

Note:
ACFAS comments are in blue. CPME changes are in red

**CPME DOCUMENT 730
PROCEDURES FOR APPROVAL OF
SPONSORS OF CONTINUING EDUCATION
IN PODIATRIC MEDICINE**

Council on Podiatric Medical Education

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INTRODUCTION

The Council on Podiatric Medical Education (CPME) is an autonomous, professional accrediting agency designated by the American Podiatric Medical Association (APMA) to serve as the accrediting agency in the profession of podiatric medicine. The council evaluates, accredits, and approves educational institutions and programs. The scope of the council's approval activities extends to institutions throughout the United States and its territories and Canada.

The mission of the council is to promote the quality of doctoral education, postdoctoral education, certification, and continuing education. By confirming ~~that~~ these programs meet established standards and requirements, the council serves to protect the public, podiatric medical students, and doctors of podiatric medicine.

The council was established by the APMA House of Delegates in 1918 and charged with formulating educational standards. The council began accrediting colleges of podiatric medicine in 1922. The council conducted its first residency evaluation in 1964. The council has been responsible for approval of sponsors of continuing education in podiatric medicine since 1977.

The council approves sponsors of continuing education ~~that that~~ demonstrate and maintain compliance with the standards and requirements stated in CPME publication 720, *Standards, Requirements, and Guidelines for Approval of Sponsors of Continuing Education in Podiatric Medicine*. The council and its Continuing Education Committee (CEC) base approval on programmatic evaluation and periodic review. The council approves the sponsor itself rather than each of the sponsor's continuing education activities, but reserves the right to review any or all of a sponsor's activities, educational, or otherwise.

"Approval" is defined as the recognition accorded a continuing education sponsor ~~that~~ has demonstrated compliance with standards and requirements established by the council. The approval process for sponsors of continuing education in podiatric medicine is essentially a six-step process, involving:

1. Development and submission of application or petition materials documenting the ability of the sponsor to comply with the council's standards and requirements;
2. Review of the application or petition by the CEC;
3. Forwarding of an approval recommendation from the CEC to the council;
4. Determination by the council of initial or continued approval;
5. Procedural reconsideration, reconsideration, and appeal of a proposed adverse approval action;
6. Annual follow-up of progress in improving the quality of the activities provided by the sponsor.

The council reserves the right at any time to conduct on-site evaluations of courses provided by applicant and approved sponsors, to evaluate instructional media developed by applicant and approved sponsors, and to schedule reverse site visits.

Sponsors must review CPME 720 prior to applying for approval or submitting petitions. Particular attention should be paid to the sections entitled “[About this Document](#)[Glossary](#)” and “Information for Sponsors.”

In order for a sponsor to be eligible for council approval, the primary administrative office of the sponsor must be located within the United States or Canada and the preponderance of the sponsor’s activities must be provided within the United States and/or Canada.

The following approval procedures have been developed to assist potential and approved sponsors in preparing for initial or continuing approval and to guide the CEC and the council in their deliberations concerning the approval of continuing education sponsors. Prior to adoption, all council policies, procedures, standards, and requirements are disseminated widely in order to obtain information regarding how the council’s community of interest may be affected.

COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE CEC/COUNCIL AND THE SPONSOR

The CEC and the council have adopted the following general policies related to communication with sponsors of continuing education. Information related to specific correspondence (e.g., notification of approval actions) appears in the pertinent sections of this document.

The CEC and the council require ~~that~~ the sponsor’s director of continuing education is the individual responsible for submitting all materials to council staff related to applications, petitions, annual reports, and reconsiderations. ~~All The~~ materials submitted by the sponsor must be [submitted on media as determined by the council or its committees](#) accompanied by a cover letter signed by the director, ~~or~~ ~~The~~ CEC, ~~and~~ council, ~~and~~ evaluators ~~will not consider~~ [unsigned, unverified, or signature-stamped correspondence or the](#) materials. Materials submitted by fax or electronically will be accepted as long as they follow these guidelines. Unsigned, [unverified](#), or signature-stamped correspondence or materials will be returned to the director of continuing education; submission of such materials may adversely affect the approval status of the sponsor.

All correspondence and inquiries should be directed to the council office. Utilization of other channels of communication may delay the processing of applications and result in inconvenience to applicant and approved sponsors.

The CEC and the council mail correspondence to the director of continuing education at the director’s office address indicated on the sponsor’s application or most recent annual report. The sponsor’s chief administrative officer is copied on all correspondence.

The sponsor is responsible for informing the council office in writing within ~~3060~~ calendar days of substantive changes in the program. The sponsor must inform the council of changes in areas including, but not limited to ~~;~~:

- appointment of a new director of continuing education, ~~-~~
- affiliate sponsorship, [and](#)

- significant changes in curricular structure.

~~Notice of appointment of a new director or new chief administrative officer must be submitted by an appropriate member of the sponsor's administrative staff. must submit notice of appointment of a new director or new chief administrative officer.~~

The council's continuing education documents and any proposed revisions to the documents forms are available on the Council's website (www.cpme.orgUcpme.orgU). ~~Additionally, any proposed changes to council documents (standards, requirements, and procedures) are included on the Web site in a "Memo to Continuing Education Directors" section.~~

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CONTINUING EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The Continuing Education Committee is responsible for recommending to the council approval of sponsors of continuing education in podiatric medicine. The CEC reviews applications, petitions, reports of on-site evaluations, progress reports, requests for reconsideration, and annual reports when concerns have been identified through staff review. The CEC may modify its own policies and/or recommend to the appropriate ad hoc committee modifications in standards, requirements, and procedures for sponsor approval.

