



Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Accreditation Guidelines

Contents

Overview of CPD requirements for GPs	2
Criteria for CPD accreditation by the Irish College of GPs	3
CPD activities not suited for accreditation.....	4
Eligible organisers of education	4
How to apply to Irish College of GPs for CPD accreditation	5
Possible outcomes of CPD accreditation review.....	6
Communication of accreditation status	6
Obtaining CPDR Codes.....	6
GMS study leave for Accredited CPD activities	6
Responsibilities of an applicant organisation	7
Responsibilities of the College in providing CPD accreditation.....	7
Responsibilities of GPs in engaging with accredited CPD activities	8
Disclaimers	8
Privacy statement	8
Quality Assurance.....	8
Available Resources.....	9
Appendix 1: Financial Disclosures	10
Disclosure requirements for planners and faculty.....	10
Owners and employees of ineligible companies – restrictions on participation	10
Review of relevant financial relationships.....	10
Mitigation of conflicts of interest	11
Disclosure to learners	11
Appendix 2: Commercial Sponsorship & Marketing	12
Sponsorship from Ineligible Companies	13
Appendix 3: Scale of Fees for External Applications.....	14
Appendix 4: Eight Domains of Good Professional Practice	15

Overview of CPD requirements for GPs

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

CPD is defined as educational activity that engages registered medical practitioners in lifelong learning appropriate to their scope of practice. CPD activity improves knowledge, skills and attitudes to develop both clinical and non-clinical competencies according to the [eight domains of good professional practice](#).

The mission of the Irish College of GPs CPD programme is to support GPs in maintaining and improving the level of safe, effective patient care through educational opportunities relevant to their scope of practice.

Not all CPD activity is accredited. Doctors are required to record CPD credits in the following four categories.

- *Accredited CE* – maintaining knowledge and skills in events that a Postgraduate Training Body (PGTB) recognises as meeting the educational standards required. GPs must use a CPDR attendance code or provide a certificate of attendance when recording.
- *Work-based Learning* – activities that promote a GP's learning at or through work and which are reflective in nature. Work-based learning credits are self-reported and do not require recognition by an accredited PGTB.
- *Practice Review* – an audit, quality improvement, or practice evaluation which the GP self-reports.
- *Planning* – a Professional Development Plan template to fulfil the requirement to plan learning needs and activities for the year is embedded in the ePortfolio.

Generally, one hour of learning equals one CPD credit. Note that the PCS year runs from 1 May to 30 April, and activities can only be recorded by doctors during the PCS year in which they were completed.

The Irish College of GPs accredits CPD activities in line with the [Irish Medical Council's standards for CPD accreditation](#). Accredited activities must meet defined criteria and align with the scope of practice of enrolled medical practitioners.

Criteria for CPD accreditation by the Irish College of GPs

The Irish College of GPs accredits CPD activities where the proposed activity meets Medical Council criteria.

1. It is an activity appropriate for accreditation, with format(s) appropriate to the setting and objectives. Examples include
 - conferences
 - workshops
 - blended courses or modules
 - in-person courses
 - online courses with a means of monitoring the learner's active engagement
 - lectures
 - live webinars
2. The activity takes place in the Republic of Ireland. For online education, data collection and retention must conform to GDPR and any other relevant Irish legislation.
3. Accreditation must be sought within the appropriate timeframe (i.e. at least 4 weeks in advance of the activity). Activities **cannot** be accredited retrospectively.
4. Any financial support or sponsorship for the activity aligns with the Irish College of GPs Sponsorship Policy and is compliant with sponsorship and marketing rules (see [Appendix 2](#)).
5. The activity is independent and free from all sales and marketing messages.
6. The activity content and format relate to General Practice in Ireland, are evidence-based and delivered by GPs and/or appropriate subject experts. Content meets relevant quality and educational standards, including taking account of gender balance and being free from bias.
7. The educational needs of learners that the activity seeks to address must be stated and include learning objectives with measurable outcomes, which can subsequently be evaluated.
8. The activity must incorporate the relevant Medical Council [Eight Domains of Good Professional Practice](#).
9. Each application must include a named Medical Lead, a currently registered medical practitioner who takes responsibility for ensuring the scientific validity and objectivity of the educational content.
 - The College's strong preference is for doctors on the specialist register for General Practice to be involved in the planning of educational activities to ensure that the content and delivery is suited to the needs and scope of general practice.
10. The organiser of the activity takes attendance and retains a record of those who satisfactorily complete the activity. *The College provides a template attendance register on the CPD accreditation area of the website.*
11. The organiser solicits feedback from participants and evaluates each activity including, where relevant, each iteration of the same event on separate dates. *The College provides a template evaluation form on the CPD accreditation area of the website.*
12. The organiser provides a certificate of attendance/participation or CPDR code to those who satisfactorily complete the activity.
 - The Irish College of GPs Application Reference Number (ARN) should be included on certificates of attendance whether provided electronically or as printed copy. *The College provides a template certificate on the CPD*

