

Quick Tips on the accreditation of online learning



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Quick Tips for Credit Requirements:

1. For The College of Family Physicians of Canada Mainpro-M1: Activities eligible for Mainpro-M1 credits are Group Learning Activities such as conferences, courses, workshops, scientific assemblies, lectures and seminars that have been reviewed and approved according to the Mainpro-M1 accreditation criteria. (Courses that meet the requirements for U of T sponsorship meet the accreditation criteria for Mainpro-M1.)
2. For The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada Section 1: Accredited Group Learning Activities (education sessions produced by accredited providers of CPD activities). They include workshops, meetings, education sessions within conferences, courses, and online CME provided or sponsored by a CME provider, which is accredited by the Maintenance of Certification (MOC) program.
3. For the American Medical Association Physicians Recognition Award Category 1: Known as Enduring Materials, electronic activities must comply with all standards for live Category 1 activities.

Elements required to meet the requirements for Mainpro-M1, MOC Section 1 and AMA Category 1 credits for online educational programs.

1. The faculty member must complete the course proposal form, requesting U of T sponsorship of the program. Note: The commercial support policy applies, as does the requirement to charge a fee to all participants. Part of the approval process involves having three potential participants in the program go through the online learning materials and provide feedback, including the length of time it took to complete the program/module. This feedback is used in assigning the number of credits per program, section or module.
2. In order to meet the “group” requirement of both MOC Section 1 and Mainpro-M1 approval, there must be an opportunity for communication between the teacher and the learners as a group. Learners must be able to ask questions of the teacher and the answers must be available for viewing by ALL learners. To accomplish this, one would likely set up an electronic bulletin board where questions and answers may be viewed by everyone. Alternatively, questions could be sent to the organizer who would forward them to the relevant teacher. The organizer would then have to post the questions and answers on a site to allow other participants to view the dialogue. Up to 25% of the total learning time must be made available for interaction. Faculty should advise course participants of the days when he/she will be available to participate in discussions. Since teachers must be available to respond to questions, the approval period for such programs is usually very short (less than three months).
3. Once a discussion is closed, faculty should provide feedback to participants, which summarizes the discussion and conclusions and offers a guide to further reading.
4. Verifying participation: Participants must be able to register, pay and receive a tuition receipt. There must be a method of tracking participation in the program. This is usually achieved by directing learners to a web site where they would log on to register and to complete a short test based on the materials presented. The College of Family Physicians stipulates that participants must have logged onto the course site at least twice over the length of the course.