



**Academy**  
*of General Dentistry*

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***PACE***

**Program Approval for  
Continuing Education**

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# **Program Guidelines**

Revised May 2010

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# Program Approval for Continuing Education (PACE)

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Each year, thousands of continuing education courses are presented by hundreds of program providers—dental schools, dental societies, and companies that specialize in course presentations. Most provide dentists with valuable information that can be successfully integrated into the dental practice. The Academy of General Dentistry (AGD) Program Approval for Continuing Education (PACE) was created to assist members of the AGD and the dental profession in identifying and participating in quality continuing dental education (CDE).

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

## *Disclaimer*

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The Academy of General Dentistry (AGD) does not endorse any course content, products, processes, services or therapies presented by AGD PACE-approved providers. The views and opinions of program providers expressed during education programs do not necessarily state or reflect those of the AGD. AGD PACE approval may not be used for product or program endorsement purposes; nor does it imply acceptance by a state or provincial board of dentistry; nor does it imply accreditation of a program.

## *Purposes and Goals*

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

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

## *Eligibility*

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The provider organization is approved, not speakers or individual course content. The applicant may be a major unit or department within an institution. To be eligible for PACE, the following criteria must be met:

1. The CDE provider offers a planned program of continuing dental education activities consistent with the definition of continuing dental education provided in the Lexicon of Terms. The CDE provider must demonstrated oversight by an independent advisory committee. The program provider must have been offered a planned program of CDE activities for at least 12 months. If the provider organization has not offered course during the 12 months immediately preceding the application date, the provider may apply for a maximum of one year approval.
2. The program provider must ensure that all courses offered have a sound scientific basis in order to adequately protect the public. PACE reserves the right to require acceptable substantiation from providers that their courses have a sound scientific basis and proven efficacy and that they ensure public safety.
3. The program provider must ensure that the educational methods are appropriate to the stated objectives for the activity and, when participation is involved, enrollment must be related to available resources to ensure effective participation by enrollees.
4. The program provider must ensure that the facilities selected for each activity are appropriate to accomplishing the educational method(s) being used and the stated educational objectives.
5. 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 at the end of this document.
6. The program provider must ensure that, upon completion of a continuing dental education course intended toward attainment of certification or other recognition through the program provider, participating dentists will not be obligated, as a condition for attaining or maintaining that certification or recognition, to utilize a volume of

any products and/or services.

## *Where to Apply: National or Local?*

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1. Program providers who are national in scope must apply for national approval.
2. Program providers that draw participants from more than one state/province must be national approved.
3. Program providers who intend to become national in scope should apply for national approval.
4. Program providers that offer protocol and/ or self-instruction courses must apply for national approval.
5. Program providers who are local in scope only may apply for either local or national approval.

## *Guidelines for Joint Program Provider Approval*

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1. Joint program provider approval is defined as an educational activity planned and presented jointly by two organizations, only one of which is a PACE-approved program provider. Both organizations assume financial and administrative responsibility for planning and implementing the program.
2. The approved program provider is held accountable for upholding the PACE standards of the AGD and must be able to provide documentation that the educational activity was jointly planned and implemented in compliance with the standards.
3. All printed material for educational activities that are provided jointly must carry the following statement:  

“This activity has been planned and implemented in accordance with the standards of the Academy of General Dentistry Program Approval for Continuing Education (PACE) through the joint program provider approval of (approved program provider) and (non-approved program provider). The (approved program provider) is approved for awarding FAGD/MAGD credit.”
4. Jointly provided educational activities may be considered toward the eligibility of an organization applying for its initial PACE approval.

# Standards/Criteria for Approval

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

## Standard I Administration

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1. Administration of the program must be consistent with:

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

2. The program must be under the continuous guidance of an administrative authority and/or individual responsible for its quality, content, and ongoing content.

### Criteria

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A. The continuing education program must be under the ongoing supervision of an individual or an administrative authority so that there is continuity in the program provider's continuing education efforts.

B. The responsibilities and scope of authority of the individual or administrative authority *must* be clearly defined.

C. The administrative authority/administrator will have the responsibility for assuring compliance with the quality contained in these standards and guidelines.

D. The CE provider must be responsible for:

- a. Establishing clear lines of authority and responsibility
- b. Conducting a planning process
- c. Ensuring that an adequate number of qualified personnel are assigned to manage the program
- d. Ensuring continuity of administration

E. To maintain continuity, the program provider must develop specific procedures for personnel changes. This is particularly important with regard to the administrator or the administrative authority (program planner).

F. Providers are required to have a committee that meets regularly and a majority of the committee must be dental professionals, including at least one licensed practicing dentist who are independent from other responsibilities for the provider and be broadly representative of the intended audience or constituency including the members of the dental team for which the courses are offered. The committee will also be required to maintain minutes from its meetings. The minutes of the meetings will be attached to the PACE Application when applying for participation and continued participation.

G. The program planner must commit sufficient time to planning and conducting the CDE program relative to its planned size and scope of activity; be responsible for choosing the educational methods to be utilized in consultation with advisory committees, instructors, educational advisors, or potential attendees; and ensure that facilities and equipment (including those borrowed or rented) are adequate in size, safe, and in good working condition so that instruction can proceed smoothly and effectively.

H. Where the size or extent of the CDE program warrants, especially when offering participation courses, there must be provision for adequate support personnel to assist with program planning and implementation. Group size must be limited in coordination with the nature of available facilities and the number of instructors/ evaluators. Very careful attention to group size is mandatory when planning an activity that requires participants to perform complex tasks requiring supervision and evaluation.

I. The administrative authority/administrator is required to maintain accurate records of participants' attendance. The administrative authority/administrator will be responsible for retaining information on the formal planned activities offered, including needs assessment, methods, objectives, course outlines, and evaluation procedures. This information must be available at the time of application or reapplication for program provider approval.

J. CE providers must assume responsibility for compliance by participants with applicable laws and regulations. The provider must ensure that participation in its program by dentists not licensed in the jurisdiction where the program is presented does not violate the state practice act. Unless malpractice coverage for attendees participating in clinics is arranged by the CE provider, notice must be given to participants to obtain written commitments of coverage from their carriers.

K. Continuity of administration and planning is necessary for the stability and growth of the program. It is required that:

1. Members of the advisory committee be selected for a term of longer than one year.
2. Members of the advisory committee serve staggered terms of office.

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

M. Administrative responsibility for development, distribution, and/or presentation of continuing education activities must rest with the AGD-PACE-recognized provider whenever the provider acts in cooperation with providers that are not recognized by the AGD-PACE.

