



**ROYAL COLLEGE**  
OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS OF CANADA

**THE COLLEGE OF  
FAMILY PHYSICIANS  
OF CANADA**



**LE COLLÈGE DES  
MÉDECINS DE FAMILLE  
DU CANADA**



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## National standard for support of accredited CPD activities

### Preamble

The primary purpose of Continuing Medical Education/Continuing Professional Development (CME/CPD) is to “address the educational needs of physicians and other health care providers in order to improve the health care of patients” (CMA Policy; Guidelines for Physicians in Interactions with Industry; standard 22) and improve public health outcomes.

Financial and in-kind support of accredited<sup>1</sup> CPD activities for physicians should not be considered either necessary or desirable. However, the practical reality for many is that this support is required for the development, delivery and evaluation of CME/CPD activities. The medical profession shares a common interest with for-profit and not-for profit organizations in improving patient care and improving public health outcomes. These organizations have resources and expertise that can contribute to the development, quality and effectiveness of accredited CPD activities. However, the interests of organizations that provide financial and in-kind support for the development of accredited CPD activities cannot be assumed to always be congruent with the goal of addressing the educational needs of the medical profession. Therefore it is essential that the medical profession define and assume their responsibility for setting standards that will guide the development, delivery, and evaluation of accredited CPD activities.

The intent of the National Standard for Support of Accredited CPD Activities (the Standard) is to safeguard the integrity of accredited CPD activities from the influence of sponsoring organizations that could lead to bias.

### Applicability

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.

Adherence to the Standard is required for the approval of all accredited CPD activities included within the Canadian national/provincial CME/CPD accreditation systems for physicians. The standards of individual accrediting organizations may be more stringent than these standards, but may not be less so.

The requirements of the [Code of Ethics](#) of the Conseil québécois de développement professionnel continu des médecins (CQDPCM <http://www.cemcq.qc.ca>) must be met for accredited activities held in the province of Québec.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Any use of the term “accreditation” applies to the CFPC Mainpro+ certification process.

<sup>2</sup> For Royal College MOC Section 1 or MOC Section 3 credits, this paragraph is only applicable to CPD activities developed by organizations directly accredited by the CMQ.

Physicians participating in CPD activities should adhere to the Canadian Medical Association's [Guidelines for Physicians in Interactions with Industry](#).

### **Acknowledgements**

The Standard was developed by a working group that included members from the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC), Committee on Accreditation of Continuing Medical Education (CACME), Conseil québécois de développement professionnel continu des médecins (CQDPCM), Fédération des médecins spécialistes du Québec (FMSQ) and the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (Royal College).

The authors thank the CPD provider organizations and other stakeholders who provided feedback throughout the development and implementation of the Standard.

### **About this document**

The Standard includes 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 used is available at the end of this document.

### **Principles**

The Standard is guided by the following four principles:

#### *Trust*

Accredited CPD activities must be developed, delivered and evaluated in accordance with educational and ethical standards of Canadian national/provincial CME/CPD accreditation systems, and to minimize the potential for bias in learning that supports physicians in their multiple roles with patients, learners, and the health care system.

#### *Transparency*

CPD Providers<sup>3</sup> must disclose to participants information related to the receipt of financial and in-kind support provided by sponsors. Upon request, CPD Providers must report on how financial or in kind support was used.

#### *Accountability*

All CPD provider organizations will be expected to adhere to all elements and sub-elements of the Standard and will be informed by the national/provincial CME/CPD accrediting bodies about the process for monitoring adherence to the Standard. All CPD provider organizations will be invited to consult on any future versions of the Standard.

#### *Fairness*

The implementation and monitoring of the Standard by national/provincial CME/CPD accrediting bodies will be equally applied to all CPD Provider organizations and respectful of the principles of equity, due process, and justice.

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<sup>3</sup> For Royal College MOC Section 1 or MOC Section 3 credits, CPD provider organizations must always meet the definition of a physician organization. CFPC Mainpro+ two and three-credit-per-hour activities must be developed in collaboration with a physician organization.

### **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 Standard.
- 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 learning 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 Standard.

