

Answers to Frequently Asked Questions About the Certified Shorthand Reporters Program

The following pages answer some of the most frequently asked questions about the program based on the [State Court Administrator Policies for the Certification of Shorthand Reporters \(Policies\)](#). If you find a conflict between these pages and the *Policies* document, the *Policies* control.

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT COURT REPORTING IN OREGON

- **Do I have to have an Oregon certificate to work in Oregon?**

No. Oregon certification is voluntary, not compulsory. The law does not require shorthand reporters to have an Oregon certificate to work in Oregon; however, Oregon Revised Statute (ORS) 8.435(5) does limit who may use the title “certified shorthand reporter”:

“A person may not assume or use the title or designation “certified shorthand reporter” or the abbreviation “C.S.R.” or any other title, designation, words, letters, abbreviation, sign or device tending to indicate that the person is a certified shorthand reporter unless the person has received a certificate as a certified shorthand reporter under ORS 8.415 to 8.455 and policies of the administrator that is not revoked, suspended or lapsed.”

In addition, ORS 44.320 allows those who maintain current Oregon certification to administer oaths.

- **How is the job market for court reporters in Oregon?**

Although the state courts employ some certified reporters, most certified reporters work in the freelance market. As a courtesy, we occasionally provide information on specific job opportunities as we learn of them; however, we do not routinely collect that information.

For information about court reporting in Oregon and court reporting as a business, we suggest that you contact the Oregon Court Reporters Association (OCRA) at www.orcra.org. (This is an independent, private association and not directly affiliated with the State of Oregon or the certification program.)

- **Can I get an Oregon certificate if I already have an RPR certificate or a certificate from another state?**

It depends. Oregon does not offer reciprocity for national certification or certification from other states. You must pass a qualifying exam within 24 months of applying for Oregon certification.

We do accept passing scores of some other exams as a substitute for passing the Oregon exam. The State Court Administrator must have deemed the exam to be comparable to or better than the Oregon exam, and the applicant must have passed the substitute exam within 24 months of applying for Oregon certification. If you recently obtained your Registered Professional Reporter (RPR) certificate from the National Court Reporters Association (NCRA) or a certificate from another state, you might qualify for Oregon certification.

CERTIFICATION EXAMS

- **When do you offer the Oregon exam?**

We typically conduct a qualifying exam twice a year, on the fourth Saturday in February and July. These dates are not guaranteed, however, and are subject to change.

We post [registration materials](#) on our web page about two months before the scheduled exam date. We also mail registration materials on request.

- **Do I have to meet eligibility requirements to take the exam?**

No. You need not be an Oregon resident or a member of any association or meet any other requirements to take the Oregon exam.

- **What dictation speeds are used in the Oregon exam?**

The Oregon exam consists of three segments of dictation, followed by transcription of those segments. Dictation is at the following speeds and content levels:

- Five minutes of literary at 180 words per minute
- Five minutes of jury charge at 200 words per minute
- Five minutes of two-voice testimony at 225 words per minute

The Oregon exam does not include a written knowledge test. To pass, each transcribed segment must be at least 95 percent accurate.

- **What if I just passed the RPR exam?**

We accept comparable or higher-level exams as a substitute for the Oregon exam if you passed within 24 months of applying for Oregon certification. We consider the National Court Reporters Association's RPR exam to be a comparable exam and an acceptable substitute for the Oregon exam.

- **Can I just show up for the exam?**

No. We do not accept "drop-in" registration. You must submit a completed registration form and nonrefundable exam fees by the registration deadline shown on the exam notice and registration form.

- **Am I responsible for supplying my own equipment to use during the exam?**

Yes. You must bring all the equipment, software, and supplies you will need during the exam. The OJD will provide you with table space to set up your equipment and access to an electrical outlet to plug in your equipment or your power strip.

- **Would you call me to let me know if I passed the exam?**

No. To ensure that exam results are released in a consistent form and manner, we do not give exam results by phone or email. We will mail your official exam results to the mailing address you provide on your registration form or to any alternative address you provide on exam day.

We make every effort to mail results quickly, usually within two weeks; however, it can take longer, depending on how many people take the exam and the availability of exam graders. Please allow six weeks for delivery. If you have not heard by then, please contact us.

