

# Recognition Standards 2026

Criteria, Standards for Integrity  
and Independence, Policies, and  
Procedures

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## ADA CERP Recognition

Continuing dental education (CE) serves to maintain, develop, or increase the knowledge, skills, and professional performance and relationships that a dentist uses to provide services for patients, the public, or the profession. The objective of CE is to enhance and update the knowledge base of dentists, strengthen critical thinking skills and support an evidence-based, ethical practice of dentistry

The American Dental Association's Continuing Education Recognition Program (ADA CERP) recognizes providers of continuing dental education that demonstrate that they routinely meet certain standards of educational quality. The ADA CERP Recognition Standards and Policies form the basis for assessing CE providers' practices for planning, implementing and evaluating CE. ADA CERP recognition helps dental professionals select quality CE.

ADA CERP approves organizations that provide continuing dental education for dental professionals, it does not approve individual educational activities.

Interested organizations should review the ADA CERP Eligibility Criteria and Recognition Standards and Policies.

### How to apply

For new, or initial, applicants, the recognition process may take seven to twelve months. There are two steps to the initial application process: (1) a pre-application to determine eligibility to apply, and (2) an application for initial recognition.

CE providers wishing to apply for the American Dental Association's Continuing Education Recognition Program (ADA CERP) recognition should:

1. Obtain complete information about ADA CERP and the application process at [CCEPR.ADA.org](https://www.ccepr.ada.org) or contact the Commission for Continuing Education Provider Recognition at 312-440-2869.
2. Review the ADA CERP Eligibility Criteria, Standards and Procedures in this document to determine whether recognition should be pursued, or whether program adjustments should be made prior to applying for recognition.
3. Review information for new applicants at [CCEPR.ADA.org](https://www.ccepr.ada.org), including application materials and instructions, timelines, and fee schedules. It is important that a provider is familiar with these to know whether it is able to supply all information and supporting documents required in the application process.
4. Complete pre-application requirements.

CE providers based in the United States or Canada are required to submit a Pre-Application Determination of Eligibility.

CE providers that are based outside the United States or Canada must meet specific eligibility criteria and complete the Pre-Application Process for International Providers (PIIP, outlined in this document) before submitting an application for initial recognition.

Providers that have submitted a Pre-Application or a PIIP and that the Commission determines to be eligible will be invited to complete an ADA CERP application for recognition. The Commission for Continuing Education Provider Recognition reserves the right to determine a provider's eligibility based on the CERP Eligibility Criteria.

5. Contact the Commission for Continuing Education Provider Recognition at [cerp@ada.org](mailto:cerp@ada.org) or 312-440-

2869 when ready to initiate the pre-application process.

### **Initial recognition**

Eligible providers that submit an initial application and demonstrate compliance with the ADA CERP Recognition Standards and Policies may be awarded an initial recognition term of two years. If approved, providers will be eligible to apply for continued recognition at the end of the Initial Recognition term.

### **Continued recognition**

To be considered for another recognition term, a provider must submit an application for continued recognition. Twelve months before an ADA CERP provider's recognition term ends, the provider will receive instructions and application materials from the Commission. Providers will be given approximately six months to prepare the application for continued recognition.

After the Initial Recognition period, providers will be eligible for continued recognition. Recognition terms of four years will be awarded to providers that demonstrate they meet they ADA CERP Recognition Standards and Policies, unless the Commission determines that a shorter recognition term is appropriate, based on the provider's level of compliance with the Recognition Standards and the complaint history of the provider.

For more information, review the Regulations Governing the Recognition Process.

## Eligibility

The Commission for Continuing Education Provider Recognition (CCEPR) recognizes providers as defined in the ADA CERP Glossary and *Recognition Standards and Policies*. CCEPR recognizes providers of continuing dental education (CE), not individual courses. Institutions, organizations or major units or departments within an institution/organization (e.g., an oral and maxillofacial surgery department of a medical center) in the United States and Canada are eligible to apply for recognition. Providers based outside the United States and Canada may be eligible to apply if they meet the Additional Requirements for International Providers listed under the Pre-Application Policy for International Providers. Any provider of CE meeting the Eligibility Criteria and the ADA CERP Recognition Standards and Policies may be eligible for recognition.

To be eligible to apply for ADA CERP recognition, a provider must first meet the following eligibility criteria:

1. The CE provider offers a planned program of continuing dental education activities consistent with the definition of continuing dental education provided in the ADA CERP Glossary which defines continuing dental education as follows:

Continuing Dental Education: Continuing education consists of educational activities which serve to maintain, develop, or increase the knowledge, skills, and professional performance and relationships that a dentist uses to provide services for patients, the public, or the profession. The objective is to enhance and update the knowledge base of dentists, strengthen critical thinking skills and support an evidence-based, ethical practice of dentistry. The content of continuing dental education is that body of knowledge and skills generally recognized and accepted by the profession as within the basic medical and dental sciences, the discipline of clinical dentistry, and the provision of oral healthcare to the public.

Examples of non-clinical topics that are included in the ADA CERP definition of continuing dental education content include but are not limited to:

- Practice management, for managing offices related to the dental profession
- Educational methodology, for dentists teaching in academic dental programs
- Coding and reimbursement in a dental office
- Research advances in basic and clinical sciences.

Continuing education activities that are not directly related to a dentist's professional work do not fall within the ADA CERP definition of continuing dental education. Although these activities may be worthwhile, continuing dental education activities related to a dentist's nonprofessional educational needs or interests—such as personal financial planning or physical fitness—are not considered continuing dental education by ADA CERP.

2. The provider must have planned, implemented and evaluated at least one CE activity within the last 12 months prior to initiating the CERP pre-application process.
3. The CE provider must ensure that all courses offered for continuing education credit have a sound scientific basis in order to adequately protect the public. CCEPR reserves the right to require that the applicant provide documentation that courses offered by the provider have a sound scientific basis and proven efficacy in order to ensure public safety.
4. The CE provider must demonstrate that it assumes the financial and administrative responsibility of planning, publicizing and offering the continuing education program consistent with the definition of provider in the CERP Glossary, which defines Provider as follows:

Provider: An agency (institution, organization, or individual responsible for organizing, administering, publicizing, presenting, and keeping records for the continuing dental education program. The CE provider assumes both the professional and fiscal liability for the conduct and quality of the program. If the CE provider contracts or agrees with another organization or institution to provide facilities, instructor/author or other support for the continuing education activity, the recognized provider must ensure that the facilities, instructor/author or support provided meet the standards and criteria for recognition. The CE provider remains responsible for the overall educational quality of the continuing education activity.

5. Commercial interests are not eligible for recognition. The CERP Glossary defines “commercial interest” as follows:

Commercial Interest: (1) An individual or entity that produces, markets, resells or distributes health care goods or services consumed by, or used on, patients, or (2) an individual or entity that is owned or controlled by an individual or entity that produces, markets, resells, or distributes health care goods or services consumed by, or used on, patients. Providing clinical services directly to or for patients (e.g., a dental practice, dental lab, or diagnostic lab) does not, by itself, make an individual or entity a commercial interest.

6. CE providers that are not based in the United States or Canada must meet the additional eligibility criteria and requirements outlined in the Pre-application Process for International Providers *before* they will be considered eligible to apply for recognition.

The Commission for Continuing Education Provider Recognition reserves the right to determine a provider’s eligibility.

#### **Additional Requirements for International Providers**

7. The provider applying is a dental school or a continuing education program within a dental school, a national governmental health authority, a professional membership association, or a dental or medical education or communications company.
8. The provider operates under health care standards and standards of care for dentistry which support the ethical practice of dentistry and the profession.
9. The provider has direct oversight of all CE activities offered, and is directly responsible for planning, developing and administering the CE activities.
10. The survey responses and required documentation are in English and are appropriate and understandable.

# ADA CERP Recognition Standards 2026

Adopted September 26, 2024 for implementation June 1, 2026

The ADA CERP Recognition Standards, Criteria and Policies establish a framework to help providers of continuing dental education deliver quality education grounded in science and independent of commercial influence in order to promote optimal oral healthcare.

The five Standards contain criteria which state the requirements for providers. Most criteria are followed by intent statements which are designed to explain the requirement and offer guidance to providers. The intent statements are not requirements.

Providers applying for ADA CERP recognition or continued recognition must comply with all ADA CERP Standards, Criteria, and Policies that are applicable to their programs.

The ADA CERP Standards, Criteria, Policies and Procedures are subject to review and modification from time to time by the Commission for Continuing Education Provider Recognition at its discretion.

## STANDARD 1. PURPOSE AND MISSION

### 1.1. Provider's CE mission

The provider has a mission statement for its CE program which identifies the intent and expected results of its CE programming in terms of changes in professional skills or performance, or patient outcomes.

*Intent statement/guidance:*

*A clearly defined CE mission statement can serve as a roadmap for the provider's overall CE program. A mission statement may include information about the learners, educational methods and goals, but it must define what the program aims to achieve in terms of changes in professional skills or performance, or in terms of patient outcomes.*

### 1.2. Overall program analysis

The provider collects data and information on its CE program and analyzes the degree to which its CE mission is being met.

*Intent statement/guidance:*

*Gathering information and data about the provider's individual CE activities and using this information in a periodic analysis will help the provider to assess how effective its programming is in terms of improving professional knowledge, skills or practice, or patient outcomes.*

### 1.3. Overall program improvements

The provider identifies, plans and implements needed changes in the overall program in order to meet its CE mission.

*Intent statement/guidance:*

*Based on the data gathered about the provider's CE programming and the provider's analysis of whether it is meeting its CE mission, the provider utilizes the data gathered about the provider's CE programming to continuously improve its CE program and implement changes to be more effective. Improvements might include changes in planners, planning processes, instructors, educational methods, educational resources, facilities, organizational support or structure, etc.*

## 1.4. Program administration

The provider has an identifiable, continuous administrative authority or individual with responsibility for administration of the provider's CE program. The administrator is responsible for ensuring that the CE program meets the ADA CERP Recognition Standards and Procedures through an established planning, implementation, evaluation and record-keeping process.

*Intent statement/guidance:*

*Continuity of administration and planning is necessary for the stability and growth of the program.*

*Written policies and procedures for planning, implementing the provider's CE program will support continuity and compliance with the Standards.*

## 1.5. Advisory input in CE planning

The provider obtains input into the planning of its CE activities from health care professionals who are reflective of the target audience for which the provider's CE activities are designed.

