Office of Continuing Education (OCPE)
Joint Provider Guidance Document

May 2021

The following is an outline of the CE Activity process, specifically for joint providers. Use this in conjunction with the Speaker/Presenter Guidance document in planning your CE Activity.
The diagram below outlines the process for a CE activity from the initial planning through the final invoicing. The subsequent pages will review information for each stage of the process.
The **Joint Provider Agreement/MOU** is an agreement between the Joint Provider Organization and the Office of Continuing Education (OCPE) specifying the responsibilities for each party, fees, contacts, and timelines. The Agreement is typically for a one-year period from July 1 – June 30. An agreement/MOU must be executed prior submitting the CE Activity Application form.

In 2021, ACPE announced the adoption the **ACCME Standards for Integrity and Independence in Accredited Continuing Education**. See Attachment A for more information regarding these standards and the implications for joint providers.

In order to comply with the Standards for Integrity and Independence in Accredited Continuing Education, members of the Joint Provider planning committee will be required to submit a disclosure and updated CV yearly at the time of the renewal for the MOU (July 1) or as changes are made throughout the July 1 – June 30 timeframe. Joint Provider planning committee members can submit their disclosures and CVs to continuinged@rx.umaryland.edu.

Joint Providers are responsible for **engaging with the speakers/presenters** throughout the planning and execution of each CE Activity to ensure compliance with the presentation requirements. Specifically, the Joint Provider will work with their speakers/presenters to ensure the CE activity meets the following prior to application submission:
• Total number of learning objectives do not exceed 1 objective for every 15 minutes of CE activity. If applicable, there are separate learning objectives for pharmacists and pharmacy technicians.

• The learning objectives should be specific, measurable, and use appropriate action verbs that align with the activity type (i.e., knowledge-based versus application-based). See the Speaker/Presenter Guidance Document for more information regarding learning objective and appropriate action verbs.

• Active learning and assessment strategies are planned and address each of the learning objectives. The assessment should include the opportunity for providing feedback to the participants. These strategies will be documented during the application process.

Additional information for speakers/presenters can be found in the Speaker/Presenter Guidance Document.
**Online Application Form:** CE activities should be submitted for approval via the online application form (https://www.pharmacy.umaryland.edu/academics/ce/application-process/) at least 45 days prior to the activity date.

Once submitted, the **CE administrator will review the application.** For any issues with the application (e.g., the learning objectives contain inappropriate verbs), the administrator will reach out to the Joint Provider planning committee.

**Any financial relationships must be mitigated** prior to the activity. The CE Administration will contact the Joint Provider planning committee in cases where mitigation is required.

At the completion of the review, OCPE will **submit the activity to ACPE.** An **ADF** is created from the ACPE system. OCPE will send this ADF to the joint provider planning committee and is documentation of approval. Joint Providers should review the ADF and confirm that the information included is correct. The information on the ADF must match how it is written on all activity materials, including but not limited to, announcements, websites, slides, etc.
After an activity has been reviewed/approved, the following materials must be submitted to OCPE by the Joint Provider.

- **Activity Announcement**: The activity announcement must be sent to OCPE for review and approval prior to sending or posting and at least 21 days prior to the activity date. See the Activity Announcement Guidance document for more information regarding requirements and a sample announcement.

- **Slides**: The activity slides must be sent to OCPE at least 14 days prior to the activity date. OCPE may require the slides prior to approval for review if the speaker(s)/presenter(s) has any conflicts or disclosures. Joint Provider should with their speakers/presenters to ensure the slides meets the following prior to application submission
  - References are present and are written in such a way that it is easy for participants to find.
  - Educational materials, such as slides or a handout, are available for participants.
  - Educational materials are free of any undue bias.
  - Educational materials do not violate Copyright law or other intellectual property laws or policies.
  - A conflict of interest disclosure statement appears or is verbally provided, even if there are no relevant financial interests to disclose.
  - Patient confidentiality is maintained where applicable.

Note: The information (e.g., activity title, learning objectives, etc.) in the activity announcement and slides must match the ADF. Please contact OCPE to resolve any discrepancies. This includes activities with multiple presentations. For instance, if you have a ‘Clinical Pearls’ activity with 4
presentations, the title slide must match the title in the ADF. It may have a sub-title with the presentation name, but the slides must also include the title that is written on the ADF.

