



2021

NATIONAL CPD PROGRAM AND ACCREDITATION SYSTEM FOR THE STATE OF QATAR

2020-2021 REPORT

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONS - ACCREDITATION SECTION



**“Continuous Development,
Enhanced Performance”**



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1. Introduction

Qatar Council for Healthcare Practitioners (QCHP) has been established by the Amiri Decree No. 7 of the year 2013 in constant aspiration to excellence throughout the healthcare system. It was a non-profit governmental body that regulated the healthcare practice and medical education in the State of Qatar. The Accreditation Department (AD) was one of three (3) pillar departments of the QCHP.

Development of the National CPD Program and Accreditation System was one of the key legal mandates and achievements of the QCHP-AD.

Since the time of its launch (March 7, 2016), all healthcare practitioners (HCPs) in the country were mandated to participate in the National CPD Program to enhance their skill sets, upgrade their knowledge, and maintain professional competence to a degree that would ensure improved service outcomes and quality patient care.

The National Accreditation System, on the other hand, enabled QCHP-AD to ensure the quality of CPD activities provided to the HCPs in the country.

Although the Amiri Decree No. 14 of the year 2019 has changed QCHP from being an independent regulatory body to become one of the Ministry of Public Health's (MoPH) departments (Department of Healthcare Professions (DHP)), setting and implementing standards for CPD of healthcare practitioners continued to be the legal responsibility of the DHP (through its Accreditation Section (AS)).

This report presents the statistics, achievements, and challenges of the implementation of the National CPD Program and Accreditation System during the period from March 2020 – March 2021.



2. National CPD Program and Accreditation System Implementation in Numbers

DHP continued to oversee and monitor the progress in the implementation of the National CPD Program and Accreditation System through the year 2020 and early 2021. The following presents data driven from DHP e-portfolio and electronic portals.

2.1. National CPD Accreditation System

DHP-AS processed four (4) CPD provider requests (3 re-accreditation and 1 CPD cycle upgrading requests) during the period March 2020 – March 2021, all of them were successful and granted re-accreditation to three of the previously accredited CPD providers and an upgrade to a five-year CPD cycle to one of the currently accredited providers. Further details about the processed provider accreditation requests are presented in **table 1**.

Currently DHP-AS has thirteen (13) accredited CPD Providers representing all sectors of healthcare facilities and academic institutions. A detailed list of accredited CPD providers is included in **table 2**.



Table 1: Processed CPD Provider Accreditation Requests (March 7, 2020- March 6, 2021)

Decision	Governmental & Semi-Governmental Healthcare Facilities		Private Healthcare Facilities		Academic Institutions		Other Institutions (e.g. Professional societies)	Total
	Accreditation Applications	Re-Accreditation Applications	Accreditation Applications	Re-Accreditation Applications	Accreditation Applications	Re-Accreditation Applications	Accreditation Applications	
	Accredited	0	0	0	2	0	1	
Upgraded	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Deferred	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rejected	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
All	0	1	0	2	0	1	0	4

Table 2: List of Accredited CPD Providers in the State of Qatar (March 6, 2021)

Governmental Healthcare Providers	Academic Institutions	Private Healthcare Providers
1. Primary Health Care Corporation (PHCC), Workforce & Training Dept.	1. Qatar University (Health)	1. Al Emadi Hospital
2. Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC)	2. College of North Atlantic, Qatar (CNA-Q)	2. Al Ahli Hospital
3. Sidra Medicine	- School of Health Sciences	3. Aster DM Healthcare
4. Aspetar Orthopedic and Sports Medicine Hospital (ASPETAR)	3. Weill Cornell Medicine – Qatar (WCM-Q)	
5. Healthcare Section -Qatar Petroleum (QP)	4. University of Calgary, Qatar - College of Nursing.	
6. Naufar Center		



From March 7, 2020 and until March 6, 2021, DHP-AS **approved** the accreditation of 461 CPD activities (**table 3**). The approved activities were **planned** to provide 19,905 educational hours and 487,086 educational opportunities and grant up to 1,168,826.75 Category 1 and 141,472.5 Category 3 credits. On the other hand, nineteen (19) activity applications were rejected.

Table 3: CPD Activities Approved for Accreditation by DHP-AS (2015 –2021)

	2015-2016*	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
CPD Activities						
Accredited by DHP-AS	64	910	827	911	1150	461
Accredited Hours**	439.5	6,232	5,344.5	6,178.8	7,005.25	2,338.75
Educational Hours***	1,424	48,141.5	38,310.25	29,871.7	40,098.25	19,905

*For 2015-2016, statistics are for activities from September 7, 2015 to March 7, 2016 only. For the coming years, statistics are for a whole year (starting from March 7).

