



Draft Guidelines for Dental Continuing Professional Development in Europe (Part of the Erasmus DentalCPD Project)

AIM: - To prepare guidelines for dental continuing professional development in Europe

This document aims to provide overall guidelines for the design and implementation of education and training in support of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for graduate dentists in Europe. It will include suggestions for organizing and monitoring professional development. The recommendations aim to facilitate further convergence within the dental profession and to ensure that patients receive appropriate standards of oral healthcare within Europe. The aim is not to set the regulations for Dental CPD in individual member countries in Europe but to promote recognition across country boundaries.

Our main focus is on CPD courses and programmes which may consist of face-to-face lectures, small group activities, hands-on courses, on-line courses conducted using mixed or blended approaches, also including associated reading. We have excluded Dental postgraduate education aimed at a specialist training programme or a doctorate or other postgraduate university degree in dentistry.

This aspect of the DentCPD project is the next developmental part of the project following on from the recent extensive literature and internet search along with the survey of CPD activity and related topics carried out with stakeholders in the EU and beyond.

This document provides an initial outline of the content and discussion points

GUIDELINES

Who is entitled to participate in Dental CPD?

The European dentist is a lifelong learner who should constantly strive to improve their skills and broaden their knowledge for the benefit of their patients. In their work, the dentist is responsible for constant internal quality monitoring and to set the criteria for the highest quality of patient care, according to the current evidence base. Thus, every dentist should actively seek for up-to-date knowledge, understanding and skills improvement throughout their career. Opportunities to achieve this aspiration should be made readily available for all dentists.

Who is entitled to provide Dental CPD?

There should be an officially recognized National or European body monitoring the motives and quality of the provider organisations of Dental CPD.

The pre-requisites for the providers include, impartiality and continuous and transparent quality monitoring of the education provided, using for example an appropriate feedback system. Uniform internationally recognized criteria for the accreditation of providers would be desirable.

Who is entitled to act as an educator providing Dental CPD?

In addition to recognized university faculty members, other dental professionals can act as educators, provided they possess the up-to-date evidence based professional and pedagogical knowledge and/or experience for delivering or conducting high quality courses or activities in support of continuing education.

We recommend that the educators seek pedagogical proficiency in adult education.

We recommend that the body/institution responsible for approval/accreditation of the educators and the providers of CPD, should satisfy themselves that the educators/providers demonstrate sufficient pedagogic skills and when applicable, also enforce (and direct them to undertake) pedagogic courses.

For discussion at SIG:

Case: Novel equipment appears on the market all the time (designed f. ex. for preparation of cavities, for radiological examination using cone beam computed tomography, for chair side production of inlay/onlay fillings and crowns, for endodontics, for periodontics, for oral surgery etc). Who should be the provider for the education? The manufacturer of the equipment knows its characteristics and capacity, but only the dentist is able to judge its suitability and value for dental treatment in comparison to the gold standard.

What is technical instruction, what is sales promotion, and what is continuing education?

Outcome

The outcome of a Dental CPD course/activity should result in an appropriate alteration in a prevailing practice when recognized new evidence calls for it. To achieve this alteration, the activity/course must give a sufficient reason and means to motivate the dentist to execute the necessary changes in their practice and discuss how barriers to implementation may be overcome. It is important that the dentist is a reflective practitioner who reflects not only on their learning needs but also reflects on what they have learnt and how that impacts on their clinical practice. This should be part of their philosophy of a continuum of education and training throughout their career.

Structure of the CPD activities

It is not our aim to dictate any particular structure for a course/ activity over another. Modern information technology offers many possibilities for delivering courses/activities, some of which are suitable for Dental CPD. However, we recognize traditional face-to-face lectures and hands on courses form the basis of much Dental CPD delivery.

Dental CPD should facilitate learning. Learning objectives, learning activities and assessment tasks should all be aligned as described by Biggs & Tang, 2007.

Continuity

Providers should coordinate individual CPD courses into learning programmes which enable participants to build on their learning across a series of courses or modules. The overall aim for the structure of Dental CPD should be that the individual course/activity forms part of a learning plan.

In order to match the learning outcomes of the individual activities, all educators involved should be aware of the aims and outcomes of the learning plan.

Multiprofessional CPD for the whole dental team

To strengthen shared goals and intensify the implementation of novel techniques and ways of working within dentistry, the Dental CPD courses/activities should be, when applicable, designed to fulfill the needs of the whole dental team.

Learning objectives

All individual CPD courses/activities should have clearly defined learning objectives. The objectives should be provided in advance in the description of the course/activity to allow the participants to undertake comprehensive planning of their continuing education.

Learning material

Learning material should be available for all Dental CPD activities, either in print or in electronic form, prior to the course.

Assessment of learning and the application of learning

All Dental CPD activities should include an assessment of the learning outcome. The assessment should be appropriately mapped with the learning objectives. Ideally, assessment is needed to ensure that the participants have adopted the substantive learning outcomes of the course/activity, but thus may be difficult to achieve. It is more likely to be achieved through direct observation and peer review.

