



Ethical Standards for Accredited CPD Activities

Department of Health Professions



DHP-AS Ethical Standards for Accredited CPD Activities

Applicability

Adherence to the ethical standards is required for the approval of all accredited CPD activities in Category 1 and 3 within Department of Health Professions – Accreditation Section (DHP-AS) CPD Framework, regardless of whether the activity has received financial and/or in-kind support.

Where financial and/or in-kind support has been received, these ethical standards apply equally to for-profit (including but not limited to commercial interests) and not-for-profit entities.

About this document

The ethical standards include 7 elements and 29 sub-elements across the domains of Independence, Content Development, Conflict of Interest, Receiving Financial and In-Kind Support, Recognizing Financial and In-Kind Support, Managing Commercial Promotion, and Unaccredited CPD Activities.

A Glossary of Terms is available at the end of this document.

Principles

The ethical standards are guided by the following four principles:

Trust

Accredited CPD activities must be developed, delivered and evaluated in accordance with administrative, educational, and ethical standards of the DHP-AS, and to minimize the potential for bias in learning that supports healthcare practitioners in their multiple roles with patients, colleagues and co-workers, and the healthcare system.

Transparency

CPD Providers must appropriately and accurately disclose to participants information related to the receipt of financial and in-kind support. Upon request by DHP-AS, CPD Providers must also disclose how sponsorship was used to support the accredited CPD activity.

Accountability

All CPD provider organizations will be expected to adhere to all elements and sub-elements of the ethical standards and will be informed by the DHP-AS about the process for monitoring adherence to the standards.

Fairness

The implementation and monitoring of the ethical standards by the QCHPP-AD will be equally applied to all CPD Provider organizations and respectful of the principles of equity, due process, and justice.



Element 1: Independence

This element describes the membership, roles, responsibilities and decision authority of a scientific planning committee.

- 1.1 Every accredited CPD activity must have a scientific planning committee (SPC) that includes representatives of the intended target audience. The SPC is the group responsible for all decisions noted throughout the ethical standards.
- 1.2 The SPC may consider data or advice from all sources, but must ensure that decision-making related to the following CPD program elements is under its exclusive control:
 - a) Identification of the educational needs of the intended target audience;
 - b) Development of educational objectives;
 - c) Selection of educational methods;
 - d) Selection of speakers, moderators, facilitators and authors;
 - e) Development and delivery of content; and
 - f) Evaluation of outcomes.
- 1.3 Representatives of a sponsor or any organization hired by a sponsor cannot participate in decisions related to CPD program elements a) through f) within 1.2.

Element 2: Content Development

This element describes the processes and requirements for members of the SPC and speakers to develop content that is responsive to the needs of the intended target audience.

- 2.1 The SPC must have mechanisms in place to support the development of content and/or materials that address the identified educational needs of the intended target audience. Specific interests of any sponsor must have no direct or indirect influence on the content and/or materials of an accredited CPD activity.
- 2.2 A process must be in place to ensure that those responsible for developing or delivering content are informed about:
 - the identified needs of the target audience,
 - the need to ensure that the content and/or materials presented provide (where applicable) a balanced view across all relevant options related to the content area.
 - the intended learning objectives for the activity,
 - ensuring that the description of therapeutic options utilize generic names (or both generic and trade names) and not reflect exclusivity and branding.



- 2.3 The SPC must have a process to collect from participants their assessment of the degree to which the accredited CPD activity:
- met the stated learning objectives,
 - achieved appropriate balance,
 - was perceived to be biased.
- 2.4 The SPC must have a process in place to deal with instances where CPD activities are not in compliance with the ethical standards.

Element 3: Conflict of interest

This element describes the processes and requirements for the gathering, managing and disclosing conflicts of interest to participants.

- 3.1 All members of the SPC, speakers, moderators, facilitators and authors must provide to the CPD provider organization a written description of all relationships with for-profit and not-for-profit organizations over the previous 2 years including (but not necessarily limited to):
- a) Any direct financial payments including receipt of honoraria;
 - b) Membership on advisory boards or speakers' bureaus;
 - c) Funded grants or clinical trials;
 - d) Patents on a drug, product or device; and
 - e) All other investments or relationships that could be seen by a reasonable, well-informed participant as having the potential to influence the content of the educational activity.
- 3.2 The CPD provider organization is responsible to review all disclosed financial relationships of the SPC. The CPD provider organization must have procedures in place to be followed if a conflict of interest comes to its attention prior to the CPD activity.
- 3.3 The SPC is responsible to review all disclosed financial relationships of speakers, moderators, facilitators and authors in advance of the CPD activity to determine whether action is required to manage potential or real conflicts of interest. The SPC must also have procedures in place to be followed if a conflict of interest comes to its attention prior to or during the CPD activity.
- 3.4 All members of the SPC, speakers, moderators, facilitators, and authors, must disclose to participants their relationships as described in 3.1.
- 3.5 Any individual who fails to disclose their relationships as described in 3.1 and 3.4 cannot participate as a member of the SPC, speaker, moderator, facilitator or author of an accredited CPD activity.



