

MPC Program: Some key aspects and updates on procedures for participating in and organizing CME/CPD activities

Introduction

Participants of CME/CPD activities as well as organizers of CME/CPD activities need to be aware of the essential elements of the MPC (Maintenance of Professional Competence) Program. Some of the important features of the scheme and the updates that have been introduced recently are listed below. Details of the changes and of the administrative procedures adopted are available in *MPC Program with Learning Sites for Health Professionals* and at <www.kims.org.kw/cme>.

Registration in MPC Program

CME/CPD Cycle

The first five-year cycle of the MPC Program began in September 2001, and will end in December 2006. (The CME Year, which initially ran from September of one year to August the following year, has since been changed to extend from January to December). As formal CME/CPD under a central administrative authority was a new concept that was being introduced in Kuwait, the administrators included two concessionary features in the scheme:

- i. An extra year, i.e. September 2000 to August 2001, was added to the first five-year cycle;
- ii. Practitioners who registered at any time within the first year, i.e. September 2001 to August 2002 had their registration treated as coming into effect from September 2001.

In the case of practitioners who were in service when the scheme was introduced but did not register before end of August 2002, and for those who commenced practice in Kuwait in or after September 2002, the date when the five-year CME/CPD cycle begins is taken as the date on which they applied for registration.

Re-appointment for Service in Kuwait

If a practitioner who is employed in Kuwait terminates his service and is re-appointed at a later date, he or she starts on a new CME/CPD cycle with effect from the new date of appointment. The practitioner is required to submit an Application for Registration giving the current data. A CME/CPD Status Certificate for the period of service completed previously could be obtained from the CME Center.

Exemption from CME/CPD Requirement

Trainees enrolled in postgraduate training programs conducted or approved by KIMS, and practitioners registered in advanced degree programs in the fields of medicine, dentistry, pharmacy or nursing are exempted from having to satisfy the credit point requirement announced under the MPC Program. Instead, when evidence of maintenance of professional competence needs to be submitted to the authorities, trainees in approved programs may mention the training programs in which they are registered. For satisfying the administrative requirements of the Ministry of Health, trainees in approved training programs are entitled to receive a CME/CPD Status Certificate on account of training.

Trainees who wish to attend any CME/CPD activities for their own education may do so through application to the organizer concerned.

Although KIMS exempts trainees from having to acquire the minimum CME/CPD credit point total of the CME/CPD cycle, some training centers require trainees enrolled in training programs administered by them to engage in continuing education during the training period. It is important, therefore, that trainees obtain the relevant information from the authorities concerned and satisfy any such requirements.

Participating in CME/CPD Activities

Internet-based Activities

Practitioners are encouraged to use web-based learning for continuing education and continuing professional development. The maximum number of CME/CPD credit points that may be claimed on accredited CME/CPD activities undertaken through the Internet is limited to 5 points within a 24-hour period.

Practice audits, Personal Learning Plans (PLPs) and strategies to deal with specific problems in the practice setting

Practice Audits include patient care reviews or audits that practitioners initiate for reviewing any specific aspects of their practices or utilization of the resources. The audit is undertaken with the aim of assessing current procedures and identifying areas that need to be improved. Activities that are included in this group may take the form of practice audits and patient surveys, institution audits, and utilization studies.

Practitioners are eligible to claim CME/CPD credit on practice audits and Personal Learning Plans (PLPs) they develop and the learning undertaken after having identified their learning needs. A similar avenue that is open for acquiring CME/CPD credit points is putting in place a strategy or plan (referred to as a Practice Improvement Plan or PIP) by the practitioner after identifying a problem or deficiency in the work setting that can be dealt with using the resources available to or obtainable by the practitioner and evaluating the ensuing results.

Practitioners who intend to claim CME/CPD credit points on practice audits, PLPs or PIPs are required to submit the relevant documentation to the CME Center before undertaking the activity. A CME/CPD credit value will be assigned after a review of the plan, and the practitioner will then become eligible to claim the credit points upon submitting a report at conclusion.

CME/CPD Status Certificate

For a CME/CPD Status Certificate to be issued, it is essential that practitioners submit copies of the certificates of participation to the

CME Center well in advance of applicable deadlines. The CME Center requires a minimum of five days for verifying the records, checking participation and for getting the certificate ready.

Worth of Category 2 CME/CPD Credit Points

Some practitioners may hold the view that CME/CPD credit points under Category 2 have no value. Moreover, some CME/CPD organizers, too, may feel that classification of their activities under Category 2 CME/CPD downgrades their efforts. These perceptions are far from the true situation.

Two factors that determine whether an activity gets classified under Category 2 are that:

- Target audience is a local group, or
- Activity is primarily of a self-learning nature.

The Category 2 CME/CPD menu comprises a wide variety of activities that require different levels of inputs and produce different degrees of outputs.

A point worth noting is that when the Certificate of Completion of CME/CPD is to be issued at the end of the five-year CME/CPD cycle of the MPC Program, 40% of the required total could be based on Category 2 activities. Furthermore, there is provision, as outlined below, for some Category 2 CME/CPD credit points to be transferred to be included under Category 1 when practitioners need CME Status Certificates for satisfying the administrative requirements of the Ministry of Health.

