

The Royal Society of Medicine



Continuing Professional Development: Standards and Criteria

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What is CPD?

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is a continuing learning process that enables doctors and healthcare professionals to maintain and improve their performance across all areas of their professional work and to be seen as fit for practice.

CPD is defined by the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges as: “A continuing process, outside formal undergraduate and postgraduate training, that enables individual doctors to maintain and improve standards of medical practice through the development of knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviour. CPD should also support specific changes in practice”¹.

Doctors are expected to carry out a range of CPD activities to be able to complete revalidation every 5 years. CPD credits are awarded based on 1 hour of educational activity for 1 CPD credit.

The RSM awards CPD credits through the process described below, ensuring the Society and its members can be confident in the quality of the educational activity it offers.

Aims of the process

In line with criteria set out by the Academy, the process for accrediting CPD activities at the RSM aims to:

- ensure that all events meet expected standards of quality
- minimise bias and conflicts of interest
- ensure relevance of the content to non-trainee doctors
- provide ongoing evaluation of educational activities as part of continuous improvement
- publish a list of accredited events to support the revalidation of doctors
- provide a transparent process that is open to scrutiny and administratively simple.

Educational Standards and Criteria for CPD credits

The standards set out below define how the RSM will evaluate any proposals seeking CPD accreditation. Each standard includes a number of specific criteria describing what is required from activity organisers to meet the standard.

Educational and Competence Standards

1. Target Audience: each educational activity has a clearly defined target audience

Criteria:

- The event is appropriate for trained doctors
- The intended audience is clearly specified

¹ Guidelines for recommended headings under which to describe a college or faculty CPD scheme. Academy of Medical Royal Colleges. 2009.

2. Learning aims and outcomes: clearly defined learning aims reflect the overall educational purpose

Criteria:

- There is a clearly defined learning aim setting out what a participant is expected to learn and how the learning is to be demonstrated. The learning aims should be described in terms such as 'provide', 'develop', 'enable' or 'assist'
- There are clearly defined learning outcomes that show how the attendee would benefit from the event in professional terms. The learning outcomes should be measurable and should indicate what knowledge or skills the attendees are expected to obtain as a result.

3. Programme content: the event content is relevant to the CPD of non-trainee doctors

Criteria:

- There are a minimum of three sentences describing what the event is about, e.g. purpose, outcomes, unique selling point
- The activity being accredited has an educational purpose only
- Educational content is authoritative, accurate and up-to-date, based on balanced evidence and free from unjustifiable claims or bias
- Clinical content follows all appropriate patient consent and confidentiality policies and the principles outlined in the GMC's Good Medical Practice guidelines
- The activity is structured with appropriate breaks for attendees
- The activity is awarded a maximum of 6 credits per day.

4. Delivery methods: education is delivered using a method appropriate to the learning aims

Criteria:

- There is a clear statement about what delivery methods are used, eg lectures, presentations, discussions, masterclasses.
- The delivery uses appropriate language, style and pace that is relevant to the defined learning aims.

5. Supporting materials: supporting educational materials are clear, relevant and accessible

Criteria:

- The supporting materials are up-to-date and accurate, such as any hand-outs and pre- or post-course assessments
- Any third party content is clearly identifiable by the name and contact details of the publisher or copyright owner of the content, the country of publication and the date of the activity or production
- Any sponsoring company is acknowledged on supporting materials as having provided sponsorship (see also, commercial sponsorship).

6. Speakers: speakers have the appropriate skills to address the learning aims

Criteria:

- Speakers declare any potential conflicts of interest by providing a slide setting out any financial or professional interests relevant to the topic at the start of any presentation
- Speakers provide a short biography in advance, setting out relevant expertise, knowledge and skills to deliver the education programme within the specific subject
- Any event aims to reflect diversity of gender and ethnicity in the speaker profiles wherever possible.

7. Quality assurance: a quality assurance process that includes evaluation of the intended learning and the process of awarding CPD points

Criteria:

- Each attendee is asked to evaluate the event including the following:
 - Overall impression using the Net Promotor Score
 - Whether the stated learning aims and outcomes of the course were met
 - Whether any bias or conflict of interest was evident in the course
 - The knowledge and presentation of the speaker relevant to the topic
 - Impact of the event on future practice.
- The event organiser receives a summary of the delegate feedback and any points for improvement
- The RSM will systematically track feedback from all events and review any performance concerns at the Education Programme Approval Board
- The accreditation process is subject to routine cross-checking by other experts in the process.

Organisational Standards

1. Commercial sponsorship: educational content is not influenced or biased by commercial sponsors

Criteria:

- Any sponsored event includes a clear statement that the educational content is not inappropriately influenced or biased by commercial organisations, such as pharmaceutical companies or device manufacturers
- Any commercial sponsorship is acknowledged on supporting materials, including details of any input that the sponsor has into the educational structure and content of the activity
- No product advertising or promotional material occurs within the educational event.

2. Administrative arrangements: educational events are supported by an efficient and transparent process

Criteria:

- Event organisers aim to apply for accreditation at least eight weeks prior to the meeting date
- The RSM maintains and publishes a list of accredited activities

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- Event organisers maintain and retain an attendance register for a period of at least 24 months. The attendance register will be provided on request. In order to comply with GDPR regulations, personally identifiable information such as telephone numbers or email addresses are not included alongside the names on the attendance register.
- The RSM provides a CPD attendance certificate to participants.

Applying the process

The CPD accreditation process at the RSM is overseen by an Education Process Approval Committee (EPAC), chaired by the Dean. The EPAC reports to the Education Committee, a standing committee of the Council. The role of the EPAC includes:

- Setting out a written protocol describing the process of awarding CPD points
- Agreeing criteria for approving educational events at the RSM that reflect high quality educational content in line with the educational strategy
- Ensuring requests for CPD are awarded efficiently, in a timely fashion
- Developing proposals for how the accreditation approach may be rolled out beyond the Society on a commercial basis
- Conducting regular reviews of the process against agreed Key Performance Indicators, including the proportion of eligible RSM events that obtained accreditation
- Providing an annual report on activity to the Education Committee.

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