



Office of Continuing Pharmacy Education (OCPE) Joint Provider Guidance Document

Updated May 2024

This document offers a framework for the CE Activity process for Joint Providers. Use this guidance document in conjunction with the Speaker Guidance document in planning your CE Activity.

CE Activity Process

This graphic illustrates the CE activity process from planning through final invoicing.



Planning

Joint Provider/MOU Agreement

The Joint Provider Agreement/MOU is an agreement between the Joint Provider Organization and the Office of Continuing Pharmacy Education (OCPE) specifying the responsibilities for each party, fees, contacts, and timelines. The Agreement is typically for a one-year period from July 1 – June 30 and is renewed annually. An agreement/MOU must be executed prior to submitting a CE Event Form.

To comply with the Standards for Integrity and Independence, each member of the Joint Provider planning committee is required to submit a disclosure (conflict of interest) and updated CV annually at the time of the yearly MOU renewal. Planning committee members can submit their disclosures and CVs to continuinged@rx.umaryland.edu.

Speaker Selection & Engagement

Faculty should be selected based upon their knowledge of the subject matter; experience and teaching ability; and ability to meet the educational needs of the pharmacists and/or technicians. Joint Providers are responsible for **engaging with the speakers** throughout the planning and execution of each CE activity to ensure compliance of requirements.

Commercial Support

Joint Providers are allowed to seek commercial support (defined as financial or in-kind support from ineligible companies); however, following stipulations apply:

- The CE activity must remain free of commercial bias and commercial influence.
- Ineligible companies must not pay directly for any of the expenses related to the education or the learners.
- Commercial support may be used to fund honoraria or travel expenses of planners, faculty, and others in control of content for those roles only.
- Commercial support may NOT be used to pay for travel, lodging, honoraria, or personal expenses for individual learners or groups of learners in accredited education.
- Commercial support may be used to defray or eliminate the cost of the education for all learners.



For activities that have commercial support, an agreement must be created between OCPE and the ineligible company. The agreement must be executed **prior** to the start of the accredited education activity. Any commercial support must be disclosed to the participants in the activity announcement. Disclosures, and all educational materials, must **NOT** include **company name and/or product logos, trade** names or product messages from the ineligible organization. See Attachment A for more information (Guideline 4).

Contact OCPE with any questions and/or concerns regarding commercial support.

Application Process

CE Event Form and the Activity Application

Each activity requires submission of two online forms: the CE Event Form and the Activity Application.

- The **CE Event Form** includes questions pertaining to the general planning of the CE activity. Due at least 45 days prior to the activity.
- The **Activity Application** addresses presentation specifics (e.g., learning objectives, active learning, assessments, and speaker information). Due at least 40 days prior to the activity.

Both are submitted online (<https://www.pharmacy.umaryland.edu/academics/ce/application-process/>). We encourage Joint Providers to be proactive and work closely with speakers to ensure the applications are accurate to expedite the approval process. PDF versions of the forms can be found in the Activity Planning Tools section of the website: <https://www.pharmacy.umaryland.edu/academics/ce/activity-planning/>

Review by CE Administrator

The CE administrator reviews the activity application. OCPE will reach out to the speaker, copying the Joint Provider, with feedback if necessary (e.g. learning objectives contain inappropriate verbs).

Conflict Mitigation

Relevant financial relationships with an ineligible company must be mitigated prior to planning and development of the activity. OCPE will contact the Joint Provider when mitigation is required. Disclosure statements, provided in the activity approval email are required for all speakers and planning committee members. See Attachment A for more information.

Activity Submission to ACPE & Approval Documentation

Once the review is complete and activity forms are approved, OCPE will submit the activity to ACPE. The Activity Description Form (ADF) is documentation of approval and will be sent to the Joint Provider. Joint Providers should review the ADF and confirm that the information included is correct. Any updates should be communicated as quickly as possible and are reviewed on a case-by-case basis. **The information on the ADF – activity title, learning objectives, etc. - must match how it is written on all activity materials, including but not limited to, announcements, websites, slides, etc.**

Pre-Activity Documentation

The following materials must be submitted to OCPE:

- **Activity Announcement:** The purpose is to ensure potential participants have the information required to determine if they would like to participate.
 - Due **at least 21 days prior** to the activity.
 - Must be approved prior to dissemination or public posting; and included with **ALL** marketing and outreach efforts.
 - See the Activity Announcement Checklist for all required elements, and examples.

- **Slides and Educational Materials:**
 - Due **at least 14 days prior** to the activity.
 - Speakers with potential conflicts or disclosures may be required to submit slides before activity approval.
 - See the Speaker Guidance document for additional information and requirements.

