



## Continuing Professional Education (CPE) Frequently Asked Questions

### **ATMS Continuing Professional Education (CPE)**

#### **What is CPE?**

ATMS philosophy is that consumers of natural medicine services have the right to expect they will be treated in a competent, safe and effective manner that meets the best practice standards of health care within Australia.

ATMS defines Continuing Professional Education (CPE) as a well-structured program of further education for graduates of natural medicine to ensure they maintain and increase their knowledge, skills, expertise and competence throughout their professional career.

The ATMS CPE Policy is designed to ensure its practitioners regularly update their clinical skills and professional knowledge. One of the chief roles of CPE is to bridge the gap between the skills and knowledge gained as a student, and the skills and knowledge actually required in clinical practice.

CPE consists of any educational activities which help to maintain, develop or increase knowledge, problem-solving, technical skills, clinical outcomes, effective client management or professional performance standards to provide the best in health care.

#### **Where can I find the ATMS CPE Policy?**

The ATMS CPE Policy can be found on the ATMS website [www.atms.com.au](http://www.atms.com.au), or you can contact our office on 1800 456 855 to have this sent to you.

#### **Why is CPE mandatory for accredited members?**

A CPE program is generally regarded as an integral part of your professional life. Being a professional person generally implies a commitment to updating and furthering your education. It is not enough for a person to become a professional, you must remain a professional.

Accredited members are deemed to be practicing members and therefore can access many of the benefits that this level of membership brings, including health fund recognition and public referral.

#### **How many CPE points do I need to obtain?**

Accredited Members need to obtain 20 CPE points per financial year in accordance with the ATMS CPE Policy and point system.

#### **How do I record what CPE I have done?**

ATMS provides all new Accredited Members with a CPE Record. The CPE record is also available on the ATMS website [www.atms.com.au](http://www.atms.com.au), or you can contact our office on 1800 456 855 to have this sent to you. The CPE Record allows you to write down the activities that you have done. You will need to keep the CPE Record, along with substantiating evidence of undertaking these activities in a secure place. You will only need to provide this evidence if requested by the ATMS Office.

### **What type of evidence of CPE should I keep?**

It is recommended to keep as much evidence of undertaking CPE activities as possible. The types of evidence could include certificates of attendance/participation, brochures, receipts to show purchase or booking, answers to questions or academic transcripts to show studies. By keeping as much evidence of CPE as possible means that providing substantiating evidence of CPE for an audit is a more simple process. Also, should you wish to upgrade your qualifications in the future, having sufficient evidence of CPE on hand may also mean that the College may be able to take this into consideration when looking at recognition of prior learning/credit transfers.

### **Does the evidence of CPE need to be in English?**

As the CPE evidence may be requested to be sent to the office for auditing, it is recommended that evidence of CPE is in English. If you choose to keep evidence of your CPE in a language other than English, we will require you to get your CPE activities officially translated should you be audited.

### **How long do I need to keep evidence of CPE for?**

ATMS recommends that you keep your evidence of CPE for at least 3 years, however there are other reasons including taking leave from practice or using CPE activities as possible recognition of prior learning, that may warrant keeping this documentation indefinitely.

### **Are the CPE activities I undertake tax deductible?**

As many CPE activities can be regarded as education expenses, certain activities can therefore be used as a tax deduction. ATMS strongly recommends however that you seek advice from a tax professional to ensure that you are correctly claiming any education or self-education expenses as tax deductions.

### **I recently graduated from a course and have just joined. Do I have to complete any CPE?**

Yes. The course that you have just graduated from will generally be the course that makes you eligible for Accredited membership. CPE must then be accrued from the date of becoming an Accredited member with ATMS, in accordance with the ATMS CPE Policy.

### **I joined part way into the financial year, do I have to complete 20 CPE points?**

It is always recommended to complete the full 20 CPE points, however, ATMS does allow a pro-rata accrual of CPE points for new members joining ATMS only.

