



Academy
of General Dentistry

PACE

**Program Approval for
Continuing Education**

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Program Approval for Continuing Education (PACE)

Each year, thousands of continuing education courses are presented by hundreds of program providers - dental schools, dental societies and companies that specialize in course presentations. Most provide dentists with valuable information that can be successfully integrated into the dental practice. The Academy of General Dentistry Program Approval for Continuing Education-PACE, (formerly called the AGD National Sponsor Approval Program NSAP) was created to assist members of the Academy and the dental profession in identifying and participating in quality continuing dental education. The name was changed to reflect the forward moving direction of the Academy as it sets the PACE for the dental profession in continuing education.

The program provider approval mechanism is an evaluation of the educational processes used in designing, planning and implementing continuing education. Approval by the Academy of General Dentistry does not imply endorsement of course content, products or therapies presented, nor does this approval imply that courses will be accepted by a state or provincial board of dentistry. Approved program providers are expected to comply with all relevant state and federal laws. Continuing education offered by approved program providers will be accepted by the Academy for Fellowship/Mastership credit.

Purposes and Goals

The Program Approval for Continuing Education (PACE) will operate:

1. To improve the educational quality of continuing dental education programs through self-evaluation conducted by the program provider in relation to the Standards and Criteria, and/or through counsel and recommendations provided to program providers by the PACE Committee.
2. To assure participants that approved continuing education program providers have the organizational structure and resources necessary to provide CDE activities of acceptable educational quality.
3. To achieve interstate acceptance for AGD Fellowship and Mastership credit for activities put on by approved program providers.
4. To promote uniformity in identification of those CDE activities that are acceptable for AGD Fellowship and Mastership credit.
5. To promote uniformity of standards for continuing dental education that can be accepted by the dental profession.
6. To promote, through consistent and meaningful application of standards, an increased credibility for AGD's Fellowship and Mastership awards.

Eligibility

The program provider organization, institution or individual is approved, not specific courses, programs, lecturers, publications or audiovisual materials. An applicant may be a major unit or department within an organization or institution (e.g., oral surgery department within a medical center). To be eligible for Program Approval for Continuing Education the following criteria must be met:

1. The program provider must be national in scope, putting on programs in more than one state/province or drawing a significant amount of participants from more than one state/province.
2. The program provider must have been offering a planned program of continuing dental education activities for at least 12 months.
3. The CE provider must ensure that all courses offered have a sound scientific basis in order to adequately protect the public. PACE reserves the right to require acceptable substantiation from providers that their courses have a sound scientific basis, proven efficacy, and ensure public safety.

Guidelines for Joint Program Provider Approval

1. Joint program provider approval is defined as an educational activity planned and presented jointly by two organizations, only one of whom is a PACE-approved program provider. Both organizations assume financial and administrative responsibility for planning and implementing the program.
2. The approved program provider is held accountable for upholding the PACE standards of the Academy of General Dentistry, and must be able to provide documentation that the educational activity was jointly planned and implemented in compliance with the standards.
3. All printed material for educational activities that are provided jointly must carry the following statement:
"This activity has been planned and implemented in accordance with the standards of the Academy of General Dentistry Program Approval for Continuing Education (PACE) through the joint program provider approval of (approved program provider) and (non-approved program provider). The (approved program provider) is approved for awarding FAGD/MAGD credit."
4. Jointly provided educational activities may be considered toward the eligibility of an organization applying for its initial PACE approval.

Standards/Criteria for Approval

Program providers are expected to adhere to published standards/criteria in 14 different areas in order to obtain and then retain approval status. These standards/criteria are accompanied in most areas by recommendations. Though these recommendations do not represent requirements for approval, they provide suggestions and guidance that can improve the program provider's continuing dental education program or make its easier administration.

Standards/Criteria For Approval

I. Administration

Standards

- 1. Administration of the program must be consistent with:**
 - a. the goals of the program;**
 - b. the objectives of the planned activities.**
- 2. The program shall be under the continuous guidance of an administrative authority and/or individual responsible for its quality, content and ongoing content.**

Criteria

- A. The continuing education program must be under the ongoing supervision of an individual or an administrative authority so that there is continuity in the program provider's continuing education efforts.
- B. The administrative authority/administrator shall have the responsibility for assuring compliance with the quality contained in these standards and guidelines.
- C. To maintain continuity, the program provider shall develop specific procedures for personnel changes. This is particularly important with regard to the administrator or the administrative authority (program planner).
- D. The program planner must commit sufficient time to planning and conducting the CDE program relative to its planned size and scope of activity.
- E. Where the size or extent of the CDE program warrants, there shall be provision for adequate support personnel to assist with program planning and implementation.
- F. The administrative authority/administrator shall be responsible for maintaining accurate records of participants' attendance. The administrative authority/administrator shall be responsible for retaining information on the formal planned activities offered, including needs assessment, methods, objectives, course outlines, and evaluation procedures. This information shall be available at the time of application or reapplication for program provider approval.