accreditation area of the website and encourages organisers to consider the environment before distributing paper certificates.

- Certificates of attendance must accurately reflect the approved value of CPD credits and GMS study leave by stating “This activity has been accredited by the Irish College of GPs for [X credits and Y days GMS study leave] and can be recorded as Accredited CE.”
 - Where an event has been assigned an Irish College of GPs CPDR code, this should be provided to attendees in lieu of a certificate in line with the College’s [CPDR code policy](#).
 - Certificates or CPDR codes must be provided only to those who attend the activity and who complete all required elements.
 - Certificates or CPDR codes must not be shared via mass communication tools such as a mailing list or WhatsApp group.
13. The organiser retains records and files related to the activity planning, implementation, attendance, and evaluation for the current PCS year plus 2 years after the activity took place, in accordance with GDPR requirements.

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

CPD activities not suited for accreditation

It is not necessary to request CPD accreditation for the following activities, and we do not grant accreditation for them.

- Work-based learning activities including personal learning, teaching, and research.
- Practice review activities including audit, quality improvement, or practice evaluation.
- Full time or part time postgraduate courses in a recognised third level institution where these lead to the award of a higher degree.
- Activities accredited by another Irish Postgraduate Training Body.

The Irish College of GPs does not accredit the following activities within a CPD programme when assigning credits:

- Sections of a programme aimed specifically at other healthcare professionals
- Prize giving ceremonies
- Unmoderated poster viewing
- Opening / closing speeches
- Business meetings, committee meetings, AGMs
- Work-based learning components of an agenda

Eligible organisers of education

Relevant educational or clinical organisations can apply to the Irish College of GPs for accreditation of their proposed educational event. Per Medical Council guidelines, companies which produce, market, resell, or distribute products consumed by or used on patients are ineligible to deliver or plan accredited education.

How to apply to Irish College of GPs for CPD accreditation

CPD accreditation applications are submitted via the College's online CPD accreditation platform. An applicant completes the online form, submits related documentation and pays the relevant application fee, which is non-refundable. Please ensure you are familiar with the criteria outlined in this set of Guidelines as well as the College Sponsorship Policy before submission. A link to the online platform can be found on the [CPD Accreditation page](#) of our website.

Applicants complete one application form for each activity. Where an applicant plans to deliver the same event with the same content multiple times within the same PCS year, they may complete one application form for all planned dates. Where there is unique educational content for a recurring event, individual applications must be submitted.

Before applying, applicants must ensure that their event is aligned with the Irish College of GPs Sponsorship Policy if it is receiving any sponsorship. Organisers of events on clinical topics must collect, review, and mitigate disclosures of financial relationships with pharma or medical device companies and declare on the application form that this has been done. See [Appendix 1](#) for full details.

Applications are subject to an administrative triage before review by a specialist panel. Where queries arise, an application may be referred to the College's Medical Directorate for further review. Administrative staff may also revert to applicants for further information, supporting documentation, or clarification.