*Intent statement/guidance:*

*Objective input from professionals representative of the audience for which a provider's activities are designed can offer insights and guidance regarding the profession's educational needs and educational content. Providers may establish formal committees or advisory panels to provide this input, appoint qualified individuals to participate in the development of CE activities or provide peer review. These groups and/or individuals may also help the provider conduct its periodic self-assessment.*

## STANDARD 2. CE PLANNING

### 2.1. Educational needs

The provider identifies the educational needs and/or the professional practice gaps (gaps in knowledge, skills, performance) of their learners and incorporates these into their CE activities.

*Intent statement/guidance:*

*Continuing education helps dental practitioners remain current in their professional knowledge, skills and practice in order to promote oral health and protect the public. CE providers should identify gaps between what dental professionals currently know or do and what is needed and desired in practice. Examples to document compliance might include but are not limited to:*

- *Course planning forms that include questions and information about the practice gaps to be addressed*
- *Surveys of target audience regarding performance gaps or barriers to practice*
- *Quality and safety assurance and improvement documentation*
- *Clinical guidelines*
- *Regulatory requirements*

### 2.2. Designed to change

The provider develops CE activities that are designed to change professional competence or performance, or patient outcomes.

*Intent statement/guidance:*

*As a next step in the planning process, the provider develops education that is designed to change learners' strategies/skills (competence), what learners actually do in practice*

*(performance), and/or the impact on the patient or on the care delivered (patient outcomes). Written educational objectives articulate the desired results of an educational activity. They help direct the design of the activity and provide a framework for measuring the effectiveness of the activity.*

### **2.3. Educational formats**

The provider chooses educational formats for each CE activity that are appropriate for the setting, objectives, and desired results of the activity, and which promote active learning.

*Intent statement/guidance:*

*Activity formats (e.g., didactic, small group, interactive, hands-on skill labs) should be chosen based on what the provider hopes to change as a result of the education. Adult education literature provides guidance about which learning formats are more effective than others depending on the outcome that is desired, the setting, and the needs of the learners.*

### **2.4. Instructor qualifications**

The provider chooses instructors who are qualified by education and experience to provide instruction in the relevant subject matter.

### **2.5. Instructor collaboration and communications**

The provider communicates and collaborates with the instructor regarding the educational needs, objectives, active learning formats, and assessments for the activity.

### **2.6. Publicity**

Publicity for the provider's CE activities is informative and not misleading, and includes:

- a. Name of the provider, and any joint providers
- b. Contact information for CE provider
- c. Description of course content
- d. Description of educational objectives
- e. Description of educational methods used
- f. Instructors' names and qualifications
- g. Costs and refund policies
- h. Location, date and times (live activities)
- i. Release date and expiration date (self-study activities)
- j. Number of CE credits to be awarded
- k. Information on any pre-requisites
- l. ADA CERP recognition statement and joint providership statement when applicable

*Intent statement/guidance:*

*Publicity for CE activities must provide accurate information to the potential learners so that they may make informed decisions.*

## STANDARD 3. INTEGRITY AND INDEPENDENCE

### 3.0 Integrity and independence

The provider develops CE activities that comply with the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education's [Standards for Integrity and Independence in Accredited Continuing Education](#), which includes the responsibility to:

1. Ensure content is valid.
2. Prevent commercial bias and marketing in accredited continuing education.
3. Identify, mitigate, and disclose relevant financial relationships.
4. Manage commercial support appropriately (if applicable).
5. Manage ancillary activities offered in conjunction with accredited continuing education (if applicable).

ADA CERP requirements for integrity and independence listed below reflect the requirements of the ACCME's Standards for Integrity and Independence in Accredited Continuing Education. The Standards for Integrity and Independence have been adopted by nine accrediting organizations in the health professions, including the Commission for Continuing Education Provider Recognition and ADA CERP. The complete ACCME Standards for Integrity and Independence in Accredited Continuing Education, including preamble and additional explanatory materials, are published at [ACCME.org/rules/standards/](https://www.accme.org/rules/standards/).

#### **Terminology**

**Accredited:** ADA CERP considers "accredited provider" as equivalent to "ADA CERP recognized provider," and "accredited continuing education" as equivalent to CE offered by an ADA CERP recognized provider.

**Commercial interest:** (1) An individual or entity that produces, markets, resells or distributes health care goods or services consumed by, or used on, patients, or (2) an individual or entity that is owned or controlled by an individual or entity that produces, markets, resells, or distributes health care goods or services consumed by, or used on, patients. Providing clinical services directly to or for patients (e.g., a dental practice, dental lab, or diagnostic lab) does not, by itself, make an individual or entity a commercial interest. (See INELIGIBLE COMPANY)

**Ineligible company:** The [term](#) used by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) to define those companies that are not eligible for accreditation within the ACCME system and whose primary business is producing, marketing, selling, re-selling, or distributing healthcare products used by or on patients. ADA CERP considers the term 'commercial interest' to be the equivalent of 'ineligible company' in the ADA CERP recognition system.

### 3.1. Ensure content is valid

Providers are responsible for ensuring that their education is fair and balanced and that any clinical content presented supports safe, effective patient care.

1. All recommendations for patient care in accredited continuing education must be based on current science, evidence, and clinical reasoning, while giving a fair and balanced view of diagnostic and therapeutic options.
2. All scientific research referred to, reported, or used in accredited education in support or justification of a patient care recommendation must conform to the generally accepted standards of experimental design, data collection, analysis, and interpretation.
3. Although accredited continuing education is an appropriate place to discuss, debate, and explore new and evolving topics, these areas need to be clearly identified as such within the program 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, or not yet, adequately based on current science, evidence, and clinical reasoning.

4. Organizations cannot be accredited if they advocate for unscientific approaches to diagnosis or therapy, or if their education 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.

### **3.2. Prevent commercial bias and marketing in CE**

Continuing education must protect learners from commercial bias and marketing.

1. The provider must ensure that all decisions related to the planning, faculty selection, delivery, and evaluation of accredited education are made without any influence or involvement from the owners and employees of an ineligible company (commercial interest).
2. CE must be free of marketing or sales of products or services. Faculty must not actively promote or sell products or services that serve their professional or financial interests during accredited education.
3. The provider must not share the names or contact information of learners with any ineligible company (commercial interest) or its agents without the explicit consent of the individual learner.

### **3.3. Identify, mitigate and disclose relevant financial relationships**

Many healthcare professionals have financial relationships with ineligible companies (commercial interests) These relationships must not be allowed to influence accredited continuing education. The accredited provider is responsible for identifying relevant financial relationships between individuals in control of educational content and ineligible companies and managing these to ensure they do not introduce commercial bias into the education. Financial relationships of any dollar amount are defined as relevant if the educational content is related to the business lines or products of the ineligible company.

Providers must take the following steps when developing CE. Exceptions are listed at the end of Standard 3.

1. **Collect information:** Collect information from all planners, faculty, and others in control of educational content about all their financial relationships with ineligible companies (commercial interests) within the prior 24 months. There is no minimum financial threshold; individuals must disclose all financial relationships, regardless of the amount, with ineligible companies (commercial interests). 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 (commercial interest) 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 (commercial interests) should be disclosed by the principal or named investigator even if that individual's institution receives the research grant and manages the funds
2. **Exclude owners or employees of ineligible companies (commercial interests):** Review the information about financial relationships to identify individuals who are owners or employees of ineligible companies (commercial interests). These individuals must be excluded from controlling content or participating as planners or faculty in CE. There are three exceptions to this exclusion—employees of ineligible companies (commercial interests) can participate as planners or faculty 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 CE activity is limited to basic science research, such as pre-clinical 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.
3. Identify relevant financial relationships: 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 (commercial interest).
  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 faculty and would occur before planning begins.
    - b. Document the steps taken to mitigate relevant financial relationships.
  5. 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 commercial interests by their name only. Disclosure to learners must not include ineligible companies' corporate or product logos, trade names, or product group messages.

Disclose absence of relevant financial relationships. Inform learners about planners, faculty, and others in control of content (either individually or as a group) with no relevant financial relationships with ineligible companies.

Learners must receive disclosure information, in a format that can be verified by ADA CERP, before engaging with the continuing education.

**Exception:** Providers do not need to identify, mitigate, or disclose relevant financial relationships for any CE that is non-clinical, such as leadership or communication skills training.

### **3.4. Manage commercial support appropriately**

*Standard 3.4 applies only to CE activities that receive financial or in-kind support from commercial interests.*

Providers that choose to accept **commercial support** (defined as financial or in-kind support from ineligible companies (commercial interests)) are responsible for ensuring that the education remains independent of the Ineligible company (commercial interest) and that the support does not result in commercial bias or commercial influence in the education. The support does not establish a financial relationship between the ineligible company (commercial interest) and planners, faculty, and others in control of content of the education.

1. Decision-making and disbursement: The provider must make all decisions regarding the receipt and disbursement of the commercial support.
  - a. Ineligible companies (commercial interests) must not pay directly for any of the expenses related to the education or the learners.
  - b. The provider may use commercial support to fund honoraria or travel expenses of planners, faculty, and others in control of content for those roles only.
  - c. The provider must not use commercial support to pay for travel, lodging, honoraria, or personal expenses for individual learners or groups of learners in CE.

The provider may use commercial support to defray or eliminate the cost of the education for *all* learners.

2. **Agreement:** The terms, conditions, and purposes of the commercial support must be documented in an agreement between the ineligible company (commercial interest) and the provider. The agreement must be executed prior to the start of the CE. A provider can sign onto an existing agreement between an accredited provider and an ineligible company (commercial supporter) by indicating its acceptance of the terms, conditions, and amount of commercial support it will receive.
3. **Accountability:** The CERP recognized 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 company that provided the commercial support.
4. **Disclosure to learners:** The provider must disclose to the learners the name(s) of the 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' (commercial interests') corporate or product logos, trade names, or product group messages.

### **3.5. Manage ancillary activities in conjunction with accredited CE**

*Standard 3.5 applies only when there is marketing by commercial interests or nonaccredited education associated with the CE.*

Providers are responsible for ensuring that education is separate from marketing by ineligible companies (commercial interests)—including advertising, sales, exhibits, and promotion—and from nonaccredited education offered in conjunction with CE.

1. Arrangements to allow ineligible companies (commercial interests) 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 commercial interests for the education.
2. The provider must ensure that learners can easily distinguish between CE and other activities.
  - a. Live continuing education activities: Marketing, exhibits, and nonaccredited education developed by or with influence from an ineligible company (commercial interest) or with planners or faculty 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 labeled and communicated as such.
  - b. Print, online, or digital continuing education activities: Learners must not be presented with marketing while engaged in the CE 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 CE (such as slides, abstracts, handouts, evaluation mechanisms, or disclosure information) must not contain any marketing produced by or for an ineligible company (commercial interest), including corporate or product logos, trade names, or product group messages.
  - d. Information distributed about CE that does not include educational content, such as schedules and logistical information, may include marketing by or for an ineligible company (commercial interest).
3. Ineligible companies (commercial interests) may not provide access to, or distribute, CE to learners.

