



Creating a Representative Scientific Planning Committee

What is it?

Representative Scientific Planning Committees help ensure that the educational needs of all segments of the target audience are identified and appropriately addressed and are required for the accreditation of your program. They also ensure the topic and content of CPD activities are relevant to the practice needs of the target audience. Scientific Planning Committee members work with the Program or Conference Director to develop and interpret learning needs assessments, choose effective learning and teaching methods, clarify curricular goals and specific learning objectives, select speakers and faculty, choose an appropriate venue, and develop evaluation questions or outcome measures. They also help ensure fiscal responsibility and transparency relating to funding and influence or bias.

The First Formal Step

Forming a Representative Scientific Planning Committee is one of the first formal steps in strategic planning and the development of a CPD Program. Representatives can be selected from:

- Learners or members of the target audience
- Speakers
- Content experts
- Educational planners
- Administrators
- Librarians
- Patients and/or members of patients' families

Reflecting the Target Audience

The Scientific Planning Committee should reflect appropriate representation of the target audience.

Questions to ask in forming a committee would include:

- Who is the target audience?
- Is it a specific discipline? Is it comprised of differing professions or disciplines such as physicians, nurse practitioners, social workers or pharmacists?
- Is the committee comprised of people from diverse practices (academic, urban, rural, community)?
- From a range of professional training levels? (fellows, residents, practicing professionals)

If the answer is "yes" to any of these questions, the planning committee requires representation from each relevant category.

We also recommend that you consider broad interpretations of equity, ensuring representation in sex, gender, racial identity etc.).

Questions? Comments? Suggestions? Contact one of our Educational Consultants at quicktips@utoronto.ca

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Please note: both the College of Family Physicians and the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons stipulate that a member of their college must be on the Scientific Planning Committee to receive MainPro+ or Maintenance of Certification (MOC) accreditation, respectively.

Scientific Planning Committee members must provide full disclosure by providing personal information regarding potential conflict of interest. Industry or sponsor representatives should not be members of the Scientific Planning Committee nor should they attend meetings of the Committee.

References:

Centre for Interprofessional Education. (2017). 12 Tips for Education Needs Assessments through an Interprofessional Lens. Retrieved from <https://ipe.utoronto.ca/tools-resources>

Owen, J. A., & Schmitt, M. H. (2013). Integrating interprofessional education into continuing education: a planning process for continuing interprofessional education programs. *Journal of Continuing Education in the Health Professions*, 33(2), 109-117.

Acknowledgements:

Jane Tipping, MAEd PCC (ICF)
Education Consultant, Post MD Education – Continuing Professional Development

Morag Paton, MEd
Education Research Coordinator, Post MD Education – Continuing Professional Development

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