

AMA PRA Frequently Asked Questions for Physicians

Q: Why do physicians need continuing medical education (CME) credit?

A: Physicians use CME credit to demonstrate that they have participated in educational activities and obtained CME credit to document meeting the requirements of state medical boards, medical specialty societies, specialty boards, hospital medical staffs, the Joint Commission, insurance groups, and others.

Q: What does AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™ represent?

A: AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™ represents that the physician has participated in an educational activity, and completed all requirements for such an activity, that is expected to “serve to maintain, develop, or increase the knowledge, skills, and professional performance and relationships that a physician uses to provide services for patients, the public or the profession” as stated in the AMA’s definition of CME.

Q: For what purposes is AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™ used?

A: The purposes for which AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™ is used include meeting CME requirements established by hospital credentialing bodies, state medical boards, medical specialty certifying boards, medical specialty societies, Joint Commission and other organizations. AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™ is the most commonly accepted form of CME credit for physicians and is also the basis for receiving the AMA Physician’s Recognition Award.

Q: How does a physician earn AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™?

A: There are three ways for physicians to earn AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™:

a. By participating in certified activities sponsored by CME providers accredited by either the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) or an ACCME-recognized State Medical Society. Accredited CME providers are expected to ensure that activities certified for AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™ meet all requirements of both the AMA and their accreditor.

b. By participating in activities recognized by the AMA as valid educational activities. Physicians receive AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™ for these activities directly from the AMA. More details can be found in question 12. Further information about qualifying activities can be found at www.ama-assn.org/go/directcredit.

c. By participating in certain international activities recognized by the AMA. Through its International Conference Recognition Program, there are some international activities which the AMA directly certifies for AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™. Additionally, at this time the AMA has agreements with the European Union of Medical Specialists and the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada for conversion of their CME credit to AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™. Information regarding these activities can be found at www.ama-assn.org/go/internationalcme.

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Physicians may claim AMA PRA Category 2 Credit™ for participation in educational activities not certified for AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™ if the activity meets certain requirements. Please refer to page 10 of the AMA PRA booklet for more information (<http://www.ama-assn.org/go/prabooklet>).

Q: What types of CME activities may be certified for AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™ through an accredited CME provider?

A: The types of CME activities certified by accredited CME providers include the following:

- Live activities - CME activity that occurs at a specific time as scheduled by the accredited CME provider. Participation may be in person or remotely as is the case of teleconferences or live Internet webinars. These may be offered through a variety of delivery mechanisms; examples include, but are not limited to, national, regional or local conferences, workshops, seminars, regularly scheduled conferences, journal clubs, simulation workshops, structured learning activities presented during a committee meeting and live Internet webinars. Faculty credit is a type of live activity for which physicians may earn AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™; There are two types of faculty credit:
 - Accredited CME providers may choose to certify a live activity to award AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™ to faculty for an original presentation(s) at a live activity that is designated for such credit. If the providers choose not to offer faculty credit, physicians may claim this credit directly from the AMA.
 - Accredited CME providers that are also accredited by either the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education

(ACGME) and/or Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) may certify a live activity to award AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™ to faculty to recognize the learning that occurs in the preparation for teaching residents and/or medical students.

- Enduring materials – CME activities that endure over a specified time such as print, audio, video and Internet materials, such as monographs, podcasts, CD-ROMs, DVDs, archived webinars, as well as other web-based activities.
- Journal-based CME - CME activity in which an article, within a peer-reviewed, professional journal, is certified for AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™ prior to publication of the journal.
- Test item writing – CME activity wherein physicians learn through their contribution to the development of high stakes examinations, or certain peer-reviewed self-assessment activities, by researching, drafting and defending potential questions for examinations given by the National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME) or a member board of the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS), or for peer reviewed, published, self-assessment educational activities from a national medical specialty society. This must be a robust process which includes participation in a group peer review.
- Manuscript review (for journals) – CME activity in which a physician learns through the critical review of an assigned journal manuscript. The review must be of an original contribution for publication in a medical journal indexed by MEDLINE which requires multiple reviewers, and must be deemed acceptable by the editor.
- Performance improvement CME (PI CME) – CME activity in which an accredited CME provider structures a long-term three-stage process by which a physician or group of physicians learn about specific performance measures, assess their practice using the selected performance measures, implement interventions to improve performance related to these measures over a useful interval of time, and then reassess their practice using the same performance measures. A PI CME activity may address any facet (structure, process or outcome) of a physician’s practice with direct implications for patient care.
- Internet point of care learning - CME activity structured by an accredited CME provider in which a physician engages in self-directed, online learning on topics relevant to their clinical practice. Learning for this activity includes a reflective process in which a physician must document their clinical question, the sources consulted and the application to practice.

