



Directions for Online Academic Course Review

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Since 1996 the National Council on Family Relations (NCFR) has reviewed undergraduate and graduate degree programs for inclusion of academic courses covering the content needed for Provisional status as a Certified Family Life Educator (CFLE). Provisional certification was created to provide access to the professional credential for the applicant with a family degree that lacked the work experience required for Full Certification. Students who graduate from NCFR-approved academic programs can apply for Provisional CFLE status via the Abbreviated Application process <http://www.ncfr.org/cfle-certification/abbreviated-application-process> within two years of graduation.

NCFR approval has historically been confined to a specified degree program or to an identified CFLE track of courses offered through several departments. In order to be considered an NCFR-approved CFLE program, an institution must offer coursework covering *all ten of the family life content areas*, plus a supervised practicum or internship that includes focus on family life education (a two or three-credit course that involves at least 120 hours in the field).

Beginning in 2012, NCFR will review individual academic courses for coverage of specific CFLE content areas. However, in order for an individual course to be approved by NCFR, the course must be available in an online format. Individual online courses approved by NCFR will be listed on the NCFR website as **CFLE-Approved Online Courses** <http://www.ncfr.org/cfle-certification/cfle-approved-online-courses>.

NCFR is providing this opportunity in an effort to meet the needs of students enrolled at NCFR-approved CFLE programs who are unable to complete one or more CFLE-approved course at their school. Students unable to complete a CFLE-approved course at their school can access a list of CFLE-approved online courses via the NCFR website. Availability of these CFLE-approved online courses will enable students to complete the CFLE coursework requirements.

The following information is specific to the review of individual online courses. Information on the Academic Program Review process (for complete degree programs) can be found on the NCFR website at <http://www.ncfr.org/cfle-certification/academic-program-approval>

Information regarding the Abbreviated Application process can be found on the NCFR website at <http://www.ncfr.org/cfle-certification/abbreviated-application-process>

Online Academic Course Approval Criteria

Course approval will be limited to **one** CFLE content area. While many courses will include coverage of issues relevant to more than one CFLE content area, courses approved for the **NCFR CFLE-Approved Online Course** listing must cover the majority of a single content area. For example, a course approved for the *Parent Education and Guidance* content area must cover the concepts of this content area solely within the one course and not in combination with another course.

Appendix A lists the CFLE Content Areas in a concise one-page summary. **Appendix B** details the Curriculum Guidelines of the Content Areas. Briefly, the ten Areas address:

1. Families & Individuals in Societal Contexts
2. Internal Dynamics of Families
3. Human Growth and Development Across the Lifespan
4. Human Sexuality
5. Interpersonal Relationships
6. Family Resource Management
7. Parent Education and Guidance
8. Family Law and Public Policy
9. Professional Ethics & Practice
10. Family Life Education Methodology

Appendix C includes the rubric used to evaluate the course for CFLE content

Online Academic Course Review Committee

CFLE professionals serving on the Online Academic Course Review Committee will review and approve courses that are deemed to cover the CFLE content. The Committee makes a review of the course and, working with the NCFR Director of Education, reaches a conclusion about how well the course covers the CFLE content area.

Committee members are Master's- and doctoral-prepared professionals who are qualified to review college level curricula and who can bring the perspective of both academic and practitioner. They are members of NCFR and hold the CFLE credential.

Online Academic Course Submission Process

Institutions seeking approval of individual online courses must submit the following:

- 1) **NCFR CFLE-approved Online Academic Course submission form.** This form is available via the NCFR website as a web form.
<http://www.ncfr.org/cfle-certification/cfle-forms/online-cfle-academic-course-submission-form> Complete the form and attach the course syllabus.
- 2) The syllabus should include instructor contact information, course objectives (and unit objectives if available), course description (may be from catalog), textbook(s) and/or required readings including research-based and peer-reviewed scholarly literature, course requirements/assignments, and a course schedule reflecting topics (may be labeled tentative).

Online Academic Course Approval Process

The Committee strives to complete course reviews within 30 days of receipt. The NCFR Director of Education will begin the review process with a preliminary assessment of the materials submitted. The Director may advise the institution of additions or changes that can be made immediately before the application advances to the Online Academic Course Approval Committee.

Online Academic Course Review Committee members utilize a scoring rubric in their evaluation of submitted materials. Scores are not reported to the institution; scoring serves only as a guide for the Committee and the Director of Education. Guides do not include cut scores or minimum points for approval; they assist in identifying areas

needing clarification.

