

Policy on the Accreditation of
Continuing Education Certificate Programs

Policy PR-03



The Canadian Council on Continuing
Education in Pharmacy

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Table of Contents

1 Introduction 2
1.1 Purpose..... 2
1.2 Background 2
2 Scope and Definition 2
2.1 Definition of “Continuing Education Certificate Program”..... 2
2.2 Continuing Education Certificate Program versus Professional Certification..... 3
3 Program Provider Organizational Capacity and Consumer Confidence 4
3.1 Standard – Organizational Capacity..... 4
3.2 Guidelines – Organizational Capacity..... 4
4 Program Development 5
4.1 Standard – Program Development 5
4.2 Guidelines – Program Development 5
5 Program Design and Delivery 5
5.1 Standard – Design and Delivery..... 5
5.2 Guidelines – Program Design 5
5.3 Guidelines – Program Delivery..... 6
6 Learner Assessment..... 6
6.1 Standard – Learner Assessment 6
6.2 Guidelines – Learner Assessment 6
7 Quality Assurance and Program Evaluation..... 7
7.1 Standard Quality Assurance and Program Evaluation 7
7.2 Guidelines – Quality Assurance and Program Evaluation 7
8 Program Promotion and Marketing 7
8.1 Standard – Promotion and Marketing 7
8.2 Guideline – Promotion and Marketing..... 7
9 Documentation of Completion 8
9.1 Standard -- Documentation: 8
9.2 Guidelines Documentation..... 8
10 Use of the Continuing Education Certificate 8
10.1 Standard Use of Certificate: 8
10.2 Guidelines – Use of Certificate 8
Appendix A: Example of content for a Program Outline 10

Table with 2 columns and 2 rows: First approved: 2010-06-03, Monitoring frequency: Every 3 years; Revised: 2014-11-27, Page 1



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. The policy also provides guidance to developers of the requirements for a certificate level continuing education program

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- a) Establish a framework policy and standards for continuing education certificate programs in pharmacy in Canada;
- b) Outline the requirements and criteria for the accreditation of continuing education certificate programs in pharmacy in Canada; and
- c) Provide guidance to organizations seeking to develop continuing education certificate programs in pharmacy.

1.2 Background

The certificate program policy was modelled on the best practices in certificate program accreditation of the Accreditation Council of Pharmacy Education (ACPE),¹ the Institute for Credentialing Excellence (ICE)² the International Association for Continuing Education and Training (IACET) and the American National Standards Institute (ANSI).

2 SCOPE AND DEFINITION

2.1 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:

- 2.1.1 Either has a broader scope or is more in-depth than a regular continuing education learning activity;
- 2.1.2 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);
- 2.1.3 Assesses the learner’s performance, proficiency of the learning outcomes;

First approved:	2010-06-03	Monitoring frequency:	Every 3 years
Revised:	2014-11-27		Page 2



Certificate Program Accreditation Policy

- 2.1.4 Involves applied, work-based, or equivalent learning activities;
- 2.1.5 Engages the learner in reflective learning; and
- 2.1.6 Awards a continuing education certificate only upon demonstration of proficiency in the learning outcomes; as opposed to demonstration of attendance or participation.

2.2 Continuing Education Certificate Program versus Professional Certification

A continuing education certificate program is not a professional certification.

- 2.2.1 A continuing education certificate program does not automatically result in the professional certification of the participant in an area of practice.
- 2.2.2 The primary focus of a continuing education certificate program is on the provision of education. The learner assessment is used to confirm that participants have achieved the intended learning outcomes of the program.
- 2.2.3 The primary focus of a professional certification is on assessment. The assessment is independent of a specific class, course, or other education program, and also independent of any provider of classes, courses, or programs.
 - 2.2.3.1 The defining features of professional certification which differentiate them from continuing education certificate programs are:
 - a) The primary focus is on assessment of an individual, as opposed to providing education;
 - b) The assessment process is independent from any education program or program provider, although an education program may be one of the requirements for certification;
 - c) The basis of the assessment are predetermined standards for requisite requirements rather than the learning outcomes of a particular education program; and
 - d) The ability of certificants to use a credential or letters following their names to indicate they have satisfactorily met the requirements for certification.³

These differences between Continuing Education Certificate Programs and Certification are highlighted in the following table.

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	Based on the learning	Based on predetermined

³ Knapp & Kendzel. 2009. Background Information ANSI/NOCA 1100 – Standard for Assessment-Based Certificate Programs. Washington: National Organization for Competency Assurance. <http://www.credentialingexcellence.org>. Accessed March 2010.



Certificate Program Accreditation Policy

	Certificate Program	Certification
Assessment	outcomes of the program.	standards for knowledge, skills, or competencies, including experience
Credential	May <u>not use</u> 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.

3 PROGRAM PROVIDER ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY AND CONSUMER CONFIDENCE

3.1 Standard – Organizational Capacity

The program provider has the human and financial capacity and expertise to develop, design, deliver, evaluate, administer and maintain a continuing education certificate program in a way that learners, stakeholders, and the public can have confidence in the quality of the continuing education certificate.

