

The Hong Kong College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists

Principles and Guidelines on Continuing Medical Education and Continuous Professional Development (CME/CPD)

Effective from 1 January 2011

1. Objective and Definition

It is the objective of the College to promote the advancement of the art and science of medicine, foster the development of postgraduate medical education and continuing medical education as well as promoting the improvement of health care for Hong Kong citizens. The purpose of CME/CPD is to meet these objectives.

CME/CPD is a continuous life-long learning process for Academy Fellows and comprises activities that serve to:

- a) maintain, develop or increase the knowledge, skills and competencies relevant to the practice of Academy Fellows that may change over the years;
- b) enhance professional performance to enable the delivery of quality professional care and safe standard of practice to the patients, and public that Academy Fellows serve, and;
- c) ensure that Academy Fellows will remain competent throughout their professional career.

2. General Principles

- a) The purpose of this document is to lay down broad principles for the Hong Kong College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (HKCOG) and Academy Fellows to follow. This framework has built in enough flexibility to cater for individual professional, educational and development needs.
- b) CME/CPD programmes established by HKCOG must be clearly defined and approved by the Education Committee of the Academy. HKCOG will make efforts to facilitate and to accommodate the participation from its Academy Fellows.
- c) Any changes to established CME/CPD programmes require the approval of the Education Committee of the Academy.
- d) The HKCOG will submit a summary of its Academy Fellows' total number of CME/CPD points to the Education Committee of the Academy within 6 weeks after the end of the first and second year of a cycle, and within 4 weeks after the end of the cycle to facilitate timely return to Medical Council.
- e) The HKCOG will report to the Education Committee of the Academy any Fellow of the Academy who fails to comply with CME/CPD requirements at the end of the cycle. The Education Committee of the Academy will then consider sanction.

- f) To ensure compliance, the Education Committee of the Academy may recommend to the Council of the Academy the suspension of an Academy Fellow who has failed to comply with CME/CPD requirements by the end of the cycle, unless the Committee is satisfied that there are relevant and exceptional circumstances.
- g) Academy Fellows, residing in Hong Kong or overseas, must fulfill the full requirements of the CME/CPD programme by the end of each cycle
- h) It is the duty of Academy Fellows to keep themselves up-to-date in all areas of their practice. Academy Fellows are encouraged to devise a personal professional educational and development portfolio to help them monitor and achieve the objectives of CME/CPD. The Academy and HKCOG would provide assistance if and when required.
- i) Academy Fellows must respond to call for CME/CPD returns from Academy/HKCOG, and submit all returns with required proof within the defined period of time.
- j) Academy Fellows failing to submit return on time will be regarded as CME/CPD non-compliant. Subsequent request to review late submissions may be subject to an administrative fee to be determined by the Academy/HKCOG.
- k) All notices sent to the address last provided by an Academy Fellow to the Academy/HKCOG will be deemed to have been received by that Academy Fellow, and it is the responsibility of an Academy Fellow to update the Academy/HKCOG of his contact address whenever it is changed.

3. **The Cycle**

- a) A cycle of CME/CPD assessment shall consist of 3 years.
- b) The Academy adopted fixed CME/CPD cycles from 1 January 2005. Academy Fellows will commence their first cycle on the first day of the month immediately after their admission to Academy Fellowship; and the required CME/CPD points for the first cycle will be counted on pro-rata basis.
- c) If the first cycle is shorter than 3 years:
 - i) normal capping on individual CME/CPD categories will still apply; but
 - ii) the minimum requirements of individual CME/CPD categories, if any, will be waived.
- d) Notwithstanding (b) above, if a doctor has been certified for Specialist Registration and already started a CME/CPD cycle prior to his admission as an Academy Fellow, there will be no change in this CME/CPD requirements of existing cycle.