Communication of APR Approval

NCFR sends the institution an official certificate of approval for the approved course. The approved course will be included in the list of *CFLE-approved Online Courses* on the NCFR website under the appropriate CFLE Content Area.

Course Renewal Process

Approved courses are reevaluated every five years through the submission of a Renewal Application. An updated syllabus for the approved course must be submitted at that time.

The institution is advised that changes in any of the following areas should be reported immediately to the Director of Education, without waiting for the regular renewal time.

1. Change in a course title or number
2. Substantive changes in courses. (Usual updates such as new textbooks do not need to be reported during the five-year period of approval.)

Please note: In order for the approved online course to appear in the NCFR Clearinghouse it will be important that NCFR be notified of course offerings including course dates and registration deadlines.

Fee Structure for Review of CFLE Online Courses

CFLE-approved Academic Program

A CFLE-approved course that was previously submitted and approved by NCFR in an *online format*. (Course currently appears on the school's CFLE checklist)

No charge

A CFLE-approved course that was submitted and approved by NCFR in a *traditional classroom format*. (Course currently appears on school's CFLE checklist) **No charge**

A course offered by an NCFR-approved school that has *not been previously reviewed* by NCFR for CFLE. (Course does *not* appear on school's CFLE checklist) **\$50 per course**

Non-CFLE Approved Academic Program

Course submitted by a non-CFLE Approved Academic School **\$100 per course**

Appendix A: Summary of CFLE Content Areas

The CFLE curriculum requires study of each of ten content areas, plus a 3-credit, 120 hour minimum Family Life Education internship or practicum. Institutions seeking approval of individual online academic courses must limit coverage to one content area within a single course.

FAMILIES & INDIVIDUALS IN SOCIETAL CONTEXTS

Structures and Functions; Cultural Variations; Dating, Courtship, Marital Choice; Kinship; Cross-Cultural and Minority; Changing Gender Roles; Demographic Trends; Historical Issues; Work/ leisure & Family Relationships; Societal Relations

INTERNAL DYNAMICS OF FAMILIES

Internal Social Processes; Communication; Conflict Management; Decision-making and Goal-setting; Normal Family Stresses; Family Stress & Crises; Special Needs in Families

HUMAN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT ACROSS THE LIFESPAN

Prenatal; Infancy; Early and Middle Childhood; Adolescence; Adulthood; Aging

HUMAN SEXUALITY

Reproductive Physiology; Biological Determinants; Emotional and Psychological Aspects of Sexual Involvement; Sexual Behaviors; Sexual Values and Decision-Making; Family Planning; Physiological & Psychological Aspects of Sexual Response; Influence of Sexual Involvement on Interpersonal Relationships

INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Self and Others; Communication Skills; Intimacy, Love, Romance; Relating to Others

FAMILY RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Goal Setting and Decision-Making; Development and Allocation of Resources; Social Environment Influences; Life Cycle and Family Structure Influences; Consumer Issues and Decisions

PARENT EDUCATION AND GUIDANCE

Parenting Rights and Responsibilities; Parenting Practices/Processes; Parent/Child Relationships; Variation in Parenting Solutions; Changing Parenting Roles Across the Life Cycle

FAMILY LAW AND PUBLIC POLICY

Family and the Law; Family and Social Services; Family and Education; Family and the Economy; Family and Religion; Policy and the Family

PROFESSIONAL ETHICS & PRACTICE

Formation of Social Attitudes and Values; Recognizing and Respecting the Diversity of Values; Examining Value Systems and Ideologies; Social Consequences of Value Choices; Ethics and Technological Changes; Ethics of Professional Practice.

FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION METHODOLOGY

Planning and Implementing; Evaluation; Education Techniques; Sensitivity to Others; Sensitivity to Community Concerns and Values

Appendix B: University & College Curriculum Guidelines

I FAMILIES & INDIVIDUALS IN SOCIETAL CONTEXTS

Content: Families in Society - An understanding of families and their relationships to other institutions, such as the educational, governmental, religious, and occupational institutions in society.

e.g., Research and theories related to: Structures and Functions; Cultural Variations (family heritage, social class, geography, ethnicity, race & religion); Dating, Courtship, Marital Choice; Kinship; Cross-Cultural & Minority (understanding of lifestyles of minority families & the lifestyles of families in various societies around the world); Changing Gender Roles (role expectations & behaviors of courtship partners, marital partners, parents & children, siblings, & extended kin); Demographic Trends; Historical Issues; Work/leisure & Family Relationships; Societal Relations (reciprocal influence of the major social institutions & families, i.e., governmental, religious, educational, & economic).

