This guideline is no longer in effect as of June 1, 2025. Please refer to the Insurance Council's Continuing Education Requirements page for the most current Continuing Education information.

Insurance Council
BRITISH COLUMBIA

Continuing Education Guidelines
Program for Life and/or Accident and Sickness Insurance Agents

V.1.4

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Insurance Council
BRITISH COLUMBIA

CONTINUING EDUCATION GUIDELINES – PROGRAM FOR LIFE AND/OR ACCIDENT AND SICKNESS AGENTS

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with Council Rule 7(5) licensees must meet the requirements of the continuing education program established by Council, as amended from time to time. The Insurance Council of British Columbia ("Insurance Council") last amended its continuing education program in 2008 (as per Council Notice ICN-08-005 – *The Continuing Education Program for Life and/or Accident and Sickness Insurance Agents*).

CONTINUING EDUCATION

What is continuing education?

Continuing education is learning that helps fulfill the knowledge required to maintain a standard of professional competence and remain current with an ever-changing industry. This knowledge can be obtained through a variety of learning opportunities such as online or in-person courses offered by training institutions or attending professional development conferences.

Who needs to complete continuing education?

In accordance with Council Rule 7(5), all licensees are required to complete continuing education courses. As well, licensees are expected to maintain competence as required under Section 5.2 of Insurance Council's Code of Conduct: "*You must conduct all insurance activities in a competent manner. Competent conduct is characterized by the application of knowledge and skill in a manner consistent with the usual practice of the business of insurance in the circumstances. You must continue your education in insurance to remain current in your skills and knowledge.*"

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Definitions **4**

Non-resident Licensees **4**

Resident Licensees **4**

Course content 4

Continuing education records 5

Reporting continuing education 5

Partial credits 6

Pro-rated continuing education 6

Carry over continuing education 6

Duplicate courses 6

Audits 6

Compliance 6

Continuing Education Record Form ..... **Appendix 1**

Continuing Education (CE) Requirements: What Counts for CE Credits? ..... **Appendix 2**

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INSURANCE COUNCIL'S CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAM

Definitions

Licence Period: Annual licence period runs from June 1 to May 31.

Annual Licence Renewal: A process that consists of completing a declaration to confirm that the licensee has met their professional licensing requirements and submitting an annual licence renewal fee.

Continuing Education Records: Documents confirming relevant knowledge was acquired for the purpose of continuing education (i.e. certificates of course completion, attendance records, written confirmation from course providers, etc.)

Calendar Year: January 1 to December 31

Continuing Education Credits: One hour of instruction is equal to one credit, not including breaks.

Resident Licensee: A licensee who is a resident of British Columbia.

Non-Resident Licensee: A licensee who is a resident of a Canadian province other than British Columbia.

Home Jurisdiction: The Canadian province where a licensee lives and holds an insurance licence.

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NON-RESIDENT LICENSEES

All licensees must complete continuing education regardless of their home jurisdiction. Non-resident licensees whose home jurisdiction has a mandatory continuing education requirement will not be required to meet Insurance Council's requirements provided they complete their continuing education in accordance with their home province's requirements and keep their licence in good standing in their home jurisdiction. If the home jurisdiction does not have a continuing education program, the licensee is required to meet Insurance Council's continuing education program requirements.

RESIDENT LICENSEES

Number of Continuing Education Credits Required

Life and/or Accident and Sickness Insurance Agents are required to complete fifteen (15) hours of continuing education per licence period.

Course Content

Continuing education is learning that helps fulfill the knowledge required to maintain a standard of professional competence and remain current with an ever-changing industry. Licensees should complete sufficient

education to maintain and increase their knowledge in the insurance products they sell. Therefore, accepted continuing education is technical material directly related to:

- Insurance products;
- Compliance with insurance legislation and licensee requirements such as Council Rules, Council's Code of Conduct, the *Insurance Act*, and privacy legislation;
- Ethics;
- Errors and omissions;
- Financial planning (life and accident and sickness insurance agents only), provided the education is focused on life and accident and sickness insurance and not a non-insurance sector.

Continuing education courses that do not contribute to fulfilling knowledge to remain competent in the insurance industry will not be given credit toward meeting Insurance Council's continuing education program. Credit toward their continuing education requirement will not be granted if the course content primarily involves:

- Marketing or sales techniques;
- Service;
- Training on how to use computer programs;
- Self improvement or self help; or
- Non-insurance products.

