

**RENEWAL BY SYNERGY CERPs**

CCRN 

  
PCCN

**Direct Care Renewal Pathway**  
**Knowledge Professional Renewal Pathway**  
**Tele-critical Care Renewal Pathway**

*It's EASIER than you think!*

AACN  
CERTIFICATION  
CORPORATION

Certification Organization for the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses

# CERPs = Continuing Education Recognition Points

CERPs consist of both learning topics and activities.



You probably have more CERPs than you think.

**Ask yourself these questions.**

## Learning Topics

- **Have you attended** in-services required by your hospital, such as infection control, injury prevention, patient safety or HIPAA?
- **Have you attended** a class, conference or seminar and received CEs or CMEs?
- **Have you attended** a class, conference or seminar on any topic that did not award credit?
- **Have you taken** an academic course for credit?

## Activities

- **Are you a member** of a professional nursing association (e.g., AACN, ANA, etc.)?
- **Do you participate** on committees or advisory teams?
- **Are you a member** of a community or advisory team, or do you volunteer in your institution or community?
- **Have you precepted** and/or mentored?
- **Have you published?**



**There are a few basic requirements.**

**1**

Learning topics and activities must be completed during the 3-year certification period.

**2**

Learning topics and activities must be related to nursing practice.



**Have questions?  
Not sure if it counts?  
We're here to help.**

Contact AACN Customer Care

800-899-2226

or

[certcorp@aacn.org](mailto:certcorp@aacn.org)



A total of 100 CERPs must be completed during the 3-year certification period.

Renewal by Synergy CERPs		
Direct Care Pathway	Knowledge Professional Pathway	Tele-critical Care Pathway (CCRN Only)
Category A = 60 CERPs	Category A = 80 CERPs	Category A = 70 CERPs
Category B = 10 CERPs	Category B = 10 CERPs	Category B = 5 CERPs
Category C = 10 CERPs	Category C = 10 CERPs	Category C = 25 CERPs
Any Category = 20 CERPs		
Acceptable topics and activities are listed in the tables below.		

# Category A

## Clinical Judgment and Clinical Inquiry

<b>Examples</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lab values</li> <li>• BLS</li> <li>• ACLS</li> <li>• PALS</li> <li>• NRP</li> <li>• ECG</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IV therapy</li> <li>• Heart failure</li> <li>• Pharmacology</li> <li>• Assessment</li> <li>• Pathophysiology</li> <li>• Statistics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technical skills/new equipment</li> <li>• Clinical research</li> <li>• Evidence-based practice</li> <li>• Auditing</li> <li>• Publishing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practice protocols</li> <li>• QI/QA</li> <li>• Clinical aspects of bioterrorism</li> <li>• Exam review courses</li> </ul>
<b>Learning Topics &amp; Activities</b>	All categories have both learning topics and activities that may be counted for CERPs. CERPs are grouped as they relate to the nurse characteristics of the AACN Synergy Model for Patient Care. Refer to <a href="http://www.aacn.org">www.aacn.org</a> for more information about the Synergy Model.			

<b>Clinical Judgment</b> Clinical reasoning, which includes clinical decision-making, critical thinking and a global grasp of the situation, coupled with nursing skills acquired through a process of integrating education, experiential knowledge and evidence-based guidelines	<b>LEARNING TOPICS</b>	<b>CERPs</b>	
	Includes all CE, academic, e-learning or CME courses and/or in-services related to body systems, monitoring, physical assessment, anatomy and physiology, nursing interventions, lab values, pharmacology, ABG interpretation, diagnostic tests, therapies, fluid dynamics, BLS, ACLS, PALS, NRP, ECG interpretation, nutritional support, bariatric surgery, IV therapy, clinical implications of bioterrorism, technical skills, new equipment, core review and exam review programs	Calculate CERPs 1 hour of education = 1 CERP 1 academic credit = 15 CERPs	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>CERPs</b>	
	Participation on an AACN Certification Corporation committee or task force (Practice Analysis, Item Writer, Exam Development, SAE or Practice Exam Reviewer)	30 CERPs	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Appeals Panel	5 CERPs	<input type="checkbox"/>



Renew your certification at [www.aacn.org/certification/certification-renewal](http://www.aacn.org/certification/certification-renewal)

## Clinical Inquiry

The ongoing process of questioning and evaluating practice and providing informed practice. Creating changes through evidence-based practice, research utilization and experiential knowledge.

