Comhairle na nDochtúirí Leighis
Medical Council

CPD Accreditation Framework

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Overview of CPD Accreditation Framework

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) holds significant potential to address a wide range of challenges within the healthcare system from supporting the well-being of registered medical practitioners to advancing national goals of improved health outcomes, enhanced care quality, and cost efficiency.

As medical knowledge and best practices in prevention, diagnosis, and treatment continue to evolve, doctors are expected to stay informed and up to date. Ongoing engagement in CPD ensures they can consistently deliver high-quality care aligned with the latest standards.
Accredited Continuing Professional Development (CPD) plays a vital role in supporting doctors throughout their learning journey, helping them maintain their competence and expertise. This, in turn, leads to improved performance and better outcomes for the individuals and communities they serve.

Although a model for CPD recognition has existed, the Medical Council is now introducing a formal CPD Accreditation Framework. This framework will enable routine assessment of the CPD activities that make up the 50 CPD hours required under the Medical Practitioners' Continuing (MPC) Framework, ensuring they meet high standards of educational quality.

Under this system, organisations will be invited to apply for accreditation. Once accredited, they will be authorised to deliver CPD activities that are officially recognised. These organisations will be referred to as accredited providers.

While the Medical Council sets the standards and criteria for doctors' education, training, and lifelong learning, it acknowledges that the bodies operating the Professional Competence Schemes are best positioned to deliver CPD aligned with the specific scopes of practice of their enrolled practitioners.

To ensure quality, the Medical Council will implement a set of accreditation criteria through which CPD activities will be assessed. Organisations seeking accreditation must demonstrate compliance with these criteria, reflecting their commitment to providing independent CPD that drives learning, fosters change, and enhances healthcare outcomes.

The Medical Council will regularly evaluate both accredited CPD activities and the accredited providers to ensure ongoing adherence to these standards.

System Terminology

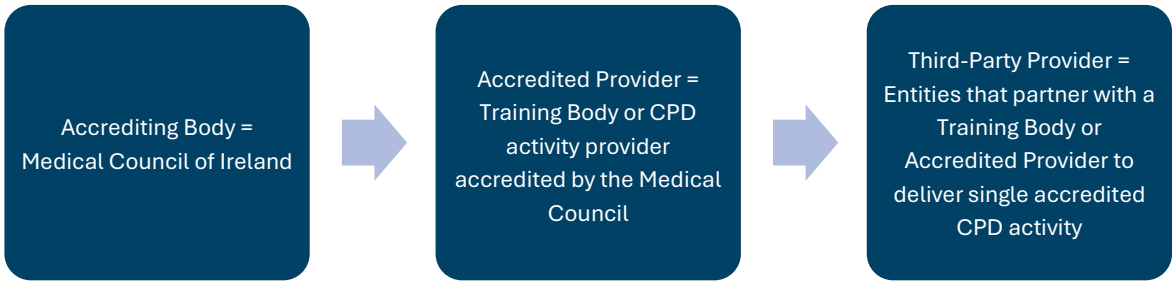

Figure 1 - CPD Accreditation Terminology

Provision of Accredited CPD

Under the Medical Council (Maintenance of Professional Competence) Rules 2025, specific individuals, bodies, or organisations are authorised to deliver accredited Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activities. These accredited activities must meet defined criteria and align with the scope of practice of enrolled medical practitioners.

Training Body who has received accreditation by the Medical Council	A Training Body is recognised by the Medical Council to operate the Schemes. When it is recognised by the Medical Council, it must also satisfy accreditation criteria and standards set by the Medical Council to become an accredited provider of CPD (CPD Accreditation Framework). A Training Body provides and accredits CPD activity in accordance with the CPD Accreditation Framework.
Accredited provider who has received accreditation by the Medical Council	A person, body or organisation can apply for accreditation from the Medical Council and become an accredited provider of CPD. This accreditation enables the person, body, or organisation to provide and accredit CPD. The application for accreditation must satisfy the CPD Accreditation Framework of the Medical Council. An accredited provider only provides or accredits CPD and does not operate the Schemes.