4. **Requirements for a Cycle**

The minimum CME/CPD requirement is 90 points in a 3-year cycle. CME/CPD points accumulated in excess of the requirement for one cycle cannot be carried forward to the next cycle. HKCOG may recommend to its Academy Fellows a minimum number of points to be achieved each year.

5. **Measurement of Activities**

A point of CME/CPD activity is equivalent to one hour of participation as an attendee in a Formal College Approved Activity (FCAA).

A minimum of 1 hour scheduled time is necessary for an activity to be considered for accreditation as CME activity. The first hour is awarded 1 CME point. Half (1/2) a point is awarded for each subsequent completed half hour.

The HKCOG will decide the number of points to be awarded to activities that normally cannot be accredited on a time basis; and to individual CME/CPD categories taking into consideration the nature of their specialties.

6. **Accredited Activities**

6.1 *Participation as an Attendee in FCAA*

One hour of participation as an attendee at a FCAA is ordinarily awarded 1 point.

- a) No more than 75 points can be awarded for passive participation as an attendee in FCAA in a cycle. Academy Fellows are encouraged to decrease further the CMECPD points gained from passive participation through increasing the proportion of other CMECPD activities.
- b) CME points have to be applied before the activities are held, and the activities must be announced to all Academy Fellows in reasonable interval. Although there may be a limit to the total number of participants (related to physical constraints of the venue), the meeting should be open to all Academy Fellows.
- c) The CME/CPD Committee represents the HKCOG in decisions about award of CME points. The CME/CPD Committee judges according to her understanding about the level of expertise and audience targeted. There is no limit on the number of attendants or venue.
- d) The CME/CPD Committee chairman or his/her delegates may ensure on quality of an activity.

6.2 *Chairing/Presenting at FCAA*

- a) Chairing or presenting at FCAA can be awarded more than 1 point.
- b) 3 points is awarded for chairing / presenting at each FCAA irrespective of the duration. A maximum of 30 points may be earned each year through chairing or presenting at FCAA.

6.3 *Self-study*

- a) Self-study is accepted as a form of CME/CPD.
- b) One hour of self-study is ordinarily awarded 1 point.

- c) Self-study is only accredited with prior approval from HKCOG, and with the necessary evidence that it has been carried out diligently.
- d) No more than 20 Points per year can be awarded to each Academy Fellow from O&G related self-study
- e) Non-O&G related self-studies accepted by the HK Academy of Medicine or HKCOG are recognized. No more than 5 Points per year can be awarded to each Academy Fellow for all non-O&G related activities, including passive participation in meetings and self-studies.

6.4 *Publications*

- a) No more than 10 points can be awarded to each Academy Fellow for any single publication.
- b) Other than text books (thesis will be regarded as text book), papers in indexed journals or journals published by the Academy or its constituent Colleges, no other publication can be awarded any points unless agreement from HKCOG has been obtained prior to publication.
- c) Each Academy Fellow may not earn more than 20 points with publications each year.
- d) No more than two Academy Fellows are allowed to claim points for each case report or letter to editor.
- e) Each chapter of a textbook is considered as one publication.
- f) The CME/CPD Committee should decide on awarding of points to other publications in special conditions.

6.5 *Research*

Research activities are accepted as a form of CME/CPD.

- a) The Academy Fellow states clearly the purpose, design and expectations of the research project and number of points applied.
- b) Points are awarded at acceptance of a research protocol.
- c) No more than 3 Points can be awarded to the principal investigator. No more than 1 Point can be awarded to other investigators.
- d) No more than 6 Points per year can be awarded to Academy Fellow for research.
- e) The CME/CPD Committee may monitor the progress of a program and the Points awarded may be altered accordingly.

6.6 *Development of New Technologies or Services*

The development of new services or technologies is accepted as a form of

CME/CPD.

- a) The Academy Fellow states clearly the purpose, design and expectations of the new technologies or services and number of points applied.
- b) Points are awarded after implementation of new technologies or services.
- c) No more than 3 Points can be awarded to the principal designer. No more than 1 Point can be awarded to other co-workers.
- d) No more than 6 Points per year can be awarded to Academy Fellow for the development of new technologies or services.
- e) The CME/CPD Committee may monitor the progress of a program and the Points awarded may be altered accordingly.