<b>Month of Joining</b>	<b>Points Required</b>	<b>Month of Joining</b>	<b>Points Required</b>
July	20	January	10
August	18	February	9
September	17	March	7
October	15	April	5
November	13	May	3
December	12	June	2

### **Do I need to gain 20 CPE points in every modality that I have accreditation for?**

ATMS does not currently require you to complete 20 CPE points for each modality that you are accredited for, however some health funds are requiring that the 20 CPE points be completed per modality and that the activities undertaken are directly related to those modalities. Please see the health funds Terms and Conditions on the ATMS website [www.atms.com.au](http://www.atms.com.au) to ensure your compliance.

It is also recommended that members who hold national registration ensure that the CPE they complete meets the ATMS CPE requirements also meet the requirements of their national registration body.

## **Do my CPE activities need to directly relate to my accredited modalities??**

Whilst it is preferred that CPE activities align to your clinical skills and professional knowledge in your accredited modalities, one of the key underpinning principles of the ATMS CPE Policy is that is applicable to not only the disciplines in which a member has ATMS accreditation, but also to other practices that are relevant to clinical practice which ATMS does not accredit e.g. Yoga, Reiki, etc. CPE activities that are relevant to clinical practice including activities associated in managing a small business e.g. bookkeeping, advertising, marketing, etc. are also acceptable for CPE points.

If you are unsure if the activity you wish to undertake will be eligible for CPE points, you can consider how relevant the activity is to your business and the natural medicine profession. If you feel that the activity is relevant, you will then need to keep documentation to show this relevancy should you be audited. Please keep in mind, that the Continuing Professional Education Committee may be required to assess this documentation to award points if necessary. Activities that are deemed irrelevant will not be recognised. You can check the activity against the ATMS Code of Conduct and official policies, as activities that contravene ATMS policies will not accrue any CPE points.

It is also recommended that members who hold national registration ensure that the CPE they complete meets the ATMS CPE requirements also meet the requirements of their national registration body.

Please note that some health funds require that the activities you undertake relate directly to the modalities that you are accredited for. Please see the health funds Terms and Conditions on the ATMS website to ensure your compliance.

You can also contact the ATMS office to discuss the CPE course that you wish to undertake.

## **Why aren't all activities eligible for one point per hour?**

ATMS has its own point system in which some activities accrue a higher rate of points than other activities. All ATMS run CPE activities and activities run by other organisations that are approved by ATMS for CPE points accrue 1 point per hour. All other activities generally accrue 1 point per 2 hours.

## **Why does ATMS approve activities for CPE?**

ATMS approves activities for CPE points to ensure that those activities are of a standard appropriate to the already trained practitioner. The course content is also checked to ensure it is not only correct, but of a high standard and that it does not contravene the ATMS Code of Conduct or official ATMS Policies.

## **Where do I find the list of ATMS approved CPE courses?**

The list of ATMS approved CPE activities can be found on the ATMS website [www.atms.com.au](http://www.atms.com.au). ATMS approved CPE activities may also be advertised in the ATMS Journal.

All Recognised Colleges (educational institutions whose ATMS approved courses lead to membership of ATMS) are all automatically approved with ATMS for CPE points for their CPE activities as a part of their Recognised College status. These Recognised Colleges can be found on our website [www.atms.com.au](http://www.atms.com.au).

## **I have booked into an activity that is not listed on your approved list. Why isn't the activity listed and will I receive any CPE points for it?**

Due to the vast array of organisations offering good quality CPE activities, it is not possible for ATMS to approach and approve every activity. If you feel that the organisation would benefit from being ATMS approved for CPE, you can recommend that they contact our office to start the process.

Any accredited member who undertakes an activity that is not on the approved list may still accrue CPE points providing that the member can demonstrate the relevance to their clinic. The member will also be required to retain information pertaining to the content and hours of the activity so that the appropriate points can be awarded. As a general rule, it will be 1 point for every 2 hours of tuition.

### **What do I do if I'm not sure if the activity I wish to undertake will accrue CPE points?**

CPE consists of any educational activities which help to maintain, develop or increase knowledge, problem-solving, technical skills, clinical outcomes, effective client management or professional performance standards to provide the best in health care.

If you are unsure if the activity you wish to undertake will be eligible for CPE points, you can consider how relevant the activity is to your business and the natural medicine profession. If you feel that the activity is relevant, you will then need to keep documentation to show this relevancy should you be audited. Please keep in mind, that the Continuing Professional Education Committee may be required to assess this documentation to award points if necessary. Activities that are deemed irrelevant will not be recognised.

