MEETING A NEED

The NEO distance education program meets requirements set by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) to qualify a physician as an Authorized User on a radioactive materials human use license.

NEO offers this education and training via the Internet to students throughout the world combining a web-based curriculum with experiential training at local sites for the ultimate experience.

Online education provides several benefits:

- **Flexibility:** Scheduling is determined by individual physicians or training programs.
- **Enhanced Learning Experience:** Didactic instruction is delivered in tandem with clinical experiences.
- **Efficient Use of Staff Resources:** Residency programs are relieved of lecture obligations when NEO replaces or supplements the existing curriculum.
- **Documentation:** The required documentation for regulatory agencies is provided upon program completion.

CURRICULUM

The NRC mandates a minimum of 700 hours of training and experience to become an Authorized User of radioactive materials. Depending on practice requirements or state regulations, either an 80-hour or 200-hour didactic training is required.

The NEO education program offers both the 80-hour and the 200-hour nuclear education training courses, divided into four separate course blocks. Each course may be completed independently:

- Nuclear Physics
- Nuclear Instrumentation
- Radiation Biology and Radiation Protection
- Radiochemistry and Regulations

HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS

The NEO program is facilitated through the use of WebCT, an industry-leading e-learning platform. The program is designed to include traditional and student-centered learning environments. Learners have access to a variety of learning tools, including lecture notes, reading assignments, self-assessments and examinations. The online learning environment places more responsibility on the student and requires self discipline, but it also provides rewards through increased interactivity, scheduling flexibility and enhanced accessibility.

To obtain the necessary hands-on experiential training, each student will be assigned a local preceptor to supervise and guide the student through a highly-structured program.

FACULTY

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HISTORY OF NUCLEAR EDUCATION ONLINE

In 1999, the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences and the University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center formed Nuclear Education Online (NEO), an education consortium that delivers the Authorized User (AU) training.

NEO recognized the need to expand access to nuclear education and training beyond the university walls. In response to the growing demand from medical professionals for specialized education and training required to become Authorized Users of radioactive materials, NEO now offers several distance educational programs.

Since 2001, NEO has trained more than 300 nuclear pharmacists, technicians and PET cyclotron workers. A recent grant from the U.S. Department of Education has allowed the program to expand and offer this online education and training to physicians.

The NEO program is expanding to provide specialized training.

Authorized User Training for:
- Nuclear Cardiologists
- Radiologists
- Oncologists
- Nuclear Pharmacists
- Nuclear Pharmacy Technicians
- PET Cyclotron Operators

Training for Workers with Occupational Exposure to Radiation:
- Basic Radiation Safety
- Shippers and Transporters of Radiopharmaceuticals (DOT)