.) if there are three or more clear learning objectives that provide attendees with knowledge or skills within the professional's scope of practice.

Course MUST be current:

- Courses must be less than 10 years old. If course content is updated with additional or new information and/or references, the course must be submitted as a new course. The new course approval will receive a new course code, and learners can again earn CECs by completing the updated version of the course.

Commonly approved CE course topics include:

- Anatomy and exercise physiology
- Exercise programming and fitness assessments
- Behavior changes and motivation
- Injury prevention and post-rehab programming
- Nutrition (within [ACE Nutrition Scope of Practice](#))
- Business, leadership, and management
- Professional conduct and ethics

ACE will NOT approve:

- Courses that prepare students to take NCCA-accredited certification exams (i.e., exam prep workshops)
- Courses that are positioned or titled as core certifications do not hold NCCA accreditation.
 - Please note, ACE Professionals may earn CECs for passing the certification exams by submitting a CEC Petition.
- Courses that are redundant to the experience and education of ACE Professionals (e.g., NCCA-accredited certifications for Personal Trainer, Group Fitness Instructor, Health Coach, or Medical Exercise Specialist).
- Courses that prepare students for a different field (e.g., massage) or are beyond the scope of practice for ACE Professionals
 - NOTE: Partial credit may be awarded if a course is outside the ACE Scope of Practice, but the course content falls within the broader spectrum of the allied healthcare continuum.
- Courses that are not delivered in a structured learning environment

Topics deemed to be outside the ACE Scope of Practice include, but are not limited to:

- Courses that prepare students to take NCCA-accredited certification exams (e.g., exam prep workshops)
- Blood flow restriction training
- Counseling
- Cupping
- Diagnosing
- Instrument-assisted soft tissue mobilization (IASTM)
- Kinesiotaping
- Monitoring progress for medically referred clients
- Prescribing
- Recommending supplements or creating individualized meal plans for clients
- Rehabilitating
- Treating injury or disease
- Vibration-assisted self-myofascial release tools
- Working with “patients”

Confirm Instructor Qualifications

It is the responsibility of the Education Provider to verify instructor credentials and to confirm that each course is taught by at least one instructor who meets the instructor qualifications. Failure to do so may result in course denial, and repeated failures may result in ACE revoking Education Provider status.

All instructors must agree to the [ACE Instructor Code of Ethics](#).

All instructors and authors must meet at least one qualifying credential standard.

Health and Fitness Courses – Acceptable Qualifications:

- Bachelor’s degree in exercise science or health-related field

- If this is the only credential the instructor has, the degree must directly relate to the course content. For example, a bachelor's degree in dance would allow the instructor to only teach courses related to dance. Additional qualifying credentials would be required for the instructor to teach other subjects.
- Current NCCA-accredited health or fitness certification
- Current Experienced Registered Yoga Teacher (E-RYT) credential (yoga courses only)
- Current National Pilates Certification Program (NPCP) credential (Pilates courses only)
- Current license or certification in a health-related profession
 - If this is the only qualifying credential the instructor has, the field of study should directly relate to the course content. For example, a nurse practitioner may be approved to teach courses on certain health education subjects but would need additional qualifying credentials to be able to teach exercise programming courses.

Business, Leadership, or Technology Courses – Acceptable Qualifications:

- Bachelor's degree in a related field
- Relevant license or NCCA-accredited certification

If you don't have a qualified instructor:

- Work with our Education Advisors to get ACE Certified
- Add a qualified co-instructor (they may review content without teaching)

Accepted Course Formats

Determine the course type that best matches your delivery format:

- Conference: One-time event that may include multiple sessions for participants to choose from that run concurrently (can be in-person or virtual). Conference spreadsheet required to complete application.