N. Program providers must submit complete contact information annually to the AGD. Contact information must include current provider name, address, phone number, fax number, Web address (if available), name of current provider contact person and address, phone number, fax number, and e-mail address of contact person.

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

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

f. Preoperative dental charting.

7. During treatment, records will be kept to demonstrate:

- a. Treatment rendered materials, methods, etc.
- b. Mounted treatment casts, if applicable;
- c. Photographs of treatment progress, if appropriate
- d. Radiographs taken during treatment, if indicated.

8. Upon completion of treatment:

- a. Unedited photographs of completed treatment;
- b. Postoperative unedited radiographs, if indicated.

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

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

### *Recommendations*

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- A. The program planner should have background and experience appropriate to the task.
- B. The size of the potential audience for any CDE activity is important in determining appropriate methods. A potentially active method can become purely passive if the group is too large.
- C. Methods requiring learner involvement (seminars, discussion groups, case reviews/preparations, laboratory work, and patient treatment) have been shown to provide more effective learning experiences. Over-emphasis on purely didactic methods (lectures, panel discussions) is discouraged.
- D. The appropriate use of films, slides, video, electronic media, and other teaching aids can support and enhance other teaching methods as integrated into a planned educational program.
- E. Program providers are encouraged to provide attendees with resource materials and references to facilitate post-course practical application of course content, as well as continued learning.

# Standard II Fiscal Responsibility

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1. Resources must be sufficient to meet:

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

## *Criteria*

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- A. Adequate resources must be available to fund the administrative and support services necessary to manage the continuing education program.
- B. In instances where continuing education is only one element of a program provider's activities, resources for continuing education must be a clearly identifiable component of the program provider's total budget and resources.

C. The program provider must provide a budget for the overall continuing education program, to include all costs and income, both direct (e.g., honoraria, publicity costs, tuition fees, refunds, or foundation grants) and indirect (e.g., use of classroom facilities or equipment, non-paid instructor time, etc.).

D. Resources must be adequate for the continual improvement of the program.

## *Recommendations*

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

# Standard III Goals

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

## *Criteria*

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- A. The individual or authority responsible for administration of the CDE program must have input into development of the overall program goals.
- B. There must be a clear formulation of the overall mission and goals of the program provider institution or organization.
- C. A mechanism must be provided for periodic reappraisal and revision of the program provider's continuing education goals.

## *Recommendations*

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- A. The goals of the CDE program should be consistent with the goals of the organization or institution.
- B. The goals of the CDE program should be relevant to the educational needs and interests of the intended audience.

# Standard IV Needs Assessment

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

## Criteria

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- A. The program planner must be responsible for carrying out or coordinating needs assessment procedures.
- B. Identified needs/interests must be developed from data sources that go beyond the program provider's own perceptions of needs/interests.
- C. The program provider must document the process used to identify needs/interests and must include input from the provider's advisory committee.
- D. The program provider must state the needs/interests identified and indicate how the assessment is used in planning educational activities.
- E. The program provider must involve members of the intended audience in the assessment of their own educational needs/interests.
- F. Consistent use of needs assessment data from multiple sources is required for use in planning continuing education activities.

# Standard V Objectives

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1. Specific written educational objectives identifying the expected learner outcomes must be developed for each activity and published in advance for the intended audience.

## Criteria

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- A. The program planner must be ultimately responsible for assuring that appropriate objectives are developed for each activity. The educational objectives may, however, be prepared by instructor, course director, or program planner.
- B. Educational objectives must be developed for each activity during the earliest planning stages. These provide direction in selecting specific course content and choosing appropriate educational methodologies.
- C. The written educational objectives must be published and distributed to the intended audience as a mechanism for potential attendees to select courses on a sound basis.
- D. Educational objectives must not conflict with or appear to violate the ADA Principle of Ethics and Code of Professional Conduct.
- E. For conventions and major dental meetings that involve multiple course topics and speakers present during a multi-day period it is sufficient to publish detailed course descriptions that enable participants to select appropriate course offerings however it shall be the responsibility of the provider to ensure that the individual courses presents are following the guidelines in their presentations.

## Recommendations

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- A. Educational objectives shall form the basis of evaluating the effectiveness of the learning activity.

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

1. Changes in the attitude and approach of the learner to the solution of dental problems;
2. Corrections of outdated knowledge;
3. Provision of new knowledge in specific areas;
4. Introduction to and/or mastery of specific skills and techniques;
5. Alterations in the habits of the learner.

# Standard VI Admissions

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

## *Criteria*

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- A. As an activity is designed, the program planner may determine that previous training or preparation is necessary for learners to participate effectively in the activity. In all such cases, the program provider must:
1. Provide a precise definition of knowledge, skill, or experience required for admission;
  2. Demonstrate the necessity for any admission restriction, based on course content and educational objectives;
  3. Specify in advance and make available a method whereby applicants for admission may demonstrate that they have met the requirement;
  4. Develop methods that are objective, specific, and clearly related to the course content and stated requirements;
  5. If attendees are required to provide materials and equipment, the program provider must make this requirement clear to potential enrollees and must provide enrollees with specific descriptions of all equipment and materials required.

## *Recommendations*

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

# Standard VII Patient Protection

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

## *Criteria*

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- A. Participants must be cautioned about the dangers of incorporating techniques and procedures into their practices if the course has not provided them with adequate, supervised clinical experience in the technique or procedure to allow them to perform it competently.
- B. The program provider must assume responsibility for assuring that participants treating patients (especially those from outside the state/province where the course is held) are not doing so in violation of state dental licensure laws.
- C. The program provider is responsible for obtaining the informed consent of all patients.
- D. Patients must be informed, in non-technical language, of:
  1. The training situation;
  2. The nature and extent of the treatment to be rendered;
  3. Any benefits or potential harm that may result from the procedure;
  4. Available alternative procedures;
  5. Their right to discontinue treatment.
- E. The program provider must assume responsibility for completion of treatment by a qualified clinician, should any question of the course participant's competence arise.
- F. There can be no compromise in adequate and appropriate provisions for care of patients treated during CDE activities; aseptic conditions (where possible, and, where not possible, antiseptic conditions), equipment, and instruments, as well as emergency care facilities, must be provided.
- G. Sufficient clinical supervision must be provided during patient treatment to ensure that the procedures are performed competently.
- H. The program provider must assume responsibility for providing the necessary post-course treatment, either through the practitioner who treated the patient during the course or through some alternative arrangement.
- I. Program providers, instructors, and participants should have adequate liability protection.

