



American Academy of Physician Assistants

Standards for Programs Designated for AAPA Category I CME Credit

CME Mission Statement

The mission of the AAPA's CME Review Panel is to review and approve appropriate clinical and professional educational activities that assist PAs in their ongoing efforts to remain current with medical knowledge, clinical skills, standards of practice and health care issues in order to enhance the PA's ability to provide quality care to patients.

Educational Standards

1. The program is based on identified CME needs of PAs.
2. The planning committee includes at least one Physician Assistant-Certified (PA-C). At the discretion of the PA Review Panel, this requirement may be waived.
3. The provider has developed explicit learning objectives for each session and will communicate these objectives to the prospective participants.
4. The medium, or combination of media, chosen by the provider is consistent with the content and educational methodology of the stated objectives.
5. The provider will demonstrate that a meaningful evaluation process is included.

Administrative Requirements

1. The provider has a mechanism to record and verify participation.
2. The approval statements are prominently stated on the certificate of completion.
3. The provider must prominently include the following information in the final program:
 - a. AAPA's approval statements
 - b. learning objectives for each session
 - c. speakers' names and credentials
 - d. speakers' disclosures
 - e. participant evaluation method

Standards for Commercial Support of CME Activities

Adapted from the 2004 Standards for Commercial Support of the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME), approved September 2004.

1. Independence.
 - A. A CME provider must ensure that the following decisions were made independent of a commercial interest or a commercial interest's surrogate.
 - 1) identification of CME needs
 - 2) determination of educational objectives
 - 3) selection of content and presentation modality
 - 4) selection of individuals and organizations that will be in a position to control content
 - 5) selection of educational methods
 - 6) evaluation of the activity
 - B. A commercial interest or its surrogate may not take the role of a non-accredited partner in a joint sponsorship relationship.
 - C. The activity must provide a balanced view of the clinical topic including an unbiased discussion of therapeutic options.
2. Content and Format
 - A. The content and format must promote healthcare and not a specific proprietary business interest of a commercial interest.
 - B. Presentations must give a balanced view of therapeutic options. Use of generic names is preferred. If the CME educational material or content includes trade names, where available, trade names from several companies should be used.
3. Disclosures Relevant to Potential Commercial Bias
 - A. Faculty and educational planning committee members must disclose to the learners:
 - 1) name of commercial interest(s), 2) nature of the relationship with the commercial interest
 - B. If no relevant financial relationship(s) exist, learners must be so informed.
 - C. Learners must be informed of the source of all commercial support for an educational program. If commercial support is 'in kind', the nature of the support must be specified.
 - D. Disclosures may not include the use of a trade name or product-group message.

E. All disclosures specified above must be disclosed to learners at the beginning of the educational activity. For computer-based activities, the user navigation pathway must provide full disclosures prior to accessing the educational content.

4. Resolution of Personal Conflicts of Interest

A. The provider must document all relevant financial relationships for all faculty as well as those involved with planning content. “Relevant financial relationships” are defined as those in any amount occurring within the past 12 months that create a conflict of interest.

B. An individual who refuses to disclose relevant financial relationships must be disqualified from being a planning committee member, a teacher, or an author, and cannot have control of, or responsibility for, the development, management or presentation of a CME activity.

C. The provider must have implemented a mechanism to identify and resolve all conflicts of interest prior to the presentation of any educational activity.

5. Appropriate Use of Commercial Support

A. The provider must make all decisions regarding the disposition and disbursement of commercial support

B. A provider cannot be required by a commercial interest or its surrogate to accept advice or services concerning teachers, authors, or participants or other education matters, including content, as a condition of receiving funds or services.

C. All commercial support associated with a CME activity must be given with the full knowledge and approval of the provider.

D. The terms, conditions, and purposes of the commercial support must be in writing, specifying the provider and the commercial interest and must be signed by both parties.

E. The provider must have written policies and procedures governing honoraria and reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses for program planners, faculty and authors.

F. The provider must pay directly to the faculty any honoraria or reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses in compliance with their own written procedures.