You can check the activity against the ATMS Code of Conduct and official policies, as activities that contravene ATMS policies will not accrue any CPE points.

You can also contact the ATMS office to discuss the CPE course that you wish to undertake.

Please note that some health fund require that the activities you undertake relate directly to the modalities that you are accredited for. Please see the health funds Terms and Conditions on the ATMS website to ensure your compliance.

### **My Certificate of Attendance at a non-ATMS seminar lists CPE Points. Will I be recognised for the number of CPE Points on the Certificate?**

ATMS, like many other associations, national registration bodies and CPE organisations all have their own CPE point system. This does mean that any documentation that list CPE points that is not an ATMS run activity, may not always be the number of points that ATMS will offer for that activity. Sometimes ATMS may offer more points, and sometimes it will be less.

The way to work out what points you will accrue for that activity is to then look at whether the activity is ATMS approved for CPE or not, and then calculate the number of points per hour of training.

### **I live in a rural area and find it difficult to attend ATMS seminars. What other activities can I do to get 20 CPE points?**

The ATMS CPE Policy allows you to gain CPE points from a range of different activities, to allow all members to participate regardless of where they reside. These activities include webinars, teleseminars, purchasing or hiring technical books, DVDs or CDs, answering questions in the ATMS Journal and subscriptions to peer reviewed or electronic journals to name a few.

### **Do overseas activities count for CPE points?**

Overseas activities do count for CPE points, however unless they are ATMS approved will only accrue 1 point for every 2 hours of tuition.

It is recommended that the substantiating evidence for these activities is in English. If not, and you are requested to submit your evidence of CPE, you will be required to get these documents officially translated.

### **Does clinical practice count for CPE points?**

No. ATMS does not recognise clinical practice for continuing professional education points.

### **At the clinic where I work, there are staff meetings in which new techniques and other clinical practices are discussed so that all practitioners are kept up to date. Can this count for CPE points?**

Yes. Staff Meetings can be used for CPE points. This will accrue 1 CPE point however you are required to have written evidence of participation by the group leader or Chair of the meeting as well as a copy of the Agenda / Outline of the meeting.

An additional CPE point can be accrued for completing a short review on what you learnt and how you can apply this to your own clinical practice. This will need to be submitted as evidence for the additional CPE point.

### **I'm a lecturer at a college. Can this count for points?**

Lecturing at a college will only be counted for CPE points where the Lecturer has compiled to course, seminar, webinar or workshop themselves. This activity will accrue 1 points per lecture/presentation hour to a maximum of 8 CPE points for this activity and does not include the time in compiling the activity.

A letter from the educational institution confirming that the member compiled the activity and states the number of hours that the member was presenting the activity is required as substantiating evidence of undertaking this activity. The outline of the activity and/or notes will also need to be supplied.

### **I supervise a Student in a clinical practice setting. Can I use this for CPE points?**

Yes, supervising a student in a clinical practice setting will be eligible for CPE points. This activity accrues 1 CPE point per hour to a maximum of 8 CPE points for this activity. Members are required to obtain a letter from their employer or college institution stating that you have been supervising students and the number of hours of supervision you have completed.

### **I offer a Mentoring Program. Can I use this for CPE?**

Mentoring will only be counted for CPE points where the Mentor has compiled the Mentoring Program themselves. This activity will accrue 1 point per mentoring hour to a maximum of 8 CPE points for this activity and does not include the time in compiling the program. A copy of the Mentoring Program will also need to be supplied.

A letter from the Clinic Manager confirming that the member compiled the activity and states the number of hours that the member was mentoring, or a completed and signed log book is required as substantiating evidence of undertaking this activity.

### **I participate in a Mentoring Program. Can I use this for CPE?**

Yes, members who are being mentored can use this for CPE points. This activity will accrue 1 CPE point every 2 hours of tuition to a maximum of 8 CPE points for this activity. Members undertaking this type of activity for CPE points are required to obtain a letter from their Mentor that states the hours and topics covered in the mentoring sessions.