6.7 *Undergraduate and Postgraduate Teaching*

Undergraduate and postgraduate teaching may not be accepted as a form of CME/CPD. Consideration can be given to the development of teaching materials such as PBL cases.

- a) The Academy Fellow may award for development of teaching materials for undergraduate teaching.
- b) No more than 3 Points can be awarded to the each production of teaching material for undergraduate teaching or substantial rewriting of existing materials.
- c) No more than 6 Points per year can be awarded to Fellow for development of teaching material for undergraduate teaching.
- d) The CME/CPD Committee may seek verification from the chairman of the clinical departments and Points to be awarded accordingly.

6.8 *Conducting Examinations*

The participation in HKCOG examinations can be counted for CME/CPD points:-.

- i) Coordinators: 10 points
- ii) Examiners: 10 points
- iii) Observers: 5 points
- iv) Attendance to workshops (SOE): 5 points
- v) Participation in setting/correcting (SOE) questions: 5 points

i, ii, iii, iv & v) will be appointed by the HKCOG.

No more than 10 Points can be awarded for any single examination. An Academy Fellow may not earn more than 20 points each year with examiner activities.

6.9 *Postgraduate Courses*

Attending a course leading to post-graduate qualification can be accepted as a form

of CME/CPD.

- a) No more than 10 Points per year can be awarded to Academy Fellow attending a course leading to post-graduate qualification related to Obstetrics & Gynaecology.
- b) No more than 10 Points per year can be awarded to Academy Fellow for each course.
- c) The CME/CPD Committee determines the relevance of the course to O&G.

6.10 *Development of CME/CPD or Knowledge-Translation Materials*

Participation in development of CME/CPD or knowledge-translation materials for self-study, e-learning and other purposes is accepted as a form of CME/CPD.

- a) No more than 10 Points per article can be awarded to the Academy Fellow developed a CME/CPD materials for self-study or e-learning.
- b) No more than 10 Points per year can be awarded to Academy Fellow for development of CME/CPD materials for self-study or e-learning. No more than 4 points are given to each Academy Fellow who sets up MCQ questions in each issue

6.11 *Quality Assurance, Audits and Activities for Improvement of Patient/Medical Care*

The following are accepted as a form of CME/CPD, and not be counted under 6.1:

- a) Quality assurance activities, such as clinical/surgical/service review and audit, clinical governance, peer review of operative practice, activities that examine and evaluate the clinical care of patients or individual practice;
 - i) The quality assurance activity should be registered in advance to the CME/CPD Committee. The organized meeting should be publicized to all FHKAM(O&G) related to the scope of the activity in reasonable interval.
 - ii) A standardized form to report about the meeting, together with certification of the meeting by the chief organizer with list of attendants of the meeting.
 - iii) For self-organized audit activities, 3 points are allocated to each audit activity upon submission of a standardized form together with results of the audit.
 - iv) No more than 3 Points can be awarded to the principal organizer. No more than 2 Points can be awarded to Academy Fellows presenting in the meeting. One hour of passive participation is ordinarily awarded 1 Point.
 - v) No more than 6 Points per year can be awarded to Academy Fellow for quality assurance and medical audits.

