

A selection from a glossary of CME/CPD terms

Given below is a glossary of terms useful in continuing education and continuing professional development as well as in related aspects of medical education. They have been selected and defined based on the specific applications in the MPC Program and the CME Center of KIMS.

Adult education

The education of adults involves all forms of education for those above a specified age that identifies adulthood. The term adult education is restricted to what can best be learned as adults and covers all forms of education that treat the student participants as adults - capable, experienced, responsible, mature and balanced people.

Accreditation

Accreditation is the process by which governmental, non-governmental or voluntary associations grant recognition to educational programs that meet specified criteria. The CME Center uses accreditation to ensure that CME/CPD activities meet the accepted standards of education and scientific merit.

Affective domain

The attitudes and values that health professionals are expected to possess are grouped under the affective domain. They may be influenced by many factors, one of which is knowledge in the associated topics.

Assessment

Assessment involves determining whether a previously-listed ability has been mastered by the learner, and quantifying it by giving a numerical score or grading on a scale.

Audit

The process of reviewing the performance of practitioners with the aim of identifying deficiencies so that appropriate remedies could be introduced.

Certification

The process by which a trainee is certified that he or she is ready to move to a higher phase of training or could be granted a license to practice.

Checklist

An instrument of assessment that employs a list of previously-agreed tasks or abilities, to be checked, if present on observation.

Clinical competence

Possession of relevant knowledge, skills, and attitudes and values pertaining to clinical, technical and interpersonal aspects of patient care so that a practitioner could be considered to be adequately equipped to perform at the expected level.

CME/CPD authority

An institution or designated body that oversees the organization of accredited CME/CPD activities within a CME/CPD scheme.

CME/CPD activity

An educational activity (e.g. conference, seminar, workshop, symposium, lecture series, practical/clinical session) that is planned and conducted for the purpose of achieving pre-specified learning objectives that are related to maintenance of professional competence.

CME/CPD calendar

A listing of CME/CPD activities that are being planned by CME/CPD organizers and accredited by the CME Center.

CME/CPD categories

The grouping of CME activities used by CME authorities for administering the CME schemes. The KIMS program has limited the categories to two, to make it easily understandable to the practitioners, while covering both structured as well as self-learning educational opportunities.

CME Center

The division at KIMS that deals with the routine administration of the CME/CPD scheme in Kuwait.

CME/CPD credits

A yardstick used by CME/CPD authorities to measure and quantify CME/CPD involvement of the health professionals. It is not a highly precise measuring tool, and may not allow performance in some areas to be readily interpreted through it.

Certificate of Completion of CME/CPD

Practitioners who acquire a specified minimum total of credits during the five-year cycle receive a Certificate of Completion of CME/CPD from KIMS. The certificate remains valid for a five-year cycle from the date of issue.

CME/CPD coordinator

A content expert appointed by an institution for local coordination of CME/CPD activities within the institution.

CME links

Websites that offer lessons or give information on CME/CPD that can be accessed from other sites or through web addresses.

CME/CPD officer

A content specialist appointed by KIMS for serving as a link between the practitioners in the specialty and the CME Center. Practitioners should contact the respective CME/CPD officers for any clarifications about the MPC Program.

CME/CPD organizer

An appropriate content specialist functions as the CME/CPD organizer on behalf of the CME/CPD Provider, and takes immediate responsibility for the different aspects of the CME/CPD activity.

CME/CPD Provider

An institution or organizations that possesses expertise within it for conducting CME/CPD activities at a national level, which becomes eligible for recognition as a CME/CPD Provider.

CME/CPD status certificate

Any practitioner who needs a certificate of the CME/CPD status to satisfy administrative requirements, or is terminating service in Kuwait is eligible to receive a Certificate of the CME/CPD status.

Cognitive domain

Learning that is related to knowledge falls within the cognitive domain. It can be further divided into a hierarchy, with recall/recognition at the lowest level, data interpretation next, and problem-solving at the highest level.

Competence

The abilities gained as a result of an effective learning experience; knowledge is only one group of the competencies.

