



Format-Specific Guidelines for Jointly Accredited Providers Designating AAPA Category 1 CME Credit

About AAPA CME Credit

AAPA Category 1 CME credit is reserved for provider-planned activities. AAPA Category 1 CME credit also includes two sub-brands for specific formats that are treated differently within the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA) system for Certification Maintenance. These are AAPA Category 1 PI-CME credit and AAPA Category 1 Self-Assessment CME credit. While NCCPA no longer has specific requirements for these formats, they have incentivized PA participation by applying additional weighting to these credit types within their system. The first 20 AAPA Category 1 PI-CME credits a PA logs during a two-year cycle are doubled when logged with NCCPA. For all activities approved for AAPA Category 1 Self-Assessment CME credit, NCCPA applies an additional 50 percent weighting when those self-assessment credits are logged for NCCPA certification maintenance purposes. It is important to note that these additional credits are NOT designated by the provider but added automatically within the NCCPA logging system once they are logged by the PA. More information may be found [here](#).

AAPA Category 1 CME credit may be designated for the following formats:

- **Live.** Live activities involve face-to-face activities, or activities that are mediated through technology, but where participation is synchronous. Examples include conferences, lectures, live webinars, and live teleconferences. Credit for these activities is designated on the basis of time spent in the activity with one credit for every 60 minutes of instruction. Credits may be designated down to the quarter hour (.25 credits). Regularly Scheduled Series (RSS) are a type of live activity. RSS activities occur as a series of events that are generally planned by duty-of-care providers and held on a reoccurring and regular basis. Examples include grand rounds, tumor boards, M&M conferences, and journal clubs.
- **Enduring materials.** Enduring materials are activities where the learner determines the time and place of participation using materials furnished by the provider. The learner does not typically have immediate access to faculty members or developers. Examples include printed materials such as monographs, or activities that are delivered through the internet or other electronic media. AAPA considers point-of-care and journal-based activities to be types of enduring materials. Credit is designated based on the provider's estimate of the time required for the learner to complete the activity. The provider must use a defensible mechanism to determine the amount of credit.
- **Performance Improvement CME (PI-CME).** These activities involve the learners assessing their own practice, planning and implementing improvements, and evaluating and reflecting on the results of their efforts. These activities may include pre-planned modules that the learners implement on their own, or team-based quality improvement. Please note that these activities are designated for AAPA Category 1 PI-CME credit and should use the associated credit designation statement and logo. More information is provided below.
- **Self-Assessment.** These activities provide a mechanism for learners to conduct a systematic review of their own performance, knowledge base, or skill set in a defined area of practice. These often take the form of self-administered tests with feedback and case study portfolios. Please note that self-assessment activities are designated for AAPA Category 1 Self-Assessment CME credit and should use the associated credit designation statement and logo. More information is provided below.

AAPA Category 1 PI-CME

AAPA Category 1 PI-CME is reserved for activities that include the following elements:

- An assessment of the learner's current practice using recognized benchmarks
- An intervention period where learners implement changes aimed at improvement
- A reassessment of practice to assess the impact of changes that were made
- A reflection on the process

This model represents at least one PDSA (Plan-Do-Study-Act) cycle.

Providers are entitled to designate 5 AAPA Category 1 PI-CME credits for each stage and 5 bonus credits for the reflection and for completing the entire cycle for a total of 20 credits. For activities that have two or more PDSA cycles in their design, providers may designate up to 30 AAPA Category 1 PI-CME credits.

Team-Based, Institutional Quality Improvement

Providers may also designate AAPA Category 1 PI-CME credit for participation in team-based institutional quality improvement activities. To the extent that these activities tend to contain more than one PDSA cycle, providers are entitled to designate up to 30 AAPA Category 1 PI-CME credits for these types of activities.

Providers must decide in advance and be prepared to defend the criteria by which they will decide if a learner has meaningfully participated in the quality improvement activity. While discretion is left to the provider, these criteria may include items such as length of participation; attendance at team meetings; assisting with data collection, analysis or interpretation; and implementing interventions aimed at improvement. The provider must have a process that allows learners to attest to their meaningful participation in the project and for the participation to be verified by a team leader or champion according to established criteria.

