

REAL ESTATE EDUCATION COURSE APPROVAL GUIDELINES

This document contains specific recommendations for course development and Commission approval; however, it does not contain all rules, requirements, and information affecting education providers and instructors. It is not, nor is it intended to be, a replacement or substitute for reading the Commission's Real Estate Education Rules ([21 NCAC Subchapter 58H](#)). It is essential that all prospective education providers, instructors, and course developers read the complete Real Estate Education Rules thoroughly before attempting to use the information in this document.

PART 1: DETAILS REGARDING THE PROCESS

Persons or entities wishing to submit real estate education courses to the NC Real Estate Commission for approval must first become certified Education Providers (EPs).

- Complete the *Application for Original Education Provider Certification* (form REC 3.86): <https://www.ncrec.gov/EduProviderCertification/Index>

On the EP certification application, you will indicate which courses you wish to offer – Prelicensing, Postlicensing, CE Update, and/or CE Elective courses.

- If you indicate you wish to offer **Pre or Postlicensing courses**, you will be required to submit the \$40 per course fee(s) with the certification application.
- If you indicate you wish to offer the **CE Update courses**, ~~RDGGLWLRQOIHHZLOOEHFKDUIJHGZLWK WKHFHUWLILFDWLRQSSOLFDWLRQWDRQWLPHPDWHULDOVIHHZLOOEHFKDUIJHGZKHQ V&KPLWD&SGDWHFR&VHDSSOLFDWLRQ~~
- If you indicate you wish to offer **CE Elective courses**, no additional fee will be charged with the certification application, but a \$100 (per course) application fee will be charged when you submit an elective course application.

Once you have achieved certification as an Education Provider, you will be provided an EP Code and login instructions for the EP Login System. The EP Login System will provide access to the course applications, as follows:

- *Application for Approval of a Real Estate Education Course* (form REC 7.33): This form is used to apply for approval of Pre, Post, or CE Elective courses.
- *Application for Approval to offer the Commission's Update Courses In Person or via Synchronous Distance Learning* (form REC 7.34): This form is only used to apply for approval of CE Update courses.

A course application must be submitted for each course you wish to offer. Further, a separate application must be submitted for each delivery method for each course. For example, if you wish to offer the prelicensing course in-person and via distance delivery, two separate course applications will be required.

Prior to obtaining the Commission's written approval of a real estate education course, EPs shall not offer, advertise, or otherwise represent that any real estate course is, or may be, approved for credit in North Carolina.

- Read [Subchapter 58H Real Estate Education](#) in its entirety so that you are familiar with the rules.

Application fees are **nonrefundable**, so if you are uncertain about any aspect of your application, reach out to Commission staff to get answers **before** you submit your forms and fees.

The time required to process a course application varies depending upon the type of application submitted and the time of year it reaches our office. Applications for newly developed courses are the most time consuming. If a proposed course application for a new course is received before April or after June, and the course clearly satisfies all criteria, it will normally be reviewed and approved within 3 to 4 weeks. During the April through June period, that timeframe may double. Review of a proposed course application for a new course which does not fully satisfy all criteria may take even longer.

If you have a tentative initial "course start date" in mind, submit course applications far enough in advance to allow sufficient time for processing and review by Commission staff, for correcting any potential problems in course materials, and finally for adequate advertising of your course offering(s).

The Commission reserves the right to require verification of any relevant information concerning the Education Provider or the course(s) prior to making a determination on any application.

The applicant should make and retain a copy of each completed application and other information submitted to the Commission. The completed application and all material submitted to the Commission become the property of the Commission and will not be returned to the applicant.

PART 2: THE COURSE APPLICATIONS

The application and approval process for prelicensing, postlicensing, and CE elective real estate education courses is addressed in Commission Rule [58H .0401](#), and the application and approval process for the Commission's Update courses is addressed in Commission Rule [58H .0403](#). By correctly and completely filling out form REC 7.33 (for prelicensing, postlicensing, and CE electives), and/or form REC 7.34 (for Update), you will be supplying the information and materials required.

After providing the general Education Provider information requested in the first five items, you must identify the type of course for which you are requesting approval:

- prelicensing (minimum 75 hours of instruction),
- postlicensing (minimum 30 hours of instruction per course), or
- continuing education elective course (minimum 4 hours of instruction).

