Australian Physiotherapy Association

Accreditation of Continuing Professional Development

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Introduction

All events & workshops that are conducted under the auspices of the APA are required to pass the APA CPD Accreditation Process. Providers of professional development who would like to apply for accreditation through the APA are expected to familiarise themselves with the contents of this guide before completing the Application for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) accreditation via the APA National Office.

This information has been prepared for providers of professional development (PD) who would like to apply for accreditation through the Australian Physiotherapy Association (APA). The purpose of this document is to assist providers of PD in planning events and as a guide to completing the Application for CPD Accreditation.

The APA system of continuing professional development (CPD) aims to assist physiotherapists in Australia to maintain and improve their knowledge and skills throughout their careers. Participation in PD activities is in line with the National Registration Board with every hour of participation recorded towards the requirement of their registration.

Physiotherapy Board of Australia - Continuing professional development registration standard

All practicing physiotherapists are required to participate in CPD activities that contribute directly to maintaining and improving their competence in their chosen scope of practice. Practicing physiotherapists must complete at least 20 hours of CPD per year.

The APA has a responsibility to ensure that PD activities that are conducted under its auspices are of a high quality. Under the APA CPD Accreditation Process, PD activities are reviewed in terms of the rationale for offering the PD activity:

- the objectives and expected outcomes of the activity
- content or learning activities
- presenter’s qualifications and experience
- methods of evaluation
- assessment of learning
Things to know

**Accreditation** is a process of officially recognising a professional development activity submitted, assessed and then delivered by an organisation or individual which have met criteria or standards set by APA and the Education Advisory Committee (EAC).

“APA accredited means that the event has been accredited as part of the APA Member Lifelong Learning Pathway”

Application process for accreditation

The applicant will need to determine if their event is suitable for accreditation. Please read the [APA Guide to CPD Accreditation](#) before commencing with accreditation process six months prior to the anticipated event date.

If the professional development activity meets the accreditation criteria an [Application for CPD Accreditation Form](#) should be completed and submitted to APA National Office, Learning & Development Division which then assesses whether the guidelines have been met.

Assessment of applications

The APA will assess whether the application supports the APA Member Lifelong Learning Pathway and is a professional development activity that supports and enhances the APA suite of learning activities.

Applications will be assessed by two auditors who are part of the EAC. Notification of interim outcomes will be communicated via email within 10 working days upon receipt of application.

When an assessment application outcome is deemed not successful:

The applicant will be notified via email by the APA National Office, Learning & Development Division.

When an assessment application outcome is deemed successful:

The applicant will be notified via email by the National Office, Learning and Development Division and the event will be given Interim-Accreditation status. Your event booking form and budget can now be submitted
Once a CPD event has received interim accreditation

The APA National Office, Learning & Development Division retrieve feedback from the event and will:

- Verification and evaluation of event content based on the original application
- Learning objectives and outcomes are met
- Recommendation of any improvements or additions
- The sign off on interim accreditation if satisfied and the event will receive Full Accreditation

Where recommendations have been made or the activity has not met the event content based on the application, the applicant will not receive Full Accreditation until the EAC has been able to verify completion and compliance based on the feedback given.

The National Office, Learning & Development Division will then review the feedback provided by the EAC and liaise with them to make the final recommendation of the applicants accreditation status.

The National Office, Learning & Development Division will officially inform and communicate the successful outcome to the applicant.

Non Compliance

If compliance is not met within an agreed timeframe, the Interim Accreditation will be cancelled by the National Office, Learning & Development Division.

For Accreditation to occur once the Interim Accreditation has been cancelled the applicant will need to apply again.

Accreditation Status

APA Accreditation is valid for a two year period from date of Interim Accreditation. This means that the event can be run in several states and at different times without having to seek reaccreditation each time.

New material or inclusion of any new content into an approved accredited activity must be approved by the National Office, Learning & Development Division before training commences. Failure to do so may result in loss of accreditation.

Re-accreditation will need to commence at least six months prior to the end date of the two year period with submission of re-accreditation documents.
APA Guide to CPD Accreditation

Provider contact information
Please be sure to clearly list all Convenor details including contact information on the front page. This will enable us to process your application and stay in contact to advise you of the Accreditation outcome.

Level one, two or three?
Please note that we currently surmise a Level 1 to be appropriate for newly graduated Physiotherapists with a couple of years working experience. A Level 2 would be a more specialised event that carries on from a Level 1, and the Level 3 would be an event that is appropriate for someone who is preparing for their Masters Qualifications.