### LEARNING TOPICS

Includes all CE, academic, e-learning or CME courses and/or in-services related to research and research process, quality improvement, evidence-based practice, how to do an audit or prevalence study, how to evaluate nursing care and how to publish an article

### CERPs

Calculate CERPs  
1 hour of education = 1 CERP  
1 academic credit = 15 CERPs




### ACTIVITIES

Develop best practices, standards of practice or standard nursing care plans for specific patient populations; original authorship

Develop evaluation tools based on outcome criteria in behavioral terms; original authorship

Develop or revise practice protocol; original authorship

Auditing activities

Quality improvement activities

Research activities

### CERPs

Calculate CERPs  
1 hour of education = 1 CERP  
1 academic credit = 15 CERPs

3 CERPs (revised 1 CERP)

3 CERPs (revised 1 CERP)

3 CERPs per year (min. 8 hours)

3 CERPs per year (min. 8 hours)

3 CERPs per year (min. 8 hours)









### Professional Publications

Responsibility in the publication may be authorship, co-authorship or editorial. The item to be published may be a book, chapter in a book, paper, article, abstract, book review, etc. Professionally authored multimedia aids are acceptable. Note: CERPs for joint authorships are determined by dividing the number of CERPs to be awarded by the number of authors.

**A maximum of 30 CERPs per renewal period is allowed in this area.**

### ACTIVITIES

Editorial in a journal

Column in a journal

Journal article (peer reviewed)

Journal reviewer (article or book chapter)

Service on editorial boards

Article in a local newsletter or AACN chapter newsletter

Original research article (peer reviewed)

Textbook or chapter editor

Textbook or chapter author

Professionally authored multimedia aids

Book review

COVID-19/Value of Certification story (300-600 words about how our certification influenced our practice during the pandemic email to certjourney@aacn.org)

Clinical blog

Master's thesis/final project

DNP capstone/final project

Doctoral dissertation

### CERPs

5 CERPs

10 CERPs

20 CERPs

5 CERPs

5 CERPs per board, per year

2 CERPs

30 CERPs

1 CERP per 10 pages (max. 30)

2 CERPs per 10 pages (max. 50)

15 CERPs

3 CERPs

2 CERPs (max. 2 CERPs per year)

2 CERPs (max. 4 CERPs per year)

30 CERPs

35 CERPs

45 CERPs



















Obtaining an AACN Micro-credential may be counted for CERPs (Direct Care and Knowledge Professional pathways only). Refer to the AACN website (or email received) for the number of CERPs and category.

# Category B

## Advocacy & Moral Agency, Caring Practices, Response to Diversity, Facilitation of Learning

<b>Examples</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safety/restraints</li> <li>• Legal or ethical issues</li> <li>• Charting/documentation</li> <li>• Reducing medication errors</li> <li>• Preceptorship</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public policy</li> <li>• HIPAA</li> <li>• The Joint Commission</li> <li>• Patient support groups</li> <li>• Cultural aspects of care</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diversity</li> <li>• Medical Spanish</li> <li>• Therapeutic communication</li> <li>• Psychosocial aspects of care</li> <li>• Mental illness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Geriatric care</li> <li>• Spiritual considerations</li> <li>• Addiction/recovery</li> <li>• Violence/abuse</li> <li>• End-of-life care</li> </ul>
<b>Learning Topics &amp; Activities</b>	All categories have both learning topics and activities that may be counted for CERPs. CERPs are grouped as they relate to the nurse characteristics of the AACN Synergy Model for Patient Care. Refer to <a href="http://www.aacn.org">www.aacn.org</a> for more information about the Synergy Model.			

<b>Advocacy &amp; Moral Agency</b> Working on another's behalf and representing the concerns of the patient/family and nursing staff; serving as a moral agent in identifying and helping to resolve ethical and clinical concerns within and outside the clinical setting	<b>LEARNING TOPICS</b>	<b>CERPs</b>	✓
	Includes all CE, academic, e-learning or CME courses and/or in-services related to patient rights, value of certification, advance directives, informed consent, ethics, ethical issues, regulatory issues (HIPAA, The Joint Commission), insurance and reimbursement, legal aspects of nursing practice, public policy and sexual harassment training	Calculate CERPs 1 hour of education = 1 CERP 1 academic credit = 15 CERPs	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>CERPs</b>	✓
	Participation on an ethics committee	5 CERPs per year	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Caring Practices</b> Nursing activities that create a compassionate, supportive and therapeutic environment for patients and staff, with the aim of promoting comfort and healing, and preventing unnecessary suffering. These caring behaviors include, but are not limited to, vigilance, engagement and responsiveness of caregivers. Caregivers include family and healthcare personnel	<b>LEARNING TOPICS</b>	<b>CERPs</b>	✓
	Includes all CE, academic, e-learning or CME courses and/or in-services related to comfort measures, therapeutic touch, therapeutic communications, palliative care, grief and loss, patient safety (including infection control, fall prevention, body mechanics), stress management and burnout, and pet therapy	Calculate CERPs 1 hour of education = 1 CERP 1 academic credit = 15 CERPs	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>CERPs</b>	✓
	Facilitate a patient or family support group (e.g., Mended Hearts, bariatric or transplant support groups)	6 CERPs per year (min. 6 hours)	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Participate in pet visitation program for hospital or nursing home	5 CERPs per year (min. 5 hours)	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Facilitate a critical incident debriefing with staff involved	5 CERPs per year (min. 5 hours spent on incident)	<input type="checkbox"/>