For prelicensing and postlicensing courses, you must also provide a description of the method by which the education provider will proctor the end-of-course examination to maintain exam integrity.

After identifying the type of course, you must identify the title of the proposed course, and the delivery method(s) through which you will deliver the course content:

- in-person instruction;
- synchronous distance instruction – a method of instruction in which the instructor and students are separated only by distance and not time, allowing for real-time monitoring of student participation [58H .0101(15)];
- distance instruction (asynchronous) – a self-paced method of instruction accomplished through the use of media whereby teacher and student are separated by distance and time [58H .0101(5)];
or
- blended instruction – any combination of distance education, synchronous distance learning, and in-person methods of instruction [58H .0101(2)].

For each delivery method, you are required to identify the owner/developer of the course. Here are the choices as presented in the course application for prelicensing, postlicensing, or CE elective courses (form REC 7.33):

- Course created and owned by the applicant
Select this option if you are applying for...approval of an in -person, synchronous distance learning, or distance Prelicensing or Postlicensing course that your organization has developed according to the Commission's syllabi; or approval of an in -person, synchronous distance learning, or distance CE elective course that your organization has developed.
- Course created and owned by an entity/person other than the applicant
This includes a course that has already been approved by NCREC for the course owner.

If the course owner is a person/entity **other than the applicant**, you must provide evidence of

- the owner's permission for the applicant to seek approval to offer the course,
- whether the course is currently Commission-approved, and
- whether the course will be conducted as originally approved.

NOTE: Each delivery method requires a separate application form, and each delivery method has specific requirements which are addressed separately.

- In-person Instruction: If the delivery method is in-person instruction, you must provide **a copy of the course guide** which must include:
 - course objectives,
 - learning objectives for each topic,
 - a course syllabus,
 - instructional methods and aids to be employed, and
 - all course materials that will be provided to students.

Additionally, you must provide:

- a description of the mechanism used for verification of possession of required course materials, and
- a description of the method by which the EP will verify and record student attendance.

Also, if the application is for a prelicensing or postlicensing course, you must provide:

- a description of the method by which the EP will proctor the end-of-course examination in accordance with [Rule 58H .0207\(c\)](#).

- Synchronous Distance Instruction: If the delivery method is synchronous distance instruction, you must provide **a copy of the course guide** which must include:
 - course objectives,
 - learning objectives for each topic,
 - a course syllabus,
 - instructional methods and aids to be employed, and
 - all course materials that will be provided to students.

Additionally, you must provide:

- a description of the method by which the EP will verify and record student attendance,
- a description of the mechanism used for verification of possession of required course materials, and
- a list of hardware and software or other equipment necessary to both offer and complete the course, and
- the contact information for the technical support service for the course.

Also, if the application is for a prelicensing or postlicensing course, you must provide:

- a description of the method by which the EP will proctor the end-of-course examination in accordance with [Rule 58H .0207\(c\)](#).

- Distance (Asynchronous) Instruction: If the delivery method is asynchronous distance instruction and the course has **not** been previously approved, you must provide **a copy of the course guide** which must include:
 - course objectives,
 - learning objectives for each topic,
 - a course syllabus,
 - instructional methods and aids to be employed, and
 - all course materials that will be provided to students.

Additionally, you must provide:

- a full copy of the course on the medium to be utilized for instruction,
- a description of the method by which the EP will verify and record student attendance,
- a description of the mechanism used for verification of possession of required course materials,
- a list of hardware and software or other equipment necessary to both offer and complete the course,
- the contact information for the technical support service for the course,
- all hardware and software necessary to review the submitted course at the expense of the applicant, and
- an outline demonstrating the course meets the minimum course hours measured by a reading speed of 225 words per minute and the actual duration of audio and video files.

Also, if the application is for a prelicensing or postlicensing course, you must provide:

- a description of the method by which the EP will proctor the end-of-course examination in accordance with [Rule 58H .0207\(c\)](#).