Each step corresponds to information required for the Application for CPD accreditation

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Step One

Rationale and Goal Statement - What is the need?

The first step in event design is to establish the need for a particular event or activity. Because a formal needs assessment is often not possible, the need for the event is more likely to be based upon an observed or perceived need to provide physiotherapists with an opportunity to acquire particular knowledge or skills.

The rationale statement should:

- state why the event has been proposed (why there is a need for this event)
- include a clear goal statement regarding the learning outcomes for participants

To complete this step, provide a simple statement (one or two sentences) that answers the question: Why is the event needed?

The goal statement answers the question: What is the overall aim of the particular event or activity?

**Example 1 - Shoulder event**

Effective management of shoulder injuries requires a sound knowledge of the anatomy, pathology and biomechanics of the shoulder joint and appropriate assessment and treatment skills. This event aims to provide physiotherapists with an opportunity to improve their knowledge and skills relevant to assessment and treatment of common shoulder injuries.

**Example 2 - Introduction to Evidence Based Practice**

Evidence-based practice is a relatively new concept in physiotherapy practice and, until recently, has not been included in undergraduate or postgraduate events. This workshop will introduce participants to the principles of evidence-based practice and provide an opportunity for participants to develop knowledge and skills required to critically appraise research evaluating the effects of treatment.

Step Two

Target Audience and Prerequisites - Who has the need? What must they already know or be able to do?

Step Two is to define the audience and any prerequisite knowledge or skills. The event must be designed with a specific audience in mind so that participants benefit from the event content and learning activities. In terms of advertising, this will allow physiotherapists to decide if the event is right for them. Participants are likely to be discouraged if their level of knowledge, skills and experience is too low for the event. On the other hand, participants will be frustrated if their level of knowledge, skills and experience is too high for the event. A clear statement about the target audience will assist the design of the event as well as participant satisfaction.

To complete this step, provide a simple statement (one sentence) that answers the question: Who will benefit most from attending the event or activity?

**Example 1 - Basic Synthetic Plaster Workshop**

This event is suitable for physiotherapists with basic plastering skills and knowledge, interested in improving their plastering techniques using synthetic casting materials.

**Example 2 — Pulmonary Physiology Update**

This event is suitable for physiotherapists with clinical experience in respiratory care, interested in updating their knowledge of pulmonary physiology.
Prerequisites are a simple statement of any knowledge or skills that are considered necessary for successful participation in the event. To complete this step, provide a simple statement (one sentence) that answers the question: What must participants already know or be able to do?

**Example 1 – Basic Synthetic Plaster Workshop**
Participants require basic plastering skills and knowledge.

**Example 2 – Pulmonary Physiology Update**
Participants require clinical experience in respiratory care.

**Step Three**

**Learning objectives/outcomes - What will the participants learn?**

Learning objectives/outcomes are important in the design of events and learning activities because they tell the participants what to expect, what they will learn and what they will have to do. The learning objectives/outcomes will help physiotherapists decide if they want to participate in the event or activity. For the event convenor, the objectives help to decide what needs to be included in the event content and how to structure the learning activities. Should be measurable to allow for assessment.

Learning objectives/outcomes should be written as action statements (using words such as list, describe, demonstrate, define, explain) to describe what knowledge, skills or attitudes will be learned by participants. Words such as understand and learn are difficult to measure and should be avoided.

To complete this step, provide a simple statement (one sentence) that answers the question: What are participants expected to learn? One statement is required for each session of the event or activity.

The learning objectives/outcomes should be able to complete a sentence such as: Upon completion of this event, participants should be able to: OR During the event, participants will be expected to:

**Example 1 - Basic Synthetic Plaster Workshop**
A learning objective/outcome of the workshop may be that "participants will be able to apply synthetic plasters appropriately"

**Example 2 – Pulmonary Physiology Update**
A learning objective/outcome of the event may be that "participants will be able to describe the normal values for arterial oxygen and carbon dioxide levels."

**Step Four**

**Event Program: What will be included in the event/activity and when?**

The next step in the event design process involves development of an outline of the event content. This should be based on responses to the following questions:

a) What are the key topics/elements that must be included in the event or activity?

b) Which topics/elements are based on research and evidence?

c) What is the most appropriate order of presentation of the topics/elements? It is important to plan a logical sequence for the topics/elements to be presented and to identify appropriate transitions from one topic to another.
Research & Evidence Based Practice Component

In order to pass the review process of the APA System of Event Accreditation the event must have a component of research within the structure. For some events, providing appropriate references to research papers for topics may satisfy this requirement. Another strategy is to ask participants to bring a recent and relevant research paper to the event and distribute copies of each paper to all participants (subject to copyright requirements). Alternatively, examples of how event participants can keep abreast of new research relevant to the event could satisfy this requirement.