## STANDARD 4. EVALUATION

### 4.0. Analyze effectiveness of CE activities

The provider analyzes changes in learners' knowledge, performance or practice, and/or patient outcomes achieved as a result of the provider's CE programs.

*Intent statement/guidance:*

*The provider uses evaluation tools for CE activities to assess learners' achievement. The provider may evaluate any aspects of its CE activities that are relevant to its program, learners, setting, goals, etc., but it must at least use evaluation tools that will allow it to analyze any changes in its learners' knowledge, performance or practice that resulted from the educational activity, changes the learners expect to make, and/or the impact on patients.*

*Using this data and information gathered for all its CE activities, the provider will be able to analyze the impact of its overall CE program in terms of those changes.*

## STANDARD 5. PATIENT PROTECTION

### 5.0. Patient protection

*Standard 5. Applies only to those providers that offer continuing education courses in which patients are treated. This includes courses in which the instructor or the learners perform procedures on patients.*

A provider that offers CE courses in which patients are treated has protocols and procedures in place to ensure patient safety and privacy, including the following:

- a. Ensuring that participants and instructors treating patients are in compliance with any applicable dental licensure laws in the jurisdiction where the course is being held;
- b. Ensuring that providers, instructors and participants have liability protection where required;
- c. Obtaining informed consent from patients;
- d. Informing patients in plain language of
  - i. The training situation
  - ii. The nature and extent of the treatment to be rendered
  - iii. Any benefits or potential harm that may result from the procedure
  - iv. Available alternative procedures
  - v. Their right to discontinue treatment
  - vi. The name and contact information for the clinician responsible for answering questions, addressing concerns, and providing any necessary completion of treatment and post-treatment care, including emergency treatment.
- e. Ensuring standard infection prevention and infection control protocols, sterile equipment and instruments in good working order, and access to emergency care.
- f. Ensuring instructors/participants are up to date on patient safety protocols and emergency response procedures.
- g. Assuming responsibility for competent completion of treatment, any necessary post-course treatment, and management of complications by a qualified clinician.

# ADA CERP Policies for Providers

*Providers seeking ADA CERP recognition or continued recognition must comply with all policies applicable to their programs.*

## PERIODIC REVIEW OF SELF-STUDY ACTIVITIES

Providers that produce self-study activities must review each activity at least once every three years or more frequently if indicated by new scientific developments to ensure that content is current and accurate. Providers must publish the original release date of each self-study activity, the review date, and the expiration date on the self-study activity.

*ADA CERP Policy on Periodic Review of Self-Study Activities*  
Approved: September 2024

## CALCULATING CREDITS

The provider designates credits for CE activities as follows:

- a. Credits are based on the actual length of instruction time, including Q&A periods, and any mandatory self-assessment. Credits are not awarded for breaks, meals, registration periods or general business.
- b. Credits may be awarded in increments of 15 minutes (0.25 credits per 15 minutes); no credits are awarded for activities that are less than 15 minutes in duration.
- c. Self-instructional activities are designated for credit based on a good faith estimate of the time an average participant needs to complete the activity.

*ADA CERP Policy on Calculating Credits*  
Approved: September 2024

## AWARDING CREDIT

The provider issues verification of CE credits earned to learners who complete a CE activity; the verification issued contains the following information:

- a. Name of the CE provider
- b. Name of the participant
- c. Title of the CE activity, including specific subjects if these are not included in the activity title
- d. Dates, hours and location of the activity (live activities), or the learner's completion date (self-study activities)
- e. Educational format of the activity (e.g., in-person lecture, hands-on participation, live webinar, on-demand webinar, online self-study, etc.)
- f. The number of credits awarded (for large conferences or extended programs, the title of each session and the number of credits awarded for each are listed)
- g. The complete, authorized ADA CERP recognition statement, including information on filing complaints.

Documentation must not resemble a diploma. Documentation must not attest, or appear to attest to specific skill, or specialty or advanced educational status. Providers must design such documentation to avoid misinterpretation by the public or professional colleagues.

*ADA CERP Policy on Awarding Credits*  
Approved: September 2024

## RECORD KEEPING

The provider maintains accurate records of the learners' participation in CE activities for a period of at least six years, and information on the planning and presentation of each course for the duration of its current ADA CERP recognition term. Maintaining accurate records of course participants helps the learners in the provider's activities meet their reporting requirements to regulatory agencies. Maintaining course activity files helps the provider meet its reporting requirements to ADA CERP, including the annual report, applying for continued recognition, and in the event of potential complaints.

ADA CERP Policy on Record Keeping  
Approved: September 2024

## JOINT PROVIDERSHIP

This policy delineates recommended procedures for initiating, developing and managing joint providerships in compliance with the current ADA CERP standards, procedures, definitions and policies.

1. A recognized provider may elect to share responsibility with one or more recognized or non-recognized providers for planning, implementing, evaluating, and keeping records for a continuing dental education activity. A non-recognized provider may initiate joint providership with a recognized provider.
2. Non-recognized joint providers must be compliant with eligibility requirements as they reflect specific ADA CERP standards, criteria, procedures and definitions. A commercial interest as defined by ADA CERP may not be a joint provider.
3. Responsibility for quality assurance rests with the recognized provider. Administrative responsibility for development and implementation of continuing education activities must rest with the recognized provider whenever the recognized provider acts in cooperation with providers that are not recognized. When two or more recognized providers act in cooperation to develop, distribute and/or present an activity, one must take responsibility for ensuring compliance with CERP Standards.

These responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- a. A letter of agreement must be drawn up between the providers forming the joint providership. The letter of agreement must be signed by all parties.
  - b. Responsibility for initiating and coordinating management of the letter of agreement must rest with the recognized provider(s).
  - c. The recognized provider(s) must ensure that specific planning and administrative procedures have been established to ensure compliance with ADA CERP standards, criteria, procedures and policies.
  - d. The recognized provider(s) and any joint providers that are not recognized must ensure that CE activities offered have a sound scientific basis in order to adequately protect the public.
  - e. The parties named in the letter of agreement must review the letter of agreement periodically in order to make any required updates or revisions.
4. The recognized provider must inform the participant of the joint providership relationship through the use of the appropriate recognition statements. All printed materials for jointly provided activities must carry the appropriate recognition statements.

*<<Name of provider>> is an ADA CERP Recognized Provider. ADA CERP is a service of the American Dental Association to assist dental professionals in identifying quality providers of continuing dental education. ADA CERP does not approve or endorse individual courses or instructors, nor does it imply acceptance of credit hours by boards of dentistry.*

*Concerns or complaints about a CE provider may be directed to the provider or to the Commission for Continuing Education Provider Recognition at [CCEPR.ADA.org](http://CCEPR.ADA.org).*

*<<Name of provider>> designates this activity for <<number of credit hours>> continuing education credits.*

*This continuing education activity has been planned and implemented in accordance with the standards of the ADA Continuing Education Recognition Program (ADA CERP) through joint efforts between <<Name of CERP recognized provider>> and <<Name of joint provider.>>*

ADA CERP Joint Providership Policy

Approved: November 2001; Revised: November 2009, December 2013, March 2015, April 2019, September 2022

## REPORTING SUBSTANTIVE CHANGES

**Substantive changes:** A substantive change to a provider's continuing education (CE) program is one that may impact the degree to which the recognized provider complies with the ADA CERP Recognition Standards and Procedures. The Commission must be made aware of substantive changes as soon as possible. Substantive changes may include, but are not limited to:

- Changes in ownership, legal status or form of control.
- Introducing a new educational method beyond the scope described in the application, e.g., adding patient treatment courses or self-study activities.
- Changes in the CE program's source(s) of financial support, especially if funding is from an external commercial source.
- Changes in the CE provider's contact information.

When an ADA CERP recognized provider undergoes certain substantive changes, resulting, for instance, from a merger or acquisition, the Commission may need to work through the transition with the organization.

When a recognized provider undergoes certain substantive changes, for example, becoming owned by a commercial interest, ADA CERP may consider the provider to be significantly different than the organization that was recognized. ADA CERP may require the provider to cease providing CE as an ADA CERP recognized provider.

ADA CERP may withdraw a provider's recognition if the provider is dissolved or ceases to exist as a result of a merger, acquisition or dissolution.

When substantive changes occur, the primary concern of the Commission for Continuing Education Provider Recognition (the Commission) is that the provider continues to meet the ADA CERP standards and criteria. Recognized providers must be able to demonstrate that any substantive change(s) to their CE program will not adversely affect the ability of the organization to comply with established standards. If the Commission determines that the program changes represent a sufficient departure from practices in place at the time of application, the Commission may elect to re-evaluate the provider before the next formal reapplication is due.

**Contact information changes:** To protect the best interest of all parties, ADA CERP generally limits communications to authorized contact persons identified by the provider. It is very important to ensure that your organization's contact information is current and accurate. ADA CERP uses the following

contact categories:

1. CERP contact: the person with whom CERP regularly communicates, frequently via email
2. Chief Executive Officer: the person in a leadership role who is ultimately responsible for the organization's ADA CERP recognized CE provider

A provider may review and make necessary changes to their organization's contact information by contacting ADA CERP staff at [cerp@ada.org](mailto:cerp@ada.org). ADA CERP considers the names and contact information for providers recognized by ADA CERP to be public information, and provides lists of these names to the public, accordingly.

**Reporting changes:** All recognized providers are expected to report substantive changes **in writing** to the CCEPR within 30 days of the change. If a provider is uncertain whether a change is substantive, the provider should contact Commission staff at [cerp@ada.org](mailto:cerp@ada.org) for clarification and guidance. The following procedures shall apply to substantive changes:

1. ADA CERP recognized providers must report any substantive change(s) to their CE program within 30 days of the change.
2. The provider must submit to the Commission a description and/or documentation describing the change(s) and explaining how the CE program will continue to comply with ADA CERP standards and criteria.
3. Providers will receive written notification from the Commission that:
  - a. The information is acceptable and will be kept on file for review at the time of the provider's next scheduled reapplication, or
  - b. Additional documentation is required for re-evaluation prior to the next scheduled reapplication, usually at the time of Commission's next scheduled meeting.
4. The Commission may exercise its right to re-evaluate a recognized provider at any time.
5. When a provider has received written notification to provide additional documentation, failure to submit the requested documentation shall be considered grounds for withdrawal of ADA CERP recognition status at the next regularly scheduled meetings of the Commission.
6. Submission of false or misleading information shall be grounds for withdrawal of ADA CERP recognition status.