Composition of the Committee includes two representatives from approved sponsors of continuing education in podiatric medicine (selected by the council), one representative from the podiatric practice community (selected by the council), one representative from state licensing boards (appointed by the Federation of Podiatric Medical Boards), ~~and~~ at least two council members (one of whom is a public member). Majority of members shall not have a direct or perceived vested interest in an accredited organization, and one representative from ASPE (appointed by the American Society of Podiatric Executives).¹ The council and its staff administer the affairs of the CEC.

Comment [S1]: The ACCME is comprised of 7 member organizations, so a perfect parallel is not possible. However, ensuring that no majority of accredited organizations control the Committee will help to ensure the best interest of the profession is the Committee's first and foremost loyalty.

APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF A NEW CONTINUING EDUCATION SPONSOR

Submission of the Application

Sponsors seeking initial approval must follow the procedures stated in this section. ~~The council encourages potential sponsors to contact council staff early in the developmental stages of the program of continuing education should questions arise related to the council's standards, requirements, and procedures for approval.~~

The council and the CEC expect ~~that~~ the potential sponsor's director of continuing education is the individual responsible for submission of the application and communication with council staff related to the application and approval processes.

¹ http://www.accme.org/sites/default/files/639_20130206_Chapter_7_Governance_Leadership_and_Collaboration.pdf

An institution, organization, or individual seeking initial approval as a sponsor of continuing education in podiatric medicine must complete and submit CPME form 715, *Application for Approval of Sponsor of Continuing Education in Podiatric Medicine*, accompanied by specified supplementary information and the application fee, to the council office. The supplementary documentation requirements are outlined on the application form. A sponsor may apply for approval based on affiliate sponsorship (including courses and/or instructional media developed by the affiliate). Submission of an application may be required when an approved sponsor has so altered its program of continuing education ~~that~~ it is essentially a new sponsor or program.

Application Deadlines

Complete applications will be considered at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Committee. The entire review process for a sponsor requesting approval may require a period of 12-15 months from the time an application is received by council staff until an approval action is taken.

All applications must be reviewed by the CEC; the council does not accept applications directly from potential sponsors. The CEC and the council will not consider incomplete applications. Approval of a sponsor of continuing education is effective on the date on which the council takes the approval action.

Council staff reviews the application to determine the completeness of information submitted. The sponsor is informed whether the application appears to be complete. If the application is considered to be incomplete, the director of continuing education is notified in a timely manner with the request to submit the required information. If the application, supplementary documentation, and processing fee are in order, the prospective sponsor's application is placed on the agenda of the next meeting of the CEC.

Withdrawal or Termination of the Application

A sponsor ~~that has submitted an~~ submitting an application for approval may withdraw its application at any time before the council takes an action on the approval status of the sponsor.

If the sponsor fails to respond in writing within six months to written requests from council staff and/or the CEC for information to complete the application, the application will be terminated by staff. Council staff will correspond with the director of continuing education and the sponsor's chief administrative officer to inform them ~~that~~ the application has been terminated. The sponsor may submit a new application, supplemental material, and application fee after the application has been terminated.

Review by the Committee and Council

Following review of a prospective sponsor's application, the CEC has the following recommendation options: (1)

- ~~That the council~~ approve the sponsor, with or without a request for additional information, (2)
- ~~That the council~~ withhold approval of the sponsor, or (3)
- ~~That the council~~ table the a decision and request additional information.

The CEC and the council reserve the right to conduct an on-site evaluation of any continuing education activity course, to evaluate any instructional media, or to schedule a reverse site visit with the sponsor bearing full responsibility for expenses involved. The CEC and the council also reserve the right to survey participants or to collect supportive data through any reasonable means considered necessary to facilitate an approval action. The sponsor may request, at its own expense, an appearance before the CEC to provide additional information about its application and/or continuing education activities. The CEC and the council reserve the right to reject applications from and to deny approval as a sponsor to applicants ~~that that~~ promote or sponsor clinical course work or learning experiences that do not have a sound scientific basis, proven efficacy, or ensure public safety.

An applicant should be aware ~~that~~ it is difficult to demonstrate its ability to comply with the standards and requirements until after at least one continuing education activity has been completed. If the sponsor wishes to proceed with the application process during its first activity, the CEC and the council will honor the sponsor's request. To complete the process of Committee review and council approval, however, the sponsor must provide documentation of subsequent evaluation of the activity and its use in planning future activities before the council will consider the approval status of the sponsor.

PETITION FOR CONTINUED APPROVAL FOR APPROVED SPONSORS

An approved sponsor seeking continued approval, as a sponsor of continuing education in podiatric medicine must submit CPME form 735, *Petition for Continued Approval*, accompanied by specified supplementary information, and the petition review fee to the council office. The required supplementary documentation is outlined on the petition form, and the amount of the review fee is indicated on the form. The petition materials are to provide detailed information related to the sponsor's continuing education activities, allowing the sponsor to document continued compliance with the council's standards and requirements for approval, as well as improvements in any previously identified areas of concern.

Approximately six months prior to the next scheduled CEC meeting, council staff contacts the director of continuing education to provide the petition due date. The council and the CEC expect ~~that~~ the sponsor's director of continuing education is the individual responsible for submission of the petition and communication with council staff related to the petition. Sponsors are reminded in approval letters as to when their next petition is due.

Staff will review each petition and request additional information as needed when the petition is received by the deadline. If the petition and supplementary documentation are in order and received by the deadline, the sponsor's petition is placed on the agenda of the CEC's next meeting, in accordance with the published deadlines outlined above. Council staff will inform a

sponsor whose materials are grossly incomplete ~~that~~ an appropriately completed petition must be submitted immediately for consideration at the Committee meeting for which the petition was requested. Failure of an approved sponsor to submit a completed petition shall be cause for the council to extend administrative probation, which may lead to withdrawal of approval.