The content outline must include a description of the research component of the event.

Step Five

Teaching strategies and learning activities - How will each topic/element be covered?

The next step is to decide on the teaching strategies/learning activities to be used for each topic/element of the event or activity. The selection of teaching strategy/learning activity should be based on how the participants will best learn particular knowledge or skills.

If a topic/element of the event or activity is skill based, the following formats may be appropriate:

- demonstration of skills
- practical sessions to practice and implement skills with tutor/presenter availability for feedback and refining of skills. Practical sessions will facilitate the acquisition of skills.

If a topic/element of the event or activity is knowledge based, the following formats may be appropriate:

(a) pre-reading material
(b) lectures - include videos, slide images etc
(c) discussions - include case study discussion, or focus and break out groups
(d) debates or teacher led discussions - for synthesis and application of knowledge

If a topic/element of the event or activity is focused on attitudinal changes, the following formats may be appropriate:

- small group discussions with a facilitator;
- communication activities in which participants learn to project their attitudes and values;
- role plays and analysis of real situations.

Decide which format would be suitable for each topic/element: lectures, small and large group discussions, demonstrations, practical sessions, problem-solving exercises or even self-study. The teaching strategy/learning activities must contribute to the learning objectives/outcomes for the event or activity.

Step Six

Learning assessment - How do you know if the learning objectives and outcomes have been met?

All accredited events must include an example of a method of assessment that allows each participant to demonstrate the learning outcomes as appropriate. The assessment task can be designed by event convenors, event presenters, or, in the case of skilled participants, the participants themselves. The assessment task should be completed within a specified time period during or following completion of the event or activity. The assessment task should be consistent with the stated learning objectives/outcomes of the event. It is important that the learning objectives/outcomes can be measured in some way.
Assessment tasks can take many forms depending on what learning is being evaluated. Assessment tasks do not have to be as formal as assignments or examinations. Simple assessment tasks could include performance of certain skills during the event, or answering (applied) questions related to what has been covered in the event during a scheduled discussion session later in the event.

Assessment tasks that can be performed following completion of the event include demonstrating the skills that have been learned to a professional colleague or presenting knowledge that has been acquired to a group of colleagues and having the colleagues complete an assessment report.

The assessment task(s) should be designed by answering the following questions:

(a) How could participants apply their new knowledge and skills?

(b) What standard of achievement is expected and how will this be measured?

If assessment tasks are performed following completion of the event or activity, participants should be provided with the names of appropriate contacts and encouraged to follow up with them after the assessment task if they have any problems or questions.

Step Seven

Presenters' qualifications and experience relevant to the topic

The proposed event presenter/s must have relevant qualifications and experience. A summary of the relevant qualifications and experience of event presenters must be included with the application for APA Event Accreditation.

Step Eight

Event Evaluation

Event evaluation is conducted to provide information that can be used to improve the event if it is conducted again. If considered appropriate, an evaluation during the event may also be arranged to check how participants are progressing in terms of the learning objectives/outcomes and to give participants an opportunity to alter the teaching/learning environment. This type of evaluation can be conducted through the assessment tasks. For example, participants may be required to perform certain skills during the event. Evaluation during the event may be done informally by asking for feedback or at a review session at the end of the day. If it is clear that participants cannot perform the skills that have been taught, it may be necessary to modify the program "on the spot" to address this problem. This is an ideal to strive for and will not be possible during many events, but the information gathered from evaluation during the event should be used to improve future events. Learning objectives/outcomes may be modified in response to feedback/evaluation if the event is repeated.

Other important aspects of evaluation are the educational environment (place and people), the relevance of the material, the quality of presentations and/or group work, and the competencies developed. An appropriate evaluation form should be distributed to participants at the start of the event so that responses can be made during or following each session.

Examples of an evaluation form are available from the APA. The information gathered during evaluation must be collated and distributed promptly to all concerned in the development, accreditation and delivery of the event.

Evaluation at the end of a event is essential and provides feedback from participants to event convenors, lecturers and group leaders about the material presented, the lecturers and group leaders’ ability to teach effectively and whether the event was well administered and organised educationally (i.e., good timetable, time for feedback, sessions not too crammed).
Step Nine
Underpinning Research

You should provide a short paragraph (300-500 words) to demonstrate the research underpinning the event content. You should include reference to peer-reviewed or currently published studies & should include reference to 3-5 peer-reviewed or published studies.