

**Consensus Statement for Independence and Funding of Continuing Medical Education (CME)/  
Continuing Professional Development (CPD)<sup>i</sup>**

The International Academy for CPD Accreditation is dedicated to advocating for and enhancing the development, implementation and evolution of CME/CPD accreditation systems throughout the world by providing an opportunity for individuals in leadership positions to (a) learn about the values, principles and metrics of varying CME/CPD accreditation systems; (b) explore the accreditation standards for CME/CPD provider<sup>ii</sup> organizations and activities<sup>iii</sup> under differing systems; and (c) foster evaluations to measure the impact of CME/CPD accreditation systems on physician learning, competence<sup>iv</sup>, performance<sup>v</sup> and healthcare outcomes.



In “Evolving Alignment in International Continuing Professional Development Accreditation<sup>vi</sup>,” it is noted that accreditation systems across the world are “evolving to encourage continuous improvement in the competence and performance of healthcare clinicians and the organizations in which they provide patient care,” and that “since choice and diversity are key to meeting clinicians’ needs, several CPD accreditors<sup>vii</sup> have been engaging in deliberate, concerted efforts to identify a core set of principles that can serve as the basis for determining substantive equivalency between CPD accreditation systems.”

This consensus statement is offered in support of the goal to have all learning activities planned and managed to ensure independence from commercial interests<sup>viii</sup> and other potential sources of funding.

**Preamble**

1. The medical profession has devoted itself to lifelong learning in order to maintain and/or improve the competencies required to enhance performance and thereby contribute to patient outcomes.
2. CME/CPD are primarily characterised by clinician-to-clinician interaction (“by the profession for the profession”). CME/CPD comprises a broad range of educational formats, of which some need the investment of financial resources exceeding what individual physicians might be able to invest.
3. Third party financial support (“commercial support”) of CME/CPD has a long tradition in many healthcare systems, in most cases replacing funding, which otherwise would have to be provided by national/provincial regulatory authorities or clinicians.
4. Since commercial support might be offered under conditions which violate principles and values of the medical profession, principles and rules need to be defined by which commercial support of CME/CPD might be acceptable, not only to the medical profession, but also to patients and society as a whole.
5. The value of CME/CPD accreditation includes safeguards related to the objectivity, evidence-base, and independence of the education.
6. Commercial support should in general follow principles of fairness, transparency, and separation of promotion from education.

The following principles and rules safeguard the independence of accredited CME/CPD:

### **Principles**

1. The content, as well as persons and organizations in control of the content, of the accredited CME/CPD activity is developed/selected independently, with no influence, control or involvement from a commercial interest<sup>x</sup>, and is based on evidence that is scientifically valid, accepted by the profession of medicine, and balanced.
2. There are several levels, on which physicians have relationships with industry. Thus, transparency of relationships of physicians to third parties, in particular pharmaceutical and medical-technical industry, is fundamental for accreditation of CME/CPD.
3. If funds or resources from a commercial interest are contributed to the accredited CME/CPD activity, those funds/resources must be managed appropriately and independently.
  - In systems with provider accreditation, this falls under the responsibility of the accredited provider.
  - In activity accreditation systems, this should be managed by the organisation responsible for development of content and presentation of the educational activity.This process needs to be transparent, and direct relationships between faculty members and commercial supporters are strongly discouraged.

### **Rules**

1. Commercial support of CME/CPD activities is allowed.
2. Conditions and methods of payment must meet applicable national legal requirements, in particular tax and anti-corruption law, respectively, as well as professional law. If professional law is against commercial support, then it cannot be accepted.
3. A commercial interest is not eligible to be accredited or to organize accredited CME/CPD.
4. All individuals who are involved in the planning and development, presentation (verbal or through creation of a manuscript), or evaluation of the accredited CME/CPD activity must disclose relevant financial relationships so that conflicts of interest may be identified and resolved by the provider/organiser of the accredited CME/CPD activity.
5. Learners must be informed, prior to engaging in the accredited CME/CPD activity, of the presence (or absence) of all relevant financial relationships of all individuals involved in the planning, presentation or evaluation of the accredited CME/CPD activity, as well as the acceptance of funds/resources contributed by a commercial interest (if applicable).
6. Organisers must avoid all promotional or sales communication to participants relating to the content of the activity prior, during or after the educational activity. This might include rules for wording to describe commercial support, placement of commercial interest logos, etc.
7. The provision of commercial support must never constitute a relationship between individual learners and the commercial supporter.

