

Preceptors and Continuing Professional Education

Optimizing CPE Opportunities

Learning is a treasure that will follow its owner everywhere.
Chinese Proverb

Can learning opportunities used by preceptors be awarded continuing education (CPE) credit with CDR's current guidelines? Are there any additional opportunities for capturing learning with the Professional Development Portfolio? These are questions frequently asked of CDR by education program directors and practitioners serving as preceptors for supervised practice programs.

CPE credit, for knowledge of skills obtained to successfully be a preceptor, is available for RDs and DTRs. In addition to information about these opportunities for CPE credit, examples of how preceptors can optimize their professional development opportunities are provided.

How has the PDP expanded the definition of CPE?

Recognizing that each individual has a unique preference for learning, the Portfolio embraces diversity in learning styles, offering a variety of CPE activities for professional development, such as conventional activities (eg, workshops, journal clubs, case presentations, self-study), as well as academic coursework, exhibits, posters, reading professional journal articles, and sponsored independent learning.

Also, by grounding the Portfolio in professional practice, the professional assumes responsibility for selecting learning activities that have a direct relationship to that practice. CDR's role then shifts from approving or denying continuing education activities to one of providing the tools for self-directed learning, verifying that each step in the process has been completed and meets minimum guidelines.

CDR's Free Preceptor Training Program

The Commission on Dietetic Registration is offering the Dietetics Preceptor Training Program, free of charge, to help preceptors of dietetics students prepare for and excel in their important role. It includes 7 modules covering:

- Preparing for Your Role as Preceptor
- Planning for Student Learning
- Facilitating Student Learning

Two examples that preceptors can consider for professional development are professional reading and sponsored independent learning. Preceptors who read professional journal articles to assist a student with learning about, for example, insulin resistance, can claim continuing professional education units (CPEUs). Reading 2 peer-reviewed journal articles will be awarded 1 CPEU (200: Professional Reading). Preceptors who complete an individualized learning activity that is planned with an expert in a particular area will be awarded 1 CPEU for 2 hours spent on this activity. An example of this is sponsored independent learning with a nursing home administrator to enhance skills in prospective payment systems.

Learning activities that enable one to gain the knowledge or skills to successfully act as a preceptor also can be awarded CPE credit. The examples provided in this article are just some of the ways to optimize professional development for preceptors now and in the future.

CPE opportunities within the current guidelines

Opportunities, such as the following, are available to practitioners for CPE credit (See PDP Guide for complete details).

- Workshops to maintain communication and/or education skills (Activity Type 150)
- Journal clubs to review literature on key topics, such as innovative foodservice quality improvement approaches (Activity Type 160)
- Attending Case Presentations (Activity Type 110)
- Self-study activities to enhance time and resource management skills (Activity Types 700-740)

- Assessing Student Learning
- Communicating Effectively
- Managing Your Time
- Keeping Current

The program can be found on www.cdrcampus.com, and it is good for 8 CPEUs. Individuals completing the program will be able to access it at their convenience on CDR's online campus.