Introduction

Continuing professional education (CPE) programs and products are a key resource in supporting food and nutrition professionals in building their knowledge and skills through multi-disciplinary learning opportunities. Through advanced technology and the development of high-quality programming, national, state and district levels of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (Academy) can best serve their respective members. By providing member volunteer time and effort to support and maintain quality education, members will effectively enhance their skill set and advance their career opportunities.

The CPE Program Development Toolkit has been designed by the Academy Center for Lifelong Learning and the Committee for Lifelong Learning, with input from affiliates, districts, dietetic practice groups (DPGs) and member interest groups (MIGs). This toolkit is intended to provide guidance planning and organizing quality continuing education programs for nutrition and dietetics practitioners.
Face-to-Face Learning

The following checklist is provided to assist you in planning your events:

**Pre-Event**

**Select event topic**
- Review the Academy’s strategic plan roadmap at [www.eatright.org/strategicplan](http://www.eatright.org/strategicplan)
- Review member surveys and evaluations for future topic requests
- Review CDR aggregate data on Learning Need Codes at [www.cdrnet.org](http://www.cdrnet.org)
- Consider licensure requirements/needs unique to your group

**Identify and contract speaker(s)**
- Showcase the expertise of Academy members whenever possible
- Seek outside experts to enhance learning and build practice partnerships
- Confirm dates of speaker availability
- Obtain a bio/CV for each speaker
- Network with other affiliates, DPGs and MIGs to solicit feedback on successful speakers they have utilized
- Consider Academy Board of Director members and experts who may be available to speak on leadership development, strategic issues, volunteerism, and a variety of practice-based topics impacting the profession.
- Develop a critical dates calendar for handout distribution
- Require speaker to complete a formal speaker agreement, including conflict of interest and disclosure/commercialism forms,** to confirm participation in event
- Consider use of a session moderator*** to watch timing of speakers, introduce the session/speaker, moderate the Q&A, etc.
- Additional Speaker Process Tips are located on page 3 of this toolkit

**Secure location, site or venue**
- Confirm date(s) and time
- Perform a site visit
  - Note parking access, room size capacity, furniture arrangement, catering considerations
  - Identify a contact person for actual date of your event
- Review audiovisual needs for event
  - Rental or use of screens, LCD projectors, laptops, flip charts, etc.
- Discuss hospitality needs for event
  - Refreshments, lunch, breaks
- Finalize site contract
  Closely review contract to understand and negotiate “fine print,” such as cancellation and attrition clauses, minimums required for fees and food and beverage

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**Speaker agreement samples are available upon request by emailing the Center for Lifelong Learning at cpd@eatright.org**

**Session moderator script samples are available upon request by emailing the Center for Lifelong Learning at cpd@eatright.org**
Apply for prior approval for Continuing Professional Education (CPE) for attendees upon confirming program content and speaker(s) using Survey Monkey

- Select at least three appropriate Learning Needs Codes and Performance Indicators
- Determine event program Level
- Visit the Commission on Dietetic Registration’s website at www.cdrnet.org for more information
- Assess if program/product is appropriate for audience other than Academy members
- Prepare an attendee evaluation form for use
- Plan to distribute individual certificate of attendance copies to attendees. A sample certificate is available at www.cdrnet.org in the Appendix of the CPE Provider Accreditation Handbook.

Develop a marketing plan

- Determine appropriate pricing for program/product to demonstrate Academy member value—break-even, return on investment, profit, developmental costs, technology, site, presenters, marketing
- Create the registration form or Web page
  - Ensure member vs. nonmember pricing and verification of status
- Evaluate opportunities to collaborate and/or research supportive funding sources, such as sponsors, exhibits or partnering with other affiliates, DPGs or MIGs
- Establish a cancellation or refund policy for registrants
- Include CPE event registration details and program costs on all materials
  - Newsletter, brochure, website, blast email, listserv, etc.