Recommendations

- G. The responsibilities and scope of authority of the individual or administrative authority should be clearly defined.
- H. The program planner should have background and experience appropriate to the task.
- I. Continuity of administration and planning is necessary for the stability and growth of the program. It is recommended that:

- a. members of the administrative authority or advisory committee be selected for a term of longer than one year;
- b. members of the administrative authority or advisory committee serve staggered terms of office.

Determination of the adequacy of a program provider's administration to its program's goals and its activities' objectives will necessarily be based on the PACE Committee's evaluation of each program provider's individual situation. The PACE Committee will evaluate administration in the following areas:

- a. clarity of lines of authority and responsibility;
- b. strength of planning process;
- c. adequacy of the qualifications and quantity of personnel to manage the program;
- d. continuity of administration.

Ongoing supervision of the continuing education program by an individual or continuing authority provides continuity for a program provider's efforts, and experience has shown that better educational experiences are the result.

Administrative responsibility rests with the approved program provider whenever the program provider acts in consort with non-approved program providers for development, distribution, and/or presentation of continuing education activities.

When two or more approved program providers act in consort for development, distribution and/or presentation of an activity, each will be equally and fully responsible for assuring compliance with these standards.

II. Fiscal Responsibility

Standard

1. Resources shall be sufficient to meet:

- a. the goals of the program;**
- b. the objectives of the planned activities.**

Criteria

- A. Adequate resources shall be available to fund the administrative and support services necessary to manage the continuing education program.
- B. In instances where continuing education is only one element of a program provider's activities, resources for continuing education shall be a clearly identifiable component of the program provider's total budget and resources.
- C. The program provider shall provide a budget for the overall continuing education program, to include all costs and income, both direct (e.g., honoraria, publicity costs, tuition fees, refunds, or foundation grants) and indirect (e.g., use of classroom facilities or equipment, nonpaid instructor time, etc.).
- D. Financial aid must be acknowledged in printed announcements and brochures.

Recommendations

- E. Resources shall be adequate for the continual improvement of the program.
- F. Separate budgets for each activity should be prepared as guidelines, but institutional or organizational policies requiring that each individual activity to be prepared be self-supporting tend to restrict the quality of the CDE program unduly, and are discouraged.

III. Goals

Standards

- 1. The program provider shall develop and operate in accordance with a written statement of its broad, long-range goals related to the continuing education program.**
- 2. Goals shall relate to the health care needs of the public and/or interests and needs of the profession.**

Criteria

- A. The individual or authority responsible for administration of the CDE program shall have input into development of the overall program goals.
- B. There must be a clear formulation of the overall goals of both a) the program provider institution or organization, and b) the entire CDE program.

Recommendations

- C. The goals of the CDE program should be consistent with the goals of the organization or institution.
- D. The goals of the CDE program should be relevant to the educational needs and interests of the intended audience.
- E. A mechanism should be provided for periodic reappraisal and revision of the program provider's continuing education goals.

IV. Needs Assessment

Standard

- 1. Program providers shall utilize identifiable mechanisms to determine objectively the current professional needs and interests of the intended audience, and the content of the program shall be based upon these needs.**

Criteria

- A. The program planner shall be responsible for carrying out or coordinating needs assessment procedures.
- B. Identified needs/interests must be developed from data sources that go beyond the program provider's own perceptions of needs/interests.
- C. The program provider shall document the process used to identify needs/interests.
- D. The program provider shall state the needs/interests identified and indicate how the assessment is used in planning educational activities.

Recommendations

- E. The program provider shall involve members of the intended audience in the assessment of their own educational needs/interests.

The needs assessment method used is not critical, provided it serves the purpose of consulting (or otherwise gaining insight into) the needs and interests of the potential audience. Advisory committees representing a cross section of the intended audience or constituency can be effective. Surveys may be conducted by mail, phone or electronic media, or during the specific CDE activities.

It is recommended that cooperative efforts to utilize the needs assessment data be used, if appropriate. Where intended audiences are the same, use of another organization's needs assessment data may provide much better information than the program provider's resources would otherwise provide.

V. Objectives

Standard

- 1. Specific written educational objectives must be developed for each activity and published in advance for the intended audience.**

Criteria

- A. The program planner shall be ultimately responsible for assuring that appropriate objectives are developed for each activity. The educational objectives may, however, be prepared by instructor, course director or program planner.
- B. Educational objectives shall be developed for each activity during the earliest planning stages. These provide direction in selecting specific course content and choosing appropriate educational methodologies.
- C. The written educational objectives must be published and distributed to the intended audience as a mechanism for potential attendees to select courses on a sound basis.

Recommendations

- D. Educational objectives should form the basis of evaluating the effectiveness of the learning activity.

