



# Accredited Activity Standards for the Maintenance of Certification (MOC) Program Group Learning Activities (Section 1)

November 2016 (v.1)

*In order for an activity to be accredited in the Royal College Maintenance of Certification (MOC) Program, it must be developed or co-developed with a physician organization, planned to meet the following accreditation activity standards, and reviewed by a [Royal College accredited CPD provider](#).*

## Part A: Administrative Standards

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**Administrative Standard 1:** All accredited group learning activities must be developed or co-developed by a physician organization as defined by the Royal College.

A **physician organization** is a not-for-profit group of health professionals with a formal governance structure, accountable to and serving, among others, its specialist physician members through continuing professional development, provision of health care and/or research.

This definition includes (but is not limited to) the following groups:

- Faculties of medicine
- Hospital departments or divisions
- Medical societies
- Medical associations
- Medical academies
- Physician research organizations
- Health authorities not linked to government agencies
- Canadian provincial medical regulatory authorities (MRAs)

The physician organization(s) developing or co-developing a CPD activity is responsible to ensure that all accreditation standards are met and to submit the application to an accredited CPD provider.

**Note:** Accredited CPD providers are permitted to self-approve CPD activities they have developed or co-developed.

Types of organizations that **are not** considered physician organizations:

- Pharmaceutical companies or their advisory groups
- Medical/surgical supply companies
- Disease-oriented patient advocacy organizations (e.g. Canadian Diabetes Association)
- Government departments or agencies (e.g. Health Canada, Public Health Agency of Canada)
- Industry (e.g. pharmaceutical companies, medical device companies, etc.)
- Medical education or communications (MEC) companies (e.g. CME Inc.)
- 'For-profit' on-line educators, publishing companies or simulation companies (e.g. Medscape, CAE)
- Small number of physicians working together to develop educational programming
- Any other for-profit organizations/ventures

All activities must be developed by a planning committee that is representative of the target audience.

*See Part C - Ethical Standards for additional requirements for the planning committee.*

**Administrative Standard 2:** All accredited group learning activities must have a scientific planning committee (SPC) that is representatives of the target audience.

All CPD activities must be developed by a scientific planning committee (SPC) that is representative of the target audience. The target audience is defined as the specific group of physicians, specialist or other healthcare professionals CPD activity will be aimed. Therefore, the target audience must be determined from the inception of the CPD activity so that the SPC can be chosen accordingly.

There is no minimum or maximum number of members required to sit on the SPC. Best practice would suggest that if the CPD activity is aimed at only one specialty, representatives with other demographic factors should be included on the SPC to allow for more comprehensive representation from within a singular target audience.

The SPC is ultimately responsible for the following program elements:

- Identification of the educational needs of the target audience
- Development of educational objectives
- Selection of educational methods
- Selection of all individuals (planning committee members, faculty) or organizations in a position to control the development of content
- Development and delivery of content
- Evaluation of outcomes

**Administrative Standard 3:** All accredited group learning activities must maintain attendance records and provide participants with a certificate of participation that includes the appropriate accreditation statement.

A certificate of participation or written confirmation signed by the chair of the planning committee must be issued to participants for all accredited group learning activities.

The certificate must specify the following elements:

- The title of the activity.
- The name of the physician organization (and co-developer if applicable) responsible for the activity.
- The date(s) the activity took place.
- The location of the activity (i.e. city, country, web-based).
- The total number of hours the activity is accredited for.
- The number of hours the registrant attended the activity (or a blank space for the registrant to complete themselves).
- All applicable accreditation statements (include co-development statement when necessary).

The physician organization is responsible for maintaining attendance records for a 5 year period.

## Part B: Educational Standards

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**Educational Standard 1:** The educational CPD activity must be planned to address the identified needs of the target audience.

A needs assessment of the target audience must be performed to identify areas of knowledge, skills, performance and/or health outcomes that the CPD activity intends to address or improve. The needs assessments can identify either perceived or unperceived needs and should be used to inform:

- the development of learning objectives
- the identification of appropriate educational or delivery methods
- the selection of relevant educational content
- the development of evaluation strategies.

**Educational Standard 2:** Learning objectives must be created for the overall CPD activity and each individual session. The learning objectives must be printed on the program, brochure and/or handout materials.

The identified learning needs of the target audience should be utilized in the creation/development of the learning objectives.