Review by the Committee and Council

Following review of a petition, the Committee has the following recommendation options: (1)

- ~~That~~ the ~~c~~Council approve the sponsor, with or without a request for additional information, (2)
- ~~That~~ the ~~c~~Council extend probationary approval of the sponsor, (3)
- ~~That~~ the ~~c~~Council withdraw approval, for a sponsor already on probation, or (4)
- ~~That the c~~Council table a decision and request additional information from the sponsor.

The CEC and the council reserve the right to conduct an on-site evaluation of any course, to evaluate any instructional media, or to schedule a reverse site visit with the sponsor bearing full responsibility for expenses involved. The CEC and the council also reserve the right to survey participants or to collect supportive data through any reasonable means considered necessary to facilitate an approval action. The sponsor may request, at its own expense, an appearance before the CEC to provide additional information about its petition and/or activities.

The council recognizes ~~that~~ sponsors submitting petitions for continued approval do so voluntarily. Therefore, the burden of proof is the responsibility of the ~~sponsor, sponsor,~~ including ~~the demonstrati~~demonstrating on ~~that~~ activities are educational in nature.

CPME WHISTLEBLOWER PROCESS

CPME will create a whistleblower portal on the CPME website to allow for formal complaints to be submitted against an approved sponsor [or affiliate]. Formal complaints must include the name of the submitter, the name of the approved sponsor [or affiliate], the activity name and date (if live activity), and a description of the concern. CPME staff and members of the CEC will hold all such complaints in strict confidentiality, both regarding the whistleblower and the sponsor [and/or affiliate]. CPME will investigate all complaints. A letter will be sent to inform the sponsor [and affiliate] that a complaint was received, outline the investigation process, and include a timeline for evaluation and decisions regarding any corrective actions (to take no more than 90 days). An on-site evaluation/audit may be required (see below). CPME staff will conduct a review of videos, PPTs, hand-outs, or other materials provided during the activity. A recommendation of action to be taken will be made to the CEC. The sponsor will be informed of the CEC's decision and any corrective action required by letter. The timeline for corrections shall also be made known in this letter. The CPME staff will ensure that the corrective action has taken place and that the issue has been resolved. If not, additional actions, probation, and withdrawal of approval may occur.

A summary of the complaint and resolution, with the sponsor [and/or affiliate] de-identified, will be posted to the CPME website not later than 30 days after the final corrective action has been approved by CPME staff.

Sponsors [and/or affiliates] must inform attendees that this CPME whistleblowing process exists

Comment [S2]: If CPME keeps affiliate status, insert "and affiliate."

and provide the web address in all program materials provided to registered attendees in not less than 10 point font. Those sponsors [and/or affiliates] who fail to inform attendees may be penalized, including being placed on probation status.

ON-SITE EVALUATION AND REVERSE SITE VISITS

The CEC and council ~~reserve the right WILL to~~ conduct an evaluation and/or audit of the sponsor [and/or affiliate] whenever circumstances require such review. Circumstances ~~that~~ may warrant scheduling of an evaluation include, but are not limited to:

- A formal complaint against an approved sponsor [and/or affiliate] requires evaluation of the issues related to the complaint through the CPME Complaint Process.
- The program of continuing education has undergone a substantial change
- Major deterioration in the program of continuing education has ~~occurred~~been observed, such as concerns about commercial bias, amount of time not matching the credit hours provided, or content provided during the activity not matching the content validity requirements outlined in document 720, CPME Glossary
- The sponsor has requested reconsideration of a proposed adverse approval action
- ~~A formal complaint against an approved sponsor requires evaluation of the issues related to the complaint~~

In any event, the Committee and council reserve the right to conduct an evaluation of the sponsor [and/or affiliate] whenever circumstances require such review. The primary purpose of either the on-site or the reverse site visit is to document and assess the capacity of the sponsor [and/or affiliate] to conduct continuing education activities for the podiatric medical profession. The evaluation assesses:

- The general quality of the program of continuing education, including adherence to the requirements related to commercial support and independence.
- The extent to which the activity matches the advertisement/marketing of the activity including the hours available to DPM attendees.
- The sponsor [and/or affiliate]'s ability to carry out its mission and the learning objectives established for its individual activities,
- The sponsor [and/or affiliate]'s plans for continued improvement.

The evaluation may have an impact on the sponsor's approval status. The extension of continued council approval is contingent upon the findings of the evaluation. An on-site evaluation is usually scheduled to coincide with the date of a course.

Appointment of Evaluator(s)

The council chair appoints the evaluator(s) based upon a recommendation from council staff. The evaluator is selected from a pool of professionals who have expertise in adult and continuing education and/or continuing education in podiatric medicine. The pool will be constituted through recommendations from council members, council staff, and/or the community of interest. Evaluators may include, but not be limited to, current and former members of the council and the Committee. Ordinarily, individuals who are selected to represent

the council as evaluators will have participated in a training session for evaluators. Should an evaluation team be appointed, one evaluator will serve as chair and be responsible for preparing and submitting the report of the evaluation.

The evaluators do not act as consultants to the sponsor. The evaluators' role is that of a fact-finders and observers to provide the Committee with an assessment of the sponsor's compliance with the council's standards and requirements.

Approximately 45 days before the evaluation, council staff formally informs the sponsor of the name of the evaluator(s) and the time, date, and location of the evaluation. The sponsor has the prerogative of rejecting an evaluator when an appropriate cause related to conflict of interest can be identified clearly. In such a case, a written statement from the sponsor is to be submitted to the council office no later than 30 days before the date of the evaluation, affording the council sufficient opportunity to appoint a replacement evaluator(s). The council will not appoint evaluators who have any known conflict of interest in the evaluation of the sponsor, including graduates, current and former faculty members, administrators, or officers of the sponsor.