Accurate educational objectives succinctly describe the education that will result from attending the course. Specific educational objectives should describe the expected outcome(s) of the learning experience. They may include, but are not limited to, the following categories:

- 1. changes in the attitude and approach of the learner to the solution of dental problems;
- 2. corrections of outdated knowledge;
- 3. provision of new knowledge in specific areas;
- 4. introduction to and/or mastery of specific skills and techniques;
- 5. alteration in the habits of the learner.

VI. Admissions

Standards

- 1. In general, continuing education activities shall be made available to all dentists.**
- 2. If activities require previous training or preparation, the necessary level of knowledge, skill or experience shall be specified in course announcements.**

Criteria

- A. As an activity is designed, the program planner may determine that previous training or preparation is necessary for learners to participate effectively in the activity. In all such cases, the program provider must:
 1. provide a precise definition of knowledge, skill or experience required for admission;
 2. demonstrate the necessity for any admission restriction, based on course content and educational objectives;
 3. specify in advance, and make available a method whereby applicants for admission may demonstrate that they have met the requirement.

Such methods must be objective, specific and clearly related to the course content and stated requirements.

Recommendations

- B. Where activities are offered at an advanced level, program providers are encouraged to provide sequentially planned instruction at basic and intermediate levels, to allow participants to prepare for the advanced activity. Though program providers are not obligated to provide CDE activities for all dental occupational groups, admission policies that discriminate arbitrarily among individuals within an occupational group, without a sound educational rationale, are not acceptable. Where restrictive registration requirements have been determined to be necessary on the basis of the foregoing Standards and Criteria, course applicants might demonstrate compliance with the requirements through documentation of attendance at CDE activities, submission of patient treatment records, or actual demonstration of required skills or knowledge.

VII. Educational Methods

Standards

- 1. Educational methods must be appropriate to the stated objectives for the activity.**
- 2. Where participation is involved, enrollment must be related to available resources to assure effective participation by enrollees.**

Criteria

- A. The CDE program planner shall be responsible for choosing the educational methods to be utilized in consultation with advisory committees, instructors, educational advisors, or potential attendees.
- B. Educational methods shall be appropriate to the characteristics or composition (especially skill level) of the intended audience.
- C. Educational methods shall be appropriate to the facilities used for the activity.

- D. For participation activities, group size must be limited in coordination with the nature of available facilities and the number of instructors/evaluators. Very careful attention to group size is mandatory when planning an activity that requires participants to perform complex tasks requiring supervision and evaluation.
- E. For self-instructional activities, provision must be made for participant feedback and interchange with individuals having expertise in the subject area. A mechanism by which the learner can assess his mastery of the material shall be supplied.
- F. Self-instructional activities that are primarily audio, audiovisual or delivered through electronic media must be augmented by additional text that serves the purpose of summarizing, further explaining, or clarifying course materials, and which provides references that can be pursued for further study in the subject being addressed by the activity.

G. If providing electronically mediated distance learning, participant interaction with faculty and other participants is an essential characteristic and can be facilitated through a variety of methods such as voice mail, e-mail or chat rooms, in a timely manner.

H. For combination on-site/in-office participation programs, the following requirements must be met:

1. The course director or course instructor must be a member of a faculty in an accredited dental program; or, qualifications must be approved by the PACE Committee.
2. Specific course objectives must be written.
3. A bibliography of current literature in the subject being taught must be assembled.
4. The initial formal course session(s) will include both lecture and demonstration of the procedures to be studied.
5. Participants will do whatever procedures they are studying on patients in their offices. They will keep complete records on these patients, which must include at least the following:
 - a. patient consent and release form;
 - b. preoperative medical/dental history;
 - c. preoperative radiographs, if indicated;
 - d. preoperative mounted diagnostic casts, if applicable;
 - e. preoperative photographs;
 - f. preoperative dental charting.

During treatment, records will be kept to demonstrate:

- g. treatment rendered materials, methods, etc.
- h. mounted treatment casts, if applicable;
- i. photographs of treatment progress, if appropriate;
- j. radiographs taken during treatment, if indicated.

Upon completion of treatment:

- k. photographs of completed treatment;
- l. postoperative radiographs, if indicated.

6. After an agreed-upon time needed to complete patient treatment, the group will reconvene with the course director/instructor. Utilizing records developed during treatment, each participant will make a complete case presentation to the group. Following the presentation, the group will be allowed to challenge the presentation. The course director/instructor will critique each presentation.

7. After all participants have presented cases, a seminar session will be held during which the bibliography will be discussed as it relates to the cases that were presented.

Recommendations

I. For self-instructional activities, use of audiovisual materials may offer valuable learning experiences when their usefulness as a means, rather than an end, is appreciated.

Program providers who plan self-instructional activities should assure the input of individuals having technical expertise in both media and self-directed learning techniques, and the application of these techniques to adult learning.