Computer-based learning

Learning systems that use computers to convey the subject matter of the lesson. A teacher is essential for defining the learning objectives, identifying the associated content and planning the assessment.

Computer literacy

The ability to use a computer effectively and efficiently in performing specific tasks. Common computer literacy skills include word processing, using spreadsheets, designing presentation graphics and manipulation of databases.

Computer peripherals

The various items of equipment such as scanners, pointing devices, printers, monitors or projectors that allow data to be input into a computer or for information to be displayed after being processed by a computer.

Continuing Medical Education (CME)

Educational activities that physicians undertake after they had completed basic undergraduate education and any specified postgraduate training. The subject content dealt with in CME activities has expanded from purely medical subjects to include topics in many non-medical fields.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Continuing Professional Development aims to cover the development of a wider range of professional skills than learning in medical subjects. It also allows the CME/CPD activities undertaken by many categories of health professionals to be included under it.

Credit validation

Maintenance of relevant records by practitioners registered in the MPC Program and the organizers of CME/CPD activities, and submitting them to the CME center when requested during program review.

Curriculum

A plan that identifies goals to be achieved, delineates the related learning objectives and the subject content, and lists the methods of teaching and evaluation to be used to ensure that the pre-specified targets have been reached. The concept of curriculum is wider in scope than a listing of topics to be dealt with in a course or program.

Database

An organized collection of related information about employees, patients, diseases, equipment etc. so that it can be rearranged and sorted, and any item retrieved efficiently.

Data interpretation

The process of making meaning of novel information – from data that the individual has not been exposed to in the past.

Distance learning

A system of learning in which the tutor and the learner are not present in the same setting at the same time. Print, audio, photographic or video media, or computers are used for presenting the lesson materials to the learner.

Documentation

Maintenance of relevant records by CME/CPD participants so that they could be used to support credit claims and to monitor program administration.

Domain

One of the three divisions – cognitive, affective and psychomotor - to which learning is classified for academic purposes and which identify the scope of the competencies.

Download

Gaining access to and obtaining the data available in the Internet to be printed, transmitted to other users, or included in own documents.

Effectiveness

The degree to which a pre-specified set of goals can be achieved or targets reached.

Efficiency

The extent to which resources are spent in reaching a pre-specified set of goals.

eLearning

eLearning is the use of multimedia technologies and the Internet to improve the quality of learning through access to resources as well as remote exchanges and collaboration.

Entry level

Also called pre-requisites, the entry level lists the abilities that a trainee should possess before being considered as ready to be enrolled in a training program.

Essay question

A format of question where the candidate has the freedom to select the subject content and the style of presentation considered appropriate.

Evaluation

The process of judging the results obtained on assessment against some external criterion that has been previously set. Evaluation is undertaken in relation to structure, process and outcome.

Faculty

The Boards of Study of KIMS that are responsible for postgraduate studies in the various medical specialties. Other common meanings of the term are an institution, as Faculty of Medicine, that offers undergraduate training for a university degree, and the teaching staff of an institution.

Feasibility

The degree to which a given program plan or scheme could be implemented considering the practical constraints.

Feedback

Providing specific information to the learner or the instructor on the strengths and weaknesses as regards the tasks undertaken so that the subsequent performances could be improved.

Formative evaluation

Formative evaluation is purely for feedback, so that the trainee could improve in weak areas, before it is too late. See Summative evaluation.

Global rating

Assigning a grade or a rating to the achievement of the learner, based on overall assessment, as opposed to the observation of specific skills, tasks or behaviors.

Goal

A general aim or overall expectation from a course of study or training program. Goals enable the course planners to derive the general and specific objectives that are needed for instruction and assessment.

Graduate medical education

See postgraduate education.

Health professionals

Health personnel who have undergone a specified period of training in a university and are entrusted with the responsibility of providing an accepted level of health care. The concept is often widened to include other groups who have received training but not necessarily at undergraduate level.

Homepage

A webpage developed and maintained by an institution, agency or an individual, which highlights its essential features or facilities available.

Horizontal integration

Subjects that are taught as distinct and separate units during one phase in the medical curriculum are presented so that the interrelations and links are emphasized.

