

National Standard for Support of Accredited CPD Activities (the National Standard)
FAQs for Implementation

On Implementation

1. When did the National Standard come into effect?

Answer:
January 1, 2018.

2. Does the National Standard apply to accredited regular scheduled series, rounds, journal clubs, and small groups?

Answer:
Yes. Rounds, journal clubs and small groups must adhere to the National Standard.

3. If a CPD provider hosts an accredited CPD activity in the province of Quebec, are both the Conseil québécois de développement professionnel continu des médecins s ([CQDPCM](#)) Code of Ethics and National Standard applicable?

Answer:
Activities accredited for Royal College MOC or Mainpro+ credits must always comply with the National Standard. CFPC Mainpro+® certified activities held in the province of Quebec must also adhere to the CQDPCM's Code of Ethics. All CPD activities developed by CMQ accredited organizations must also adhere to the Code of Ethics regardless.

Wherever discrepancies exist between the National Standard and the CQDPCM's Code of Ethics, the higher of the two standards shall prevail.

4. Does the implementation of the National Standard eliminate or replace the Canadian Medical Association's "Guidelines for Physicians in Interactions with Industry?"

Answer:
No. Physicians participating in CPD activities should still adhere to the CMA's [Guidelines for Physicians in Interactions with Industry](#).

Wherever discrepancies exist between the National Standard and CMA's "Guidelines for Physicians in Interaction with Industry", the higher of the two standards shall prevail.

5. For a CPD activity to award both MOC and Mainpro+ credits, does it need to be accredited by both the Royal College and the CFPC?

Answer:
Yes. To award both Royal College MOC and CFPC Mainpro+ credits, CPD providers must pursue CPD accreditation by both systems.

On CPD Providers and Physician Organizations

6. According to the glossary, a CPD provider organization ordinarily meets the definition of a “physician organization”. Are there circumstances when a CPD provider organization might not meet this definition?

Answer:

For Royal College

MOC Section 1 or MOC Section 3 credits, Accredited CPD provider organizations must always meet the [definition of a physician organization](#).

For CFPC

Mainpro+, a CPD provider organization cannot be a commercial interest or a representative of a commercial interest. This includes, but is not limited to, pharmaceutical companies, medical device companies, and other for-profit organizations, or communications or marketing companies in the employ of commercial interests.

Two and three-credit-per-hour programs require collaboration with a not-for-profit physician organization.

7. Do the Colleges have a list of recognized physician organizations?

Answer:

No, but any organization that meets the definition is considered to be a [physician organization](#).

On Co-Development

8. How can co-development be acknowledged in a way that is compliant with the National Standard?

Answer:

Co-developed program can be acknowledged by placing the Royal College’s co-development statement on CPD activity materials such as preliminary or final scientific programs, promotional materials, certificates of attendance.

“This [program/workshop/seminar] was co-developed with [name of organization] and was planned to achieve scientific integrity, objectivity, and balance.”

Note that the CFPC does not have a co-development model

9. Can partners’ logos for co-developed activities be placed on scientific program materials which contain the co-development statement?

Answer:

Yes, corporate logos of co-development partners may be used in conjunction with the co-development statement in program materials such as preliminary or final scientific programs, promotional materials.

On Independence

10. Can CPD provider organizations fund their own CPD activity and be represented on the scientific planning committee (SPC)?

Answer:

Yes, they can. Self-funding by eligible CPD provider organizations, physician organizations or SPCs is not sponsorship as defined by the National Standard. A sponsor is defined as 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 to an eligible CPD provider organization.

11. Can a representative of a sponsor (either a commercial or non-commercial interest) or any organization hired by a sponsor attend SPC meetings, but not participate in decisions related to CPD program elements?

Sub-elements 1.2 and 1.3 indicate that Representatives of a sponsor or any organization hired by a sponsor cannot participate in decisions related to CPD program elements:

- Identification of the educational needs of the intended target audience;
- Development of learning objectives;
- Selection of educational methods;
- Selection of speakers, moderators, facilitators and authors;
- Development and delivery of content; and
- Evaluation of outcomes.

Answer:

For CPD activities accredited for Royal College MOC Section 1 or 3 credits, representatives of a sponsor or any organization hired by a sponsor may attend SPC meetings but are not permitted to participate in decisions related to CPD program elements.