The size of the potential audience for any CDE activity is important in determining appropriate methods. A potentially active method can become purely passive if the group is too large.

Methods requiring learner involvement (seminars, discussion groups, case reviews/preparations, laboratory work and patient treatment) have been shown to provide more effective learning experiences. Over-emphasis on purely didactic methods (lectures, panel discussions) is discouraged.

The appropriate use of films, slides, video, electronic media and other teaching aids can support and enhance other teaching methods as integrated into a planned educational program.

Program providers are encouraged to provide attendees with resource materials and references to facilitate post-course practical application of course content, as well as continued learning.

VIII. Facilities

Standard

- 1. Facilities selected for each activity must be appropriate to accomplishing:**
 - a. the educational method(s) being used;**
 - b. the stated educational objectives.**

Criteria

- A. The program provider shall be responsible for assuring that facilities and equipment (including those borrowed or rented) are adequate and in good working condition, so that instruction can proceed smoothly and effectively.
- B. Program providers must assume responsibility for the safety of the attendees in their activities.
- C. Adequate space and equipment must be provided to accommodate the size of the intended audience.
- D. For participation courses, sufficient space and equipment (and patients, if used) must be available to allow active participation by each learner without any learner experiencing undue idle time.

- E. If attendees are required to provide materials and equipment, the program provider must make this requirement clear to potential enrollees, and the program provider must provide enrollees with specific descriptions of all equipment and materials required.
- F. If the course is delivered through electronic media, the intended audience must be informed of specific requirements for hardware and software, and must have access to technical assistance throughout the duration of the course.

Recommendations

- G. Course program providers should direct course participants to where appropriate software needed to utilize the electronic media used in the course can be obtained or downloaded.
- H. If providing electronically mediated distance learning, security measures must be in place to ensure both quality standards and the integrity and validity of information (e.g., password protection, encryption, back-up systems, firewalls, secured servers).

IX. Patient Protection

Standards

- 1. Participants must be cautioned about the hazards of using limited knowledge when integrating new techniques into their practices.**
- 2. Where patient treatment is involved, either by course participants or instructors, patient protection must be assured as follows:**
 - a. the program provider must seek assurance prior to the course, that participants possess the basic skill, knowledge, and expertise necessary to assimilate instruction and perform the treatment techniques being taught in the course.**
 - b. informed consent from the patient must be obtained in writing prior to treatment.**
 - c. appropriate equipment and instruments must be available and in good working order.**
 - d. adequate and appropriate arrangements and/or facilities for emergency and postoperative care must exist.**

Criteria

- A. Participants should be cautioned about the dangers of incorporating techniques and procedures into their practices if the course has not provided them with adequate, supervised clinical experience in the technique or procedure to allow them to perform it competently.
- B. The program provider must assume responsibility for assuring that participants treating patients (especially those from outside the state/province where the course is held) are not doing so in violation of state dental licensure laws.
- C. The program provider is responsible for obtaining the informed consent of all patients.
- D. Patients must be informed, in nontechnical language of:
 - a. the training situation;
 - b. the nature and extent of the treatment to be rendered;
 - c. any benefits or potential harm that may result from the procedure;
 - d. available alternative procedures;
 - e. their right to discontinue treatment.
- E. The program provider must assume responsibility for completion of treatment by a qualified clinician, should any question of the course participant's competence arise.

- F. There can be no compromise in adequate and appropriate provisions for care of patients treated during CDE activities; aseptic conditions (where possible, and where not possible antiseptic conditions), equipment and instruments, as well as emergency care facilities, must be provided.
- G. Sufficient clinical supervision must be provided during patient treatment to assure that the procedures are performed competently.
- H. The program provider shall assume responsibility for providing the necessary postcourse treatment, either through the practitioner who treated the patient during the course, or through some alternative arrangement.

X. Instructors

Standards

- 1. **Instructors chosen to teach courses must be qualified by education and/or experience to provide instruction in the relevant subject matter.**
- 2. **The number of instructors employed for a CDE activity must be adequate to assure effective educational results.**

Criteria

- A. Program providers must assume responsibility for communicating specific course objectives and design to instructors early in the planning process.
- B. The number of instructors assigned to any activity must be predicated upon the course objectives and the educational methods used.
- C. The instructor-to-attendee ratio is most critical in participation courses. Great care must be taken to assure that close supervision and adequate direct interchange between participants and instructors will take place.

Recommendations

- I. In order to meet course objectives, patients should be screened prior to the course to ensure that an adequate number is present, with conditions requiring the type of treatment relevant to the course content.
- J. Program providers, instructors and participants should have adequate liability protection.
- K. Program providers are advised to consult legal counsel regarding informed consent requirements in their locale and appropriate procedures for obtaining patient consent.