Members of the International Academy for CPD Accreditation, on behalf of their accreditation systems, endorse this Consensus statement, principles, and rules – recognizing that each system may implement them in a manner appropriate for their system, local laws/regulations, learners, and their learners' patients.

<sup>i</sup> Continuing Medical Education (CME): The process by which healthcare professionals engage in activities designed to support their continuing professional development. Activities are derived from multiple instructional domains, are learner centered, and support the ability of those professionals to provide high-quality, comprehensive, and continuous patient care and service to the public or their profession. The content of CME can be focused not only on clinical care, but also on those attitudes/skills necessary for the individual to contribute as an effective administrator, teacher, researcher, and team member in the healthcare system. "International Academy for CPD Accreditation Glossary"

Continuing Professional Development (CPD): The learning journey of the healthcare professional as he/she seeks to improve her/his competence and expertise. This learning journey is supported by continuing medical education and other personal/professional activities by the learner with the intention of providing safe, legal, and high quality services aiming at better health outcomes for the patients and the community. "International Academy for CPD Accreditation Glossary"

<sup>ii</sup> Continuing Medical Education Provider: An organization that assumes the responsibility and accountability for the development of accredited educational activities. "International Academy for CPD Accreditation Glossary"

<sup>iii</sup> Activity: An educational offering that is planned, implemented, and evaluated in accordance with the accreditor's policies. "International Academy for CPD Accreditation Glossary"

<sup>iv</sup> Competence: The degree to which learners *show* in an educational setting *how* to do what the activity intended them to do. "International Academy for CPD Accreditation Glossary"

<sup>v</sup> Performance: The degree to which learners *do* what the CME activity intended them to be able to do in their practice. "International Academy for CPD Accreditation Glossary"

<sup>vi</sup> Graham T. McMahon, MD, MMSc, et al., "Evolving Alignment in International Continuing Professional Development Accreditation," *The Journal of Continuing Education in the Health Professions* 36, no. 1 (summer 2016): S22-S26.

<sup>vii</sup> Accreditor: The organization that sets and enforces the standards for CME activities and/or CME provider organizations through the review and approval of organizations /applications for the provision of CME and to monitor and enforce guidelines for these organizations/activities. "International Academy for CPD Accreditation Glossary"

<sup>viii</sup> Commercial Interest: Any entity producing, marketing, re-selling, or distributing healthcare goods or services consumed by, or used on, patients. "International Academy for CPD Accreditation Glossary"

Definitions: see International Academy for CPD Accreditation Glossary

## **Approval and Endorsements**

### **Approval**

The Consensus Statement for Independence and Funding of Continuing Medical Education(CME)/ Continuing Professional Development (CPD) (Consensus Statement) was approved by the members of the International Academy for CPD Accreditation on Wednesday November 8, 2017 at the College of Physicians of Ireland, Dublin, Ireland. The Consensus Statement will be reviewed by the Academy members three years from this date of approval.



### **Endorsement**

The following institutions have endorsed the Consensus Statement as being in line with their relevant CPD accreditation systems.

#### **European International**

- European Board for Accreditation in Cardiology (EBAC)
- European Board for Accreditation in Haematology (EBAH)
- European Board for Accreditation in Pneumology (EBAP)

#### **European National**

- Austrian Academy of Physicians
- German Medical Association
- Spanish Medical Professional Accreditation Council
- Swiss Institute for Postgraduate Training and Continuing Medical Education

#### **Canada**

- The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada

#### **United States of America**

- Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education