**Accredited Hours are the sum of Credit hours assigned for all accredited activities

*** Educational Hours are the sum of credit hours assigned for offerings for all accredited activities.

The accredited activities **conducted** during the same period (6,561 offerings of 823 accredited CPD activities) provided more than 18,000 instructional (educational) hours and 266,000 educational (attendance) opportunities and granted more than 875,000 CPD credits (92% of which are from Category 1) to the Healthcare Practitioners (HCPs). Most of the educational opportunities and granted credits were provided by accredited governmental & semi-governmental healthcare facilities (**table 4**).

Inter-professional CPD activities continued to play important roles in providing educational opportunities for all healthcare practitioners (**table 5**), especially for pharmacists and dentists.



**Table 4: Educational Opportunities and Credits Granted by Conducted Accredited CPD Activities
(March 7, 2020 – March 6, 2021)**

	Accredited Governmental & Semi-Governmental Healthcare Facilities	Accredited Private Healthcare Facilities	Accredited Academic Institutions	Accredited Providers	Non- Accredited Providers	Total
Total Instructional (Educational) Hours	16,194.75	117	637.75	16,949.50	1162.25	18,111.75
Total Participants (Educational opportunity)	199,189.00	3,776.00	52,953.00	255,918.00	10,278.00	266,196.00
External (Non-employee) Participants*	16,798.00	48.00	51,417.00	68,263.00	NA	68,263.00
% External (Non-employee) Participants	8.43%	1.27%	97.10%	26.7%	NA	26.67%
Total Granted Category 1 Credits	676,282.75	5,014.50	72,491.00	753,788.25	54,321.00	808,109.25
Total Granted Category 3 Credits	64,885.00	0.00	1,188.50	66,073.50	942.00	67,015.50
Total Granted Credits	741,167.75	5,014.50	73,679.50	819,861.75	55,263.00	875,124.75
% Credits Granted to External (Non-employee) Participants	28%	6.6%	96.1%	34%	NA	34%

*External Participants are HCPs not employed by the accredited CPD providers.



**Table 5: Conducted Accredited CPD Activities per Target Audience Profession
(March 7, 2020 – March 6, 2021)**

Profession	Accredited Profession-Specific		Accredited Interprofessional		Total Accredited CPD Activities
	CPD Activities		CPD Activities		
	Number	%	Number	%	
Physician	104	20%	415	80%	519
Dentists	14	7%	185	93%	199
Pharmacists	12	4%	256	96%	268
AHPs	73	14%	450	86%	523
Nurses	72	14%	428	86%	500
All HCPs	275	33%	548	67%	823

As a direct result of **COVID-19 pandemic** and the associated gathering restrictions and intense engagement of the health sector in the pandemic fight, the number of **approved** and **conducted** accredited CPD activities **dropped markedly** from last year. The **availability of Category 1 credits** (as measured by Credit Availability Index (CAI)¹) for healthcare practitioners in the State of Qatar has, consequently, been **affected** (**Figure 1**). However, credit availability, in its lowest value (among nurses), was still more than 150% of the **average annual CPD credit** requirements (20 credits/year). For **other healthcare professions**, CAI was much higher and reached up to 145.7 credits per year for pharmacists.

Credit availability index for **external HCPs** (HCPs not employed by the accredited CPD providers) was even better than the average for all HCPs (**figure 2**). It ranged from 47.3 credits per year (for nurses) to 120.3 credits per year (for physicians).

DHP-AS's swift response and change in strategic direction towards encouraging the provision of online formats of Category 1 activities had a good impact on maintaining Category 1 credit availability, even though the need for Category 1 credits was reduced by other **DHP COVID-19 mitigation strategies**.

¹ **Credit Availability Index (CAI)** is an estimate of Category 1 Credits (granted by conducted accredited CPD activities) available for HCP per year. CAI must be interpreted as a crude estimate (as it considers the available and not the actual credits granted to each profession). However, it is considered by DHP as the best available indicator to monitor CPD activity availability and provide guidance for CPD activity planners to target healthcare professions with the lowest availability in their programs.