ADA CERP Policy on Reporting Substantive Changes

Adopted: September 1994

Revised: May 2000, September 2000, January 2006, March 2015; April 2023

## COMPLIANCE WITH PRIVACY LAWS

Every provider submitting materials to the Commission for Continuing Education Provider Recognition (CCEPR) as part of the recognition process must attest to the following:

*"The materials we submit to CCEPR as part of an application, activity file, progress report, report of substantive change, or other reports will not include protected health information, as defined in the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), as amended, unless we have obtained any necessary authorization, consent or release, or any other personally identifiable information that may be protected by federal, state or local laws."*

ADA CERP Policy on Compliance with Privacy Laws

Adopted: May 2014; Revised: March 2015

# ADA CERP Recognition Policies and Procedures

## **VOLUNTARY NATURE OF THE PROGRAM**

Participation in the ADA Continuing Education Recognition Program (ADA CERP) is voluntary. Continuing education (CE) providers are not required to obtain ADA CERP recognition. Any decision not to participate in the program will be respected.

An official list of ADA CERP recognized providers is posted online at [CCEPR.ADA.org](http://CCEPR.ADA.org). State dental boards, dental societies, allied dental organizations and other dental professional organizations may use the results of the ADA CERP program and recognize the ADA CERP recognized providers in various manners to fulfill their CE interests or obligations.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

The Commission for Continuing Education Provider Recognition (CCEPR) will keep confidential to the extent permitted by law the name of any provider that has:

1. Initiated contact with the Commission concerning application for recognition;
2. Applied for recognition but has not yet been apprised of a decision;
3. Applied for and been denied recognition.

Further, in response to general inquiries, the Commission will not confirm that a provider has not applied for recognition, nor provide details regarding any weaknesses of a recognized provider. All inquiries as to the recognition status of a specific provider will be answered by referral to the published, official list of ADA CERP recognized providers.

## **RECOGNITION**

ADA CERP recognition is based on a provider's demonstration of compliance with ADA CERP Standards. Providers wishing to apply for ADA CERP recognition must first complete a pre-application related to the ADA CERP eligibility criteria. If the Commission determines that a provider meets the eligibility criteria, the provider will be invited to apply for recognition. To apply for recognition, the provider must complete the ADA CERP Application for Recognition, a form that relates to each of the ADA CERP Standards. The application, together with any required documentation or pertinent data, is submitted to the Commission for evaluation.

Providers approved by the Commission shall be designated "ADA CERP recognized providers" for the length of their period of recognition. New applicants (providers that are not currently ADA CERP recognized) may be eligible for an Initial Recognition period of two years. Providers seeking continued recognition may be awarded a 4-year recognition term unless the Commission determines that a shorter recognition term is appropriate based on the level of compliance and complaint history of the provider.

If the Commission determines that more information is required to make a decision regarding recognition status, or that the provider only minimally meets the ADA CERP Standards, the Commission may (1) postpone action to determine recognition status for a specified period of time pending submission of additional information or a new application, or (2) grant recognition contingent upon the provider's submission of a progress report within six months to one year. The Commission will identify and transmit to the provider recommendations for improvement or concerns noted during the review.

Recognition of a provider does not imply recognition or approval of that provider's satellite or parent organizations, parent company, subsidiaries, cooperating agencies or divisions.

The ADA CERP Standards are subject to review and modification from time to time by the Commission at its discretion. To retain recognition, providers must comply with ADA CERP Standards as modified.

CCEPR does not approve lecturers, individual courses, or credit hours.

Providers must inform participants on how comments or complaints about an ADA CERP recognized provider may be filed with the Commission.

## **REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE RECOGNITION PROCESS**

1. All providers interested in obtaining ADA CERP recognition must first complete a pre-application form. Providers in the United States and Canada must complete the ADA CERP Pre-application: Determination of Eligibility form. International providers, defined by ADA CERP as providers based outside the United States or Canada, must complete the Pre-application Process for International Providers (PPIP). The pre-application forms include questions related to the ADA CERP eligibility criteria. Pre-applications may be submitted at any time. The Commission will notify providers in writing, usually within eight weeks, of receipt of the pre-application and fee, regarding the provider's eligibility to continue with the application process. Providers that are deemed eligible to continue will be invited to apply and will be sent application materials and instructions.
2. Eligible providers will be requested to complete an ADA CERP Application for Recognition within a specified time frame, usually within 18 months of notification of eligibility, and in accordance with published application deadlines. The Commission will inform eligible providers of the date(s) by which an initial application may be submitted. Eligible providers that do not submit an application for the Commission's consideration by the final date specified by the Commission will be required to submit a new pre-application form and pay the applicable fee. Published application deadlines shall fall approximately two months prior to meetings of the Commission.
3. After receipt of the ADA CERP Application for Recognition, the application will be reviewed to determine completeness of information submitted. If problems are identified, Commission staff will notify the provider of any issues related to the application, including any required information or documents, which must be addressed before the application may be submitted to the Commission for consideration.
4. The application will be considered at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Commission. If the Commission determines that the application does not provide adequate information on which to base a recommendation for recognition, the Commission may seek additional information from the provider or from alternative sources.

CCEPR may seek additional information from the provider, including but not limited to course evaluation forms completed by participants and the names, addresses and telephone numbers of all course participants. The Commission may also seek information from alternative sources including but not limited to: surveys of program participants, on-site visits, observation of the provider's CE activities, review of the provider's web site, or other means considered necessary to determine whether the provider is in compliance with the standards and criteria.

5. New applicants (providers that are not currently ADA CERP recognized) may be eligible for an Initial Recognition period of two years. After the Initial Recognition period, providers may be eligible for continued recognition. Continued recognition terms of four years will be awarded to providers that demonstrate they meet the ADA CERP Recognition Standards and Policies, unless the Commission determines that a shorter recognition term is appropriate, based on the provider's level of compliance with the ADA CERP Standards and the complaint history of the provider.

Recognition is effective the first day of the month of May or November after action is taken by the CCEPR. In no case will recognition be granted retroactively or prior to action taken by the Commission.

**If recognition is granted**, the provider will be supplied with the following information:

- a. The effective dates and length of the recognition term
- b. A statement that must be used to announce or publicize ADA CERP recognition
- c. Responsibilities and procedures for documenting participation in CE activities
- d. Procedures regarding expiration of recognition and reapplication
- e. Requirements and recommendations for improvements in the provider's CE program

Recognition may be contingent on the submission of one or more progress reports at specified intervals. The Commission reserves the right to reevaluate a provider at any time; for example, by surveying participants in the provider's CE activities, by reviewing activities in person, or by requiring additional information concerning the provider and/or its activities.

Recognized providers have an obligation to ensure that major changes or additions to the program—such as a change of ownership, implementing courses in which treatment is provided to human subjects or adding a new educational method—must conform with ADA CERP Standards. Major changes must be reported in keeping with the ADA CERP Policy on Substantive Changes.

6. Recognized providers must use the following statements regarding recognition status, credit designation and notice of opportunity to file complaints on materials related to their continuing education activities.

- a. Publicity materials

The following authorized recognition and credit designation statements must be used on publicity materials related to the provider's continuing education courses:

*<<Name of provider>> is an ADA CERP Recognized Provider.*

*ADA CERP is a service of the American Dental Association to assist dental professionals in identifying quality providers of continuing dental education. ADA CERP does not approve or endorse individual courses or instructors, nor does it imply acceptance of credit hours by boards of dentistry.*

*<<Name of provider>> designates this activity for <<number of credit hours>> continuing education credits.*

- b. Course materials and verification of participation forms

The following authorized recognition statement and notice of opportunity to file complaints must be published by recognized providers in course materials available to participants during the activity, such as program guides, evaluation forms, instructions for self-study activities, etc., and on all verification of participation documents issued by the provider for continuing dental education activities:

*<<Name of provider>> is an ADA CERP Recognized Provider.*

*ADA CERP is a service of the American Dental Association to assist dental professionals in identifying quality providers of continuing dental education. ADA CERP does not approve or endorse individual courses or instructors, nor does it imply acceptance of credit hours by boards of dentistry.*

*Concerns or complaints about a CE provider may be directed to the provider or to the Commission for Continuing Education Provider Recognition at [CCEPR.ADA.org](http://CCEPR.ADA.org).*

7. All recognized providers must submit an annual report to CCEPR containing current contact information and information about the providers' CE activities in the preceding year. Contact information must include the provider's name, address, phone, fax, Web address, and the names and contact information for the chief administrative authority and the person with primary day-to-day responsibility for administration of the provider's continuing dental education program.
8. Use of the ADA CERP logo (or name) in connection with advertisements and written course materials associated with continuing education activities by a recognized provider must conform to the following criteria:
  - a. It shall not be used to imply that any CE activities or CE credit hours have been approved or endorsed by ADA CERP, the Commission for Continuing Education Provider Recognition, or the American Dental Association
  - b. It shall not be used on letterheads or in any fashion that would imply that the organization is affiliated with ADA CERP, the Commission for Continuing Education Provider Recognition, or the American Dental Association, other than as a recognized provider
  - c. It may not be displayed in a type size larger than the provider organization's name, or given greater prominence than the provider organization's name
  - d. It shall not be published in conjunction with any statement or material that, in the Commission's or the ADA's judgment, may be harmful to the ADA's or the Commission's good will or may tend to undermine the Commission's or the ADA's credibility
  - e. It shall only be used in conjunction with the authorized statement that the organization is a recognized provider
9. **Recognition may be denied or withdrawn** if there is non-compliance with the ADA CERP Standards for recognition. If recognition is denied or withdrawn, the provider will be provided with the following:
  - a. Identification of the specific standards and criteria with which the Commission found noncompliance
  - b. Requirements and recommendations for alterations and/or improvements in the provider's continuing dental education program
  - c. Rules and mechanisms governing resubmission of an application
  - d. Procedures for reconsideration
10. **Recognition may be withdrawn** by the Commission for any of the following reasons:
  - a. A voluntary request is received from the recognized provider.
  - b. A finding of noncompliance with the ADA CERP Standards for recognition. Specific reasons for the action will be identified.
  - c. The provider submits false and/or misleading information.
  - d. The provider fails to submit documentation requested in writing in a timely manner.
  - e. CE activities have not been offered to dentists for a period of two years or more.
  - f. Required fees have not been paid.
  - g. The provider fails to sign and comply with terms of the ADA CERP License Agreement.
  - h. The provider fails to submit an annual report.