Learning objectives must clearly describe the intent of the educational activity, be written from the perspective of the learner, and express the expected outcomes determined by the Scientific Planning Committee and faculty.

Learning objectives must be made available to participants prior to the activity and must be incorporated into the evaluation strategy (*See Educational Standard 4*). The planning committee must ensure that the selected educational methods and delivery are consistent with the identified need(s) and stated learning objectives as well.

**Educational Standard 3:** A variety of learning formats should be used to support the identified learning objectives.

A variety of learning formats is encouraged to be selected that (1) are linked to and support the identified perceived and /or unperceived educational needs and established learning objectives (2) address CanMEDS professional roles beyond the Medical Expert role.

**Educational Standard 4:** At least 25 per cent of the total education time must be allocated for interactive learning.

Promoting interactive learning through (for example) question and answer periods, case discussions, skills training, etc., helps participants to understand, translate and apply content to their specific practice contexts. Interaction builds a relationship between (and among) participants and the faculty, contributes to a supportive learning atmosphere and enables speakers to determine the degree to which participants understand the content.

For those participating in group learning activities online and/or remotely, there must be a system that allows participants to track their attendance, interact with the group, participate in discussions, and provide evaluation feedback on order for them to be able to record MOC Section 1 credits for the CPD activity.

When choosing the learning formats, the program developer should consider choosing delivery methods that best facilitate the identified need and incorporate the 25% interactivity requirement.

The program and/or brochure should identify the opportunities for interactive learning.

**Educational Standard 5:** Participants must be provided with an opportunity to evaluate individual sessions and overall CPD activity.

Accredited group learning activities must provide participants with an opportunity to evaluate each individual session and the overall CPD activity. The evaluation system must:

- allow participants to identify whether the individual session and overall CPD activity learning objectives were met;
- ask participants to identify whether the content was balanced and free of commercial or other inappropriate bias;
- provide opportunities for participants to identify the potential impact of the CPD activity for their practice.

Additional evaluation strategies may include:

- An intent to measure improved patient performance
- An intent to measure improved health care outcomes
- An opportunity for participants to receive feedback related to their learning

## Part C: Ethical Standards

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**Note:** All activities accredited after January 1, 2018 must comply with the [National Standard](#) for support of accredited CPD activities. The Standard applies to all situations where financial and in-kind support is accepted to contribute to the development, delivery and/or evaluation of accredited CPD activities.

Each of the following ethical standards, derived from the [CMA Guidelines for Physicians interactions with Industry](#), must be met for group learning activities to be developed and approved under MOC Section 1.

**Ethical Standard 1:** The physician organization(s) must have control over the topics, content and speakers selected for this activity.

The process by which the topics, content and speaker(s) are selected for an educational activity must be in the control of the physician organization and planning committee at all times and cannot be influenced by commercial interest(s).

**Ethical Standard 2:** The physician organization(s) must assume responsibility for ensuring the scientific validity, objectivity and balance of the content of the activity.

The scientific integrity and balance is a joint responsibility between planning committee and faculty. Planning Committees and speakers cannot be influenced by commercial interest(s).

The planning committee cannot include members from pharmaceutical, medical supply, medical education, or other for-profit companies.

The scientific planning committee must be representative of the target audience, and industry should never be a focus for educational sessions eligible for credit within the MOC Program. Inclusion of members from industry or other for-profit companies on the planning committee is strictly prohibited.

**Ethical Standard 3:** The physician organization(s) must disclose to participants all financial affiliations of faculty, moderators or members of the planning committee (within the past two years) with any commercial organization(s).

All faculty, speakers, and planning committee members must complete Conflict of Interest Declaration forms irrespective of whether a direct conflict exists. Forms must be submitted to the planning committee prior to the start of the CPD activity.

The Royal College defines a conflict of interest as a situation(s) that may occur where the personal and professional interests of individuals may have actual, potential or apparent influence over their judgment and actions. There must be policies and procedures place for the planning committee to manage identified conflicts of interest once they are disclosed.