- **Home Study Contact Hour Justification:** A detailed outline of the amount of CE contact hours in the activity.
 - Due **at least 14 days prior** to the home study launch date.
 - Contact hours are determined by the amount of time anticipated to complete an activity in 0.25-hour (15 minute) increments.
 - See The Home Study Hour Justification Template for additional information and example.

The following materials will be provided by OCPE:

- **Activity Evaluation**
 - OCPE will send evaluation link with submission deadline **at least 7 days prior** to the activity.
 - The Joint Provider disseminates the link after the activity to participants who qualify to receive credit (i.e., met the criteria for successful completion).
 - Custom questions, if applicable, must be submitted to OCPE **at least 14 days prior** to the activity.
 - A Summary report will be sent after CPE Monitor uploads are completed.

CE Activity Content

Content Requirements

Accredited continuing education content must be **fair and balanced**. Clinical content presented must support safe, effective patient care. See the Speaker Guidance for additional information regarding appropriate content for CE activities.

Active Learning and Assessments

All CE Activities must contain active learning and assessments. Speakers are required to identify their active learning strategies and assessment strategies (with feedback to participants) in the CE Activity Application. Activities that have multiple target audiences (e.g., pharmacists and pharmacy technicians) may require separate active learning and assessments for each target audience. The active learning and assessments (with feedback) must be sent to OCPE.

Alignment Between Gap Analysis, Learning Objectives, Active Learning, and Assessments

See the Speaker Guidance document for more information on aligning gap analysis, activity type, learning objectives and active learning, assessment strategies and lists of potential strategies.

- Gap Analysis: will identify the potential or actual problem being addressed in the activity and will determine the cause of the problem.
 - If the determined cause is due to a lack of knowledge, the activity will be knowledge-based.
 - If the determined cause, at least partially, is lack of skill or limited experience, the activity will be application-based.
- Learning Objectives: must use appropriate verbs based on the activity type determined in the gap analysis.
- Active Learning & Assessments: must be appropriate and address the learning objectives.

Role of the Joint Provider

Joint Providers should engage with their speakers to identify active learning and assessment strategies and ensure alignment between the gap analysis, learning objectives, active learning, and assessments is appropriate. These activities should be thoughtfully and proactively planned. It is the role of the Joint Provider to work with Speakers to ensure these requirements are met.

Post-Activity Documentation

The following materials must be submitted to OCPE:

- **Attendance List**

- Due **at least 7 days post** activity
- Serves as documentation of participants eligible to receive CE credits.

If the criterion for successful completion includes specific pass rates or metrics (e.g., earning 70% or higher on a post-test), documentation of participants meeting the criteria is required.

The following will be provided by OCPE:

- **CPE Monitor/NABP Uploads**

- Completed **at least 60 days after** the activity; typically uploaded within 30 days. **After 60 days, we are unable to make additional uploads.**
- OCPE is required to award ACPE credit to all learners who successfully complete the requirements necessary for credit.
- In the event of an error while uploading, OCPE will contact the attendee via email, up to 3 times, to confirm their information.
- CE credits will not be awarded without participant completion of the activity evaluation.
- Joint Providers are responsible for sending the evaluation to all eligible participants in a timely manner and to send reminders as needed.

- **Activity Evaluation Results**

Evaluation results will be sent for record keep or sharing with participants and other stakeholders. Joint Providers may share the evaluation results with speakers; speakers will not be sent the results directly.

- **Invoicing:** OCPE will send an invoice and back-up documentation outlining the fees. The invoice will be sent via email to the contact listed in the MOU agreement.

- Invoices are due 30 days (unless otherwise discussed) from the invoice date.
- Paid via check, ACH/Wire Payment, or Credit Card.
- **Reference the invoice number** when submitting payment. If submitting payment via check, please include a copy of the top portion of the invoice with your payment.

Attachment A

Standards for Integrity and Independence in Accredited Continuing Education

BACKGROUND: The Standards for Integrity and Independence in Accredited Continuing Education evolved from the Standards for Commercial Support: Standards to Ensure Independence in CME Activities™, first adopted in 1992 and updated in 2004. The goal of the revision process was to streamline, clarify, and modernize the Standards, and ensure their continued relevance and effectiveness in the changing healthcare environment.

Standard 1: Ensure Content Is Valid

- Clarifies that education is an appropriate place to explore new and evolving topics but must not advocate for, or promote, those approaches.

