**APPROVED PROVIDER UNIT PROCESS**

**An Approved Provider** **Unit** (APU) isan organization who supports the delivery of nursing continuing professional development (NCPD) activities. An Approved Provider may be a single unit or part of a larger organization that has the authority to assess, plan, implement, and evaluate NCPD activities and operate using ANCC Accreditation Program criteria.

Each NCPD activity must have a nurse planner (NP) and a content expert. The NP can serve as both but there must be at least one other planner. Contact hours may not be awarded for activities developed without the direct involvement of a NP. APU may jointly provide activities, but they may not approve activities.

**For eligibility** to apply forAPU status, the organization:

* Must be one of following:
* ANA Organizational Affiliate
* C/SNA of the ANA
  + - College or University
    - Healthcare facility
    - Health-related organization
    - Multidisciplinary educational group
    - Professional nursing education group
    - Specialty Nursing Organization (SNO)
* **Cannot be an ineligible company** (those whose primary business is producing, marketing, selling, or distributing healthcare products used by or on patients).
* Must be operational and using the ANCC criteria for a minimum of 6 months prior to application and implemented at least three separate educational activities in the last 12 months that adhere to the ANCC Accreditation Criteria. These activities cannot be jointly provided and must have at least 60 minutes in length for initial applicants.
* **Target the majority** (>50%) of its CNE activities to nurses in a single HHS region and its contiguous states (based on the HHS regions: <http://www.hhs.gov/about/agencies/regional-offices>). Applicants whose target audience is in multiple regions or in states that are not confined to a single region and its contiguous states for more than 50% of its activities may **not** be **Approved Providers**. Instead, they must apply to ANCC as **Accredited Providers** through the accreditation process.
* **Compliance** is required with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations that affect the organization’s ability to meet the Mississippi Nurses Foundation (MNF) guidelines.
* **Disclose** previous denials, suspensions, and/or revocations of ANCC Accreditation and/or other accrediting /approving organizations.
* Must **identify** one nurse planner who will act as the **primary nurse planner (PNP)** and:
* Hold a current, unrestricted license as an RN and a baccalaureate degree or higher in nursing
* Have authority within the organization to ensure compliance with ANCC accreditation criteria
* Be accountable to the Accredited Approver Program Director (AAPD) at MNF for all APU activities
* Ensure that all NPs in the APU hold current valid licenses as RNs with a baccalaureate degree or higher in nursing
* Be responsible to orient, educate, and monitor all APU NPs to ensure that each NCPD activity has a qualified NP who is an active participant in the planning, implementing, and evaluation process

**APU APPLICATION PROCESS**

**Step 1 – Establish Approved Provider Unit Eligibility -** An ineligible company cannot provide NCPD. Complete the Applicant Eligibility Verification Form and email to the AAPD for review at [foundation@msnurses.org](mailto:foundation@msnurses.org).

* **Required: Applicant Eligibility Verification Form**



* **Resource:*****Standards for Integrity and Independence in Accredited Continuing Education - check the web link for the current document and resources at:*** 
  + [Accreditation Council for CME Announces New Standards for Integrity and Independence in Accredited Continuing Education | ACCME](https://nam11.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Faccme.org%2Fnews-releases%2Faccreditation-council-for-cme-announces-new-standards-for-integrity-and-independence%3Futm_source%3Dnewsletter%26utm_medium%3Demail%26utm_content%3DView%2520this%2520announcement%2520on%2520the%2520ACCME%2520website.%26utm_campaign%3DStandards%2520Release&data=04%7C01%7CJennifer.Graebe%40ana.org%7Cc19ba584abc34d76fa1108d89d4ac804%7Cb71490a5752544a9bb2162e89f8db650%7C1%7C0%7C637432291795432372%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=4mLZ3j3yJW3dOkNe5lI9pl%2FH0sXd4jd5QB54BFJGHiY%3D&reserved=0)
  + Tips for incorporating the Standards for Integrity and Independence



**Step 2** - Once eligibility has been confirmed, the PNP should contact the AAPD for a **consultation phone call** to review the application process and answer any questions.

**Step 3 – Application Process –** complete the self-study template, APU Information form, and payment form at least 3 months prior to the review cycle for APU status. Submit these documents via email along with 3 individual activity files (see record-keeping list) to [foundation@msnurses.org](mailto:foundation@msnurses.org).

* **Required:** APU Self-Study Template, Information Form, Payment Form

  

* **Resources:** Guide for Writing to the ANCC NCPD Accreditation Criteria, ANCC Table of references/outcomes, Impact of CNE/Nursing Outcomes, SMART Goals Worksheet.

  

**Step 4 – Application Review Process –** Upon receipt of the documents, a quantitative review will be conducted to ensure the application is complete before sending to the nurse peer reviewers. Submission of any missing documents should be submitted within 2 weeks from the request. Once the qualitative review is complete and the AAPD makes the final decision, a letter will be emailed to the applicant. Possible decisions are:

* **Accredited Approval with Distinction (3 years)**: exemplary work in adherence to ANCC Criteria
* **Accredited Approval (3 years):** adherence to ANCC Criteria
* **Provisional Approval (up to 1 year):** lack of adherence to ANCC Criteria. Close monitoring and follow-up progress report of improvement. If monitoring demonstrates improvement and success in demonstrating adherence to the ANCC Criteria, approval will be extended for the balance of the approval period. Failure to demonstrate this during a provisional approval will result in suspension or revocation of approval.
* **Accreditation Denial:** non-adherence to ANCC criteria and no recognition of deficiencies or established any plans to address those deficiencies. The applicant must wait 6 months to submit a new application. During this time, the applicant can apply to provide individual activities.

**Step 5** – For new APU, all documents/forms must be updated to include the correct Approved Provider ANCC approval language.

***(Name of Approved Provider) is approved as a provider of nursing continuing professional development by the Mississippi Nurses Foundation, Inc., an accredited approver by the American Nurses Credentialing Center’s Commission on Accreditation.***

**Step 6 –** The APU continues to assess learner needs, plan, implement and evaluate educational activities which adhere to the relevant criteria of the ANCC Accreditation Program within the agency without submission of an application to MNF with each activity. The APU is responsible for maintaining NCPD records for 6 years (see record-keeping list).

**Resources:**

    

**Step 7** - The APU is responsible for submitting a report annually of NCPD activities conducted to the ANCC’s Nursing Activity Reporting System (NARS). The AAPD will send out a reminder each year regarding the requirements and due date of **March 1st.**