Renew your certification at [www.aacn.org/certification/certification-renewal](http://www.aacn.org/certification/certification-renewal)



<p><b>Response to Diversity</b></p> <p>The sensitivity to recognize, appreciate and incorporate differences into the provision of care. Differences may include, but are not limited to, individual, cultural, spiritual, gender, race, ethnicity, lifestyle, socioeconomic, age and values</p>	<p><b>LEARNING TOPICS</b></p> <p>Includes all CE, academic, e-learning or CME courses and/or in-services related to cultural diversity, developmental stages, medical Spanish, spiritual considerations of the dying patient, psychosocial issues in diverse populations and outcomes/health disparities related to diverse populations</p>	<p><b>CERPs</b></p> <p>Calculate CERPs 1 hour of education = 1 CERP 1 academic credit = 15 CERPs</p>	<p>✓</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>
	<p><b>ACTIVITIES</b></p> <p>Participation on an advisory team or committee related to diversity (e.g., multigenerational work environment, cultural aspects of care, special needs)</p>	<p><b>CERPs</b></p> <p>5 CERPs per year</p>	<p>✓</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>
	<p>Volunteer community service for diverse patient populations (e.g., HIV hospice, migrant health clinics, free clinics); minimum 4 visits/service contacts per year; activity must involve nursing clinical judgment</p>	<p><b>CERPs</b></p> <p>1 CERP per hour (max. 8 CERPs per renewal period)</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>

<p><b>Facilitation of Learning</b> (or Patient/Family Educator):</p> <p>The ability to facilitate learning for patients/families, nursing staff, other members of the healthcare team and the community. Includes both formal and informal facilitation of learning</p>	<p><b>LEARNING TOPICS</b></p> <p>Includes all CE, academic, e-learning or CME courses and/or in-services related to learning theory, mentoring, precepting, assessing learning needs and health literacy projects</p>	<p><b>CERPs</b></p> <p>Calculate CERPs 1 hour of education = 1 CERP 1 academic credit = 15 CERPs</p>	<p>✓</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>
	<p><b>ACTIVITIES</b></p> <p>Preceptorship/mentorship (includes checking skills for staff competency); a minimum of 80 hours per year of preceptorship is required</p>	<p><b>CERPs</b></p> <p>10 CERPs per year</p>	<p>✓</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>
	<p>Designing informational aids intended for use as references in the clinical area</p>	<p><b>CERPs</b></p> <p>3 CERPs per project (revised 1 CERP)</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>
	<p>Designing patient educational aids, booklets or audiovisual projects</p>	<p><b>CERPs</b></p> <p>5 CERPs per project (revised 1 CERP)</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>
	<p>Designing a multimedia learning module (e.g., patient teaching program on PowerPoint)</p>	<p><b>CERPs</b></p> <p>5 CERPs per project (revised 1 CERP)</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p><b>Professional Presentations</b></p> <p>Encompasses the certificant's participation as an instructor delivering content to nurses, other healthcare professionals or the public. The presentation must be delivered within a structured framework of teaching/learning.</p> <p>A presentation includes a seminar, in-service, clinical conference, patient/family education program, consumer education program, BLS, ACLS, AACN chapter educational activities, podcast and/or presenting an original paper or poster. The participant may be a primary instructor, member of a team, guest lecturer or member of a panel. Check-in stations during a skills lab also count in this category.</p>	<p><b>CERPs</b></p> <p>3 CERPs are granted for each contact hour of lecture given. Each repeat presentation is granted 1 CERP per contact hour for a maximum of 2 times within a renewal period.</p> <p>If the program is co-taught, the number of CERPs to be awarded is determined by dividing CERPs by the number of instructors.</p> <p><b>A maximum of 10 CERPs per year will be granted for professional presentations.</b></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	
<p>Obtaining an AACN Micro-credential may be counted for CERPs (Direct Care and Knowledge Professional pathways only). Refer to the AACN website (or email received) for the number of CERPs and category.</p>			