On-site:

- Site/Venue logistics
  - Confirm site/venue contact person and set-up requirements 24 to 48 hours prior
  - Arrive early to assure room set up and prepare registration or entry area
  - Provide a master registration roster available for ease of attendee check-in at event

- Attendees
  - Check in and welcome registrants
  - Distribute handouts and materials, if applicable
  - Complete attendance roster and appropriate forms for CPE
  - Have attendees complete and submit an evaluation form
  - Provide attendees with a Certificate of Attendance

- Speakers
  - Provide speaker an expense reimbursement form, if applicable
  - Coordinate speaker honorarium payment, if applicable
Post-Event:

• Site/Venue
  ° Audit/approve final event invoice/expenses for payment

• Attendees
  ° Keep a master copy of event attendance roster for CPE purposes
  ° Review attendee evaluations

• Speakers
  ° Send personalized thank you notes to speakers

• Overall
  ° Discuss success and/or failure of event and document as notes for future planners
  ° Assess educational goals
  ° Complete budget report and review financial goals

Speaker Process Tips

Speaker Selection:

• Identify qualifications by having potential speakers provide a CV/resume, preferably one page.
• Review CV/resume for information that exhibits strong, demonstrated lecturing experience and practice area or research expertise on the speaking topic. Look for state, regional and/or national speaking experience.
• Look for “new experts” or experts with new and breaking information on the topic.

Securing a Speaker:

• Once a speaker is secured, send a speaker confirmation packet*. This packet should include a confirmation letter with the event date, time and location.
• Include any deadlines for handouts and presentations the speaker may provide before the event. Provide a written contract outlining the benefits you are providing to them. You may require a signature and social security number on the contract.
• Hold a conference call with the speaker about 2 to 3 weeks before the event. This helps especially if there are multiple speakers, in order to get them in contact with each other and to discuss their presentations.

*Speaker communication and packet samples are available upon request by emailing the Center for Lifelong Learning at cpd@eatright.org

Speaker Benefits:

• A presentation of 30 to 40 minutes is recommended to be eligible for an honorarium. It’s recommended the speaker be an established expert in the topic area in order to be considered for honorarium.
• If available, other possible speaking benefits can include air travel, ground transportation, hotel lodging and per diem.
Additional Formats for Group Learning

Journal clubs remain a great way to stay abreast of new research and practice articles. Peer discussions bring new views and ideas for enhanced application and learning. Also, audio recordings of recent Food & Nutrition Conference & Expo™ (FNCE®) sessions or webinars can be approved for group learning when you had to miss the live event.

Technologies for Distance Learning

Consider your future program planning to involve and excite members in distance learning technologies and formats. Webinars and online courses offered by the Academy Center for Lifelong Learning can be easily implemented by program planners to meet local, affiliate, DPG and MIG learning needs on many topics. One creative district dietetic group combined an Academy webinar event with two live speakers on a related topic and offered its members 4 hours of CPE for about half the cost of a traditional half-day workshop with multiple speakers. Go to https://www.eatrightpro.org/practice/professional-development/distance-learning for upcoming events.

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the educational needs for Academy members? Lifelong learning is necessary for maintenance of registration with the Commission on Dietetics Registration. Staff and volunteer members devote extensive time and resources into researching, developing and offering CPE. Members should benefit from these offerings by products and pricing that directly demonstrate value in Academy membership. Registered dietitian nutritionists (RDNs) must obtain the equivalent of 75 CPEUs in a 5-year recertification cycle (approximately 15 hours per year) and nutrition and dietetic technicians, registered (NDTRs) must obtain 50 CPEUs in a 5-year cycle (approximately 10 hours per year). Topics must now be offered to meet the broad needs of the Professional Development Portfolio and the various Learning Need Codes or Performance Indicators that will meet individual learning plans. State licensure CPE requirements will vary. You can access the state agencies from CDR’s website at www.cdrnet.org.

How will members’ broad educational needs be met within the Professional Development Portfolio process? Planned events should utilize a variety of Learning Need Codes (LNCs) and Performance Indicators (PIs). One session or event may be appropriate to code with several different LNCs/PIs if a session is attended by an individual who has not selected those codes on their current, verified learning plan, the participants have up to 120 days to add an appropriate LNC/PIs to their plan in order to receive CPE for the session. Members can enter and modify their individual learning plans online at www.cdrnet.org.

