

20.8.2008/SH

## **Final Report to NACP Council by the CPD Working Group**

### **Background**

CPD (Continous Professional Development) for medical physicists is the procedure that describes the education and training, which a competent medical physicist should undergo to ensure the maintenance of the competence. The Nordic medical physicists should comply with a CPD program, if their competence as medical physicists is subject to EFOMP approval of the education schemes.

In the general aims of the NACP the CPD was already mentioned as one activity:

”To foster and co-ordinate the activities of the Nordic member organisations in the field of clinical physics in all its aspects. Forthcoming activities are work on some grants and CPD task.”

In 2005 NACP Council established a CPD Task Group. The following persons were appointed to the CPD Task Group of NACP:

Bertil Axelsson (Sweden), Kjell Inge Gjestal (Norway), Simo Hyödynmaa (Finland), Gardar Myrdal (Iceland as observer) and Kjeld Olsen (Denmark, secretary)

The council defined the main target for this TG:

"To make recommendations for a CPD -system which can be used in the Nordic countries, and to have in mind the different levels for CPD we do find within these countries" (mandate as of 16.6.2005)

Terms of Reference defined by NACP were the fiollowing:

1. Give recommendations for a "user-friendly", harmonised CPD-system within the Nordic countries.
2. Investigate, if the CPD-system should be related to competence levels and to international standards.
3. Give recommendations for how to keep track of the CPD-points for the individual physicist.
4. Give recommendations on how to develop the CPD-system further.
5. The task group should give its recommendations to the council of NACP. Final decisions are made by this council.
6. The recommendations will be published on the NACP web pages.
7. Since there are no financial resources the work will have to be done via exchange of e-mail and telephone meetings.

In this report several references to the EFOMP (European Federation of Organisations for Medical Physics) recommendation are made. The full recommendations can be found in the reference:

Recommended Guidelines on National Schemes for Continuing Professional Development of Medical Physicists. EFOMP Policy statement No. 10. *Physica Medica*. Vol. XVII, N. 2, 2001.

## The task reports by the Work Group

### **Task 1. Status of CPD systems**

The first task undertaken by the Work Group was to review the status report of the CPD-systems in various Nordic countries. This was coordinated and reported to the council by Kjeld Olsen. The following is a direct (only slightly edited) copy of the report:

#### **Finland**

We have an EFOMP compatible CPD-scheme that was recently set up for use at the web-site of the NMO. The members were advised to register their CPD credits according to the described guidelines, but only a handful (less than 10 out of 80+ members) have done so. In October 2006 we had a national gathering of hospital physicists (bi-annual "Hospital Physics Days" May 12.-13.), where the members were urged to register their CPD-credits by the end of summer. We need to get this up and running before our re-approval by EFOMP by the end of this year. The gathering of and informing about the regular courses in Medical Physics offered by different institutions in Finland is under way (some are lectured in English). There are no special intensive courses in the offering right now, but due to increasing demand the situation is probably changing. The only special education in different fields of Hospital Physics is the special (half day to one day) physics sessions during the annual national meetings of the professional organisations in Radiation Therapy/Oncology, Nuclear Medicine, Clinical Physiology and Clinical Neurophysiology. No survey of the need for CPD-courses has been conducted (reported by Simo Hyödynmaa).

#### **Sweden**

There are now 39 participants in the Swedish CPD program. The program has been slightly modified to adjust to EFOMP standard. In 2005 there were 5 CPD-approved courses given. There are 3 courses planned for 2006. A survey on the need for course was made in 2004. The Swedish CPD-course council has now opened a course catalogue at the website for our national organisation. This gives the medical physicists the possibility to review suggestions on future courses and to vote for the courses they are interested in. the course catalogue is open to anyone and therefore gives the opportunity also for medical physicists in the other Nordic countries to vote for future courses (reported by Bertil Axelsson)

#### **Denmark**

We have been running a CPD program since 1999. At present there are more than 40 physicists in the program which is voluntary based. The CPD system is used in assessing the applications from physicists who wants to be recognised as Medical Physics Experts. In most radiotherapy departments in Denmark this qualification is tied to the salary system so we expect the number of participants in the CPD system to increase. We run a symposium every year which has about 80 participants. Most of the lectures are given in English by foreign

experts. Since the education system for medical physicists in Denmark is based on the job training we use the training courses of EFOMP and ESTRO to a large extent. The education scheme and the content of the symposia can be seen on our web page (reported by Kjeld Olsen).

### **Norway.**

We were informed that a CPD scheme would be discussed at the recent meeting on Medical Physics in Norway but no news on, what has happened has been sent.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

The Finnish and the Danish CPD system have been approved by EFOMP and are very similar to each other. The Swedish CPD scheme is very similar to the Finnish and Danish system. Sweden has not received approval from EFOMP since EFOMP only approves the CPD as a part of a registration system but EFOMP has informed Sweden that the CPD system is in agreement with the EFOMP CPD system described in the policy statement.

We have in three countries CPD systems which are quite similar and hopefully Norway can accept a similar system. We should not try to make changes unless they are in agreement with the EFOMP system. The set up of courses open for all physicists in Scandinavia need more effort from the boards of the medical physics organisations in the different countries. NACP can help in this.

