Steps for Success: Planning continuing nursing education:

1. Start early! Submit your application 40+ calendar days BEFORE your event (cost effective). [https://www.aorn.org/education/individuals/ce-approval-process](https://www.aorn.org/education/individuals/ce-approval-process)

2. Applications must be submitted and approved BEFORE the activity date. Continuing Education Approval Committee members have specific criteria they must follow when reviewing an application. These criteria are dictated by the American Nurses Credentialing Center’s Commission on Accreditation. Failure to comply with reviewers' requests could jeopardize contact hour approval for this activity. Failure on the reviewer’s part to ensure complete application files could jeopardize AORN's accreditation from ANCC.

3. Assemble your planning committee
   a. Assign a Key Contact, minimum of 2 members, and one member with a BSN degree
   b. Plan time to review the AORN and ANCC criteria (on the website)
   c. Some points of discussion can include:
      i. Identify the learning gap.
      ii. Why are you planning this program?
      iii. What data has been collected or identified to support the committee’s decision to provide this continuing nursing education activity?

4. Discuss and select a presentation based on your learners’ needs including one or more of these:
   a. Identification of Gaps: in nursing knowledge, skills, or practice?
   b. Literature review (e.g., peer reviewed evidence-based journal articles/textbooks/websites)
   c. Member requests
   d. Quality and outcome data
   e. Trends in literature, law, and healthcare

5. Develop objectives and learning outcomes based on your needs assessment data.
   a. Discuss, “at the end of the presentation, the perioperative RN will be able to (do what?)” “How will this educational activity enrich the RN’s contributions to quality nursing care?”

6. Select your Presenter based on his or her:
   a. Clinical expertise, professional achievements, work experience, education
   b. Experience and expertise in the content and presenting the content

7. Discuss with the Presenter
   a. Program objectives and learning outcomes
   b. Evidence-based resources for the content
   c. Length of program
   d. Request the presenter’s demographic information and statements of expertise in the content to be presented
   e. Teaching methods and AV equipment needs
i. (e.g.) Lecture format, slide presentation, include 5-10 minutes for questions/answers

ii. Arrange AV needs (laptop/slide projector, handouts?)

f. Evaluate the presence or absence of conflict of interest/commercial interest related to this topic

8. Submit the online application.
   a. Include any flyers/brochures/marketing materials
   b. Part of the application will ask how you determined your learners’ need for this activity. You will also be asked to provide the data to support the needs assessment. For example, this information can be uploaded to the online application as a word document (include how the needs assessment was conducted, a summary statement of the data collected from the learners, and how the committee decided to provide this activity).
   c. Remember to state in your “Planning Expertise” your familiarity or expertise in ANCC criteria – Example: “Planned or reviewed education offerings using the ANCC contact hour criteria.”
   d. Credit card payment – Please note: no refunds once payment is submitted

9. Your application is reviewed by AORN colleagues on the Continuing Education Approval Committee (CEAC) and the AORN team. Together, this group is the AORN Approval Unit.

10. You may be asked to provide more information or clarify information before the final approval. The Key Contact will be notified. The status is called “Pending Approval” and is to ensure AORN has the required information for AORN and ANCC criteria.

11. Waiting for the Approval Letter
   a. The regular review process is 3-4 weeks and rush reviews are available (see fee schedule).

12. Approved applications
   a. The Key Contact will be notified via email.
   b. You can print your certificates and evaluations.
   c. All applications are approved for 2 years

13. After the Event: Submit your post activity report online.

For more information and for technical assistance, email: approvalunit@aorn.org or call 1-800-755-2676, ext. 456. The AORN team is available to help you: Ellice Mellinger MS, BSN, RN, CNOR emellinger@aorn.org, Kim Simkins ksimkins@aorn.org, and Susan Bakewell MS, RN-BC sbakewell@aorn.org.