Recommendations

- D. Program providers should be responsible for working closely with instructors during course planning to assure that the stated objectives will be addressed by the presentation.
- E. Each program provider should have a carefully formulated plan for selecting qualified instructors. A wide variety of sources for qualified instructors should be explored and utilized.
- F. The teaching staff for any CDE program should consist of dentists and other professionals in related disciplines who have demonstrated ability, training and experience in the relevant fields.
- G. Instructors should also possess the demonstrated ability to communicate effectively with professional colleagues, and possess an understanding of the principles and methods of adult education.
- H. Expertise and assistance in development and use of instructional materials and aids, when needed, should be available to support the teaching staff.
- I. Program providers should develop clearly-defined policies on honoraria and expense reimbursement for instructors.

XI. Publicity

Standards

- 1. **Publicity shall be informative and not misleading. It shall include:**
 - a. **course title;**
 - b. **a description of course content;**
 - c. **the educational objectives;**
 - d. **a description of teaching methods to be used;**
 - e. **costs;**

- f. **the name of the program provider and contact person;**
- g. **course instructor(s) and their qualifications;**
- h. **refund and cancellation policies;**
- i. **location;**
- j. **date;**
- k. **specifics as to approvals granted and credits available.**

2. **For effective presentation and assimilation of course content, the prior level of skill, knowledge, or experience required (or suggested) of participants shall be clearly specified in publicity materials.**

Criteria

- A. Any publicity on CDE activities shall provide complete and accurate information to the potential audience.
- B. Care must be taken to avoid misleading statements regarding the nature of the activity or the benefits to be derived from participation.
- C. Accurate statements concerning credits or approvals granted for the activity shall be included. Great care must be taken to assure that such statements follow the wording prescribed by the agency granting the credits or approvals, so that participants cannot misinterpret them.

XII. Evaluation

Standards

1. **The program provider shall develop and utilize activity evaluation mechanisms that:**
- a. **are appropriate to the objectives and educational methods;**
 - b. **measure the extent to which course objectives have been accomplished;**
 - c. **assess course content, instructor effectiveness, and overall administration.**

Criteria

- A. The program provider shall provide an evaluation mechanism that will allow participants to assess their achievement of personal objectives. Such mechanisms shall be content-oriented and shall provide feedback to participants so that they can assess their mastery of the material. This is especially important if the activity is self-instructional in nature. The educational objectives for the activity should form the basis for the evaluation.
- B. The program provider shall provide an evaluation mechanism that will help the program provider assess the effectiveness of the CDE activity and the level at which stated objectives were fulfilled, with the goal being continual improvement of the program provider's activities.

Recommendations

- D. The name of the program provider, as well as of any co-program providers or agencies providing financial support should be clearly stated.
- E. Approved program providers should use the approved AGD PACE logo/brand with the appropriate credit statement in all the printed brochures and promotional materials for their educational program.

The attendees' expectations concerning course content and anticipated learning are based on course publicity. Materials containing less than complete and accurate information will almost always result in disappointment and dissatisfaction on the part of all or some attendees. Further, complete and detailed publicity materials will help assure that those who want and need the course will attend, and that they will be motivated to learn.

- C. The program provider shall periodically conduct an internal review to determine:
- a. the extent to which the goals are being achieved;
 - b. the extent to which activity evaluation effectively and appropriately assesses:
 - 1. educational objectives;
 - 2. quality of the instructional process;
 - 3. participants' perception of enhanced profession effectiveness;
 - c. if evaluation methods are appropriate to and consistent with the scope of the activity;
 - d. how effectively activity evaluation data are used in planning future CDE activities.

Recommendations

- D. Minimally, the evaluation mechanisms should:
- a. be appropriate to the educational objectives and methods for the activity;
 - b. measure the extent to which objectives have been met;
 - c. determine participant assessment of course content with regard to whether it was practically useful, comprehensive, appropriate, and adequately in-depth.
 - d. assess instructor effectiveness;
 - e. assess adequacy of facilities;
 - f. assess overall administration of the activity.
- E. The program provider should provide feedback to the instructor concerning the information which evaluation of the CDE activity has produced.

XIII. Course Records

Standards

- 1. Program providers shall maintain permanent and accurate records of individual attendance and make such records accessible to attendees.**
- 2. Any record supplied in connection with the continuing education activity must not be, nor resemble, a certificate or diploma that attests to or might appear to attest to specific skill, or specialty or advanced educational status.**
- 3. Credit awarded to participants of an approved program providers' educational activity must be in compliance with Academy policies related to credit allocation.**

Criteria

- A. Program providers must accept the responsibility of maintaining accurate, permanent records of individual attendees at each activity, to accommodate the growing number of legal and professional requirements.
- B. Credit should be awarded based on the following calculations:
 1. For formal structured lectures, credit will be awarded based on actual number of contact hours (excluding breaks, meals and registration periods). No credit will be awarded if the course is less than one hour in duration.
 2. For courses in which at least 30% of course content involves the participant in the active manipulation of dental materials or devices, the treatment of patients or other opportunities to practice skills or techniques under the direct supervision of a qualified instructor, participation credit will be awarded based on actual number of contact hours (excluding breaks, meals and registration periods).