## *Recommendations*

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

# Standard VIII Instructors

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1. Instructors chosen to teach courses must be qualified by education and/or experience to provide instruction in the relevant subject matter.
2. The number of instructors employed for a CDE activity must be adequate to ensure effective educational results.
3. Providers must ensure that instructors support clinical recommendations with references from the scientific literature whenever possible. References must have a sound scientific basis, as defined in the Lexicon of Terms. References must be published and/or translated into English.

## *Criteria*

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- A. Program providers must assume responsibility for communicating specific course objectives and design to instructors early in the planning process.
- B. The number of instructors assigned to any activity must be predicated upon the course objectives and the educational methods used.
- C. The instructor-to-attendee ratio is most critical in participation courses. Great care must be taken to ensure that close supervision and adequate direct interchange between participants and instructors will take place. The instructor-to-attendee should not exceed 1:15 during any hands-on activities.
- D. CDE providers that utilize one instructor to present 50% or more of the provider's CDE activities must submit a Curriculum Vitae containing complete information on the instructor's education, professional training, positions held, publication and presentation history when applying for the AGD PACE recognition.
- E. CE program providers must assume responsibility for taking steps to ensure that images presented in courses have not been falsified or misrepresent the outcome of treatment. Signed affidavits of image authenticity must be obtained from all faculty members.

## *Recommendations*

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

# Standard IX Publicity

1. Publicity must be informative and not misleading. It must include:
  - a. Course title
  - b. A description of course content
  - c. The educational objectives
  - d. A description of teaching methods to be used
  - e. Costs
  - f. The name of the program provider and contact person
  - g. Course instructor(s), their qualifications and any conflict of interest
  - h. Refund and cancellation policies
  - i. Location
  - j. Date
  - k. Specifics as to approvals granted and credits available
  - l. Time and period of availability for internet-based courses
  - m. The names of any entities providing commercial support
2. For effective presentation and assimilation of course content, the prior level of skill, knowledge, or experience required (or suggested) of participants must be clearly specified in publicity materials.

## Criteria

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- A. Any publicity for CDE activities must provide complete and accurate information to the potential audience.
- B. Care must be taken to avoid misleading statements regarding the nature of the activity or the benefits to be derived from participation.
- C. Accurate statements concerning credits or approvals granted for the activity must be included. Great care must be taken to ensure that such statements follow the wording prescribed by the agency granting the credits or approvals, so that participants cannot misinterpret them.
- D. The name of the program provider, as well as of any joint program provider or agencies providing financial support, must be clearly stated.
- E. Approved program providers must use the approved AGD PACE logo/brand with the appropriate credit statement in all printed brochures and promotional materials for their educational program.
- F. The terms “accredited,” “accreditation,” “certification” or “endorsement of” must not be used in conjunction with PACE approval. Providers must not make statement

implying AGD PACE Approval or endorsement of individual courses.

- G. If the program provider requires the continuing dental education course(s) to gain access to its services and/or products, any and all guidelines or limitations pertaining to prospective course participants’ access to said services and/or products must be disclosed, in any and all publicity, including any initial registration packet for the course(s) such that prospective participants are fully aware of these guidelines and limitations.

**NOTE:** The program provider must submit with the application all samples of publicity from the past twelve months, up to five, from all forms of media (i.e., printed advertisements, radio spots, on-line postings, etc.) in print format.

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

## Using the AGD PACE Logo

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



Academy of General Dentistry Approved PACE Program Provider  
FAGD/MAGD Credit  
Approval does not imply acceptance by a state or provincial board of dentistry or AGD endorsement.  
(DATE) to (DATE)  
Provider ID <AGD ID Number>

- The AGD PACE Logo should be between one and two inches in height and should not be larger than the providers logo
- Either one of the above approval statements must appear in your promotional copy placed either under or directly to the right of the AGD PACE Logo.
- Type size should not be less than 6 point. Type style should be sans serif (Helvetica, Ariel, etc.).

# Standard X Evaluation

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1. The program provider must develop and utilize activity evaluation mechanisms that:

- a. Are appropriate to the objectives and educational methods;
- b. Measure the extent to which course objectives have been accomplished
- c. Assess course content, instructor effectiveness, and overall administration

## *Criteria*

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A. The program provider must provide an evaluation mechanism that will allow participants to assess their achievement of personal objectives. Such mechanisms must be content-oriented and provide feedback to participants so that they can assess their mastery of the material. This is especially important if the activity is self-instructional in nature. The educational objectives for the activity must form the basis for the evaluation.

B. The program provider must provide an evaluation mechanism that will help the program provider assess the effectiveness of the CDE activity and the level at which stated objectives were fulfilled, with the goal being continual improvement of the program provider's activities.

C. The program provider is required to periodically conduct an internal review of completed course evaluations to determine:

1. The extent to which the goals are being achieved;
2. The extent to which activity evaluation effectively and appropriately assesses:
  - a. Educational objectives;
  - b. Quality of the instructional process;
  - c. Participants' perception of enhanced profession effectiveness;

3. If evaluation methods are appropriate to and consistent with the scope of the activity;
4. How effectively activity evaluation data are used in planning future CDE activities.

D. The advisory committee must be involved in the provider's periodic assessment of the effectiveness of its continuing education program.

## *Recommendations*

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A. Minimally, the evaluation mechanisms should:

1. Be appropriate to the educational objectives and methods for the activity;
2. Measure the extent to which objectives have been met;
3. Determine participant assessment of course content with regard to whether it was practically useful, comprehensive, appropriate, and adequately in-depth;
4. Assess instructor effectiveness;
5. Assess adequacy of facilities;
6. Assess overall administration of the activity.

B. The program provider should provide feedback to the instructor concerning the information that evaluation of the CDE activity has produced.

# Standard XI Course Records

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1. Program providers must maintain accurate records of individual attendance and make such records accessible to attendees for a minimum of six years.
2. Any record supplied in connection with the continuing education activity must not be, nor resemble, a certificate or diploma that attests to or might appear to attest to specific skill, specialty, or advanced educational status. Providers must design such documentation to avoid misinterpretation by the public or professional colleagues.
3. Credit awarded to participants of an approved program provider's educational activity must be in compliance with AGD policies related to credit allocation.
4. Program providers must submit continuing education credits for all AGD member attendees directly to the AGD by mail or online within 30 days. AGD-approved standardized roster submission forms must be used.
5. A course completion code for each educational activity must be given to the attendees at the end of each course.