All faculty, moderators, authors, and members of the scientific planning committee must:

1. Disclose, in writing, all financial or 'in kind' relationships, regardless of the relevance to the subject being discussed, for the previous two (2) years. It is the presenter's responsibility to ensure that their presentation (and any recommendations) are balanced and reflect the current scientific literature.
2. Unapproved use of products or services must be declared within the presentation. The only caveat to this guideline is where there is only one treatment or management strategy.
3. All disclosures must be done verbally, displayed in writing on a slide at the beginning of a presentation or included in the written CPD activity materials.
4. Examples of relationships that must be disclosed include (but not limited to):
  - Any direct financial interest in a commercial entity such as a pharmaceutical organization, medical devices company or communications firm (" the Organization")
  - Investments held in the Organization
  - Membership on the Organization's Advisory Board or similar committee
  - Current or recent participation in a clinical trial sponsored by the Organization
  - Member of a Speakers Bureau
  - Holding a patent for a product referred to in the CME/CPD activity or that is marketed by a commercial organization
5. Failure to disclose or false disclosure may require the Planning Committee to replace the speaker.

**Note:** *The accredited CPD provider or physician organization should consider implementing mitigation policies or strategies to manage any potential or identified conflicts of interest or bias.*

**Ethical Standard 4:** All funds received in support of the CPD activity must be provided in the form of an educational grant payable to the physician organization.

Sponsors may provide support for a CPD activity in the form of an educational grant payable to the physician organization or "in kind" support. In kind support can include (but is not limited to) logistical support, goods or services to support the educational activities, learning resources or tools.

Additional funds management responsibilities of the physician organization(s) include:

- The physician organization(s) must assume responsibility for the distribution of funds to all faculty and speakers, including the payment of honoraria, travel, accommodations or hospitality.
- The physician organization can ONLY provide funding to support the travel, lodging, legitimate out of pocket expenses and any honoraria offered to members of the faculty, authors, or members of the planning committee and never for the CPD activity participants and/or their families.
- The physician organization is accountable to ensure that all hospitality and other in-kind arrangements are modest and paid for directly by the planning committee.
- Sponsors must be recognized in a location separately from the educational content.
- Tagging (defined by the Royal College as the linking or alignment or a sponsor's name to a specific educational session within an accredited group learning activity) is strictly prohibited.
- Satellite Symposia (defined by the Royal College as unaccredited group learning activities developed independently by non-physician organizations) may not:
  - occur at times that would conflict with or compete with accredited group learning activities and;
  - be listed or included within conference brochures or schedules of accredited group learning activities.

**Ethical Standard 5:** No drug or product advertisements may appear on, or with, any of the written or presented materials for the CPD activity.

Drug or product advertisements must not appear in any written materials, including but not limited to, preliminary or final programs, brochures, slides or advanced notifications.

**Ethical Standard 6:** Generic names must be used, or both generic and trade names, on all presentations and written materials.

It is the responsibility of the planning committee and faculty to ensure that presentations and all related materials be consistent in their use of just generic names, or both generic and trade name. Therapeutic recommendations for medications that have not received regulatory approval ("off-label" use of medication) must be declared to the audience during the presentation and in all materials.

## Web-based CPD activities

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Web-based activities are assessed against the same standards as face-to-face group learning activities like conferences, workshop and seminars and must be reviewed and approved by a Royal College-accredited CPD provider.

Since the online environment is different from a face-to-face one, take into consideration the following recommendations when planning a web-based group learning activity:

1. Group learning activities delivered via the web must provide an opportunity for interaction between participants and course faculty/facilitators (e.g. the ability to email a question).

**NOTE:** They must also allow participants to observe the interaction of other participants with the course faculty/facilitator.

2. The following are some acceptable options to incorporate interactivity for accredited web-based group learning activities:
  - ✓ discussion forums and chat groups
  - ✓ teleconferencing and videoconferencing
  - ✓ Twitter and email
3. Participants must log on to the interactive component to claim credit under Section 1. Fellows and MOC Program participants can claim the time spent reviewing posted materials under Section 2.
4. Certificates of participation should only be given to participants if they have logged on to the interactive component for the course.

## Additional Resources

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### ACCREDITATION PROCESS

1. Review the CPD accreditation standards.
2. Contact a Royal College accredited CPD provider to obtain the appropriate forms, policies and procedures or applicable fees for having the program reviewed and accredited. (*See Directory of Accredited CPD Providers below under Useful Web Links*).
3. Once the activity is accredited, certificates of participation and activity promotional materials can be updated to include the applicable accreditation statement.

### USEFUL WEB LINKS

- [Accredited CPD Provider Tools and Resources](#)
- [CMA Guidelines](#)
- [Directory of Accredited CPD Providers](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\)](#)
- [Learning objectives](#)
- [Maintenance of Certification \(MOC\) Program](#)
- [Needs assessments](#)