- vi) The CME/CPD Committee chairman or his/her delegates may ensure on quality of an activity.
- b) Participation in mortality and morbidity meetings or structured quality improvement meetings that audit individual or medical practice;
- i) Mortality & Morbidity Meetings should be registered in advance to the CME/CPD Committee. The organized meeting should be publicized to all FHKAM(O&G) related to the scope of the activity in reasonable interval.
 - ii) A standardized form to report about the meeting together with certification of the meeting by the chief organizer with list of attendants of the meeting.
 - iii) For self-organized audit activities, 3 points are allocated to each audit activity upon submission of a standardized form together with results of the audit.
 - iv) No more than 3 Points can be awarded to the principal organizer. No more than 2 Points can be awarded to Academy Fellows presenting in the meeting. One hour of passive participation is ordinarily awarded 1 Point.
 - v) No more than 6 Points per year can be awarded to Academy Fellow for Mortality & Morbidity Meetings.
 - vi) The CME/CPD Committee chairman or his/her delegates may ensure on quality of an activity.
- c) Participation in learning/activities that enhances the ability to practise medicine both as an individual doctor and as part of the health care team eventually leading to improvement of patient management and medical care, e.g. clinical and other skills laboratory learning, simulator and virtual reality learning, patient safety enhancement programme.
- i) CME/CPD points may be awarded to Academy Fellows participating activities for improvement of patient care.
 - ii) One hour of participation in O&G related activities for improvement of patient care is ordinarily accepted as the basic unit of CME/CPD (1 Point).
 - iii) No more than 5 Points per year can be awarded to Academy Fellow for participating activities for improvement of patient care.
 - iv) The CME/CPD Committee determines the relevance of the activity to O&G.

6.12 *Grand Rounds in Training Units*

Participation in accredited grand rounds in training units is accepted as a form of CME/CPD.

- a) One hour of Participation at a Grand Round is ordinarily accepted as the basic unit of CME/CPD (1 Point)
- b) No more than 3 Points can be awarded to the participation in accredited Grand Round.
- c) No more than 10 Points per year can be awarded to the participation in accredited Grand Round.

6.13 *Reviewers of Hong Kong Medical Journal (HKMJ) and Indexed Journals*

Participation in reviewing articles submitted to HKMJ and other indexed journals is accepted as a form of CME/CPD.

- a) No more than 3 Points can be awarded to the participation in reviewing per article.
- b) No more than 10 Points per year can be awarded to the participation in reviewing articles.

6.14 *Hands-on Clinical Attachment Programme*

Hands-on clinical attachment programme to accredited training units of the appropriate specialty is accepted as a form of CME/CPD to enhance/refresh the knowledge and skills of an Academy Fellow in specified areas, or to enable the Academy Fellow to learn new knowledge and skills. Clear learning objectives have to be defined in such attachment programmes, and the programme usually should be over a continuous period lasting one week or longer. Regular weekly attachment over a longer period can also be considered. The normal rotation of duties, or posting changes are not regarded as attachment.

- a) The hand-on clinical attachment should be registered in advance to the CME/CPD Committee.
- b) The CME/CPD Committee represents the HKCOG in decisions about award of CME/CPD points. The CME/CPD Committee judges according to the number of hours involved. One hour of Participation at a Hands-on Clinical Attachment is ordinarily accepted as the basic unit of CME/CPD (1 Point).
- c) No more than 10 Points can be awarded to the participation per attachment.
- d) No more than 10 Points per year can be awarded to the participation for Hands-on Clinical Attachment.

6.15 *Other Non-medical Professional Development Activities*

Participation in other non-medical professional development activities that may facilitate the practice of Academy Fellows, e.g. knowledge and skills relating to relevant laws, information technology, clinic management and interpersonal

communication, is also accepted as a form of CME/CPD.

- a) No more than 5 Points can be awarded to the participation per activity.
- b) No more than 5 Points can be obtained from activities in this category in a cycle.

7. **Maximum and Minimum Points for Activities**

- 7.1 No single FCAA can earn more than 30 passive CME/CPD Points.
- 7.2 The minimum CME/CPD requirement is 90 Points in a 3-year cycle. CME/CPD points accumulated in excess of the requirement for one cycle cannot be carried forward to the next cycle.
- 7.3 No more than 75 Points can be awarded to each Academy Fellow for passive participation in each CME/CPD cycle.
- 7.4 The HKCOG recommends each Academy Fellow to earn a minimum of 20 points each year.