- **Activity Evaluation Survey**: Unless otherwise discussed, the activity evaluation will be drafted by OCPE. You will receive a link to evaluation along with a completion deadline for participants. If you would like to add custom questions to the evaluation, contact OCPE for more information.
CE Activities must adhere to the following:

- All recommendations for patient care in accredited continuing education must be based on current science, evidence, and clinical reasoning, while giving a fair and balanced view of diagnostic and therapeutic options.

- All scientific research referred to, reported, or used in accredited education in support or justification of a patient care recommendation must conform to the generally accepted standards of experimental design, data collection, analysis, and interpretation.

- Although accredited continuing education is an appropriate place to discuss, debate, and explore new and evolving topics, these areas need to be clearly identified as such within the program and individual presentations. It is the responsibility of accredited providers and joint providers to facilitate engagement with these topics without advocating for, or promoting, practices that are not, or not yet, adequately based on current science, evidence, and clinical reasoning.

- Content cannot be included in accredited education if it advocates for unscientific approaches to diagnosis or therapy, or if the education promotes recommendations, treatment, or manners of practicing healthcare that are determined to have risks or dangers that outweigh the benefits or are known to be ineffective in the treatment of patients.

Additionally, CE Activities must contain active learning and assessments. The active learning may be different or can be the same as the assessments. Assessments must contain correct/incorrect feedback to the participants including the rationale for the correct response. Speakers/presenters are
required to identify their active learning strategies, assessment strategies, and feedback to the
participants in the CE Activity Application form. See the Speaker/Presenter Guidance document for
more information on active learning and assessment strategies and requirements. Joint Providers
should engage with their speakers/presenters to identify the active learning and assessment strategies
and activities.
Activity Evaluation: At the completion of the CE Activity, the Joint Provider (unless otherwise discussed) should send the link to the activity evaluation and deadlines to the attendees along with the deadline for completion. The link should only be sent to those who qualify to receive credit (i.e., met the criteria for successful completion).

Once the activity evaluation survey has closed, OCPE will pull the results and send an aggregate summary to the Joint Provider. The summary for pharmacists and technicians will be provided separately.

CPE Monitor/NABP Uploads: All pharmacist and pharmacy technician CE credits will be uploaded directly to CPE Monitor. The uploads are completed after the activity evaluation has closed. ACPE requires uploads be completed within 60 days of the activity date. After 60 days, we are unable to make additional uploads. In the event of an error while uploading, OCPE will contact the attendee via email to confirm their information.

Attendance List: The attendance list should be sent by the Joint Provider to OCPE after the activity date.
**Invoicing:** OCPE will send an invoice as well as the back-up documentation outlining the fees included on the invoice. The invoice will be sent via email to the contact indicated in the MOU agreement.

Invoices are due 30 days from the invoice date and can be paid via check, ACH/Wire Payment, or Credit Card. Instructions for payment are included on the invoice.

Please be sure to reference the invoice # on the invoice when submitting your payment. If submitting payment via check, please include a copy of the top portion of the invoice with your payment.
BACKGROUND: The new Standards for Integrity and Independence in Accredited Continuing Education evolved from the Standards for Commercial Support: Standards to Ensure Independence in CME Activities℠, which were first adopted in 1992 and updated in 2004. The goal of the revision process was to streamline, clarify, and modernize the Standards, and ensure their continued relevance and effectiveness in the changing healthcare environment.

SUMMARY OF CHANGES: Here are the key changes to the final Standards:

1. Disclosure
   • The disclosure period was extended from 12 months to 24 months.
   • The requirement that individuals disclose the financial relationships of their spouse/partner was removed.

2. Commercial support
   • The proposed requirement prohibiting joint providers from paying or reimbursing expenses to individuals such as faculty was removed.

3. Ancillary marketing and nonaccredited activities
   • ACCME defined how much time (30-minute interval) must separate accredited activities and marketing or nonaccredited activities if they are held in the same educational space.

Standard 1: Ensure Content Is Valid
   • Clarifies that education is an appropriate place to explore new and evolving topics but must not advocate for, or promote, those approaches.

IMPLICATIONS FOR JOINT PROVIDERS:
   • Education must be fair and balanced.
   • Must not advocate or make recommendations that are not adequately supported by evidence.

Standard 2: Prevent Commercial Bias and Marketing in Accredited Continuing Education
   • New: Prohibits faculty from marketing or selling their products or services.
   • New: Accredited providers must receive consent from learners before sharing their names or contact information with ineligible companies or their agents.

