

CONTINUING MEDICAL EDUCATION

What are the continuing medical education (CME) requirements for licensed physicians in Washington?

Licensed physicians must have 200 credit hours of CME every four years.¹

There are five categories of creditable CME activities approved by the Medical Quality Assurance Commission (MQAC).² All 200 credits may be earned in Category I,³ but only up to 80 credits may be earned from any one of the remaining categories.⁴

The categories are:⁵

- Category I CME activities with accredited sponsorship.
- Category II CME activities with non-accredited sponsorship.
- Category III Teaching physicians or other allied health professionals.
- Category IV Books, papers, publications, and exhibits (10 credits may be claimed for each publication, paper, exhibit, or book chapter that is authored and published).⁶
- Category V Self-directed activities (*i.e.*, self-assessment, self-instruction, specialty board examination preparation, quality of care review, utilization review).

In lieu of the 200 CME hours, MQAC will accept a current Physician's Recognition Award from the American Medical Association or a current certificate from any specialty board approved by the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) that the specialty board considers as equivalent to the 200 hours of CME required under Washington law.⁷

Certification or recertification from an approved specialty board within the four years preceding license renewal will also be accepted by MQAC as the equivalent of 200 CME hours.⁸

¹ WAC 246-919-430(1). See also RCW 18.71.080(1)(c) (granting authority to MQAC to establish mandatory CME requirements for physicians);

² WAC 246-919-450.

³ WAC 246-919-460(2).

⁴ WAC 246-919-450; WAC 246-919-460(3)–(6).

⁵ WAC 246-919-450; WAC 246-919-460.

⁶ WAC 246-919-460(5)(b).

⁷ WAC 246-919-430(2).

⁸ WAC 246-919-430(2).

Must a physician who wishes to maintain a retired active license meet CME requirements?

Yes. A physician with a retired active license must report 100 hours of CME at each renewal, which is every two years.⁹

How does a physician report CME credits?

Every four years, upon renewing his or her license, a physician must sign the affidavit of CME compliance located on the back of the license renewal form.¹⁰

On occasion, MQAC may require additional documentation. A physician should maintain records—such as course or program certificates of training or transcripts—proving compliance with the CME requirements for at least four years.¹¹

Is compliance with the CME requirements monitored?

Yes. Up to 25% of practitioners are randomly audited for CME compliance after their credentials are renewed. It is the practitioner's responsibility to submit documentation of completed CME activities at the time of the audit. Failure to comply with the audit documentation request or failure to supply acceptable documentation within sixty days may result in disciplinary action.¹²

Are there any different CME requirements for osteopathic physicians?

Yes. Osteopathic physicians need 150 credit hours of CME every three years.¹³ There are two main categories of CME activities for osteopathic physicians, each with subsections. The categories are:¹⁴

- Category I A minimum of 60 credit hours is mandatory under this category.
 - I-A: Formal educational programs sponsored by nationally recognized osteopathic or medical institutions, organizations, and their affiliates.
 - I-B: Preparation in publishable form of an original scientific paper and initial presentation before a qualified postdoctoral audience.

⁹ WAC 246-919-480(4).

¹⁰ See WAC 246-12-180; FAQs for MD CME (Aug 2012), Washington State Dept. of Health, <http://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/3000/657-127.pdf>.

¹¹ WAC 246-12-200.

¹² WAC 246-12-190.

¹³ WAC 246-853-080(1). See also RCW 18.57.050 (granting authority to the state osteopathic board to establish mandatory CME requirements for osteopathic physicians).

¹⁴ WAC 246-853-070.

I-C: Serving as a teacher, lecturer, preceptor, or moderator-participant in any formal educational program (maximum 45 credit hours per three year period).

- Category II

II-A: Home study (maximum of 90 credit hours per three-year period).

II-B: Preparation and personal presentation of a scientific exhibit at a county, regional, state, or national professional meeting (maximum of 30 credit hours per three-year period).

II-C: All other programs and modalities of continuing professional education, including observation at medical centers, programs dealing with experimental and investigative areas of medical practice, and programs conducted by non-recognized sponsors (maximum of 30 credit hours per three-year period).

In lieu of the 150 CME hours, the Board of Osteopathic Medicine and Surgery (BOMS) will accept certification of compliance with the requirements for CME of the American Osteopathic Association, receipt of the American Medical Association Physician's Recognition Award, or a current certification of CME from medical practice academies.¹⁵ Original certification or recertification within the previous six years by a specialty board will also satisfy the CME requirement.¹⁶

How does an osteopathic physician report CME credits?

Every three years, upon renewing his or her license, the osteopath must submit an affidavit stating compliance with the CME requirements.¹⁷

¹⁵ WAC 246-853-080(2).

¹⁶ WAC 246-853-080(3).

¹⁷ See WAC 246-12-180; Osteopathic Physician and Surgeon Credentialing (May 2012), Washington State Dept. of Health, <http://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/2600/630112OsteoMD.pdf>.