



**CRITERIA AND GUIDELINES
FOR ACCREDITORS**

FEBRUARY 2010

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Continuing professional development (CPD) serves to maintain and enhance the knowledge, skills and ethical attitudes of practitioners so as to facilitate good quality of health care. CPD should meet an educational and developmental need and provide an effective learning experience for the participants. Professional Boards may delegate this function of accrediting service providers **and activities** to Accreditors with the mutual agreement of the Accreditor.

1. **Accreditors** are groups or institutions appointed by a Professional Board on the basis that they meet the criteria set out by the HPCSA CPD Committee. The role of the Accreditor is to review and approve applications for the provision of CPD activities (within its profession's ambit) by organizations and individuals without accredited service provider status; to monitor these activities; and to revise continuing education units (CEUs) allocated where the provider failed to comply with the rules and regulations of the CPD guidelines. Professional Boards may delegate their responsibility for accrediting service providers to Accreditors with the mutual agreement of the Accreditor. The criteria and processes to be followed as well as the procedures for record keeping has been developed by the HPCSA CPD Committee in consultation with the Accreditors and are contained in the **Criteria and Guidelines for Accreditors** document. These guidelines enable the Accreditors to standardise the process of accreditation and to fulfil their mandate effectively and timeously.

Accreditors who have been approved by a Professional Board will continue to function for the duration of the Board's term of office. Potential Accreditors should apply to the relevant Professional Boards for registration as an Accreditor on Form CPD4. Professional Boards shall, within their first year of office, review the existing Accreditors and appoint new Accreditors or re-appoint the existing Accreditors for a further period of five years.

2. The role of the Accreditor is
 - (a) to review applications for –
 - i. accreditation of accredited service providers if the function was delegated to them;
 - ii. applications for provision of Level 1 or 2 CPD activities by service providers according to the guidelines for service providers wishing to offer CPD activities;
 - (b) to monitor compliance with the guidelines;
 - (c) to revise continuing education units (CEUs) allocated where the provider failed to comply with the rules and regulations of the HPCSA CPD System;
 - (d) to review Accredited Service Providers and submit a report to the HPCSA CPD Committee noting whether the following was adhered to:
 - a list of all activities during the year was provided;
 - all ethical activities were mentioned;
 - relevance of activities to the field of practice;
 - has an activity been presented more than once to the same audience; and

- any problems experienced.

(e) to investigate complaints against Accredited Service Providers.

(f) to submit accredited CPD activities to the HPCSA for uploading on the website.

2. All Professional Boards will appoint Accreditors. Applications for accreditor status should be submitted to the relevant Professional Board (Form CPD 4). Boards will submit the list of their Accreditors to the HPCSA CPD Committee. After the election of new board members the Professional Boards will, within the first year, review the existing Accreditors and appoint new Accreditors or re-appoint the existing Accreditors for a further period of five years.
3. The following bodies qualify for accreditor status, namely: (a) Tertiary institutions involved in health sciences education, (b) Education committees of Professional Boards, and (c) *Bona fide* professional associations (excluding associations primarily involved with managed care).
4. The appropriate infrastructure must be provided by an Accreditor to facilitate proper functioning and administration of records. This infrastructure includes access to the internet; computer with database; e-mail and fax facilities; and dedicated administrative support.
5. The Accreditor should establish a designated Accreditation Committee to facilitate good governance and accountability. A record of all applications received, as well as their outcomes and a record of the minutes of all Accreditor Committee Meetings is to be kept for at least three years.
6. To avoid conflict of interest, members of Accreditation Committees need to take cognizance of the Ethical Rules and the Policy on Undesirable Business Practice at all times.
7. In the case of straightforward applications where discussion is not necessary, the CEUs allocated by the designated person will be noted formally by the Committee at its next regular meeting. However, the accreditor must ensure that the proposed activity is free of undesirable commercial influence. Therefore the proposed activity should be ethically acceptable, of educational value, should provide a balanced view and must not be unduly promotional.
8. In the case of contentious or problematic applications where the designated committee cannot reach a decision (or in the case of an appeal by the provider), such an application, with supporting documentation, should be referred to the HPCSA CPD Committee.
9. Where an Accreditor stands to gain financially from recommending an application for approval, in order to avoid conflict of interest, such application should be referred to an independent Accreditor for review. This would exclude formal course material in the case of Universities or Institutes of Technology, and short courses/CPD activities approved by an independent quality assurance committee within the institution or organization.
10. The Accreditor should require the provider to indicate whether or not the application was submitted for accreditation to another Accreditor and if so, what the outcome was.
11. Levies for the accreditation of activities/accreditation of providers should be within approved guidelines as agreed to by the HPCSA CPD Committee and the National Accreditors Forum, in consultation with the relevant Professional Board. The Guidelines on the Accreditation fees will be prescribed by the HPCSA CPD Committee and may be audited on an annual basis.