3. AGD members who complete audio, audio-visual or electronically delivered self-instructional programs should receive credit equal to twice the length of the instructional time provided, with a minimum of one hour of credit.
4. AGD members who complete self-paced self-instructional programs should receive credit granted based on an educator's estimate of the time required to complete the program segment, with the minimum being one credit hour and the maximum being eight credit hours.
5. For courses that include an in-office component, credit will be awarded hour-for-hour for the formal, on-site sessions. Credit for the in-office component may not exceed (but may be less than) the amount of credit awarded for the initial sessions (excluding the final case presentation session).

Recommendations

- C. Program providers should be aware of the professional and legal requirements for continuing dental education that may affect their participants.
- D. Program providers should cooperate with course participants and with requiring agencies in providing documentation of course attendance, as necessary.
- E. Such records and documentation should clearly indicate at least:
 - a. the name of the program provider;
 - b. the date(s) of the activity;
 - c. the title of the activity and/or specific subjects;
 - d. educational methods used (e.g., lecture, videotape, clinical participation);
 - e. number of credit hours (excluding breaks and meals);
 - f. a course completion code for each educational activity.

XIV. Commercial or Promotional Conflict of Interest

Standards

1. **The PACE standards and criteria are designed to ensure that:**
 - a. **Activities offered by CE program providers should be independent of commercial influence, either direct or indirect.**
 - b. **If commercial relationships exist between the program provider, course presenters and/or a commercial company and its products, they must be fully disclosed to participants.**

Criteria

- A. CE program providers must assume responsibility for ensuring the content quality and scientific integrity of all CE activities.
- B. CE program providers must operate in accordance with written guidelines and policies that clearly place the responsibility for program content and faculty selection on the program provider. These guidelines must not conflict with the PACE Standards/Criteria for Approval. Each CE learning experience offered must conform to this policy.
- C. The ultimate decision regarding funding arrangements for CE activities must be the responsibility of the CE program provider. CE activities may be supported by funds received from external sources if such funds are unrestricted. External funding must be disclosed to participants 1) in announcements, brochures or other educational materials, and 2) in the presentation itself.
- D. CE program providers receiving commercial support must develop and apply a written statement or letter of agreement outlining the terms and conditions of the arrangement and/or relationship between the program provider and the commercial supporter.

- E. CE program providers must disclose to participants any monetary or other special interest the program provider may have with any company whose products are discussed in its CE activities. Disclosure must be made in promotional material and in the presentation itself.
- F. CE program providers must ensure that a balanced view of all therapeutic options is presented and that any promotional nature of the activity is fully disclosed. Whenever possible, generic names must be used to contribute to the impartiality of the program presented.
- G. CE program providers must assume responsibility for the specific content and use of instructional materials that are prepared with outside financial support.
- H. CE program providers must assume responsibility for taking specific steps to protect against and/or disclose any conflict of interest of the faculty/instructors presenting courses. Signed conflict of interest statements must be obtained from all faculty.
- I. If providing electronically mediated distance learning, embedded advertising and direct commercial links are inappropriate within the educational content and should be avoided.

Recommendations

- J. The following are examples of outside or commercial support that is customary and proper: payment of reasonable honoraria, reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses for faculty, modest meals or social events held as part of the educational activity.
- K. The CE program provider and the commercial supporter or other relevant parties should each report to the other on the expenditure of funds each has provided, following each subsidized CE activity.

Application and Evaluation Procedures

Applications

A program provider that wishes to apply for approval to give Fellowship/Mastership approved continuing education credit from the PACE program is required to submit data documenting its compliance with program Standards/Criteria. To apply for approval, the program provider must complete the "Application Program Provider Approval," in English. This application, together with other required or pertinent data, is submitted in English for evaluation to the Committee on Program Approval for Continuing Education (PACE).

Fees

All applications must be submitted with a \$475 application fee. The check or money order should be made payable to the Academy of General Dentistry. Completed applications should be mailed to:

Academy of General Dentistry
PACE
211 E. Chicago Avenue
Suite 900
Chicago, IL 60611-1999

Small, minimally capitalized non-profit program providers could be eligible for a fee waiver. Information is available at the above address.

Approvals

The maximum term of approval shall not exceed four years. Shorter terms of approval may be awarded if there are deficiencies or concerns that would justify an earlier reevaluation date. In these cases, the reason(s) for a shorter period of approval will be identified and provided to the program provider. In no case will approval be granted for a period of less than one year.