Figure 1: Availability of Educational Opportunities and Category 1 Credits per HCP (for All HCPs) (March 7, 2020 – March 6, 2021)

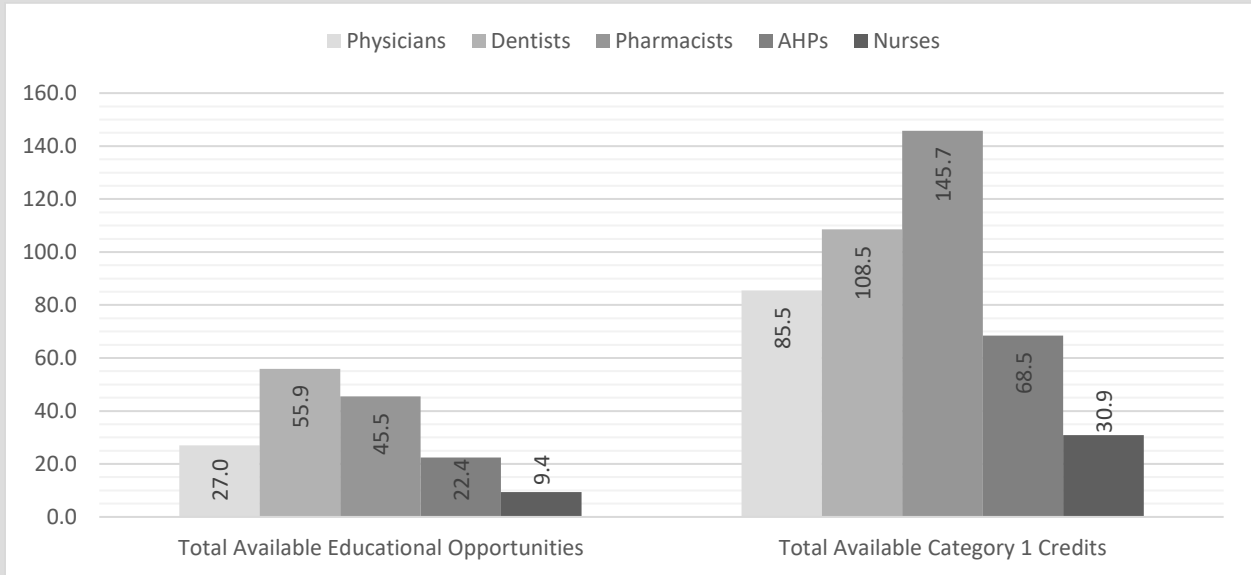
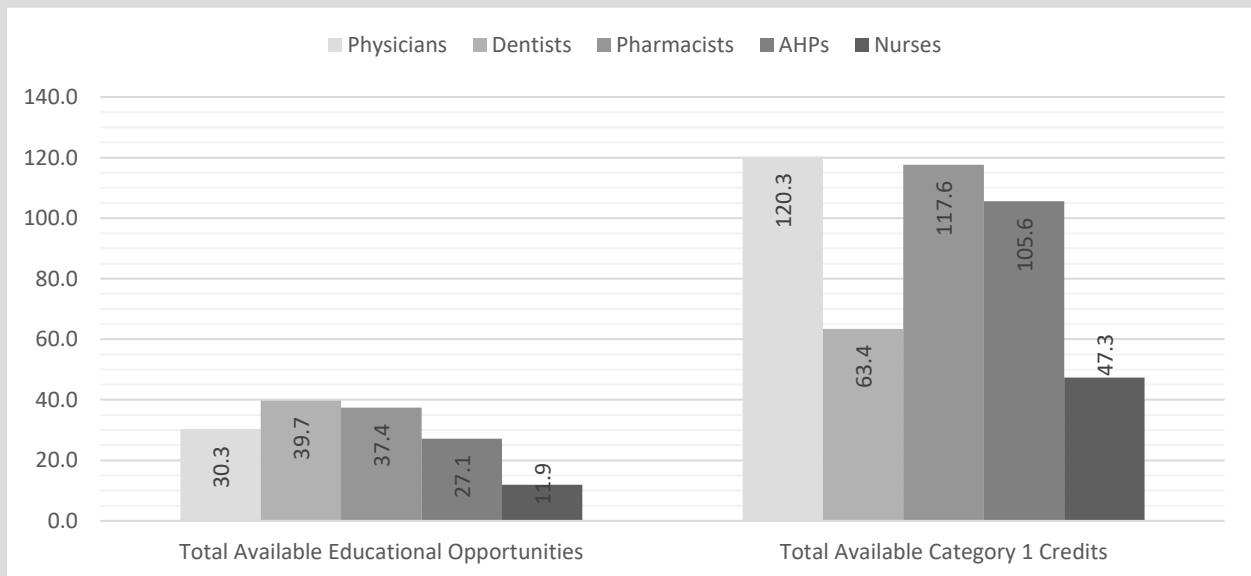


Figure 2: Availability of Educational Opportunities and Category 1 Credits per HCP (for External* HCPs) (March 7, 2020 – March 6, 2021)



* External HCPs: HCPs Not Employed by the Accredited CPD Provider.



