

CONTINUING MEDICAL EDUCATION ACTIVITY UNDERSTANDING NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND OBJECTIVES

NEEDS ASSESSMENT DATA:

The first step in the design of a Category 1 activity is the assessment of the educational needs or the purpose of the activity. A brief “needs” assessment paragraph must be included in your promotional material that summarizes the assessment data submitted with your application documents. The sponsor shall have established procedures for identifying and analyzing the needs and interests of prospective participants. The need or purpose for the proposed educational offering *goes beyond the sponsor’s own perception of need and must relate to relevant patient care issues*. This can be supported by:

- **research**
- **surveys**
- **journal articles**
- **evaluations from previous activities**
- **committee notes**
- **continuous quality improvement issues**
- **site visit reports**
- **focus groups**
- **health policy studies**
- **incident reports**
- **patient records and databases**
- **professional review organization studies**
- **government reports on health statistics/technology developments, etc.**

DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES:

While the needs assessment indicates what deficits or insufficiencies will be address in the educational activity, the objectives state the educational goals of the activity; that is, what the planning committee anticipates the audience will derive from the activity. Stated learning objectives communicate to the audience:

- **what is to be taught and learned**
- **what will be required of the student**
- **the basis for evaluating both the student’s learning and the effectiveness of the instructional program.**
- **the type and extent of activities that are required for successfully carrying out the learning.**

The statement of learning objectives also can help the planning committee to think in specific terms and to organize the sequence of the subject matter of the educational activity – establishing the agenda, step 3 in the planning process of an educational activity.

Concrete terms that can form the basis of specific learning objectives:

The following terms to be CONSIDERED when writing learning objectives:		
To explain	To apply	To predict
To identify	To employ	To evaluate
To describe	To illustrate	To defend
To integrate	To use	To assess
To contrast	To interpret	To distinguish
To sort	To categorize	To diagram
To solve	To formulate	To report
To relate	To organize	To restate
To recall	To prepare	To review
To list	To arrange	To classify
To name	To construct	To translate
To recognize	To create	To discriminate

General Terms such as those listed below are inadequate because they are open to many interpretations (they are non-specific) and are not accessible to quantification.

AVOID the following terms when writing learning objectives:		
To know	To understand	To really understand
To fully appreciate	To internalize	To grasp the significance of
To have an awareness of		

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