

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES (DSHS)
LANGUAGE TESTING AND CERTIFICATION (LTC)**

**Guidelines for Application and Management of Interpreter
and Translator Continuing Education Activities**

To ensure the quality of interpreting and translation services for persons of limited English proficiency in Washington State, Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 388-03-160 requires medical and social service interpreters and document translators certified/authorized by the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) to take continuing education (CE) activities. Only activities accredited by the DSHS Language Testing and Certification (LTC) program will count for CE credits. Individuals and organizations that provide such activities need to receive approval from DSHS LTC prior to the activity date.

This document outlines general policies regarding CE activities, including the criteria for approval, the procedure of application, and management requirements for providers. It replaces the previous documents regarding the approval criteria (published in June 2017) and application procedures (published in February 2020). The purposes of this revision are to simplify the approval process and improve the quality of CE activities.

I. Criteria for Approving Continuing Education Activities

1. Types of continuing education credits

CE activities can be directly related to practical skills of interpreting and translation, can focus on terminology, can address special topics or areas of expertise, or can cover ethics. General broad topics not exclusively addressing the needs of DSHS interpreters and translators will not be approved for DSHS CE credits. Continuing education credits are categorized into two types: Ethics Credits (EC) and General Credits (GC).

ECs are defined as a minimum of one hour spent on reviewing, explaining, and discussing the DSHS Code of Professional Conduct for interpreters and translators (WAC 388-03-050). Any training activity with content not consistent with WAC 388-03-050 will not be approved.

GCs are defined as a minimum of one hour spent on skills or knowledge building in all modes of interpreting and types of translation, for example, protocols for interpreting and translating, modalities for delivering interpreting services, tools for processing translation, terminology, and other skills or knowledge an interpreter or translator may need.

2. Instructor qualifications

Instructors or presenters of CE activities are required to meet some or all of the following qualifications depending on the topic, content, domain, and/or other characteristics of the proposed activity:

- Have at least a bachelor's degree from a U.S. university or equivalent from a foreign university
- Possess Washington State interpreter or translator certification, national/federal interpreter or translator certification, or interpreter or translator certification from another state
- Have a minimum of five (5) years of professional experience in interpreting and translation
- Have a minimum of five (5) years of professional experience in the domain of expertise
- Have a minimum of two (2) years of experience teaching or delivering training

Some activities require domain expertise, for example, those that focus on terminology or address technical topics in a specific area of medical practice (e.g. cardiology) or social services (e.g. domestic violence). The instructor of such activities should have experience in the domain. Otherwise, the provider must supply documentation showing that the training content has been reviewed by a subject matter expert for accuracy.

LTC will accept submissions taught by teams whose members together fulfill the requirements above, such as a mental health professional with no interpreting experience working with an experienced interpreter with no medical training to co-teach a course on interpreting for mental health patients.

3. Formula for calculating continuing education credits

DSHS requires certified/authorized interpreters and translators to obtain a total of twenty (20) CE credits every four years to maintain their certification/authorization status. The formula used for calculating CE credits are as follows:

- Workshops or courses: hour for hour (1 hour = 1 credit), with 8 credits maximum;
- Conferences: 2.5 credit hours per full day (6 hours or longer) of conference attendance up to a maximum of five (5) credit hours per event.

II. Procedure of Applying for Approval

1. CE activity provider submits application to DSHS LTC, including:

- The application form (Form 02-592)
- The resume/CV of the instructor(s)

- A syllabus or description of the proposed activity/course, including information such as learning objectives, topics to be covered, plans for breaks, methods to ensure attendance, methods to engage attendants (e.g. exercises and games), and methods to assess learning (e.g. quizzes)
- Documentation (e.g. a letter or Email) showing that the training material has been reviewed by a subject matter expert for accuracy (if applicable)

2. LTC, or its designee, reviews the application based on the criteria for approval.

3. LTC notifies the provider of review results within 3-5 weeks.

4. LTC adds approved activities to the approval list posted on the LTC website.

Once approved, a CE activity will be valid for three (3) years from the date of approval.

Providers also need to be aware of the following when preparing an application:

1. For activities with ethics content, a maximum of one (1) credit will be awarded as an ethics credit. Any remaining credit hours will be counted as general credits.
2. Changes of dates, locations, or other minor modifications to an approved activity can be made by submitting an Application Form (Form 02-592), with only Sections 1 to 5 filled out – without additional documentation. However in the case of major changes, such as changes in course content, credits requested, activity hours, or instructors, a provider must file a new application for approval with all supporting documentation.
3. LTC prioritizes applications for CE activities that primarily benefit Washington State interpreters and translators. There is no limit on applications for in-person or on-site activities provided in Washington, Oregon and Idaho. In-person activities located outside these three states will not be accepted, except major professional conferences providing skills or knowledge building sessions that meet the needs of Washington State interpreters and translators. **For online activities, LTC will accept a maximum of 20 applications per year from any provider, instate or out-of-state.**

A provider will not be allowed to avoid the limit on applications by using different names, for instance, an individual's name in one application, but an organization's name in another. DSHS LTC reserves the right to decline applications at its discretion.

III. Management of Continuing Education Activities

To ensure proper management of CE activities, providers and attendants must comply with the following rules.

1. Three-year valid period

An approved CE activity is valid for three (3) years from the date of approval. Once an activity expires, the provider must submit a full new application if they plan to continue offering this activity. An expired activity will not be honored for credits.

2. Certificate of completion

After a CE activity is completed, the provider will issue attendants a Certificate of Completion. The attendants should submit the certificate to DSHS LTC to receive CE credits within six months after attending the training. The certificate must contain ALL of the following information:

- DSHS approval number
- DSHS approval date
- Activity title
- Date(s) of attendance
- Name of instructor(s)
- Name of provider
- Number and type of credits (e.g. 1 EC and 2 GC)

3. Granting credits once per activity per certification cycle

DSHS LTC honors credits for the same CE activity attended by the same individual only once per certification cycle. In other words, an interpreter or translator can attend an activity as many times as they want, but they will not be granted credits more than once for this same activity within the four years' valid period of their certification.

4. Record keeping

Providers of DSHS approved CE activities should keep appropriate records of important information such as the approval number, approval date, activity date, activity title, instructor's profile, and attendants' names. DSHS LTC has the right to request and examine these records if necessary. It is recommended that records be maintained for a period of no fewer than 5 years.

This document provides general guidelines for application and management of continuing education activities. DSHS LTC has the right to modify these policies and to make decisions as to accept/not accept new applications as well as approve/not approve an application at any time.

If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact DSHS LTC: <DSHSCT@dshs.wa.gov>.

Updated: 06/15/2020

Effective: 07/01/2020