Preparation for and Conduct of Evaluation

The evaluator(s) determine(s) the date of the on-site evaluation in conjunction with the director of continuing education and the other member(s) of the evaluation team. A copy of CPME 705, *Agenda Guide*, is forwarded to the director of continuing education. Using the agenda guide, the director of continuing education is required to prepare a schedule identifying personnel to be interviewed by the evaluator. Depending upon the reasons for which the evaluation is to be conducted, the director of continuing education may be advised by council staff and/or the evaluator of interviews and activities ~~that~~ need not be scheduled. The agenda must be forwarded to the council office at least three weeks prior to the evaluation.

The evaluation requires approximately six-eight hours. In order ~~that that~~ the evaluator may assess the administrative structure of the sponsor and curriculum content of the program of continuing education, the agenda for the on-site evaluation requires ~~that~~ key participants in the program of continuing education be interviewed, as indicated in CPME 705, *Agenda Guide*, ~~Agenda Guide~~. The evaluator conducts interviews with the director of continuing education, chief administrative officer, members of the advisory/education committee, and staff members involved in planning continuing education activities. The director of continuing education and other representatives of the sponsor should be prepared to clarify and amplify data in application or petition materials and demonstrate the effectiveness of the sponsor's continuing education activities. If the activity is provided under affiliate sponsorship, an administrative representative of the primary approved sponsor must be available for interview by the evaluators.

On-site evaluation of a course includes observation of a learning activity in session and review of facilities and resources. Evaluation of instructional media includes participation of the evaluator in the continuing education activity. The evaluation concludes with a session with the director of continuing education and the chief administrative officer to discuss the tentative findings. During the exit interview, the evaluator explains to the representatives of the sponsor the council's procedures for approval of sponsors of continuing education in podiatric medicine

(specifically, the sequence of events that will follow the evaluation).

Failure of key participants in the program of continuing education to be available will be cause for cancellation of the evaluation, which may jeopardize the approval status of the sponsor. Rescheduling of the evaluation is possible but only at the expense of the sponsor.

Preparation of the Report

The evaluator prepares a draft report based on observations and impressions from the on-site evaluation. The evaluator forwards this draft report to the council office for editing. The edited draft of the report is then returned to each evaluator for review and comments. A draft copy of the report, consisting of a summary of findings, a list of interviewees, areas of potential noncompliance, and recommendations, is forwarded to the director of continuing education and the chief administrative officer of the sponsor.

The sponsor is encouraged to provide a substantive response to areas of potential noncompliance and recommendations identified by the evaluator, as well as any supporting documentation, prior to consideration of the report by the CEC. The cover letter to the sponsor specifies the deadline for receipt of the response. The sponsor may correct factual information included in the report; however, impressions and observations based on the on-site visit will not be modified.

Reverse Site Visit

The CEC and/or the council have the prerogative of scheduling a reverse site visit rather than an on-site evaluation of a sponsor. In a reverse site visit, a representative(s) of the sponsor attends a CEC meeting to present information and appropriate documentation about the sponsor relative to specific concerns of the CEC and/or the council.

CONSIDERATION BY THE CEC AND THE COUNCIL

CEC Review

The CEC meets prior to each of the semiannual meetings of the council. Approval recommendations are determined by the CEC only at meetings of the CEC or by conference call.

The CEC reviews applications, petitions, reports of on-site evaluations, progress reports, requests for reconsideration, and annual reports when concerns have been identified through staff review.

For each sponsor, the CEC recommends a proposed approval action to the council. The CEC recommendation includes the approval status, date by which the petition must be submitted, period of approval, identification of areas ~~that are~~ in noncompliance with council standards and requirements, identification of areas that merit commendation, and a schedule for requesting progress reports. The recommendations from the CEC to the council are confidential.

During discussions and voting about approval recommendations for sponsors of continuing education, no CEC member may participate if he/she has a pecuniary or personal interest (or appearance of same) or with respect to which, because of present organizational, institutional, or

program association, he/she has divided loyalties or conflicts (or the appearance of same) on the outcome of the decision. Members of the Committee who conducted the most recent on-site evaluation are required to recuse themselves from discussion and voting related to the approval recommendation.

In reviewing a progress report, the CEC has the prerogative to add, modify, or delete areas of noncompliance or to recommend the council add, modify, or delete areas of noncompliance.

Council Action

At a meeting of the Council, the chair of the CEC presents for each sponsor the confidential recommendation of the CEC. Areas of noncompliance determined by the council may include, but are not limited to, those indicated by an evaluation team and the CEC. The sponsor may be requested to submit documentation of progress made in addressing areas of noncompliance and/or concerns expressed by the CEC or the council.

~~The council takes Approval actions~~ **are taken by the council at official meetings of the council, only at official meetings of the council.** Under special circumstances, mail ballots or conference calls may be used for sponsor approval decisions. ~~The council reserves the right to review applications for approval and petitions.~~

During ~~approval~~ discussions ~~about the approval status of the sponsor and voting,~~ any member of the council who is affiliated with the sponsor under consideration in a governance, administrative, staff, or faculty capacity must excuse him/herself from the deliberations. Members of the council who conducted the most recent on-site evaluation or evaluation of instructional media are required to excuse themselves from discussion and voting **until the final approval action has been determined on the final approval action.**

CATEGORIES OF APPROVAL AND APPROVAL PERIOD

The following approval actions are available to the council:

- For ~~a new sponsor~~ **sponsor that has completed an application,** the council grants approval or withholds approval.
- For ~~an existing approved sponsor~~ **sponsor that has completed a petition or that has submitted a progress report,** the council extends approval (with or without further progress reports), extends probation, or withdraws approval (the option of withdrawal of approval applies only to a sponsor already on probation).

