

HONG KONG ACADEMY OF MEDICINE

Principles and Guidelines on Continuing Medical Education and Continuous Professional Development (CME/CPD)

Effective from 1 January 2011

1. Objective and Definition

It is the objective of the Academy to promote the advancement of the art and science of medicine, foster the development of postgraduate medical education and continuing medical education as well as promoting the improvement of health care for Hong Kong citizens. The purpose of CME/CPD is to meet these objectives.

CME/CPD is a continuous life-long learning process for Academy Fellows and comprises activities that serve to:

- a) maintain, develop or increase the knowledge, skills and competencies relevant to the practice of Fellows that may change over the years;
- b) enhance professional performance to enable the delivery of quality professional care and safe standard of practice to the patients, and public that Fellows serve, and;
- c) ensure that Fellows will remain competent throughout their professional career.

2. General Principles

- a) The purpose of this document is to lay down broad principles for Colleges and Fellows to follow. This framework has built in enough flexibility to cater for individual professional, educational and development needs.
- b) CME/CPD programmes established by the Colleges must be clearly defined and approved by the Education Committee of the Academy. Colleges shall make efforts to facilitate and to accommodate the participation from all Fellows.
- c) Any changes to established CME/CPD programmes require the approval of the Education Committee of the Academy.
- d) Colleges shall submit a summary of their Fellows' total number of CME/CPD points to the Education Committee of the Academy within 6 weeks after the end of the first and second year of a cycle, and within 4 weeks after the end of the cycle to facilitate timely return to Medical Council/Dental Council.
- e) Colleges shall report to the Education Committee of the Academy any Fellow of the Academy who fails to comply with CME/CPD requirements at the end of the cycle. The Education Committee of the Academy shall then consider sanction.

- f) To ensure compliance, the Education Committee of the Academy may recommend to the Council of the Academy the suspension of a Fellow who has failed to comply with CME/CPD requirements by the end of the cycle, unless the Committee is satisfied that there are relevant and exceptional circumstances.
- g) Fellows, residing in Hong Kong or overseas, must fulfil the full requirements of the CME/CPD programme by the end of each cycle.
- h) It is the duty of Academy Fellows to keep themselves up-to-date in all areas of their practice. Fellows are encouraged to devise a personal professional educational and development portfolio to help them monitor and achieve the objectives of CME/CPD. The Academy and Colleges would provide assistance if and when required
- i) Fellows must respond to call for CME/CPD returns from Academy/College, and submit all returns with required proof within the defined period of time.
- j) Fellows failing to submit return on time will be regarded as CME/CPD non-compliant. Subsequent request to review late submissions may be subject to an administrative fee to be determined by the Academy/College.
- k) All notices sent to the address last provided by a Fellow to the Academy/College will be deemed to have been received by that Fellow, and it is the responsibility of a Fellow to update the Academy/College of his contact address whenever it is changed.

3. The Cycle

- a) A cycle of CME/CPD assessment shall consist of 3 years.
- b) The Academy adopted fixed CME/CPD cycles from 1 January 2005. Fellows will commence their first cycle on the first day of the month immediately after their admission to Academy Fellowship; and the required CME/CPD points for the first cycle will be counted on a pro-rata basis.
- c) If the first cycle is shorter than 3 years:
 - i) normal capping on individual CME/CPD categories will still apply; but
 - ii) the minimum requirements of individual CME/CPD categories, if any, will be waived.
- d) Notwithstanding (b) above, if a doctor has been certified for Specialist Registration and already started a CME/CPD cycle prior to his admission as an Academy Fellow, there will be no change in this CME/CPD requirements of existing cycle.

4. Requirements for a Cycle

- a) The minimum CME/CPD requirement is 90 points in a 3-year cycle. CME/CPD points accumulated in excess of the requirement for one cycle cannot be carried

forward to the next cycle. Each College may recommend to its Fellows a minimum number of points to be achieved each year.

- b) Fellows holding multiple Fellowships under different Colleges must fulfil requirements for each of these Fellowships.
- c) The number of CME/CPD points required for Fellows of different specialties and subspecialties shall be the same, and a Fellow accredited for more than one specialty/subspecialty within the same College shall not be required to obtain more than 90 points.
- d) CME/CPD requirements for subspecialties shall be comparable to that for specialties. Mandatory elements, if any, shall be applicable across all specialties/subspecialties within the same College.