For CPD activities certified for CFPC Mainpro+ credits, representatives of a commercial interest, as defined by the National Standard, or any organization hired by a commercial interest cannot attend SPC meetings. Sponsors who are not commercial interests may attend SPC meetings but are not permitted to participate in decisions related to CPD program elements.

12. What is meant by "hired"?

Answer:

"Hired" refers to any organization (such as a medical communication company), working for, in conjunction with or accountable to a sponsor.

13. Can a sponsor provide needs assessment details/materials?

Answer:

Yes. The SPC may consider data or advice from all sources at its meetings. However, the SPC must ensure that it has exclusive control over the identification of needs for the intended target audience and all other decision-making related to the needs assessment process.

On Conflict of Interest

14. What strategies are recommended for managing identified conflicts of interest?

Answer:

When a conflict of interest is declared by a planning committee member, speaker or facilitator, the CPD provider must have a process in place to manage identified conflicts of interest that, in the judgment of the CPD Provider, are of significant concern (for example, where the conflict and the content of the topic make balance and the minimization of bias becomes very difficult).

There are a number of strategies that can be considered to manage and resolve such identified conflicts:

- The speaker could be required to alter the focus of the talk to limit the areas where conflict of interest is significant.
- The topic selected could be changed, but the same speaker be used.
- The planning committee could ask for a peer review of the content to ensure that the principles of scientific integrity, objectivity and balance have been respected.
- Both topic and speaker could be eliminated. This is a very uncommon occurrence, but it can be a last resort if a significant conflict of interest cannot be otherwise managed.
- If a scientific planning committee member, the conflict would be declared to others on the committee and the member could recuse themselves from planning decisions relevant to their area of conflict.

On Receiving Financial and In-Kind Support

15. Can a sponsor provide in-kind support of a CPD activity in the logistical planning of the activity?

Answer:

Yes, they can. The National Standard defines in-kind support as “services or tools” or human resources which have a monetary value and are provided to an organization in support of an educational activity.” Therefore, distributing invitations to potential participants, booking meeting space, liaising with vendors such as catering, audiovisual services etc. are considered “in-kind” support.

Sub-element 4.3 requires “the terms, conditions and purposes by which sponsorship is provided must be documented in a written agreement signed by the CPD provider organization, physician organization or SPC and the sponsor.” This includes in-kind support.

All support, financial and in-kind, must be recognized and disclosed to participants as part of a sponsorship acknowledgement page in participant materials separate from the educational content (as per sub- element 5.1 of the National Standard). For Mainpro+ certified programs, such support must also be declared verbally and using required slides to program participants as part of the conflict of interest disclosures.

16. Can a sponsor directly pay expenses associated with a CPD activity, without first providing financial or in-kind support to the CPD provider organization?

Answer:

Ideally, a sponsor must provide all sponsorship directly to the CPD provider organization, physician organization or SPC in accordance with sub-element 4.1: “the CPD provider organization or SPC is responsible to receive any financial or in-kind support for the development of an accredited CPD activity.” This also applies to accredited rounds, journal clubs, and small groups (“regularly scheduled series”) as well as single-sponsored CPD activities.

The CPD provider organization, physician organization or SPC may choose to enter into a written agreement with a third party for the receipt of any financial or in-kind support from a sponsor.

The CPD provider organization, physician organization or SPC may choose to delegate the payment of logistical expenses (such as audiovisual arrangements, venue rental fees, catering, etc.) to a program sponsor which may be a commercial interest. This delegation should be expressed via the contractual agreements with the sponsor/commercial interest.

However, the CPD provider organization, physician 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.

The CPD provider organization, physician organization or SPC is responsible to maintain oversight and accountability for the budget, expenditure(s) and deliverables of the agreement.

17. Is the CPD provider organization, physician organization or SPC required to delegate payments to a third party in order to comply with the National Standard?

Answer:

No. The CPD provider organization, physician organization or SPC can choose to manage this themselves or delegate these payments to a third party. The CPD provider organization, physician organization or the SPC must approve what payments are delegated and retain overall accountability for these payments.

18. What terms and conditions should be documented in a written agreement signed by the CPD provider organization, physician organization or SPC and the sponsor of an accredited CPD activity?