Practice—A CFLE can:

- a Identify the characteristics, diversity, & impact of local, national, & global social systems
- b Identify factors (e.g., media, marketing, technology, economics, social movements, natural disasters, war) influencing individuals & families from both contemporary & historical perspectives.
- c Identify factors that influence the relationship between work & family life
- d Identify social & cultural influences affecting dating, courtship, partner/marital choice & relationships, family composition, & family life
- e Recognize the reciprocal interaction between individuals, families, & various social systems (e.g., health, legal, educational, religious/spiritual)
- f Assess the impact of demographics (e.g., class, race, ethnicity, generation, gender) on contemporary families

II INTERNAL DYNAMICS OF FAMILIES

Content: An understanding of family strengths and weaknesses and how family members relate to each other.

e.g., Research & theories related to: Internal Social Processes (including cooperation & conflict); Communication (patterns & problems in husband-wife relationships & in parent-child relationships, including stress & conflict management); Conflict Management; Decision-making and Goal-setting; Normal Family Stresses (transition periods in the family life cycle, three-generation households, caring for the elderly, & dual careers);
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Family Stress & Crises (divorce, remarriage, death, economic uncertainty & hardship, violence, substance abuse); Special Needs in Families (including adoptive, foster, migrant, low income, military, & blended families disabled members).

Practice—A CFLE can:

- a Recognize & define healthy & unhealthy characteristics pertaining to:
 - 1. Family relationships
 - 2. Family development
- b Analyze family functioning using various theoretical perspectives
- c Assess family dynamics from a systems perspective
- d Evaluate family dynamics in response to normative & non-normative stressors
- e Evaluate family dynamics in response to crises
- f Facilitate & strengthen communication processes, conflict-management, & problem-solving skills
- g Develop, recognize, & reinforce strategies that help families function effectively

III HUMAN GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT ACROSS THE LIFE SPAN

Content: An understanding of the developmental changes (both typical and atypical) of individuals in families across the life span. Based on knowledge of physical, emotional, cognitive, social, moral, and personality aspects.

e.g., Research and theories related to: Prenatal; Infancy; Early and Middle Childhood; Adolescence; Adulthood; Aging.

Practice—A CFLE can:

- a Identify developmental stages, transitions, tasks, & challenges throughout the lifespan
- b Recognize reciprocal influences
 - 1. Individual development on families
 - 2. Family development on individuals
- c Recognize the impact of individual health & wellness on families
- d Assist individuals & families in effective developmental transitions

e Apply appropriate practices based on theories of human growth & development to individuals & families

IV HUMAN SEXUALITY

Content: An understanding of the physiological, psychological, and social aspects of sexual development across the life span, so as to achieve healthy sexual adjustment.

e.g., Research and theories related to: Reproductive Physiology; Biological Determinants; Emotional and Psychological Aspects of Sexual Involvement; Sexual Behaviors; Sexual Values & Decision-Making; Family Planning; Physiological & Psychological Aspects of Sexual Response; Influence of Sexual Involvement on Interpersonal Relationships.

Practice—A CFLE can:

- a Recognize the biological aspects of human sexuality
 - 1. sexual functioning
 - 2. reproductive health
 - 3. family planning
 - 4. sexually transmitted infections (STIs)
- b Recognize the psycho-social aspects of human sexuality
 - 1. characteristics of healthy & ethical sexual relationships
 - 2. interpersonal dynamics of sexual intimacy
 - 3. risk factors (e.g., substance abuse, social pressures, media)
- c Address human sexuality from a value-respectful position

V INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Content: An understanding of the development and maintenance of interpersonal relationships.

e.g., Research and theories related to: Self and Others; Communication Skills (listening, empathy, self-disclosure, decision making, problem-solving, and conflict resolution); Intimacy, Love, Romance; Relating to Others with Respect, Sincerity, & Responsibility.

Practice—A CFLE can:

- a Recognize the impact of personality & communication styles
- b Recognize the developmental stages of relationships

- c Analyze interpersonal relationships using various theoretical perspectives
- d Develop & implement relationship enhancement & enrichment strategies
- e Develop & implement effective communication, problem solving, & conflict management strategies
- f Communicate aspects of relationships within the context of their developmental stages

VI FAMILY RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Content: An understanding of the decisions individuals and families make about developing and allocating resources including time, money, material assets, energy, friends, neighbors, and space, to meet their goals.

e.g., Research and theories related to: Goal Setting and Decision-Making; Development and Allocation of Resources; Social Environment Influences; Life Cycle and Family Structure Influences; Consumer Issues and Decisions.