Another person, body or organisation can apply to either a Training Body or accredited provider have their CPD activity accredited.	At times, a person, body, or organisation may wish to provide CPD without applying for or obtaining accreditation from the Medical Council (for example smaller societies or patient advocacy groups). They may want to have a single CPD activity accredited. To do so, they must apply to a Training Body or an accredited provider to have their CPD activity accredited. It is the responsibility of the scheme or accredited provider to ensure that the criteria and standards of the CPD Accreditation Framework are met and adhered to. These entities have not received accreditation from the Medical Council, rather they partner with either a Training Body or accredited provider to deliver accredited CPD – this is termed 'Third-Party Delivery'.
Another person, body or organisation based overseas who has their CPD accredited in the country they are based.	The accredited CPD activity delivered must be accepted by the Training Body as meeting applicable international standards.

Table 1 - Delivery of Accredited CPD

Criteria and Standards within the CPD Accreditation Framework

Any individual, body, or organisation seeking recognition as an accredited provider of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) must demonstrate full compliance with the criteria and standards outlined in the CPD Accreditation Framework. These requirements are established under Rule 15 of the Medical Council (Maintenance of Professional Competence) Rules 2025, with the process for recognising accredited providers governed by Rules 10 and 11.

All accredited providers are required to meet the Medical Council's Organisational Governance Criteria. Furthermore, every accredited CPD activity—whether delivered directly by the provider or in collaboration with a third party—must adhere to the CPD Activity Criteria and uphold the Standards for Integrity and Independence.

Organisational Governance Criteria

The Organisational Governance Criteria outline the programme-level responsibilities of an organisation acting as an accredited CPD provider. These criteria are designed to ensure a consistent and standardised approach to the delivery of CPD activities across all providers, while also promoting a culture of continuous improvement and development.

Organisational Governance Criteria	
1. Eligibility	Organisations eligible to be accredited providers by the Medical Council are: • providers of clinical services directly to patients [such as hospitals and clinics] or • organisations that have as their primary mission the education of healthcare professionals [such as professional colleges, schools, and societies] or • organisations that have as their primary mission a responsibility to patients, the public, or population health [such as a department of health]. Companies who do not meet the above criteria are not eligible for accreditation by the Medical Council and are deemed *ineligible providers*.
2. Mission	The accredited provider has a CPD mission statement that includes expected results articulated in terms of changes in competence, performance, or patient outcomes of learners who participate in any of the CPD activities it delivers.
3. Programme Analysis	The accredited provider gathers data or information, and conducts a programme-based analysis, on the degree to which the CPD mission of the provider has been met through the conduct of CPD activities/educational interventions.

4. Programme Improvements	The provider identifies, plans, and implements the needed or desired changes in the overall programme (e.g., planners, teachers, infrastructure, methods, resources, facilities, interventions) that are required to improve on ability to meet the CPD mission.
5. Data Capacity	The accredited provider manages activity and learner data ethically and professionally and has the resources necessary to report data on CPD activities and the accreditation requirements to the Medical Council while maintaining data privacy and learner confidentiality. **Attendance Records:** the accredited provider must have mechanisms in place to record, and when authorised by the learner, verify participation for, at a minimum, the current year and following two years from the date of the CPD activity and share this data with the Medical Council. **Activity Documentation:** An accredited provider is required to retain activity files/records of CPD activity planning and implementation during, at a minimum, the current year and following two years. **Data Protection:** The accredited provider does not share any learner information with industry (such as pharmaceutical companies or device manufacturers) without the explicit permission of the learner
6. Professionalism	The accredited provider operates the business and management policies and procedures of its CPD programme (as they relate to human resources, financial affairs, and legal obligations), so that its legal and commercial obligations and commitments are met.

CPD Activity Criteria

The CPD Activity Criteria are reflected in the planning, delivery, and evaluation of each activity. These criteria ensure that all accredited CPD offerings maintain a high standard of quality and academic rigour, while also being tailored to meet the educational needs of medical practitioners in Ireland.