The ADA CERP Standards are subject to review and modification from time to time by the CCEPR at its discretion. To retain recognition, continuing dental education providers must comply with ADA CERP Standards as modified. CCEPR will notify recognized providers of any program updates and changes to the ADA CERP Standards. Notifications will be sent via email and announcements posted online at [CCEPR.ADA.org](http://CCEPR.ADA.org). The most current version of the ADA CERP Recognition Standards and Policies is available at [CCEPR.ADA.org](http://CCEPR.ADA.org). If, as a result of any modification, a recognized provider is no longer in compliance with the new ADA CERP Standards, then by the date of the provider's next regularly scheduled review, or the date specified by the Commission, whichever is earlier, the provider must either

bring its continuing dental education program into compliance with the new ADA CERP Standards or it must voluntarily request to withdraw from the ADA CERP program.

## **CONTINUED RECOGNITION OF PREVIOUSLY RECOGNIZED PROVIDERS**

The re-recognition process begins about twelve months prior to the designated recognition expiration date. The Commission for Continuing Education Provider Recognition (CCEPR) notifies recognized providers and sends them information about the re-recognition procedures, including a specific schedule. Application deadlines shall be regularized and published, and shall fall approximately two months prior to meetings of the Commission.

Recognized providers must complete and submit an ADA CERP Application for Recognition by the specified deadline prior to the date when the provider's recognition will expire. In addition to the Application form, the provider must submit any other specifically identified materials documenting its continued compliance with the CERP standards and criteria for recognition, as well as improvements in any previously-identified areas of deficiency or weakness. Recommendations for improvements shall be evaluated under the ADA CERP Standards in effect at the time of the evaluation.

## **POLICY ON EXTENSIONS**

If a recognized provider is unable to meet its reapplication deadline, the provider may request a one-time extension of its recognition term. In order to do so, the provider must notify Commission staff of its intent to extend and submit payment of the appropriate extension fee (see Fee Schedule). If the Commission grants the extension, the provider's recognition term will be extended six months, pending submission and approval of a reapplication to be reviewed during the next application cycle. If an extension is granted and the provider submits an application for continued recognition during the next application cycle and the Commission approves the provider for another term of recognition, the new recognition term will begin at the end of the extended recognition term.

*Policy on Extensions*  
Adopted: May 2024

## **POLICY ON PRE-APPLICATION PROCESS FOR INTERNATIONAL PROVIDERS (PIIP)**

ADA Continuing Education Recognition Program (ADA CERP) recognition is based on a provider's demonstration of compliance with ADA CERP Standards. Participation in ADA CERP is voluntary. ADA CERP was created to assist the dental profession in identifying and participating in quality continuing dental education and to assist dental regulatory agencies to establish a sound basis for increasing their uniform acceptance of continuing dental education (CE) credits earned by dentists to meet the CE requirements for re-licensure currently mandated by the majority of licensing jurisdictions in the United States.

International CE providers may seek ADA CERP recognition for the purpose of obtaining an independent, external review, for benchmarking, or to serve the needs of dental professionals for quality continuing dental education.

An international CE provider is defined as a provider whose primary location is outside the United States and Canada.

An international CE provider seeking ADA CERP recognition must demonstrate compliance with the same ADA CERP Recognition Standards, Policies and Procedures as providers in the United States and Canada.

Accordingly, for those international providers interested in obtaining ADA CERP recognition, the Commission for Continuing Education Provider Recognition has a Pre-application Process for

International Providers (PPIP) to enhance these providers' understanding of the purpose and function of the program, and to support the Commission's ability to assess providers in diverse cultural, professional and regulatory contexts.

### **ADA CERP Eligibility Criteria**

1. The CE provider offers a planned program of continuing dental education activities consistent with the definition of continuing dental education provided in the ADA CERP Glossary which defines continuing dental education as follows:

Continuing Dental Education: Continuing education consists of educational activities which serve to maintain, develop, or increase the knowledge, skills, and professional performance and relationships that a dentist uses to provide services for patients, the public, or the profession. The objective is to enhance and update the knowledge base of dentists, strengthen critical thinking skills and support an evidence-based, ethical practice of dentistry. The content of continuing dental education is that body of knowledge and skills generally recognized and accepted by the profession as within the basic medical and dental sciences, the discipline of clinical dentistry, and the provision of oral healthcare to the public.

Examples of non-clinical topics that are included in the ADA CERP definition of continuing dental education content include but are not limited to:

- Practice management, for managing offices related to the dental profession
- Educational methodology, for dentists teaching in academic dental programs
- Coding and reimbursement in a dental office
- Research advances in basic and clinical sciences.

Continuing education activities that are not directly related to a dentist's professional work do not fall within the ADA CERP definition of continuing dental education. Although these activities may be worthwhile, continuing dental education activities related to a dentist's nonprofessional educational needs or interests—such as personal financial planning or physical fitness—are not considered continuing dental education by ADA CERP.

2. The provider must have planned, implemented and evaluated at least one CE activity within the last 12 months prior to initiating the CERP pre-application process.
3. The CE provider must ensure that all courses offered for continuing education credit have a sound scientific basis in order to adequately protect the public. CCEPR reserves the right to require that the applicant provide documentation that courses offered by the provider have a sound scientific basis and proven efficacy in order to ensure public safety.
4. The CE provider must demonstrate that it assumes the financial and administrative responsibility of planning, publicizing and offering the continuing education program consistent with the definition of provider in the CERP Glossary, which defines Provider as follows:

Provider: An agency (institution, organization, or individual responsible for organizing, administering, publicizing, presenting, and keeping records for the continuing dental education program. The CE provider assumes both the professional and fiscal liability for the conduct and quality of the program. If the CE provider contracts or agrees with another organization or institution to provide facilities, instructor/author or other support for the continuing education activity, the recognized provider must ensure that the facilities, instructor/author or support provided meet the standards and criteria for recognition. The CE provider remains responsible for the overall educational quality of the continuing education activity.

5. Commercial interests are not eligible for recognition. The CERP Glossary defines “commercial interest” as follows:

Commercial Interest: (1) An individual or entity that produces, markets, resells or distributes health care goods or services consumed by, or used on, patients, or (2) an individual or entity that is owned or controlled by an individual or entity that produces, markets, resells, or distributes health care goods or services consumed by, or used on, patients. Providing clinical services directly to or for patients (e.g., a dental practice, dental lab, or diagnostic lab) does not, by itself, make an individual or entity a commercial interest.

6. CE providers that are not based in the United States or Canada must meet the additional eligibility criteria and requirements outlined in the Pre-application Process for International Providers *before* they will be considered eligible to apply for recognition.

### **Additional Requirements for International Providers**

7. The provider applying is a dental school or a continuing education program within a dental school, a national governmental health authority, a professional membership association, or a dental or medical education or communications company.
8. The provider operates under health care standards and standards of care for dentistry which support the ethical practice of dentistry and the profession.
9. The provider has direct oversight of all CE activities offered, and is directly responsible for planning, developing and administering the CE activities.
10. The survey responses and required documentation are in English and are appropriate and understandable.

The Commission for Continuing Education Provider Recognition reserves the right to determine a provider's eligibility.

### **Pre-application Process for International Providers (PIIP)**

An international CE provider wishing to apply for CERP recognition must submit a pre-application survey to the Commission for Continuing Education Provider Recognition (“the Commission”) demonstrating that it meets the Eligibility Criteria. The Commission will invite international CE providers that meet these criteria to submit an ADA CERP application for initial recognition.

#### **Step 1. Submission of PIIP Eligibility Survey**

The applicant organization submits a PIIP survey, with supporting documentation, and a Pre-application fee to begin the application process. The survey is reviewed by the Commission using the eligibility criteria listed above. If the Commission determines that the continuing education provider meets the Eligibility Criteria, the Commission will invite the provider to submit an application for ADA CERP recognition. If the Commission determines that the provider has the potential to meet the Eligibility Criteria for International Providers but the Pre-application Survey does not demonstrate that the provider meets all requirements, the Commission may ask the provider to submit additional information. If the Commission determines that the international provider is not eligible to pursue CERP recognition, the Commission will inform the provider of the specific areas that, in the opinion of the Commission, limit the ability of the provider to meet CERP recognition requirements for international providers.

#### **Step 2. Submission of ADA CERP application for initial recognition**

International CE providers that are determined to be eligible and that wish to apply for ADA CERP recognition will be requested to complete an ADA CERP Application for Recognition within a specified time frame, usually within 18 months of notification of eligibility, and in accordance with published

application deadlines. The Commission will inform eligible providers of the date(s) by which an initial application must be submitted. Eligible providers that do not submit an application for the Commission's consideration by the final date specified by the Commission will be required to submit a new pre-application form and pay the applicable fee. Published application deadlines shall fall approximately three months prior to meetings of the Commission.

The Commission will consider applications submitted by published deadlines at its next regularly scheduled meeting, and will communicate its findings to the provider in accordance with the ADA CERP Regulations Governing the Recognition Process.

### **Step 3. Maintaining ADA CERP recognition once approved**

International providers that receive ADA CERP recognition must comply with all program requirements. It is the provider's responsibility to stay informed of changes in the ADA CERP Standards and to abide by all current policies and procedures.

All ADA CERP recognized providers must periodically reapply for continued recognition, as described in the ADA CERP Recognition Policy and the Policy on Continued Recognition of Previously Recognized Providers.

#### *ADA CERP Policy on Pre-application Process for International Providers*

Adopted: December 2013; Revised: March 2015; September 2015; April 2019; October 2020; September 2022; April 2023; April 2026

## **FEES**

Continuing education providers that are not currently ADA CERP recognized must pay a non-refundable fee when submitting pre-applications to determine eligibility and an application fee when submitting an application for initial recognition. Once approved, CERP recognized providers must also pay an annual fee. No annual fee will be required in the year the provider receives initial CERP recognition.

ADA CERP fees are based on the operating expenses of the program. A schedule of current fees is published at [CCEPR.ADA.org](http://CCEPR.ADA.org).

The Commission will view non-payment of all required fees within the established deadline(s) as a decision by the provider to voluntarily withdraw from the ADA CERP. The name of the previously recognized provider will be removed from the current list of ADA CERP recognized providers when it is next published. Any provider wishing to reinstate its recognition following discontinuation for non-payment of fees will be required to submit an ADA CERP Application and follow the established procedures for recognition.

