



# QUICK TIPS

# PREPARING SYNCHRONOUS ONLINE GROUP LEARNING ACTIVITIES

11 >> Program Design Series

**Quick tips:**

## SYNCHRONOUS ONLINE SELF-LEARNING

- For example, in a synchronous online group learning program, a speaker/moderator presents content online (either live or prerecorded) and participants engage in a form or forms of moderated group active learning such as online chats, or polling. This could also take the form of a hybrid online program, where a speaker and some participants are in one meeting space (in person) with participants connecting in from remote locations.
- This form of online learning can be accredited by University of Toronto CPD as [College of Family Physicians of Canada \(CFPC\) Mainpro+ Group Learning](#) and/or [Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada - Section 1 \(Group Learning\)](#).
- This Quick Tip is largely intended to support synchronous online group learning programs.

## ONLINE SELF-LEARNING

- For example: a participant watches an online presentation run by a speaker/moderator, and learns from the content.
- This form of online learning is not accredited by University of Toronto CPD, but can be accredited individually through the [CFPC Mainpro+ Self-Learning](#) and/or [Royal College Section 2 \(Self-Learning\)](#) categories. This is typically categorized as 'enduring materials'.

## ASYNCHRONOUS E-LEARNING

- For example, a participant logs into an online system, goes through a series of e-modules on their own, engages in a scheduled facilitated online discussion, or answers questions.
- This form of online learning can be accredited by University of Toronto CPD as [CFPC Mainpro+ Assessment Programs](#) and/or [Royal College Section 1 \(Group Learning\)](#) or [Royal College Section 3 \(Self-Assessment\)](#).
- There are a number of [requirements for these types of programs](#) to be accredited, including having the program peer-reviewed by three members of the representative target audience in advance of an application to accreditation.

**Quick tips:**

Preparing Synchronous Online Group Learning Activities

---

## ACCREDITATION REQUIREMENTS

- Indicate in the application for accreditation that the live program will also be offered via a mode of synchronous online delivery (please specify name of it as “live webcast” etc.). This could be indicated in the field “Program Description”. If an upcoming program is already approved, please contact Karma Farah, Accreditation Coordinator ([karma.farah@utoronto.ca](mailto:karma.farah@utoronto.ca)) so we can add a note that the approval covers this additional mode of delivery.
- Participants must have the opportunity to ask questions or engage in other scheduled active learning methods. All programs must meet the minimum 25% interactivity requirement. This is often a challenging requirement for online programs to demonstrate, please see below for more information and tips on how this can be achieved.
- All programs, whether conducted in person or online must adhere to the University of Toronto CPD [Sponsorship Policy](#). Education content must be separated from information from the sponsors. You may wish to consider ways where sponsors can engage with the participants while adhering to the sponsorship policy. Some ideas are virtual fairs (that allow sponsors to present separate from the accredited educational program) or housing sponsor information on separate sections of a host website.
- The sponsorship policy requires identified conflicts of interest to be presented in a provided slide template at the beginning of the presentation (Powerpoint [4x3/16x9](#)) whether delivered online or in person.
- Registrants joining online (via remote access) must be tracked and their participation verified as CPD requires a complete list of registrants post-program. All letters of accreditation are to be forwarded to only those registrants whose participation has been verified.
- All evaluation forms must be forwarded to those participants joining in remotely as CPD requires a summary of the evaluation form post program. Example evaluation templates are available on our [Quick Tips page](#).

**Quick tips:**

## SYNCHRONOUS ONLINE GROUP LEARNING

Synchronous Online Group Learning can be conducted through either the casting of narrated slides, a live 'talking head' on a shared or webcast screen, or a hybrid program where some groups are listening to a live presentation with other participants connecting in remotely.

While best practices would indicate that a live presentation is preferred, speakers can also cast a pre-recorded presentation. The synchronous piece of online group learning is that the participants are engaging through synchronous group active learning. In either live or prerecorded content, a minimum of 25% of active learning by participants is required for accredited programs.

The purpose of active learning is to increase comprehension, solidify learning and increase the likelihood that it will be adapted into practice. Active learning helps you professionally reflect on program content, relevance and impact.

Best practices indicate that didactic presentations, whether delivered live or online, are more engaging with embedded active learning components included at regular intervals. If you are considering moving a 45-minute long keynote presentation to an online format, for example, we suggest that you consider preparing 3 15-minute long presentations (to be delivered live or prerecorded) with planned active learning embedded within them or immediately after each 15 minute component.

It is important to remember that in any form of accredited CPD online or in-person, the provision of practice enablers are recommended. In an online environment, you can make slides available for download, or provide a handout of key points.

There are a number of ways to engage participants in active learning exercises. For information about choosing which kind of active learning activity to conduct (whether in person or online) please also see our [Quick Tip on Choosing Instructional Methods and Integrating Active Learning](#).

**Quick tips:**

Preparing Synchronous Online Group Learning Activities

---

## ONLINE TOOLS FOR WEBCASTING/CONFERENCING

Many synchronous online group learning programs utilize chats, polling techniques and Q&A to engage learners online. There are numerous free and cost-based programs available for programs to use.

Below are some selected online tools which are available for free or at minimal cost which may be useful to conduct online webcasting of presentations. Many of these tools have embedded functions for chats, and polls.