# Category C

## Collaboration and Systems Thinking

<b>Examples</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication skills</li> <li>• Teamwork</li> <li>• Healthy work environments</li> <li>• AACN Synergy Model for Patient Care</li> <li>• Redesigning hospital care</li> <li>• Disaster/emergency planning</li> <li>• Developing policies or procedures</li> <li>• Community resources</li> <li>• Committees</li> <li>• Leadership</li> <li>• Management</li> <li>• Risk management</li> <li>• Case management</li> <li>• AACN membership</li> </ul>
<b>Learning Topics &amp; Activities</b>	<p>All categories have both learning topics and activities that may be counted for CERPs. CERPs are grouped as they relate to the nurse characteristics of the AACN Synergy Model for Patient Care. Refer to <a href="http://www.aacn.org">www.aacn.org</a> for more information about the Synergy Model.</p>

<b>Collaboration</b>  Working with others (e.g., patients, families, healthcare providers) in a way that promotes/ encourages each person's contributions toward achieving optimal/realistic patient/family goals. Collaboration involves intra- and interdisciplinary work with colleagues and the community	<b>LEARNING TOPICS</b>  Includes all CE, academic, e-learning or CME courses and/or in-services related to communication skills, dealing with conflict, dealing with difficult people, crucial conversations, and improving interdepartmental or inter- and intraprofessional communication	<b>CERPs</b>  Calculate CERPs 1 hour of education = 1 CERP 1 academic credit = 15 CERPs	  <input type="checkbox"/>	
	<b>ACTIVITIES</b>  Current membership in a professional nursing healthcare organization (e.g., AACN, ANA, etc.)	<b>CERPs</b>  3 CERPs per year per organization (max. 6 CERPs per year)	  <input type="checkbox"/>	
	<b>The following applies to AACN and other national organizations</b>			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Participation on a Chapter Advisory Team	15 CERPs per year	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Participation as a learning connection mentor	5 CERPs per year	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Participation on a review panel (e.g., grants, scholarships, etc.)	5 CERPs per year	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Participation in a focus group	10 CERPs per year	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Participation in a work group	10 CERPs per year	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Participation as an AACN ambassador	5 CERPs per year	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Participation on a non-AACN national committee	10 CERPs per year	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Volunteering in a healthcare mission (e.g., Flying SAMS, Project Concern, health fairs, manning a first-aid booth at a community event); activity must utilize clinical judgment	1 CERP per hour (max. 8 CERPs per renewal period)	<input type="checkbox"/>		



Renew your certification at [www.aacn.org/certification/certification-renewal](http://www.aacn.org/certification/certification-renewal)

## Systems Thinking

The body of knowledge and tools that allow the nurse to manage whatever environmental and system resources that exist for the patient/family and staff within or across healthcare systems and non-healthcare systems

### LEARNING TOPICS

Includes all CE, academic, e-learning or CME courses and/or in-services related to care across many departments, settings, facilities, participants and regions; discharge planning; standards of excellence; management and leadership skills; healthy work environments; AACN Synergy Model for Patient Care; risk management; natural disaster/emergency planning and coordination; exploring community resources, etc.

### CERPs

Calculate CERPs  
1 hour of education = 1 CERP  
1 academic credit = 15 CERPs




### ACTIVITIES

Participation in activities/teams/committees that solve or prevent complex problems and improve care across many participants, multiple departments, settings, facilities or regions (e.g., spearheading a major patient care improvement)

### CERPs

10 CERPs per activity per year




Participation in leadership responsibilities or committee involvement at a chapter/regional level

10 CERPs per committee per year

Leadership responsibilities or committee involvement in professional or health-related organizations

10 CERPs per committee per year

Participation as an AACN or AACN Certification Corporation board member

20 CERPs per year

Initiating or leading an interdisciplinary team to solve a patient care problem, or leading a case conference

5 CERPs per team meeting/case conference (max. 5 CERPs per year)

Developing or revising nursing policy or procedure

3 CERPs for original, 1 CERP for revision

Obtaining an AACN Micro-credential may be counted for CERPs (Direct Care and Knowledge Professional pathways only). Refer to the AACN website (or email received) for the number of CERPs and category.



## Certification Period

A total of 100 CERPs must be completed during the 3-year certification period.