- NOTE: Pre- or post-conference sessions must be submitted separately as workshops.
- Live or Virtual Workshop: Live training that may happen multiple times a year with a singular timeline for all participants to attend (includes synchronous learning activities only)
 - May be in-person or virtual, but asynchronous (self-study) activities will NOT be included in the total CECs awarded.
 - Attendance satisfies comprehension check requirement (no quiz required).
 - Attendees follow the same fixed schedule and course curricula (multiple sessions running concurrently must be submitted as a conference).
- Online Distance Learning: Online, self-paced course with a quiz that may be delivered via a learning management system or a combination of audio, video, text, and other enhanced learning activities [includes asynchronous (self-study) learning activities only]
 - Self-paced, pre-recorded content
 - Must have a quiz to satisfy the comprehension check
 - Some short-duration distance learning courses may be submitted as webinars (see webinar section below for additional information).
- Blended Learning (online + in-person – submit as Online Distance Learning course): Combination of an online distance learning course with a quiz and in-person workshop (may include both synchronous and asynchronous learning activities)
 - Course timeline must specify activity type (asynchronous vs. synchronous) and duration.
 - Quiz or exam required to satisfy the comprehension check (exam may be online or in-person)
- Book: A correspondence course, including a book and/or e-book
 - Must include a quiz to satisfy the comprehension check

- Short Live or Recorded Event (Webinar): May include recorded conference sessions, webinars, videos or podcasts, online sessions or webcasts – with a duration of a minimum of 50 minutes with a maximum of 2 hours
 - Live Event or Webinar: Tracked attendance or quiz can satisfy the comprehension check
 - Recorded Event or Webinar: Quiz required to satisfy the comprehension check
- Professional Conduct and Ethics (PC&E) Course: ACE is requiring all ACE Certified Professionals to complete 1 hour (0.1 CEC) of CE focused on Professional Conduct and Ethics during every 2-year certification period to become eligible to renew their ACE Certification(s).
 - If your course is **NOT** PC&E-specific but does have 60+ minutes dedicated to PC&E content, select “YES” on your application and specify exactly where that content can be found in the course.
 - If your course is live in-person or virtually in real-time, select the Workshop Course application.
 - If your course features any recorded sections (self-paced) or a blend of in-person and recorded, select Online Learning Course.

Prepare Required Application Materials

While requirements vary by course type, all applications require:

- Course title
- 100- to 150-word course description
- Three measurable learning objectives
 - Learning objectives **MUST**:
 - Begin with: “Students will be able to...”
 - Be specific, measurable, and aligned with the outline
- Detailed outline with hour-by-hour breakdown (include breaks/meals)

- Instructor/author names and emails
- Course materials (PDF, DOC, or DOCX)
- Comprehension check
 - Attendance for live or virtual workshops and conferences is acceptable
 - Quiz for DVD/books, online, recorded, or hybrid courses (see details in next section)

Each course type has a specific submission checklist you must follow:

- [Conference Checklist](#) and [Conference Spreadsheet](#)
- [Workshop Checklist](#) (live or virtual)
- [Online Distance Learning and Blended Learning Course Checklist](#)
 - Must include three completed [Course Reviewer Forms](#)
- [Short Live or Recorded Event \(Webinar\) Checklist](#)
- [Book Review Checklist](#)

Important: Files over 10 MB must be emailed separately to educationprovider@acefitness.org with a subject line “ATTN: ACE Course Reviewer – Application Documents Attached”

Comprehension Check Requirements

A comprehension check is required for ALL continuing education courses to ensure that learners are gaining the intended knowledge and skills provided by the course. The type of comprehension check required depends on the type of course.

For Live Courses (in-person or virtual), there are two types of acceptable comprehension checks:

- Attendance: Must be tracked at the beginning and end of the course to ensure participants attended the event in its entirety
 - Must describe how attendance will be tracked
- Practical or written exam administered during the event

- Be sure to include a copy of the final assessment as well as details on:
 - What is considered a passing score
 - What happens if participants do not pass

For Online Distance Learning, Blended Learning Courses, and Book courses, there MUST be a quiz to satisfy the comprehension check requirement. Additionally, the number of quiz questions should correspond to the duration of the course, as longer courses require longer quizzes.

Quiz Writing Rules:

- Must meet minimum question requirement, as the course duration dictates the minimum required number of questions (see next section)
- Each question has **four answer options**
- No “All of the above” or “None of the above”
- No abbreviations (e.g., reps, abs)
- Avoid absolutes (e.g., always, never)
- Keep all answers similar in length and style

Minimum Number of Quiz Questions by CEC Value:

- 0.1–0.3 CECs → 10 questions
- 0.4–0.6 CECs → 20 questions
- 0.7–0.9 CECs → 30 questions
- 1.0–1.2 CECs → 40 questions
- 1.3–1.5 CECs → 50 questions
- 1.6+ CECs → 60 questions
- PLEASE NOTE: Alternate learning activities, such as short answer, fill in the blank, true/false, etc., may be included in the total number of quiz/exams questions reported on the application, but the quiz used to determine whether students pass or fail should adhere to all quiz writing rules.