## Criteria

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- A. Program providers must accept the responsibility of maintaining accurate records of individual attendees at each activity, to accommodate the growing number of legal and professional requirements.
  1. Rosters submitted using incorrect forms or with missing information will be returned to the program provider for completion. Corrected rosters must be returned to the AGD within 21 days.
- B. Credit must be awarded based on the following calculations:
  1. For formal structured lectures, credit will be awarded based on actual number of contact hours. No credit will be awarded if the course is less than one hour in duration.
  2. For courses in which at least 30% of course content involves the participant in the active manipulation of dental materials or devices, the treatment of patients, or other opportunities to practice skills or techniques under the direct supervision of a qualified instructor, participation credit will be awarded based on actual number of contact hours (excluding breaks, meals and registration periods).
  3. Participants who complete audio, audio-visual, or electronically delivered self-instructional programs must receive credit equal to the length of the instructional time with a minimum of one hour of credit.
  4. Participants who complete self-paced self-instructional programs must receive credit based on an educator's estimate of the time required to complete the program, with the minimum being one credit hour and the maximum being eight credit hours.
  5. For courses that include an in-office component, credit will be awarded hour-for-hour for the formal, on-site sessions. Credit for the in-office component must not exceed (but may be less than) the amount of credit awarded for the initial sessions (excluding the final case presentation session).
- C. Providers must issue accurate records of individual participation to attendees.
- D. Verification of participation documentation must clearly indicate at least:
  1. The name and PACE provider ID number of the program provider;
  2. The date(s), location and duration of the activity;
  3. The title of the activity and/or specific subjects;
  4. Educational methods used (e.g., lecture, videotape, clinical participation, electronically mediated)
  5. Number of credit hours (excluding breaks and meals);
  6. A course completion code for each educational activity.
    - a. When attendees can attend one or more portions of a program, completion codes should be issued at the end of each portion of the program.
  7. The name of the participant
  8. The title of each individual CE course the participant has attended or successfully completed as part of a large dental meeting or other similar activity (and number of credits awarded for each)
  9. The recognition status of the provider, through the use of the authorized statement, and, whenever feasible (given space considerations) the use of the AGD PACE logo in conjunction with the authorized approval statement. (See page 18.)

## Recommendations

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- A. Program providers should be aware of the professional and legal requirements for continuing dental education that may affect their participants.
- B. Program providers should cooperate with course participants and with requiring agencies in providing documentation of course attendance at the end of each educational activity, as necessary. Electronic scanning devices to collect participant information should be used at the end of each educational activity.

# Standard XII Commercial or Promotional Conflict of Interest

In 1997 the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued a policy statement entitled "Guidance for Industry: Industry Supported Scientific and Educational Activities." This policy states that activities designed to market or promote the products of a commercial company are subject to FDA regulation under the labeling and advertising provisions of the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act, whereas.

Activities that are independent of commercial influence and non-promotional are not. In this context, the AGD PACE standards and criteria are designed to ensure separation of promotional activities from continuing education activities in the following ways: 1) CE providers must demonstrate that all educational activities offered are independent of commercial influence, either direct or indirect, and 2) CE providers must ensure that all financial relationships between the provider and commercial entities, as well as all financial relationships between course planners and faculty and commercial entities are fully disclosed to participants.

1. The PACE standards and criteria are designed to ensure that:
  - a. CDE providers must ensure that continuing education activities promote improvements in oral healthcare and not a specific drug, device, service or technique of a commercial entity.
  - b. If commercial relationships exist between the program provider, course presenters, and/or a commercial company and its products, they must be fully disclosed to participants.
  - c. Providers must disclose to participants in CDE activities any conflicts of interest the planners and lecturer/author/instructors or a continuing education activity may have. Disclosure must be made at the beginning of the continuing education activity and must be made in writing in publicity materials, course materials and/or audiovisual materials.
  - d. Financial aid is acknowledged in printed announcements and brochures.

## Criteria

- A. CE program providers must assume responsibility for ensuring the content quality and scientific integrity of all CE activities. Educational objectives, course content, teaching methods, instructors and advisors must be selected independent of commercial interest.
- B. CE program providers must operate in accordance with written guidelines and policies that clearly place the responsibility for program content and faculty selection on the program provider. These guidelines must not conflict with the PACE Standards/Criteria for Approval. Each CE learning experience offered must conform to this policy.
- C. The ultimate decision regarding funding arrangements for CE activities must be the responsibility of the CE program provider. CE activities may be supported by funds received from external sources if such funds are unrestricted. External funding must be disclosed to participants 1) in announcements, brochures, or other educational materials, and 2) in the presentation itself.
- D. CE program providers receiving commercial support must develop and apply a written statement or letter of agreement outlining the terms and conditions of the arrangement and/or relationship between the program provider and the commercial supporter.
- E. CE program providers and instructors must disclose to participants any monetary or other special interest the program provider may have with any company whose products are discussed in its CE activities. Disclosure must be made in publicity materials and at the beginning of the presentation itself.
- F. Product-promotion material or product-specific advertisement of any type is prohibited in or during CME activities. Live promotional activities (staffed exhibits, presentations) or enduring promotional activities (print or electronic advertisements) must be kept separate from CDE. The juxtaposition of editorial and advertising material on the same products or subjects must be avoided during CDE activities.
  - a. For live, face-to-face CDE, advertisements and promotional materials cannot be displayed or distributed in the educational space immediately before, during, or after a CDE activity. Providers cannot allow representatives of Commercial Interests to engage in sales or promotional activities while in the space or place of the CDE activity.
  - b. For print CDE activities, advertisements and promotional materials will not be interleaved within the pages of the CDE content. Advertisements and promotional materials may face the first or last pages of printed CDE content as long as these materials are not related to the CDE content they face and are not paid for by the commercial supporters of the CDE activity.
  - c. For electronically mediated/computer based CDE activities, advertisements and promotional materials will not be visible on the screen at the same time as the CDE content and not interleaved between computer 'windows' or screens of the CDE content

- d. For audio-and video-based CDE activities, advertisements and promotional materials will not be included within the CDE. There will be no 'commercial breaks.'
  - e. Educational materials that are part of a CDE activity, such as slides, abstracts and handouts, cannot contain any advertising, trade name or a product-group message.
  - f. Print or electronic information distributed about the non- CDE elements of a CDE activity that are not directly related to the transfer of education to the learner, such as schedules and content descriptions, may include product promotion material or product-specific advertisement.
- G. Arrangements for commercial exhibits or advertisements must not influence planning or interfere with the presentation, nor can they be a condition of the provision of commercial support for CDE activities.
- H. CE program providers must ensure that a balanced view of all therapeutic options is presented. Whenever possible, generic names must be used to contribute to the impartiality of the program presented.
- I.. CE program providers must assume responsibility for the specific content and use of instructional materials that are prepared with outside financial support.
- J.. CE program providers must assume responsibility for taking steps to protect against and/or disclose any conflict of interest of the advisory committee, CDE activity

planners, course directors and lecturer/author/ instructors presenting courses. Signed conflict of interest statements must be obtained from all advisory committee members, CDE activity planners, course directors and lecturer/author.

