



Continuing Mediator Education FAQs for Mediators

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The NC Dispute Resolution Commission (NCDRC) adopted a mandatory continuing mediator education (CME) policy in February of 2016 which requires certified, active mediators to complete two hours of approved CME on an annual basis. These FAQs may help answer questions that mediators have about the policy and its implementation. Q.

What is the NCDRC's policy with regard to Continuing Mediator Education (CME)?

All active MSC and FFS certified mediators must complete two hours of eligible CME prior to certification renewal every fiscal year.

Q. Is the completion of CME mandatory?

Yes. It is mandatory for all active MSC and FFS certified mediators. The NCDRC encourages inactive mediators to engage in CME activities, but it is not required at this time. There is no CME requirement for mediators certified in the district criminal court mediation program or the Clerk Mediation Program.

Q. What content is eligible for CME credit?

Content must be related to G.S. §7A-38.1, G.S. §7A-38.4A, Rules of the NC Supreme Court for the NCDRC, and for the MSC and FFS Programs, Rules of the NC Industrial Commission, Standards of Professional Conduct for Mediators, grievance and disciplinary procedures of the NCDRC, advisory opinions adopted to date by the NCDRC, and/or case law updates involving mediation.

Q. Where can I find the text of the NCDRC Continuing Mediator Education Policy?

You may find the CME policy by visiting www.ncdrc.gov, then click on the "Mediator Toolbox" link. On the next screen, then click on the "Continuing Mediator Education Information for Certified Mediators" link.

Q. Are there other resources related to the NCDRC CME Policy available to mediators?

Yes. You may find the "NCDRC Procedures Implementing NCDRC CME Policy", by visiting NCDRC website at www.ncdrc.gov, then click on the "Mediator Toolbox" link. On the next screen, click on the "Continuing Mediator Education Information for Certified Mediators" link.

Q. How can I find out about available CME opportunities?

Go to the NCDRC's website at www.ncdrc.gov, click on the "Mediator Toolbox" link on the next screen, click on the "Continuing Mediator Education Information for Certified Mediators" link. From the next screen, click on the "CME Information for Certified Mediators" link. Mediators can also seek information from sponsors of programs, such as the NCBA, local bar associations, and the like, about programs that have been approved for CME.

Q. Will the NCDRC contact me when programs have been approved for CME credit?

The NCDRC will make every effort to notify its certified mediators of approved CME programs. The NCDRC will send emails regarding all programs approved for CME credit, include announcements in its newsletter, on Twitter (@NC-DRC) and on LinkedIn (NCDRC) and post them on its website.

Q. When did the policy go into effect?

The policy went into effect with the renewal period for fiscal year 2017-2018 (July 1, 2017, to September 30, 2017), a mediator must have completed 2.0 hours of approved CME between October 1, 2015, and September 30, 2017, in order to be able to renew his/her certification. In subsequent fiscal years, a mediator must complete 2.0 hours of approved CME between July 1 of the fiscal year prior to the current year of renewal and September 30 of the year for which you are renewing your certification, or 15 months.

Q. How do I self-report the CME hours that I have completed?

Mediators will now be able to self-report their CME course(s) during the application renewal process each year. Mediators may also self-report their CME hours throughout the year by logging into their mediator profile and clicking on the CME course they attended/watched.

Q. What happens if I haven't completed 2.0 hours of approved CME when it is time to renew my certification? Is there a grace period?

You will not be able to submit your renewal application until you have completed 2.0 hours of approved CME. Renewal must occur between July 1 and September 30 of the year for which you are renewing your certification. Applications submitted after September 30, of each renewal year will be assessed a \$30 late fee.

Q. Will there be CME programs available during the renewal period if I haven't taken 2.0 hours of approved CME before July 1?

Yes. The NCDRC anticipates and will make its best efforts to ensure that there are sufficient opportunities to obtain CME credit during the renewal period, July 1 – September 30 of any given year. However, the NCDRC cannot guarantee the availability of approved programs, and therefore recommends that mediators complete their CME requirement prior to the beginning of the renewal period.

Q. I'm dually certified. How much approved CME must I complete?

Dually certified mediators are required to complete only 2.0 hours of approved CME each fiscal year. There is no additional requirement for mediators holding dual certifications.

Q. I was certified during the current fiscal year. Will I need to complete 2.0 hours of approved CME prior to renewal for the next fiscal year?

No. Completion of approved CME is not required for certification renewal in the first year after initial certification.

Q. Do I have to take a 2.0 hour course?

No. A mediator can take two 1.0 hour courses, or complete NCDRC approved Podcasts totaling 60 minutes per CME credit hour. However, partial-hour credit will not be credited. If a program is less than one hour, it will not be approved. If a program's duration is between 1.0 and 2.0 hours, CME credit will be rounded down to 1.0 hour. Podcasts are required to be a minimum of 10 minutes and mediators must complete no less than 60 minutes of podcasts to complete 1.0 hour of CME credit.

Q. Do I have to take live programs?

No. Live programs, video replays, webinars, and on demand/online programs, if approved, will qualify.

Q. Can I receive CME credit if I am a presenter at an approved CME program?

Yes. A presenter can receive an hour of CME credit for each hour she or he presents at an approved CME program. A podcast presenter will receive minute for minute credit, rounded down to the nearest 10-minute increment. The presenter will also receive an hour for hour teaching credit for all CME program courses, and a minute for minute teaching credit for all CME podcasts taught.

Q. Will programs approved for CME credit also be approved for CLE credit by the NC State Bar?

In general, yes. An application for CME credit will not be approved unless the State Bar has approved the program for CLE credit. However, some on demand programs which are replays of live programs which were approved and then taped by NCAOC most likely will not be separately approved for CLE credit. Attorneys should check with the State Bar about the possibility of self-reporting attendance at such programs. The NCDRC may disseminate information about programs conditionally approved for CME credit with the caveat that State Bar approval for CLE credit is pending.

Q. Will podcasts approved for CME credit also be approved for CLE credit by the NC State Bar?

No. Podcasts will not qualify for CLE credit through the NC State Bar. Podcasts will only provide CME credit.

Q. Will the NCDRC assess a fee per hour of CME taken?

No. There are no fees assessed by the NCDRC for approved CME hours completed. The only fee is the registration fee, if any, assessed by the sponsor of the program.

Q. Can I carry-over extra CME hours to another year?

No. There is no carry-over from year to year. However, after renewal for a given fiscal year, you may take additional CME prior to the expiration of the renewal period and receive credit.

Q. Why aren't topics such as mediation theory and techniques eligible for CME credit?

Because of a rise in ethical complaints against mediators the NCDRC intentionally approved a narrow policy that would focus on program enabling legislation, program rules, and matters of ethics.

Q. Will the NCDRC continue to post additional educational resources and programs related to mediation even though they are not eligible for CME credit?

Yes. Two hours is a minimum requirement for mandatory CME. The NCDRC encourages mediators to attend additional seminars and workshops, to continue reading resources on mediation, to allow observers, and to engage in other educational activities related to mediation whether or not said activity is approved for CME credit.

Q. If I take a program on mediation out-of-state can it be eligible for CME credit?

It is unlikely that an out-of-state program would be able to meet the narrow criteria of the content that would be approved for credit under the NCDRC CME Policy.

Q. If I have additional questions, who do I contact?

You may email the NCDRC at DRCMediators@nccourts.org or call the office at 919-890-1415.