Applications should be submitted **at least four weeks** before the proposed date of the activity. Applicants should bear in mind that there are peak times of the year when the volume of applications can affect response times.

College accreditation of an activity for CPD is valid for the activity submitted and for the date(s) provided in the application only. Accreditation for on-demand learning activities is for a period of 12 months from the date of approval. An applicant cannot carry over CPD accreditation for any activity in any circumstance, and approval of an application does not guarantee approval of future applications.

Documentation included with an application should include, at a minimum:

- The final programme or agenda of the activity, including details of all speakers/presenters (short bios), titles of the sessions/workshops/lectures, start and end times of all components of the agenda
- Copy of the invitation or advertisement, where applicable
- Link to relevant website and access details if necessary to view the page

Organisers may be asked to submit additional materials for review, such as:

- Copy of the feedback form that will be used
- Copy of the certificate that will be used (not necessary if CPDR code being used)
- Slides and educational materials or content
- MCQs / details of assessment
- List of additional reading materials / resources

Possible outcomes of CPD accreditation review

The College assesses each application for CPD accreditation against the criteria for accreditation. There is a limited number of outcomes for an application, which are

- Application is successful.
- Application is provisionally unsuccessful because it requires changes or further information.
 - The applicant can resubmit this application.
- Application is rejected because it does not adhere to Medical Council standards and/or Irish College of GPs criteria for CPD.

Communication of accreditation status

The organiser of the activity must clearly and accurately communicate to learners the accreditation status of the activity.

- Once accredited, promotional or informational material about the activity should include a statement such as “This activity has been accredited by the Irish College of GPs for [X credits and Y days GMS study leave] and can be recorded as Accredited CE.”
- While an application is in progress, organisers should use the phrase “CPD accreditation applied for” in promotional material for the activity and refrain from speculating about the number of credits that may be given.
- Where accreditation is not granted, organisers must not state that the activity is accredited. If an organisation offers both accredited and non-accredited education, this distinction should be made clear to participants.
- Organisations must not use the Irish College of GPs logo and branding on promotional material or certificates for the activity.

If any changes are made to the programme, the date of the activity, or the venue after accreditation has been issued, College must be informed of these changes. Changes after accreditation has been issued may invalidate the accreditation.

Obtaining CPDR Codes

At the time of application, organisers of non-College CPD events may choose to pay an optional fee of €100 in order to receive a CPDR code for the event. This is in addition to the application fee. For more information, see the [CPDR code policy on our website](#).

GMS study leave for Accredited CPD activities

As part of the accreditation review process, the Irish College of GPs calculates GMS study leave for accredited CPD activities according to the relevant criteria. This information will be included on the CPD dashboard for the applicant to include on certificates of attendance. GMS study leave is administered by the HSE.

Responsibilities of an applicant organisation

Representatives of an organisation that applies for CPD accreditation have the following responsibilities regarding their applications.

- To ensure that the event conforms to Irish College of GPs and Irish Medical Council criteria, including the CPD Activity Criteria and Standards for Integrity and Independence
- To apply in a timely manner (at least four weeks in advance of the proposed activity)
- To include a suitable Medical Lead for each application and provide their MCRN or other professional registration number in the application.
- To ensure that the information in the application, including details of content and sponsorship, is accurate, and to respond to requests for further information promptly.
- To collect, review and mitigate possible conflicts of interest per Medical Council standards, and to ensure that learners are informed before the beginning of the education (see [Appendix 1](#) for details).
- To provide accurate information about the accreditation of the activity to attendees, distribute accurate certificates, and ensure that certificates or CPDR codes are only distributed to those who have completed the activity.
- To retain all activity documentation, including but not limited to attendance records, evaluation/feedback, planning materials, financial disclosure records, and slides for at least the PCS year of the activity plus two to comply with Medical Council requirements and facilitate [quality assurance](#) review.
- To ensure all requirements related to promotional and marketing activities are met (see [Appendix 2](#)).
- To adhere to sponsorship requirements where commercial support is received, and to keep a record of the amount/kind of financial support and how it was used (see [Appendix 2](#)).
- To collect post-event feedback from attendees, including improvements in knowledge, skills or competencies ([see template on our website](#))
- To treat College staff with courtesy and professionalism.

