



Royal College  
of Surgeons  
ADVANCING SURGICAL CARE

# Continuing Professional Development



# Continuing professional development

Continuing professional development (CPD) is a continuing learning process that requires surgeons to maintain their knowledge base and performance throughout their working life. The General Medical Council (GMC) state that CPD enables doctors to maintain and improve their standards across all areas of their practice, including all the professional roles that they currently perform and those that they plan to perform in the future. Gaining a minimum number of CPD points each year is one way in which surgeons are expected to comply with the GMC's revalidation requirements.

In order to assist with the GMC's revalidation requirements, the Royal College of Surgeons of England (RCS) has established a process for reviewing and accrediting surgical events for the purposes of CPD. CPD accreditation from the RCS is a good quality benchmark for surgeons and allied professionals as it ensures that the content of an event is relevant to the continuing professional development of surgeons. It can also assist surgeons in justifying attendance and/or participation in scientific and educational events. The criteria and standards incorporate principles of national and international accreditation of continuing medical education (CME) as developed by the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges and the European Union of Medical Specialists.

The accreditation process is premised on the following aims, which are reflected in the criteria and standards:

- » To ensure that the content of the event is relevant to the continuing professional development of surgeons.
- » To encourage the appropriate evaluation of educational activities.
- » To maintain a published list of accredited activities to aid the completion and submission to annual CPD portfolios.
- » To assist surgeons in justifying attendance and/or participation in scientific and educational events.

# Benefits of CPD Accreditation

Having an event accredited will demonstrate that it meets the standards as defined by the Royal College of Surgeons for CPD, and that it offers a high-quality learning experience. Recognition of these factors may assist in attracting delegates, especially those collecting CPD points for revalidation purposes.

Accredited events will receive the following benefits:

- » use of the strap line 'Accredited by the Royal College of Surgeons of England for up to x number of CPD points';
- » listing on the RCS Accreditation Portal;
- » listing in the RCS *Bulletin*;
- » Listing on the Intercollegiate Surgeons' Portfolio.

# Criteria and standards for accreditation of CPD Activities

The criteria and standards for the accreditation of CPD activities define the evidence required from event organisers for CPD accreditation to be awarded by the Royal College of Surgeons. The organiser of a CPD event must demonstrate compliance with academic and competence standards and also meet organisational requirements.

The RCS Quality Assurance Committee (or a panel thereof) will consider all applications in compliance with the criteria and standards. If appropriate, the event will be accredited and recommended with an appropriate number of CPD points.

Documents and information submitted as part of the CPD accreditation process to the RCS should demonstrate that the event meets the following criteria:

## Organiser's details

There should be a clear statement indicating the organiser's experience in conducting educational/scientific activities, the frequency of educational activities conducted and the number of similar activities conducted in the past.

There should be a clear statement providing information about the facilities and organisational arrangements made for the activity.

The organiser's address and invoicing address (if different) should be provided.

## Target audience

There should be a clearly defined target audience. The activity should be predominantly aimed at surgeons (within surgical specialties/subspecialties) or professionals allied to surgery.

In line with GMC guidance, it is not a requirement of those in training grades to collect CPD points. As such, the RCS will not review events aimed purely at those in training grades.

## Learning aims

There should be clearly defined learning aims that reflect the overall purpose of the activity. This information should clearly indicate how the activity contributes to the continuing professional development of surgeons.

Aims are general statements that briefly outline the content of the activity. There should be a brief description of the intent, intellectual challenge and skills development. Aims are the kind of statements that might be used in advertising materials.

To describe what the activity offers, it is appropriate to use terms such as 'provide', 'develop', 'enable' or 'assist', and to refer to the learning opportunities that are offered to participants. There should be at least one defined learning aim.

## Programme structure and content

There should be a detailed statement outlining the structure and content of the programme. Each topic and subtopic should be given with a reference to any materials, products or technologies used by presenter(s) or facilitator(s).

A full timetable listing educational and other programme activities should be provided.

## Learning outcomes

There should be clearly defined learning outcomes that clearly show how the attendee would benefit from the event in professional terms. A learning outcome is a statement of what a participant is expected to know, understand and be able to do at the end of a period of learning and of how the learning is to be demonstrated. The learning outcomes should be measurable. There should be at least two defined learning outcomes.