IMPLICATIONS FOR JOINT PROVIDERS:

- Education must be fair and balanced.
- Must not advocate or make recommendations that are not adequately supported by evidence.

Standard 2: Prevent Commercial Bias and Marketing in Accredited Continuing Education

- Prohibits faculty from marketing or selling their products or services.
- Accredited providers must receive consent from learners before sharing their names or contact information with ineligible companies or their agents.

IMPLICATIONS FOR JOINT PROVIDERS:

- Must ensure all decisions are made without influence or involvement of ineligible companies.
- Must not promote or sell products or services that serve their own interests.
- Must not share names or contact info of learners with ineligible companies or its agents without explicit consent of the individual learner. Make sure learner is aware and gives permission - yes or no - without adverse effects for declining.

Standard 3: Identify, Mitigate, and Disclose Relevant Financial Relationships

- Accredited providers must collect disclosure information from those in control of content about all financial relationships with ineligible companies. It is the accredited provider's responsibility to determine which relationships are relevant.
- Individuals must disclose relationships with ineligible companies within the prior 24 months (changed from the current 12-month requirement).
- Research grants from ineligible companies are financial relationships that should be disclosed, even if the funds go to the researcher's institution and not to the individual researcher.
- Owners or employees of ineligible companies must be excluded from controlling content.
- When disclosing relevant financial relationships to learners, accredited providers must include a statement that all relevant financial relationships have been mitigated.

IMPLICATIONS FOR JOINT PROVIDERS:

- Collect Information about ALL financial relationships with ineligible companies in prior 24 months
- No minimal financial threshold
- Must disclose regardless of their view of relevance of relationship to education session.
- Must include Name of ineligible company and Nature of relationship.
- Exclude owners or employees of ineligible companies from planning and controlling content with 3 exceptions:
 1. Content is not related to business lines or products of their company
 2. Content is limited to basic science research; pre-clinical, drug discovery, methods of research, AND does not make recommendations.
 3. When participating as technicians to teach the safe and proper use of medical devices AND do not recommend whether or when a device is used (for example, CT scanner tech can teach how to use device).
- Need to review information and determine which financial relationships are relevant. If the educational content controlled by an individual is related to the business lines or products of the ineligible company, then it is relevant).
- Mitigate relevant financial relationships – take steps to prevent all those with relevant financial relationships from inserting commercial bias into content. Steps for planners will be different than for faculty and would occur before planning begins.
- Document the steps taken to mitigate the relevant financial relationships.
- Disclose all relevant financial relationships to learners - must include Name of individuals, names of ineligible companies, nature of relationship, and a statement that all relationships have been mitigated.

EXCEPTIONS: Do not need to identify, mitigate, or disclose if:

1. education is non-clinical – leadership, for example. These standards govern clinical care recommendations only.
2. the learner group is in control of content – spontaneous education only; regularly scheduled series like case conference, grand rounds, tumor boards are planned events and are not exceptions.
3. self-directed education where the learner controls their educational goals and reports on the changes that resulted, such as learning from teaching, remediation, or personal development plan.

Standard 4: Manage Commercial Support Appropriately

- Simplified guidance about decision-making, documentation, accountability, and disclosure to learners.
- Clarifies that accredited providers can sign onto an existing commercial support agreement.

IMPLICATIONS FOR JOINT PROVIDERS:

- Only applies if you accept commercial support.
- Only applies to accredited CE that receives financial or in-kind support from ineligible companies.

- If Joint Providers choose to accept commercial support, they must ensure that education remains independent of the ineligible companies.
- The proposed change that would have prohibited joint providers from reimbursing faculty expenses using commercial support was removed from the final standard.
- Do not need a policy on how we handle commercial support.

Standard 5: Manage Ancillary Activities Offered in Conjunction with Accredited Continuing Education

- Simplified, updated guidance about the separation of accredited and nonaccredited education, as well as the separation of education and marketing by ineligible companies.
- Clarifies that learners must be able to easily distinguish between accredited education and other activities, such as nonaccredited continuing education and marketing by ineligible companies.
- There must be a 30-minute interval in the educational space between accredited activities and marketing or nonaccredited activities.

IMPLICATIONS FOR JOINT PROVIDERS:

- Only applies when there is marketing by ineligible companies or non-accredited education associated with accredited CE.
- Important difference is the 30-minute time frame between accredited and non-accredited activities.
- Ineligible companies may not provide access to, or distribute, accredited education to learners.
- Definition of educational space – where the learner is engaging in the education with the materials and faculty. When it is live, we don't want the learner to interact with non-accredited information at the same time and in the same space/room. OK to have the two at same time but in different rooms.