**I'm employed/contracted as a research consultant for a natural medicine company. I research many products and produce reports that may or may not be released as publications. Can this research be counted for CPE and if yes, what evidence will I need to obtain?**

Yes, Research Consultants undertaking research within the natural medicine industry are eligible to use this for CPE points. This activity will accrue 1 point for every 2 hours of research to a maximum of 8 CPE points for this activity. The substantiating evidence required would include Evidence of the reports or publications. Where these are unable to be provided, a letter from the members employer stating that the member has undertaken research that includes the number of hours of research and the topics researched.

**I watch a lot of YouTube videos. Can this be counted for CPE and if yes, what evidence will I need to obtain?**

Whilst there may be YouTube video's that could be relevant to our members, there is no substantiating evidence that is able to be kept to demonstrate that the activity was undertaken, nor when the activity was undertaken.

**I have purchased Apps for my iPad. Can this be counted for CPE and if yes, what evidence will I need to obtain?**

Yes, Apps purchased for iPads and tablets will be accepted for CPE points similar to that if a member was purchasing technical books, cd's or dvd's. Apps will accrue 2 points per item. Proof of purchase / download is required along with evidence of the content of the App.

An additional CPE point can be accrued for completing a short review on what you learnt and how you can apply this to your own clinical practice. This will need to be submitted as evidence for the additional CPE point.

**I have noticed that EBSCO has CPE activities that you can undertake. Are these eligible for CPE points?**

Yes, CPE activities delivered through the EBSCO database is eligible for CPE points. These activities accrue 1 CPE point per activity. Evidence of completion of those activities is required for substantiating evidence that the activity was undertaken.

**I have purchased books, DVDs and other reference materials several years ago but still regularly refer to them. Can this still be used even though I purchased these reference materials several years ago?**

No. All activities, including the purchase of reference materials, must be done within the financial year that is being audited, unless the member is using rollover points from a previous year. Without solid substantiating evidence of when the activity was undertaken, the activity cannot be used for CPE points.

**Can I get points for receiving the ATMS Journal?**

There are no CPE points awarded for receiving the ATMS Journal. An accredited member must complete the questions in the ATMS Journal against the designated articles in order to receive CPE points.

**I want to answer ATMS Journal questions for CPE Points. Do I have to use Journals from the same financial year?**

Yes, you will need to use ATMS Journals from the same financial year. Whilst we do acknowledge that not every article may be relevant to you, it can be a good way to learn about new developments with other modalities.

**I receive many peer reviewed journals each year. Are the points per subscription or per issue?**

The points allocated to a peer reviewed journal are per subscription not per issue. Therefore, if you receive a quarterly journal, you will receive points for the one subscription, not for each issue that you may receive.

**I receive an online journal every week. Are the points per subscription or per issue?**

The points allocated to an electronic journal are per subscription not per issue. Therefore, you will only receive points for the one subscription, not for each issue that you may receive.

**I have completed online/correspondence training for CPE. How do I calculate how many CPE points I get from this?**

If the activity is ATMS approved, it will be 1 point per hour. If the activity is not ATMS approved, it will be 1 point for every 2 hours of study.

**I have undertaken training that falls into 2 different financial years; however the certificate that has been issued has a date in this financial year. What financial year does this study then belong to?**

You will need to obtain an academic transcript or letter from the organisation to show what hours of training that you did in each of the financial years. This will then allow that study to appropriately accrue CPE points for each financial year. You cannot backdate CPE training, nor allocate training done in a previous year to the next one, unless you are rolling over excess CPE points.

**I have obtained more than 20 CPE points in the previous financial year, can any of these points be rolled over to this year?**

Yes, if an accredited member exceeds 20 CPE points in a year, a maximum of 10 points can be carried over into the next year.

**I have used points rolled over from last year but with the activities I have done this year, I have over 20 CPE points again. Can the excess be rolled over to next year?**

No. The points rolled over from the previous year can only help you to accrue 20 CPE points. Therefore if you are eligible to roll over 10 CPE points but have completed activities to accrue 15 CPE points, only 5 of the eligible 10 to rollover can be used.