## Delivery methods

Delivery methods should be appropriate to the learning outcomes that were set for the participants. There should be a clear statement of what delivery methods are used (lectures, presentations, discussions, master classes, etc).

## Assessment

It should be stated whether there is any form of assessment used within the educational programme of the activity and, if there is, a clear description of this assessment should be provided.

## Teaching staff qualifications

There should be a statement about the qualifications and expertise of the facilitators/presenters/other teaching staff demonstrating that they are qualified to deliver their aspects of the programme.

## Quality assurance

There should be a clear statement outlining how the organiser will conduct an evaluation of the activity. A well-defined quality assurance process is integral to receiving CPD accreditation.

If an organiser is applying for CPD accreditation for the first time, a detailed description of the evaluation should be included. For organisers who have run their event previously, the results of any previously conducted evaluation should be included in the application.

## Commercial sponsorship

There should be a clear statement of assurance that the educational programme of the activity is not inappropriately influenced or biased by commercial organisations. Where commercial sponsorship takes place, full details should be provided, including details of any input that the sponsor has into the educational aspects of the activity.

## Attendance register

The organiser should maintain an attendance register and retain the list of participants for a period of 24 months. The attendance register should be provided to the RCS upon request.

## Faculty declaration of interest

The organiser is required to ask the event's faculty to provide a declaration regarding any interest they may have relating to the event, and make each faculty's declaration available at the event.

# Conditions for CPD accreditation

Once accreditation has been granted the organiser of the accredited event will be subject to the terms and conditions outlined below.

## 1. Accreditation validity

Accreditation will only be valid for the specified activity/event unless otherwise stated. There is no automatic renewal of the RCS accreditation. Once accreditation has expired, an organiser must apply for accreditation for any subsequent activities/events.

## 2. Third party accreditation

Accreditation from the RCS is not transferrable. Where an event is accredited by the RCS and is then franchised, the franchisee cannot state that the event is accredited by the RCS. The organiser of the franchised event must apply for CPD Accreditation itself.

## 3. Statements regarding accreditation

Once the RCS has acknowledged an application and (where applicable) the administration fee payment has been received, applicants may advertise their event prior to receiving full accreditation by stating: 'Accreditation has been sought from The Royal College of Surgeons of England'.

Once applicants have received a confirmation letter stating that their activity has been accredited and (where applicable) full payment has been received, the following statement can be made: 'Accredited by the Royal College of Surgeons of England for up to x number of CPD points'.

## 4. RCS logo

The College does not provide use of its badge, logo or crest for the purposes of CPD accreditation. The initials 'RCS', the words 'The Royal College of Surgeons of England', and the RCS 'eagle' logo are all registered trademarks and may not be used without the written consent from the College.

## 5. Quality assurance

The RCS Quality Assurance Department reserves the right to send a representative to review any event that has received CPD accreditation.

## 6. Copyright

Any materials distributed to delegates/participants must comply with legal requirements and state that copyright has been obtained, where necessary. It is illegal to use the published work of others by photocopying from books, journals, periodicals and the internet without permission. Further information can be obtained from:

The Copyright Licensing Agency, 90 Tottenham Court Road, London W1T 4LP  
Tel: 020 7631 5555  
Fax: 020 7631 5500  
Email: [cla@cla.co.uk](mailto:cla@cla.co.uk)  
[www.cla.co.uk](http://www.cla.co.uk).

A useful overview of copyright, including frequently asked questions and any changes in the law, can be obtained from: [www.patent.gov.uk/copy/](http://www.patent.gov.uk/copy/).

It is the responsibility of applicants to check that copyright is obtained and any breach of this requirement may allow the RCS at its discretion to withdraw accreditation.

## 7. Equal opportunities and the Disability Discrimination Act

All event organisers must comply with the relevant equality legislation.

## 8. Health and safety

All venues must comply with relevant health and safety legislation.

## 9. Limitation of accreditation

The RCS must be informed if any significant changes are made to the structure, programme, educational content or to those delivering the activity. The RCS retains the right to withdraw CPD accreditation for an activity at any time, for any reason, including one or more of the following reasons:

- » significant changes to educational content;
- » significant changes to the presentation format;
- » failure to disclose to the College any conflict of interest on the part of the organiser, provider or speakers;
- » misuse of any branding, wording or insignia of the RCS.