### **Task 2. Comparison of the CPD-programs in the Nordic countries**

The second task of the Work Group was to make a comparison of the CPD-programs in the various Nordic countries (only Swedish, Danish and Finnish system could be used for the comparison, since the Norwegian CPD system was not ready by that time. This task was coordinated and reported to the NACP by Bertil Axelsson, Sweden. The following is a direct copy of the report:

The group has found no fundamental differences between the CPD programs as they are used in the Nordic countries. The suggested guidelines are well in agreement with current CPD-programs.

In Finland there is a requirement on continuous education in radiation protection which has been taken into account in the national CPD-program (40 h in 5 years). This requirement is not specifically expressed in the other national programs although it seems reasonable to assume that activities in this field will be included in the continuous education of any medical physicist.

The guidelines are not very detailed but we believe that this is not necessary to enable medical physicists to get acceptance for the credit points earned in one country when moving to another. There might however be a need for translation of the CPD documentation so that the national boards, and the employer, will be able to understand and evaluate the awarded credit points. If translations are needed the national boards should assist each other to deal with this.

There are other issues regarding the competence of medical physicists that needs to be taken into account when moving from one country to another. This is i.e. the education and training

of medical physicists before they are entering a CPD program. This is however beyond the task for our group.

The task group believes that the CPD programs already in use are well in agreement with the proposed guidelines. If also new national programs are developed in accordance with these guidelines there should be no problem to get recognition for the CPD credit points in any other Nordic country.

### **Task 3. The recommendations for the guidelines on Schemes for CPD in Nordic Countries**

The third task was to produce recommendations for the guidelines on Schemes for Continuous Professional Development in Nordic Countries. This was coordinated and reported to the NACP by Bertil Axelsson, Sweden. The following are the recommended guidelines:

#### **Recommended guidelines on Schemes for Continuing Professional Development for the Nordic Countries**

##### **Basis**

These recommendations are based on the recommendations given by the EFOMP and on CPD schemes already at work in European countries. The recommendations are intended as a guide for development of CPD schemes for those Nordic countries that not yet have developed such schemes and for further development of existing schemes. The aim is to contribute towards a harmonised system enabling medical physicists participating in the CPD scheme in one country to be able to transfer credits when moving to another Nordic country. The guidelines should also help in establishing common CPD activities. The CPD scheme should be organised so that it can be used in a formal recognition of the participant as a Specialist Medical Physicist in accordance with the EFOMP policy.

##### **Qualification**

Medical physicists registering for participation in a CPD scheme shall be at least at level defined by EFOMP as Qualified Medical Physicist.

Registration for participation in the CPD schemes shall be a joint commitment by the employer and the medical physicist taking the interest of both parties into account.

##### **Registration**

The national professional organisations shall appoint a body that is responsible for acceptance and registration of applicants. The participants and the employer shall jointly summarise the CPD activities on an annual basis and submit the summary to the national CPD-body for review. The CPD body should be responsible for maintenance and development of the CPD system and for an annual validation of the summary of CPD credits submitted by the participants. The national body shall keep a record of the awarded credits.

## Recognition

To maintain and develop professional competence on the average 50 credit points, recognised by the national body, should be undertaken each year.

It is recommended that the national organisations should work towards a formal recognition of a "Specialist Medical Physicist". The CPD-system should offer a way to reach this qualification. To qualify for recognition as a Specialist Medical Physicist the participant shall have at least 250 CPD credit points over a 5 year period. Applications to be recognised as a Specialist Medical Physicist shall be handled by the national CPD body. A formal way to appeal the decisions of the national body should be given.

## CPD credit system

There should be a clear model for recording of credit points for the participants. The main principle should be one credit point awarded for each effective hour of activity.

Activities directed towards continuous professional development could be divided into two categories.

Category 1: Participation in organised activities such as courses, workshops, seminars, or in national or international task groups.

Category 2: Self-directed activities such as production of publications in scientific journals, preparation and presentation of lectures, development of new methods, structured literature studies, examinations and supervision of research students

The activities should give the participant a broad base for development and it is therefore recommended that there should be reasonable distribution of the credit points between the two categories.

It is not practical to give recommendations on credit points for all activities that might be part of the professional development. Recommendations on credit points given by EFOMP should be followed. We suggest that harmonisation of the credit points, awarded for different activities, is achieved by direct communication between the national bodies responsible for the CPD program.

The national bodies should also exchange information on courses and other activities that are open for participants from the other Nordic countries.

### **Task 4. Presentation of the Work by the Task Group at the NACP 2008 Symposium**

The last task of the Work Group was to give a presentation of the results of the Work Group at the NACP 2008 Symposium in Århus, Denmark on June 4-5 2008. The presentation was given by Simo Hyödynmaa, Finland. The Power Point presentation by Hyödynmaa ("NACP Recommended guidelines on Schemes for CPD for the Nordic Counties") is attached to this final report.

Tampere, Finland  
Aug 20, 2008

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Coordinator of the final report of the CPD task group