APPLICATION AND CERTIFICATION PROCESS

- **How do I apply for Oregon certification?**

You must pass a qualifying exam before we can issue an Oregon certificate to you. We typically offer our qualifying exam twice a year (in February and July). We also accept passing scores of comparable or higher-level exams as a substitute for the Oregon exam if you passed the other exam within 24 months of applying for Oregon certification.

If you take and pass the Oregon exam, we will automatically send application materials to you with the notice that you passed the exam. If you wish to substitute another exam for the Oregon exam, please contact us with your request for an application and let us know what exam you would like us to consider as a substitute.

- **Do I order my own stamp, or do you provide it to me?**

Each Certified Shorthand Reporter is responsible for finding a vendor and ordering his or her own stamp.

- **Do I need an embossing stamp, or can I use a rubber stamp?**

You need to use some form of ink stamp. The content and style of the stamp (also called an "official seal") is shown in the [State Court Administrator Policies for the Certification of Shorthand Reporters](#) "CSR Code of Conduct" section.

- **Can you give me my certificate number right now so I can order my stamp?**

No. We must review your application for completeness and to ensure that you have met all of the qualifications before we can issue a certificate to you. We will not assign a number until our review is complete. Please wait for your certificate before you order your stamp. If you do not receive your certificate within four weeks, please contact us.

- **I just received my Oregon certification. Do I have to maintain my notary commission?**

We cannot advise you on whether you should maintain your notary commission. If you obtained your notary so that you can administer oaths and take testimony, note that ORS 44.320 states:

“Every court, judge, clerk of a court, justice of the peace, certified shorthand reporter as defined in ORS 8.415 or notary public is authorized to take testimony in any action or proceeding, as are other persons in particular cases authorized by statute or the Oregon Rules of Civil Procedure and is authorized to administer oaths and affirmations generally, and every such other person in the particular case authorized.”

CONTINUING EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTIFICATE RENEWAL

- **How do I calculate continuing education units (CEUs)?**

Generally, you can earn 0.05 continuing education units (CEUs) for each full half hour of qualified education, 0.1 CEUs for an hour of qualified education, etc. (There are a few exceptions stated in the [State Court Administrator Policies for the Certification of Shorthand Reporters](#).)

To calculate hours into CEUs, take the number of hours and divide by ten.

Examples:

0.5 hours / 10 = 0.05 CEUs
1.0 hours / 10 = 0.10 CEUs
10 hours / 10 = 1.0 CEUs
20 hours / 10 = 2.0 CEUs

- **How many CEUs do I need to renew my certificate?**

You need a minimum of 2.0 CEUs in qualified educational programs for your renewal. Except as otherwise stated in the [State Court Administrator Policies for the Certification of Shorthand Reporters](#), 2.0 CEUs is equivalent to 20 hours of qualified education.

- **Do I need a certain number of credits each year?**

No. You must earn at least 2.0 CEUs in the 24 months before your certificate expires. You may earn them at any time during the 24 months.

- **Do I have to attend the OCRA convention to earn my credits?**

No. The OCRA is the Oregon Court Reporters Association, an independent, private association not affiliated with the Oregon Judicial Department and the certification program. Although we do not require that you attend OCRA conventions, many reporters find these conventions to be a useful and an easy way to earn their CEUs. Typically, courses at OCRA conventions, regardless of subject, qualify for CEUs.

- **Can I have an extension to earn more credits?**

No. We mail renewal packets at least 60 days in advance of your certificate expiration date. We do this, in part, to give you enough time to earn more CEUs if you do not have the required minimum.

We cannot give you an extension past your certificate expiration date for more time to earn CEUs. Our policies do, however, provide for a 30-day grace period to apply for renewal. The grace period is for submitting a late application only, not for making up missing CEUs.

- **I'm short on credits. Can you recommend courses?**

We do not routinely collect and disseminate information on upcoming educational programs and cannot advocate for specific vendors or organizations. If we become aware of a specific educational opportunity, we may send information by email as a courtesy to current Certified Shorthand Reporters who have provided us with their email addresses. If we notify you by email of a particular educational opportunity, we will include information on the number of CEUs available.

- **Do the courses offered by a particular company (or school) qualify for credit?**

Program policies provide blanket authorization for courses offered by some specified sponsors. All other authorizations must be on a course-by-course basis and depend on content and length of the specific course. Even if a sponsor is a nationally recognized provider of continuing education classes, that does not automatically mean the sponsor's courses qualify for CEUs toward your continuing education requirement for renewal of your Oregon CSR certification.