CPD Activity Criteria	
1. Educational Needs	The accredited provider incorporates into CPD activities the educational needs (knowledge, competence or performance) that underlie the professional practice gaps of their own learners.
2. Change Competence, Performance and/or Patient Outcomes	The accredited provider provides learners with CPD activities designed to change competence, performance or patient outcomes as described in its mission statement.

3. Appropriate Formats	The accredited provider chooses educational formats that are appropriate for the setting, objectives, and desired results of each CPD activity.
4. Competencies	The accredited provider provides CPD activities in the context of desirable registered medical practitioner attributes (competencies) incorporating the Medical Council's Eight Domains of Good Professional Practice.
5. Analyses Change	The accredited provider analyses changes in learners (competence, performance, or patient outcomes) achieved due to participating in a CPD activity(ies) provided by the organisation.

Standards for Integrity and Independence

The Standards for Integrity and Independence ensure independent and validity of all accredited CPD activities. These standards provide an important guard against potential influence of commercial bias in accredited CPD activities.

Standards for Integrity and Independence	
1. Accredited CPD is Scientifically Valid.	Standard 1.1 – All recommendations for patient care in accredited CPD must be based on current science, evidence, and clinical reasoning, while giving a fair and balanced view of diagnostic and therapeutic options.
	Standard 1.2 – All scientific research referred to, reported, or used in accredited CPD in support or justification of a patient care recommendation must conform to the generally accepted standards of experimental design, data collection, analysis, and interpretation.
	Standard 1.3 – Although accredited CPD is an appropriate place to discuss, debate, and explore new and evolving topics, these areas need to be clearly identified as such within the programme and individual presentations. It is the responsibility of accredited providers to facilitate engagement with these topics without advocating for, or promoting, practices that are not (yet) adequately based on current science, evidence, and clinical reasoning.
	Standard 1.4 – Organisations cannot be accredited providers if they advocate for unscientific approaches to diagnosis or therapy, or if CPD promotes recommendations, treatment, or manners of practicing healthcare that are determined to have risks or dangers that outweigh the benefits or are known to be ineffective in the treatment of patients.
2. Accredited CPD is independent and free from all sales	Standard 2.1 – The accredited provider must ensure that all decisions related to the planning, educator selection, delivery, and evaluation of accredited CPD are made without any influence or involvement from the owners and employees of an ineligible company

and marketing messages.	Standard 2.2 – Accredited CPD must be free of marketing or sales of products or services. Educators must not actively promote or sell products or services that serve their professional or financial interests during accredited CPD activities.
	Standard 2.3 - The accredited provider must not share the names or contact information of learners with any ineligible company or its agents without the explicit consent of the individual learner.
3. The accredited provider must identify, mitigate, and disclose relevant financial relationships for all individuals involved in control of accredited CPD activity content.	Standard 3.1 – If the content of the CPD includes clinical topics, the accredited provider must collect information from all planners, educators, and others in control of educational content about all their financial relationships with ineligible companies within the prior 24 months. There is no minimum financial threshold; individuals must disclose all financial relationships, regardless of the amount, with ineligible companies. Individuals must disclose regardless of their view of the relevance of the relationship to the education. Disclosure information must include: a. The name of the ineligible company with which the person has a financial relationship. b. The nature of the financial relationship. Examples of financial relationships include employee, researcher, consultant, advisor, speaker, independent contractor (including contracted research), royalties or patent beneficiary, executive role, and ownership interest. Individual stocks and stock options should be disclosed; diversified mutual funds do not need to be disclosed. Research funding from ineligible companies should be disclosed by the principal or named investigator even if that individual's institution receives the research grant and manages the funds.
	Standard 3.2 - For each accredited CPD activity, the accredited provider must review the information about financial relationships to identify individuals who are owners or employees of ineligible companies. These individuals must be excluded from controlling content or participating as planners or educators in accredited education. There are three exceptions to this exclusion—employees of ineligible companies can participate as planners or educators in these specific situations: a. When the content of the activity is not related to the business lines or products of their employer/company. b. When the content of the accredited activity is limited to basic science research, such as preclinical research and drug discovery, or the methodologies of research and they do not make care recommendations. c. When they are participating as technicians to teach the safe and proper use of medical devices, and do not recommend whether or when a device is used.