All activities certified for AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™ by an accredited CME provider must meet all requirements for one of the above learning formats as well as the AMA’s core requirements for all activity formats.

Q: Can a physician obtain AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™ for reading articles published in a professional journal?

A: Yes, a physician may obtain AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™ for reading a peer-reviewed article, but only if the article has been planned as a learning activity and certified for credit by an accredited CME provider prior to publication. These articles must meet all AMA PRA requirements for this format, including a mechanism for physician assessment that measures achievement of meeting the purpose/objectives of the articles. Physicians claim this credit by achieving at least the minimum required performance level in the post activity assessment and by submitting the required documentation to the accredited CME provider.

Q: Can a physician obtain credit for reading articles that have not been certified for AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™ in advance of publication?

A: For articles that have not been certified for AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™ by an accredited CME provider, physicians may claim AMA PRA Category 2 Credit™ if they individually determine that it meets the requirements. Please refer to information on AMA PRA Category 2 Credit™ for more information.

Q: Can a physician earn AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™ for teaching at a certified CME activity? If so, how much credit is earned for these activities?

A: Yes, physicians may earn AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™ for the learning that occurs in the preparation and teaching of an original presentation at a live activity certified for AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™. There are two ways physicians may obtain this credit:

- a. The physician can apply directly to the AMA (processing fee involved – see www.amaassn.org/go/directcredit)
- b. The accredited CME provider may develop Faculty credit as a CME activity and award AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™ to the faculty of their live activities for the learning associated with the preparation and teaching of an original presentation if they meet all AMA PRA requirements. To calculate the number of AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™ earned as faculty:
 - Physician faculty may claim credit based on a 2-to-1 ratio to presentation time. For example, faculty may be awarded 2

AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™ for a one-hour presentation or 1.5 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™ for a 45-minute presentation for sessions that were designated for AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™. Credit should be rounded to the nearest one-quarter credit.

- Credit may only be claimed once for an original presentation; credit may not be claimed for subsequent presentations of the same material.
- Physician faculty may not claim credit as a participant for their own presentations; however, they may claim credit for other segments they attend as a participant at a certified live activity.

Q: Can a physician earn AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™ for other types of teaching?

A: Physicians are now able to earn AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™ for the learning associated with teaching medical students and residents if the accredited CME provider is also accredited by the LCME and/or ACGME, and the activity is certified for AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™ in advance of physician participation. Please refer to additional information regarding this type of live activity.

Q: Can a physician get credit for certification or maintenance of certification (MOC®) with an ABMS member specialty board?

A: Yes; physicians have two choices for obtaining a CME benefit for certification or MOC with an ABMS member specialty board: a. A physician can receive a standard three year AMA Physician's Recognition Award (PRA) for completing an ABMS member board certification process, and/or b. A physician can claim sixty (60) AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™ for successfully completing an ABMS board certification process dated September 1, 2010 or later. Physicians can claim twentyfive (25) AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™ for certifications dated prior to September 1, 2010.

To obtain credit for ABMS certification, the physician must apply directly to the AMA by completing (1) the AMA PRA online application (sign in or create an account) or AMA PRA written application to receive the AMA PRA or (2) the Direct Credit Application to receive a credit certificate. Physicians are responsible for ensuring that their board is a member-board of the ABMS (www.abms.org). Complete instructions, including substantiating documentation requirements and processing fees, are found on the forms.

For the full PDF version of the *AMA PRA Frequently Asked Questions for Physicians*, please [click here](#).