How ACE Determines CECs Awarded:

- 1 hour of education = 0.1 CEC
- CECs are not awarded for breaks, meals, quizzes or exams (written or practical).
- Partial hours are rounded down (must be 50+ minutes to be rounded up to next full hour).
 - Conferences will sum up the total duration of all sessions before rounding.
 - For example, seven 90-minute sessions across two days would be calculated as follows:
 - 1.5 hours x 7sessions = 10.5 hours or 1.0 CECs
 - Individual session rounding:
 - 50–85 minutes = 1 hour/0.1 CEC
 - 86–104 minutes = 1.5 hours/0.15 CECs
 - 105–145 minutes = 2 hours/0.2 CECs
 - 146–164 minutes = 2.5 hours/0.25 CECs
 - 165–205 minutes = 3 hours/0.3 CECs
 - 206–224 minutes = 3.5 hours/0.35 CECs
 - 225–265 minutes = 4 hours/0.4 CECs
 - 266–284 minutes = 4.5 hours/0.45 CECs
 - 286–325 minutes = 5 hours/0.5 CECs

Submit Course Application and Application Fees

Submission Process:

- Log into your ACE Business Account: [American Council on Exercise - Business to Business Login](#). You must use this login page, as attempting to log into an ACE Business Account from the login page for ACE Professionals will NOT work.
 - If needed, [create a new ACE business Account](#).

- Be sure to note the designated contact’s first name, last name, and email address. This is the person who will be responsible for submitting applications and renewals, as well as who will receive all automated notifications (receipts, status update emails, etc.).
- Please note that the username is created at the time of the account (it is NOT an email address). It is the responsibility of the designated contact to securely store the username and password. There is a prompt to reset the password, but you must know both the username and password to log in.
- Click “Enter New Course.”
- Complete the application using the appropriate checklist and select “Save Application,” which will take you back to your ACE Business Account home page.
 - Saved and pending applications can be updated if additional information or documentation is required both before and after.
- From your home page, click “Pending Courses.”
 - This is where all applications are housed both before and after they are submitted. Before they are submitted, they will be listed at the top in the “Courses Pending Submission” section and after they have been submitted, they will live in the section titled “Courses Submitted for Approval.”
- From the “Courses Pending Submission” list, locate the desired course application and select the desired calendar year and **optional** RUSH review.
 - January–September: Current calendar year
 - October–December: Option for current calendar year or next calendar year. If you select the following calendar year, the course approval will not be active until January 1st of the following calendar year.
 - Example: A course submitted in November 2026 could be submitted for either 2026 or 2027, but if 2027 is selected, the approval is not active until January 1st, 2027.
- Add the course to your cart and complete payment – pricing chart is included below.

Your course is not submitted until payment is complete. The emailed receipt is confirmation that your course has been submitted.

Course Application Fees

Annual Provider Fee – \$250

- Required once per calendar year – charged at the time of renewal or first new course application for that calendar year

Course Application Fees (by Course Type)

Course Type	Standard Application Fee	Notes
Workshop (Live or Virtual)	\$50 per course	New or renewed
Online Distance Learning Blended Learning Course Text/DVD	\$225 per course (1–9) \$200 per course (10+)	New or renewed
Conference (Live or Virtual)	\$400 (1–50 sessions) \$800 (51–100 sessions) \$1,200 (100+ sessions)	Per conference CANNOT BE RENEWED
Short Live or Recorded Event (Webinar)	\$75 per course (1–12) \$50 per course (13+)	New or renewed

Optional RUSH Review (All Course Types)

- \$150 per course
- Expedites application review to 10 business days (normal application review period is 30 business days)
- RUSH fees are optional and **in addition** to standard application fees.