	Standard 3.3 – For each accredited CPD activity, the accredited provider must review the information about financial relationships to determine which relationships are relevant. Financial relationships are relevant if the educational content an individual can control is related to the business lines or products of the ineligible company.
	Standard 3.4 - Mitigate relevant financial relationships: Take steps to prevent all those with relevant financial relationships from inserting commercial bias into content. a. Mitigate relationships prior to the individuals assuming their roles. Take steps appropriate to the role of the individual. For example, steps for planners will likely be different than for educators and would occur before planning begins. b. Document the steps taken to mitigate relevant financial relationships.
	Standard 3.5 – For each accredited CPD activity, the accredited provider must disclose all relevant financial relationships to learners. Disclosure to learners must include each of the following: a. The names of the individuals with relevant financial relationships. b. The names of the ineligible companies with which they have relationships. c. The nature of the relationships. d. A statement that all relevant financial relationships have been mitigated. Identify ineligible companies by their name only. i. Disclosure to learners must not include ineligible companies' corporate or product logos, trade names, or product group messages. ii. Disclose absence of relevant financial relationships. Inform learners about planners, educators, and others in control of content (either individually or as a group) with no relevant financial relationships with ineligible companies. iii. Learners must receive disclosure information, in a format that can be verified at the time of accreditation, before engaging with the accredited education.
4. An accredited CPD activity can receive financial or in- kind support ("commercial support") from ineligible companies and must manage the	Standard 4.1 – Decision-making and disbursement of commercial support: The accredited provider must make all decisions regarding the receipt and disbursement of the commercial support. a. Ineligible companies must not pay directly for any of the expenses related to the education or the learners. b. The accredited provider may use commercial support to fund honoraria or travel expenses of planners, educators, and others in control of content for those roles only. c. The accredited provider must not use commercial support to

commercial support appropriately.	pay for travel, lodging, honoraria, or personal expenses for individuals or groups of learners in accredited education. d. The accredited provider may use commercial support to defray or eliminate the cost of the education for *all* learners.
	Standard 4.2 – Agreement: The terms, conditions, and purposes of the commercial support must be documented in an agreement between the ineligible company and the accredited provider. The agreement must be executed prior to the start of the accredited education. An accredited provider can sign onto an existing agreement between an accredited provider and a commercial supporter by indicating its acceptance of the terms, conditions, and amount of commercial support it will receive.
	Standard 4.3 – Accountability: The accredited provider must keep a record of the amount or kind of commercial support received and how it was used, and must produce that accounting, upon request, by the accrediting body or by the ineligible company that provided the commercial support.
	Standard 4.4 – Disclosure to learners: The accredited provider must disclose to the learners the name(s) of the ineligible company(ies) that gave the commercial support, and the nature of the support if it was in-kind, prior to the learners engaging in the education. Disclosure must not include the ineligible companies' corporate or product logos, trade names, or product group messages.
5. Accredited CPD activity educational content must be separate from marketing by ineligible companies, including advertising, sales, exhibits, or promotion.	Standard 5.1 - Arrangements to allow ineligible companies to market or exhibit in association with accredited education must not: a. Influence any decisions related to the planning, delivery, and evaluation of the education. b. Interfere with the presentation of the education. c. Be a condition of the provision of financial or in-kind support from ineligible companies for the education.
	Standard 5.2 – The accredited provider must ensure that learners can easily distinguish between accredited education and other activities. a. Live continuing education activities: Marketing, exhibits, and nonaccredited education developed by or with influence from an ineligible company or with planners or educators with unmitigated financial relationships must not occur in the educational space within 30 minutes before or after an accredited education activity. Activities that are part of the event but are not accredited for continuing education must be clearly labelled and communicated as such. b. Print, online, or digital continuing education activities: Learners must not be presented with marketing while engaged in the accredited education activity. Learners must be able to