- **Can I get credit for an online course?**

It depends. The course must meet the same eligibility requirements as for courses you might physically attend, and you must be able to meet the same documentation and "proof-of-attendance" requirements.

- **Can I get credit for reading a book?**

It depends. The National Court Reporter Association (NCRA) has an approved reading program. If you earn education credits through the NCRA by reading material on their approved list and passing the related exam, Oregon accepts those credits as it does other NCRA credits.

You must contact the NCRA directly for information or to participate in their program. Oregon does not have an independent reading program, and you cannot earn credit for reading books other than through the NCRA program.

- **Can I get credit for listening to audio tapes?**

No. There are no provisions in program policies that allow for someone to earn CEUs by listening to audio tapes, regardless of the topic covered in the tapes. This is true even for audio tapes from sessions at a conference that would have qualified for CEUs if the CSR had attended the conference in person. We have no method in place that would enable a

CSR to meet the “proof-of-attendance” and other documentation requirements to earn CEUs for listening to audio tapes.

- **Can I get credit for a class I’m taking tonight?**

It depends. You are not required to request specific approval before or after you take any course. If a course is given by someone other than a preapproved sponsor, however, and we have not specifically approved the course in advance, a CSR assumes the risk that he or she may take a course and receive no CEUs.

A CSR may apply in writing for a determination on the eligibility of a specific course and the number of CEUs that may be earned. The request should contain a summary of course content, name of the sponsor and sponsor contact information, course dates and number of instructional hours, and a description of how the course might be applicable to the duties and functions of a CSR. (An optional [request form](#) is available on our web page for your convenience.) It is also helpful if you provide official documentation from the course sponsor. The information you provide is the only information we will use in determining whether the course is eligible for CEUs under program policies. We do not have resources available to research educational opportunities.

You may submit a request for consideration before or after taking a class. We will determine the appropriateness of the program and the number of CEUs to be granted, if any.

We respond as quickly as we can, but we cannot preapprove a course you intend to take the same day you submit your request.

- **Can I get credit for attending meetings?**

It depends. Meetings of an organization, government agency, or any other entity, the primary purpose for which is not education (e.g., board meetings, business meetings, town hall meetings, public hearings, etc.) do not qualify for CEUs. We do sometimes approve meetings for CEUs if we determine that the content is intended for educational purposes and is appropriate for CEU credit.

- **How many credits have I earned so far?**

We cannot answer this question. We do not have the resources necessary to be able to maintain and track your records for you in the interim between renewals. Please be sure you keep all the documentation you will need for your next renewal and keep track of how many CEUs you have earned so you will be able to meet the renewal requirements.

- **What documents do I need to submit for the course I took?**

At least 60 days before your certificate is scheduled to expire, we will mail a renewal packet to you. You need to complete the forms in your packet, including the continuing education log. Put an entry in the log for each conference or other educational event that you are claiming for CEU credit, and attach official documentation showing the following for each educational session:

- (1) Agenda or course description

- (2) Sponsor
- (3) Course date(s)
- (4) Hours of actual education
- (5) Proof of attendance

Some documents, such as an Oregon Court Reporters Association (OCRA) conference Continuing Education Report Form or a National Court Reporter Association (NCRA) Continuing Education Transcript Report, may be sufficient to meet all of the five requirements. If you are providing a photocopy of an OCRA conference report form, please be sure to place a dark sheet of paper behind the form before copying so the locations of the punched holes are clearly visible on the copy. The punched holes constitute your “proof of attendance.”

Many documents meet some but not all of the requirements. Most event invitations and fliers are sufficient to meet the first four requirements, but you will need to provide additional documentation for proof of attendance. “Proof” may include documents such as a certificate of completion, a report card, a letter from the sponsor or instructor stating that you attended, or proof of paid registration. We also have a form you can use specifically to obtain [proof of attendance](#) when you go to an event.

Some documents, such as course handouts and many self-prepared forms, are not sufficient to meet any of the five requirements. The Oregon State Bar’s “MCLE Recordkeeping Form 1,” for example, does not meet any of the five requirements. The form is self-prepared by the attendee and is not signed or verified by the event sponsor. We do not have records on courses approved for MCLE, nor do we have access to Bar records or event sign-in sheets. Self-prepared forms used to request “credit” from another organization are typically not sufficient for similar reasons.

Please do not send us your personal notes taken in class or copies of course handouts.

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