**What happens if I cannot meet the CPE requirements?**

If a member is unable to meet the ATMS CPE requirements, they will cease to be an accredited member and instead be granted Associate membership. The member will also be removed from the health fund lists. Should the member wish to regain accredited status, the member will need to demonstrate that they have undertaken activities to the value of at least 20 CPE points within the previous 12 months from the date that they re-apply for accredited membership. The member will also be subject to current ATMS accredited membership and health fund entry requirements at the time of reapplying for accredited membership. The member is then required to undertake a further 20 CPE points (or applicable pro-rata amount) for that financial year. CPE points used to gain accredited membership status, even if done within the same financial year, cannot be used to accrue the required 20 CPE points to maintain Accredited Membership.

**I'm looking to take some leave from my practice, am I still required to undertake CPE?**

If a member would like to maintain accredited membership and continue to receive the benefits of this level of membership, they will need to continue to undertake CPE. If they are not looking to practice for some time, it is suggested that they downgrade to Associate Membership. Should the member wish to regain accredited status, the member will need to demonstrate that they have undertaken activities to the

value of at least 20 CPE points within the previous 12 months from the date that they re-apply for accredited membership. The member will also be subject to current ATMS accredited membership and health fund entry requirements at the time of reapplying for accredited membership. The member is then required to undertake a further 20 CPE points (or applicable pro-rata amount) for that financial year. CPE points used to gain accredited membership status, even if done within the same financial year, cannot be used to accrue the required 20 CPE points to maintain Accredited Membership.

### **Can my CPE be requested for anything else, other than the yearly CPE audit?**

Yes. There are other reasons that a member may be requested to provide evidence of their continuing professional education outside of the yearly audit, for example, an audit by a health fund.

A member, who is the subject of an investigation or hearing, may also be requested by the ATMS Complaints Committee and/or ATMS Board to provide documented evidence of their completed CPE activities and future plans. They may also be required to demonstrate the rationale for undertaking or proposing to undertake these activities.

Please note that some health fund require that the activities you undertake relate directly to the modalities that you are accredited for. Please see the health funds Terms and Conditions on the ATMS website to ensure your compliance.

## **ATMS Continuing Professional Education (CPE) Audit**

### **What is the CPE audit?**

The ATMS Office undertakes a random audit of 5% of Accredited Members each year, generally in March. This is to ensure all members are complying with the requirements of accredited membership, but also those that are eligible for health funds are complying with this health fund requirement.

### **I have been audited for CPE. What do I do now?**

The accredited members who are randomly selected for the audit are contacted in writing and are requested to supply substantiating evidence of their continuing professional education for that same financial year. For those members who have not completed 20 CPE points, they are required to outline what further activities they will undertake to accrue the necessary points. They are also required to demonstrate completion of those other activities, to accrue the necessary 20 CPE points, before successfully passing the audit.

All members must have successfully passed the CPE audit by the end of June of that same financial year.

### **Why do you audit members CPE in March when the financial year is not over?**

ATMS is aware that it is auditing members for their CPE even though the financial year is not over. We have members who face hardships in their life, or run very busy practices and forget about their continuing professional education. By auditing a member before the financial year is over allows the member time to complete sufficient CPE should they have not completed all, or any, of the required CPE points for that financial year. This is a courtesy to our members, as the implications of failing to complete CPE or comply with the audit can be quite severe to the practitioner and their clinic.

### **What happens if I am audited and have not yet obtained 20 CPE points?**

ATMS recommends that you send all substantiating evidence of the CPE activities that you have undertaken to the office as soon as possible after you receive the letter advising you have been selected for the CPE audit. If you have not obtained 20 CPE points, you are then required to provide an outline of the further activities that you will be undertaking to accrue the balance of points.

By providing an outline of the activities, this allows the Auditor to ensure that the remainder of activities that you have indicated you will undertake are actually sufficient to accrue the balance of points. A member will not successfully complete the audit until they can demonstrate that they have undertaken these activities and have accrued the required 20 CPE points.

If you have also completed in excess of 20 CPE points in the previous financial year, you may want to use rollover points to help you obtain the required 20 CPE points for this financial year.

### **I have been audited and want to use rollover points. What evidence do I need to supply?**

Any member wishing to rollover points from the financial year before the one being audited is required to submit their evidence of 2 years' worth of CPE. This allows the Auditor to assess the previous financial year to ensure you have sufficient points to rollover, up to a maximum of 10 points, to then be calculated with the CPE points from the activities undertaken in the current financial year.