Responsibilities of the College in providing CPD accreditation

The Irish College of GPs has the following responsibilities regarding CPD accreditation applications.

- To process applications in a timely manner.
- To treat all applications professionally according to the criteria for accreditation and Medical Council requirements.
- To subject accreditation activity to appropriate review / verification to ensure that it meets the College's educational and quality standards in accordance with CPD accreditation guidelines and Medical Council standards.
- To carry out a quality assurance review of CPD accreditation activities.
- To impose appropriate penalties or sanctions on organisations that contravene College guidelines or Medical Council standards.
- To treat representatives of applicant organisations with professionalism and respect.

Responsibilities of GPs in engaging with accredited CPD activities

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

- To sign in to attend the full activity.
- To give feedback on the activity via the evaluation form provided by the activity organiser.
- To record the CPD credits for the activity in their ePortfolio accurately after the activity.
- To retain evidence of their CPD activity such as certificates for six PCS years.

Disclaimers

College accreditation of an activity for CPD purposes does not constitute a professional association between the College and the activity organiser. The organiser of the activity must never imply such an association in any of their published material for the activity, including use of the Irish College of GPs logo or branding.

If the College receives information demonstrating that the educational content of the activity is substantially different to what was indicated in the CPD application, the College reserves the right to reduce the number of CPD credits allocated.

The College is not responsible if an external organisation erroneously promotes an activity as one accredited by the College for the purposes of CPD. Any GP who subsequently records such an activity on their Irish College of GPs ePortfolio may be considered non-compliant for that number of CPD credits. Any organisation that chooses to provide certificates for CPD activity other than for the College-approved number of CPD credits will be subject to sanction by the College and, where appropriate, by the Medical Council of Ireland.

If the College becomes aware of fraudulent or incorrect application of CPD accreditation, it reserves the right to refuse to accept future applications from the errant organisation, and/or to take further action as deemed necessary.

Privacy statement

The Irish College of GPs processes and retains personal data according to GDPR requirements. By completing an application to have an activity accredited for CPD credits, an applicant organisation is agreeing to the terms of the [Irish College of GPs Privacy Policy](#).

Quality Assurance

The Irish College of GPs conducts an annual quality assurance review of CPD applications for the previous PCS year, to ensure that activity granted CPD accreditation meets required standards. This review examines in detail a sample of accredited CPD activity post-event to ensure they meet Medical Council standards and the requirements laid out in these Guidelines, including the rules around sponsorship and marketing. The process includes review of education information and supporting documentation post-event. The College PCS team

conducts the initial administrative review with any clinical or educational queries referred to a GP panel of experts.

Applicant organisations will be notified via email in advance of their selection for review and will be asked to provide relevant documentation demonstrating compliance with requirements. The outcome will be advised following completion of the review and unsatisfactory outcomes may have consequences for new CPD applications. Organisations are requested to collaborate with this process in a timely and professional manner.

Available Resources

A range of templates and resources for CPD applicants are available on the Irish College of GPs website, including:

- Application checklist
- Attendance register for CPD template
- Certificate of attendance/participation template
- Evaluation form template
- Financial disclosures form template
- Financial disclosures review tracker template
- Conflict of interest disclosure slide template

Appendix 1: Financial Disclosures

Per [Medical Council rules](#), organisers of accredited education that includes clinical topics must collect, review, and mitigate relevant financial relationships for those involved in the planning or delivery of the education before their participation. Organisers will be asked to affirm that they have done this when applying for accreditation from the Irish College of GPs.

Organisers may choose to collect this information on an annual or periodic basis and ask the individuals to update if any information changes in the meantime. However, disclosures should still be reviewed in connection with each activity.

