



## Boating Education Course Review and Approval Procedure

### 1. Submittal of Application:

The National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) reviews boating courses to determine if a course meets an indicated National Boating Education Standard. Course providers seeking NASBLA review and certification of a course must first complete and submit the application package in both electronic and hard copy formats, including, the completed application, course materials, chapter assessments, final exam (minimum of two versions), signed Terms and Conditions document, all completed appendices, and application fee. (Note: States and Territories receive course reviews as a member benefit and are not required to pay an additional application fee. All other requirements apply.)

All [application documents](#) are available on the NASBLA website.

**Section 9.3A Option** – Beginning in 2018, course providers have a new option provided in [NASBLA Course Approval Policy Section 9.3A](#). (a.k.a. ‘Section 9.3A Option’<sup>i</sup>). This option allows for an evaluation of course interactivity against a [NASBLA developed interactive rubric](#). If the heightened level of interactivity is achieved as defined in the rubric, the course timer requirement is waived. Additional Section 9.3A Option information is provided throughout this procedure document. Course Providers NOT applying under the Section 9.3A Option may ignore this information.

### 2. NASBLA Review:

**Section 9.3A Option** – Course providers may request an *optional pre-review* of the course against the interactivity rubric. This pre-review will provide an initial opinion regarding the course provider’s approach to meet the requirement for interactivity<sup>ii</sup>. **Separate pre-review fees apply.** Pre-review will NOT determine the minimum of 50% interactive requirement, as this percentage can only be determined after all content is provided. Once submitted for final review, the interactivity component will undergo an additional review to ensure the final course followed the previously reviewed plan. If it is found to follow the previously reviewed plan, the interactivity requirement will be approved, subject to the 50% minimum content requirement and all other course review requirements. If interactivity components do NOT follow the concept reviewed in the pre-review process, the pre-review opinion will be set aside,

and interactivity levels will be subject to course review through the standard interactive course review process.

**All Courses:** NASBLA will review all course materials for meeting national and administrative requirements including final examination and chapter quizzes for meeting requirements of the indicated assessment standards. (*Note: New requirements for Professionalism were adopted in 2017*)<sup>iii</sup>

If NASBLA finds that the course does not meet one or more sections of the standard, or the application is incomplete, the course provider will be notified of the deficiencies in writing (electronic or printed). A provider may modify the course to correct such deficiencies and resubmit for additional review within 120 days of the original application date, or within 30 days of official notice of needed modification, whichever is greater. If a course modification is not received within the indicated time, and if NASBLA has not granted an extension of time, the course review process will be closed and the course will not be approved. All course materials will be returned to the Course Provider who must reapply meeting all application requirements including payment of fees.

Once it is determined that a course meets the indicated national standard and related administrative policies including payment of fees, NASBLA will notify the applicant who will then be responsible for sending the application package to at least one state for review of state-specific information.

### **3. State Review:**

The State Boating Law Administrator (BLA), or their designee, will review the course and accompanying materials for accuracy, correctness, and sufficient content in the coverage of the state-specific information. If the State Reviewer finds that the course is deficient in meeting the state-specific content, the reviewer will notify the course provider of the deficiencies. *NOTE: A state may require additional content beyond what is listed in Section 8.* If the course is sufficient in meeting the state requirements, the state reviewer will sign the application form and send it to NASBLA. NASBLA will provide final notification to the course provider. Additional charges may apply.

If the State BLA so chooses, the state review portion of a boating safety course may be conducted by NASBLA. A letter from the BLA to NASBLA's Executive Director signifying that the review of state-specific information and test questions has been relinquished to NASBLA must be on file at NASBLA headquarters before such review will take place. In addition, the State BLA must furnish to NASBLA a copy of the state-specific information and test questions written exactly as the State BLA would want to see that information included in a boating safety course. NASBLA will then supply these documents to any interested course provider who requests it and will review the courses to ensure that the information has been included verbatim.

**Section 9.3A Option** – As with all approved courses, each state may determine whether or not it will authorize NASBLA-approved courses built with this interactive approach as meeting any state requirements.

#### **4. Notice of NASBLA Approval:**

When a course receives NASBLA approval, NASBLA will notify the course provider and will issue an invoice for any outstanding fees. Upon payment, NASBLA will issue written notification to the course provider, the state BLA involved, and the United States Coast Guard (USCG) - Boating Safety Division of NASBLA approved course status. A copy of all course materials will be retained in the NASBLA Office along with a copy of the letter granting NASBLA approval. NOTE: NASBLA Approval means the course has been found to conform to the indicated national boating standard only and does not mean a state has accepted a course for delivery in that state. **No state is required to recognize, accept, or endorse any course that has been approved by NASBLA.** NASBLA maintains and provides a list of [NASBLA Approved courses](#) on NASBLA's website.