- K. If providing electronically mediated distance learning, embedded advertising and direct commercial links are inappropriate within the educational content and must be avoided.
- L. CDE providers that also offer activities designed to promote drugs, devices, services or techniques must clearly disclose the promotional nature of the activity in publicity materials and in the activity itself. The CDE hours awarded must not include the promotional hours.
- M. The advisory committee must be involved in evaluating and taking steps to protect against conflicts of interest that CE activity planners, course directors and lecturer/author/instructors may have.

### *Recommendations*

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

# Standard XIII Self-Instruction and Electronically Mediated Programs

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## *Criteria*

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- A. Self-instruction activities that are primarily audio or audiovisual must include supplemental information that further explains the audio or audiovisual material.
- B. Electronically mediated programs must include a documented technology plan including electronic security measures to ensure both quality standards and the integrity and validity of information (e.g., password protection, encryption, back-up systems, and firewalls).
- C. Participant interaction with faculty or individuals having expertise in the subject area and/or other participants is an essential characteristic and can be facilitated in a timely manner through a variety of methods such as voicemail, e-mail, or chat rooms.
- D. Participants who complete self-paced self-instructional programs should receive credit based on an educator's estimate of the time required to complete the program segment, with the minimum being one credit hour and the maximum being eight credit hours.
- E. For self-instructional or electronically-mediated activities, a provision must be made for a mechanism by which the learner can assess his/her mastery of the material.
- F. Participants must be informed of specific requirements for hardware and software and must have access to technical assistance throughout the duration of the course and the design of the course should support easy navigation to even novice users.
- G. Courses must include resources, references, and information to aid participants in securing relevant supportive material.
- H. Embedded advertising and direct commercial links are inappropriate with the educational content and must be avoided.

- I. Program providers who plan self-instructional activities must ensure the input of individuals having technical expertise in both media and self-directed learning techniques, and the application of these techniques to adult learning.
- J. For live electronically mediated events a provision must be made to ensure periodic interchange between the instructor such as, but not limited to, polling, direct questions and surveys.

## *Recommendations*

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- A. For self-instructional activities, use of audiovisual materials may offer valuable learning experiences when their usefulness as a means, rather than an end, is appreciated.
- B. Course program providers should direct course participants to where appropriate software needed to utilize the electronic media used in the course can be obtained or downloaded.
- C. If providing electronically mediated distance learning, security measures should be in place to ensure both quality standards and the integrity and validity of information (e.g., password protection, encryption, back-up systems, firewalls, secure servers).
- D. Feedback to participants about assignments and questions should be constructive and provided in a timely manner.
- E. Courses should provide participants with flexibility to access and review course materials on demand during the period of announced availability.
- F. Questions directed to course personnel should be answered quickly and accurately. A structured system to address participant complaints should be in place.

# Applications

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

## Fees

### National Approval

All applications for national approval must be submitted with a \$575 application fee. The check or money order should be made payable to the Academy of General Dentistry. Completed applications should be mailed to:

Academy of General Dentistry - DE  
211 E. Chicago Ave Ste. 900  
Chicago, IL 60673-1281

**Effective Jan. 1, 2009**, nationally approved AGD PACE providers will be required to pay an annual (or 12-month) non-refundable renewal fee of \$200 in order to maintain national approval.

All nationally approved providers will continue to pay a non-refundable application fee when an application is submitted. If the application is approved, this fee will include the first year's approval. An annual renewal fee for nationally approved PACE providers will subsequently be due at 12 month intervals, based on the start of each approval period.

Non-payment of all required fees within the established deadline(s) will be viewed as a decision by the approved provider to voluntarily withdraw from the PACE program. The name of the previously approved provider will be removed from the current list of AGD PACE-approved providers available on the AGD Web site. Any provider wishing to reinstate its recognition following discontinuation for non-payment of fees will be required to submit a new AGD PACE Application and follow the established procedures for recognition.

Providers whose approval starts on Jan. 1, 2009, or later will be responsible for this fee. Renewal fees are billed approximately 90 days prior to the anniversary of the provider's approval date.

### Local Approval

All applications for local approval must be submitted to the local AGD approval representative that approves providers in the state or province in which the provider intends to offer courses. Applicants must include the appropriate application fee with their application. Fees may vary. A list of local AGD approval representatives is available on the AGD Web site. Applicants for local approval may also call the AGD at 1.888.243.3368 ext. 4114 or 4335 for a complete list.

## Approvals

The maximum term of approval will not exceed four years. Shorter terms of approval will be awarded if there are deficiencies or concerns that would justify an earlier reevaluation date. In these cases, the reason(s) for a shorter

period of approval will be identified and provided to the program provider. In no case will approval be granted for a period of less than one year.

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

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



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

- OR -



Academy of General Dentistry  
Approved PACE Program Provider  
FAGD/MAGD Credit  
Approval does not imply acceptance  
by a state or provincial board of  
dentistry or AGD endorsement.  
(month/date/year) to (month/date/year)

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

The AGD will publish an official list of program providers approved by the PACE Council and update this list whenever there are additions, deletions, or status changes. This list is available on the AGD's Web site, [www.agd.org](http://www.agd.org). The list will also be made available to constituent academies for inclusion in their publications.

## *Confidentiality*

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

## *PACE Council Program Provider Monitoring Program*

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The PACE Council is committed to ensuring that program providers maintain the high standards of PACE approval. The Monitoring Program has been instituted to assist the council with this and the following guidelines have been adopted:

### Monitoring Selection Criteria

A program provider could be monitored if a:

- Complaint has been lodged against a provider
- Provider submitted a questionable application or received provisional approval
- Provider has received multiple citations
- Provider is selected randomly by the PACE Council
- Provider's approval was previously revoked due to a violation of the standards and re-applies for approval.

### A. Role of the PACE Council Chair

1. The PACE Council Chair will be responsible for identifying monitors and will select the courses of nationally approved program providers appropriate for

monitoring within his/her constituent. Monitors must have a clear understanding of all PACE standards.