Application Review and Timelines

Standard review period: Up to 30 business days (except conferences)

- Conferences: May take up to 60 business days for processing

RUSH review period: 10 business days (additional fee)

PLEASE NOTE: Incomplete applications may delay review and approval timelines.

- Designated contact (the member of the provider's team responsible for submitting the application) must monitor emails in case additional information or documentation is required.
- Incomplete applications will remain open for 30 business days before denial. Denied course fees are non-refundable and cannot be applied toward a new application.

Provider's designated contact will receive an approval notification email once the course has been approved that specifies the CEC value the course earned.

After Approval – Provider Responsibilities

Once approved, you MUST provide learners with a valid certificate of completion that includes:

- Participant name
- Approved course title
- ACE CEP number (**cannot be publicly displayed**)
- Completion date
- Number of CECs
- Presenter or provider name and signature

IMPORTANT: Failure to issue a valid certificate of completion with the required information may result in your learners not being able to redeem their CEP code for CECs in a timely manner. A compliance notice will be issued to the provider in the event that repeated instances of incomplete certificates are reported to ACE. Failure to comply may result in revoking course approval and repeated compliance issues may result in revoking Education Provider status.

- To prevent fraudulent redemption of course CECs, ACE Customer Care will instruct professionals with incomplete certificates to contact the provider so they can be issued a new, valid certificate of completion.

- Upon approval, providers will be provided with a template once a course is approved. You are not required to use the template, but we recommend using it as a guide when creating your certificate.

Approved Providers also gain access to:

- ACE-approved logos
- Certificate templates
- Course popularity reports

Course Renewals and When to Reapply

Courses Eligible for Renewal:

- All course types (except conferences) may be renewed up to five times.
 - Course must be less than 10 years old at time of renewal.
- Course can be renewed for two years after most recent approval year – after which the provider must reapply as a new course.
 - Example: A course approved in 2026 would be eligible for renewal in 2027 and 2028 but would need to be submitted as a new course in 2029.
- Fewer than **10% content changes**
- Less than **45-minute duration change (+/-)**

Courses Not Eligible for Renewal:

- Conferences
- Courses that have not been approved in the last two calendar years
- Courses that are 10+ years old
 - A course that has been updated with new or additional information must be submitted as a new course. When resubmitted, it will receive a NEW course code so that learners can earn CECs for taking the updated version of your course.

- Courses with significant content or schedule changes
 - Changes of 45+ minutes must be submitted as a new course.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

- Submitting courses outside the ACE Scope of Practice
- Providing incomplete instructor information – must attach resume or add approved instructor for EVERY course
- Missing required attachments or required information. Courses cannot be processed without the specific required items:
 - Workshops – must attach document to show that the content covered is within scope of practice AND course timeline (hourly breakdown)
 - Online or Blended Learning Course – must attach three reviewer forms and include total word count, total media run time (in minutes), AND total number of quiz/exam questions
 - All courses must include complete outlines or quizzes
- Displaying CEP codes publicly. Anyone can redeem this code once it is displayed, so CEP codes must only be listed on certificates of completion.
- Waiting until too close to event dates to submit

Final Tips

1. Be sure the designated contact securely stores the account username and password. The primary reason providers are unable to **access** their account is forgetting their username and/or password. The username is NOT an email – it is a unique username selected by the provider at the time the ACE Business Account is created. While there is a “Forgot Password” prompt that will allow the designated contact to reset your password, they still **MUST** know the username.

2. Always use the ACE checklists for your specific course type and submit your application as completely as possible to avoid delays. In the case of incomplete

applications, you will be given 30 days to provide any follow-up content needed for approval, but it may slow the review process.

3. Be sure to have the designated contact monitor emails in the event that additional information or documents are required. The designated contact is the person responsible for submitting and renewing courses. If you need to update who the designated contact is, you can do so in the “Update Account” section of your ACE Business Account. You will enter their first name, last name, and email. You may also add one additional email address that will be included in all automated communications (receipts, approval notification emails, etc.).

4. Renew or submit courses for the following calendar year as early as possible. ACE begins accepting applications for the following calendar year on October 1st. While ACE does send out annual email reminders to renew eligible courses, we recommend the provider take it upon themselves to renew as early as possible to ensure the course is approved prior to January 1st. Due to high volume, providers should expect processing to take the full review period during peak months of December through March.