The council has established the following categories of approval:

Approval

Approval indicates recognition of a sponsor ~~that,~~ in general, is in substantial compliance with the council's standards and requirements for approval. In granting an extended period of approval, the council expresses its confidence in the abilities of the sponsor to continue providing adequate support and implementing ongoing improvements in the continuing education program.

As a condition of continued approval, the sponsor may be requested to provide a progress report relating to educational or administrative enhancement as based upon recommendations made by the CEC and/or the council. Alternatively, a progress report will be requested related to correction of specific areas of noncompliance. Customarily, the sponsor is provided at least six months from the time of submission of the most recent progress report to correct areas of noncompliance.

The sponsor is granted an initial term of approval ~~that becomes~~ effective at the time of the council action. Under no circumstances is approval granted retroactively or prior to the date on which the council takes action. The length of approval is clearly stated in the approval letter ~~that transmittings~~ the council's action to the sponsor. Approval may be contingent on the submission of one or more progress reports at specified intervals, as indicated in the approval letter. The approval letter also includes the date by which the scheduled petition for continued approval must be submitted. The sponsor's initial petition is due no later than three years from the time of the council action. For subsequent terms of approval, the petition is due no later than five years from the time of the council action. The period of approval for approved sponsors extends from the effective date of approval until the council acts upon the sponsor's petition for continued approval. The CEC and/or the council may request submission of the petition at an earlier date should significant concerns become evident from review of the sponsor's progress report(s) and/or annual report(s).

Approval of a sponsor does not imply approval of the sponsor's satellite organizations or divisions, such as regional or local chapters of a national organization.

Probation

Probation indicates ~~that~~ a sponsor is in noncompliance with the council's standards and requirements for approval to the extent ~~that~~ the quality and effectiveness of the continuing education program are in jeopardy. This category serves as a strong warning to the sponsor ~~that~~ serious problems exist ~~which that~~ could cause its educational program to fail to meet its stated mission. When probation is extended, the sponsor is considered to be a candidate for withdrawal of approval.

The sponsor must provide evidence of significant progress in correcting areas of noncompliance within a specified period. Customarily, the sponsor is provided at least six months from the time of submission of the most recent progress report to correct areas of noncompliance. Probation may not extend for more than two years. This category applies only to previously approved sponsors and is a published approval status. A decision to extend probation is not subject to the council's procedures for procedural reconsideration, reconsideration, or appeal.

Sponsors approved on a probationary status may not extend affiliate sponsorship to another entity. Sponsors approved on a probationary status may, however, extend affiliate status for activities ~~that were~~ contracted prior to institution of probationary status.

Administrative Probation

Administrative probation indicates ~~that~~ a sponsor has failed to submit information or fees

following two separate requests. The category of administrative probation may be activated automatically without vote by the council based upon a lack of response by the sponsor to requests related to annual reports and/or fees, submission of the petition for continued approval, or other information about the sponsor. The sponsor will be notified in writing ~~that~~ materials and/or fees are past due and ~~that~~ consideration is being given to placing the sponsor on administrative probation. If no response is received within 30 calendar days, administrative probation will become effective.

This category applies only to previously approved sponsors and is a published approval status. A decision to grant administrative probation is not subject to the council's procedures for procedural reconsideration, reconsideration, or appeal.

Administrative probation is removed when all requested materials and/or fees are received. If no response is received from the sponsor, the council considers withdrawing approval of the sponsor at its next scheduled meeting. Withdrawal of approval is based upon the perception ~~that~~ the sponsor no longer desires to be recognized by the council and voluntarily withdraws from approved status. The action is viewed as a voluntary decision of the sponsor; it is not subject to the council's procedures for procedural reconsideration, reconsideration, or appeal.

Withholding of Approval~~Approval Withheld~~

Withholding of approval is determined in the event ~~that~~ a new sponsor seeking approval evidences substantial noncompliance with the council's standards and requirements for approval. When the council proposes withholding approval of a potential sponsor, factors ~~that~~ having e-a significant impact on the effectiveness of the educational program are identified as the basis for the action. A decision to withhold approval will not become final or be published until the processes of procedural reconsideration, reconsideration, and appeals are exhausted (see Procedural Reconsideration, Reconsideration, and Appeal).

Withdrawal of Approval~~Approval Withdrawn~~

Withdrawal of approval is determined under any one of the following conditions:

- A sponsor on probation has failed to correct one or more areas of noncompliance, or a new area(s) of noncompliance has emerged, and therefore the sponsor evidences substantial noncompliance with the council's standards and requirements.
- A sponsor withdraws voluntarily from offering continuing education activities. Actions to withdraw approval voluntarily are not subject to the council's procedures for procedural reconsideration, reconsideration, and appeal.
- Two or more sponsors merge into a single new sponsor, resulting in the loss of identity of a previously approved sponsor.
- A sponsor ~~that has been~~ placed on administrative probation does not provide requested materials and/or fees.
- A sponsor has remained inactive for a period of more than two consecutive years (see Inactive Status).

When the council considers an action to withdraw approval, factors ~~that have a significant~~ having

significant impact on the effectiveness of the sponsor are identified as the basis for the action. A decision to withdraw approval will not become final or be published until the processes of procedural reconsideration, reconsideration, and appeals are exhausted. Reconsideration and appeal are available only to sponsors on probation ~~that have failed to~~failing to correct areas of noncompliance (see Procedural Reconsideration, Reconsideration, and Appeal).