2. The Constituent Continuing Education Chair or Approval Representative may be asked by the PACE Council Chair to monitor specific program providers.
3. The PACE Council Chair will authorize only ONE monitor per course.
4. The Constituent Continuing Education Chair will ensure that nationally approved program providers will be monitored only once per year per constituent. Even in instances in which the program provider offers several different courses, only one course from the program provider's entire list of offerings for that calendar year may be monitored.
5. The monitor will forward one copy of the completed Monitor Evaluation Form to the PACE Council within two weeks of its submission by the monitor. He/she will retain one copy of the form.

### B. Role of the Monitor

1. The monitor will evaluate the course, using the PACE Standards and Criteria as the guide.
2. The monitor will receive lecture credit for his/her attendance at the course monitored. Participation credit is allowable if the monitor participates in a participation course and pays the provider for that course.
3. The monitor will return the completed Monitor Evaluation Form to the CE Chair within 10 days of the course.

### C. Role of the Program Provider

1. The program provider will admit a maximum of one monitor per calendar year as requested by the PACE Council Chair at no cost to the AGD or the monitor unless the monitor participates in hands-on activities.
2. The program provider has the right to determine if the monitor may take part in the participation portions of the course.

# Regulations Governing the Approval Process

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## Process

1. All program providers interested in approval by the AGD PACE program must complete the appropriate Application form and submit it to the PACE Council or local approval representative for consideration.
2. Within 14 days after receipt of an Application for Program Provider Approval, applicants will receive confirmation that the application was received.
3. If the application does not appear to provide adequate information on which to base an approval action, the council may seek additional information from the program provider within 45 days of receipt of the application.
4. If the program provider does not meet the PACE program eligibility requirements, the application will be returned to the program provider, with a full refund of the application fee, within 90 days of receipt.
5. Applicant program providers will be notified of the action taken by the PACE Council within 30 days after it meets to determine approvals.
6. If approval is granted, the program provider will be provided with the following information:
  - a. The effective dates of the approval;
  - b. A statement and logo that must be used to announce or publicize the approval;
  - c. The correct AGD program provider code for use in reporting attendance at activities;
  - d. Responsibilities and procedures for reporting attendance at activities;
  - e. Statement explaining the right of the PACE Council to audit future activities;
  - f. General procedures and time frames regarding expiration of approval and reapplication;
  - g. Recommendations and suggestions for alterations or improvements in the program provider's CDE program.
7. After approval is granted, the PACE Council reserves the right to re-evaluate a program provider at any time by surveying participants in the program provider's CDE activities, by reviewing activities in person, or by requiring additional information concerning the program provider and/or its activities. AGD Constituents may lodge a formal written complaint with the PACE Council if they can document substantial noncompliance with the Standards by an approved program provider. Upon receipt of such a formal complaint from an AGD Constituent, the PACE Council will initiate a formal review of the program provider's approval status. An approved program provider may also be reevaluated at any time if information is received from the program provider or other sources that indicates the program provider has undergone changes in program administration or scope, or may no longer be in compliance with the Standards/Criteria for Approval. Such monitoring activities will be undertaken by the PACE Council solely to ensure ongoing compliance with the Standards/Criteria for Approval.
8. Approval will be denied if there is substantial noncompliance with the Standards/Criteria for Approval. If approval is denied, the applicant program provider will be provided with the following by return receipt mail:
  - a. The Standards and Criteria with which the Council found noncompliance;
  - b. Recommendations and suggestions for alterations and/or improvements in the CDE program;
  - c. Rules and mechanisms governing appeal of the Council's decision.
9. Approval may be withdrawn by the council if:
  - a. The approved program provider makes a request for voluntary withdrawal of approval;
  - b. The Council finds that there is substantial non-compliance with the Standards/Criteria for Approval;
  - c. Continuing dental education activities have not been offered for a period of two years or more;
  - d. The provider submits false or misleading information.
10. The effective date of approval is the day on which action is taken by the council. However, retroactive approval may be granted by the PACE Council when a written request outlining the situation is received on behalf of a program provider who is applying for or who has previously received program provider approval for continuing education via PACE. Previously approved providers requesting retroactive approval for a time greater than twelve months may be required to pay a penalty fee of up to \$125 per year for each year they are requesting retroactive approval. Retroactive approval will not be granted for a period greater than three years.
11. The council will notify nationally-approved program providers of the need to reapply for approval within no less than 11 months prior to the date that the program provider's approval will expire. Program providers must submit a new Application for Program Approval no less than three months prior to the expiration date. In addition to the formal application for approval, the program provider must submit other relevant materials documenting its continued compliance with the Standards and Criteria, as well as improvements in any previously identified areas of deficiency or weakness. Program providers that anticipate promoting courses that will be presented after their approval expires are encouraged to submit a renewal application early to ensure that approval statements will be accurate.
12. Approved program providers who did not provide self-instructional or on-site/in-office participation programs at the time their application was reviewed, but who may provide such programs in future, are expected to conform to the Standards and Criteria unique to these areas, specifically:

Standard XI, Criteria B.3, B.4  
Standard XIII, Criteria A through I

# Program Administration

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The AGD PACE program must be administered by the PACE Council. This council must be composed of nine members of the AGD, appointed by the AGD's president. Each member must be appointed for staggered three-year terms, and each may serve a maximum of two full terms on the Council.

The PACE Council must be responsible for overall administration of the AGD PACE program and for recommending alterations in the policies governing the program. The Council must evaluate and take approval action on all applications for AGD PACE. The Council must be responsible for hearing appeals of all approval action.

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

## *Complaints Policy*

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The PACE Council is interested in the continued improvement and sustained quality of continuing dental education programs, but does not intervene on behalf of individuals or act as a court of appeal for individuals in matters not related to the AGD's PACE Standards and Criteria or established recognition policies. If a complaint includes matters that are currently the subject of, or directly related to, litigation, the PACE Council will not proceed with consideration of the complaint until the litigation is concluded.

Potential complaints will be evaluated to ascertain that they pertain to PACE Standards and Criteria and/or recognition policies. A potential complainant will be asked to provide information and documentation about the alleged lack of compliance with the Standards and Criteria or recognition policies.

The PACE Council will consider appropriate complaints against PACE-approved programs from AGD staff, course participants, faculty, other CDE providers, constituent dental societies, state boards of dentistry, and other interested parties. In this regard, an appropriate complaint is defined as one alleging that there exists a practice, condition, or situation within the program of a PACE-approved provider that indicates potential non-compliance with PACE Standards and Criteria or established recognition policies. The PACE Council will review and make recommendations regarding disposition of such complaints.