Program providers approved by the PACE Committee shall be designated "approved program providers" for the length of the approval. Approval of a program provider does not imply recognition or approval of that program provider's satellite organizations, cooperating agencies or divisions.

Any reference to the awarding of approved continuing education credit by a PACE-approved program provider in its announcements, promotional materials, publications or any other form of communication shall conform exactly to one of the following:

"(name of program provider) is designated as an Approved PACE Program Provider by the Academy of General Dentistry. The formal continuing dental education programs of this program provider are accepted by AGD for Fellowship/Mastership and membership maintenance credit. Approval does not imply acceptance by a state or provincial board of dentistry. The current term of approval extends from (date to date)."

OR

Academy of General Dentistry
Approved PACE Program Provider
FAGD/MAGD Credit
(date to date)

If this alternative is used, the entire notice must appear in the same type size and color. The terms "accreditation" or "accredited" must not be used in conjunction with PACE approval.

The Academy of General Dentistry will publish an official list of program providers approved by the Committee on Program Approval for Continuing Education and update this list whenever there are additions, deletions or status changes. This list will be mailed to all AGD members once a year with their annual continuing education printout and is available on the Academy's web site, www.agd.org. The list will also be made available to constituent academies for inclusion in their publications.

Confidentiality

The Academy of General Dentistry will not release in any form the name of any continuing dental education program provider that (1) has initiated contact with AGD concerning application for approval; (2) has applied for approval but has not yet been apprised of a decision; (3) has applied for and been denied approval. Further, the Academy will not confirm that a program provider has not applied for approval, or weaknesses of a program provider that has been approved. All inquiries as to the approval status of a specific program provider will be answered by referral to the published, official list of approved program providers. The Academy of General Dentistry reserves the right to notify its members in the event that a program provider's approval has been withdrawn, or if a program provider's approval status has changed, or if a program provider uses false or misleading statements regarding AGD PACE approval.

PACE Committee Program Provider Monitoring Program

Prior to the expiration of a program provider's current approval period, the Committee may solicit comments regarding the program provider's past performance in complying with the standards. Comments may be solicited from each AGD Constituent Academy and from a random selection of AGD members and will be reviewed at the time the Committee evaluates the approved program provider's application for reapproval.

In order to provide informed comments, the constituent academies are allowed to monitor CDE courses presented by approved program providers. Of course, the Committee can only review evaluations made available to them. To ensure that evaluations of nationally approved program providers contain information which can be used by the Committee in its decision process, the Committee has adopted the following guidelines:

A. Role of the Constituent CE Chair

1. The Constituent Continuing Education Chair will be responsible for identifying monitors and will select the courses of nationally approved program providers appropriate for monitoring within his/her constituent.
2. The Constituent Continuing Education Chair may be asked by the PACE Committee to monitor specific program providers.
3. The Constituent Continuing Education Chair will authorize only ONE monitor per course.
4. The Constituent Continuing Education Chair will ensure that nationally approved program providers will be monitored only once per year per constituent. Even in instances in which the program provider offers several different courses, only one course from the program provider's entire list of offerings for that calendar year may be monitored.
5. Once the course and the monitor have been identified, it is the responsibility of the Continuing Education Chair to collect a check from the monitor for an amount equal to the course tuition, made payable to the course program provider, and to provide the monitor with two copies of the Monitor Evaluation Form.

6. If the monitor submits the completed Monitor Evaluation Form within 10 days of the course, the CE Chair will return the tuition check to the monitor. In cases in which the monitor fails to submit the form within 10 days, the CE Chair will forward the check to the program provider.
7. The CE Chair will forward one copy of the completed Monitor Evaluation Form to the PACE Committee within two weeks of its submission by the monitor. He/she will retain one copy of the form.

B. Role of the Monitor

1. The monitor will evaluate the course, using the Standards and Criteria of the PACE program as the guide.
2. The monitor will pay all expenses incurred in attending the course which are not included in the tuition.
3. The monitor will "stand aside" in deference to paid attendees if the course has insufficient participation opportunities or materials.
4. The monitor will receive participation or lecture credit for his/her attendance at the course monitored.
5. The monitor will return the completed Monitor Evaluation Form to the CE Chair within 10 days of the course.

C. Role of the Program provider

1. The program provider will admit one monitor per constituent per calendar year as requested by the Constituent CE Chair.
2. The program provider has the right to determine if the monitor may take part in the participation portions of the course.

