



## Criteria for Approval of Online CPD Events for Maintenance of Certification

### Background:

The Standards Committee, at its Spring 2001 meeting, clarified the requirements for Online Continuing Professional Development (CPD) events to be approved for Section 1 of the framework of CPD options – Group Learning Activities. The Committee passed the following motion:

Recognizing that online Continuing Medical Education (CME) group learning activities vary in their ability, it is recommended that:

- To qualify under Section 1, online Internet CME must be approved by an accredited CPD provider of the Maintenance of Certification program.
- There was consensus that online CME events should meet the standards expected of other Section 1 programs, especially those pertaining to interaction between faculty and participants.

### Purpose of document:

Anticipating increasing requests for approval of online CME programs under Section 1, it is recommended that this document be sent to accredited providers and interested online CME companies.

### Online CPD Events Designed for Self-Directed Learning:

Hours spent participating in Online CME events that cater to self-directed learners may be submitted under Section 2 of the framework of CPD options for maintenance of certification. Fellows also may create personal learning projects (PLPs) from new information and new learning they experience while undertaking these programs and submit the hours of participation under Section 4.

**A personal learning project (PLP)** is a learning activity that is planned and its outcome is recorded and evaluated by the individual or a mentor. PLPs are executed in three steps:

**Step 1:** The Fellow identifies a question, controversy, idea, innovation, tip, or pearl for instance, from, a practice experience, reading an article in a journal or by participating in an educational activity, such as an online CME program.

**Step 2:** The Fellow critically appraises and validates the information through a review of the literature and/or discussion with colleagues or expert.

**Step 3:** The Fellow assesses the application of the learning derived from Step 2 to his/her professional practice - PLPs may or may not result in a change of practice.

For each personal learning project the physician must document:

- a) The item (question, idea, innovation, etc.)
- b) The stimulus (where the question, idea, innovation, etc. came from)
- c) References, name of mentor (where applicable)
- d) Outcome of Learning (potential to impact practice)

Note: WebDiary at <http://www.mainport.org> helps Fellows to document PLPs and automatically submits assigned CPD hours to Section 4 in the CPD Summary.

## **Online CPD Events Designed for Group Learning:**

The online CPD designed for group learning must fulfill the requirements for all CPD activities approved under section 1. These include:

1. Online CPD events produced by a medical organization and approved by an accredited provider.
2. Online CPD events produced by commercial companies and non-physician organizations are required to be co-sponsored by the accredited provider and abide by the regulations for co-sponsorship.
3. The CPD event has start and end dates, outside of which access by physicians is not possible.
4. Participants should register for the event and receive a receipt or record of registration.
5. The CPD course planner accepts the responsibility for the accuracy of the information listed on the application form and certifies that the CMA's guidelines, entitled "Physicians and the Pharmaceutical Industry" (sec. 17-24) have been met in preparing for the CPD event.
6. Information from the target audiences must be used to determine course objectives either through participation on a planning committee or through surveys, focus groups or interviews.
7. The course objectives (which are printed on the brochure or handouts) describe what the participants may learn or achieve by participating in the course.
8. The accredited provider should be provided with evidence that the online CPD event includes periods of discussion that use the following techniques to promote interactive learning:
  - ❑ Participants should be able to communicate with specific faculty and with other participants
  - ❑ The faculty should act as moderator of the discussion and encourage contributions from participants.
  - ❑ Once a discussion is closed faculty should provide feedback to participants which:
    - 1) Summarizes the discussion and conclusions made; and
    - 2) Refers participants to further reading.

### **Additional requirements for interactivity in synchronous CPD events:**

The participants should be given the opportunity to interact with the faculty and other participants. As in other accredited group learning activities, 25 percent of the time online should be made available for interaction.

### **Additional requirements for interactivity in asynchronous CPD events<sup>1</sup>:**

- ❑ The faculty should advise course participants of the days when she or he will visit the conferencing environment to participate in ongoing discussions.
- ❑ Discussions should occur during a specified time frame. For example, participants may have two weeks to participate in ongoing discussions, starting with the date of their first posting. The conversations are then closed.

Standards Committee  
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<sup>1</sup> Based on recommendations from Julie Ann Richardson (2001) Collaborative Learning In A Virtual Classroom: Lessons Learned and a New Set of Tutor Guidelines National Teaching and Learning Forum. <http://www.ntlf.com/> Feb. 2001 Volume 10 Number 2