In the event that a course is denied approval, NASBLA will provide written notification to the course provider, with a copy of the letter provided to the NASBLA Executive Board. Course review must be completed within indicated time frames unless prior written authorization to extend this time frame is received by the course provider from NASBLA.

#### **5. Appeals Process:**

In the event that a course does not receive NASBLA approval, the course provider will have 30 days to file a formal, written appeal to NASBLA in accordance with the [Association's Bylaws \(Part VI\)](#). The appeal must provide information that details the point(s) of contention on the course not being approved. The course provider will file an administrative fee with the appeal. The fee will be refunded if the course provider is successful in the appeals process.

The Boating Education Course Appeals Committee, as authorized in NASBLA Bylaws, will receive the appeal and all documents for review. The Committee will have 30 days to provide the course provider with a decision in writing. Decisions regarding NASBLA policy and administrative procedures are the sole discretion of NASBLA Appeals Committee. Decisions regarding interpretation of an education standard may be deferred to the National Education Standards Panel.

#### **6. Course Provider Responsibilities:**

Course Providers notice of NASBLA Approval are authorized to use the NASBLA logo including the words “Course approved by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators and recognized by the U.S. Coast Guard.” Per the Terms and Conditions document, course providers who are neither a state nor associate member will be assessed an annual maintenance/licensing fee to cover ongoing costs of course monitoring and database administration for the three year approval period.

## **7. NASBLA’s Responsibilities:**

- A. NASBLA retains copyright to the National Boating Education Standard(s) document and other publications as produced by NASBLA, policy committees, and the National Boating Education Standards Panel. NASBLA retains all rights to the ‘NASBLA-Approval’ process and logo trademark.
- B. Standards developed and/or revised and new documents regarding the conformity assessment process will be made available to the public through the NASBLA website. NASBLA will contact the Course Provider if there are amendments in the National Boating Education Standards to be addressed in an approved course before the end of the renewal term.
- C. NASBLA may routinely monitor courses for content changes and continued adherence to the NASBLA National Boating Education Standards including appropriate use and reference to ‘NASBLA-Approval.’
- D. No state is required by NASBLA to recognize, accept, or endorse any course that has been approved by NASBLA.

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Replaces all previous versions.

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<sup>i</sup> Effective 2018, states have the option to choose online courses that provide interactive content requiring successful completion before advancing to the next session. Implementing this option will eliminate the requirement for course timers [NASBLA Course Approval Policy 9.3.1 (b)] if interactive content replaces 50% or more of the material presented with the expectation that an average student will spend a minimum of 3 hours to complete all required content. In order to eliminate course timers, interactivity must be presented at eLearning Levels 3 or 4<sup>i</sup> and must be incorporated in a variety of ways and dispersed throughout the course. As with all approved courses, each state may determine whether or not it will authorize NASBLA-approved courses built with this interactive approach as meeting any state requirements.

<sup>ii</sup> The eLearning industry has identified four levels of interactivity to help the communication amongst eLearning stakeholders. (Pappas, Christopher. (2015). "eLearning Interactivity: The Ultimate Guide for ELearning Professionals." ELearning Industry RSS. ELearning Industry, 18 Apr. 2015. Web. 05 Aug. 2016.)

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Level 3 interactivity is characterized by active learning, a moderate-level of control of the course environment by which the learner actively participates and makes decisions. Instructional designs often seen at this level include interactive live-action or animated video, customized audio, branching scenarios, or complex drag and drop interactions. At Level 3, the content is not passive (i.e., it is more than clicking 'next'), but instead involves decision and application based practice. In Level 4, users have a great deal of control over their own experience. Instructional designs at this level may include gamification, simulations, or avatars. At Level 4, the content is not so much presented, rather it is experienced through interaction with a variety of realistic situations.

Levels 3 and 4 offer another learning design called varied practice. Like the spaced and interleaved practices discussed before, varied practice taps into yet a different part of the brain to “improve the ability to transfer learning from one situation and apply it successfully to another”. Varied practice can be designed in eLearning courses by using situational, scenario-based or problem-solving activities, for example. Research shows that the combination of interleaving and varied practice encourages higher cognitive processing in the learner. Referring to Bloom’s taxonomy, the learning is characterized not by knowledge or comprehension levels but by the application, analysis, evaluative and creation levels. As stated above, by designing varied practice into the eLearning course, learners may be able to apply their knowledge of boating safety in the water.

<sup>iii</sup> NASBLA Course Approval Policy Section 9.1.2. – Professionalism must be maintained throughout the course in regards to grammar, general boating language and terminology, and spelling. The Associated Press Stylebook (latest version) shall serve as the recognized editorial resource unless a course provider, as part of the course conformity assessment process, presents another nationally recognized source deemed acceptable by NASBLA, and to the individual states in which the provider is seeking authorized use.