	engage with the accredited education without having to click through, watch, listen to, or be presented with product promotion or product-specific advertisement. c. Educational materials that are part of accredited education (such as slides, abstracts, handouts, evaluation mechanisms, or disclosure information) must not contain any marketing produced by or for an ineligible company, including corporate or product logos, trade names, or product group messages. d. Information distributed about accredited education that does not include educational content, such as schedules and logistical information, may include marketing by or for an ineligible company
	Standard 5.3 – Ineligible companies may not provide access to, or distribute, accredited education to learners.
6. Learners must be informed of who is responsible for the CPD activity and its accreditation.	Standard 6.1 – The accreditation statement must appear on CPD activity materials and brochures distributed by accredited providers.
	Standard 6.2 – Learners must receive this information before engaging with the accredited CPD activity.

Application Process for Recognition as an Accredited Provider

As part of the CPD Accreditation Framework, the Medical Council will act as the accrediting authority. Individuals, bodies, or organisations will be invited to apply for accreditation through a formal application process. Applicants must demonstrate compliance with defined criteria throughout a three-stage review process:

- Stage 1: Self-Assessment
- Stage 2: Application Review
- Stage 3: Awarding of Accreditation

A fee may be applicable at the time of application. Details regarding any associated fees will be made available on the Medical Council's website in due course.

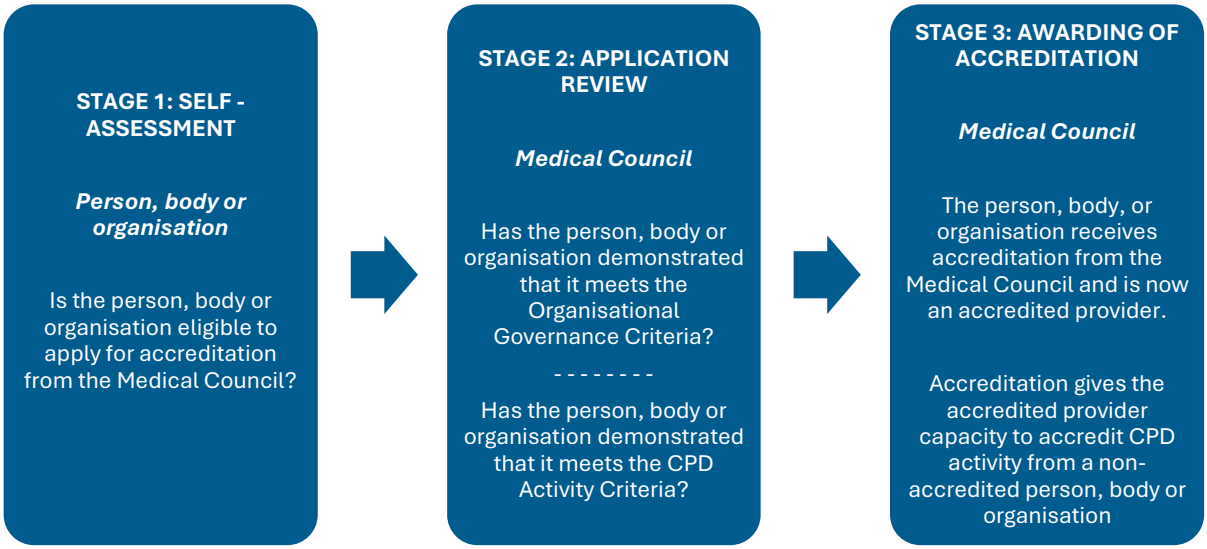

Figure 2 - Application Process for CPD Accreditation

Stage 1 – Self-Assessment

Is the person, body or organisation eligible to apply for accreditation from the Medical Council?