The Irish College of GPs does not ask for the specifics of financial disclosures and this information should not be uploaded during the application process. All handling of these disclosures must be done in line with GDPR and any other relevant privacy policies and legislation. You may be required to provide evidence of compliance with this requirement as part of a [quality assurance](#) review.

Disclosure requirements for planners and faculty

The Medical Council requires that all those involved in planning or delivery of accredited education must disclose financial relationships with ineligible companies over the previous 24 months, or provide a statement that they have no such relationships to disclose. **Ineligible companies are those whose primary business is producing, marketing, reselling, or distributing products consumed by or used on patients.** All relationships within the time period must be disclosed regardless of duration or value.

Templates for financial disclosure forms are available on our website.

Owners and employees of ineligible companies – restrictions on participation

The Medical Council has established that owners or employees of ineligible companies cannot be involved in the planning or delivery of accredited education, with three exceptions.

1. Where the content of the accredited activity is not related to the business lines or products of their employer/company.
2. Where the content of the accredited activity is limited to basic science research, such as pre-clinical research and drug discovery, or the methodologies of research, and care recommendations are not made during the education.
3. Where the individual is participating as a technician to teach the safe and proper use of medical devices and are not recommending whether or when a device is used.

Review of relevant financial relationships

The organiser / Medical Lead is responsible for reviewing all disclosures to identify relevant financial relationships. A relationship is considered relevant if it relates to the content of the activity.

Completed disclosure forms must be reviewed for all individuals who have influence over the content of the activity. This includes planners, speakers, faculty, reviewers, writers etc.

Mitigation of conflicts of interest

Disclosed relationships that are deemed relevant to the content of the education must be mitigated.

If a relevant financial relationship with an ineligible company is identified, the Irish College of GPs considers that an attestation statement from an individual that their contributions will be free from bias is the minimum standard form of mitigation. This statement confirms that the content is scientifically accurate and free from commercial influence.

Other forms of mitigation might include:

- ending the financial relationship
- peer review of content or planning decisions by individuals without relevant financial relationships
- recusal of an individual with relevant relationships from controlling aspects of planning and content

All steps taken to identify and mitigate relevant relationships must be clearly documented by the organiser and all records must be retained for a period of the current PCS year plus two years from the date of the activity.

A template review tracker is available on our website.

Disclosure to learners

The Medical Council requires any potential conflicts of interest to be disclosed to learners before they engage in the activity. Speakers should do this on the first or second slide of their presentation, or verbally at the start of their talk if not using slides.

Disclosures slides should outline the name/s of any relevant companies, the nature of the relationship, and that the relationship has been appropriately disclosed and mitigated. The slide must not include brand logos, promotional or marketing messages, or product trade names.

Template conflict of interest disclosure slides are available on our website.

Appendix 2: Commercial Sponsorship & Marketing

Organisers may accept sponsorship to support their accredited CPD activities, subject to the following rules. These rules are aligned with the Medical Council CPD Accreditation Framework and College Sponsorship Policy to ensure that accredited educational content is independent from commercial interests and any sponsorship is disclosed to learners. Please note that CPD activities are considered in their entirety, therefore all sessions must conform to the sponsorship rules.