3.2 Guidelines – Organizational Capacity

The program provider will normally be a legal entity⁴ and have:

- 3.2.1 A history of successfully providing continuing education learning activities, or equivalent;
- 3.2.2 An identifiable organizational officer charged with the oversight of the development and management of the continuing education certificate program;
- 3.2.3 The financial and human resources to develop, deliver and sustain a continuing education certificate program;
- 3.2.4 A system of tracking, advising, and managing learners while they are in the program;
- 3.2.5 A learner records system;
- 3.2.6 A policy on learner discipline, complaints, and privacy; and
- 3.2.7 The capacity to design and conduct fair and reliable learner assessments.

⁴ A ‘legal entity’ is any incorporated profit or non-profit organization or cooperative, partnership or sole proprietorship registered within their province of operation.

First approved: 2010-06-03	Monitoring frequency: Every 3 years
Revised: 2014-11-27	Page 4



4 PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

4.1 Standard – Program Development

The program provider has a systematic program planning process for the development, design, delivery, and evaluation that is appropriate to the purpose and scope of the continuing education certificate program area.

4.2 Guidelines – Program Development

The program planning process:

- 4.2.1 Identifies the knowledge and skill gap to be addressed, the justification for development of the program, the appropriate instructional design and delivery formats, the learning outcomes, and the appropriate learner assessment methods;
- 4.2.2 Determines the intended learning outcomes and the learning gaps (knowledge, skills, and attitudes) to be addressed by the continuing education certificate program through an analysis of the needs of (a) potential learners, (b) the pharmacy profession or health system, (c) patients and consumers, and/or (4) other stakeholders; or equivalent needs identification process.
- 4.2.3 Develops a program outline based on the needs analysis that appropriately describes the program and its intended outcomes to learners and stakeholders. (See Appendix A for sample program outline.)

5 PROGRAM DESIGN AND DELIVERY

5.1 Standard – Design and Delivery

The content, design, and delivery of the continuing education certificate program are aligned with the stated intended learning outcomes, are consistent with generally accepted instructional design principles, include active learning, facilitate knowledge translation to practice, and ensure quality instruction.

5.2 Guidelines – Program Design

The program design:

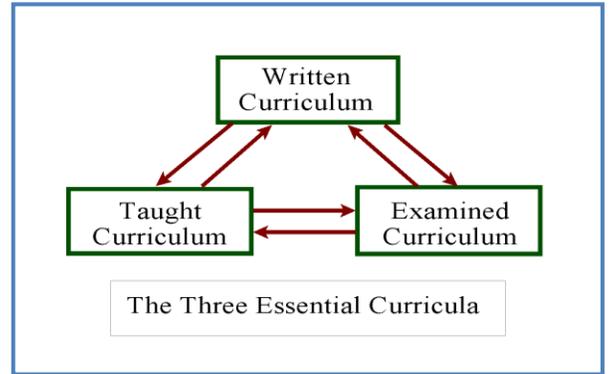
- 5.2.1 Includes a) practice experiences, and/or b) simulations, and/or c) other activities that demonstrate the learner’s proficiency in the application of the stated learning outcomes and professional competencies;

First approved:	2010-06-03	Monitoring frequency:	Every 3 years
Revised:	2014-11-27		Page 5



Certificate Program Accreditation Policy

- 5.2.2 Results in a written curriculum for the program and the specifications for educational materials, teaching techniques, delivery methods, and learner assessment;
- 5.2.3 Ensures that the taught curriculum is the same as the written curriculum.
- 5.2.4 Ensures that the content of the program is reviewed periodically and updated as needed to ensure that content is current.



5.3 Guidelines – Program Delivery

The program delivery:

- 5.3.1 Includes active and interactive learning activities;
- 5.3.2 Provides systematic and effective guidance and development support for facilitators.

6 LEARNER ASSESSMENT

6.1 Standard – Learner Assessment

The program provider conducts an assessment of participants’ proficiency of the stated learning outcomes and ensures that the procedures used to develop and conduct the assessment(s) and to evaluate/score participants’ performance are consistent with accepted measurement principles, the instructional design, and the intended use of the continuing education certificate.

6.2 Guidelines – Learner Assessment

- 6.2.1 The learner assessment instruments and methods are evaluated to ensure that the learner assessment is valid and reliable.
- 6.2.2 The learner assessment is conducted in a manner that provides all learners with a fair and equal opportunity to demonstrate their proficiency and mastery of the learning outcomes.
- 6.2.3 The results of a learner assessment are provided to the learner in an appropriate, timely, and constructive manner.

First approved:	2010-06-03	Monitoring frequency:	Every 3 years
Revised:	2014-11-27		Page 6



7 QUALITY ASSURANCE AND PROGRAM EVALUATION

7.1 Standard Quality Assurance and Program Evaluation

The program provider establishes quality standards for the continuing education certificate program and regularly evaluates the program to ensure that the program achieves these quality standards.