Finally, per [Rule 58H .0415](#), the beginning of each distance education course shall:

- include an orientation that:
 - explains the course syllabus,
 - identifies all required materials/resources,
 - states the maximum completion time allowed, and
 - instructs students on course navigation;
 - include a navigation menu within the course platform that allows students to access the:
 - instructor's name/contact information,
 - course syllabus and schedule,
 - course materials,
 - Policies and Procedures Disclosure,
 - contact information for the course's technical support.
 - be divided into units and students shall complete an assessment for each unit prior to beginning the subsequent unit.
- **Blended Instruction.** If the delivery method is blended instruction, you must provide **a copy of the course guide** which must include:
 - course objectives,
 - learning objectives for each topic,
 - a course syllabus,
 - instructional methods and aids to be employed,
 - all course materials that will be provided to students, and
 - all the information listed above relative to the types of instruction that are being blended.Additionally, you must provide:
 - a description of the mechanism used for verification of possession of required course materials, and
 - a description of the method by which the EP will verify and record student attendance.Also, if the application is for a prelicensing or postlicensing course, you must provide:
 - a description of the method by which the EP will proctor the end-of-course examination in accordance with Rule 58H .0207(c).

The last two portions of the application form require the name(s) and instructor number(s) of your prospective course instructors, and finally, the signature of the Education Provider's Education Director.

PART 3: COURSE MATERIALS

Per [Commission Rule 58H .0205](#), all courses shall be required to have course materials that cover current North Carolina real estate related laws, rules, and practices. The nature and depth of subject matter coverage shall be consistent with the competency and instructional levels prescribed by the syllabus for the course for which approval is sought.

- The Broker Prelicensing Course is an introductory level real estate principles and practices course with heavy emphasis on real estate brokerage law and practice. Consult the prelicensing course syllabus.
- The primary objective of the Postlicensing Education Program is to provide instruction at a level beyond that provided in the Broker Prelicensing Course on topics deemed to be of special importance to licensees. Consult the Postlicensing Education Program syllabi.

- Postlicensing courses shall utilize the current edition of the *North Carolina Real Estate Manual*.
- EPs shall use the Commission-developed course materials to conduct Update courses.
- Continuing Education Elective Course requirements are discussed separately in the next section.

PART 4: CE ELECTIVE COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Basic Requirement for Elective Course Subject Matter

Continuing education elective courses shall cover subject matter related to real estate brokerage practice and offer knowledge or skills that will enable brokers to better serve real estate consumers and the public interest. [[Commission Rule 58H .0402\(a\)\(1\)](#)]

Key Elements of the Criteria

A proposed elective course must satisfy the following key elements of the subject matter criteria that are discussed below.

- **A proposed elective course shall cover subject matter related to real estate brokerage.**
 - **Courses must generally address subject matter that is considered to be part of the body of real estate knowledge that real estate brokers are expected to possess.**

Listed below are various examples of acceptable topics chosen from Commission-approved elective courses. These were chosen to illustrate the wide range of acceptable topics available to course developers. The examples of acceptable topics are listed under general subject area categories (in bold) which are generally too broad to be acceptable topics.

Examples of ACCEPTABLE Topics	
Agency Agency Forms and Practices Buyer Representation	Finance Residential Financing Options Understanding Lending Procedures
Appraisal Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice (USPAP) Most courses approved by the NC Appraisal Board	Investment Investment Analysis of Office Properties Real Estate Investment Fundamentals
Brokerage Practices Listing Procedures Navigating Tricky Transactions Performing a CMA/BPO	Land Use Zoning Basics
Client Specialization Expectations of Affluent Buyers/Sellers Military Residential Specialist Working with Seniors	Legal Issues Misrepresentation: Case Studies Top Legal Issues for Brokers

Commercial Real Estate Brokerage Commercial Real Estate Fundamentals Managing Commercial Real Estate	License Law and Commission Rules Top Disciplinary Complaints
Construction/Building Design Residential Construction Basics Sustainable Housing & Building Green	Miscellaneous Mortgage Fraud and Predatory Lending Property Inspections Real Estate Ethics Risk Management Short Sales “Staging” Real Estate for Sale
Contracts (Sales) Guide to Sales Contract Preparation Sales Contracts and Addenda	Property Management Legal Issues for Property Managers Residential Property Management
Environmental Issues Healthy Homes Understanding Mold	Risk Management Liability Reduction for Residential Agents Protecting Client Data
Fair Housing Fair Housing Case Studies	Taxation Taxation of Investment Property Tax-Deferred Exchanges

