



Royal College
of Surgeons
ADVANCING SURGICAL CARE



CPD Points FAQs

The Award of CPD Points

Frequently Asked Questions

International audiences

1) What is the difference between CPD points and CME credits?

According to the GMC, “although Continuing Professional Development and Continuing Medical Education can be, and are frequently used interchangeably, most literature has now defined CME as being an ingredient of CPD. (...) Many countries are now moving from a ‘knowledge and skills base’ CME system, towards a system that seeks to promote the ‘the wide-ranging competencies needed to practice high quality medicine’ that CPD entails.”¹

2) Are the College’s CPD points accepted overseas?

The Royal College of Surgeons of England is a member of the Academy of Royal Medical Colleges which is “the national authority recognised by the UEMS-EACCME [European Union of Medical Specialities and the European Accreditation Council for Medical Education] for setting standards for the accreditation of CPD.”²

The EACCME® has signed an agreement with a number of European countries, Canada and the USA about mutual recognition of CME credits.³

However, whether the College’s CPD points are accepted as CME credits for a particular event is up to the individual country. For instance, it was only around 2022 that new legislation in Poland allowed some form of online events to be accepted as CPD points/CME credits for evidencing the legally required professional development.

Since legislation defining requirements for continuous medical education varies from country to country, and is constantly changing, we encourage individual participants to contact their relevant national bodies.

The application process

3) Who can apply for the award of CPD points?

Any event organiser or provider of educational or scientific activities that aid the development of competent surgeons or those from allied health professions can apply for the award of CPD points. These include national and overseas providers of conferences, courses, lectures, seminars, master-classes, study days, training events, presentations and e-learning resources

¹ Source: https://www.gmc-uk.org/-/media/documents/cpd---the-international-perspective-jul-11_pdf-44810902.pdf

² Source: https://www.aomrc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Accreditation_standards_0719.pdf

³ Source: <https://eaccme.uems.eu/Agreements.aspx>

4) How many CPD points will I receive for my event?

Each event will be reviewed in isolation. However, the College normally recommends one CPD point per hour of educational activity up to a maximum of six points per day.

5) Can I apply for CPD points retrospectively?

No. The award of CPD points must be applied for prospectively.

6) What is the difference between learning aims and learning outcomes?

Learning aims must be linked to learning outcomes. A learning aim is a general statement that briefly outlines the overall goal or purpose of the learning activity, using such terms as “to provide” or “to develop.” A learning outcome is a statement that outlines what a participant is expected to know, understand and be able to do after the educational event. A list of learning outcomes could start with, “Upon successful completion of the course, the learners will be able to: ...” Learning outcomes are more detailed, measurable and learner-focused.

7) What if I do not know the PO number?

You may not know whether your organisation requires a Purchase Order number or you may be waiting to obtain one. In either case, you can leave that section of the application blank and get back to the Quality Assurance and Accreditation team as soon as possible.

8) I don't have a confirmed activity programme and/or faculty list. Can I still apply for CPD points?

The College requires all the information outlined on the CPD application form in order to start the review process. Some minor changes post approval should be allowed depending on the circumstances. Therefore, a provisional programme may be accepted.

9) How long does the CPD accreditation process take?

Once an application has been submitted, it will initially be reviewed by the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Team. The application is then passed to an experienced member of our surgical review panel. It usually takes 10 working days to receive a recommendation from the panel. Additional time may be required if the panel have any specific queries relating to an application. Event organisers are therefore advised to apply for the CPD award as far in advance of their event as possible.

Fees

10) Why does the College charge CPD fees?

The Royal College of Surgeons of England is the leading body for accreditation and support of surgical education. In order to cover the costs involved in the administration of our services, we apply a wide range of carefully structured [fees](#). While the benefits of the College's CPD awards are well documented, the fees are not designed to make a profit. We merely charge according to the evidence presented in the application form, so that we can, where possible, cover our costs and subsidise other activities. That is why the fees for internal events and the not for profit organisations are issued with a lower fee. The organisers can, if they wish to, incorporate the CPD award fee into a nominal participation fee or seek external sponsorship.

11) What is the timeframe for paying the CPD award fee?

The payment of the accreditation fee is requested once a confirmation of the CPD award has been provided. The College asks that all invoices are paid within 30 days.

12) My event received support from the College's Outreach Team. Do I still have to pay the CPD award fee?

Some surgical student societies apply for event support through the College's Outreach Team. In some cases, the Outreach Team may offer a sponsorship agreement. The Quality Assurance and Accreditation Team is separate from the Outreach Team and therefore will have to charge a CPD award fee outlined [here](#). We encourage surgical student societies to explore options of having the CPD award fee covered by the Outreach Team's sponsorship agreement, seek other commercial sponsorship or incorporate the cost as part of a nominal participation fee.

13) My CPD activity will take place multiple times. How many CPD fees will I have to pay?

In general, a CPD award fee is issued for a single event and therefore running the same event in the future would require a separate application and payment. For educational events running multiple times, it may be more beneficial to apply for [Course Accreditation](#).

14) What happens if I have an outstanding invoice?

One of the consequences of an outstanding invoice is being listed as a debtor. This means that no future applications will be accepted from the organiser until the outstanding invoice has been settled.

For activities awarded CPD points

15) Will approved activities be publicised?

Unless the activity provider is an accredited centre, the details of all accredited events will be listed on the [Accreditation Portal](#).

16) What if my CPD activity had to be cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances?

We appreciate that the CPD activities are sometimes cancelled due to circumstances beyond the organiser's control. In such cases, we can postpone the CPD award until the activity, with no major amendments, can be reinstated. All outstanding invoices must be settled to claim any past or future CPD awards from the College. To discuss your individual circumstances, please contact ga@rcseng.ac.uk.

17) What if I have to postpone my CPD activity due to unforeseen circumstances?

We appreciate that the CPD activities are sometimes postponed due to unforeseen circumstances. In such cases, we can put the CPD award on hold until the activity, with no major amendments, can be reinstated. Please remember to let us know about the new dates so we can update the information on our website. Please note that all outstanding invoices must be settled to claim any past or future CPD awards from the College.

18) I had to change the activity programme and/or faculty after the CPD application was approved. What do I do?

Minor changes to speakers or the programme should be allowed depending on the circumstances. It is important that any such changes are communicated to the College by emailing ga@rcseng.ac.uk. In particular, changes to the programme may impact on the number of CPD points awarded.

The College must be informed if any significant changes are made to the structure, programme, educational content or to those delivering the activity.

19) Can I use the College badge, logo or crest?

The College does not provide use of its badge, logo or crest for the purposes of awarding CPD points.