

# What Counts as Scholarship? Professional Development

A national modified Delphi study to define the nature of scholarship within  
Continuing Professional Development

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# Background

- In many domains within medical education, scholarship can have unique attributes.
- The accreditation standards for Canadian Continuing Professional Development (CPD) require scholarly output from each Office in Canada.
- However, it is unclear what scholarly outputs might be considered as CPD scholarship.

# The problem we're solving

- There is no agreed-upon statement to outline what might be considered CPD scholarship
- Accreditation standards typically list traditional research outputs including peer-reviewed presentations; peer-reviewed grants; peer-reviewed publications; and 'other' activities
- Othering aside, without a shared understanding, the lack of detail and clarity hampers the expansion and acceptance of scholarly activities that go beyond archetypal and perhaps antiquated notions of what should count as scholarly activity in CPD

# How we're solving it

- We used Boyer's Framework as a starting point
- Did a modified 3 step Delphi process with a national slate of experts to establish consensus (93.5% response)
- Recruitment was 29 CPD leaders, regulators, and analogues at each of the regulatory bodies and colleges

## Phase 1: Registration and Ideation

- Invitation to provide open-ended ideas for types of CPD scholarship
- Responses collected via online survey problem
- Analyses using qualitative analysis yielded foundational set of scholarships

## Phase 2: Consensus Process

- Focussed on evaluating relevance and importance of foundational set of scholarships
- Consensus threshold was 75%
- Feedback reports were shared summarizing the groups ratings and rankings

## Phase 3: Final Validation

- Presented the refined list of CPD scholarship types to participants
- Participants were asked to confirm the validity of the identified types of scholarship

# What we found- Endorsed

Quality Improvement
Testing/pilot educational materials
Leading or contributing to development of CPD program continuous improvement methodologies and processes
Innovations in Program Delivery (evidence or theory driven/informed)
Testing/pilot approaches (e.g. AI in CPD)
Needs Assessment
Producing and/or creating CPD work
Leading or contributing to development of CPD program evaluation methodologies
Scholarship of Teaching Learning / Scholarship of Education

Scholarly practice
Developing educational materials (podcasts, videos, interactive online modules)
Disseminate best practices
Impact or Outcomes analysis of CPD
Teaching CPD (esp. peer reviewed workshops and keynotes)
Leading or contributing to development of learning assessment methodologies
Service/leadership work in CPD
Community Engagement
Advocacy Scholarship

## What we found- NOT Endorsed

Knowledge Moderation - Reviewing, Editing, and Facilitating the "Back End" of Scholarship	72.4%
Keynotes and other invited presentations	72.4%
Engagement metrics	72.4%
Quality Assurance	69%
Digital Scholarship	69%
Creative Reflection	65.5%

System Development	58.6%
Writing a multi-disciplinary textbook	58.6%
Curation of content	55.2%
Leading or contributing to protocol development involving intra-disciplinary validation	55.2%
Remediation of others (individualized design for programming)	48.3%
Promotion of CPD as a discipline (including facilitating awards & recognition)	37.9%
Consultative services to external groups	34.5%

# Discussion

- Traditional domains (Discovery, Integration, Application, Teaching) remain core.
- Novel types (e.g., Community Engagement, Advocacy) are gaining traction near 75% endorsement.
- Shifting demographics of scholarship to reflect addressing real-world challenges
- Scholarship of Engagement: Reflects Boyer's later emphasis on community impact and advocacy.
- High endorsement for Quality Improvement & Program Delivery shows a push toward real-world impact in healthcare.
- Recognizing these new activities broadens CPD's definition of scholarly work.

# Implications

## Recognition and Inclusivity

- Urge for CPD offices and universities to acknowledge diverse scholarly outputs.
- Increase credibility and acceptance in academic environments.

## Promotion & Tenure

- Criteria should account for broader scholarship, including community engagement and advocacy.
- Ensures CPD-focused faculty receive proper recognition.

## Strategic & Policy Adjustments

- Influences accreditation and institutional policies to accommodate innovative scholarship forms.
- Prompts development of robust metrics for new forms (e.g., digital outputs).

## Ongoing Research

- Continued studies needed to track acceptance of emerging scholarship types.
- Identifies barriers to recognition and adaptation of institutional policies.



## Bottom Line

- Our study affirms both traditional and evolving scholarship types in CPD
- We need inclusive, flexible definitions to match the reality of a changing CPD landscape
- Shifts challenge conventional views and criteria in promotion/tenure.
- Highlights need to evaluate how newer scholarship types fit existing frameworks.