5. Measurement of Activities

A point of CME/CPD activity is equivalent to one hour of participation as an attendee in a Formal College Approved Activity (FCAA). Colleges will decide the number of points to be awarded to activities that normally cannot be accredited on a time basis; and to individual CME/CPD categories taking into consideration the nature of their specialties.

6. Accredited Activities

The list below serves as a general guideline. Colleges may design CME/CPD programmes that are most suitable for their specialties and subspecialties. Colleges can require specialty or subspecialty-specific CME/CPD activities in their programmes as long as principles laid down in 4(c) and (d) are adhered to. It is strongly recommended that Fellows should maintain a balanced CME/CPD profile with a mix of different activities, including 5 points in a cycle from activities in category 6.11 in order to capture the full benefit of different types of CME/CPD activities.

6.1 Participation as an Attendee in FCAA

One hour of participation as an attendee at a FCAA is ordinarily awarded 1 point. No more than 75 points can be awarded for passive participation as an attendee in FCAA in a cycle. Fellows are encouraged to decrease further the CME/CPD points gained from passive participation through increasing the proportion of other CME/CPD activities.

6.2 Chairing/Presenting at FCAA

Chairing or presenting at FCAA can be awarded more than 1 point. For example, 3 points if no collection of data is involved, 6 points if collection or analysis of data is involved. The number of points to be awarded shall be decided by individual Colleges.

6.3 Self-study

- a) Self-study is accepted as a form of CME/CPD.
- b) One hour of self-study is ordinarily awarded 1 point.

- c) Self-study is only accredited with prior approval from the College concerned, and with the necessary evidence that it has been carried out diligently.

6.4 *Publications*

- a) No more than 10 points can be awarded to each Fellow for any single publication.
- b) Other than text books (thesis will be regarded as text book), papers in indexed journals or journals published by the Academy or its constituent Colleges, no other publication can be awarded any points unless agreement from the relevant College has been obtained prior to publication.

6.5 *Research*

Research activities are accepted as a form of CME/CPD.

6.6 *Development of New Technologies or Services*

The development of new services or technologies is accepted as a form of CME/CPD.

6.7 *Undergraduate and Postgraduate Teaching*

Undergraduate and postgraduate teaching may not be accepted as a form of CME/CPD. Consideration can be given to the development of teaching materials.

6.8 *Conducting Examinations*

The participation as an examiner in specialist examinations is accepted as a form of CME/CPD. No more than 10 points can be awarded for any single examination.

6.9 *Postgraduate Courses*

Attending a course leading to post-graduate qualification can be accepted as a form of CME/CPD.

6.10 *Development of CME/CPD or Knowledge-Translation Materials*

Participation in development of CME/CPD or knowledge-translation materials for self-study, e-learning and other purposes is accepted as a form of CME/CPD.

6.11 *Quality Assurance, Audits and Activities for Improvement of Patient/Medical Care*

The following are accepted as a form of CME/CPD, and not be counted under 6.1:

- a) Quality assurance activities, such as clinical/surgical/service review and audit, clinical governance, peer review of operative practice,

activities that examine and evaluate the clinical care of patients or individual practice;

- b) Participation in mortality and morbidity meetings or structured quality improvement meetings that audit individual or medical practice;
- c) Participation in learning/activities that enhances the ability to practise medicine both as an individual doctor and as part of the health care team eventually leading to improvement of patient management and medical care, e.g. clinical and other skills laboratory learning, simulator and virtual reality learning , patient safety enhancement programme.

6.12 *Grand Rounds in Training Units*

Participation in accredited grand rounds in training units is accepted as a form of CME/CPD.

6.13 *Reviewers of Hong Kong Medical Journal (HKMJ) and Indexed Journals*

Participation in reviewing articles submitted to HKMJ and other indexed journals is accepted as a form of CME/CPD.

6.14 *Hands-on Clinical Attachment Programme*

Hands-on clinical attachment programme to accredited training units of the appropriate specialty is accepted as a form of CME/CPD to enhance/refresh the knowledge and skills of a Fellow in specified areas, or to enable the Fellow to learn new knowledge and skills. Clear learning objectives have to be defined in such attachment programmes, and the programme usually should be over a continuous period lasting one week or longer. Regular weekly attachment over a longer period can also be considered. The normal rotation of duties, or posting changes are not regarded as attachment.

