Distance Learning Programs; Criteria for CPD Accreditation

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| **This document** | When designing and developing an online or distance-learning CPD program there are several requirements that are different than for other programs’ accreditation standards. A number of these elements should be well-thought out before any development happens, way back at the planning and designing stage.  The following lists the main elements that I have taken from both the CFPC and the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons that are linked to online and distance learning programs. Where possible I have quoted directly from the source. |
| **CFPC**  **Online Mainpro-M1 programs** | *CFPC Mainpro Guide, page 31*  **Please carefully review the information available in the CFPC guide.**  **32**  “…Online programs must meet all the requirements below in addition to those for Mainpro-M1 programs outlined earlier in this document:   * Participants must be able to register and receive a receipt or record of registration * There must be a definitive period of time during which the program is available; this time frame should be mentioned before the start of the program * There must be an opportunity for participants to interact with faculty and other participants (direct or asynchronous); when a discussion is closed, a summary of the discussion points, conclusions, and recommended additional readings should be provided * The number of assigned credits should be based on a best estimate of the time required to complete the CPD program (including reading time, discussion board entries, and so on)” |
| Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons | The e-CPD Task Force reviewed questions and concerns of Accredited CPD Providers regarding how the accreditation standards for face-to-face group learning could be effectively applied to asynchronous web-based learning activities. The e-CPD Task Force made four recommendations that were reviewed and approved by the CPD Accreditation Committee and the Professional Development Committee.  In addition to the organizational, educational and ethical standards, these four recommendations clarify the standards related to interactivity and course completion that are applicable to all asynchronous web-based group learning activities approved under Section 1e. |
| **Asynchronous**  **Web-based Group Learning Activities** | Online CPD Events for MOC  1. Asynchronous group learning activities delivered via the web must provide an opportunity for interaction between participants and course faculty/facilitators (e.g. e-mail a question) and enable participants to observe the interaction of other participants with the course faculty/facilitator. 2. Acceptable options to incorporate interactivity for accredited group learning activities delivered in an electronic format include but are not limited to;    * + Discussion forums / Chat groups      + Teleconference / Videoconferencing      + Twitter / Email 3. Participants must ‘log on’ to the interactive component to claim credit under Section 1. Fellows can claim the time spent only reviewing posted materials under Section 2. 4. Certificates of participation should only be given to participants after they have ‘logged on’ to the interactive component for the course. |
| **CPD Section 3 Accreditation** | If applying for a Section 3 accreditation, for an online program in the **Self-Assessment Program (SAP) category**, please refer to the Royal College website for all the educational, ethical and organizational criteria.  <http://www.royalcollege.ca/portal/page/portal/rc/members/cpd/cpd_accreditation/self_assessment_programs>  Below is a list of items that will impact your design of an online program.  Keep in mind that even if this is an online program, an SAP program has different requirements than the “Asynchronous Web-based Group Learning Activities” listed above, especially around dialogue. Dialogue is not a focus in an SAP program.  Interaction with program must allow participant to demonstrate the target abilities  “Self-assessment programs provide participants with a strategy to assess their knowledge, skills, clinical judgment and attitudes in comparison to established evidence (scientific or tacit). All self-assessment programs must use methods that enable participants to demonstrate these abilities across the key areas of the subject area, topic or problem(s). “  Provide detailed feedback with references  “Criteria 3: The self-assessment program must provide detailed feedback to participants on their performance to enable the identification of any areas requiring improvement through the development of a future learning plan.  Providing specific feedback on which answers were correct and incorrect with references enables specialists to determine if there are important aspects of their knowledge, skills, clinical judgment or attitudes that need to be addressed through engaging in further learning activities.” |
| **Written/online activities:** | 1. Performance and interaction   You will have to design the process by which participants will be provided with answers to individual questions: for example, through the creation of an answer sheet and scoring key or web based assessment tools.   * You will have to develop an answer sheet or assessment tool  1. Feedback   You will have to design   * How participants will receive feedback on the answers they provided (their performance). * How participants will be able to know which answers were answered correctly or incorrectly. * How the program provides participants with references justifying the appropriate answer.  1. Reflection   You will have to include a reflective tool that provides participants with an opportunity to document:   1. Knowledge or skills that are up-to-date or consistent with current evidence 2. Any deficiencies or opportunities they identified for further learning 3. What learning strategies will be pursued to address these deficiencies; and 4. An action plan or commitment to change to address any anticipated barriers 5. Evaluation   You will have to provide participants with an evaluation form that assesses:   * Whether the stated learning objectives were achieved * Relevance of the SAP to the participant’s practice * The thoroughness of the content reviewed * The ability of the program to assess knowledge * Ability to identify CanMEDS competencies or role * Identification of bias |
|  | There are many other criteria for accreditation of CPD programs but the ones in this document relate specifically to an online or distance-learning program.  For a complete list of requirements and criteria for accreditation of CPD activities, review the information from the Colleges.   * [Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada](http://www.rcpsc.medical.org/)   Accreditation Tool Kit  <http://www.royalcollege.ca/portal/page/portal/rc/members/cpd/cpd_accreditation/group_learning/cpd_accreditation_toolkit>  Self-Assessment Programs   * <http://www.royalcollege.ca/portal/page/portal/rc/members/cpd/cpd_accreditation/self_assessment_programs> * [Canadian College of Family Physicians](http://www.cfpc.ca/)   Guide to Mainpro (for physicians)  <http://www.cfpc.ca/uploadedFiles/CPD/_PDFs/GuidetoMainpro_BRO_EN.pdf>  Mainpro Guide (for developers)  <http://www.cfpc.ca/uploadedFiles/CPD/A%20Guide%20to%20Mainpro%20Accreditation.pdf> |