- **Many courses address subject matter that is useful to real estate brokers but that clearly does NOT meet the basic standard cited in the first bullet above, such as the examples below:**

Examples of Unacceptable Topics	
Professional Development Stress Management Understanding Body Language Effective Time Management Personal Financial Management Effective Interpersonal Communication Improving Your Personal Image	General Skills Computer Basics Introduction to the Internet MLS Data Entry
General Business Administration/Management Personnel Management Marketing Principles of Management Accounting	Non-Real Estate Topics Product “Branding” Feng Shui Economic Development Principles of Business Leadership
Topics not Directly Related to Real Estate Practice Guidelines for First-Time Homebuyers Managing In-House Corporate Real Estate Holdings	

- **A proposed elective course shall offer knowledge or skills that will enable brokers to better serve real estate consumers and the public interest.**

The second key element of the subject matter criteria focuses on the “consumer protection” aspect of continuing education. The primary purpose of mandatory continuing education is to benefit real estate consumers. If the acquisition by a licensee of the knowledge and skills taught in a proposed course will directly contribute to this consumer protection goal (and the course satisfies the other criteria), the course is acceptable. This means that knowledge of the topic should have a direct bearing on the licensee’s ability to protect and serve consumers’ interests. However, if the principal beneficiary of the knowledge/skills taught in the course is the licensee rather than the consumer, and any benefit to the consumer is merely incidental, then the course is not acceptable.

Examples of Unacceptable Topics (Real Estate Topics Directly Related to Brokerage Practice that Do NOT Directly Contribute to Consumer Protection)

- Achieving Financial Stability
- Expanding Your Real Estate Business
- Dealing with Client/Customer Objections
- Persuasive Real Estate Presentations
- Efficient Real Estate Office Operations
- Prospecting (“Farming”) for Listing
- REALTOR® Board Orientation

Notes:

- *As a general rule, it is best to select a fairly specific topic and address that topic in depth, or to select the most important points relating to a topic and focus on those points.*
- While a “review” of basic points of law, principles, or practices for a reasonable portion of a CE elective course is acceptable, *the course should also attempt to expand the students’ knowledge/skills by focusing on (a) recent changes, (b) applications of principles and procedures to situations encountered in practice, or (c) special problem areas, or (d) specialized areas of practice such as commercial real estate brokerage or property management.*
- Although some licensees attending CE courses may not be actively engaged in real estate brokerage, the vast majority of licensees attending CE are active brokers, and courses should generally be designed for active licensees. An effective instructor should be able to adjust the level of instruction to fit the needs of a class dominated by inactive brokers.

PART 5: COURSE DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

STEP ONE: Understand What is Required

The first step in sound development of a real estate education course is knowing exactly what is required for approval by the North Carolina Real Estate Commission. Parts 1, 2, and 3 of this document specifically outline the necessary elements to be submitted with the application. In addition to studying those sections, read Commission Rules 58H .0205, 0401, 0402, and .0415 thoroughly for complete details regarding criteria for real estate education course approval. As far as actual materials are concerned, in developing the proposed course, you must produce the following:

- Substantive real estate information which shall consist of the appropriate instructional hours and credit for the type of course being developed; and
- A copy of the **Course Guide** which shall include:
 - course objectives
 - learning objectives for each topic
 - a course syllabus as defined by Rule [58H .0101](#).
 - instructional methods and aids to be employed, and
 - all materials that will be provided to students (**Student Materials/Manual**),

The **Student Materials** should provide, in **narrative or text form**, all the information to be presented in the course. In other words, the **Student Materials** should contain the narrative details of the substantive information to be presented in the course.

The **Student Materials** should be current, accurate, explanatory of the topics covered, consistent with course learning objectives, grammatically correct, logically organized, and presented in an easy-to-read format. The scope and depth of the information presented must be appropriate in view of the course learning objectives and time allotments. The quality of the student materials should be comparable to that of professionally produced educational materials.

STEP TWO: Choose an Appropriate Topic

(For CE elective course development only. Prelicensing and Postlicensing courses must follow NCREC syllabi.)