Element 4: Receiving Financial and in-kind Support

This element provides a description of the requirements for CPD provider organizations and the SPC in receiving and distributing financial and in-kind support.

- 4.1 The CPD provider organization is responsible to receive any financial and in-kind support for the development of an accredited CPD activity.
- 4.2 The SPC cannot be required to accept advice from a sponsor as a condition of receiving financial and in-kind support. Specific interests of any sponsor must have no direct or indirect influence on any aspect of the development, delivery or evaluation of an accredited CPD activity.
- 4.3 The terms, conditions and purposes by which sponsorship is provided must be documented in a written agreement that is signed by the CPD provider organization and the sponsor.
- 4.4 The CPD provider organization or SPC can assume or delegate to a third party the payment of travel, lodging, legitimate out of pocket expenses and any honoraria offered to members of the SPC, speakers, moderators, facilitators and/or authors. The CPD provider organization or the SPC must approve what payments are delegated and retain overall accountability for these payments.
- 4.5 The CPD provider organization cannot pay for or subsidize a participant's travel, lodging or other out of pocket expenses related to their participation in an accredited CPD activity. This provision does not preclude participants' claiming and receiving compensation from residency programs, employers or local CPD support funds, even when activities they attend have received support from these sources.
- 4.6 The travel, lodging or other out of pocket expenses of spouses, partners or other family members of: the SPC, speakers, moderators, facilitators, authors or participants cannot be paid for or subsidized by the CPD provider organization, sponsor or any organization hired by a sponsor.
- 4.7 Social activities associated with CPD activities cannot occur at a time or location that interferes/competes with or takes precedence over accredited CPD activities.
- 4.8 Upon request by DHP-AS, CPD Providers must disclose how the financial and in-kind support was used for the accredited CPD activity.
- 4.9 The CPD provider organization has an obligation to ensure that their interactions with sponsors meet professional and legal standards including the protection of privacy, confidentiality, copyright and contractual law regulations.



Element 5: Recognizing Financial and in-kind Support

This element provides a description of the requirements for CPD provider organizations and the SPC in recognizing financial and in-kind support received from sponsors.

- 5.1 The SPC must recognize and disclose to participants all financial and in-kind support received from sponsors of CPD activities. All financial and in-kind support received must be recognized using the standard acknowledgement statement "This CPD activity is supported by financial and/or in-kind support from the following sponsors:" Sponsorship recognition must appear on a page separate from the educational content, activity schedule, learning objectives, and accreditation statement.
- 5.2 Beyond the standard acknowledgement statement of financial and in-kind support outlined in 5.1, the linking or alignment of a sponsor's name (or other branding strategies) to a specific educational session or section of an educational program within an accredited group learning activity is prohibited.

Element 6: Managing Commercial Promotion

This section defines the requirements related to exhibits and the types of materials that can and cannot be displayed.

- 6.1 Product-specific advertising, promotional materials or branding strategies cannot be included on, appear within, adjacent to:
 - any educational materials, slides, abstracts and handouts used as part of an accredited CPD activity;
 - activity agendas, programs or calendars of events (preliminary and final);
 - any webpages or electronic media containing educational material.
- 6.2 Product-specific advertising, promotional materials or branding strategies cannot be included on/appear within locations where accredited CPD sessions are occurring (e.g. lecture halls, small group discussion rooms) immediately before, during or immediately after an accredited CPD activity.
- 6.3 Commercial exhibits or advertisements must be arranged in a location that is clearly and completely separated from the accredited CPD activity.
- 6.4 The SPC cannot be required by an exhibitor or advertiser to accept advice concerning the CPD activity development, delivery or evaluation as a condition of their exhibit or advertisement. Specific interests of any exhibitor or advertiser must have no direct or indirect influence on any aspect of the CPD activity development, delivery or evaluation.
- 6.5 Any incentive provided to participants associated with an accredited CPD activity must be approved by the CPD provider organization.



Element 7: Unaccredited CPD Activities

This section defines the roles and responsibilities of the SPC in relation to unaccredited CPD activities.