NOTIFICATION OF ACTION

Within a reasonable period following each of the council's two meetings, an approval letter indicating the council action is forwarded to each sponsor currently under consideration. Confidential correspondence regarding council actions is addressed to the director of continuing education. A copy of the letter is forwarded to the chief administrative officer of the sponsor.

When the council action is to place the sponsor on probation, to continue probation, to place the sponsor on administrative probation, to withhold approval, or to withdraw approval, the letter to the director is sent by certified mail, with a return receipt requested. Letters to withhold approval or to withdraw approval are forwarded to the director within 30 calendar days of the council action.

Each letter indicates the approval status of the sponsor and the due date of the next petition, unless the action is to withhold or withdraw approval. When the council takes an action and that requests submission of a progress report, the letter identifies the reason(s) for taking the action. The letter outlines the necessary information that must be submitted for the CEC and council to review the approval status of the program at future scheduled meetings, as well as the date on which this information is due in the council office.

When the council considers withholding or withdrawing approval, the letter advising the sponsor of the proposed action contains: (a)

- the specific reason(s) for taking the proposed action, (b)
- the date the action becomes effective unless a request for procedural reconsideration or reconsideration is received from the ~~sponsor~~sponsor, and (c)
- the right of the sponsor to request procedural reconsideration, reconsideration, and appeal and the date by which such a request must be received by the council.

When a sponsor is placed on administrative probation, the director and the chief administrative officer receive notification from council staff ~~that~~ the sponsor has failed to respond to at least two requests for information or payment of fees. The letter to the sponsor describes the consequence of withdrawal of approval if immediate attention is not directed to responding to the council's previous requests.

When the approval action is based on the report of an on-site evaluation, a final copy of the report is enclosed with the approval letter. The report reflects the sponsor's educational program, as it existed at the time of the on-site evaluation. The final report does not, therefore, reflect program modifications made subsequent to the on-site evaluation that may have been described in the sponsor's response to the draft report. The sponsor may distribute the final

report as it wishes and is encouraged to provide as wide a distribution as possible to the individuals who participate in the educational program.

The council awards a certificate to sponsors recognized in the category of approval.

PROCEDURAL RECONSIDERATION, RECONSIDERATION, AND APPEAL

The following reconsideration and appeal procedures are available if the council proposes **withholding or withdrawing approval**:

- Procedural reconsideration, followed by reconsideration, followed by appeal, **or**
- Reconsideration, followed by appeal

A request to initiate the processes of procedural reconsideration, reconsideration, or appeal will be accepted for cause and will not be accepted solely on the basis of dissatisfaction with the proposed adverse action, nor will it be accepted on the basis of modifications made subsequent to the determination of the adverse action. A sponsor ~~that~~ that conforms to council standards, requirements, and/or procedures following determination of an adverse action (resulting in withholding of approval or withdrawal of approval) will be viewed as a new sponsor and will be required to follow the application procedures described earlier in this publication.

The sponsor receives formal written notification of the adverse action following the action of the council. The basis for the adverse action and the sponsor's right to request procedural reconsideration, reconsideration, and appeal are stated clearly in the notification letter.

When the council considers an adverse action, the action does not become final, nor is it published, until the sponsor has been afforded an opportunity to complete the processes related to procedural reconsideration, reconsideration, and/or appeal. If the sponsor does not initiate the procedural reconsideration, reconsideration, or appeal processes, the sponsor's rights to due process through the council are viewed to be exhausted.

During this due process period, the approval status of the sponsor reverts to the status prior to the adverse action. If the council sustains an action to withdraw approval, the final action becomes effective as determined by the council but will not be fewer than 60 days and not more than one year following the date of the action.

Procedural Reconsideration

Procedural reconsideration is the process ~~that~~ allows the sponsor the opportunity to request ~~that~~ the council review the proposed adverse action for the purpose of determining whether the

Council or the CEC failed to follow council procedures described in this publication. Because procedural reconsideration is designed for the review of errors in the application of council procedures, matters of disagreement related to issues of substance will not be reviewed within the procedural reconsideration process. Such matters, however, may be identified as the basis for a request for reconsideration and/or appeal.

A request for procedural reconsideration must be submitted within 15 calendar days following receipt of the notification letter. If such a request is not submitted and postmarked within this 15-day period, the council considers the sponsor to have waived all rights to procedural reconsideration. The sponsor is encouraged to submit its written request to the council office by certified mail, with a return receipt requested.

The request for procedural reconsideration must identify the procedure(s) in question and describe in detail the sponsor's claim ~~that~~ the procedure(s) was not followed, including any documentary evidence to support the claim. Following receipt by council staff, the Council's Executive Committee considers the request for procedural reconsideration by conference call or actual meeting. The council acknowledges in writing the receipt of all procedural reconsideration materials.

Based on a recommendation of the Executive Committee, a decision may be made by the council, either by conference call or meeting to:

- sustain the previous action
- rescind the previous action and refer the matter for additional review by the CEC, or
- defer action and conduct an on-site evaluation

If an evaluation is conducted, the sponsor and the council share the cost of the evaluation equally. The director of continuing education and the sponsor's chief administrative officer are notified of the action taken with respect to the procedural reconsideration no later than 30 calendar days following the next scheduled meeting of the council following the original determination of the action ~~that~~ led to the request for procedural reconsideration.

Reconsideration

Reconsideration is the process ~~that~~ allows the sponsor the opportunity to request ~~that~~ the CEC and/or the council ~~review~~ reviews the proposed adverse action for the purpose of determining whether any error or omission occurred in making the decision.