AAPA Category 1 Self-Assessment CME

Self-assessment activities provide a mechanism for learners to conduct a systematic review of their performance, knowledge, or skill in a given area of practice. A key requirement is that the self-assessment question is presented prior to the content that addresses that question. The self-assessment questions should serve as a stimulus for learning and remarks from the moderator/feedback on an enduring activity should address the rationale for the right answer. The presence of questions in the context of an activity/lecture alone does not make an activity/lecture qualify as self-assessment. This format is generally self-administered and should contain a mechanism for scoring the learner's performance and providing the learner with an opportunity for immediate remediation and references for future study.

The most common form that self-assessment CME takes is a self-scored multiple-choice question test with a scoring sheet containing the correct answer, a rationale for the correct answer, and at least one authoritative reference for future study.

As a general benchmark, at least 10 multiple-choice questions should be provided for each credit designated. Providers may designate credits based on fewer questions if the questions are especially complex and the rationales provided are substantial. However, the provider should be prepared to defend the decision and provide a rationale for their credit designation.

Self-assessment CME may be delivered in a live setting. When self-assessment CME is conducted live, learners should be provided with a mechanism to provide their answers to the instructor before the correct answer is revealed and the rationale discussed. An audience response system is the most common choice for this purpose, but colored cards would be a low-cost, low-tech alternative.

Because self-assessment is intended to guide development of a PA's future learning, a best practice is to have some form of tangible takeaway available for learners.

Examples for live activities:

- Answer sheet for learners to record their responses and track their areas for improvement to help direct their future learning.
- Audience response system report provided digitally to the participant to help direct their future learning.
- Handout of the slides, including the questions without the correct answers marked if the handout is provided prior to the live session taking place. A handout with the correct answers can be provided following the live activity.

Example for enduring activities:

- The ability for the learner to go back and review which questions they got correct/incorrect, along with the correct answers, corresponding rationales, and references.

Credit Designation Statements and CME Approval Logos

AAPA has developed CME approval logos for AAPA Category 1 CME credit, AAPA Category 1 PI-CME credit, and AAPA Category 1 Self-Assessment CME credit. These logos are designed to be used adjacent to the credit designation statement as a way of alerting PAs that the needs of PAs were considered in the planning of the activity and that AAPA CME credit has been designated.



AAPA Credit Designation Statement – Live

{Provider Name} has been authorized by the American Academy of Physician Associates (AAPA) to award AAPA Category 1 CME credit for activities planned in accordance with AAPA CME Criteria. This activity is designated for ___ AAPA Category 1 CME credits. PAs should only claim credit commensurate with the extent of their participation.



AAPA Credit Designation Statement – Enduring Materials

{Provider Name} has been authorized by the American Academy of Physician Associates (AAPA) to award AAPA Category 1 CME credit for activities planned in accordance with AAPA CME Criteria. This activity is designated for ___ AAPA Category 1 CME credits. Approval is valid until {Expiration Date}. PAs should only claim credit commensurate with the extent of their participation.



AAPA Credit Designation Statement – Other/Blended

{Provider Name} has been authorized by the American Academy of Physician Associates (AAPA) to award AAPA Category 1 CME credit for activities planned in accordance with AAPA CME Criteria. This other/ blended activity is designated for ___ AAPA Category 1 CME credits. PAs should only claim credit commensurate with the extent of their participation.



AAPA Credit Designation Statement – PI-CME

{Provider Name} has been authorized by the American Academy of Physician Associates (AAPA) to award AAPA Category 1 PI-CME credit for activities planned in accordance with AAPA CME Criteria. This activity is designated for a maximum of ___ AAPA Category 1 PI-CME credits. Approval is valid until {Expiration Date}. PAs should only claim credit commensurate with the extent of their participation.



AAPA Credit Designation Statement – Live Self-Assessment

{Provider Name} has been authorized by the American Academy of Physician Associates (AAPA) to award AAPA Category 1 Self-Assessment CME credit for activities planned in accordance with AAPA CME Criteria. This activity is designated for ___ AAPA Category 1 Self-Assessment CME credits. PAs should only claim credit commensurate with the extent of their participation.



AAPA Credit Designation Statement – Enduring Self-Assessment

{Provider Name} has been authorized by the American Academy of Physician Associates (AAPA) to award AAPA Category 1 Self-Assessment CME credit for activities planned in accordance with AAPA CME Criteria. This activity is designated for ___ AAPA Category 1 Self-Assessment CME credits. Approval is valid until {Expiration Date}. PAs should only claim credit commensurate with the extent of their participation.