Indicator

A criterion or observable behavior that can be used to conclude that a learner or practitioner possesses a specific competence or attribute.

Integrated teaching

A system of teaching in which subjects or courses that were traditionally taught as independent units are presented as a unified whole. In integrated teaching it is the learning objectives that get integrated.

Internship training

The period during which new graduates of medical schools undergo supervised training before they are granted license for independent practice. Also called PRHO training.

Instructor

An individual who is responsible for presenting learning sessions.

Internet

A computer network of networks. Computers linked in the internet can communicate with each other using different software. See World Wide Web

Intranet

An intranet is a network for sharing of information within an organization or institution. Only authorized personnel are allowed to gain access to the information.

Jargon

The terms and phrases specific to a particular discipline or profession, which are meaningful to its members and which facilitate communication.

KIMS

The Kuwait Institute for Medical Specialization, which is the administrative authority in Kuwait that is responsible for internship training, postgraduate medical education, CME/CPD, and research in the medical disciplines in the Ministry of Health.

KIMS Faculty

The Boards of Study and Scientific Committees that oversee the educational activities in the different specialties under KIMS.

Knowledge

The area of learning that involves acquisition of facts, data, information, ideas or principles. Though related, knowledge is considered as distinct from attitudes and values, and the performance of skills.

Learner-centered education

The process of learning in which the learner primarily determines what is to be learned and how it is undertaken, with the teacher setting the overall goals and serving as a guide or facilitator, but not taking the role of a repository of knowledge.

Learning objective

A learning objective is a description of an observable change in the performance that results from a learning activity. Therefore, a learning objective is not a theme to be discussed or the manner in which a topic is to be dealt with during a learning session.

Lecture

A method of instruction where a subject matter expert presents information, usually to a large audience and with no opportunity available for interaction by the audience.

Licensure

The process of an authorized agency granting permission to engage in practice or use a title to those who have satisfied pre-specified criteria.

Lifelong learning

Learning on a continuing basis that professionals undertake to keep up with the developments in their disciplines, and which forms the essential basis of CME/CPD.

Logbook

A detailed record maintained by a trainee or a practitioner of the learning undertaken or the activities performed, to be reviewed at a later date for formal or informal assessment.

Log-in

The process of signing-in to start a session for using a computer system or a network, in some cases after authority has been granted.

Maintenance of professional competence (MPC)

The process of lifelong learning undertaken by health professionals to ensure that they keep abreast of the developments in their specialties and in other areas that affect their practices.

Medical education

The process of providing learning opportunities for students to become competent medical practitioners. Three phases that can be identified in it are undergraduate, postgraduate and continuing.

Medical educator

A professional who is concerned with the educational processes that are relevant in curriculum planning, teaching, assessment and evaluation in medical education.

Medical informatics

The scientific field that deals with storage, retrieval and optimal use of information in medicine, with computers playing an integral part in the process.

Medical school

An institution, usually affiliated to a university, that provides formal training to students to become medical practitioners. Some other common terms used are Medical College, Faculty of Medicine, College of Medicine and Health Science, and Medical Institute.

Modified essay question

The format of essay-type question that limits the freedom that is usually available to the candidate who answers the standard essay-type question. The choice of content and style of answer is restricted through varying degrees of structuring.

MPC Program

The CME scheme administered by the CME Center of KIMS for the maintenance of professional competence; formerly called the CME Program.

Multiple choice question (MCQ)

A format of question in which a set of choices is offered from which the candidate selects the correct answer(s).

Needs assessment

The process of determining in advance what prospective participants of CME/CPD activities need to learn, so that the needs identified may be used in selecting the subject content and the appropriate method of teaching.

Objective

See learning objective

Objectivity

The property of any tool of measurement that allows different examiners to agree on the score or grade assigned.

Objective questions

Questions (test items) written in a format that ensures that different examiners mark (score) the candidate's responses in the same manner.

Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE)

A system of standardizing the tasks presented to examination candidates so that there is uniformity in the problems presented to all candidates in one session. The tasks may be components of clinical performances, laboratory procedures, communication skills, cognitive tests etc., and the candidates move from one station to another.