Practice—A CFLE can:

- a Identify personal, familial, professional, & community resources available to families
- b Recognize the reciprocal relationship between individual/family/community choices & resources
- c Apply value-clarification strategies to decision-making
- d Apply goal-setting strategies & evaluate their outcomes
- e Apply decision-making strategies
- f Apply organizational & time management strategies
- g Apply basic financial management tools & principles
- h Inform individuals & families of consumer rights, responsibilities, & choices of action/advocacy
- i Apply stress management strategies

VII PARENTING EDUCATION & GUIDANCE

Content: An understanding of how parents teach, guide and influence children and adolescents as well as the changing nature, dynamics and needs of the parent child relationship across the lifespan.

e.g., Research and theories related to: Parenting Rights and Responsibilities; Parenting Practices/Processes; Parent/Child Relationships; Variation in Parenting Solutions; Changing Parenting Roles Across the Life Cycle.

Practice—A CFLE can:

- a Promote healthy parenting from a systems perspective
- b Promote healthy parenting from a child's & parents developmental perspective
- c Apply strategies based on the child's age/stage of development to promote effective developmental outcomes
- d Identify different parenting styles & their associated psychological, social, & behavioral outcomes
- e Promote various parenting models, principles, & strategies
- f Evaluate the effectiveness & appropriateness of various parenting strategies
- g Recognize various parenting roles (e.g., father/mother, grandparents, other caregivers) & their impact on & contribution to individuals & families
- h Recognize parenting issues within various family structures (e.g. single, blended, same-sex)
- i Recognize the impact of societal trends on parenting (e.g., technology, substance abuse, media)
- j Recognize the influence of cultural differences & diversity
- k Identify strategies to advocate for children in various settings (e.g. schools, legal system, healthcare)
- l Recognize the various pathways to parenting & their associated issues & challenges, (e.g. assisted reproduction, adoption, childbirth, blending)

VIII FAMILY LAW & PUBLIC POLICY

Content: An understanding of legal issues, policies, and laws influencing the well being of families.

e.g., Family and the Law (relating to marriage, divorce, family support, child custody, child protection and rights, and family planning); Family and Social Services; Family and Education; Family and the Economy; Family and Religion; Policy and the Family (public policy as it affects the family, including tax, civil rights, social security, economic support laws, and regulations.)

Practice—A CFLE can:

- a Identify current law, public policy, & initiatives that regulate & influence professional conduct & services
- b Identify current laws, public policies, & initiatives that affect families
- c Inform families, communities, & policy makers about public policies, initiatives, & legislation that affect families at local, state, & national levels

IX PROFESSIONAL ETHICS & PRACTICE

Content: An understanding of the character and quality of human social conduct, and the ability to critically examine ethical questions and issues as they relate to professional practice.

e.g., Research and theories related to: Formation of Social Attitudes and Values; Recognizing and Respecting the Diversity of Values and the Complexity of Value Choice in a Pluralistic Society; Examining Value Systems and Ideologies systematically and objectively; Social Consequences of Value Choices; Recognizing the Ethical Implications of Social and Technological Changes, Ethics of Professional Practice.

Practice—A CFLE can:

- a Demonstrate professional attitudes, values, behaviors, & responsibilities to clients, colleagues, & the broader community, that are reflective of ethical standards & practice
- b Evaluate, differentiate, & apply diverse approaches to ethical issues & dilemmas
- c Identify & apply appropriate strategies to deal with conflicting values
- d Demonstrate respect for diverse cultural values & ethical standards

X FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION METHODOLOGY

Content: An understanding of the general philosophy and broad principles of family life education in conjunction with the ability to plan, implement, and evaluate such educational programs.

e.g., Research and theories related to: Planning and Implementing; Evaluation (materials, student progress, & program effectiveness); Education Techniques; Sensitivity to Others (to enhance educational effectiveness); Sensitivity to Community Concerns and Values (understanding of the public relations process).