The second step in CE elective course development is choosing an appropriate topic. [Commission Rule 58H .0402](#) and Parts 3 and 4 of this document explain appropriate elective course subject matter. [See pages 6 - 9]. It is suggested that the developer perform some basic research into licensee needs/desires for elective courses (e.g., polling of students in existing CE courses). It would also be helpful to take note of the subject matter covered in courses that have already been approved and where the education providers of those courses are operating.

STEP THREE: Write Learning Objectives

The third step in course development is formulating your learning objectives. Per [Commission rule 58H .0101\(9\)](#), “ ‘Learning objective’ means a statement of what a student will be able to do after completing a unit or course.” Deciding to develop a course can be compared to deciding to take a trip. Just as you need to determine a destination for the journey’s end, you must determine the ultimate goal of your proposed course. Remember that learning objectives are required for each major topic. A single learning objective for the entire course is not sufficient.

Rule 58H .0101(9) dictates that “A learning objective shall be structured in accordance with Bloom's Taxonomy.” Bloom’s Taxonomy consists of six levels of thinking skills ranging from low order thinking skills (knowledge, comprehension) to high order thinking skills (application, analysis, synthesis, evaluation). A brief discussion of each thinking skill follows:

Knowledge, the lowest order of thinking, is the possession of information just as it is presented and requires only that the learner remember, recognize, or memorize information.

Comprehension is the translation of information into the learner’s own words, a level of understanding beyond mere recall.

Application is the level at which critical thinking begins. The learner is required to assimilate information and apply it in a different/new situation than that of its original presentation.

Analysis is the ability to separate information into its basic parts and understand the relationship of the parts to the whole.

Synthesis is the ability to combine information from different sources to form a new idea. Synthesis requires original and creative thinking.

Evaluation, the highest order of thinking, requires learners to make judgments about, or determine the worth of, something according to standards the learner designates.

The following list of words will help simplify the process of writing learning objectives and provide measurable outcomes. “As a result of this instruction, students will be able to . . .”

<u>KNOWLEDGE</u>	<u>COMPREHENSION</u>	<u>APPLICATION</u>	<u>ANALYSIS</u>	<u>SYNTHESIS</u>	<u>EVALUATION</u>
define	discuss	apply	analyze	combine	assess
describe	explain	classify	breakdown	create	critique
identify	interpret	compute	categorize	design	determine
list	paraphrase	demonstrate	differentiate	devise	judge
name	summarize	modify	discriminate	integrate	measure
recall	translate	produce	relate	transform	support

NOTE: See *Part 6-Resources* for additional information about Bloom’s Taxonomy.

STEP FOUR: Develop Detailed Course Outline

The fourth step in course development is constructing an outline of your proposed course. To extend the analogy from Step Three, if the proposed course is a journey with the objectives as the destination, then the outline is your road map of how to get from “Point A” to “Point B.”

The content of the proposed course can be outlined in many ways: sequentially, topically, simple to complex, etc. Regardless of the organizational method employed in constructing your outline, it is essential that it be as detailed as possible. A brief topic outline is not sufficient. A sentence outline is strongly preferred.

With regard to CE elective course development, once the detailed outline is complete, it will likely be apparent if the topic is too basic, broad, general, or otherwise inappropriate for a four-hour CE elective. *At this point, should you have any questions/concerns at all regarding the suitability of a topic, call the Commission office and ask to speak with the Continuing Education Officer.* It is better

to learn about a major subject area problem at this stage than after you have devoted significant time to course development. Many questions about the appropriateness of proposed subject matter can be answered at this stage. Remember, however, that it will be impossible for the CE Officer to advise you at this stage on whether or not the substantive information you propose to present will be found appropriate since you have not yet developed the substantive details.

STEP FIVE: Determine Proposed Time Allotments and Instructional Methods/Aids

After the detailed outline is complete, the fifth step in course development involves working the additional Instructor Guide requirements into that outline. Specifically, this step includes determining the time allotments for each major topic, deciding when to break, and selecting the appropriate instructional delivery method(s) and/or instructional aid(s) to employ.

Per [Commission Rule 58H .0101\(6\)](#), an instructional hour is defined as 50 minutes of instruction and 10 minutes of break time. In determining time allotments and breaks, consider the difficulty of the material.