Continuing Education Records

Insurance Council's continuing education program requires licensees keep their continuing education records for five (5) licence periods. Records should indicate proof of course attendance or completion issued by the course provider including the licensee's full name, the course name and description, the relevant course content (see "Course Content") and the number of eligible continuing education credits granted. An optional form is included in Appendix 1 of this guideline to help licensees track their continuing education and keep their records organized. Please note this form does not replace the requirement to maintain continuing education records.

Examples of continuing education records:

- Continuing education certificates provided by the course provider;
- Attendance sheets provided by the course provider; or
- Written correspondence from the course provider confirming that the course was successfully completed.

Reporting Continuing Education

Licensees are required to confirm they have met Insurance Council's continuing education requirements when they complete their annual licence renewal. Licensees are not required to provide their continuing education records as part of their annual licence renewal but must be in compliance with their continuing education requirements and keep a detailed record of their completed CE for five (5) licence periods.

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Partial credits

Each hour of instruction time is eligible for one continuing education credit. Partial credits will be granted in increments of fifteen (15) minutes for courses less than one (1) hour. For example, fifteen (15) minutes of instruction time amounts to a quarter (.25) of a credit and thirty (30) minutes of instruction time amounts to half (.5) of a credit.

Pro-rated continuing education

Licensees who were issued a licence between March 1 and May 31 are not required to complete continuing education during their first licence period.

Carry-over continuing education credits

Life and accident and sickness licensees can carry forward up to fifteen (15) continuing education credits to the next licence period.

Duplicate courses

Licensees cannot complete the same course for continuing education credit within three (3) licence periods. Exceptions will be made where Insurance Council can confirm the course content has changed substantially enough to warrant retaking the course.

Audits

Although licensees are not required to submit evidence of continuing education, Insurance Council conducts random audits. In the event of an audit, licensees will be required to provide their complete continuing education records for up to five (5) licence periods.

Compliance

Insurance Council conducts random audits of licensees' continuing education records. Failure to complete continuing education or to keep continuing education records can result in disciplinary action.

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BRITISH COLUMBIA

APPENDIX 1
CONTINUING EDUCATION RECORDS

LIFE AND/OR ACCIDENT AND SICKNESS INSURANCE LICENCE

For the licence year ending May 31, 20_____

The number of continuing education hours required is **fifteen (15)** per licence period. A licence period starts June 1st and ends May 31st annually. It is important to note that only technical education qualifies.

Please refer to Insurance Council's *Continuing Education Guidelines* on Insurance Council's website for more information.

Complete a separate form for each licence and licence period. A licence period starts June 1st and ends May 31st annually.
Licence Number: _____ Name: _____

COURSES COMPLETED*

List the continuing education you completed between June 1st and May 31st. Use a separate form for each licence period. If you require additional space, attach a separate page.

Keep this form with attendance certificates, as you may be asked to provide the certificates if you are audited.

DATE	COURSE NAME	COURSE PROVIDER	TYPE*	HOURS CREDITED

** 1) Life insurance products; 2) Financial planning (insurance related); 3) Compliance with insurance legislation and requirements such as Council's Code of Conduct, Council Rules, the Insurance Act, privacy legislation and anti-terrorism/money laundering legislation; 4) Ethics; or 5) E&O.*

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BRITISH COLUMBIA

APPENDIX 2

CONTINUING EDUCATION (CE) REQUIREMENTS: WHAT COUNTS FOR CE CREDITS?

The intent of the Insurance Council's CE program is for licensees to enhance their technical knowledge and competency in the business of insurance. As such, licensees must meet the CE requirements for their class of licence for each licence period (June 1 and May 31, annually).

To be eligible as CE for the purposes of the Insurance Council's continuing education program, CE courses must meet the technical content requirement.

Effective July 11, 2022, the Insurance Council has introduced a CE Accreditation Program, which is designed to support licensees in meeting their CE requirements and provide an up-to-date list of courses and course providers accredited by the Insurance Council that qualify for CE credit.

Please note that prior to the introduction of the CE Accreditation Program on July 11, 2022, courses and course providers were not accredited or approved by the Insurance Council.

Courses not accredited by the Insurance Council could still qualify for CE credits provided they meet the requirements of the CE Guidelines, but it is the **licensee's responsibility to self-assess the course**.

Technical content includes courses, seminars or programs that directly relate to:

- Insurance products (based on the class of licence held)
- Financial planning focused on life insurance content (For Life and A&S agents only)
- Compliance with insurance legislation and requirements
- Errors & Omissions Insurance
- Ethics

*Technical content for Level 3 licensees is broadened to include courses relating to management, accounting, and human resources.

Here are some examples of course material that would meet the Insurance Council's technical content requirement; however, the list is not exhaustive. If you have questions about the Insurance Council's CE requirements, please contact the Practice & Quality Assurance team for more information.

