

# Q & A: North Carolina Additional Requirements for Professional Standards and Continuing Education

Revised September 2018

## QUESTION #1

Is it allowable to spread the required hours of continuing education across two years or must the professional standards be met within one year in North Carolina?

## ANSWER #1

Ideally, annual requirements for continuing education hours meeting professional standards for each level of School Nutrition (SN) professional would be met within a one-year period. The tracking year begins July 1st and continues through June 30th of the school year; however, North Carolina recognizes continuing education hours are often provided during the summer months and allows for the carryover of excess annual professional development hours to an immediately previous or an immediately subsequent school year. This provides flexibility while ensuring School Food Authority (SFA) employees receive the required amount of continuing education each school year. All continuing education must be properly documented.

**The annual requirements for continuing education include:**

<b>SFA Director</b>	<b>12 hours</b>
<b>Manager</b>	<b>10 hours</b>
<b>Full-Time Staff (working <math>\geq</math> 20 hours per week)</b>	<b>6 hours</b>
<b>Part-Time Staff (working &lt;20 hours per week)</b>	<b>4 hours</b>

## QUESTION #2

What type of documentation is required to demonstrate completion of the annual continuing education standards?

## ANSWER #2

Both United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and School Nutrition Association (SNA) offer tracking tools which may be used to document required continuing education for SN Program employees and administrators, or the SFA may develop its own tracking tool or tracking method. Documentation should include the following information: a listing of names of employees by category; employer/school; training title; date of training; topic/objectives; learning code; source of continuing education; and total contact hours.

## QUESTION #3

Are Supervisors required to meet the same professional development requirements as Directors?

## ANSWER #3

In North Carolina, Supervisors and Assistant Directors are usually central office personnel who work under the direct supervision of the School Food Authority (SFA) Director of the School Nutrition Program, and thus, are subject to the same professional standards for annual continuing education as Directors.

Supervisors and Assistant Directors are not required to meet the same hiring standards as a Director, unless they apply for a Director position, at which time the hiring standards for a Director would be required for all applicants.

**QUESTION #4**

Are continuing education hours allowed for participating in food or equipment trade shows or other similar events?

**ANSWER #4**

In North Carolina, a maximum of two (2) hours of continuing education are allowed annually for participating in food or equipment trade shows, observing product/equipment demonstrations or visiting industry exhibit rooms or other similar activities. The SFA should provide documentation of the employee participation in the activity, its content, sponsoring agency/company, and the length of the activity.

**QUESTION #5**

Is Food Safety Certification required for all School Nutrition Program Directors?

**ANSWER #5**

Yes; in North Carolina, all School Nutrition Program Directors are required to achieve Certified Food Protection Managers (CFPM) status by passing an American National Standards Institute (ANSI) approved exam in food safety. As of September 2018, there are five organizations offering approved CFPM examinations:

[National Registry of Food Safety Professionals](#)

[National Restaurant Association](#)

[360training.com, Inc.](#)

[Prometric Inc.](#)

[StateFoodSafety.com](#)

New Directors must obtain the certification within five (5) years prior to their starting date as Director or complete certification within thirty (30) days of being hired as a Director. The Administrative Review requires documentation of Food Safety Certification for the Director.

**QUESTION #6**

Do Professional Standards apply to temporary or part-time staff?

**ANSWER #6**

The answer to this question may be different for different types of positions. Usually, in North Carolina, temporary employees who perform a single type of task for a limited amount of time (Ex: processing applications at the beginning of the year) are not required to meet Professional Standard requirements, although they will need training for their specific job.

Temporary employees who work periodically throughout the year (Ex: substitute kitchen employees, central office employees who perform a variety of office tasks throughout the year on a temporary/part-time basis) are required to meet Professional Standards continuing education requirements for part-time staff (4 hours), if employed for less than 20 hours per week. If employed for more than 20 hours per week, they would be considered full-time staff and would need 6 hours of continuing education annually. If they are employed on or after January 1st of the school year, the required number of hours would be half of the annual requirement.

**QUESTION #7**

Do Professional Standards apply to volunteers who work in the School Nutrition Program?

**ANSWER #7**

The Professional Standards should be extended to all volunteers in the School Nutrition Program in North Carolina, if the SN Director determines the position is directly involved in the operations of the SN Program, and not merely providing support to the Program. The Director should examine the job duties of volunteers and determine what job-specific training is needed to perform their jobs effectively and in compliance with program regulations. The State Agency requires health and food safety training for all staff involved in food handling, including volunteers, when applicable.

**QUESTION #8**

May the person providing continuing education (i.e., the instructor) count the hours toward his/her own annual professional standards requirements?

**ANSWER #8**

An SFA Administrator or Manager, who serves as an instructor, may count the continuing education offered to his/her staff toward part of his/her own annual continuing education requirement, but can count it only once when there are multiple repeated sessions. This flexibility is allowed because program administrators and managers must keep learning to communicate and help implement new policies and procedures and incorporate new statutory requirements through the continuing education offered to SFA personnel. Preparing for and imparting knowledge can help an SFA administrator or manager cement his/her knowledge of the school meal programs.

**QUESTION #9**

How do the annual required training hours apply to a SN staff member who has been on long-term medical leave (most of the year or one year)?

**ANSWER #9:**

Professional Standards apply to employees who are actively employed and thus do not apply when employees are on long-term medical leave approved by their employer, unless the Human Resources (HR) Department of the employer has differing requirements. Confirm with the LEA's Human Resources Department their policy on this matter. Based on guidance from HR, the following may apply. Employees are responsible for meeting the required number of hours of continuing education for the part of the year in which they are employed. The required number of hours of continuing education can be pro-rated. Example: A full-time cook is on approved medical leave for four (4) months which is one-third of the school year. The required number of hours of continuing education for this employee in that school year would be reduced by one-third (from 6 hours to 4 hours).