Practice—A CFLE can:

- a Employ a variety of current educational strategies

- b Employ techniques to promote application of information in the learner's environment
- c Create learning environments that are respectful of individual vulnerabilities, needs, & learning styles
- d Demonstrate sensitivity to diversity & community needs, concerns, & interests
- e Develop culturally-competent educational materials & learning experiences
- f Identify appropriate sources for evidence-based information
- g Develop educational experiences
 - 1. needs assessment
 - 2. goals & objectives
 - 3. content development
 - 4. implementation
 - 5. evaluation/outcome measures
- h Promote & market educational programs
- i Implement adult education principles into work with families & parents
- j Establish & maintain appropriate personal & professional boundaries

References

National Council on Family Relations. (1995). *Family life education curriculum guidelines*. Minneapolis, MN: Author.

Bredehoft, D. J. (Ed.). 1997. *Life span family life education*. (2nd ed.) [Poster]. Minneapolis: National Council on Family Relations.

National Council on Family Relations. (2007). Certified Family Life Educator (CFLE) Exam Content Outline. In D. J. Bredehoft & M. J. Walcheski (Eds). *Family life education: Integrating theory and practice* (2nd ed.). (pp. 261-263).

FAQs regarding Content Areas and Syllabi

Does NCFR require certain course readings?

Readings are not specified but the review does consider both how current the literature is and if it is research-based.

“Current” is generally defined as being published in the past five years. There is no hard and fast rule about this number. Certainly, classic literature is a welcome feature in a course and reviewers do not consider year of publication of seminal works and foundational texts.

Scholarly literature is expected across the curriculum; however, this does not mean that lay books and popular literature cannot be used, also. Reviewers look for research-based texts, refereed or peer-reviewed literature (especially from scholarly journals), and a variety of perspectives.

Should course objectives match the Content Areas?

There is no expectation that an approved course’s objectives match the criteria of a Content Area (although there is likely to be considerable overlap). Course objectives are often created or approved in original course design; at some institutions, objectives are stable over many years. Most are sufficiently broad that they encompass the concepts of CFLE Standards and Criteria.

Objectives (which may be written as Student Learning Outcomes) are expected at least at the course level. If a proposed course does not have a set of objectives, the faculty should create objectives or outcomes for submission in the Course List.

Outcomes assessment is recognized in the NCFR review as a best practice but it is not a requirement. One indicator of an outcomes approach is the articulation of Student Learning Outcomes; these are often “translated” from the course objectives. For example, a course objective of “study multiple theories” might be presented as a Student Learning Outcome of “the student will be able to identify and explain at least four theories of the family.”

Increasingly, higher education assessment standards include articulation of outcomes at the unit or module level within courses. While this is not a requirement for NCFR approval of an online course, presence of unit-level outcomes is noted as a best practice.

Appendix C – Criteria used when evaluating academic courses for CFLE content

	Exemplary	Commendable	Satisfactory	Acceptable	Not Acceptable	Score
Course's objectives / student learning outcomes	Syllabus includes both course-level AND unit-level objectives that are written in the form of student learning outcomes or similarly composed for supporting outcomes assessment	Syllabus includes both course-level AND unit-level objectives (not written in the form of outcomes)	Syllabus includes course-level objectives that are written in the form of student learning outcomes or similarly composed for supporting outcomes assessment	Syllabus includes course-level objectives (not written in the form of outcomes)	Syllabus does not include course-level objectives or outcomes	
Primary Course's textbook and/or readings' scholarship	DO NOT USE THIS CELL	Required readings include research-based and peer-reviewed scholarly literature AND represent an expert selection of materials for this course	Required readings include research-based and peer-reviewed scholarly literature	Only required reading is a research-based textbook that is professionally edited	Required readings do not include research-based texts	
Primary Course's textbook and/or readings' recency	DO NOT USE THIS CELL	Required readings include an insightful and expert selection of both classic and recent literature	Required readings include both classic and recent literature	Required readings include recent literature published in the last 5 years (and may or may not include classic literature)	Required readings do not include recent literature published in the last 5 years (and may or may not include classic literature)	
Primary Course's requirements / assignments	Assignments are expertly selected and well-designed, meeting the Content Area in a coordinated manner	Assignments are well-designed and efficiently meet much of the Content Area	Assignments meet much of the Content Area	Assignments are adequate to meet some of the Content Area	Assignments are not appropriate to meet the Content Area	

	Exemplary	Commendable	Satisfactory	Acceptable	Not Acceptable	Score
Primary Course's schedule / calendar [may be labeled "tentative"]	DO NOT USE THIS CELL	DO NOT USE THIS CELL	A schedule with dates, topics, and assignment deadlines (or other detail) clearly communicates the pace of the course	A schedule with dates and topics appears in the Syllabus	No schedule or calendar appears in the Syllabus (list of class meeting dates is not adequate)	