Answer:

As per sub-element 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, the physician organization or SPC and the sponsor. The agreement should include (but not limited to) the following details:

- whether sponsorship is financial or in-kind support;
- the dollar amount of financial support provided;
- the specific in-kind resources provided;
- the sponsor’s agreement to comply with the National Standard;
- that the SPC cannot be required to accept advice from a sponsor as a condition of receiving financial and in-kind support;
- that 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;

- if logistical payments have been delegated to a sponsor this arrangement including the budget must be included in the written agreements;
- how sponsorship will be recognized;
- how sponsorship will be disclosed to participants.

19. Can a CPD provider organization, physician organization or SPC hire a third party to draft and initiate these agreements?

Answer:

Yes, a CPD provider organization, physician organization or SPC can hire a third party to draft and initiate a written agreement.

20. Are there guidelines on the maximum dollar amount for meals provided at accredited CPD activities?

Answer:

The Royal College has not set guidelines for the maximum dollar amount for meals provided at accredited CPD activities.

The CFPC Chapters have established limits on the costs of meals associated with Mainpro+ certified activities. The maximum values for breakfast, lunch, and dinner in each province are published in the [Mainpro+ Certification Standards](#).

The CMA Guidelines for Physicians in Interactions with Industry requires any meals provided to physicians during industry-sponsored CPD activities be modest.

21. Are there guidelines on the maximum dollar amount for honoraria that can be paid to speakers?

Answer:

No, the National Standard has not defined the maximum amount; however, the CMA Guidelines for Physicians in Interactions with Industry requires that any honoraria paid to faculty be reasonable⁴.

On Managing Commercial Promotion

22. Regarding sub-element 6.5, what is considered to be an “incentive”?

6.5 Any incentive provided to participants associated with an accredited CPD activity must be approved by the CPD provider organization.

Answer:

Sub-element 6.5 specifically relates to exhibits at an accredited CPD activity. An example of an “incentive” is an “exhibitor passport” provided to participants to record a “stamp” or signature for each exhibit booth that they visit. The completed passport is entered into a draw for a prize. In this example, the incentive is the ability to win a prize by participants visit exhibit booths. Sub-element 6.5 requires incentive provided to participants associated with an accredited CPD activity be approved by the CPD provider organization.

23. What is an example of a sponsor’s “branding strategy” as referenced in sub-element 5.2 which reads:

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 the scientific program within an accredited group learning activity is prohibited.

Answer:

A sponsor’s branding strategy might include, but is not limited to: logos, colours, graphics or any other visual that invokes a direct or indirect link to that sponsor or their product(s).

24. What is meant by the term “location” in sub-elements 6.2, 6.3, and 7.1?

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.

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.”

Answer:

The term “location” refers to a room or space for promotional events/activities/exhibits that is clearly separated from the educational environment.

25. Can product ads be included in the CPD activities’ abstract book?

Answer:

No. Product-specific advertising, promotional materials or branding strategies cannot be included in abstract books, as abstract books are a part of the scientific program.

26. Can product ads be included in the Exhibit Hall Guide?

Answer:

Yes. Product-specific advertising can be included in the Exhibit Hall Guide as long as there is no educational content included in the guide.

27. Can exhibit hall hours be included in the preliminary or final program?

Answer:

Yes, exhibit hall hours can be included in the preliminary or final program, as long as they are not depicted as an advertisement.

On unaccredited education

28. If unaccredited CPD activities cannot be listed or included within activity agendas, programs or calendars of events (preliminary and final), how can I notify participants of these unaccredited CPD activities?

Answer:

Unaccredited activities can be listed in a separate tab in an app or a separate section in a printed program. Inserts about the activity can also be placed in the delegate's bag. In each of these cases, it should be explicit to the participants that these activities are not accredited and may be sponsored by a commercial interest.

Unaccredited activities that are not CPD activities can be listed in the preliminary and final program. Below are some unaccredited activities that can be listed in the preliminary or final program:

- Paid lunches by commercial interests can be listed as: "Unaccredited Sponsored Lunch"
- Unaccredited poster sessions during breaks may also be included in the preliminary and final program. A note can be included that viewing posters are eligible for Section 2 MOC credits or non-certified Mainpro+ credits Self-Learning.
- Committees or annual general meetings
- Streams developed for allied health care within the scientific program that are not accredited.