## **COMPLAINTS POLICY**

**Complaints:** A complaint is defined by the Commission for Continuing Education Provider Recognition ("the Commission") as written communication received by the Commission alleging that a CE provider recognized by the ADA Continuing Education Recognition Program (ADA CERP) may not be in compliance with ADA CERP Recognition Standards, Policies and Procedures (ADA CERP Standards).

ADA CERP recognition is based on a periodic review of a provider's compliance with ADA CERP Standards and/or recognition policies. The Complaints Policy is implemented in response to concerns about providers' compliance with ADA CERP Standards that arise outside of the recognition process. The Commission reserves the right to amend this policy at any time.

The Commission will consider written, signed complaints about recognized CE providers if the complaint documents substantial noncompliance with the ADA CERP Standards. Complaints may be forwarded to the Commission by course participants, course faculty, other ADA CERP recognized CE providers, state dental societies, state boards of dentistry and other interested parties. Upon receipt of such a complaint,

the Commission will initiate a review of the provider's recognition status, in accordance with the ADA CERP Complaints Policy in a manner that considers due process.

A recognized provider may also be reevaluated at any time if information is received from the provider or another source that indicates the provider has undergone changes in program administration or scope, or may no longer be in compliance with the ADA CERP Standards.

**Complaints Policy:** The Commission for Continuing Education Provider Recognition will only consider written, signed complaints that present evidence and documentation in support of the complaint. The complaint must identify the specific ADA CERP Standards with which the recognized provider may not be in compliance. Unsigned comments/complaints or oral complaints will not be considered.

The Commission is interested in the continued improvement and sustained quality of continuing dental education programs. The Commission only investigates and takes action in matters related to ADA CERP Standards. If a complaint includes matters that are currently the subject of, or directly related to, litigation, the Commission will not proceed with consideration of the complaint until the litigation is concluded. In accordance with its responsibilities to determine compliance with the ADA CERP Standards, the Commission does not act as a mediator, does not intervene on the behalf of any organizations and/or individuals, nor act as an arbitrator between disputing parties.

The Commission will evaluate potential complaints to ascertain that they pertain to ADA CERP Standards. A potential complainant will be asked to provide complete information and documentation about the alleged lack of compliance with the ADA CERP Standards.

The Commission will consider appropriate complaints against ADA CERP recognized providers from third parties. The Commission may also initiate a complaint or inquiry about an ADA CERP recognized provider. In this regard, an appropriate complaint is defined as one alleging that there exists a practice, condition or situation within the program of an ADA CERP recognized provider which indicates potential non-compliance with ADA CERP Standards. The Commission will review documentation and determine the disposition of such complaints.

Any attempted resolution between the complainant and the provider prior to initiating a formal complaint should be documented. The Commission will consider the complaint at the earliest feasible opportunity, usually at the next scheduled semi-annual meeting of the Commission. When setting this date, the Commission will protect the due process interests of both the provider and the complainant to the degree possible.

The following procedures have been established to review appropriate complaints:

1. The complaint will become a formally lodged complaint only when the complainant has submitted a written, signed statement of the program's non-compliance with a specific standard and/or recognition policy; the statement must be accompanied by documentation of the non-compliance whenever possible. If the Commission determines that a complaint does not relate to a provider's compliance with ADA CERP Standards, then the matter will be closed and the Commission will notify the complainant that it will not consider the complaint. If the Commission determines that the complaint does not contain the proper evidence/documentation, the complaint will be returned with a request to submit the requested documentation. The complainant will have fourteen (14) days from such notification to resubmit the complaint. If the requested documentation is not submitted within fourteen (14) days, the complaint will be closed. The Commission will complete this initial screening within thirty (30) days of receipt of the complaint and all necessary evidence/documentation. The Commission will take steps to protect the identity of the complainant, except as may be required by legal process.
2. If the Commission determines that a complaint merits further review, the Commission will notify the continuing dental education provider in writing that the Commission has received a formal complaint indicating that compliance with a specific ADA CERP Standard has been questioned.

The Commission will also notify the complainant in writing that the Commission has opened an inquiry into the complaint. The Commission will not communicate further with the complainant concerning the status or results of the inquiry other than to inform the complainant at such time as the matter has been resolved.

3. The provider will be required to provide documentation supporting its compliance with the ADA CERP Standards in question by a specific date (usually within 30 days). The Commission reserves the right to seek additional information from the provider, including but not limited to course evaluation forms completed by participants and the names, addresses and telephone numbers of all course participants. If the Commission requests further information, the provider shall provide such information within fourteen (14) days of delivery of such further request. The Commission may also seek information from alternate sources including, but not limited to: surveys of program participants, on-site visits, observation of the provider's CE activities, or other means considered necessary to determine whether the CE provider is in compliance with ADA CERP Standards.

As part of a complaint related to the ADA CERP requirements that CE activities be based on sound science, the provider will be required to submit to the Commission, or provide access to, an unaltered set of all CE materials (e.g., audio/video recordings, slides or other content outlines, program book or other handouts) related to the CE activity at issue. If, upon receipt of the materials, the Commission determines that an objective content review of the activity is necessary to determine compliance, the Commission may seek independent content reviews by at least two (2) independent reviewers. The provider will pay any costs related to the review of the activity in excess of an amount which the Commission will establish and post from time to time on its website. The provider has the option to submit its own independent content review to the Commission within thirty (30) days of being notified of the complaint.

Refusal or failure to provide all requested information or to cooperate with the Commission's information-gathering efforts may be considered cause for withdrawal of the provider's ADA CERP recognition status.

4. The Commission will consider the provider's report and documentation as well as any additional information obtained from other sources, generally, at or before the Commission's next regularly scheduled meeting.
5. Following consideration, the Commission will take action, as follows:
  - a. If the Commission finds the provider to be in compliance with ADA CERP Standards, the provider will be notified accordingly and the matter will be closed.
  - b. If the Commission determines there is sufficient evidence of noncompliance with the ADA CERP Standards, the Commission may either request additional information or initiate action to withdraw recognition. The Commission may:
    - postpone action until the next meeting pending the receipt of additional information such as:
      - a comprehensive re-evaluation of the provider;
      - a written report by the provider documenting progress in meeting the relevant ADA CERP Standards prior to the next regularly-scheduled meeting of the Commission;
      - personal appearances before the Commission by the complainant and/or the provider or their representatives to present oral testimony in support of the written documentation provided. The complainant and the provider may be represented by legal counsel. The costs to the complainant and the provider of such personal appearances and/or legal representation shall be borne by the complainant and the provider, respectively; or

- notify the provider of the Commission's intent to withdraw the provider's recognition, in accordance with the ADA CERP Procedures for an Adverse Action Against a Provider.
6. The provider will receive written notice of the Commission's action on the complaint within thirty (30) days following the Commission meeting. The complainant will also be notified that the matter has been resolved, without indicating the nature of the resolution, in keeping with the CERP Confidentiality Policy.
  7. The records/files related to such complaints shall remain the property of the Commission for five years and shall be kept confidential to the extent feasible. After five years, these records will be destroyed.

*ADA CERP Complaints Policy*

Adopted: October 1996; Revised: April 2006, November 2007, April 2010, March 2015, September 2023

## **PROCEDURES FOR AN ADVERSE ACTION AGAINST A CONTINUING EDUCATION PROVIDER**

An adverse action is defined as withdrawal or denial of recognition.

**Receiving Notice of an Adverse Action:** The following procedure is used when an adverse action (to deny or withdraw recognition) is initiated by the Commission for Continuing Education Provider Recognition (Commission):

1. The Commission sends notice that it is initiating an adverse action in a transmittal letter to the provider no later than fourteen (14) days after the Commission's meeting in which it determined to take this action. The transmittal letter is sent by tracked electronic communication and includes a copy of the Decision Report.
  - a. For a new applicant denied recognition, the Decision Report will outline the ADA CERP Recognition Standards, Policies and Procedures (ADA CERP Standards) which the Commission determined the provider did not meet.
  - b. For a recognized provider, the Decision Report will outline the ADA CERP Standards which the Commission determined the provider did not meet, and will communicate the Commission's intent to withdraw recognition and the date on which this action will be taken (generally at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Commission).
2. The transmittal letter will advise the provider of its option to request reconsideration and to provide additional information and documentation for the Commission to consider prior to taking the proposed action.

### **Reconsideration of an Initiated Adverse Action:**

1. If a provider wishes to request that the Commission reconsider an adverse action that has been initiated, the provider must notify the Commission in writing within thirty (30) days of notification of the Commission's intent to withdraw or deny recognition. The recognition status of the provider shall remain unchanged during the reconsideration process.
2. If a provider properly notifies the Commission that it wishes to request reconsideration, it will be asked to submit a report or revised application, describing and documenting its compliance with the ADA CERP Standards cited in the Commission's Decision Report, and include any reasons why the provider believes the withdrawal or denial is unjustified. The report and documentation are due by the date specified by the Commission (generally the next published ADA CERP application due date). The provider also has the option to address the Commission at the meeting during which the Commission will consider the provider's request for reconsideration.
3. After considering the information supplied by the provider in its request for reconsideration, the Commission will notify the provider of its decision in writing. If, following reconsideration, the Commission determines that approval should be withdrawn as scheduled, or the decision to deny recognition upheld, the provider will be notified of its right to appeal this decision.

4. If the provider does not communicate its intent to request reconsideration by the thirty (30) day deadline specified, the decision of the Commission will automatically be final.

**Appeal of an Adverse Action:** If, after considering a provider's request for reconsideration and supporting documentation, the Commission takes action to withdraw or deny recognition, the provider may appeal to the Commission's Appeal Board. The purpose of an appeal is to determine if, based on the information and documentation previously submitted to the Commission, the decision to deny or withdraw recognition was in accordance with ADA CERP Standards. An appellant may not present to the Appeal Board any information that had not previously been presented to the Commission, such as information regarding corrections to deficiencies cited by the Commission. It is not proper for the Appeal Board to either receive or consider facts not previously presented to the Commission since it does not sit as an initial reviewing body. Similarly, it is not the function of the Hearing Panel to determine whether the facts, singularly or cumulatively, justify the decision of the Commission unless it can be shown that the Commission's decision was clearly against the manifest weight of the evidence. Further, the Hearing Panel will not hear testimony relative to the reasonableness of previously determined requirements for recognition since this is outside the scope of authority of this reviewing body. An appeal may not be based on the length of the recognition period or disagreement with the ADA CERP Standards. Appeals are conducted in accord with the following procedures.

**Appeal Board and Hearing Panel:** The appellate body of the ADA's Continuing Education Recognition Program (CERP) shall be the Commission for Continuing Education Provider Recognition Appeal Board which shall have the authority to hear and decide appeals filed by continuing dental education providers from decisions rendered by the Commission denying or withdrawing recognition.