Before applying for accreditation to the Medical Council, the person, body, or organisation must undertake a self-assessment against a set of screening requirements.
The screening process asks whether a person, body or organisation is:

- developing and/or presenting a programme of CPD for healthcare professionals on a regular and recurring basis.
- not an agency that produces, markets, resells, or distributes products consumed by or used on patients.
- not developing and/or presenting a programme of CPD that is, in the judgement of the Medical Council, focused on promoting unscientific modalities of diagnosis or therapy.
- presenting activities that have valid content: the organisation must be presenting activities that promote recommendations, treatment, or manners of practicing medicine that are within the definition of CPD. Providers are not eligible for accreditation if they present activities that promote treatments that are known to have risks or dangers that outweigh the benefits or are known to be ineffective in the treatment of patients.

Persons, bodies or organisations that produce, market, resell, or distribute products consumed by or used on patients are not eligible to receive recognition as an accredited provider within the CPD Accreditation Framework of the Medical Council.

Once a body has determined that it is eligible to apply for accreditation, it may apply to the Medical Council to receive recognition as an accredited provider. Applicants will provide with the Medical Council with evidence detailing their compliance with the CPD Accreditation, with this evidence incorporating information regarding both the applicant's organisational governance and a sample of educational activities.

Stage 2 – Application Review

Has the person, body or organisation demonstrated it meets the Organisational Governance Criteria?

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Has the person, body or organisation demonstrated it meets the CPD Activity Criteria and Standards for Integrity & Independence?

During Stage Two of the process, the Medical Council will assess the eligibility of the person, body or organisation against the constituent criteria and standards within the CPD Accreditation Framework.

This assessment will be initially undertaken by a desk-based review of the evidence submitted by the applicant, with a subsequent interview to discuss any questions reviewers may have following the initial desk-based review.

Organisational Governance Criteria

The Organisational Governance Criteria focus on the principles of good governance, with all applicants required to demonstrate that its organisational mission reflects a commitment to, and process of, developing and implementing activities which are designed for learning and change.

Organisational Governance Criteria
1. Eligibility 2. Mission 3. Programme analysis 4. Programme improvements 5. Data capacity 6. Professionalism

CPD Activity Criteria

The CPD Activity Criteria focus on applicants' delivery of educational activities, including processes to plan, develop and implement education to enhance and support the professional practice of doctors.

CPD Activity Criteria
1. Education needs 2. Designed to change 3. Appropriate formats 4. Competencies 5. Analyses change

Experience from stakeholders in the accreditation sector suggests that a body's processes to plan, develop, and implement education to improve the professional practice of doctors are the most important areas to assess in terms of a provider's ability to meet the accreditation criteria.

Standards for Integrity & Independence

To ensure accredited CPD is from commercial bias and influence, a prospective accredited provider must also demonstrate that it is developing and delivering educational activities which meet the Standards for Integrity & Independence.

Standards for Integrity & Independence
1. Accredited CPD activity is scientifically valid 2. Accredited CPD activity is independent and free from all sales and marketing messages 3. The accredited provider must identify, mitigate, and disclose relevant financial relationships for all individuals involved in control of accredited CPD activity content

4. An accredited CPD activity can receive financial or in-kind support ('commercial support') from ineligible companies and must manage the commercial support appropriately
5. Accredited CPD activity educational content must be separate from marketing by ineligible companies, including advertising, sales, exhibits, or promotion
6. Learners must be informed of who is responsible for the CPD activity and its accreditation

Stage 3 – Awarding of Accreditation

The person, body, or organisation receives accreditation from the Medical Council and is now an accredited provider.

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Accreditation gives the accredited provider capacity to accredit CPD activity from a non-accredited person, body or organisation.

Upon successfully demonstrating compliance with all the accreditation criteria from Stage 2, the body receives accreditation by the Medical Council and becomes an accredited provider of CPD.