**Element 3: Conflict of interest**

This element describes the processes and requirements for 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 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.
- 3.3 All members of the SPC, speakers, moderators, facilitators, and authors, must disclose to participants their relationships as described in 3.1
- 3.4 Any individual who fails to disclose their relationships as described in 3.1 and 3.3 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 or SPC 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 signed by the CPD provider organization or SPC and the sponsor.
- 4.4 The CPD provider organization or SPC can assume or delegate to a third party<sup>4</sup> 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 Participants (who are not members of the SPC, speakers, moderators, facilitators and/or authors) cannot accept payment or subsidies for their travel, lodging or other out of pocket expenses to participate in an accredited CPD activity. This provision does not preclude participants' claiming and receiving compensation from residency programs, employers or provincial 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, CPD Providers must disclose how the financial and in-kind support was used for the accredited CPD activity.
- 4.9 The CPD provider organization or SPC has an obligation to ensure<sup>5</sup> that their interactions with sponsors meet professional and legal standards including the protection of privacy, confidentiality, copyright and contractual law regulations.

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<sup>4</sup> The CPD provider organization or SPC can never delegate to a commercial interest 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.

<sup>5</sup> The CPD provider organization or SPC is obligated to implement appropriate policies and procedures to demonstrate that their interactions with sponsors meet these professional and legal standards.

### **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<sup>6</sup> to participants all financial and in-kind support received from sponsors of CPD activities as part of a sponsorship acknowledgement page<sup>7</sup> separate from the educational content.
- 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, or be 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.

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<sup>6</sup> Financial and in-kind support received from sponsors of CPD activities are to be acknowledged using the standard acknowledgement statement, as defined by this document.

<sup>7</sup> The term "page" refers to any program materials containing educational content (such as learning objectives, schedules of events etc.); educational materials, slides, abstracts, and handouts associated with an accredited CPD activity; any webpages or electronic media containing educational material.

**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 event that meets the administrative, educational and ethical standards of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, College of Family Physicians of Canada or Conseil Québécois de Développement Professionnel Continu des Médecins. Accredited CPD activities include group learning, self-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. <a href="http://www.dictionaryofeducation.co.uk/b/b/blog">http://www.dictionaryofeducation.co.uk/b/b/blog</a>
CPD provider organization	An organization that assumes the responsibility and accountability for the development, delivery and evaluation of accredited CPD activities. CPD provider organizations ordinarily meet the definition of a physician organization.
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.
Conflict of interest	A set of conditions in which judgement or decisions concerning a primary interest (example a patients' welfare, the validity of research and/or quality of medical education) is unduly influenced by a secondary interest (personal or organizational benefit including financial gain, academic or career advancement, or other benefits to family, friends, or colleagues).
Continuing medical education (CME)	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)	CPD extends beyond the scope of traditional CME (defined above) and includes learning activities focused on competencies across the CanMEDS Framework.
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. <a href="http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/facilitator">http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/facilitator</a>



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. <a href="http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/incentive">http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/incentive</a>
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. <a href="http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/moderator">http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/moderator</a>
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
Physician Organization	<p>A not-for-profit group of health professionals with a formal governance structure, accountable to and serving, among others, its physician members through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuing professional development</li> <li>• Provision of health care and/or</li> <li>• Research.</li> </ul> <p>This definition includes (but is not limited to) the following groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faculties of medicine</li> <li>• Hospital departments or divisions</li> <li>• Medical societies</li> <li>• Medical associations</li> <li>• Medical academies</li> <li>• Physician research organizations</li> <li>• Physician clinic</li> <li>• Health authorities not linked to government agencies</li> <li>• Canadian provincial medical regulatory authorities (MRAs)</li> </ul> <p>This definition excludes pharmaceutical companies or their advisory groups, medical supply and surgical supply companies, communication companies or other for-profit organizations and ventures/activities.</p> <p>Types of organizations that are not considered physician organizations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disease-oriented patient advocacy organizations (e.g. Canadian Diabetes Association).</li> <li>• Government departments or agencies (e.g. Health Canada, Public Health Agency of Canada).</li> <li>• Industry (e.g. pharmaceutical companies, medical device companies, etc.).</li> <li>• Medical education or communications (MEC) companies (e.g. CME Inc.).</li> <li>• For-profit' on-line educators, publishing companies or simulation companies (e.g. Medscape, CAE).</li> <li>• Small number of physicians working together solely and</li> </ul>

	specifically to develop educational programming.
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 do not include meals or breaks.
Sponsor	An individual, group, corporation or organization (for-profit and not for-profit) who 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.
Standard acknowledgment statement	The statement that recognizes and discloses to participants all financial and in-kind support received from sponsors of CPD activities.  "This program has received an educational grant or in-kind support from (names of funding organizations)"
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.