Attempts at resolution between the complainant and the provider should be pursued prior to initiating a formal complaint. This should include, but not be limited to, staff issuing warning letters with recommendations of corrective action and informing providers that failure to correct could result in withdrawal of PACE approval. If corrective action is not taken, formal written complaints are to be forwarded to the council. Only written, signed complaints will be considered by the PACE Council. The complaint will be considered at the earliest possible opportunity, usually at the next scheduled semi-annual meeting of the PACE Council. When setting this date, the due process rights of both the provider and the complainant will be protected to the degree possible.

The following procedures have been established to review appropriate complaints:

- A. 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 should be accompanied by documentation of the non-compliance whenever possible. At the request of the complainant, the complainant's identity will be withheld from the provider when possible.
- B. The CDE provider will be informed that the PACE Council has received information indicating that compliance with a specific standard or recognition policy has been questioned.
- C. The provider will be required to provide documentation supporting its compliance with the standard or policy in question by a specific date (usually within 30 days). The PACE Council 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. The PACE Council also has the right to 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 the Standards and Criteria. Refusal or failure to provide all requested information, or to cooperate with the Council's information-gathering efforts, will be considered cause for withdrawal of the provider's approval.
- D. The provider's report and documentation, as well as any additional information obtained from other sources, will be considered by the PACE Council at the next regularly scheduled meeting.

Following consideration, the PACE Council will take action, as follows:

- A. If the complaint is determined to be unsubstantiated and the provider is found to be in compliance with PACE Standards and Criteria or established approval policies, the complainant and the provider will be notified accordingly and no further action will be taken.

B. If the complaint is substantiated and it is determined that the CE provider is not in compliance with the Standards and Criteria or established recognition policies, the PACE Council may:

1. Postpone action pending the receipt of additional information through:

- a. A comprehensive re-evaluation of the provider.
- b. A written report by the provider documenting progress in meeting the relevant standards or policies prior to the next regularly scheduled meeting of the PACE Council.
- c. A personal appearance by the complainant and/or the provider or their representatives before the PACE Council to present oral testimony in support of the written documentation provided. Legal counsel may represent the complainant and the provider. 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.

2. Withdraw the provider's recognition status.

The complainant and the provider will receive written notice of the PACE Council's action on the complaint within thirty (30) days following the Council's meeting. The records/files related to such complaints shall remain the property of the PACE Council for five years and shall be kept confidential. After five years, these records will be destroyed.

### ***Policy Statement on 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 approved provider complies with the PACE Standards & Criteria. 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 contact person or information

When substantive changes occur, the primary concern of the PACE Council is that the provider continues to meet the PACE 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 program changes are judged to represent a sufficient departure from practices in place at the time of application, the PACE Council may elect to re-evaluate the provider before the next formal reapplication is due.

**Reporting Substantive Changes:** All approved providers are expected to report substantive changes in writing to the PACE Council in a timely manner. If a provider is uncertain whether a change is substantive, the provider should contact PACE staff for clarification and guidance. The following procedures shall apply to substantive changes:

- PACE-approved providers must report any substantive change(s) to their CE program.
- The provider must submit a description and/or documentation describing the change(s) and explaining how the CE program will continue to comply with PACE standards and criteria.

Providers will receive written notification 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

The PACE Council may exercise its right to re-evaluate an approved provider at any time during the approval period. When a provider has received written notification to provide additional documentation, failure to submit the requested documentation shall be considered grounds for withdrawal of PACE approval status at the next regularly scheduled meetings of the PACE Council. Submission of false or misleading information shall be grounds for withdrawal of PACE approval.

# Appeals

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

## *Procedures for Reconsideration of an Adverse Action Against a CDE Provider*

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If the PACE Council takes an adverse action on an application for approval or against an approved provider, the provider may request reconsideration by the PACE Council. An adverse action is defined as denial or withdrawal of approval. A reconsideration would be considered by the PACE Council at its next regularly scheduled meeting. Reconsiderations are conducted in accord with the following procedures. The principal purpose of a reconsideration is to determine if, based on the information and documentation previously submitted to the PACE Council, the Council's decision to deny or withdraw recognition was in accordance with the PACE Council's procedures and policies. Reconsiderations may not be based on the length of the recognition period or disagreement with the recognition Standards and Criteria. To ensure due process, the Council will, when appropriate, review substantive procedural issues raised by the provider.

### **Procedures**

If the Council denies or withdraws recognition for cause, the CE provider shall be informed of this decision within fourteen (14) days following the Council meeting. Such provider must file a written request for a reconsideration with the Council's Program Coordinator by certified mail within twenty-one (21) days after notification of the Council's decision. In the absence of receipt of a request for reconsideration as prescribed above, the Council's decision will automatically be final.

If a request for reconsideration is received, the Council shall acknowledge notification of such intent and indicate the deadline for submission of documentation.

The provider must submit a non-refundable Reconsideration Fee of \$300 with its request for reconsideration. The provider must submit twenty (20) copies of evidence and argument in writing to refute or overcome the decision of the Council. Reconsiderations will be evaluated by the PACE Council. Representatives of the provider may make an appearance before the PACE Council. If desired, legal counsel may accompany the provider and observe the appearance. Legal counsel for the AGD PACE Council may be present for the appearance(s) and the executive session(s) thereafter. No tape-recording of the appearance(s) is permitted.

The provider will be given the opportunity to offer evidence and argument to refute or overcome the adverse action. The Council will review only information and documentation that was previously available to the PACE Council at the time the Council made its decision to take the adverse action. No change in the approval status of the provider will occur pending disposition of the reconsideration.

### Mechanism for the Conduct of a Personal Appearance

- A. A brief opening statement may be made by a representative of the PACE Council for the purpose of establishing the Council's findings and reasons therefore and to restate to the representative(s) the amount of time, 30 minutes, allocated for the hearing.
- B. The provider will then present its argument to the Council.
- C. Council members may ask questions of the provider's representative(s) to clarify information presented.
- D. After hearing the evidence, the PACE Council shall meet in closed session to discuss the reconsideration and determine its decision. The recommendation shall be based on a majority vote of the members of the Council present. The decision of the Council is final.
- E. The Council's decision will be sent by registered mail to the provider within ten (10) days following the Council's action

# Lexicon of Terms

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Many discussions of CDE result in misinterpretation or confusion because frequently used terms may be defined differently in the context of continuing education (CE). To clarify the intent of this document, the following terms are defined as they will be used in relation to CDE. CE providers should familiarize themselves with these definitions to ensure complete understanding of information provided in this document.

**ACTIVITY:** An individual educational experience such as a lecture, clinic, or home-study package. (See COURSE)

**ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITY:** The person(s) 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. A majority of the committee must be dental professionals, including at least one licensed practicing dentist who is independent from other responsibilities for the provider. The composition of 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 that have been shown through research and evaluation to effectively promote continuous quality improvement of CDE in accordance with the ADA CERP Recognition Standards and Procedures AGD PACE Program Guidebook.