Regarding instructional methods/aids, unless the applicant can demonstrate that straight lecture is the most effective instructional method for the course, *the Course/Instructor Guide should provide for the use of an appropriate variety of instructional methods and instructional aids intended to enhance student participation, attentiveness, and learning.* Examples of instructional methods and instructional aids that may be appropriate include, but are not limited to, class discussion, role-playing, in-class work assignments, PowerPoint presentations, and video recordings.

STEP SIX: Write Course Narrative and Assemble Student Materials and Course/Instructor Guide

The sixth step in course development is writing the course narrative and assembling the Student Materials and Course/Instructor Guide. The Student Materials should be, in essence, a textbook which is used by the students and the instructor. Additionally, a Course/Instructor Guide must be provided containing the detailed course outline into which all other required elements have been inserted: time allotments and break placement, learning objectives for each major topic, instructional methods/aids to be employed, as well as any other additional instructor notes.

In writing the detailed course narrative, be aware that *the substantive information to be presented must be provided in sufficient detail to demonstrate that the information is current, accurate, complete, and otherwise appropriate.* The education/experience level of the instructor(s) will not suffice as a substitute for narrative details, and Commission staff will make no assumptions about the specific information that will be presented. Every course must be fully developed prior to approval. This does not mean that the materials must contain every word to be spoken by the instructor; however, all key points to be made/discussed must be addressed in sufficient depth for Commission staff to determine that the information is current and accurate, and that the instructional level is appropriate. An outline with an occasional sentence or phrase is not sufficient, nor is a listing of key points in incomplete sentence form. In order to fairly evaluate whether the course meets approval criteria, staff must review the details of the substantive information in narrative form.

The easiest way to assure that the narrative is written with adequate detail is to use the specific learning objectives and the detailed outline (developed in Steps 3 and 4) and imagine that you are

writing course material for someone other than yourself to use in teaching the course. As an additional goal, you might strive to produce materials of such caliber that they will become resource/reference materials for licensees for years to come.

In assembling your Course/Instructor Guide and Student Materials, you should include appropriate cover pages, tables of contents, and acknowledgment pages for each document. If copyrighted materials are to be used in the proposed course, the course developer should obtain the specific permission of the copyright holder for such use and the materials should be used in a form approved by the copyright holder. Additionally, appropriate citations for copyrighted materials should appear in the course materials. Similarly, even if you use materials that are in the public domain (not copyrighted), appropriate credits should be included.

STEP SEVEN: Proofread Materials and Obtain an Independent Review

This step is a very important and often overlooked step in developing a proposed course. The Commission has received several submissions resembling “rough drafts,” which have required not only evaluation but editing/marketing for correction. Commission staff simply does not have the time nor the personnel to perform proofreading/editing.

In addition to the writer proofreading his/her work, it is advisable that the writer ask someone else who is knowledgeable of the subject matter and grammatical principles to read the material. Having another person’s viewpoint is helpful in the editing/revising stage.

STEP EIGHT: Edit - Clarify - Revise

It is a rare individual who gets it right the first time. Naturally, after the proofreading and independent review step is completed, it is likely that corrections and changes will need to be made. Once you’ve pinpointed those problem areas, correct them!

STEP NINE: Name That Course (CE Elective courses only.)

The final step in course development is selecting a title for your course that accurately reflects the course content. Many course developers like to use eye-catching or cute-sounding course titles to distinguish their courses. While attention-getting titles may have some benefit, such titles also are problematic when they give the licensees absolutely no clue as to the course subject matter. As some licensees choose courses based on the subject matter, potential students may be lost if a course title does not reveal the course’s subject matter.

PART 6: RESOURCES

Following are websites that may provide additional information about Bloom's Taxonomy, instructional design, and virtual training and facilitation.

Bloom's Taxonomy

- <https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/blooms-taxonomy/>
- <https://www.common sense.org/education/articles/samr-and-blooms-taxonomy-assembling-the-puzzle>
- <https://www.common sense.org/education/videos/blooms-digital-taxonomy>

Instructional Design

- <https://www.td.org/talent-development-glossary-terms/what-is-instructional-design>
- <https://www.instructionaldesigncentral.com/instructionaldesigneducation>

Virtual Training and Facilitation

- <https://www.idecc.org/CDEI.cfm>
- <https://www.td.org/virtual-training>