A written request for reconsideration must be received in the council office within 30 calendar days following receipt of the notification letter. If a request for reconsideration is not received within this 30-day period, the council considers the sponsor to have waived all rights to reconsideration and subsequent appeal. The sponsor is encouraged to submit its written request to the council office by certified mail, with a return receipt requested.

The request must include specific facts and reasons for which the sponsor contends the adverse action should not be taken, as well as an appropriate number of copies of substantiating materials. Council staff acknowledges in writing the receipt of all reconsideration materials. Following receipt by council staff, the materials are considered by the CEC by conference call or at its next scheduled meeting. Reconsideration related to withholding of approval or the council at its next meeting must consider withdrawal of approval.

Reconsideration of the adverse action is completed no later than the next scheduled meeting of the CEC following the original determination. The director of continuing education and the sponsor's chief administrative officer are notified of the CEC action.

Based on a recommendation of the CEC, a decision to sustain or rescind a proposed action to withhold or withdraw approval is considered by the council at its next scheduled meeting. A recommendation may be made by the CEC and/or the council to assess the request for reconsideration by conducting an on-site evaluation of the sponsor. The on-site evaluation is designed to evaluate the particular issues or concerns related to the adverse action. When an on-site evaluation is conducted, action is deferred to the second scheduled meeting following the original determination of the adverse action. The director of continuing education and the sponsor's chief administrative officer are notified of the council's action.

During the reconsideration process, a representative(s) of the sponsor under reconsideration may request in writing the opportunity to provide a statement to the council regarding the proposed adverse action. Any additional information ~~that~~ is to be brought to the attention of the council must be submitted to the council office prior to the meeting. The sponsor must provide an appropriate number of copies of all written materials.

Appeal

Following completion of the procedural reconsideration and/or reconsideration processes, the sponsor may appeal the decision to a hearing committee. The appeal process followed by the council is articulated in CPME 935, *Guidelines for the Conduct of Appeals*. The sponsor is free to pursue a substantive and/or procedural claim.

REAPPLICATION FOLLOWING WITHHOLDING OR WITHDRAWAL OF APPROVAL

A sponsor seeking approval of an educational program ~~that~~ has had approval withheld or approval withdrawn is expected to follow the procedures outlined for new sponsors (see Application for Approval of a New Continuing Education Sponsor).

~~AFFILIATION SPONSORSHIP~~

DELETE THIS SECTION

An approved sponsor may elect to extend its sponsorship to another institution, organization, or individual, resulting in ~~an affiliation~~ ~~affiliate sponsorship~~. As indicated in CPME publication 720, the council recognizes ~~that~~ an institution, organization, or individual that provides one or two continuing education offerings per year, for example, may not wish to pursue approval as a sponsor. For this reason, ~~affiliation~~ ~~e-sponsorship~~ is permissible and encouraged; the unapproved entity may provide its activity under the auspices of an approved sponsor. An approved sponsor also may extend ~~affiliation~~ ~~e-sponsorship~~ to unapproved entities that are located outside the United States or Canada or provide the preponderance of their activities outside the United States or Canada.

Requirement ~~1.69-7~~ within CPME 720 outlines the requirements of an approved sponsor ~~that~~ ~~that~~ elects to extend ~~affiliation~~ ~~e-sponsorship~~ to an unapproved entity. Activities ~~that are~~ sponsored in this manner **must be** reported as such in the sponsor's annual report to the council. A sponsor ~~that does not~~ reporting these activities will be placed on probation at the next meeting of the council (see Annual Report).

Comment [S3]: ACFAS recommends removing affiliate status per the rationale in our cover letter. If that is not approved, we recommend referencing the changes made in CPME publication 720.

Sponsors approved on a probationary status (including administrative probation) may not extend affiliate sponsorship to another entity. Sponsors approved on a probationary status (including administrative probation) may, however, extend affiliate status for activities ~~that were-~~ contracted prior to institution of probationary status.

If a sponsor offers activities for which it has not been approved or authorized by the council and in any way states or implies ~~that~~ it is approved or authorized by the council to provide these activities, the sponsor will be placed on probation at the time of the next council meeting.

The approved sponsor must be the entity to issue the certificate of attendance, not the unapproved entity.

INACTIVE STATUS ~~AND REACTIVATION~~

A sponsor's educational program ~~that which~~ is temporarily inactive will be considered eligible for continued approval for a period not to exceed two years immediately following completion of the last educational activity. A sponsor ~~that that~~ is not reactivated within two years must follow the application procedures for new sponsorship if and when the educational program is reinitiated.

Sponsors with inactive, approved educational programs are required to submit annual report forms and annual assessment fees throughout the recognized period of inactivation. During this period of inactivity, the sponsor is not required to submit a petition.

Once a sponsor decides to reactivate its educational program, if a petition was due during this period, the sponsor must submit a petition for the next scheduled committee meeting. The sponsor cannot sponsor an educational program until the council reviews the sponsor's petition and grants approval status.

Affiliation with another sponsor constitutes active status for a sponsor, including when the affiliated activity is the sponsor's sole activity during the year. For example, Sponsor A is considered active in the following situation:

- Approved Sponsor A affiliates with approved Sponsor B, with Sponsor B serving as the primary sponsor of the activity. The activity produced through this affiliation is Sponsor A's sole activity during the year.

TERMINATION OF SPONSORSHIP

If an approved sponsor ceases operations or if for any other reason the educational program is discontinued, the council will withdraw approval of the sponsor based on voluntary termination, effective on the date of closure of the sponsor or termination of the educational program. It is the responsibility of the director of continuing education and/or the chief administrative officer to notify the council of the termination of sponsorship. The sponsor is responsible for notifying participants of the voluntary termination of the program of continuing education.

