Policy PR-O3: Certificate Program Accreditation

1 INTRODUCTION

Learning activities that exist in a given practice area often differ significantly in the scope, content and approach. To assure learners that certificate programs in a subject area provide a minimum scope and quality of learning, CCCEP developed the continuing education certificate program accreditation policy.

2 SCOPE AND DEFINITION

2.1 Scope

This policy applies to all learning activities for which a provider wishes to provide more extensive or in-depth learning on the subject, and for which the provider wishes to recognize this advanced level of learning by issuing a Certificate instead of a Letter or Statement of Attendance.

2.2 Definition of "Continuing Education Certificate Program"

For the purposes of this policy, a "continuing education certificate program" is defined as a continuing pharmacy education program that:

2.2.1 Either has a broader scope or is more in-depth than a regular continuing education learning activity;

2.2.2 Has a defined set of learning outcomes that relates to an area of practice or enhanced area of practice targeted at a pharmacy professional (pharmacist or pharmacy technician);

2.2.3 Assesses the learner's performance and proficiency of the learning outcomes;

2.2.4 Involves applied, work-based, or equivalent learning activities;

2.2.5 Engages the learner in reflective learning; and

2.2.6 Awards a continuing education certificate only upon demonstration of proficiency in the learning outcomes; as opposed to demonstration of attendance or participation.

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2.3   Continuing Education Certificate Program versus Professional Certification

A continuing education certificate program is <u>not</u> a professional certification and does not automatically result in the professional certification of the participant in an area of practice.

2.3.1   The differences between Continuing Education Certificate Programs and Certification are highlighted in the Appendix.

3   ACCREDITATION STANDARDS FOR CERTIFCATE PROGRAMS

3.1   Meets CCCEP Standards for Accreditation

3.1.1   In order to be accredited as a Certificate Program, a program will meet:

3.1.1.1   The Standards and Guidelines for CCCEP Accreditation, and
3.1.1.2   The following specific Certificate Program Standards.

3.2   – Standard: Application of Learning

3.3   Standard – Application-of Learning

3.3.1   The design of the continuing education certificate program will facilitate knowledge translation to practice through the inclusion of application-based and/or practice-based learning activities.

i.   **Application-Based Learning Activities**. The primary learning outcomes are the application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of concepts, information, skills, and behaviours. Learning activities may include face-to-face or technology mediated group activities, such as scenario analysis, case study exercises, and laboratory work.

ii.   **Practice-Based Learning Activities**. These are structured, experiential Application-Based Learning Activities that occur in a real workplace and/or in a simulated workplace environment.

3.3.2   The design of the learning activity will include reflective learning and reflective exercises.

3.3.2.1   Reflective learning occurs when learners relate what they have read, done, or learned to their own practice and situation, thus gaining a deeper understanding of the material and making it more meaningful.

3.4   Standard – Learner Assessment

3.4.1   The program provider will conduct a full assessment of participants' knowledge, skill and understanding of each the stated learning outcomes; and of their ability to apply this knowledge and/or skill in practice.

3.4.2   The learner assessment will include reflective assessment and/or authentic assessment.

3.4.2.1   A **reflective** assessment is one in which the assessment question(s) requires and demonstrates reflection.

3.4.2.2   An **authentic** assessment is one in which the materials being assessed are a report, portfolio, or equivalent, created by a learner regarding a practice-based learning activity, and which requires and demonstrates reflection.

3.5   Standard: Program Evaluation.

3.5.1   The program provider will undertake a program evaluation at least once every three (3) years to assess:

(i) The program quality and effectiveness in meeting the learning outcomes and the purpose of the program, and

(ii) The appropriateness of the purpose and outcomes of the program.

3.6   Standard – Statement of Attendance/Completion

3.6.1   The program provider may issue a "certificate" to learners who successfully complete the learner assessment.

3.6.2   This statement of attendance or completion may use the word "certificate" and may have the standard features of a certificate.

3.6.3   The certificate will contain all the information required in the CCCEP Guideline "Statements of Attendance."

3.7 Standard – Learner Use of Certificate

3.7.1 The program provider will inform continuing education certificate recipients of the appropriate use of the continuing education certificate both prior to starting the program and at program completion.

3.7.2 At a minimum, the Statement of Appropriate Use:
   a) Will <u>not</u> say that the recipient is "Certified in … {*Title of Continuing education certificate}...*";
   b) Will not claim or imply that the continuing education certificate is a professional certification;
   c) Will not make any statement regarding the continuing education certificate that may be misleading regarding the nature and scope of their credential to a customer, patient, health care professional, or the public.

3.7.3 The Statement of Use may state that:

3.7.3.1 The recipients may state that they have a "Continuing education certificate in … {Title of Continuing education certificate}..."
3.7.3.2 The Recipients may indicate that the program was a CCCEP-accredited continuing education certificate program on their résumé.

APPENDIX: CERTIFICATE PROGRAM VS. CERTIFICATION

Table 1: Difference between Continuing Education Certificate Programs and Certification

	Certificate Program	Certification
Primary Focus	The provision of education and training.	The assessment of the individual.
Assessment Process	Directly linked to the educational program and the provider of the program.	Independent of any specific program or program provider.
Learner/Applicant Assessment	Based on the learning outcomes of the program.	Based on predetermined standards for knowledge, skills, or competencies, including experience
Credential	May not use a credential or letters after their name.	May use a credential or letters following their name to indicate that they have satisfactorily met the requirements of certification.
Continuing competence	Demonstrate competence at completion of program.	Certification is time limited and ongoing maintenance of competency is required to maintain certification.