---

### Zoom

[zoom.us](https://zoom.us)

For a 'cheat-sheet' in preparing in (pre)recording a shareable presentation on Zoom:  
[threadreaderapp.com/thread/1237474786844041217.html](https://threadreaderapp.com/thread/1237474786844041217.html)



---

### Skype

[www.skype.com/en](https://www.skype.com/en)



---

### Adobe Connect

[adobe.com/products/adobeconnect.html](https://adobe.com/products/adobeconnect.html)



---

### Screencast-o-matic.com

[screencast-o-matic.com](https://screencast-o-matic.com)



---

### Quercus (UofT program) and Blackboard Collaborate

- >> [q.utoronto.ca](https://q.utoronto.ca)
- >> [q.utoronto.ca/courses/46670/pages/support](https://q.utoronto.ca/courses/46670/pages/support)



---

### GSuite (Google) Products

- >> [cloud.google.com/blog/products/g-suite](https://cloud.google.com/blog/products/g-suite)
- >> [cloud.google.com/blog/products/g-suite/helping-businesses-and-schools-stay-connected-in-response-to-coronavirus](https://cloud.google.com/blog/products/g-suite/helping-businesses-and-schools-stay-connected-in-response-to-coronavirus)



---

### Ontario Telemedicine Network

[otn.ca](https://otn.ca)

**Quick tips:**

Preparing Synchronous Online Group Learning Activities

---

## **ADDITIONAL ONLINE TOOLS FOR ACTIVE LEARNING (i.e. Online Polling/Q&A/Discussions)**

We recommend that for groups of 12 and under, simple web-conferencing is also a viable option to present content and engage in active learning, however once groups are above that threshold of participant numbers, more engaging online options should occur. In addition to the options above which facilitate online casting, here are other tools that can be used to encourage active learning methods.



---

**Twitter**

[www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com)



---

**Slido**

[www.sli.do](http://www.sli.do)



---

**Poll Everywhere**

[www.polleverywhere.com](http://www.polleverywhere.com)



---

**Kahoot!**

[kahoot.com](http://kahoot.com)



---

**Mentimeter**

[www.mentimeter.com](http://www.mentimeter.com)

Other crowdsourced material (links to material posted on twitter):

[Google Doc Spreadsheet](#) Online Teaching Tools and Resources with acknowledgement to Meghan Norris, PhD, Queen's University, Canada.

[Quick Tips for Teaching and Learning Continuity](#). Faculty Development, Queen's University Canada.

## Quick tips:

### Preparing Synchronous Online Group Learning Activities

---

## REFERENCES

Continuing Professional Development. University of Toronto. Accreditation Requirements for Asynchronous E-learning Programs. 2019; <http://distribute.cmetoronto.ca.s3.amazonaws.com/QuickTips/Accreditation-of-Online-Learning.pdf>.

Continuing Professional Development. University of Toronto. Choosing Instructional Methods and Integrating Active Learning. 2018; <https://www.cpd.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Choosing-Instructional-Methods-and-Integrating-Active-Learning-parts-1-and-2.pdf>.

Davis, D., Ryan, D., Sibbald, G., Rachlis, A., Davies, S., Manchul, L., & Parikh, S. (2004). [\*Severe acute respiratory syndrome and the delivery of continuing medical education: case study from Toronto\*](#). Journal of Continuing Education in the Health Professions, 24(2), 76-81.

Millar B, Ho K, Carvalho A-M. Social media to support physician practice and CPD: Opportunities, issues, and an emergency medicine case study. BCMJ. 2016;58(2):94-96.

Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada. Accreditation of continuing professional development (CPD) activities. 2020; <http://www.royalcollege.ca/rcsite/cpd/accreditation-continuing-professional-development-cpd-activities-e>.

The College of Family Physicians of Canada. Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Mainpro+. 2020; [https://www.cfpc.ca/Mainpro+\\_intro/](https://www.cfpc.ca/Mainpro+_intro/).

University of Toronto Centre for Teaching Support and Innovation. Continuity Planning For Instructors at the University of Toronto. 2020; <https://teaching.utoronto.ca/teaching-support/strategies/continuity-planning/>. Accessed 2020.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**Kate Hodgson DVM, MHSc, CCMEP**  
Education Consultant  
Continuing Professional Development,  
PostMD Education, Faculty of Medicine,  
University of Toronto

**Morag Paton, MEd**  
Education Research Coordinator  
Continuing Professional Development,  
PostMD Education, Faculty of Medicine,  
University of Toronto

**Karma Farah, BA**  
Accreditation Coordinator  
Continuing Professional Development,  
PostMD Education, Faculty of Medicine  
University of Toronto



**This quicktip is part of the quicktips for program design series.  
Review all of the tips to help you create your best prpgram.**

### **PROGRAM DESIGN**

- 1 >> What are Adult Learning Principles**
- 2 >> Models of Course Design and Steps for Course Development**
- 3 >> Creating a Representative Scientific Planning Committee**
- 4 >> How to Conduct a Gap Analysis**
- 5 >> Assessing Learning Needs**
- 6 >> Writing Goals and Learning Objectives**
- 7 >> Choosing Instructional Methods and Integrating Active Learning parts 1 & 2**
- 8 >> Practice Enablers**
- 9 >> Tools for Encouraging Reflection And Commitment To Change In Learning Activities**
- 10 >> Program Evaluation**
- 11 >> Preparing Synchronous Online Group Learning Activities**
- 12 >> Tips for Use of Zoom Technology for Digital Learning**