



CPD in Focus

Spring 2023

Update from the National Committee on Continuing Professional Development (NCCPD)

Approval of revised Mainpro+® Certification Standards

After 10 months of examination and review, the Certification Standards Working Group (CSWG) presented a set of seven recommended revisions to the Mainpro+ Certification Standards for approval by the National Committee on Continuing Professional Development (NCCPD). The goals of the revisions are to ensure high quality, relevant, and outcome oriented continuing professional development (CPD) while simplifying the process of certification. The working group's recommended revisions also focus on how CPD can be a source for promotion of health equity, cultural safety, and social justice through reflection, diversity, and accountability of planning committee members and faculty.

The College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC) is committed to meeting the evolving health care needs of all communities and advocating for equitable health outcomes for vulnerable groups as highlighted in the CFPC's 2017–2022 Strategic Plan. We believe that the Mainpro+ Certification Standards can contribute to this commitment. We approach this work with humility and with acknowledgement that this will be an ongoing process of feedback and quality improvement. We recognize that the requirements approved may adapt over time as we work together to seek social justice and create CPD that is equitable and inclusive and addresses the diverse population of learners and patients in Canada.

The following seven revisions were approved by the NCCPD and the CFPC Board of Directors:

Replacement of two- and three-credit-per-hour certification with optional enhanced activities.

All activities will be certified at one-credit-per-hour with the ability to add optional enhanced activities to CPD programs providing the opportunity to earn additional credits.

Examples of enhanced activities include:

- A needs assessment activity that can be completed by actual program participants that incorporates data from their practice. (Certified Activities)
- An activity including tools and resources with follow up on impact on and relevance to practice reinforcing learning post-program. (Certified Activities)
- Completion and implementation of a practice improvement plan with follow up after a realistic period. (Certified Assessment Activities)

This change will reduce the complexity of the certification process as well as the number of activity categories for CFPC members. The change offers opportunities for program providers to customize educational activities by offering options to extend and reinforce learning and allow participants to earn additional credits.

CFPC member scientific planning committee requirements for nationally certified activities

All nationally certified activities must have scientific planning committees that include a minimum of two CFPC members with a Practising membership. These members must confirm they had substantial involvement in planning and developing the activity. This is a change from the minimum of three CFPC members with a Practising membership class that is currently required.

The change allows for more balanced scientific planning committees for interprofessional learning. The focus will

remain on ensuring that the scientific planning committee represents target audiences.

CFPC member scientific planning committee requirements for provincially certified activities

No change is recommended to this requirement. The status quo of a minimum of one CFPC member with a Practising membership class from the province of delivery is required on the scientific planning committee.

Certification period changes

Certified Activities will have a certification period of 12 months. Certified Assessment Activities will have a certification period of 36 months. Faculty development activities (either Certified Activities or Certified Assessment Activities) will have a certification period of 36 months.

The change recognizes the longitudinal nature of assessment activities and quality improvement programs. The change recognizes that faculty development activities are low-risk activities designed by educational experts.

Revised definition of organizations ineligible to submit activities for Mainpro+ certification

Organizations that are ineligible to offer Mainpro+ Certified Activities (ineligible organizations) are those whose primary business is producing, marketing, selling, re-selling, or distributing health care products that may be prescribed or recommended to patients. Examples of such organizations include:

- Advertising, marketing, or communication firms whose clients are ineligible companies
- Pharmaceutical companies
- Medical device companies
- Medical and surgical supply companies
- Producers of non-prescription health care products
- Nutrition companies (infant formula, nutritional supplements)

- Pharmacies; diet, fitness, and weight-loss companies; prosthetic and orthotic stores; hearing test centres; home care companies; etc.
- Clinical services that are owned or controlled by any of the above entities

This revision aligns the CFPC with the American Academy of Family Physicians' ineligible provider organization definition and puts the focus on what an organization does rather than what it calls itself.