12. An Accreditor will nominate a representative to the National Accreditors Forum.
13. The role of the National Accreditors Forum is to advise the HPCSA CPD Committee on (a) all problems and critical incidents brought to their attention, (b) policy matters with regard to the HPCSA CPD System, (c) standardization of accreditation activities, and (d) peer review of other Accreditors.
14. The HPCSA CPD Committee may randomly conduct quality assurance checks of Accreditors. Accreditor status may be reviewed and/or revoked after such quality check(s) or should any critical incident be brought to the HPCSA's attention.
15. Problems encountered, or complaints received regarding the handling of CPD activities, quality of the lectures, attendance control, issuing of certificates, commercial aims, etc., should be referred to the HPCSA CPD Committee of the HPCSA either electronically to cpd@hpcsa.co.za or in hard copy to HPCSA CPD Committee, P O Box 205, PRETORIA, 0001.

INFORMATION FOR ACCREDITORS PERTAINING TO CEU ALLOCATION

1. An Accreditor must keep a record of the following information about each activity to be presented for Continuing Professional Development purposes before the accreditation number and CEUs are published:
 - Name and number of the accredited provider who presented the activity;
 - The topic of the activity;
 - The level of the activity;
 - The number of CEUs for the activity;
 - The dates (start-finish) the activity was presented;
 - An attendance record that will reflect the names and HPCSA numbers of all the attendees; and
 - The programme of the activity/application for mentoring and supervision, to enable the Professional Board to carry out quality control procedures.
2. Accreditors must have a record keeping system where all records described in (1) will be kept for a period of three years after the activity was presented/completed.

Guidelines for allocation of CEUs for Levels

- Accreditors should obtain programmes for all activities where applicable. The programmes should be filed with the complete record of each activity.
- Accreditors must have complete records of all activities before the activity takes place.
- Accreditors must request that providers present certificates of attendance to attendees at the end of a once off activity or an activity that will be presented in one day.
- Individual applications or mentoring and supervision must be handed in to an Accreditor before an accreditation number may be allocated. The Accreditor must file this application with the completed record of the activity.
- Quality assurance should be performed.

Guidelines for the accreditation of CEUs for activities on Ethics, Human Rights and Medical Law

South Africa is defined in the first chapter of our constitution as being a democratic, independent republic based upon the principles of protecting dignity, human rights and the rule of law. Chapter two is a bill of rights which further defines these human rights including the rights to health care, food, water and social security. These are all issues intimately linked to the health care profession.

As health care professionals working in South Africa it is appropriate that practitioners should be familiar with the acts, regulations and guidelines that govern our practice. Furthermore professionals should have an understanding of the bioethical principles that determine how we perform research and interact with patients and society. Health care is a constantly advancing field and with these advances conflicts often arise within the arenas of politics, law, religion, philosophy and economics. An understanding of bioethics helps us to recognise, admit and sometimes resolve these conflicts.

The allocation of specific CEU's to ethics, human rights and medical law is an acknowledgement of how important these issues are to our practice. Practitioners are further encouraged to obtain these units with the allocation of double units as compared to CPD in other fields.

It is important however that CPD activities on these topics focus on issues of patient care. Ethics talks for instance can cover a wide range of topics but accreditation is generally awarded to talks concerning the principles of autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, justice and human dignity. Medical law activities should focus on the responsibilities of professionals and the rights of patients. For further guidance the HPCSA offers a range of guidelines on these topics and they are available on the website -www.hpcsa.co.za.