Regulations Governing the Approval Process

Process

1. All program providers interested in approval by the AGD PACE program must complete an Application form and submit it to the PACE Committee for consideration.
2. Within 14 days after receipt of an Application for Program Provider Approval, the PACE Committee will acknowledge its receipt.
3. If the application does not appear to provide adequate information on which to base an approval action, the Committee may seek additional information from the application program provider within 30 days of receipt of the application.
4. If the program provider does not meet the PACE program eligibility requirements, the application will be returned to the program provider, with a full refund of the application fee, within 30 days of receipt.
5. Applicant program providers will be notified of the action taken by the PACE Committee within 30 days after it meets to determine approvals.
6. If approval is granted, the program provider will be provided with the following information:
 - a. the effective dates of the approval;
 - b. a statement and logo that must be used to announce or publicize the approval;
 - c. the correct AGD program provider code for use in reporting attendance at activities;
 - d. responsibilities and procedures for reporting attendance at activities;
 - e. statement explaining the right of the PACE Committee to audit future activities;
 - f. general procedures and time frames regarding expiration of approval and reapplication;
 - g. recommendations and suggestions for alterations of and improvements in the program provider's CDE program.
7. After approval is granted the PACE Committee reserves the right to reevaluate a program provider at any time by requesting progress reports by surveying participants in the program provider's CDE activities, by reviewing activities in person, or by requiring additional information concerning the program provider and/or its activities. AGD Constituent Academies may lodge a formal written complaint with the PACE Committee if they can document substantial noncompliance with the Standards by an approved program provider. Upon receipt of such a formal complaint from an AGD Constituent Academy, the PACE Committee will initiate a formal review of the program provider's approval status. An approved program provider may also be reevaluated at any time if information is received from the program provider or other sources that indicates the program provider has undergone changes in program administration or scope, or may no longer be in compliance with the Standards/Criteria for Approval. Such monitoring activities will be undertaken by the PACE Committee solely to assure ongoing compliance with the Standards/Criteria for Approval.
8. Approval will be denied if there is substantial non-compliance with the Standards/Criteria for Approval. If approval is denied, the applicant program provider will be provided with the following by return receipt mail:
 - a. the Standards and Criteria with which the Committee found noncompliance;
 - b. recommendations and suggestions for alterations and/or improvements in the continuing dental education program;
 - c. rules and mechanisms governing appeal of the Committee's decision.
9. Approval may be withdrawn by the Committee if:
 - a. the approved program provider makes a request for voluntary withdrawal of approval;
 - b. the Committee finds that there is substantial non-compliance with the Standards/Criteria for Approval;
 - c. continuing dental education activities have not been offered for a period of two years or more.
10. The effective date of approval is the day on which action is taken by the Committee. However, retroactive approval may be granted by the PACE Committee when a written request outlining the situation is received on behalf of a program provider who is applying for or who has received program provider approval for continuing education via PACE previously.
11. The Committee will notify approved program providers of the need to reapply for approval within no less than 11 months prior to the date that the program provider's approval will expire. Program providers must submit a new Application for Program Approval no less than three months prior to the expiration date. In addition to the formal application for approval, the program provider must submit other relevant materials documenting its continued compliance with the Standards and Criteria, as well as improvements in any previously-identified areas of deficiency or weakness. Program providers that anticipate promoting courses that will be presented after their approval expires are encouraged to submit a renewal application early to assure that approval statements will be accurate.

12. Approved program providers who did not provide self-instructional or on-site/in-office participation programs at the time their application was reviewed, but who may provide such programs in future are expected to conform to the Standards and Criteria unique to these areas, specifically:

Standard VII, Criteria E, F, G, and I
Standard IX, Criteria A through H

Program Administration

The AGD Program Approval for Continuing Education program shall be administered by the PACE Committee. This committee shall be composed of nine members of the Academy of General Dentistry, appointed by the Academy's president. Each member shall be appointed for staggered three-year terms, and each may serve a maximum of two full terms on the Committee.

The PACE Committee shall be responsible for overall administration of the AGD PACE program, and for recommending alterations in the policies governing the program. The Committee shall evaluate and take approval action on all applications for AGD Program Approval for Continuing Education. The Committee shall be responsible for hearing appeals of all approval action.

The PACE Committee shall meet at least two times during each calendar year for the purpose of reviewing and determining action on pending applications. Application deadlines shall be regularized and published, and shall fall approximately three months prior to full meetings of the Committee.

Appeals

In the event that the PACE Committee takes adverse action on an application for program provider approval, that program provider may appeal the decision. The following conditions and policies apply:

1. Program providers who are rejected for Program Approval for Continuing Education have the opportunity to appeal the decision of the committee if they believe the decision to be capricious, arbitrary, or prejudicial. Appeals may not be based on the length of the approval period, disagreement with the Standards/Criteria, or solely on the desire to provide additional information to the PACE Committee.
2. The PACE Committee must be notified by certified mail of the program provider's interest in appeal within 30 days of the program provider's receipt of rejection.
3. Appeals will be heard by the Council on Dental Education at its next regularly scheduled meeting. The program provider will be required to submit an appeal fee of \$1,000.00 at least four weeks prior to their scheduled appearance before the Council on Dental Education. The decision of the Council on Dental Education is final.