**FAQs**

**What is CME?**

Continuing Medical Education (CME) is defined as “educational activities that serve to maintain, develop, or increase the knowledge, skills, and professional performance and relationships that a physician uses to provide services for patients, the public, or the profession” (source: ACCME and AMA).

**Who is the ACCME?**

ACCME is the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education and is the organization that sets the standards for the accreditation of all providers of CME activities.

**Who is the AMA?**

The American Medical Association helps doctors help patients by uniting physicians nationwide to work on the most important professional and public health issues.

**What type of CME credit do physicians need?**

*AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™* is the most common type of credit physicians need for medical license maintenance. In order for an activity to be designated for *AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™*, it must be accredited by a CME provider (e.g., University of Massachusetts Chan Medical School, Office of Continuing Medical Education).

**What is the difference between Category 1 and Category 2 credit?**

Category 1 CME activities are:

* Formally planned activities that include documentation of acceptable needs assessment, learning objectives, educational design, an evaluation method, and disclosure.
* Planned and implemented in full compliance with the ACCME Standards for Commercial Support
* Prospectively certified for credit by an ACCME-accredited CME Provider.

Category 2 "self claim" credits are:

* Informally planned physician-initiated activities such as practice-based self-study, consultations with colleagues, teaching, M&M conferences, journal clubs, etc.
* The UMass Medical School Office of CME is not involved with planning, certifying, or tracking Category 2 activities.

**What is the cost of CME/CE certification?**

The cost of certifying your activity for CME/CE credit depends on:

* Type of activity (joint vs. directly providership, live vs. enduring, 1 hour vs. 5-day, etc).
* Number of credit hours
* Number of educational grants involved
* Number of Faculty (speakers, authors, etc)
* Estimated number of participants/learners

 **How do I obtain CME/CE credit for my activity?**

Contact the UMass Medical School Office of CME at continuing.education@umassmed.edu to discuss your activity.

**What is the difference between direct, joint, and co-providership?**

Direct Providership:A CME activity that is planned by departments of UMass Chan Medical School and its affiliates of UMass Memorial Medical Center

Joint Providership: A CME activity that is developed and implemented by an institution or organization. The accredited provider (e.g., UMass Chan Medical School) must take responsibility for a CME activity when it is presented in cooperation with a non-accredited institution or organization. A commercial interest cannot take the role of non-accredited entity in a joint providership relationship (Source: ACCME).

**Who may serve as Course Directors?**

* A physician faculty member employed by the UMass Chan Medical School for at least 50% of the time should be part of the planning team.  Non physician faculty members may be considered for leadership positions based on compelling need; this requires prior approval by the Associate Dean for Continuing Medical Education or the Director of the UMass Chan Medical School Office of Continuing Medical Education. Community practitioners with voluntary clinical appointments, non-physicians and community health partners may participate as a course co-director in concert with a UMass Chan Medical School physician faculty member.

**What is the first step in creating a course?**

Contact the UMass Chan Medical School Office of Continuing Medical Education (OCME) in advance of the proposed activity to ensure the necessary time to discuss the conference concept and its planning and promotion by email at continuing.education@umassmed.edu.

**What is a Conflict of Interest?**

Conflict of Interest (COI): In continuing medical education (CME), circumstances create a conflict of interest when an individual has an opportunity to affect CME content about products or services of a commercial interest (see definition below) with which he/she has a financial relationship.

The [ACCME](http://www.accme.org/) considers financial relationships to create actual conflicts of interest in CME when individuals have both a financial relationship (in any amount) with a commercial interest and the opportunity to affect the content of CME about the products or services of that commercial interest.

COIs are identified by reviewing disclosed financial relationships on the Conflict of Interest OCME Disclosure form to determine if they are related to the content of the proposed CME activity. OCME has mechanisms in place to manage and resolve all conflicts of interest for individuals involved in the planning and implementation of certified CME activities. A OCME Coordinator (and as needed other OCME staff) will work with the Course Director to ensure any conflicts of interest are identified and resolve them **before** the CME activity occurs.