How do I establish member pricing or fees for my event? It is your decision as to how to set your
prices, but there are certain elements to consider. You will want to make sure that all of your costs are covered, and that the cost per CPE credit is reasonable.

One suggestion to compute your baseline price point is to divide the total anticipated cost by the number of attendees. If your costs are anticipated to be $2000, for example, and you anticipate 50 attendees, a legitimate registration fee would be $40. If attendance exceeds your expectation, you will make some excess revenue, which should be welcome. Dividing the fee by the number of CPE credits being offered will yield the cost per CPE credit which may be of interest to attendees who are determining the value of the program. In the example above, the cost per CPE would be $6.66 if you program offers 6 credits.

**What if I wish to charge nonmembers a different price or fee?** It is acceptable and encouraged to differentiate between members and nonmembers in terms of pricing, especially since nonmembers are not paying dues to the organization. There are various ways of determining an appropriate differential, and the option to select one is yours. It is suggested, however, that pricing for nonmembers be ascertained through a reasonable methodology, and not simply by arbitrarily selecting an unduly high or burdensome amount.

One method might be to charge the members the baseline price calculated to cover your costs, as set forth in the prior section, and to charge nonmembers a higher amount. But what amount? One way to select such an amount might be to establish a relationship between the dues paid by members and the CPE credits they are required to earn. By starting with the average number of CPE credits required for each member during the five-year period (i.e., 75 hours ÷ 5 years = 15 hours per year), one could divide the total annual dues by that number to reach an estimated value per CPE credit ($234 ÷ 15 = approximately $15). If each CPE credit allocated in terms annual dues is thus $15, it might be reasonable to charge nonmembers an amount based upon $15 per CPE credits or $90 for a six-credit program. Therefore, in the example, one could charge members $40 and nonmembers a higher amount based on the above calculation. The nonmembers could be charged $90 for the program, or even $130 ($40 + $90), if that is deemed to be reasonable under the circumstances. This series of calculations is thus based upon the determination of the member value for the particular program and the corresponding value to the nonmember.
Can you give me an example of showing member value pricing for a CPE event?
The 2017 Food & Nutrition Conference & Expo™ utilized member value and pricing by offering a standard registration fee of $715. Academy members received a benefit by paying a reduced fee of $395. This event offered over 20 hours of CPE. This price difference of $320 thus took into account the value of the 2017-2018 membership dues of $234 in one event. Calculated solely in terms of CPE credits, the allocated cost of each CPE hour could be viewed as an average $17.02 per CPE hour for members and $31.66 per CPE hour for nonmembers.

What technology do I need for learning formats offered by the Academy’s Center for Lifelong Learning?
Webinars may utilize a phone and computer or just a computer with speakers. This technology allows participants to watch the seminar slides and photos while listening through the phone or computer speakers. This type of technology is best suited for individuals or small groups at each computer station. A Webcast requires a computer with high-speed Internet access and speakers. This is a live or archived seminar event, with optional full speaker video and audio that is streamed into individual computers. This type of technology is best for one to three viewers per computer station. The Academy’s Center for Lifelong Learning generally conducts monthly webinars.

How can I develop programs utilizing these new technologies?
Evaluate numerous vendors, partner with a local university, and involve several technically sophisticated members on the planning committee. Costs for development, implementation and maintenance can range from $1,000 to $50,000 or more. Quality programming that utilizes advanced technology requires a substantial time and financial investment.

The Academy offers several Online Certificate of Training programs and modules for individual member use, however, you can register your individual members and host an event as a group. Please contact the Center for Lifelong Learning at cpd@eatright.org to find out more information.

CONCLUSION
The desired outcome of any educational event should be a quality learning experience by attendees. One of the most noted member benefits is the opportunity for continuing education. Investments in this area can create successful member programs that demonstrate value and support member retention.

For additional information, please contact the Academy Center for Lifelong Learning at cpd@eatright.org or visit us online at https://www.eatrightpro.org/practice.