### **Why have I been audited again when I was audited 2 years ago?**

The ATMS Office has received numerous calls from members who have been audited in the past and believe that due to being audited 2,3 and sometimes 4 years ago that they should be exempt from the current audit. There are no exemptions from the CPE audit. The audit is a random selection of at least 5% of Accredited Members, therefore some members may find they come up in an audit that is a couple of years after their last audit. If all Accredited Members are undertaking CPE in accordance to the ATMS CPE Policy then there should be no problem as to when or how many times a member is selected for the CPE audit.

### **I'm nationally registered for one or more of my modalities and CPE is a requirement of maintaining national registration. Can I still be audited?**

Yes. A CPE program is generally regarded as an integral part of your professional life. Being a professional person generally implies a commitment to updating and furthering your education. It is not enough for a person to become a professional, you must remain a professional. Therefore, all accredited members regardless of their modalities, whether they be nationally registered modalities or health fund recognised or not, can all be audited for CPE by ATMS.

As CPE consists of any educational activities which help to maintain, develop or increase knowledge, problem-solving, technical skills, clinical outcomes, effective client management or professional performance standards to provide the best in health care, many of the activities that you do for CPE to maintain national registration will be acceptable for CPE with ATMS as well.

### **The CPE for my national registration Board works on the calendar year, but your CPE works on the financial year. How do I show you that I have been properly maintaining my CPE when my activities for my national board will be done later in the year?**

ATMS is aware that 4 of our 25 accredited modalities are nationally registered and that the calendar year for their registration, and therefore their CPE for their national body, runs from November to November each year. Members of multiple associations will also find themselves in similar situations as their other associations will also have their own timeframe in which CPE must be completed. To move all modalities, or even just some modalities, to have their CPE run on a different timeframes in accordance with national registration or other associations will be confusing and difficult to monitor, especially as many members have accreditation in more than one modality.

If a member finds that they have done excess CPE in one part of the year, but this does not fall into the financial year that is being audited by ATMS, we suggest that the member demonstrates 2 years' worth of CPE. This then allows the Auditor to see that the member has accrued an excess of points and can rollover a

maximum of 10 points into the financial year being audited, meaning that the member is not disadvantaged by our CPE timeframe when taking into consideration the CPE timeframe for national registration bodies and other associations.

### **What happens if I do not successfully pass my audit?**

If a member does not successfully pass the ATMS CPE audit, they will cease to be an accredited member and instead be granted Associate membership. The member will also be removed from the health fund lists. Should the member wish to regain accredited status, the member will need to demonstrate that they have undertaken activities to the value of at least 20 CPE points within the previous 12 months from the date that they re-apply for accredited membership. The member will also be subject to current ATMS accredited membership and health fund entry requirements at the time of reapplying for accredited membership. The member is then required to undertake a further 20 CPE points for that financial year. CPE points used to gain accredited membership status, even if done within the same financial year, cannot be used to accrue the required 20 CPE points to maintain their accredited membership.

### **If I change my level of membership, or cancel my membership whilst being audited, will this affect my chances to be an accredited member in the future?**

Yes, it may do. If a member changes their level of membership or cancels their membership whilst being audited, they are deemed to have not successfully passed the ATMS CPE audit.

Should the member wish to regain accredited status, the member will need to demonstrate that they have undertaken activities to the value of at least 20 CPE points within the previous 12 months from the date that they re-apply for accredited membership. The member will also be subject to current ATMS accredited membership and health fund entry requirements at the time of reapplying for accredited membership. The member is then required to undertake a further 20 CPE points for that financial year. CPE points used to gain accredited membership status, even if done within the same financial year, cannot be used to accrue the required 20 CPE points to maintain their accredited membership.

### **What do I do if I still have questions regarding the CPE audit or ATMS CPE Policy?**

If your CPE related question has not been answered by any of the above frequently asked questions, please contact the ATMS office by phone on 1800 456 855, by email at [info@atms.com.au](mailto:info@atms.com.au) or via our website [www.atms.com.au](http://www.atms.com.au). The ATMS Office would be more than happy to help you with your enquiry.