6.15 *Other Non-medical Professional Development Activities*

Participation in other non-medical professional development activities that may facilitate the practice of Fellows, e.g. knowledge and skills relating to relevant laws, information technology, clinic management and interpersonal communication, is also accepted as a form of CME/CPD. No more than 5 points can be obtained from activities in this category in a cycle.

7. Maximum and Minimum Points for Activities

Each College shall determine the maximum number of hours to be accredited for a single FCAA. And unless already specified in this document, each College can determine the maximum/minimum points that can/must be obtained by their Fellows in a year and/or a cycle for each category of activities.

8. Exemptions

8.1 *Retired from Active Practice*

- a) The Academy will consider application for CME/CPD exemption from a Fellow only if he has formally submitted a written declaration to the

Academy/College that he has retired from active practice in and outside Hong Kong.

- b) A Fellow holding multiple Fellowships cannot claim retirement from active practice for one specialty while still practising the other specialty/ specialties. A Fellow can apply for suspension of a Fellowship for which he chooses not to continue with CME/CPD.
- c) A retired Fellow who subsequently wishes to resume active practice will be required to have obtained at least 90 CME/CPD points within 36 months counting back from the date of application in order to resume medical practice. A pro-rata number of the 90 points required must be obtained within the period between the date of retirement and the date of application for resuming practice. Should a retired Fellow resume medical practice before he can fulfil the CME/CPD requirements as aforementioned, he will lose his status as a retired Fellow and his Fellowship will be suspended accordingly.

8.2 *Acute/Prolonged Illness and Permanent Disability*

- a) A Fellow who falls behind CME/CPD because of acute/prolonged illness or permanent disability can be exempted from the CME/CPD requirements, on condition that he is not in active practice.
- b) When a Fellow recovers from prolonged illness and resumes his medical practice, he will be required to re-start his CME/CPD cycle and to obtain at least 40 CME/CPD points in the first 12 months of the cycle.

9. **Non-compliance**

9.1 *Non-compliance That Is Remediable*

- a) A Fellow must:
 - i) have achieved not less than two-thirds of the required number of points for a cycle; or
 - ii) be certified to have suffered from a medical condition which the Council of the Academy considers as a reasonable cause for the CME/CPD non-compliance.

The Academy may, at its discretion, accept other conditions if supported by the College of the Fellow on reasonable grounds.

- b) The Fellow must engage in a remedial programme to make up for the deficiency.
- c) The reason for non-compliance and the remedial programme must be endorsed by the Education Committee and Council of the Academy.

- d) The remedial programme must be finished within the time specified by the appropriate College. In any case, the remedial programme must be finished within 12 months from the end of the cycle concerned.
- e) The next cycle shall follow immediately after the previous cycle without any break, i.e. the Fellow will have to undergo normal and remedial CME/CPD at the same time.

9.2 *Non-compliance That Is Not Remediable*

For Fellows who have obtained less than two-thirds of the required number of points for a cycle without acceptable reasons, a recommendation for Fellowship suspension will be made. Reinstatement of Academy Fellowship shall be subject to the conditions stipulated in the Academy policy paper entitled "Reinstatement of Fellowship".

10. Certification for Specialist Registration

- a) The Academy will inform the Medical Council of Hong Kong/Dental Council of Hong Kong, for the purpose of Specialist Registration, if a Fellow has failed to comply with, or been exempted from, the CME/CPD requirements.
- b) For remediable non-compliance, the Academy will inform the Medical Council of Hong Kong/Dental Council of Hong Kong if the Fellow cannot complete his remedial programme by the deadline set by the Academy.
- c) If a Fellow who has been exempted from CME/CPD for reasons other than prolonged illness, or whose Fellowship has been suspended due to CME/CPD non-compliance, subsequently wants the Academy to certify him for Specialist Registration, he will be required to have obtained at least 90 CME/CPD points within 36 months counting back from the date of application for certification. A pro-rata number of the 90 points required must be obtained within the period between the date of Fellowship removal (or CME/CPD exemption) and the date of application for certification.
- d) If a Fellow who had been suffering from prolonged illness and has been exempted from CME/CPD subsequently wants the Academy to certify him for Specialist Registration, he will be required to have obtained at least 40 CME/CPD points in the first 12 months of his resumed cycle.
- e) A Fellow shall be certified to have fulfilled the CME/CPD requirements for the purpose of Specialist Registration, as long as he has obtained the required number of points for a cycle.

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