Managing eligible provider organizations

The CFPC will align its definition of a not-for-profit physician organization with that of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (Royal College):

A physician organization is defined by the Royal College as a not-for-profit of health professionals with a formal governance structure, accountable to and serving, among others, its physician members through continuing professional development, provision of health care, and/or research. The physician organization is accountable to and serving, among others, its physician members through a governance structure that enables the membership to vote on strategic directions and initiatives of the organization as a whole.*

- The CFPC will implement a more stringent application and screening process for all organizations that seek to submit applications for Mainpro+ certification. The changes will place the onus on provider organizations to demonstrate what they do and their capacity to comply with the Mainpro+ Certification Standards.
- The CFPC will introduce a regular activity audit process to ensure providers are compliant with the standards when programs are delivered.
- The CFPC will update its Mainpro+ violation policies regarding suspension and/or removal of an

*Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada. How to Identify a Physician Organization. Accessed May 23, 2023. <https://www.royalcollege.ca/ca/en/cpd/accreditation-continuing-professional-development-cpd-activities/cpd-accreditation-group-learning-activities-conferences-workshops/what-is-physician-organization.html>

organization's ability to act as a CPD provider. This change will provide the CFPC with more control to verify that activities are delivered in compliance and to regulate provider organizations within the CFPC system.

Revisions to the Quality Criteria Framework

The current six quality criteria will be replaced with the following five:

- Needs Assessment and Practice Relevance
- Active Learning, Engagement, and Program Format
- Incorporation of Evidence
- Evaluation and Outcome Assessment
- Promoting Social Justice and Accountability in Program Development

There will be a set of quality criterias and education standards for Certified Activities and a separate set for Certified Assessment Activities. These revisions will include more examples of compliance for each criterion and a simplification of the language used in the standards. The incorporation of the Promoting Social Justice and Accountability in CPD criterion encourages providers to create more inclusive CPD and consider how CPD design can address systemic racism and improve health equity. Other changes include a specific set of standards for Certified Assessment Activities that emphasizes the review of data and reflection on feedback. Another new criterion focuses on active learning, engagement, and program format, encouraging providers to design CPD activities to best meet the learning needs of participants by thoughtfully selecting the format and active learning according to the learning objectives. A revised guide to Mainpro+ certification will be released prior to the new criteria coming into effect.

The revised Mainpro+ Certification Standards will come into effect in the second half of 2024. The CFPC CPD department has begun work on a communication and training plan that includes the creation of tools and resources to help program providers prepare to update and create CPD activities to meet the new requirements. The CFPC thanks the members of the Certification Standards Working Group for their dedication to improving and elevating the certification standards as well as the process of certification.

Additional approved revisions to the Mainpro+ Certification Standards

Administrative review process for hospital/clinical rounds and journal club activities

The review of Mainpro+ Certification Standards considered simplifying the certification process of low-risk activities. After examining the issue, CPD staff presented an administrative review process similar to what was approved for faculty development activities that rely on organizers of hospital and clinical rounds or journal clubs to attest to compliance with the Mainpro+ Certification Standards in the development and implementation of these activities. The NCCPD approved implementing this new process when the revised Mainpro+ Certification Standards are launched in 2024. The proposed process will apply to activities that meet the following definitions:

Hospital or clinical rounds: These scheduled education sessions are developed by hospital or academic departments and delivered from or within a hospital, clinical, or academic setting. The scientific planning committee must be accountable to a clinical or academic department head.

Journal clubs: These involve groups of physicians and other health professionals who meet on a regular schedule to review and critically evaluate recent articles in the scientific and medical literature. Members of a journal club are also on the scientific planning committee for the club.

These activities may be financed by pooled funds accumulated from unrestricted educational grants (may come from health care pharmaceutical company commercial interests), provincial grants, and the like. Individual presentations arranged and/or paid for by organizations external to the pertinent department of medicine (e.g., pharmaceutical companies or biotechnology companies) or the journal club scientific planning committee may not be implemented as part of these activities.

The full administrative review process is to be determined. The complete details of the new process for these activities will be included in the communication and training for the revised Mainpro+ Certification Standards launching in 2024.

