

A GUIDE TO SCIENTIFIC PLANNING COMMITTEES

Guidelines for developing and operating a Scientific Planning Committee

Steps to Developing a Scientific Planning Committee (“SPC”)

1. Determine the primary target audience of your CPD activity. Ask yourself: Who is your CPD activity for? Consider:
 - Professions (e.g. physicians, registered nurses, social workers, etc.)
 - Specialties (e.g. gastroenterologists, oncologists, etc.)
 - Demographics (e.g. are you targeting specific sub-populations within any of the above, such as residents or fellows?)
 - Geography (e.g. urban versus rural, those practicing in Indigenous communities, local, provincial, national, global and etc.)
2. Determine the secondary audience of your CPD activity. Ask yourself: Who else could take part in this CPD activity? Who else might benefit from this activity? Your secondary audience can, but does not have to, be represented on your SPC. You may consider including your secondary audience in your needs assessment strategies instead.
3. Now that you have established the primary target audience of your CPD activity, build an SPC that is representative of your target audience: Recruit representatives of your primary target audience to be the Chair and members of your SPC.
Note: For any activity that is being co-developed by a physician and non-physician organization, the physician organization must appoint the Chair and all members of the SPC.
4. Upon formation of your SPC, have all members complete and sign a [Conflict of Interest Declaration Form](#).

The SPC’s Responsibilities

1. Identify the educational needs of the target audience
2. Develop the learning objectives based on the identified learning needs
3. Select educational methods / formats that align with the identified learning needs
4. Select all individuals (e.g. subject matter experts, faculty, speakers) or organizations that will contribute to the development of content
5. Oversee the development and delivery of content, including:
 - a) The process for selecting the topics, content and speaker(s), ensuring that these are not influenced by commercial interest.
 - b) Ensure that the content is scientifically valid and balanced.
6. Review all disclosed conflicts of interest in advance of the CPD activity and manage any that are disclosed ahead of the activity or that arise during the CPD activity.
7. Evaluate how well the learning outcomes were met by the (a) overall activity and (b) the individual sessions
8. A physician on the SPC, preferably the Chair, must sign off on the application for accreditation.
9. Ensure that there are clear linkages across the entire planning process (see [CPD Planning Template](#))
Example: Was the CPD activity based on what was revealed by the needs assessment? Were the learning format(s) selected to best address the learning objectives?

Other Considerations

1. The SPC cannot include members from industry or other for-profit companies
2. The SPC must include members of the physician organization that is organizing the activity
3. The SPC does not have to, but will in most cases, include a member of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada as a result of needing to be representative of the target audience of the CPD activity. In other words, the SPC for a CPD activity for a target audience that includes specialist physicians must include a representative of that specialist population.