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Insurance Products

Maintaining technical knowledge in the area of insurance enables licensees to provide the best advice to their clients and ensures the insurance products and services recommended are suitable.

Examples of technical/non-technical content related to insurance products include:

Technical	Non-Technical
✓ Insurance product knowledge – i.e. features, coverages, and exclusions	× Marketing or sales techniques
✓ Technical insurance expertise specific to your licence class – i.e. claims adjudication (for Level 2 agents), underwriting requirements	× Software tools or systems
✓ How to analyze and mitigate emerging risks and insurance trends, such as cyber-related risks	

Financial Planning (For Life and A&S Agents only)

Financial planning is defined as assessing an individual's current financial and personal circumstances while considering their future financial needs and providing objective, integrated, and comprehensive insurance recommendations that can assist in meeting those needs.

Examples of technical/non-technical content related to financial planning include:

Technical	Non-Technical
✓ Financial planning focused on life insurance products – i.e. how insurance is affected by tax changes at retirement, estate planning and trusts, segregated funds, protecting income and retirement planning, insurance and risk management	× Financial planning in a non-insurance sector, such as securities or mutual funds
✓ Identifying client's risk exposure and making appropriate insurance recommendations	

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Compliance with insurance legislation and requirements

These courses provide licensees with information regarding regulatory requirements and proper conduct of an insurance licensee.

Examples of technical/non-technical content related to compliance with insurance legislation and requirements include:

Technical	Non-Technical
✓ Education related to Council Rules, Council's Code of Conduct, the *Financial Institutions Act*, the *Insurance Act,* privacy legislation, and anti-terrorism/money laundering legislation	× Compliance related to mutual funds or securities products and services
✓ Insurance case laws	× Legislation that does not have any application to the business of insurance
✓ Legal requirements related to insurance claims	
✓ Needs based sales approach practices, which includes conducting a needs-based analysis, completing and providing an explanatory letter, and advisor disclosures to ensure the recommendations are suitable to the client's needs and objectives	

Errors and Omissions

Education focused on understanding E&O policies and what the coverage entails. This includes exposures, coverage, exclusions, and policy conditions.

Examples of technical content related to Errors and Omissions include:

- ✓ Exposure to E&O claim and how to mitigate risk to the insurance professional.
- ✓ Importance of why E&O insurance is needed.
- ✓ How to underwrite an E&O application (general insurance licensees only).

Ethics

Insurance professionals have a duty to demonstrate ethical behaviour. This helps to ensure that insurance professionals are conducting themselves lawfully and morally to the clients.

Examples of technical/non-technical content related to ethics include:

Technical	Non-Technical
✓ Ethical decision-making which assists the learner to identify and address ethical dilemmas within the context of the insurance profession	× Ethics unrelated to insurance × Courses in personal ethics/ values
✓ Professional obligations and responsibilities of insurance professionals and how it is integrated into their business practices, such as recognizing and managing situations that could result in a conflict	× Training on customer service or sales techniques
✓ Insurance Council's Code of Conduct which outlines Insurance Council's expectations of ethical behaviour and models best practices for insurance professionals	× Professional development – mentoring, coaching, leadership
	× Communication skills – writing, social media

Tip: To determine whether a CE course meets the Insurance Council's technical requirements, we recommend that you review and maintain copies of the course objectives and the course content. If audited, you may be asked to provide evidence of how the course meets the technical education requirements for your class of licence.

Check Your Understanding:

Which of the following course descriptions meet the Insurance Council's technical content requirement for CE?

a. How to be successful in sales: prospecting and marketing to retain clients
b. Develop time management skills to be an efficient insurance broker
c. Protecting client information and privacy for insurance brokers
d. Mutual fund essentials
e. Resume writing for success

The answer is C. Licensees are required to protect client information and privacy, as part of their regulatory responsibilities in the Insurance Council's Code of Conduct. This course meets the Insurance Council's technical content requirement as it is related to *compliance with insurance legislation and requirements*.

Which of the following course descriptions meet the Insurance Council's technical content requirement for CE?

a. Introduction to Office 365
b. Segregated funds and tax considerations
c. How to handle angry customers
d. Basic vehicle damage coverage
e. Both B and D

The answer is B and D. Licensees are required to maintain product knowledge for their class of licence in order to provide suitable recommendations to their clients that meet their needs. Option B meets the technical content requirement for life insurance agents as it is related to *life insurance products* and Option D meets the technical content requirement for general insurance salespersons and agents as it provides *general insurance product knowledge*.

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