8. **Exemptions**

8.1 *Retired from Active Practice*

- a) The Academy will consider application for CME/CPD exemption from a Fellow only if he has formally submitted a written declaration to the Academy/College that he has retired from active practice in and outside Hong Kong.
- b) A Fellow holding multiple Fellowships cannot claim retirement from active practice for one specialty while still practising the other specialty/ specialties. A Fellow can apply for suspension of a Fellowship for which he chooses not to continue with CME/CPD.
- c) A retired Fellow who subsequently wishes to resume active practice will be required to have obtained at least 90 CME/CPD points within 36 months counting back from the date of application in order to resume medical practice. A pro-rata number of the 90 points required must be obtained within the period between the date of retirement and the date of application for resuming practice. Should a retired Fellow resume medical practice before he can fulfill the CME/CPD requirements as aforementioned, he will lose his status as a retired Fellow and his Academy Fellowship will be suspended accordingly.

8.2 *Acute/Prolonged Illness and Permanent Disability*

- a) An Academy Fellow who falls behind CME/CPD because of acute/prolonged illness or permanent disability can be exempted from the CME/CPD requirements, on condition that he is not in active practice.
- b) When an Academy Fellow recovers from prolonged illness and resumes his medical practice, he will be required to re-start his CME/CPD cycle and to

obtain at least 40 CME/CPD points in the first 12 months of the cycle.

9. **Non-compliance**

9.1 *Non-compliance That Is Remediable*

- a) An Academy Fellow must:
 - i) have achieved not less than two-thirds of the required number of points for a cycle; or
 - ii) be certified to have suffered from a medical condition which the Council of the Academy considers as a reasonable cause for the CME/CPD non-compliance.

The Academy may, at its discretion, accept other conditions if supported by the College of the Fellow on reasonable grounds.

- b) The Academy Fellow must engage in a remedial programme to make up for the deficiency.
- c) The reason for non-compliance and the remedial programme must be endorsed by the Education Committee and Council of the Academy.
- d) The remedial programme must be finished within the time specified by HKCOG. In any case, the remedial programme must be finished within 12 months from the end of the cycle concerned.
- e) The next cycle shall follow immediately after the previous cycle without any break, i.e. the Academy Fellow will have to undergo normal and remedial CME/CPD at the same time.

9.2 *Non-compliance That Is Not Remediable*

For Academy Fellows who have obtained less than two-thirds of the required number of points for a cycle without acceptable reasons, a recommendation for Academy Fellowship suspension will be made. Reinstatement of Academy Fellowship shall be subject to the conditions stipulated in the Academy policy paper entitled "Reinstatement of Fellowship".

10. **Certification for Specialist Registration**

- a) The Academy will inform the Medical Council of Hong Kong, for the purpose of Specialist Registration, if an Academy Fellow has failed to comply with, or been exempted from, the CME/CPD requirements.
- b) For remediable non-compliance, the Academy will inform the Medical Council of Hong Kong if the Academy Fellow cannot complete his remedial programme by the deadline set by the Academy.
- c) If an Academy Fellow who has been exempted from CME/CPD for reasons other than prolonged illness, or whose Academy Fellowship has been suspended due to

CME/CPD non-compliance, subsequently wants the Academy to certify him for Specialist Registration, he will be required to have obtained at least 90 CME/CPD points within 36 months counting back from the date of application for certification. A pro-rata number of the 90 points required must be obtained within the period between the date of Academy Fellowship removal (or CME/CPD exemption) and the date of application for certification.

- d) If an Academy Fellow who had been suffering from prolonged illness and has been exempted from CME/CPD subsequently wants the Academy to certify him for Specialist Registration, he will be required to have obtained at least 40 CME/CPD points in the first 12 months of his resumed cycle.
- e) An Academy Fellow shall be certified to have fulfilled the CME/CPD requirements for the purpose of Specialist Registration, as long as he has obtained the required number of points for a cycle.