



Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Accreditation Guidelines

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).

Per the updated Rules for the Maintenance of Professional Competence introduced by the Irish Medical Council in 2025, doctors must now record a minimum of 20 credits of accredited continuing education (CE) each PCS year. To be recorded in this category, an activity must be accredited by a recognised body. External organisations can apply to the Irish College of GPs to seek CPD accreditation for their proposed educational activities.

Continuing Professional Development

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is educational activity that enables registered medical practitioners to engage in 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 [[see Appendix](#)].

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.

Registered medical practitioners can record CPD credits in four categories: professional development planning; practice review; work-based learning; and accredited continuing education (CE). 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.

Generally, one hour of learning equals one CPD credit.

GPs can obtain CPD in the following categories:

- *Accredited CE* for maintaining knowledge and skills in events that a Medical Postgraduate Training Body (PGTB) recognises as meeting the educational standards required. GPs can obtain Accredited CE credits for activities such as conferences, courses, workshops, online learning, and live webinars, and must provide a certificate of attendance with an appropriate accreditation statement on it when recording.
- *Work-based Learning* for activities that promote a registered medical practitioner's learning at or through work and which are reflective in nature. Work-based learning CPD does not require recognition by an accredited PGTB. The GP self-reports and the evidence provided in the ePortfolio is subject to verification.

- *Practice Review* such as audit, quality improvement, or practice evaluation which the GP self-reports, uploading appropriate evidence in the ePortfolio which is subject to verification.
- *Planning*, by completing the Professional Development Plan Template embedded in the ePortfolio.

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.

- It is appropriate for accreditation. 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
- The education activity takes place in the Republic of Ireland.
- The activity adheres to the College sponsorship policy and conflicts of interest are declared as outlined in the [Irish College of GPs Sponsorship Policy](#).
- The activity content and format relate to the core curriculum and are relevant to General Practice, evidence based and delivered by appropriate subject experts. Content meets relevant quality and educational standards, including taking account of gender balance.
- A completed application is made in a timely fashion (at least 4 weeks in advance of the proposed activity).
 - The application must include accurate details of the activity including timings and educational content.
 - Organisers may be asked to submit additional materials for review.
 - Activities cannot be accredited retrospectively.
- The applicant organisation takes attendance, solicits feedback, and provides a certificate of attendance for each event/activity.
 - The organiser must retain attendance records during the PCS year of the event/activity and the two following years in line with relevant GDPR obligations.
 - The organiser should undertake an evaluation process for each event/activity including, where relevant, each iteration of the same event on separate dates, and retain evaluation data during the PCS year of the event and the two following years. *The College provides a template evaluation form on the CPD accreditation area of the website.*
 - 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 number of CPD credits only and GMS study leave where relevant.

- Certificates of attendance at accredited activities must be provided only to those who attend the activity and who complete required elements.
- Certificates or CPDR codes must not be shared with non-attendees including via WhatsApp or other group communication methods.
- The applicant organisation clearly and accurately communicates to learners the accreditation status of the activity.
 - Organisations must not use the Irish College of GPs logo and branding on promotional material or certificates for the activity.
 - While an application is in progress, organisers may use the phrase “CPD accreditation applied for” in promotional material for the activity.
 - 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.

The Irish College of GPs 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, the College will accept this as evidence of a doctor’s participation in the activity. This mutual recognition also applies to multi-disciplinary activities.

What CPD accreditation does not cover

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

- 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 medical postgraduate training body

The Irish College of GPs does not recognise 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

Which organisations can apply for CPD accreditation?

Relevant educational or clinical organisations can apply to the Irish College of GPs for accreditation of their proposed educational event.

How to apply for CPD accreditation

An external organisation that wishes to apply for CPD accreditation must first register with the College 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. Links 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 a unique agenda/educational content for a recurring event, individual applications must be submitted.

Applications are reviewed by the PCS administrative team and a GP panel. Where queries arise, an application may be referred to the College's Medical Directorate for further review.

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 the College 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/April each PCS year.

Applicants who are submitting an application for a sponsored activity should align their planned activity with the [Irish College of GPs Sponsorship Policy](#).

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 online learning activities lasts 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.

GMS study leave

The Irish College of GPs calculates GMS study leave for accredited CPD activities according to the relevant criteria as part of the review process. This information will be included on the CPD dashboard for the applicant organisation to communicate to learners who attended the education.

Responsibilities of the College in providing CPD accreditation for activities

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 for CPD
- 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 for CPD accreditation
- To treat representatives of applicant organisations with professionalism and respect

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 as outlined in this document
- To apply in a timely manner (at least 4 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 provide accurate information about the accreditation of the activity to attendees, distribute accurate certificates, and ensure that certificates are only distributed to those who have completed the activity
- To retain copies of activity documentation including but not limited to slides, sign-in sheets, and evaluation forms in adherence with relevant GDPR obligations
- To treat College staff with courtesy and professionalism

Responsibilities of GPs in engaging with accredited 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 shorter than proposed 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 engage legal proceedings.

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 for data retention as described in the [Irish College of GPs Privacy Policy](#).

Possible outcomes

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 based on non-adherence to the criteria
 - The applicant can resubmit this application with changes
- Application is rejected because it is not relevant to general practice
- Application is rejected because it is not appropriate for accreditation

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 ensuring that each organisation is reviewed at least once per year. This review examines in detail a sample of accredited CPD activity post-event to ensure they meet Medical Council standards, the College Sponsorship Policy and the requirements laid out in these Guidelines, through a stringent assessment of proposed content. 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 the review and will be asked to provide relevant documentation. The outcome will be advised following completion of the review and unsatisfactory outcomes may cause delays to new CPD applications. Organisations are requested to collaborate with this process in a timely and professional manner.

Appendix: Eight Domains

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

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 which domains are relevant to the activity.

Further detail including descriptions of each domain is provided at the links below. Please refer to these definitions when submitting an application.

- [Medical Council: Eight Domains of Good Professional Practice](#)
- [Irish College of GPs: Eight Domains of Good Professional Practice](#)

Glossary

Accredited Continuing Education (CE)

Doctors are required to record a minimum of 20 credits each year from Accredited CE activities such as conferences, courses, workshops, online learning with an examination or MCQ element and live webinars. Activities must be accredited by a suitable body in order to be recorded in this category.

CPD Continuing Professional Development

Educational activity that enables a medical practitioner to engage in lifelong learning appropriate to their scope of practice in order to maintain and develop the highest professional standards. CPD credits are obtained in four categories: planning, practice review, work-based learning, and accredited CE.

CPDR Code

Issued by the Irish College of GPs, these codes can be entered into the PCS ePortfolio to automatically generate a certificate and record of an accredited event's details. Codes are not issued for all accredited events.

EACCME European Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education

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

Educational Activity

A programme of learning that may be eligible for CPD accreditation. Activities may include conferences, courses, workshops, online learning, webinars, or other formats.

ePortfolio

The digital platform which the Irish College of GPs uses to administer its professional competence scheme (PCS).

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.

Medical Council

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. The Medical Council sets standards for accreditation and authorizes bodies to accredit CPD activities in Ireland.

PCS Professional Competence Scheme

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

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 GPs is the accredited PGTB for General Practitioners.

QA Quality Assurance

An annual process carried out by the Irish College of GPs to ensure that activity granted CPD accreditation meets required standards.