Impact of Globalization on CPD Provider Eligibility

Globalization is a term used to describe how trade and technology have created a more connected and interdependent economic situation. This often comes in the form of larger organizations diversifying their holdings by acquiring other organizations from various industries.

The CPD industry has been impacted by this as provider organizations are acquired by larger and more diverse organizations. This trend becomes more complex when the acquiring organizations are not among those listed as eligible providers according to the Mainpro+ certification standards. The CFPC CPD staff brought this issue to the NCCPD's attention as it pertains to the trend of primary care clinic chains that are owned by for-profit pharmacies and other larger organizations. The CFPC members working within these clinics may wish to organize certified CPD activities for themselves and their colleagues and the nature of the clinic ownership has not aligned with our current eligibility definitions.

Similarly, medical education companies, including those that provide online education, are being purchased by larger organizations with interests in biotechnology and data science that may present potential conflicts of interest for the companies being purchased.

The NCCPD discussed these emerging challenges and determined that eligible provider organizations that are acquired by another organization will, by default, have the eligibility status of the acquiring organization. When an eligible provider organization is acquired by an organization that is not a pharmaceutical company, and it is able to sufficiently demonstrate that there are firewalls in place to retain their independence, the acquired organization may continue to act as an eligible provider for Mainpro+ Certified Activities. Determining the sufficiency of firewalls is at the discretion of the CFPC's CPD certification team and may be subject to periodic audits.

Specialist Consultation and CPD Activities

The CFPC CPD staff and Mainpro+ reviewers noted an increase in activities seeking to certify learning that occurs during consultations between family physicians and other

specialists. Most of these activities incorporate software or technology developed by the CPD provider organization in enabling the consultation.

The debate regarding the eligibility of these activities to be certified stems from consultation, which is the focal point of the activity, being part of the physician's regular duties in their practice (also referred to as a clinical act). Of note, some provinces compensate both the requester and the consultant for this clinical act. Mainpro+ reviewers and CPD staff have also expressed concerns that they would be certifying activities that are promotional in nature, designed to market the provider's software and/or other services.

After a lengthy discussion that included acknowledging the benefits to practice that come from reflecting on new knowledge gained after consultations, the NCCPD determined that the act of consultation with colleagues or specialists, including the review of a consultant's response, is not eligible in itself for Mainpro+ certified credit. Instead, activities that stimulate reflection and practice change after specialist consultation are eligible for certified credit provided the development and design meet the Mainpro+ certification standards.

Certification and Review of Faculty Development Activities

In October 2021 the NCCPD approved a new process for reviewing and approving faculty development activities. The goal of this process was to reduce the administrative burden of the certification process for these low-risk activities and to increase the number of Mainpro+ certified faculty development activities.

New certification standards for faculty development activities are now available in the Related Resources section of the [CPD Program Certification](#) page of the CFPC website. To qualify for this simplified process activities must meet the following definition of faculty development:

For Mainpro+ certification, faculty development is defined as a broad range of activities used to renew or assist faculty, supervisors, preceptors, field instructors, and clinical educators in their roles. These activities are designed to improve an individual's knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviours related to teaching, educational administration and leadership, and scholarship.[†]

[†] Scholarship is defined as those activities described in the CanMEDS-FM's Scholar Role. Adapted with permission from: Silver I, Leslie K. Comparing and Contrasting: Faculty Development and Continuing Professional Development. In: Rayburn WF, Turco MG, Davis DA, eds. *Continuing Professional Development in Medicine and Health Care: Better Education, Better Patient Outcomes*. Alphen aan de Rijn, NL: Wolters Kluwer; 2017.

The review of these activities will be conducted by university CPD offices that have been accredited by the Committee on Accreditation of Continuing Professional Development (CACME) of the Associations of Faculties of Medicine of Canada (AFMC). Some of these universities have the capacity to review activities for two- and three-credit-per-hour certification. If a faculty development developer does not have a relationship with a CACME accredited CPD office, they should contact the CFPC certification team at certplus@cfpc.ca for details on how we can support certification of their activity.