The methods used for assessment may include self reflection, multiple choice questions, written essays or short answers; computer based interactive systems (voting machine), the submission of case reports based on practice etc. The method should be chosen according to the content of the CPD course/activity and the relative importance of the subject in respect to patient safety.

For discussion in SIG:

How would you assess the following courses?

- a) Course on improving interpersonal skills with patients.
- b) Practical course on how to maintain vital functions in emergencies.
- c) Theoretical course on treating a patient with suspected anaphylactic reaction.
- d) Course on tooth whitening.

Feedback

In order to improve the quality of Dental CPD, the activities should include collection of feedback from participants to be provided to both the educators and the providers. The feedback should be collected as a pre-requisite for receiving a certificate of attendance.

The feedback should be analyzed carefully; the result of the analysis should be made public and used accordingly to improve the CPD course/activity.

It is recommended that the collection of feedback be performed using computerized systems to facilitate the statistical evaluation of the Dental CPD course/activity as an entity, which should in turn contribute to better quality control.

Credit points

To ensure uniformity in the recognition and approval of Dental CPD in Europe, the use of uniform, transparent, transferable, pan-European credits is recommended.

The content of a credit point must be clearly defined, for example by applying the European Credit Transfer System. Some form of verification of learning (assessment) prior to granting a credit point is recommended.

Ideas for further developments

Creation of a database of the learning contents (of European dental schools) for continuing education purposes is desirable.

Outcome Centered Framework of Continuing Professional Development for Dentists In Europe

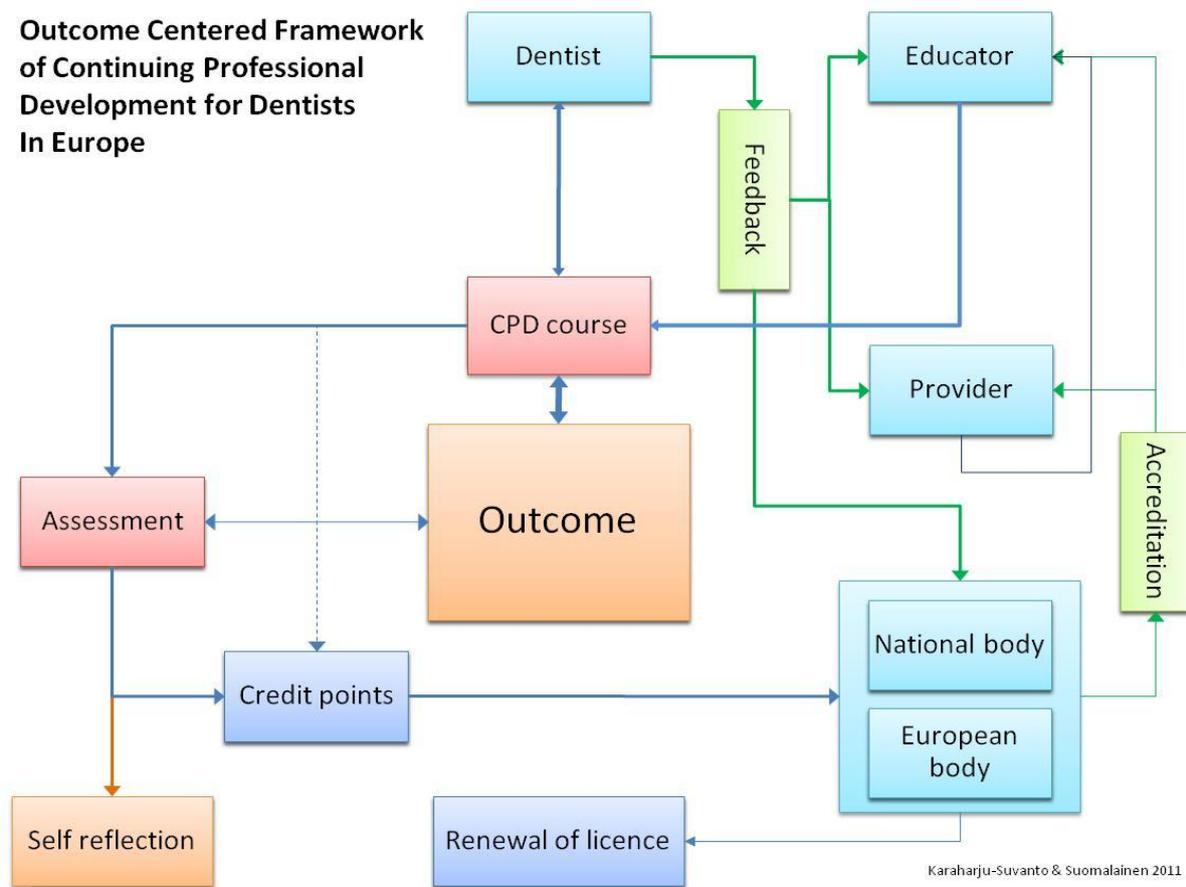


Figure 1. Schematic graph of factors influencing Dental CPD recognition in Europe

References - Biggs J, Tang C. Teaching for quality learning at university. Open university Press 2007.

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