Direct Care Pathway	Knowledge Professional Pathway	Tele-critical Care Pathway (CCRN Only)
Category A = 60 CERPs	Category A = 80 CERPs	Category A = 70 CERPs
Category B = 10 CERPs	Category B = 10 CERPs	Category B = 5 CERPs
Category C = 10 CERPs	Category C = 10 CERPs	Category C = 25 CERPs
Any Category = 20 CERPs		



## Certification Renewal Eligibility

- 1 Current, unencumbered licensure as an RN or APRN in the U.S.
- 2 Completion of 432 hours of direct care during the 3-year certification period, with 144 of those hours accrued in the year preceding the scheduled renewal date.
- 3 Eligible practice hours are those focused on the patient population in alignment with the certification held.
- 4 Complete the Renewal by Synergy CERPs program, or take and pass the exam.

For complete eligibility requirements, refer to the renewal handbook for your certification, available at [www.aacn.org/certification](http://www.aacn.org/certification).



## Key Parts of Documenting

- ✓ Your name
- ✓ Dates completed (during the 3-year certification period)
- ✓ Course title or topic
- ✓ Name of the organization, institution or hospital where the learning topic or activity took place
- ✓ Hours of CE or in-service
- ✓ Signature of educator, course director or supervisor



## Synergy CERPs Log

Logs are available in the renewal handbook and online. Certificants who successfully complete CCRN or PCCN renewal should continue to keep personal records of CERP activities for at least 3 years from their scheduled renewal date to submit if selected for audit.



## How to Calculate CERPs

CERPs are calculated according to the educational contact hour for seminars or lectures. For purposes of certification renewal, **one (1) hour of education time is equal to 1 CERP**. For example, a 1-hour in-service would be worth 1 CERP; an education program that awarded 6 contact hours, 6 CEs or 6 CMEs would be worth 6 CERPs.

CERPs are not awarded for registration, introductions, breaks, lunch, clinical time or completion of certification exams.

For academic credit courses, **1 credit is worth 15 CERPs**. For example, a 3-credit course would be worth 45 CERPs.



To support you in the renewal process, AACN offers **unlimited free CEs** to AACN members. Explore Continuing Education Activities at [www.aacn.org/certification](http://www.aacn.org/certification), where you can search by CERP type or topic. Track your CE hours and maintain your transcript through your AACN dashboard.

## Examples of How to Document CERPs

If the content of a program falls into more than one category, the content that makes up the majority of the program should be used to determine the category for awarding CERPs. If the content is equally divided between 2 categories, you may select the category in which to award CERPs.

### Learning Topics

- ✓ **CE/CME** - Provide a copy of the certificate that has your name, dates of attendance, title of course and contact hours.
- ✓ **In-service/program not providing CEs** - If the program was not formally granted contact hours (e.g., hospital or unit in-services), submit written verification of attendance, including name of participant, dates of attendance, title of course and hours of course (minus breaks and lunch), signed by educator or course director.
- ✓ **ACLS, BLS, PALS, NRP** - Provide documentation of hours, with course dates and title, your name and signature of an educator, course director or supervisor, so the total number of CERPs may be calculated. Copies of cards are not sufficient for audit, as they do not include actual class time, which varies.
- ✓ **Academic course** - Copy or online printout of formal transcript or grade report. If course title or subject is not identifiable as relating to an assigned CERP category, include course description or brief profile of content. Transcript must include time or CEs awarded.

### Activities

- ✓ **Membership in professional organization** - Copy of membership card
- ✓ **Project/Activity/Committee** - Written verification of project, activity or committee/board involvement (e.g., precepting), including dates, name of team, years on team and topics discussed
- ✓ **Leadership activities** - Written verification from organization on initiative or leadership role on team to solve patient care problem
- ✓ **Publication** - Copy of title page and table of contents; publisher's notice of acceptance for publication should be submitted if CERPs are to be granted before printing
- ✓ **Professional presentation** - Evidence of participation in presentation (e.g., brochure, announcement or written statement) and contact hours
- ✓ **Facilitation of group** - Written verification from manager acknowledging facilitation of critical incident debriefing or support group with dates and number of staff/patient/family involved
- ✓ **Volunteer participation with national organization** - Written verification from organization, including dates of participation
- ✓ **Volunteer activities** - Written documentation or brochure of volunteer organization's values and mission statement



The list of examples is not all-inclusive; other learning topics and activities that are similar and fall within the category descriptions will also qualify for CERPs.

AACN  

---

CERTIFICATION  
CORPORATION

T 800-899-2226 • F 949-362-2020 • [www.aacn.org/certification](http://www.aacn.org/certification)

008255 • 03/2026