**What is a Commercial Interest?**

Commercial Interest:  Any entity producing, marketing, re-selling, or distributing health care goods or services consumed by, or used on, patients with the exemption of non‐profit or government organizations and non‐health care related companies. The [ACCME](http://www.accme.org/) does not consider providers of clinical services directly to patients to be commercial interests (e.g. liability/health insurance providers, group medical practices, hospitals, nursing homes, rehabilitation centers).

**What is a Financial Relationship?**

Financial Relationships:   Those relationships in which the individual benefits by receiving a salary, royalty, intellectual property rights, consulting fee, honoraria, ownership interest (e.g., stock options or other ownership interest, excluding diversified mutual funds), or other financial benefit. Financial benefits are usually associated with roles such as employment, management position, independent contractor (including contracted research), consulting, speaking and teaching, membership on advisory committees or review panels, board membership, and other activities from which remuneration is received, or expected in the last 24 months.  With respect to personal financial relationships, contracted research includes research funding where the institution receives the grant and manages the funds, and the person is the principal or named investigator on the grant.

If the person involved in the CME activity is employed by a commercial interest, the [ACCME](http://www.accme.org/) considers there to be a non-resolvable conflict of interest and thus these individuals may not participate in the planning or teaching of the CME activity. The only exception is if the course content is unrelated to products or services provided by the commercial entity. See [ACCME Standards for Integrity and Independence in Accredited Continuing Education](https://accme.org/accreditation-rules/standards-for-integrity-independence-accredited-ce) for clarification.

**What if I want to seek Commercial Support?**

Designated financial commercial support for courses and internet activity (enduring material) is allowed if the following conditions have been met:

* Activity planning is independent of commercial control;
* Review by the UMass Chan Office Continuing Medical Education (OCME) finds the activity to be free of commercial bias;
* Industry support is sought in collaboration with and under the auspices of the OCME

To seek in-kind commercial support, you will work with your assigned OCME team member.

**Why do CME faculty (speakers, presenters, moderators, activity medical directors, authors, planning committee member, etc) have to complete a CME disclosure form?**

The ACCME requires CME providers (i.e., UMass Chan Medical School Office of CME) to require everyone who is in a position to control the content of an educational activity to disclose all relevant financial relationships with any commercial interest(s) in order to prevent potential bias in the educational content.

**Can commercial employees plan or instruct in CME activities?**

Commercial employees may **not** participate in the planning of CME activities. Commercial employees may serve as an instructor in UMass Chan CME activities only under narrowly defined circumstances. An employee of a commercial entity may present on: the scientific or discovery process itself, the results of basic (biologic, chemical, physical) research studies relevant to the clinical problem being addressed but not those specific to a commercial product or its preclinical and clinical testing, and CME topics other than those related to the products and business lines of his/her employer. Commercial employees may neither teach about their products nor offer recommendations regarding patient care.

The owners and employees of ineligible companies are considered to have unresolvable financial relationships and must be excluded from participating as planners or faculty and must not be allowed to influence or control any aspect of the planning, delivery, or evaluation of accredited continuing education, except in the limited circumstances outlined in Standard 3.2. Owners and employees are individuals who have a legal duty to act in the company's best interests. Owners are defined as individuals who have an ownership interest in a company, except for stockholders of publicly traded companies, or holders of shares through a pension or mutual fund. Employees are defined as individuals hired to work for another person or business (the employer) for compensation and who are subject to the employer's direction as to the details of how to perform the job.

Ineligible companies are prohibited from engaging in joint providership with accredited providers. Joint providership enables accredited providers to work with nonaccredited eligible organizations to deliver accredited education. The ACCME determines eligibility for accreditation based on the characteristics of the organization seeking accreditation and, if applicable, any parent company. Subsidiaries of an ineligible parent company cannot be accredited regardless of steps taken to firewall the subsidiaries. If an eligible parent company has an ineligible subsidiary, the owners and employees of the ineligible subsidiary must be excluded from accredited continuing education except in the limited circumstances outlined in Standard 3.2. Standards for Integrity and Independence in Accredited Continuing Education