# Frequently asked questions

## What is continuing professional development?

Continuing professional development (CPD) is a continuing learning process that requires surgeons to maintain their knowledge base and performance throughout their working life.

## Who can apply for CPD accreditation?

Any event organiser or provider of educational or scientific activities that aid the development of competent surgeons or those from allied health professions can apply for CPD accreditation. These include providers of conferences, courses, lectures, seminars, master-classes, study days, training events, presentations and e-learning resources.

## How do I apply for CPD accreditation?

In order to apply, an event organiser must register with the Accreditation Portal at <http://accreditation.rcseng.ac.uk/> and complete an application under 'continuing professional development'.

## Why apply for CPD accreditation?

Having an event accredited will demonstrate that the event meets the standards as defined by the RCS for the purposes of CPD, and that it offers a high-quality learning experience that will aid the professional development of surgeons or those in related fields. Recognition of these factors will assist in attracting attendees.

Details of all accredited events will also be listed on the College Accreditation Portal.

## What is the CPD accreditation process?

Applicants must complete an application form to demonstrate that the event complies with the RCS criteria and standards for CPD. Any additional information including previous participant evaluation (where available) should be submitted. Once submitted, the application will be reviewed by a panel drawn from the RCS Quality Assurance Committee.

## How long does the CPD accreditation process take?

Once an application has been submitted, it will initially be reviewed by the RCS Quality Assurance Team. Any queries that they have will usually be communicated to the event organiser within two working days. The application is then passed to the RCS Quality Assurance Committee, or panel thereof. It usually takes 10 working days to receive a recommendation from the panel. Additional time may be required if the panel have any specific queries relating to an application. Event organisers are therefore advised to apply for CPD Accreditation as far in advance of their event as possible.

The RCS charges a late processing fee for applications which are submitted within 10 working days of the event running.



## How long does CPD accreditation last for?

CPD accreditation is usually only valid for a single event. The criteria and standards state that 'Accreditation will only be valid for the specified activity/event unless otherwise stated. There is no automatic renewal of the RCS accreditation. Once accreditation has expired, an organiser must apply for accreditation for any subsequent activities/events'. However, if it is anticipated that there will be several instances of the same event within a short time frame, the event organiser should discuss this with the Accreditation Manager before they apply for CPD accreditation.

## Will approved posts be publicised?

Details of all accredited events will be listed on the Accreditation Portal at <http://accreditation.rcseng.ac.uk/Home/InfoAccredited>. Applications that are accredited well in advance of the event running will be published in the *Bulletin* of the Royal College of Surgeons of England, which is distributed to 18,000 active and retired surgeons and is freely available online.

## How many points will I receive for CPD accreditation?

The RCS will review each event in isolation. However, the RCS normally recommends one CPD point per hour of educational activity up to a maximum of six points per day or three points per half day.

## Can I use the College badge, logo or crest?

The RCS does not provide use of its badge, logo or crest for the purposes of CPD accreditation.

## Do I have to pay a fee?

The RCS does charge a processing and accreditation fee in certain instances. The fee structure is listed on the RCS Accreditation Portal at: <http://accreditation.rcseng.ac.uk/Home/Fees>. If you have any queries about whether you would be required to pay a fee, please contact the Accreditation Manager on 020 7869 6236/6221.

## When do I have to pay the fee?

The processing fee is payable upon submission of an application for CPD accreditation. The Accreditation Portal will direct you to a payment screen where you can either pay by card, select to pay by cheque or receive an invoice. If you select the invoice option, an invoice will be sent to you by email. Payment of the accreditation fee is requested once confirmation of CPD accreditation has been provided. The RCS asks that all invoices are paid within 30 days.

## Can I apply for CPD accreditation if my activity is an online resource or an e-learning package?

Yes. Please contact the Accreditation Manager at:

[cpdaccreditationsite@rcseng.ac.uk](mailto:cpdaccreditationsite@rcseng.ac.uk) or on 020 7869 6236/6221 to receive a specific application form for e-resources.



### **Can I apply for CPD accreditation retrospectively?**

No. CPD accreditation must be applied for prospectively.

### **Where can I find further information on CPD accreditation from the RCS?**

Further information can be found on the RCS website at <http://www.rcseng.ac.uk> or by contacting the Accreditation Manager at [qa@rcseng.ac.uk](mailto:qa@rcseng.ac.uk) or on 020 7869 6236/6221.