**COMMERCIAL BIAS/COMMERCIAL INFLUENCE:** Any activity or material designed to promote a specific proprietary business interest or entity with a commercial interest.

**COMMERCIAL INTEREST/COMMERCIAL ENTITY:** Any proprietary entity producing health care goods or services, with the exception of non-profit or government.

**COMMERCIAL SUPPORT:** Financial support, products, and other resources contributed to support or offset expenses or needs associated with a provider's CDE activity.

**COMMERCIAL SUPPORTER:** Entities which contribute financial support, products, and other resources to support or offset expenses and /or needs associated with a provider's CDE activity.

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST:** When an individual has an opportunity to affect CDE content with products or services from a commercial interest with which he/she has a financial relationship.

**CONTINUING DENTAL EDUCATION (CDE):** Educational activities designed to review existing concepts and techniques, to convey information beyond basic dental education, and to update knowledge on advances in dental and medical sciences. The objective is to improve the knowledge, skills, and ability of the individual to deliver the highest quality of service to the public and profession. The basic sciences and behavioral and social sciences should be considered inseparable from technical knowledge in their influence on the professional person and, for this reason, educational experiences in these areas are an equally valid part of CDE.

CE programs are usually of short duration and are not structured or sequenced to provide academic credit toward a certificate or degree. Such courses are not applicable to advanced standing in specialty education programs. CE courses are conducted in a wide variety of forms using many methods and techniques and are sponsored by a diverse group of institutions, schools, and organizations. CE should favorably enrich past educational experience. These programs should make it possible for dentists and allied team members to attune dental practice to modern knowledge as it continuously becomes available. All CE should strengthen the habits of critical inquiry and balanced judgment that denote the truly professional and scientific person.

**COURSE:** A type of CE activity; usually implies a planned and formally conducted learning experience. (See ACTIVITY)

**COURSE COMPLETION CODE:** Also referred to as Verification code. Random code announced by program provider toward the end of each course to help verify that each participant has taken part in the entire course.

**EDUCATIONAL METHODS, METHODOLOGIES:** The systematic plan or procedure by which information or educational material is made available to the learner. Some examples include lectures, discussions, practice under supervision, audiovisual self-instructional units, case presentations, and Internet-based or other electronically mediated formats.

**FINANCIAL RELATIONSHIPS:** Any relationship in which the individual benefits by receiving a salary, royalty, intellectual property rights, consulting fee, honoraria, ownership interest contracted research, or other financial benefit or. AGD/ADA consider relationships of the person involved in the CDE activity to include financial relationships of a family member. Financial relationships must be disclosed to the participants.

**GOAL:** A statement of long-range expectations of a CDE program.

**JOINT SPONSOR:** An AGD PACE-recognized or non-AGD PACE-recognized provider that shares responsibility with an AGD PACE-recognized provider of CE for planning, organizing, administering, publicizing, presenting, and keeping records for a program of CDE. Administrative responsibility for development, distribution, and/or presentation of CE activities must rest with the AGD PACE-recognized provider whenever the provider acts in cooperation with providers that are not recognized by AGD PACE. (AGD PACE Recognition Standards and Procedures, Standard IX. Administration, Criteria 12). When two or more AGD PACE-recognized providers act in cooperation to develop, distribute, and/or present an activity, each must be equally and fully responsible for ensuring compliance with these standards. (AGD PACE Recognition Standards and Procedures, Standard IX. Administration, Criteria 13).

**LECTURE COURSE:** A live presentation intended to communicate information or teach people about a particular subject. Lectures are used to convey critical information, history, background, theories and equations and do not significantly involve audience participation with the exception of asking and answering questions.

**NEEDS ASSESSMENT:** The process of identifying the specific information or skills needed by program participants and/or interests of the program participants, based on input from participants themselves or from other relevant data sources. The specific needs thus identified provide the rationale and focus for the educational program.

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

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

**PARTICIPATION/HANDS-ON COURSE:** A live presentation intended to teach people about a particular subject, technique or skill that actively involves the audience. Participants will actively manipulate dental materials or devices, treat patients, or practice clinical skills or techniques under the supervision of a qualified instructor for at least 30% of the total presentation time.

**PLANNED PROGRAM:** The total efforts of a sponsoring organization as they relate to CDE activities offered to professional audiences. A sequence or series of CE activities, courses, or events that in total constitutes the sponsoring organizations' activities as they relate to CDE activities offered to professional audiences. These individual activities, courses, or events must be substantially distinguishable from one another. A planned program of CDE activities must consist of more than a single course offered multiple times. A single course offered multiple times may not exceed 50 percent of the total number of courses offered per year. The CE provider's administrator must not function as a sole lecturer/author.

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

**PROTOCOL COURSE:** Courses which assign homework and award CDE credit for activities successfully completed outside of the classroom. Participants must present assignment results to the course instructor or course director before CDE is awarded.

**PROVIDER:** An agency (institution or organization) that is responsible for organizing, administering, publicizing, presenting, and keeping records for the CDE 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, faculty, or other support for the CE activity, the recognized provider must ensure that the facilities, faculty, or support provided meet the standards and criteria for recognition. The CE provider remains responsible for the overall educational quality of the CE activity. (See SPONSOR)

**RECOGNITION:** Recognition is conferred upon CE providers or sponsoring organizations that are judged to be conducting a CDE program in compliance with the Standards and Criteria for recognition. (The term "accreditation" is not used in the

context of CDE, as “accreditation” has a precise educational meaning that implies that an on-site review based on curricular or patient service standards have been conducted by an accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education or the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation. The review process used by AGD PACE does not meet these specific criteria.)

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** Detailed suggestions and/or assistance in interpreting and implementing the Standards and Criteria for recognition. (See STANDARDS AND CRITERIA FOR RECOGNITION)

**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.

**SPONSOR:** Another term used to designate the agency (institution or organization) that is responsible for organizing, administering, publicizing, presenting, and keeping records for the CDE program. (See PROVIDER)

**STANDARDS AND CRITERIA FOR RECOGNITION:** The criteria which applicant CE providers will be expected to meet in order to attain and then retain recognition status. (See RECOMMENDATIONS) The verbs used in the Standards and Criteria for recognition (i.e., must, should, could, may) were selected carefully and indicate the relative weight attached to each statement. Definitions of the words that 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.

**VERIFICATION CODE:** Also referred to as Course Completion Code. Random code announced by program provider toward the end of each course to help verify that each participant has taken part in the entire course.