ANNUAL REPORT

Completion of an annual report form, CPME 74065, *Annual Report for Sponsors of Continuing Education in Podiatric Medicine*, is required of each approved sponsor beginning with the calendar year following application. The annual report provides current information for CPME 700, *Approved Sponsors of Continuing Education in Podiatric Medicine*. ~~In the year in which the petition is due, an abbreviated report (CPME 766, *Abbreviated Annual Report for Sponsors of Continuing Education in Podiatric Medicine*) is forwarded to the sponsor for completion.~~

Council staff reviews annual reports regarding determination of continuing education contact hours and acceptable educational activity content and brings concerns to the attention of the CEC at its next scheduled meeting. Council staff may correspond with the director to request ~~that~~ the sponsor provide specific information for consideration at the CEC meeting.

Failure to submit the annual report and/or annual fee is cause for the council to place the sponsor on administrative probation and subsequently to consider withdrawal of approval. The CEC and/or council reserve(s) the right to request additional materials to clarify information in the annual report. Failure to report all activities in the annual report, including affiliated activities, will result in the extension of probationary approval at the next council meeting.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND DISCLOSURE POLICIES

All reports and communications regarding sponsors are confidential within the council, CEC, appeal committees, evaluation teams, and council staff. On-site evaluators, CEC members, ~~and~~ council members, and staff sign a confidentiality statement on a periodic basis, confirming ~~that~~ privileged information will not be disclosed in any manner or used outside the CPME process.

All proceedings of the CEC and council with respect to determining approval recommendations and actions are held in executive session. Because of the relationship of approval and licensure, the council has the prerogative of providing confidential information regarding the approval status of sponsors to state boards for examination and licensure, upon the specific written requests of these organizations. Council staff, CEC, and council will not release or confirm the following information in any form:

- The name or status of a sponsor ~~that has initiated~~ contact with the council office concerning an application for approval
- The name or status of a sponsor ~~that has applied~~ for approval but has not yet been apprised of a decision
- The name or status of a sponsor ~~having that has~~ applied for and been denied approval to be a sponsor of continuing education (prior to exhaustion of the procedural reconsideration, reconsideration, and appeal processes, as applicable)
- The name or status of a sponsor ~~having that has had~~ approval withheld or approval withdrawn (prior to exhaustion of the procedural reconsideration, reconsideration, and appeal processes)

All inquiries as to the approval status of a specific sponsor will be answered by referral to CPME publication 700 or to the sponsor(s) in question. The council publishes a directory of sponsors of continuing education on an annual basis and makes a frequently updated version of the directory

available on its website. The directory identifies ~~sponsors that are~~ approved sponsors and sponsors approved on a probationary basis (including administrative probation).

Withholding of approval and withdrawal of approval are published following exhaustion of the entire process of procedural reconsideration, reconsideration, and appeal or following the sponsor's indication ~~that~~ it does not wish to pursue these processes.

The council requires ~~that~~ sponsors notify the appropriate state boards for examination and licensure of final adverse actions upon completion of the reconsideration process.

REVIEW OF FORMAL COMPLAINTS

A mechanism exists for reviewing formal complaints against approved sponsors. The council reviews only those complaints related to the alleged noncompliance of a sponsor with the council's standards and requirements. The mechanism for reviewing formal complaints is specified in CPME publication 925, *Complaint Procedures*.

STATEMENT OF APPROVAL STATUS

An approved sponsor must use the following statement in reference to its approval status in the brochures, certificates, instructional media, or other publications pertaining to the program of continuing education:

(Name of sponsor) is approved by the Council on Podiatric Medical Education as a sponsor of continuing education in podiatric medicine. (Name of sponsor) has approved this activity for a maximum of _____ continuing education contact hours.

No other statements regarding approval by the Council may be used without the permission of the council.

ASSESSMENT OF EVALUATOR EFFECTIVENESS

The sponsor, the evaluator(s), and council staff assess the effectiveness of the on-site evaluation process formally. The CEC and the Executive Committee of the council review evaluator performance. The council commends effective evaluators and provides remediation for ineffective evaluators. The CEC and/or the Executive Committee may suggest to the council ~~that~~ evaluators who demonstrate repeated ineffectiveness be removed from the list of continuing education evaluators.

NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY

The council prohibits discrimination in accord with federal, state, and local regulatory guidelines and policies in the election and appointment of members, students, and public representatives to the council and its committees and in the selection of evaluation team members, consultants, employees, and others involved in its activities.

FEE POLICIES

Application fees have been established for sponsors seeking approval and the submission of Petitions.

All costs related to on-site evaluations of new and approved sponsors are borne by the sponsor. The council requires pre-payment of a specified on-site evaluation fee. Following the on-site evaluation, the council office bills the sponsor for the remainder of the full cost of the visit. In the event ~~that~~ a reverse site visit is scheduled, the sponsor is responsible for all expenses associated with its representative's attendance at a Committee meeting. If a scheduled on-site evaluation is canceled because key participants in the program are unavailable, rescheduling of the visit or evaluation is possible but only at the expense of the sponsor.

Sponsors ~~that have had~~ approval withheld or approval withdrawn and subsequently reapply must submit a reapplication fee.

The council has established an annual fee assessed each approved sponsor. A late fee is assessed related to submission of the annual assessment fee.

Sponsors requesting appeals of adverse actions are assessed a portion of the anticipated actual costs prior to the appeal. Sponsors are billed the remainder of any additional actual costs after the appeal.

No fees are refundable, ~~in full or in part.~~

The council reserves the right to revise established fees.

CPME 730