Transfer of CME/CPD credit points from Category 2 to Category 1

When practitioners do not have sufficient CME/CPD credit points to satisfy the administrative requirements announced by the Ministry of Health, the CME Center will consider including CME/CPD credit points from selected self-learning sections of Category 2 under Category 1 for the issue of CME Status Certificates. Such situations will be dealt with on a case-to-case basis and the details of the procedures that will be adopted will be announced by the CME Center.

Certificates of Participation issued by Organizations outside Kuwait

Educational activities conducted abroad could be considered under the MPC Program only if a recognized CME/CPD authority of the country (or region) concerned has approved the activity as CME/CPD and the certificate of participation clearly states the number of CME/CPD credit points that may be claimed.

Attending CME/CPD Activities in Fields Not Related to Practice

Practitioners should not claim CME/CPD credit points for attending activities in subject areas that are unlikely to contribute to improving own practice. Therefore, if any credit points are claimed for participation in activities which will not have any positive impact on own performance, the CME Center will disregard them when calculating credit point totals.

Organizing CME/CPD of Activities

Application for Registration

The organizer of the CME/CPD activity has to submit to the CME Center an application with the information requested and any other relevant documents well in advance of the date scheduled. On receipt of the information, the activity is registered and a Registration Number assigned. Based on the duration of contact hours of education, a credit point value, too, is calculated. These details plus the procedures expected of the organizer are then conveyed to the organizer. The organizer is expected to indicate the relevant information including the number of CME/CPD credit points in all the announcements and in the certificates that will be issued to participants. It is essential that formal and structured CME/CPD events such as conferences, symposia, seminars and workshops organized by the CME/CPD Providers are registered with the CME Center, if participants are to claim CME/CPD credit points under the MPC Program.

CME/CPD Providers

The following institutions and organizations function as CME/CPD Providers. They take

overall responsibility for organizing conferences, courses, symposia, seminars and other educational activities for CME/CPD accreditation:

1. Faculties and Scientific Committees of KIMS;
2. Health Sciences Faculties of Kuwait University;
3. Specialty or administrative divisions of the Ministry of Health or another ministry in the State of Kuwait;
4. Kuwait Medical Association and its Specialty societies, Kuwait Dental Association, Kuwait Pharmaceutical Association, Kuwait Nursing Association and other health professions organizations.

For an institution to be accredited by KIMS as a CME/CPD Provider, it is essential that it functions at the national level, i.e. there is no other parallel institution at the same level in the country.

CME/CPD Activities - Category 2

Activities included under Category 2 are divided into four sub-sections:

- i. Ongoing activities at healthcare or scientific institutions;
- ii. Activities planned and conducted for local participant groups;
- iii. Self-learning activities undertaken by health professionals;
- iv. Personal Learning Plans and Practice Improvement Plans.

All CME/CPD activities that are conducted by regional healthcare divisions or by hospitals or their departments for local participant groups fall within Category 2.

An essential feature in activities that fall under Sub-section iii or Sub-section iv of Category 2 is that they are of a self-learning nature. These activities do not need registration under the MPC Program. The amount of CME/CPD credit that may be claimed on individual activities will be determined on a case-to-case basis in consultation with the individual practitioner and the CME/CPD officer of the concerned specialty.

Credit Point Criteria

Although credit point allocation is based on the duration of sessions, excessively long presentations will not have a corresponding amount of credit allocated to them. Organizers, therefore, should not schedule long presentations, especially of lectures. This is because when sessions continue for long periods of time, the participants are unlikely to maintain interest in the topic and the amount learned and retained will not match the length of the session.

The amount of credit that will be assigned for a single lecture presentation will be limited to a maximum of one credit point, irrespective of the duration of the presentation.

Announcements

Organizers of CME/CPD activities are requested to ensure that prospective participants are informed of the activity well in advance.

It is essential that the Registration Number and the CME/CPD credit point value are clearly stated in all announcements. An activity should not be announced indicating CME/CPD credit points until the organizer has received a Letter of Registration from the CME Center.

Evaluation of CME/CPD Activity

CME/CPD organizers are required to prepare an Evaluation Report on the activity. This report should be forwarded to the CME Center within 4 weeks of completing the event or the group of events (where applicable).

The degree of sophistication of the evaluation will depend on the type of activity under consideration.

For major conferences, seminars and workshops, an evaluation needs to be carried out at conclusion of the sessions and a report prepared.

With respect to ongoing activities that are held frequently at health care, academic or scientific institutions, a group of similar sessions conducted over a specified period may be included in one Evaluation Report. The organizer would decide whether a 3 or 6 month period or a longer one is appropriate in the specific case.

Role of Private Commercial Establishments in CME/CPD

CME Providers and CME/CPD organizers may use the resources provided by pharmaceutical firms and other private establishments. However, the primary responsibility for the activity should be borne by the CME Provider, the sponsor's role being only a resource supplier.

The organizer of the activity is responsible for the announcements, participant lists, attendance certificates and evaluation reports. The CME Center will have communications only with the CME Provider or with the CME/CPD organizer, and will not entertain any queries regarding the activity from the sponsors or other parties providing support.

References

1. Kuwait Institute for Medical Specialization. *MPC Program with Learning Sites for Health Professionals*. Kuwait: Kuwait Institute for Medical Specialization; 2006.
2. Kuwait Institute for Medical Specialization. *CME Center Webpage*. Kuwait: Kuwait Institute for Medical Specialization; 2006. Available from: URL: <http://www.kims.org.kw/cme>