Online

Communication between a computer user and an individual, an agency or other institution using the Internet.

Online learning

Online learning deals with learning that uses learning materials supplied via the electronic media. The primary media used are computers, internet and the intranet.

Outcome

The result of a learning experience, described as a change in the performance of the learner; also learning objective.

Peer

Fellow learner or fellow practitioner.

Peer review

Review of an individual's performances by fellow learners or fellow practitioners through observation or scrutiny of documents and records.

Perceptual motor skills

See procedural skills

Performance

What a practitioner does in the real setting as opposed to what he or she is capable of doing as a result of the learning.

Performance-based assessment

A system of assessment in which the candidate is directly observed when performing in the real setting instead of asking him or her to demonstrate the competencies in an examination.

Performance review

Scrutinizing the performances of a practitioner through direct observation or by study of documentation maintained.

Portfolio

A written record dealing with the performances and achievements of a trainee or a practitioner, which could be used subsequently as evidence of involvement of educational activities or as the basis for assessment.

Postgraduate education

Also called graduate education. Educational activities that health professionals engage in after undergraduate education and internship training (where applicable), and are based on a prescribed course of training or which involve passing specified examinations and certification.

Practicality

See feasibility

Practicals

Learning or assessment settings in which the individual is required to operate equipment or perform operative procedures as the primary feature of the activity.

Pre-requisites

See entry level

PRHO

See internship training

Problem-based learning

Learning that is undertaken by exploring clinical problems and other health care problems as the means for defining learning objectives and identifying subject content.

Problem-solving

A mental process that involves making judgments or evaluation decisions based on novel information that is presented to the individual. The activity ceases to be problem-solving if the information has been encountered before, or the task has been practiced.

Procedural skills

Abilities that require the learner or the practitioner to perform manual (as opposed to mental) skills such as doing operative procedures. Many laboratory tasks would not fall within this category (except for the ability to operate the equipment) because the stimulus presented to the learner is often visual and the response of interpretation is a mental skill.

Psychomotor domain

The psychomotor domain is concerned with performance of procedural skills, which involve doing manual procedures. Though the relevant knowledge is essential, knowledge alone does not guarantee that the skill has been mastered. Also referred to as perceptual motor skills.

Rating scale

An instrument of evaluation, often with five points (e.g. Likert scale), which allows the performance to be graded from low to high (as opposed to noting whether present or absent).

Re-certification

Re-certification is a process by which a professional body testifies intermittently to the competence of each of its members, either with or without a period of formal re-training.

Reliability

Reliability describes the degree to which the result of a measurement would be unchanged if the act of measurement could be repeated.

Resource person

The person responsible for planning or presenting a learning activity, be it a lecture, a demonstration, a practical, a clinical, a small group session, a discussion or other educational event.

Reinforce

Confirm the desirability of observed behaviors or performances by an appropriate reward.

Small group teaching

Instruction conducted with the size of the learning group not exceeding 12 to 15, one of the main aims being to promote interaction among the group members. The limit could be exceeded by varying the presentation methods.

Subject content

The list of topics and the related subject matter that is to be dealt with in a lesson or program.

Summative evaluation

Assessment is carried out at the end of course unit or a program, and what has been learned is summed up. This step is essential before certification. See Formative evaluation.

Technology-based training

Technology-based training relies on technological resources including computer, TV, audio and video to present the learning materials in settings outside the traditional classroom.

Validity

The issue of whether a test instrument is being used to assess the abilities that it has been designed to measure.

Vertical integration

Courses taught in the different phases in the medical course are presented with varying degrees of integration, e.g. by the exposure to clinical subjects early in the curriculum or the continuation of basic sciences in its final phase.

Web-based learning

Web-based learning is essentially the same as online learning: the learning materials are delivered to the learner via computers, the internet or an intranet.

Web browser

A program that allows a user to gain access to any of the resources available in the Internet.

Webpage

A single document on the World Wide Web with its own web address (URL).

Website

A single page or collection of pages about a given topic published on the World Wide Web.

World Wide Web

A system that has been created as a way to easily access cross-referenced documents that exist on the Internet.