Guidelines for Continuing Professional Development Recognition

Background

Through the Medical Practitioners Act (2007) all medical practitioners registered with the Medical Council of Ireland (MCI) have a statutory obligation to maintain their professional competence by actively participating in a recognised Professional Competence Scheme (PCS).

The ICGP PCS supports general practitioners in developing their competencies, knowledge, skills and attitudes through self-directed, practice based learning. This approach enables lifelong learning appropriate to the GPs' scope of practice with the ultimate aim of providing safe, effective patient care.

External organisations can apply to ICGP to seek CPD Recognition for their proposed educational activities.

What is Continuing Professional Development?

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is educational activity that enables registered medical practitioners to identify lifelong learning appropriate to their scope of practice. CPD activity applies knowledge, skills and attitudes to develop both clinical and non-clinical competencies according to the eight domains of professional practice [1]. The aim of CPD is to maintain and develop the highest professional standards.

Registered medical practitioners obtain CPD credits via external activity; internal activity; personal learning; research and teaching; clinical / practice audit.

Generally, one hour of learning equals one CPD credit.

GPs can obtain Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in the following ways:

- External CPD credits for maintaining knowledge and skills in events that a Medical Postgraduate Training Body (PGTB) recognises as meeting the educational standards required. GPs can obtain external credits for conferences, courses, workshops, online learning, and live webinars. External CPD requires recognition by an accredited PGTB.

- Internal CPD credits for engaging in practice evaluation and development. Internal CPD does not require recognition by an accredited PGTB. The GP self-reports and the evidence provided in the ePortfolio is subject to verification. ICGP provides guidelines on activities appropriate for internal CPD.

- Personal learning which the GP self-reports and evidence provided in ePortfolio is subject to verification.

- Research / teaching which the GP self-reports and evidence provided in ePortfolio is subject to verification.

- Clinical / practice audit which the GP self-reports and evidence provided in ePortfolio is subject to verification.

Criteria for CPD recognition by ICGP

ICGP recognises CPD for external credits where the proposed activity meets the following criteria:

- It is relevant to the scope of General Practice
  - Examples of appropriate activity include conferences, workshops, courses, online courses with a means of monitoring active engagement with the learning, lectures, live webinars
- It takes place in the Republic of Ireland
- The proposed programme is reviewed and approved by an appropriately qualified GP, who is not involved in the event or affiliated with the organisation running the event
- The proposed activity meets relevant quality and educational standards
- The applicant organisation has the facility to generate an attendance record for each event and a certificate of attendance for each event

ICGP has reciprocal arrangements with other Irish Postgraduate Training Bodies (PGTB) for mutual recognition of CPD activities. Where one PGTB issues a certificate of attendance to a GP in recognition of CPD, ICGP will accept this as evidence of a doctor's participation in the activity. This mutual recognition also applies to multi-disciplinary activities.

Which organisations can apply for CPD recognition?

Any academic, commercial or practice-based organisation can apply to ICGP for recognition of their proposed educational event.

How do I apply for CPD?

An external organisation that wishes to apply for CPD recognition must first register with ICGP via a named person who, when approved, is given access to the online application system. The applicant completes the online application form, submits related documentation and pays the relevant application fee, which is non-refundable.

Applicants complete one application form for each activity. Where an applicant plans to deliver the same event multiple times within the same PCS year, they can complete one application form for all planned dates.

Applicants should submit their online applications at least four weeks before the proposed date of the activity. Applicants should bear in mind that there are peak times of the year in ICGP when the volume of applications can affect response times. Peak times can vary from year to year; generally they occur in September, January and March each PCS year.

Applicants who are submitting an application for a sponsored activity should refer to the ICGP sponsorship policy

ICGP recognition of an activity for CPD is valid for the activity submitted and for the date(s) provided in the application only. For multi-date activities, recognition is valid for the PCS year in which the activities occur. Recognition for online learning activities lasts for one PCS year. An applicant cannot carry over CPD recognition for any activity in any circumstance.

How do I apply for GMS study leave?

ICGP calculates GMS study leave for recognised CPD activities according to the relevant criteria and includes this information on the CPD dashboard for the applicant organisation.

Responsibilities

Below is outlined the responsibilities of the applicant organisation, the ICGP and GPs.

Responsibilities of an applicant organisation

Representatives of an organisation that applies for CPD recognition have the following responsibilities regarding their applications:

- Apply in a timely manner (at least 4 weeks in advance of the proposed activity)
- Reference ICGP CPD recognition only when the application is successfully approved
- When an application is in progress, use the phrase "CPD recognition applied for" in promotional material for the activity
- Where an application is not successful, not state that ICGP CPD recognition has been given
- Include the ICGP Applicant Reference Number (ARN) on certificates of attendance whether provided electronically or as printed copy
- Provide certificates of attendance for the recognised number of CPD credits only
- Provide certificates of attendance at recognised activities only to those who attend the activity
- Retain copies of sign in sheets for the purposes of audit and/or verification – in adherence with relevant GDPR obligations
- Apply to the PGTB most relevant to the proposed activity – for example, for inter-disciplinary activity, apply to ICGP if this discipline represents the majority target audience
- Not apply for CPD recognition retrospectively
- Undertake an evaluation process for each event including, where relevant, each iteration of the same event on separate dates. ICGP provides a template evaluation form on the CPD recognition area of the web site.
- Keep completed evaluations for six PCS years after completion of each event.
- Treat ICGP staff with courtesy and professionalism

Responsibilities of ICGP in providing CPD recognition for activities

ICGP has the following responsibilities regarding CPD recognition applications:

- To process applications in a timely manner
- To treat all applications professionally according to the criteria for recognition
- Carry out an audit of CPD recognition activities
- Subject recognition activity to appropriate review / verification to ensure that it meets ICGP educational and quality standards in accordance with CPD recognition guidelines
- Impose appropriate penalties or sanctions on organisations that contravene ICGP guidelines for CPD recognition

- Monitor and verify selections of activities to ensure that GPs on the ICGP PCS are recording their externally recognised activity accurately
- Treat representatives of applicant organisations with professionalism and respect

ICGP is not responsible if an external organisation erroneously promotes an activity as one recognised by ICGP for the purposes of CPD. Any GP who subsequently records such an activity on their ICGP ePortfolio may be considered non-compliant for that number of CPD credits.

