

Maintenance of certification and gastroenterology

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An education isn't how much you have committed to memory, or even how much you know. It's being able to differentiate between what you do know and what you don't – Anatole France (1)

The first five-year cycle of the Maintenance of Certification (MOC) program of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC) is complete. Participants who have completed the first cycle of the program are to be congratulated. Through this national program, they have participated in a process of education and reflection that recognizes their commitment to professional development and continuing education.

The RCPSC has established and defined the many categories of credit to meet the diverse needs of the learners while providing an equitable framework for participants from many specialties. This program provides many educational formats to meet the needs of the learner. Participants can learn and gain credit in a variety of relevant formats, some of which are traditional and others more innovative. The RCPSC has made a number of changes to the MOC program as it begins its second cycle. It is important to note that as of 2007, participation in the MOC programs will be a requirement of licensure for all physicians in the provinces of Saskatchewan and Quebec. It is likely that the College of Physicians and Surgeons in other provinces will also introduce this requirement within a few years. Participation in the MOC program is a requirement for continuing specialist 'listing' by the RCPSC and will also be a requirement for licensure in many provinces within a few years.

As we begin the second cycle of the MOC program, there are a number of notable changes that participants should be aware of. The first and foremost change is that fellows are now required to report a minimum of 40 credit hours per year, with a total of 400 credits over the five-year cycle. The RCPSC may, in special circumstances, consider an extension due to health or other reasons, but specifics will be required. More information can be obtained through the MOC educational support centre at the RCPSC.

The second change is that the RCPSC has redefined some of the programs that it will accept for the MOC section 1 credit. This is an important point for participants because they can accrue an unlimited number of section 1 credit hours. The educational programs developed by, or reviewed and accredited by the Canadian Association of Gastroenterology (CAG), are accepted by the RCPSC for section 1 credit. These 'accredited programs' include Canadian Digestive Diseases Week, as well as a number of other national and local educational events aimed at meeting the learning needs of the CAG membership. Attendees at Canadian Digestive Diseases Week 2007 will be able to obtain at least 30 h of section 1 credit. Participants for all section 1 programs need to obtain a certificate of attendance. These certificates are required by the RCPSC to validate participant credit hours. The RCPSC randomly selects 3% of all fellows every year to undergo a credit hour validation review.

The CAG is pleased to announce that it has been reappointed by the RCPSC as an 'accredited provider' of educational programs for a five-year term. This comes after an exhaustive RCPSC review of the CAG's education processes and programs. The CAG encourages its members to submit their local or regional educational programs to the CAG for accreditation review purposes.

The third change of note is that credit hours in section 3 will only be accepted if the program has been accredited by a RCPSC provider such as the CAG.

The fourth change to MOC is an expansion of options in section 4 for personal learning projects. To aid members, the CAG has created new templates for section 4 credit and these are available on the CAG Web site at <www.cag-acg.org/sponsors/education.htm>. As before, participants can claim unlimited number of credit hours in this category but documentation is required for credit validation.

The fifth change is in section 5, where credit hours will only be recognized when the practice audit is personal. Extensive documentation is required for credit validation. Participants

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can continue to claim two credits for every hour of their personal audit project.

The final change is significant, and affects most participants in the MOC program. Section 6 credit hours are no longer limited to 20 h per year. Participants can now claim an unlimited number of credit hours but documentation is required for credit validation. The CAG Web site has templates available to aid members with this new requirement. Each credit hour is claimed as 'personal educational development' under the broad categories of teaching, publications or grant proposals, and 'standard setting'.

The MOC program recognizes that individuals have different learning needs, objectives and goals. Because of its commitment to education, the CAG has conducted a number of national educational 'needs assessments' to help define the areas of greatest interest to the members. In addition, through

the innovative Practice Audit in Gastroenterology (PAGE) programs, the CAG has tried to better understand the 'unmet' educational needs of members. This information acts as a foundation for the CAG in developing innovative, novel and relevant educational programs that meet the diverse educational needs of its members. Through these programs, the CAG seeks to influence the care and management of patients with gastrointestinal diseases.

For more information, refer to the new MOC program guide distributed earlier this year; visit the RCPSC Web site at <www.rcpsc.medical.org> or the CAG Web site at <www.cag-acg.org/sponsors/education.htm>.

REFERENCE

1. The Quotations Page. <http://www.quotationspage.com/quotes/Anatole_France> (Version current at November 2, 2006).