

Continuing Education Credit Types: A Comparative Reference

Overview

Pharmacy professionals encounter three distinct continuing education (CE) credit frameworks: ACPE Continuing Pharmacy Education (CPE) credit, Interprofessional Continuing Education (IPCE) credit, and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) units. While all three support ongoing professional development, they differ significantly in their scope, awarding bodies, structure, and recognition. This handout provides a concise reference for understanding and differentiating these credit types.

At-a-Glance Comparison

Characteristic	ACPE CPE Credit	IPCE Credit	CPD Units
Full Name	Continuing Pharmacy Education Credit	Interprofessional Continuing Education Credit	Continuing Professional Development Unit
Credit Logo			
Primary Accreditor	ACPE (Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education)	Joint Accreditation (ACCME + ACPE + ANCC)	ACPE (Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education)
Audience	Pharmacists & Pharmacy Technicians	Interprofessional: Two or more health professions together (including Pharmacists & Pharmacy Technicians)	Pharmacy, Pharmacy Technicians, and Other Professions
Credit Measurement	Contact hours / CPE credit (1 hr. = 0.1 CEU)	Contact Hours (1 hr. = 1 IPCE credit)	Cycle-Component (2 CPDUs/Cycle Component)
Learning Approach	Structured, provider-directed education	Collaborative, team-based	Reflective, self-directed cycle
Required for U.S. Licensure?	Yes — required in most U.S. jurisdictions	All state boards accept IPCE credit	Some state boards allow for CPD, but do not require CPD units specifically
International Recognition	Primarily United States	Growing; primarily North America	Widely recognized internationally
Tracking System	CPE Monitor® (NABP + ACPE)	Profession-specific systems (incl. CPE Monitor®)	CPE Monitor® (NABP + ACPE)
Email Contact	ceinfo@acpe-accredit.org	cpdinfo@acpe-accredit.org	info@jointaccreditation.org

CPE Monitor®:

- CPE Monitor® is the official database where **the completion of all three types of credit** are recorded when a learner's NABP e-Profile ID and date of birth are recorded by a provider after all activity requirements are completed.
- Learners may view their CE / CPD transcripts via their NABP e-Profile account.
- State boards may access CPE Monitor records to verify licensee compliance during renewal.

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ACPE CPE Credit

ACPE Continuing Pharmacy Education (CPE) credits are the standard credit type for pharmacist and pharmacy technician licensure renewal in all U.S. states and territories. ACPE-accredited providers are authorized to offer and award the ACPE CPE credit.

Key Features:

- One CPE credit = 0.1 CEU.
 - Activities must meet ACPE Standards for Continuing Pharmacy Education that include the Standards for Integrity and Independence.
 - Activities are classified as Knowledge-based, Application-based, or Certificate Program, by topic designators (01-08, 99), and by target audience (Pharmacist 'P' and/or Pharmacy Technician 'T').
 - Tracked nationally through CPE Monitor®, a collaborative service of ACPE and NABP.
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IPCE Credit

Interprofessional Continuing Education (IPCE) credit is awarded for educational activities that are designed for learners from two or more health professions to learn from, with, and about each other. This model mirrors real-world collaborative practice and supports team-based patient care.

Key Features:

- Governed by the Joint Accreditation for Interprofessional Continuing Education™ (Joint Accreditation), a collaboration among ACCME, ACPE, and ANCC and eight (8) Associate accreditors.
 - Activities must meet Joint Accreditation for Interprofessional Continuing Education Criteria that includes the Standards for Integrity and Independence and are strongly aligned with Interprofessional Education Collaborative (IPEC) competency domains: values/ethics, roles/responsibilities, communication, and teamwork.
 - Joint Accredited providers are authorized to offer and award IPCE credit.
 - Measured in hours (1 hour of instruction = 1 IPCE credit). Pharmacists and pharmacy technicians can receive IPCE or ACPE CPE credit.
 - IPCE credit, just like CPE credit, is available to view in CPE Monitor.
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ACPE CPD Units

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) represents a self-directed, outcomes-based approach to professional learning. Rather than simply accumulating credit hours, CPD emphasizes a reflective cycle in which learners assess their own learning needs, plan activities to address those needs, implement the plan, and evaluate outcomes.

Key Features:

- Widely recognized internationally, particularly in Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, and other countries.
- ACPE-accredited CPD providers may offer and award CPD Units.
- The CPD cycle includes: Reflect → Plan → Learn → Evaluate → Apply → Record/Review. Learners can be awarded 2 CPDUs for completing activities reflective of cycle components.
- Portfolio-based documentation is central; learners maintain records of learning goals and outcomes.
- CPD activities may include one or more of the following: structured CE activities, self-study, mentoring, journal reading, and professional projects.
- CPD units are reported to CPE Monitor® for all learners in the same manner CPE and IPCE credits are reported.