The accredited provider will be awarded accreditation for a time specified by the Medical Council after which it will need to re-apply for accreditation. The Medical Council will specify the accreditation term and monitoring requirements. The typical initial accreditation term is for five years, although an initial shorter term may be awarded according to the judgment of the Medical Council.

Annual Reporting

The Medical Council as the accrediting body will assess Training Bodies and accredited providers and ensure compliance with accreditation criteria through reporting structures set by the Medical Council.

In their reports, Training Bodies and accredited providers will demonstrate how they implement and monitor the accreditation model. This may include any conditions imposed by the Medical Council subsequent to reviews. They must also provide details of any CPD activity they provide or accredit. The Medical Council will also implement an auditing process to monitor compliance of CPD activities.

Delivery of Accredited CPD by a Third-Party Partnership

In some cases, individuals, organisations, or groups—such as smaller societies or patient advocacy organisations—may wish to offer CPD activities without seeking full accreditation from the Medical Council. Instead, they can pursue accreditation for a specific CPD activity through a Third-Party Partnership with a recognised Postgraduate Training Body or an accredited provider, who may charge a fee for this service.

To initiate this process, the third party must identify the relevant specialty or area of practice their CPD activity addresses and contact the appropriate Training Body or accredited provider. Under this arrangement, the Medical Council remains the overarching accrediting authority, having accredited the Training Body or provider involved in the partnership.

It is the responsibility of the Training Body or accredited provider to ensure that all CPD activities accredited through Third-Party Partnerships fully comply with the CPD Accreditation Framework's criteria and standards. The Medical Council holds the same expectations for quality and compliance regardless of whether the CPD is delivered directly by an accredited provider or through a third party.

When a CPD activity is accredited via a Third-Party Partnership, the Training Body or accredited provider assumes full accountability for its adherence to the accreditation standards and is answerable to the Medical Council. These activities are subject to the same auditing processes and quality standards as those delivered directly by accredited providers.

Criteria for Activity provided by a Non-Accredited Entity

A non-accredited person, body or organisation seeking to have their CPD activity accredited must be either:

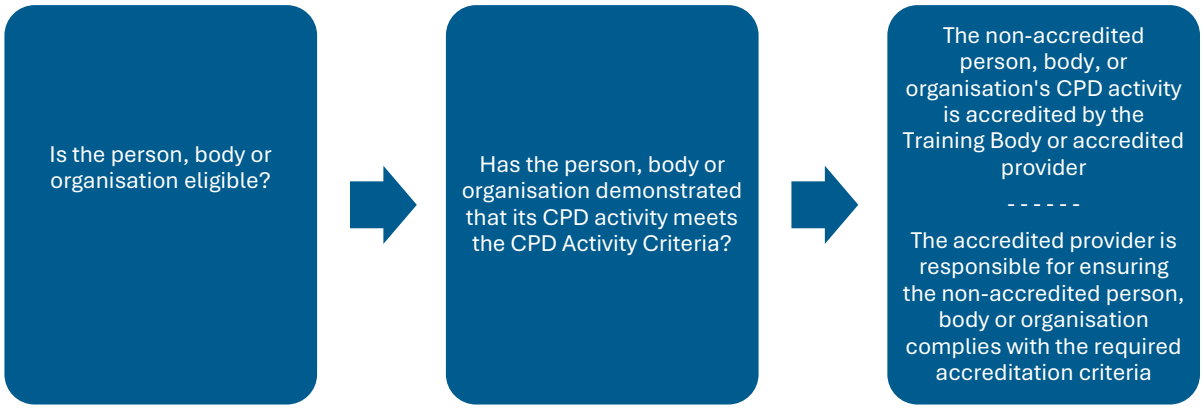
- a provider of clinical services directly to patients [such as hospitals and clinics].

or

- an organisation that has as its primary mission the education of healthcare professionals [such as professional colleges, schools and societies].

or

- an organisation that has as its primary mission a responsibility to patients, the public, or population health [such as a department of health].



It is important to note that companies which produce, market, resell, or distribute products consumed by or used on patients are not eligible to provided accredited education in the Medical Council system.