If ICGP becomes aware of fraudulent or incorrect application of CPD recognition, it reserves the right to refuse to accept future applications from the errant organisation and to engage legal proceedings.

Responsibilities of GPs in recording CPD recognition for activities

GPs attending an activity for the purposes of acquiring CPD credits have the following responsibilities:

- Sign in to attend the activity
- After the activity, record the CPD credits for the activity in their ePortfolio accurately
- Record the learning from the activity in their ePortfolio
- Give feedback on the activity via the evaluation form provided by the activity organiser

What CPD recognition does not cover

It is not necessary to request CPD recognition for the following activities:

- Internal CPD activities
- Personal learning
- Research/Teaching
- Clinical / practice audit
- Full time or part time postgraduate courses in a recognised third level institution leading to the award of a higher degree

ICGP does not recognise the following activities within a CPD programme:

- Product promotional information
- Sections of a programme aimed specifically at other healthcare professionals
- Prize giving ceremonies
- Unmoderated poster viewing
- Opening / closing speeches

ICGP does not recognise activity for any of the above activities (with the exception of CME Small Group meetings). Any organisation that chooses to provide certificates for CPD activity other than for the recognised number of external CPD credits will be subject to sanction by ICGP and, where appropriate, by the Medical Council of Ireland.

Disclaimers

Note that ICGP recognition of an activity for external CPD credit purposes does not constitute a professional association between ICGP and the activity organiser. The organiser of the activity must never imply such an association in any of their published material for the activity.

If ICGP receives information demonstrating that the educational content of the activity is shorter than proposed in the CPD application, ICGP reserves the right to reduce the number of CPD credits allocated.

Privacy statement

ICGP processes and retains personal data according to GDPR requirements. By completing an application to have an event recognised for external CPD credits, an applicant organisation is agreeing to the terms for data retention as described in the *ICGP Data Retention Policy*.

Possible outcomes

ICGP assesses each application for CPD recognition against the criteria for recognition. There is a limited number of outcomes for an application, which are as follows:

- Application is successful
- Application is provisionally unsuccessful based on non-adherence to the criteria
    - the applicant can resubmit this application
- Application is rejected because it is not relevant to general practice
- Application is rejected because it is not appropriate for external CPD recognition

Appendix

Medical Council of Ireland domains of professional practice are as follows:

1. Patient safety and quality of patient care
2. Relating to patients
3. Communication and interpersonal skills
4. Collaboration and teamwork
5. Management including self-management
6. Scholarship
7. Professionalism
8. Clinical skills

Reference: the Medical Council of Ireland

https://www.medicalcouncil.ie/Existing-Registrants-/Good-Professional-Practice/

Appendix

Glossary

CPD Continuing Professional Development

Educational activity that enables a medical practitioner to identify lifelong learning appropriate to their scope of practice in order to maintain and develop the highest professional standards. CPD credits are obtained via external activity; internal activity; personal learning; research and teaching; clinical audit.

EACCME European Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education

An institution of European Union of Medical Specialists (UEMS), which recognises educational activity for CPD.

Educational Activity

A programme of learning that may be eligible for CPD recognition.

ePortfolio

An electronic means of maintaining personalised records of lifelong learning with ability to upload documents, certificates of attendance, learning plans, reflections on the learning and how it was applied in practice.

External CPD

External CPD credits are recognised for maintaining knowledge and skills in events that a Medical Postgraduate Training Body (PGTB) recognises as meeting the educational standards required. GPs can obtain external CPD credits for conferences, courses, workshops, online learning with an examination or MCQ element and live webinars. External CPD requires recognition by an accredited PGTB.

Clinical/practice audit

The review and evaluation of current practice against evidence based standards with a view to improving clinical care for patients.

GDPR General Data Protection Regulation

A set of data protection rules for all companies operating in the European Union (EU), regardless of location; these rules include the processing of personal data and the free movement of such data.

Internal CPD

Internal CPD credits are recognised for maintaining practice evaluation and development. Internal CPD does not require recognition by an accredited PGTB. The GP self-reports and the evidence provided in the ePortfolio is subject to verification.

MCI Medical Council of Ireland

The statutory body that regulates medical doctors in the Republic of Ireland in order to protect the public by promoting and ensuring high standards of professional conduct and professional education, training and competence among doctors.

PCS Professional Competence Scheme

A statutory requirement for all medical practitioners registered with the Medical Council of Ireland (MCI) to maintain their professional competence by actively participating in a recognised Professional Competence Scheme (PCS).

Personal Learning CPD

Learning that a GP acquires through reading and reflection from a variety of sources and on which the GP self-reports and provides evidence in ePortfolio, which is subject to verification.

PGTB Postgraduate Training Body

A training body that the Medical Council of Ireland accredits to provide structured medical training, designed to address the lifelong learning needs of doctors. The Irish College of General Practitioners (ICGP) is the accredited PGTB for General Practitioners.

[1] https://www.medicalcouncil.ie/Existing-Registrants-/Good-Professional-Practice/