The Appeal Board consists of one representative selected by each of the organizations represented on the Board of Commissioners, and shall include one member each from: the national organizations of the recognized dental specialties, the American Dental Education Association, the American Society of Constituent Dental Executives, and the American Dental Association. Members of the Appeal Board must have previously served on the Board of Commissioners or its predecessor, the ADA CERP Committee. The term of office of members on the Appeal Board shall be one four (4) year term. When an appeal of an adverse action is initiated by a provider, the director of the Commission shall select a Hearing Panel consisting of three (3) members of the Appeal Board to hear and decide the appeal. Members of the Hearing Panel may not have previously reviewed an application or progress report submitted by the provider as part of the recognition process.

The Hearing Panel shall meet at the call of the director of the Commission provided at least ten (10) days' notice is given to each member of the Hearing Panel in advance of the meeting. Such meetings shall be called by the director only when an appeal to the appellate body has been duly filed by a continuing education provider following the procedures for filing an appeal.

The Hearing Panel shall elect one member of the panel to chair the hearing. A majority of the voting members of the Hearing Panel shall constitute a quorum.

#### **Procedures for an Appeal:**

1. If the Commission denies or withdraws recognition, the Commission will send notice of its decision in a written transmittal to the provider no later than fourteen (14) days following the Commission meeting. The transmittal will be sent by tracked electronic communication. If the provider wishes to appeal the adverse action, the provider must file a written request for an appeal with the director of the Commission within twenty-one (21) days of notification of the Commission's decision. In the absence of receipt of a request for an appeal as prescribed above, the decision of the Commission will automatically be final.
2. If a request for an appeal is received, the Commission shall acknowledge notification of such intent and indicate the deadline for submission of documentation.
3. The provider must submit a non-refundable Appeal Administrative Fee with its request for the appeal, in accordance with the fee schedule published from time to time at [CCEPR.ADA.org](http://CCEPR.ADA.org).

4. The director of the Commission shall provide the names of the three members of the Hearing Panel to the appellant within thirty (30) days of receipt of the appeal. In the event that the appellant believes that a member of the Hearing Panel has a conflict of interest that may preclude a balanced hearing, the appellant may request that panelist be replaced. The appellant may request replacement of up to two members of the Hearing Panel. A request for appointment of a new panelist must be submitted to the Appeal Board within ten (10) days of receipt of the original slate of Hearing Panel members. New members of the Hearing Panel will be selected by the director of the Commission.
5. The provider must submit four copies of evidence or argument in writing to refute the decision of the Commission. The appellant's written evidence or argument must be submitted at least fourteen (14) days prior to the hearing date.
6. A hearing date will be scheduled by the director of the Commission within 60 days of receipt of the appeal. The Hearing Panel shall meet virtually unless the appellant requests to meet with the Hearing Panel in person. In the event that the appellant requests an in person meeting, such meeting shall take place in Chicago, at a location determined by the Commission. The appellant shall be responsible for its representatives' travel expenses and its legal expenses. In addition, the appellant will be responsible for the travel expenses of the three members of the Hearing Panel, in accordance with the published fee schedule. The appellant must submit payment of travel expenses at least thirty (30) days prior to the hearing date.
7. Representatives of the provider may make an appearance before the Hearing Panel via teleconference or in person. If desired, the provider's legal counsel may accompany the provider and observe the appearance. Legal counsel for the Appeal Board may be present for the appearance(s) and the Hearing Panel's closed session(s) thereafter. No recording of the appearance(s) is permitted. The provider will be given the opportunity to offer evidence and argument to refute the adverse action. The Hearing Panel will only review information and documentation that was previously available to the Commission at the time the Commission made its decision take the adverse action.
8. No change in the recognition status of the provider will occur pending disposition of the appeal.

**Mechanism for the Conduct of an Appearance before the Hearing Panel:**

1. A representative of the Commission may make a brief opening statement for the purpose of establishing the Commission's findings and reasons therefore. The Commission's representative's presentation shall not exceed thirty (30) minutes.
2. The provider will then present its argument to the Hearing Panel. The appellant's presentation shall not exceed thirty (30) minutes.
3. Hearing Panel members may ask questions of the Commissioner's and the provider's representatives to clarify information presented.
4. After hearing the evidence, the Hearing Panel shall meet in closed session to discuss the appeal and make its decision, which shall be final. The Hearing Panel's decision may be to uphold or overturn the adverse action. The decision shall be based on a majority vote of the Hearing Panel members present and voting.
5. The Appeal Board Hearing Panel's decision will be sent to the provider within ten (10) days following the hearing. If the decision is to uphold the Commission's action to withdraw or deny recognition, the decision will be effective upon notification of the decision. The Appeal Board's action shall be final.
6. The Commission reserves the right to modify or change these procedures.

*Procedures for an Adverse Action Against a CE Provider*

Revised: November 1999, January 2004, November 2005, April 2006, April 2007, March 2015, September 2023

# Information on ADA CERP Objectives and Governance

## REASONS FOR PROGRAM

The ADA CERP was created to assist members of the American Dental Association, the recognized dental specialty organizations, the American Dental Education Association, the state dental board and licensing jurisdictions, and the broad-based dental profession in identifying and participating in quality continuing dental education. It is also a goal of the ADA CERP to promote continuous quality improvement of continuing dental education and to assist dental regulatory agencies to establish a sound basis for increasing their uniform acceptance of CE credits earned by dentists to meet the CE re-licensure requirements currently mandated by the majority of licensing jurisdictions. ADA CERP is administered by the Commission for Continuing Education Provider Recognition (CCEPR).

ADA CERP represents a mechanism for reviewing CE providers and recognizing those that demonstrate that they routinely meet certain basic standards of educational quality. The clearly defined ADA CERP Recognition Standards and Procedures are the basis for evaluating the educational processes used by CE providers in designing, planning and implementing continuing education. This review and recognition helps individual dentists select courses presented by recognized CE providers.

Recognition of a provider by the Commission for Continuing Education Provider Recognition does not imply endorsement of course content, products or therapies presented.

Specific objectives of the recognition program are:

1. To improve the educational quality of continuing dental education programs through self-evaluation conducted by the CE program provider in relation to the ADA CERP standards and criteria for recognition, and/or through counsel and recommendations to CE providers from the Commission.
2. To assure participants that recognized continuing education program providers have the organizational structure and resources necessary to provide CE activities of acceptable educational quality, i.e., activities that should assist the participant in providing an enhanced level of care to patients.
3. To promote uniform standards for continuing dental education that can be accepted nationally by the dental profession.
4. To assist regulatory agencies and/or other organizations responsible for granting credit in identifying those continuing dental education providers whose activities are acceptable for credit toward licensure or membership requirements or voluntary recognition programs.

## COMMISSION FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION PROVIDER RECOGNITION (CCEPR)

The Continuing Education Recognition Program (CERP) is governed by the [Commission for Continuing Education Provider Recognition](#) (CCEPR), an agency of the ADA with authority to formulate and adopt requirements, guidelines and procedures for the recognition of continuing dental education providers, and to approve providers of continuing dental education programs and activities. The Commission is structured to include broad input from those dental groups with an interest in continuing dental education at the policy-setting level.

Members of the Board of Commissioners are appointed by the following organizations:

- Sponsoring organizations of dental specialties recognized by the National Commission on Recognition of Dental Specialties and Certifying Boards (NCRDSCB) (one member each)
- American Dental Education Association (one member)
- American Society of Constituent Dental Executives (one member)
- American Dental Association (four members)

Because the focus of the ADA CERP is on continuing education for dentists, the CCEPR is primarily composed of dentists. Each represented organization selects individuals with knowledge, experience and interest in continuing education.

To help ensure representation of the public interest, the Commission also appoints one public member to the Board of Commissioners. The Commission also appoints a public member who is also a member of a state board of dentistry or jurisdictional licensing agency.

**Terms of Commission Members:** Members of the CCEPR are appointed to a four-year term. A rotational schedule ensures that a core of experienced members serve on the Commission at all times.

The Commission schedules two regular meetings each year.

**Responsibilities:** ADA *Bylaws* define the duties of the Commission as follows.

The duties of the Commission for Continuing Education Provider Recognition shall be to:

- a. Formulate and adopt requirements, guidelines and procedures for the recognition of continuing dental education providers.
- b. Approve providers of continuing dental education programs and activities.
- c. Provide a means for continuing dental education providers to appeal adverse recognition decisions.
- d. Submit an annual report to the House of Delegates of this Association and interim reports, on request.
- e. Submit an annual budget to the Board of Trustees of the Association.

## ADA CERP Glossary

*The following terms are defined as they are used by the Commission for Continuing Education Provider Recognition in relation to continuing dental education and ADA CERP*

**ACCREDITED:** ADA CERP considers “accredited provider” as equivalent to “ADA CERP recognized provider,” and “accredited continuing education” as equivalent to CE offered by an ADA CERP recognized provider.

**ACTIVITY:** An individual educational experience such as a lecture, clinic or home-study course. (See BLENDED LEARNING ACTIVITY, COURSE, LIVE COURSES/ACTIVITIES, SELF-STUDY COURSES/ACTIVITIES)

**ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITY (previously noted as administrator or program planner):** The person responsible for the coordination, organization and dissemination of planned CE offerings. Typically, it is an employee of the provider; the provider is responsible for the overall quality.

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE:** An objective entity that provides peer review and direction for the program and the provider. The advisory committee should include objective representatives of the intended audience, including the members of the dental team for which the courses are offered.

**BEST PRACTICES:** Those strategies, methods, activities or approaches which have been shown through research and evaluation to effectively promote continuous quality improvement of continuing dental education in accordance with the ADA CERP *Recognition Standards and Procedures*.

**BLENDED LEARNING ACTIVITY:** A blended learning activity is a single course which includes two or more educational formats. This category is used for hybrid, new, or unique approaches that do not fall into one of the established activity types. An example of a blended learning activity would be a CE course which includes a live lecture (either in person or online) plus some required activities which the learner must complete independently (such as reading a specified article or preparing a case presentation).

**COMMERCIAL BIAS/COMMERCIAL INFLUENCE:** In the context of continuing dental education, when a commercial interest has a role in planning or implementing a CE activity there is the potential to introduce bias that favors the commercial interest. As stewards of the learning environment for healthcare professionals, CE providers are responsible for ensuring that their learners have access to educational and skill development activities that are trustworthy and are based on best practices and high-quality evidence. By following the Standards for Integrity and Independence in CE, providers can help ensure that CE activities serve the needs of patients and not the interests of industry.