7.2 Guidelines – Quality Assurance and Program Evaluation

7.2.1 The program provider has a program evaluation plan for each continuing education certificate program.

7.2.2 The program provider conducts learner assessments of all learners and provides feedback to facilitators and authors on the learner assessments.

7.2.3 All components of the continuing education certificate program are reviewed at least annually for currency and accuracy, needed enhancements or changes in the design and delivery, and changes needed in the learner assessment instruments or methods.

7.2.4 At least once every three years, the program provider undertakes a program evaluation 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.

8 PROGRAM PROMOTION AND MARKETING

8.1 Standard – Promotion and Marketing

The promotion and marketing of the continuing education certificate program is conducted in a fair, ethical and responsible fashion.

8.2 Guideline – Promotion and Marketing

8.2.1 The program information is available for prospective learners that enables them to make a well-informed decision regarding enrolling in the program (See Appendix B.)

First approved:	2010-06-03	Monitoring frequency:	Every 3 years
Revised:	2014-11-27		Page 7



9 DOCUMENTATION OF COMPLETION

9.1 Standard -- Documentation:

The continuing education certificate appropriately reflects the nature and scope of the continuing education certificate program content and outcomes, and is awarded only to participants who have successfully demonstrated proficiency of the program’s stated learning outcomes.

9.2 Guidelines Documentation

9.2.1 The requirements and procedures for awarding the continuing education certificate for successful program completion are clearly stated in the program and promotion documents.

9.2.2 The successful completion requirement must include the successful completion of the learner assessment outlined in Section 6 on >>>> above.

9.2.3 The continuing education certificate may be in hard copy or electronic format and take the form of a letter, card, parchment, or other medium and must contain the following information:

- a) The name of the continuing education certificate holder;
- b) The name of the program provider;
- c) An appropriate title that reflects the scope and level of the program;
- d) The date (in prominent font and colour) on which the continuing education certificate was awarded; and
- e) The signature and title of the authorized representative of the program provider.

10 USE OF THE CONTINUING EDUCATION CERTIFICATE

10.1 Standard Use of Certificate:

Continuing education certificate recipients are informed of the appropriate use of the continuing education certificate both prior to starting the program and at program completion.

10.2 Guidelines – Use of Certificate

10.2.1 The program provider has a “Statement of Appropriate Use of Your Continuing Education Certificate” that outlines the appropriate and inappropriate uses of the continuing education certificate.

First approved:	2010-06-03	Monitoring frequency:	Every 3 years
Revised:	2014-11-27		Page 8



Certificate Program Accreditation Policy

10.2.2 This “Statement of Appropriate Use of Your Continuing Education Certificate” shall be provided to all continuing education certificate recipients at the time that the continuing education certificate is awarded.

10.2.3 At a minimum, the Statement of Appropriate Use:

- a) May state that the recipient holds a “Continuing education certificate in ... {*Title of Continuing education certificate*}...”
- b) Shall not say that the recipient is “Certified in ... {*Title of Continuing education certificate*}...”;
- c) Must not claim or imply that the continuing education certificate is a professional certification;
- d) Should 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.

10.2.4 Recipients may indicate that the program was a CCCEP-accredited continuing education certificate program on their resume.

First approved:	2010-06-03	Monitoring frequency:	Every 3 years
Revised:	2014-11-27		Page 9



APPENDIX A: EXAMPLE OF CONTENT FOR A PROGRAM OUTLINE

NOTE: Could remove. Some respondents found it useful.

1. Title of the continuing education certificate program
2. Purpose and scope of the continuing education certificate program
3. The target audience(s)
4. The knowledge, skill and ability gap and how the program addresses this gap
5. The professional competencies and sub-competencies addressed in the program
6. The learning outcomes of the program and the measures used to demonstrate proficiency in of the learning outcome
7. The requisites for learner participation
8. The instructional design
9. The method or methods by which the program will be delivered
10. The program length stated in instructional learning assessment and practice hours, and/or continuing education units (CEUs)
11. The faculty, practice, technological, financial and other resources required for development, delivery and evaluation of the program
12. The qualifications and expertise of the development team members who develop, design, deliver, assess learners, and evaluate the content and materials of the program
13. The role of an advisory committee, if applicable, and the qualifications of the members of the advisory committee
14. The schedule for periodic review of the content, materials, and learner results and feedback
15. The evaluation plan for the program
16. The learner assessment methods used in the program, the minimum level of proficiency required for successful completion, and the feedback provided to the learner
17. The documentation of completion to be provided to learners upon successful completion and the appropriate use of this documentation
18. Ensure that the date the continuing education certificate is awarded is clearly visible and readable on the continuing education certificate
19. The method used to determine the number of continuing education credits awarded upon successful completion and, if appropriate, partial completion of the continuing education certificate program

First approved:	2010-06-03	Monitoring frequency:	Every 3 years
Revised:	2014-11-27		Page 10