

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to give guidance for applicants for the development of continuing professional development (CPD) activities in conjunction with the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists (RANZCP) Policy and Procedure for Recognition of CPD activities.

For CPD activities to be recognised by RANZCP, they should be based on adult learning principles and address the learning needs of Fellows and members in Australia and New Zealand.

CPD activity development

Adult learning principles include experiential and problem-centered teaching that fosters self-direction and ensures effective and practical skill and knowledge transfer for learners. Adults value autonomy in their learning and learn effectively through collaboration and social interaction.

As a guide, an educational activity should include the following five elements (Table 1):

1. Relevance	2. Learning aim and outcomes	3. Active Learning	4. Re-enforcing activity	5. Evaluation
Who is the target audience?	What should participants know or be able to do after completing this activity?	How will you engage participants in the activity?	How will participants demonstrate, consolidate, or reflect on their new knowledge/ skills?	Did it meet their learning needs and intended learning outcomes?
What do they need to learn and why?		How will you encourage self-directed learning?		How will they apply the learning to their day-to-day practice?
Which CAPE domain/s will apply: Culturally Safe Practice, Addressing Health Inequities, Professionalism, Ethics? ¹		How will you foster collaboration?		
Useful tips	Useful tips	Useful tips	Useful tips	Useful tips
Identify knowledge and skills gaps to be addressed (needs assessment).	Make the purpose clear and specific. Refer to Key principles of writing learning outcomes below.	Include active learning opportunities e.g., discussion questions, case studies, polls. Provide opportunity for learners to set their own goals and groups work/peer-feedback.	Include a 'reinforcing activity' (assessment) e.g., quiz, self-reflection, action plan	Include an evaluation form so participants can provide feedback about meeting learning outcomes and their experience.

Table 1. Five elements of an educational activity

Key principles for writing learning outcomes

Learning outcomes should guide the development of CPD activity content and assessment and direct and motivate participants. They need to be relevant to the scope of practice of a specialist psychiatrist. The content needs to align with the [Fellowship competencies](#) (based on the CanMEDS roles) and link to an RANZCP CPD activity type (in Section 3 or Section 4).

Learning outcomes must describe what participants will know, or be able to do better or differently, after completing the activity.^{2,3} They should:

- **Be specific and measurable**

Clearly state what participant will know or be able to do, ensuring the outcome is specific enough to be assessed. The standard practice is to write learning outcomes in the SMART format (Table 2).

Specific	The learning outcomes specify exactly what participants will be able to know or do at the end of the activity. They should use action verbs (such as identify, describe, practise, analyse).
Measurable	Learning outcomes need to be measurable so that providers know if they have achieved them. Some verbs such as 'understand' are difficult to measure as the intent is unclear. In this instance, a better verb is 'describe', which is measurable.
Achievable	Learning outcomes for an activity need to be achievable in the time allocated for that activity.
Relevant	The learning outcomes must address current or future knowledge, skills or behaviour gaps identified in the needs assessment.
Timely	Learning outcomes should indicate the time in which they'll be achieved (for example, by the end of the audit, discussion or course).

Table 2. SMART learning outcomes

- **Use action verbs and focus on the learner**

Employ verbs that describe demonstrable behaviors and are aligned with the intended level of learning, as defined by frameworks like Bloom's Taxonomy. For example, it's useful to think in terms of this statement:

'By the end of this activity, participants will be able to ...'.

Choosing the correct verb is critical and must be tied into the activities. Unless participants are to be given opportunities to discuss, describe or analyse, these verbs should not be used in the learning outcome. For example:

'By the end of this activity, participants will be able to [action verb] + [outcome]' is a useful general format for writing learning outcomes.

Table 3 features six cognitive processes according to Bloom's Taxonomy framework and appropriate verbs that can be used when writing learning outcomes.

List	Explain	Apply	Analyse	Evaluate	Create
Identify	Describe	Examine	Compare	Determine	Design
Recall	Interpret	Implement	Contrast	Recommend	Develop
Define	Classify	Execute	Distinguish	Measure	Produce
Label	Demonstrate	Prepare	Differentiate	Assess	Integrate
Outline	Summarise	Select	Organise	Review	Modify

Table 3. Six cognitive processes and associated verbs that can be used when writing learning outcomes

Beware of vague verbs and phrases that cannot be measured: *Know, Comprehend, Understand, Appreciate, Familiarise, Study, Be aware, Become acquainted with, Gain knowledge of, Cover, Learn, Realise.*

Examples of learning outcomes

Table 4 contains unclear versus SMART learning outcomes. The SMART learning outcomes include an action verb.

Unclear learning outcomes	SMART learning outcomes
<i>By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:</i> Outline various psychiatric disorders	<i>By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:</i> <i>Describe</i> the neurobiological basis of common psychiatric disorders, such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder
Understand self-awareness and reflective practice in clinical decisions	<i>Demonstrate</i> self-awareness and engage in reflective practice to improve clinical decision-making and patient care
Learn about the effectiveness of different therapeutic modalities	<i>Assess</i> the effectiveness of different therapeutic modalities in addressing complex psychiatric presentations.
Gain knowledge of psychopharmacology to propose appropriate treatment regimens	<i>Implement</i> knowledge of psychopharmacology to propose appropriate treatment regimens for patients with specific mental illnesses.

Table 4 Examples of vague versus concise learning outcomes

Evaluation of CPD activity

At the end of the CPD activity, providers are required to provide evaluation data regarding learning outcomes to the RANZCP.

References

Available on request