Frequently Asked Questions

What qualifies as a CME activity?
A CME activity can be described as an educational offering that is planned, implemented, and evaluated in accordance with the ACCME’s Accreditation Criteria and its Standards for Commercial Support, the AMA Physician’s Recognition Award CME credit system standards and the policies of both. This ensures that topics and content are targeted toward physicians on their level of education and experience. Any educational activity that meets the professional development needs of physicians involved in clinical care, research, and education is appropriate for CME.

The learning formats currently provided by TTUHSC include Live Courses and Regularly Scheduled Series (Lectures and meetings in which learners are physically or remotely present), Enduring Material activities based on recorded or published content (i.e., printed materials, audio or video presentations and podcasts, Internet presentations) and journal-based activities. Other types of educational activities may qualify and will be assessed during the application process.

What is meant by the term "needs assessment"?
Needs assessment is the process of identifying and analyzing data that reflect the need for a particular CME activity. This data provides the basis for developing learner objectives for the CME activity. It data could result from a survey of the potential learners, evaluations from previous CME activities, needed health outcomes, identified new skills, or other sources that directly affect physician knowledge, skill and professional performance.

Can CME credits be awarded to participants who are not physicians?
CME activities are designed by practicing physicians for a physician audience so only individuals who have completed an Allopathic (MD), Osteopathic (DO) or an equivalent medical degree from another country can be awarded AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™. Beginning in 2015, residents are included as physician participants.

While other health care professionals and students are welcome to attend, their profession-specific educational needs are not typically included in the design of educational activities for physicians. As some clinics and hospitals move more toward multi-disciplinary health care teams, some CME activity planners/directors may want to design content intended to address multiple health care disciplines. Addressing the professional practice gaps of the entire health care team occurs during the educational planning process and requires health care professionals representative of each part of the team to be included.

For non-physician healthcare professionals or those in other professions, when the activity is singularly designated for AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™, participant attendance will be recorded and will be stated as such on any certificate or transcript of credits received from TTUHSC. It is the attendees’ responsibility to consult their individual accrediting body for approval or acceptance of attendance credit for each activity.

Can a department plan a CME activity jointly with another department or with a non-TTUHSC partner?
An activity that is planned, implemented and evaluated by TTUHSC departments is considered as directly sponsored. When a department works with other entities to produce a learning activity, it is termed as a jointly provided activity. For jointly provided activities, only one of the sponsors can provide CME credit. The other sponsor(s) will be listed as non-ACCME accredited provider(s). Please contact the CME Office regarding partnering with non-TTUHSC entities prior to any agreement to provide an accredited activity.

What is the cost of CME certification?
The cost of certifying your activity for CME credit depends on the type of activity (jointly provided versus directly provided, live versus enduring, one-hour versus two-day, etc.) and the number of credit hours being offered. The proper fee for your activity will be discussed in the initial planning meeting.
Commercial Support Questions:

What is commercial support?
The ACCME definition of a commercial interest is any entity producing, marketing, re-selling, or distributing health care goods or services consumed by, or used on patients. Any financial or in-kind contributions provided by a commercial interest to pay for any portion of a CME accredited educational activity is considered commercial support and must be approved by the TTUHSC Office of CME during the planning phases of the activity.

Can a department receive commercial support for a Regularly Scheduled Series?
Yes, however, the department should contact the Office of CME for assistance before applying for these funds. See SOM OP 60.05 for more guidance related to the ACCME Standards for Commercial Support: Standards to Ensure Independence in CME Activities™. Additionally, an official Letter of Agreement with the Commercial Supporter must be signed and on file in advance of the activity/series.

Are there certain guidelines I need to follow for either commercial support or faculty disclosure?
Documentation of all commercial supporters and disclosure of any commercial relationships and off-label discussions by faculty members must be made to the planning committee as part of the CME application process and to course participants in advance of all presentations. These guidelines will be presented in significant detail throughout the application process.

Can a company provide support or pay expenses for individual speakers?
CME is often made possible thanks to educational grants from commercial interests. Departments, planners or speakers should not make any arrangements with pharmaceutical companies or other commercial entities for payment of any activity expenses. Vendors or other companies desiring to provide support for any program or activity should contact the TTUHSC Office of Continuing Medical Education.

Can Activity Directors and/or Planners apply for Exhibit Fees from a Vendor?
TTUHSC Office of CME offers exhibit opportunities at large conferences/symposia. SOM OP 60.06 provides guidance for staff and exhibitors. A commercial interest may not exhibit at any regularly scheduled series activities.