G. No other payment shall be given to any faculty or authors involved with the supported activity.

- H. Individuals who conduct an educational session and then participate in the remainder of a program as a learner may be paid an honoraria and reimbursed expenses for their teacher/author role only.
 - I. Social events or meals cannot compete with or take precedence over educational events.
 - J. Commercial support may be used to pay travel expenses for faculty, bona fide employees and volunteers of the provider; it may not be used for travel expenses for those participating as a learner only.
 - K. The provider must maintain accurate accounting and documentation of receipt of all funds and their disbursement.
6. Associated Commercial Activities
- A. Arrangements for exhibits or advertisements cannot influence planning or interfere with the presentation, nor can they be a condition of the provision of commercial support for CME activities.
 - B. Product promotion or product-specific advertisement of any type is prohibited in or during CME activities. The juxtaposition of editorial and advertising material on the same products or subjects must be avoided.
 - 1) *Print materials:* Advertisements and promotional materials may not be interleaved within the pages of the CME content. Advertisements may face the first or last pages of printed CME content as long as these materials are not related to the CME content they face *and* are not paid for by the commercial supporters of the CME activity.
 - 2) *Computer-based:* Advertisements and promotional materials may not be visible on the screen at the same time as the CME content and not interleaved between computer 'windows' or screens of the CME content
 - 3) *Audio and video recordings:* Advertisements and promotional materials may not be included within the CME content. There will be no 'commercial breaks.'
 - 4) *Live, face-to-face activities:* Advertisements and promotional materials may not be displayed or distributed in the educational space immediately before, during, or after a CME activity. Providers may not allow representatives of commercial interests to engage in sales or promotional activities while in the space or place of the CME activity.
 - C. Materials that are part of a CME activity, such as slides, abstracts and handouts, may not contain any advertising, trade name or product-group message.

- D. Information pieces that *do not* provide instruction to the learner may include product promotion material or product-specific advertising. Examples include schedules and course descriptions.
- E. Enduring materials may not be distributed by a commercial interest, this includes arranging for electronic access to CME activities. A commercial interest may provide information on how to obtain an enduring material.

Glossary

AAPA Constituent Organizations: AAPA-recognized constituent chapters, specialty organizations, caucuses, accredited PA programs and postgraduate PA programs

Category I CME: Programs that are approved for Category I CME by the American Academy of Physician Assistants, Category 1 credit by the American Osteopathic Association Council on Continuing Medical Education, Prescribed credit by the American Academy of Family Physicians, or American Medical Association Category 1 CME credit for the Physician's Recognition Award from organizations accredited by the Accreditation Council on Continuing Medical Education.

Category II (Elective) CME: AAPA does not grant Category II (Elective) approval for CME activities; therefore, a provider may not state that a program is eligible for AAPA Category II (Elective) credit. Examples of activities that may be logged as Category II include clinically related self-learning activities or medically related postgraduate courses, excluding courses completed in an actual PA program. Category II activities are logged on an hour-per-hour basis.

CME Approval Statements: Statement indicating AAPA Category I CME approval and statement indicating adherence to AAPA's CME Standards.

Commercial Interest: An organization that provides financial or in-kind assistance to a CME activity.

Enduring Material Programs: Educational materials that may be used over time at various locations, may be retained for the PA's personal library, and which, in themselves, constitute a planned educational activity.

Faculty Member: Individual who contributes to the educational content of a CME program, e.g., author, editor, instructor, reviewer, or speaker.

Grantor: Commercial source providing funding via an educational grant.

Live Programs: Live, formal lectures, workshops and postgraduate residency programs.

Postgraduate Residency Programs: Organized courses of study for graduates of PA programs focusing on a specific specialty area. Postgraduate Residencies that confer academic credit *may not* confer CME credit as well.

Provider: Organization responsible for the educational content and development of a CME program.

Sponsor: The organization that approves a program for CME credit, e.g., AAPA.

Surrogate: An organization acting on behalf of a commercial interest.