IMPLICATIONS FOR JOINT PROVIDERS:
Must ensure all decisions are made without influence or involvement of ineligible companies.
Must not promote or sell products or services that serve their own interests.
Must not share names or contact info of learners with ineligible companies or its agents without explicit consent (don’t specify how, idea is to make sure learner is aware and gives permission yes or no without punishment) of the individual learner.
Do not need to ask learners if they perceive any marketing or commercial bias during the education.

**Standard 3: Identify, Mitigate, and Disclose Relevant Financial Relationships**

- New: Accredited providers must collect disclosure information from those in control of content about all their financial relationships with ineligible companies. It is the accredited provider’s responsibility to determine which relationships are relevant.
- New: Individuals must disclose relationships with ineligible companies within the prior 24 months (changed from the current requirement of 12 months).
- Removed: Individuals no longer need to disclose the financial relationships of their spouse or partner.
- Clarifies that research grants from ineligible companies are financial relationships that should be disclosed, even if the funds go to the researcher’s institution and not to the individual researcher.
- Clarifies that owners or employees of ineligible companies must be excluded from controlling content.
- Simplified guidance on identifying, mitigating, and disclosing relevant financial relationships.
- New: When disclosing relevant financial relationships to learners, accredited providers must include a statement that all relevant financial relationships have been mitigated.
- New: Exception for education that is nonclinical or where the learner group is in control of content, such as spontaneous case conversations among peers, or self-directed learning.

**IMPLICATIONS FOR JOINT PROVIDERS:**

- Collect Information about ALL financial relationships with ineligible companies in prior 24 months
- No minimal financial threshold
- Must disclose regardless of their view of relevance of relationship to education session.
- Must include Name of ineligible company and Nature of relationship.
- Exclude owners or employees of ineligible companies from planning and controlling content with 3 exceptions:
  1. Content is not related to business lines or products of their company
  2. Content is limited to basic science research; pre-clinical, drug discovery, methods of research, AND do not make recommendations.
3. When participating as technicians to teach the safe and proper use of medical devices AND do not recommend whether or when a device is used (for example, CT scanner tech can teach how to use device).

- Need to review information and determine which financial relationships are relevant (if the educational content an individual can control is related to the business lines or products of the ineligible company then it is relevant).
- Mitigate relevant financial relationships – Take steps to prevent all those with relevant financial relationships from inserting commercial bias into content. Steps for planners will be different than for faculty and would occur before planning begins.
- Document the steps taken to mitigate the relevant financial relationships.
- Disclose all relevant financial relationships to learners which must include Name of individuals, names of ineligible companies, nature of relationship, and a statement that all relationships have been mitigated.

**EXCEPTIONS:** Do not need to identify, mitigate, or disclose if

1. Education is non-clinical – leadership for example. Only care about clinical care recommendations
2. The learner group is in control of content – spontaneous education only; Regularly scheduled series like case conference, grand rounds, tumor boards are planned events and are not exceptions.
3. Self-directed education where the learner controls their educational goals and reports on changes that resulted, such as learning from teaching, remediation, or personal development plan.

**Standard 4: Manage Commercial Support Appropriately**

- Simplified guidance about decision-making, documentation, accountability, and disclosure to learners.
- Clarifies that accredited providers can sign onto an existing commercial support agreement.

**IMPLICATIONS FOR JOINT PROVIDERS:**

- Only applies if you take commercial support.
- Only applies to accredited CE that receives financial or in-kind support from ineligible companies.
- If choose to accept commercial support, then need to ensure that education remains independent of the ineligible companies.
- The proposed change that would have prohibited joint providers from reimbursing faculty expenses using commercial support was removed from the final standard.
- Do not need a policy on how we handle commercial support

**Standard 5: Manage Ancillary Activities Offered in Conjunction with Accredited Continuing Education**
• Simplified, updated guidance about the separation of accredited and nonaccredited education, as well as the separation of education and marketing by ineligible companies.
• Clarifies that learners must be able to easily distinguish between accredited education and other activities, such as nonaccredited continuing education and marketing by ineligible companies.
• New: There must be a 30-minute interval in the educational space between accredited activities and marketing or nonaccredited activities.

IMPLICATIONS FOR JOINT PROVIDERS:
• Only applies when there is marketing by ineligible companies or non-accredited education associated with accredited CE.
• Important difference is the 30-minute time frame between accredited and non-accredited activities.
• Ineligible companies may not provide access to, or distribute, accredited education to learners.
• Definition of educational space – where the learner is engaging in the education with the materials and faculty. When it is live, we don’t want the learner to interact with non-accredited information at the same time and in the same space/room. OK to have the two at same time but in different rooms.