- 7.1 The SPC/CPD provider organization cannot schedule unaccredited CPD activities to take place at times and locations that interfere or compete with accredited CPD activities.
- 7.2 Unaccredited CPD activities cannot be listed or included within activity agendas, programs or calendars of events (preliminary and final).



Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition
Accredited CPD activity	An educational activity that meets the administrative, educational and ethical standards of the DHP-AS. Accredited CPD activities include group learning and assessment, in a live or electronic format.
Advertiser	A for-profit organization that shares information about its programs, services and products through space purchased in conjunction with accredited CPD activities or through other venues produced by CPD provider organizations.
Advisory board	A group that advises the management of a corporation, organization, or foundation based on their knowledge, experience or expertise
Author	The developer of content within eLearning modules, abstracts, posters, presentation slides or any other written or visual materials provided to participants of an accredited CPD activity.
Bias	A predisposition that prevents impartiality or which promotes an unfair, limited, or prejudiced viewpoint. http://www.dictionaryofeducation.co.uk/b/b/blog
CPD provider organization	An organization that assumes the responsibility and accountability for the development, delivery and evaluation of accredited CPD activities.
Commercial interest	For-profit entities that develop, produce, market, re-sells or distribute drugs, devices, products, or other healthcare goods, services or therapies that may be prescribed to patients or ordered by doctors in the diagnosis, treatment, monitoring, management or palliation of health conditions.
Definition of Commercial Interest	Is defined by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME), is "any entity producing, marketing, reselling, or distributing healthcare goods or services consumed by or used on patients, or an entity that is owned or controlled by an entity that produces, markets, resells, or distributes healthcare goods or services consumed by or used on patients. Nonprofit or government organizations, non-healthcare-related companies, and healthcare facilities are not considered commercial interests."
Continuing medical education	Teaching and learning that meets an identifiable need and designed to enhance medical/clinical knowledge, skills, attitudes, performance or health outcomes.
Continuing professional development	CPD includes a focus on discipline-specific knowledge and skills (the traditional domain of CME) but embraces learning across a wide range of content areas and competencies (for example communication skills, professionalism, leadership and management skills, healthcare quality management, evidence based practice and clinical guidelines, information technology, collaboration and teamwork skills and quality improvement) needed to deliver high-quality healthcare
Exhibitor	An individual or organization having a service contract with a CPD provider organization for displaying and sharing information about their program's services and products in an Exhibit Hall or area separate from the location where accredited learning activity occurs.



Facilitator	One that facilitates; especially: one that helps to bring about an outcome (as learning, productivity, or communication) by providing indirect or unobtrusive assistance, guidance, or supervision. http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/facilitator
Financial support	Monetary contributions provided by sponsor for the development, delivery or evaluation of an accredited CPD activity, learning resource or tool.
Incentive	Something that incites or has a tendency to incite to determination or action. http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/incentive
In-kind support	Services or tools or human resources which have a monetary value and are provided to an organization in support of an educational activity.
Moderator	One who presides over an assembly, meeting, or discussion. http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/moderator
Participant	Any individual, other than a resource person, who attends or takes part in a CPD activity or program in order to acquire, sustain or enhance his or her knowledge or skills. The term "participant" includes healthcare professionals, residents, students or individuals who are part of the target audience.
Perceived conflict of interest	A perceived conflict of interest is the appearance of a conflict of interest as judged by outside observers regardless of whether an actual conflict of interest exists
Real conflict of interest	A real conflict of interest is when two or more interests are indisputably in conflict.
Reasonable	Not excessive and is perceived as such and defensible to stakeholders and to the public.
Scientific Planning Committee	A group of target audience representatives responsible for the identification of the educational needs of the intended target audience; development of educational objectives; selection of educational methods; selection of scientific planning committee members, speakers, moderators, facilitators and/or authors; development and delivery of content; and evaluation of outcomes of an accredited CPD activity.
Speaker	Individuals selected by a scientific planning committee based on their recognized expertise and skills to prepare and present information or evidence at a planned educational session in an accredited learning activity.
Social Activity	A gathering of individuals that enables social interaction. Social activities might include a welcome gala, awards reception, a networking event etc.
Sponsor	An individual, group, corporation or organization (for-profit and not for-profit) that provides financial or in kind support, including goods or services in support of accredited educational activities, learning resources, or tools.
Sponsorship	The process by which an individual, group, corporation or organization provides financial and in-kind support for the development, delivery or evaluation of an accredited CPD activity, learning resource or tool.



Support	The provision of financial and in-kind resources provided by sponsor for the development, delivery or evaluation of an accredited CPD activity, learning resource or tool.
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