

How to decipher CME requirements

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Providing the best care to patients is a physician's No. 1 priority. One way to reach that goal is to continuously learn and improve—which is what continuing medical education offers. Learn about the complexities behind continuing medical education (CME) and how to make sure you're getting the CME you need.



Whether you need to meet requirements for medical license renewal, maintenance of certification or other entities, such as your specialty society, you'll need to obtain CME over the course of your career. But for busy physicians, the world of CME can be confusing. For most physicians, *AMA PRA Category 1 Credit*[™] is the main type of CME you'll need to obtain. This and other types of credit—such as the American Academy of Family Physicians and American Osteopathic Association credits—are accepted by many credentialing bodies for meeting various CME requirements. These bodies include medical and osteopathic boards in most states/territories, as well as specialty boards and other credentialing entities.

Only organizations based in the United States and accredited by either the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) or an ACCME-recognized state medical society may certify CME activities for *AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™*. Get a list of accredited CME providers at the ACCME website.

To ensure activities are certified for *AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™*, physicians should look for a statement on promotional materials that designates the maximum number of *AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™* for the activity. The statement should look like this:

The [name of accredited CME provider] designates this [learning format] for a maximum of [number of credits] *AMA PRA Category 1 Credit(s)™*. Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.

The AMA requires accredited CME providers to trademark and italicize the credit phrase “*AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™*” to help physicians identify legitimate *AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™* activities.

The AMA Council on Medical Education has approved seven formats that can be used by accredited CME providers when certifying activities for *AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™*:

1. Live activities, such as specialty society annual meetings
2. Enduring materials, such as a CME activity on a DVD
3. Journal-based CME, such as the CME articles available through the JAMA Network
4. Test item writing, such as writing questions for a certification exam of a member board of the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS)
5. Manuscript review, such as participating in the pre-publication peer review process for articles submitted to *JAMA*
6. Performance improvement (PI) CME, such as a performance in practice (Part IV) activity for an ABMS-member board
7. Internet point-of-care, such as physicians using databases vetted by a CME provider to engage in self-directed learning to answer a question relevant to their clinical practice

AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™ may be awarded to any individual who has completed an MD, DO or equivalent medical degree from another country. There is no central repository of *AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™* claimed by physicians, so ultimately each physician is responsible for maintaining his or her own records of participation in CME.

Visit the AMA’s CME Web page for AMA-sponsored CME including live activities, enduring materials, journal-based CME and PI CME.

Look for more on how CME can help you better care for patients in future stories at *AMA Wire®*.