- The educational component of any meeting should be independent and standalone. Sponsorship should not influence content, choice of topics, speaker selection, or evaluation. Education should not be exclusively related to any company or product/service promotion and should be free of marketing or sales of products/services.
 - Meetings to launch or market a specific product will not be accredited by the Irish College of GPs.
 - Industry sponsors or product names should not be contained in the activity title or in the title of any part of the programme.
- Sponsors may not speak, give lectures, make introductory or closing remarks, or present as part of accredited educational events.
- Slides, handouts, and any other educational material must not include logos or other marketing messages from ineligible companies. Logos or promotional messages are only permitted on material that does not include educational content and is purely informational, such as schedules or logistical information.
- Promotional activity should be clearly distinguishable from the education.
 - Promotion, including exhibit stands, may not take place in the same room as the education and should be confined to a separate exhibition area.
 - If there is no separate exhibition area, this activity cannot take place within 30 minutes of the start and end of the accredited activity.
 - Learners should be able to access education without having to engage with product promotion.
 - Activities that are part of the event but don't constitute Accredited CPD must be clearly identified.
- Sponsorship must be documented in writing. Only unrestricted educational and/or research grants that align with these standards and related policies are acceptable and this should be acknowledged in presentations and programmes.
- Learners should be made aware of any sponsorship before they engage in the education.
- Attendee information must be collected and retained in line with GDPR, the organiser's privacy and retention policies, and any other relevant Irish legislation. In order to reduce the possibility of bias, we recommend avoiding reliance on a single sponsor, in particular for large events such as a conference.

Sponsorship from Ineligible Companies

Ineligible companies are defined by the Medical Council as those whose primary business is producing, marketing, reselling, or distributing products consumed by or used on patients. Sponsorship from these companies is subject to the following additional rules.

- Ineligible companies may not be involved in the planning, content, delivery, or evaluation of accredited education.
- Educational content must be separate from marketing by ineligible companies, including advertising, sales, exhibits or promotion, which must not be a condition of the provision of financial support.
- Sponsorship from ineligible companies must be documented in writing, come in the form of an unrestricted educational grant, and record must be kept of the commercial support received and how it was used.
- Ineligible companies must not pay directly for any of the expenses related to the education or the learners. Sponsorship from ineligible companies may be used to fund honoraria or travel expenses of those involved in planning or delivering the education, but may not be used to benefit individual learners or groups of learners.
- Sponsorship from ineligible companies must be disclosed to learners before the education begins. The disclosure of sponsorship from ineligible companies may not include corporate or product logos, trade names, or product group messages.
- Accredited education may not be hosted in the premises of an ineligible company, or on a website or digital platform owned by an ineligible company.
- Note that any financial ties that planners, educators, and others in control of educational content have to any ineligible companies (not limited to sponsors) must be disclosed and mitigated according to the process outlined in [Appendix 1](#).

Where accreditation is granted, this does not imply the College's support for or endorsement of any product or company directly or indirectly associated with the educational activity, and published material for the activity must never imply such association.

College accreditation of an activity for CPD purposes does not constitute a professional association between the College and the activity organiser. The organiser of the activity must never imply such an association in any of their published material for the activity, including use of the Irish College of GPs logo, name or branding.

Appendix 3: Scale of Fees for External Applications

<i>Category of application</i>	<i>Fee</i>
Standard CPD application fee	€300
Application for an event run by a not-for-profit organisation which has sponsorship OR an event registration fee	€150
Application for an event run by a not-for-profit organisation with no sponsorship AND no registration fee	Fee waived
Optional additional fee for CPDR code for non-College applications	+ €100

Fees are automatically calculated in the online application form and non-refundable.

In order to be eligible for a reduced or waived fee an event must meet all of the following criteria:

- Run by a not-for-profit organisation
- Not linked to a commercial organisation
- Does not have commercial potential

The College reserves the right to charge a fee adjustment where the automatically calculated fee is deemed to have been inaccurate.

Fees are normally paid online at the time of submission. Arrangements to pay by bank transfer may be possible, in which case this process must be agreed with the College before submitting an application. Applications will not be reviewed until payment is complete.

External applicants have the option to pay an additional fee to receive a CPDR code for attendees of their event. Please see the [CPDR Code Policy](#) for details.

Appendix 4: Eight Domains of Good Professional Practice

The Medical Council of Ireland has defined eight domains of good professional practice:

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

As of 2025, registered medical professionals are obliged to address all eight of these domains at least once in their recorded CPD over a three-year cycle. Applications for accreditation must indicate at least one domain that is relevant to the CPD activity.

Further detail including descriptions of each domain is provided [on our website](#). Please refer to these descriptions when submitting an application.