New Working Group on Emerging and Essential Topics in CPD is seeking two CPD provider participants

In 2022 the NCCPD approved a suite of changes to the Mainpro+ Participation Standards. One of the recommendations was to strike up a broad-based working group to identify CPD essential topic areas in CPD that reflect key emerging competencies across CanMEDS-FM roles that are relevant to the practice of most family physicians.

This recommendation would allow the CFPC to encourage family doctors to participate in CPD activities in key emerging areas of practice and encourage CPD providers to develop these programs.

The composition of the proposed working group would ensure that the topics identified reflect critical advances in medicine and health care, the patient experience of care, and the social accountability of the profession.

We are seeking two CPD providers to join this working group. This group will convene for two to three virtual meetings (half day to full day). Updates will be provided as needed via electronic communication between meetings. Appointment to this working group will begin in September 2023 and continue until its final report is submitted to the CFPC Board at which point the working group will be sunset.

If you are interested, please reach out to Zarreen Warsi at zwarsi@cfpc.ca.

Sunsetting the Approval of Two- and Three-credit-per-hour Certification

Based on the approved revisions to the Mainpro+ Certification Standards discussed above, the CFPC will cease to accept applications for two- and three-credit-per-hour certification effective December 1, 2023. This will help to limit the number of these activities that will need to be grandfathered into the new system launching in 2024. All two- and three-credit-per-hour activities with certification expiry dates beyond December 1, 2023, will be grandfathered into the new system and program providers will be given exact details of how this will occur as we move closer to the transition date.

CERT+ Tips and Tricks

Entering CFPC planning committee members

When completing an application in CERT+ you must enter the email address that your confirming CFPC-member scientific planning committee member uses to access their CFPC membership account. Please make sure that your CFPC scientific planning committee members do not update their email addresses or change their membership status prior to your activity review completion. If a member changes their email address or membership class, this will create challenges in the review of your application.

French language content requirements

If you are submitting a CPD activity for certification and you intend to deliver the program in both English and French, you are no longer required to submit the English and French content simultaneously. You may submit the completed English content for review and then submit the French for translation verification post-approval.

Save the Date

CPD in Focus Live

English – Tuesday, July 25, 2023, 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. (ET)

French – Wednesday, July 26, 2023, 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. (ET)

These live webinars will explore the contents of the *CPD in Focus* newsletter in depth and allow program providers to pose questions and seek clarifications.

Register for the English webinar at https://cfpc.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_uXDxTRY4T8SaormOr7-Apw

Register for the French webinar at <https://cfpc.zoom.us/j/87986510702?pwd=RGNhZIMrRmVIMIJTN1pQaFZBV1Jydz09>

The webinars will be recorded for those unable to attend live. You must be registered to receive the recording.

What We Are Reading: A CPD bibliography

Below are scholarly literature titles and other CPD-related articles that have recently come to our attention. These publications have attracted our interest because they address recent trends in CPD, support the principles of Mainpro+ Certification Standards, and/or introduce unique concepts in adult learning. We hope you find this information helpful as you develop CPD activities.

Garneau AB, Bélisle M, Lavoie P, Sédillot CL. Integrating equity and social justice for indigenous peoples in undergraduate health professions education in Canada: a framework from a critical review of literature. *Int J Equity Health*. 2021;20(1):123.

Cassidy D, Edwards G, Bruen C, Kelly H, Arnett R, Illing J. Are We Ever Going Back? Exploring the Views of Health Professionals on Postpandemic Continuing Professional Development Modalities. *J Contin Educ Health Prof*. March 7, 2023.

Main PAE, Anderson S. Evidence for continuing professional development standards for regulated health practitioners in Australia: a systematic review. *Hum Resour Health*. 2023;21(1):23.

Stephenson CR, Yudkowsky R, Wittich CM, Cook DA. Learner engagement and teaching effectiveness in livestreamed versus in-person CME. *Med Educ*. 2023;57(4):349-358.

Contact Us

Need more information?

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