**COMMERCIAL INTEREST:** (1) An individual or entity that produces, markets, resells or distributes health care goods or services consumed by, or used on, patients, or (2) an individual or entity that is owned or controlled by an individual or entity that produces, markets, resells, or distributes health care goods or services consumed by, or used on, patients. Providing clinical services directly to or for patients (e.g., a dental practice, dental lab, or diagnostic lab) does not, by itself, make an individual or entity a commercial interest. (See INELIGIBLE COMPANY)

**COMMERCIAL SUPPORT:** Financial or in-kind support, such as products and other resources from or on behalf of a commercial interest, contributed to support or offset expenses for a provider’s continuing dental education activity.

**COMMERCIAL SUPPORTER:** Commercial interests which contribute unrestricted financial support, products, and other resources to support or offset expenses for a provider’s continuing dental education activity.

**CONTINUING DENTAL EDUCATION:** Continuing education consists of educational activities which serve to maintain, develop, or increase the knowledge, skills, and professional performance and relationships that a dentist uses to provide services for patients, the public, or the profession. The objective is to enhance and update the knowledge base of dentists, strengthen critical thinking skills and support an evidence-based, ethical practice of dentistry. The content of continuing dental education is that body of knowledge and skills generally recognized and accepted by the profession as within the basic medical and dental sciences, the discipline of clinical dentistry, and the provision of oral healthcare to the public.

#### Examples

Examples of non-clinical topics that are included in the ADA CERP definition of continuing dental education content include but are not limited to:

- Practice management, for managing offices related to the dental profession
- Educational methodology, for dentists teaching in academic dental programs
- Coding and reimbursement in a dental office
- Research advances in basic and clinical sciences.

Continuing education activities that are not directly related to a dentist's professional work do not fall within the ADA CERP definition of continuing dental education. Although these activities may be worthwhile, continuing dental education activities related to a dentist's nonprofessional educational needs or interests—such as personal financial planning or physical fitness—are not considered continuing dental education by ADA CERP.

**COURSE:** A type of continuing education activity; usually implies a planned and formally conducted learning experience. (See ACTIVITY, BLENDED LEARNING ACTIVITY, LIVE COURSE/ACTIVITY, SELF-STUDY COURSE/ACTIVITY)

**COURSE COMPLETION CODE:** An optional, random code, a portion of which is announced by program provider toward the end of each course to help verify that each participant has taken part in the entire course. Also referred to as a verification code. Providers may use other methods to verify participation. Course completion codes are not required by ADA CERP.

**DENTAL/MEDICAL EDUCATION OR COMMUNICATIONS COMPANY:** Company whose sole purpose is to produce educational programs or communications for healthcare professionals.

**EDUCATIONAL METHODS, FORMATS:** The structured design of an educational activity. Activity formats (such as didactic, case presentations and discussion, hands-on skills training, and online self-study) should be chosen based on what the provider hopes to change as a result of the educational activity.

**EVIDENCE-BASED DENTISTRY:** Evidence-based dentistry (EBD) is an approach to oral health care that requires the judicious integration of systematic assessments of clinically relevant scientific evidence, relating to the patient's oral and medical condition and history, with the dentist's clinical expertise and the patient's treatment needs and preferences.<sup>1</sup> (See Center for Evidence-Based Dentistry at <http://ebd.ada.org>)

**FINANCIAL RELATIONSHIPS:** Any relationship in which an individual benefits by receiving a salary, royalty, intellectual property rights, consulting fee, honoraria, ownership interest, contracted research or other financial benefit. Relevant financial relationships must be disclosed to participants in CE activities. (See RELEVANT FINANCIAL RELATIONSHIPS.)

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<sup>1</sup> *Definition of Evidence-Based Dentistry (Trans.2001:462), in ADA Policy Statement on Evidence-Based Dentistry*

**GOVERNMENTAL HEALTH AUTHORITY:** A government or its designated entity responsible for health matters.

**INELIGIBLE COMPANY:** The [term](#) used by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) to define those companies that are not eligible for accreditation within the ACCME system and whose primary business is producing, marketing, selling, re-selling, or distributing healthcare products used by or on patients. ADA CERP considers the term 'commercial interest' to be the equivalent of 'ineligible company' in the ADA CERP recognition system. (See also COMMERCIAL INTEREST)

**INSTRUCTOR/AUTHOR (also lecturer, faculty, faculty member):** The person or persons responsible for the development and presentation of specific CE course material for the intended audience.

**INTENT STATEMENT / GUIDANCE:** Statements of intent within ADA CERP Recognition Standards criteria that explain the rationale, meaning, and significance of the criterion, or offer examples to help clarify the meaning and application of the requirement stated in the criterion. Intent statements are intended as guidance but are not themselves requirements.

**INTERNATIONAL PROVIDER:** A continuing dental education provider whose primary location is outside the United States and Canada. International providers interested in participating in ADA CERP must meet the Eligibility Criteria and complete the process outlined in the Pre-application Process for International Providers (PIIP) before submitting an application for CERP recognition. (See Policy on Pre-Application Process for International Providers.)

**JOINT PROVIDER:** A continuing education provider that shares responsibility with an ADA CERP recognized provider for planning, implementing, evaluating, and keeping records for a continuing dental education activity. Responsibility for continuing education activities must rest with the ADA CERP recognized provider whenever the provider acts in cooperation with providers that are not recognized. A commercial interest may not be a joint provider. (See Joint Providership Policy.)

**JOINT PROVIDERSHIP:** Any continuing education activity in which an ADA CERP recognized provider agrees to provide a program jointly with another CE provider. When an ADA CERP recognized provider enters into joint providership with a non-CERP recognized provider, the CERP recognized provider must assume responsibility for the activity. When two or more ADA CERP recognized providers act in cooperation to plan and implement an activity, one must take responsibility for ensuring compliance with CERP Standards. Letters of agreement between the joint providers must be developed to outline each party's responsibilities for the CE activity. Letters of agreement must be signed by all parties. A commercial interest may not be a joint provider. (See Joint Providership Policy.)

**LIVE COURSE / ACTIVITY:** Continuing education courses that participants must attend (whether in person or virtually) in order to claim credit. Live courses can be offered in a variety of formats including national and local conferences, workshops, seminars, and live Internet-based conferences and teleconferences.

**MITIGATE:** When CE planners, instructors, authors, reviewers, or anyone in a position to influence or control CE disclose that they have had relevant financial relationships within the last 24 months, the provider must take steps to prevent all those with relevant financial relationships from inserting commercial bias into CE content. Steps to mitigate relevant financial relationships must be taken before the CE activity and must be appropriate to the role of the individual. For example, steps for planners will likely be different than for faculty and would occur before planning begins.

**NEEDS ASSESSMENT:** The process(es) a provider uses to identify the professional practice gaps (gaps in knowledge, skills, or performance) of its learners, and the need for education in a specific area. Information on learners' educational needs can be gathered from a variety of sources, including educational mandates (for example, state boards' requirements), the professional literature (articles about the need for ongoing training in light of specific incidents or disciplinary actions by regulatory agencies), requests for information from members or the profession in general (through surveys, past course

evaluations, on-line forums, etc.) The specific needs identified provide the rationale and focus for individual educational activities.

**OBJECTIVE:** Anticipated learner outcomes of a specific continuing dental education learning experience or instructional unit, stated in behavioral or action-oriented terms for the participant.

**ONLINE ACTIVITIES:** Continuing education activities that are offered via the internet. Online activities may be live (i.e., webinars) or self-study (i.e., recorded webinars meant to be viewed asynchronously, journal articles, videos, etc.)

**PLANNED PROGRAM/OVERALL PROGRAM:** The total efforts of a CE provider as they relate to continuing dental educational activities offered to professional audiences. A sequence or series of continuing education activities, courses or events that in total constitutes the provider's activities as they relate to continuing dental educational activities offered to professional audiences.

**PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP ASSOCIATION:** An organization of dental or other healthcare professionals formed for the purpose of advancing the health of the public through education and training, development and support of standards, and advocacy for the profession and the public interest.

**PROGRAM PLANNING:** The total process of designing and developing continuing education activities. This process includes assessing learning needs, selecting topics, defining educational objectives, selecting instructors/authors, facilities and other educational resources, and developing evaluation mechanisms. All steps in the program planning process should be aimed at promotion of a favorable climate for adult learning.

**PROVIDER:** An agency (institution, organization, or individual) responsible for organizing, administering, publicizing, presenting, and keeping records for the continuing dental education program. The CE provider assumes both the professional and fiscal liability for the conduct and quality of the program. If the CE provider contracts or agrees with another organization or institution to provide facilities, instructor/author or other support for the continuing education activity, the recognized provider must ensure that the facilities, instructor/author or support provided meet the standards and criteria for recognition. The CE provider remains responsible for the overall educational quality of the continuing education activity.

**RECOGNITION:** Recognition is conferred upon CE providers which are judged to be conducting a continuing dental education program in compliance with the standards and criteria for recognition.

**RECOGNITION STANDARDS:** The criteria which applicant continuing dental education providers will be expected to meet in order to attain and then retain recognition status. The verbs used in the ADA CERP Standards, Procedures, and Policies (i.e., must, should, could, may) were selected carefully and indicate the relative weight attached to each statement. Definitions of the words which were utilized in preparing the standards are:

1. **Must** expresses an imperative need, duty or requirement; an essential or indispensable item; mandatory.
2. **Should** expresses the recommended manner to meet the standard; highly recommended, but not mandatory.
3. **May** or **could** expresses freedom or liberty to follow an idea or suggestion.

**RELEVANT FINANCIAL RELATIONSHIPS:** For a person involved in the planning, presentation, or implementation of a continuing education activity, relevant financial relationships are financial relationships in any amount, occurring in the last 24 months. Relevant financial relationships must be mitigated and disclosed to learners prior to CE activities. (See FINANCIAL RELATIONSHIPS, MITIGATE.)

**SELF-STUDY COURSE / ACTIVITY:** Structured, on-demand continuing education courses in printed or recorded format—including audio, video, or online recordings—that do not have a specific time or location designated for participation; rather, the participant determines whether and when to complete the activity (also known as an asynchronous activity).

**SOUND SCIENTIFIC BASIS:** CE material should have peer-reviewed content supported by generally accepted scientific principles or methods that can be substantiated or supported with peer-reviewed scientific literature that is relevant and current; or the CE subject material is currently part of the curriculum of an accredited U.S. or Canadian dental education program and, whenever possible, employ components of evidence-based dentistry.

**VERIFICATION CODE:** (See COURSE COMPLETION CODE)