2.2. National CME/CPD Program

2.2.1. Healthcare Practitioners' Participation in the National CPD Program

As of March 6, 2021, there were 44,384 HCPs with active licenses to practice in the State of Qatar. From March 7, 2020 until March 6, 2021, healthcare practitioners have submitted 654,324 CPD activities through their e-portfolio accounts (**table 6**). Out of all submissions, only 6% were rejected. This shows HCPs' good understanding of (and compliance with) submission rules and guidelines.

**Table 6: CPD Activities submitted by HCPs through E-Portfolio
(March 7, 2020 - March 6, 2021)**

Profession	HCPs with Currently Active Licenses	Activities Submitted from All HCPs (2020-2021)	Submission Index*	% Audited	% Rejected from Audited
Physician	7,822	102,650	13.1	4.6%	7.1%
Dentist	1,876	32,399	17.3	5.5%	4.7%
Pharmacist	2,847	45,998	16.2	3.2%	2.3%
AHPs	9,669	133,712	13.8	4.0%	5.2%
Nurse	22,170	339,565	15.3	4.9%	6.3%
Total	44,384	654,324	14.7	4.6%	6.0%

*Submission Index= No. of activities submitted/ No. of HCPs.

**Table 7: Compliance with the National CPD Program Requirements
(March 7, 2020 - March 6, 2021)**

Profession	HCPs Due for License Renewal	HCPs Compliant with Credit Requirements	General Compliance Rate*	Corrected Compliance Rate**
Physician	3,285	2,967	90.5%	97.9%
Dentist	826	702	85.0%	95.1%
Pharmacist	1,233	1,086	88.2%	96.9%
AHPs	4,791	4,253	89.1%	97.4%
Nurse	13,219	11,666	88.4%	98.4%
Total	23,354	20,674	88.7%	97.9%

*General Compliance: % of HCPs compliant with the CPD requirements when due for license renewal.

**Corrected Compliance: % of HCPs compliant with the CPD requirements when due for license renewal, excluding non-compliant HCPs who did not appeal and missed the appeal window.



Figure 3: Yearly Comparison of HCPs General Compliance

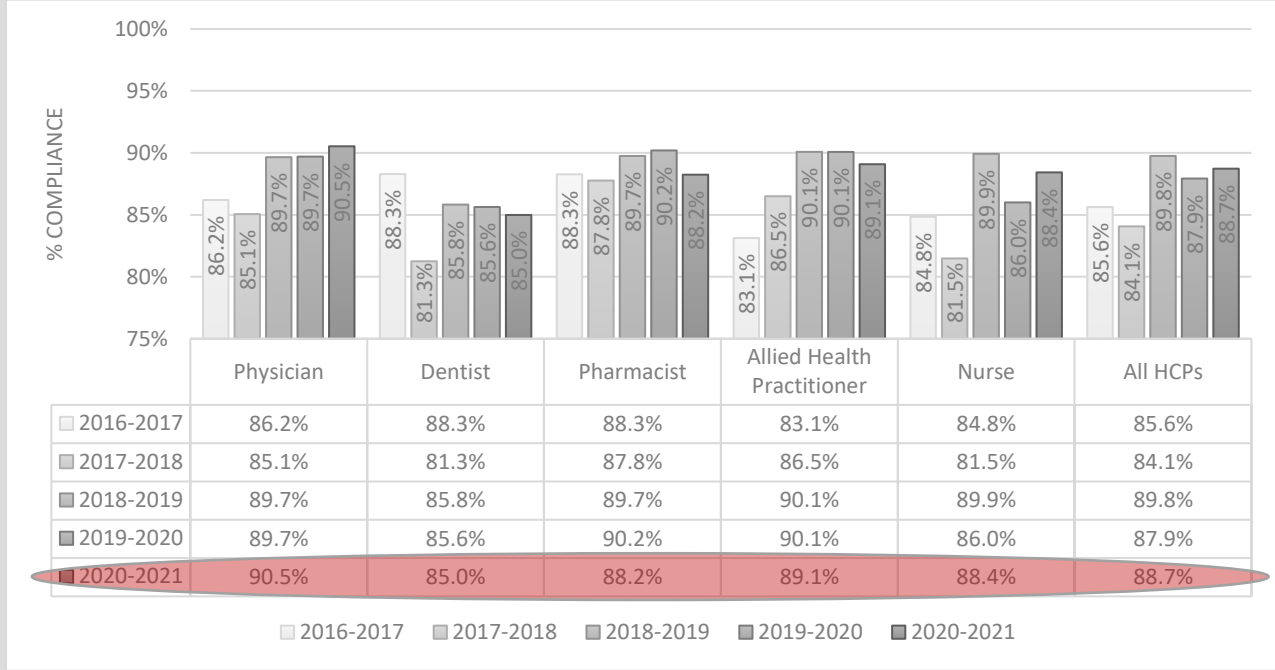
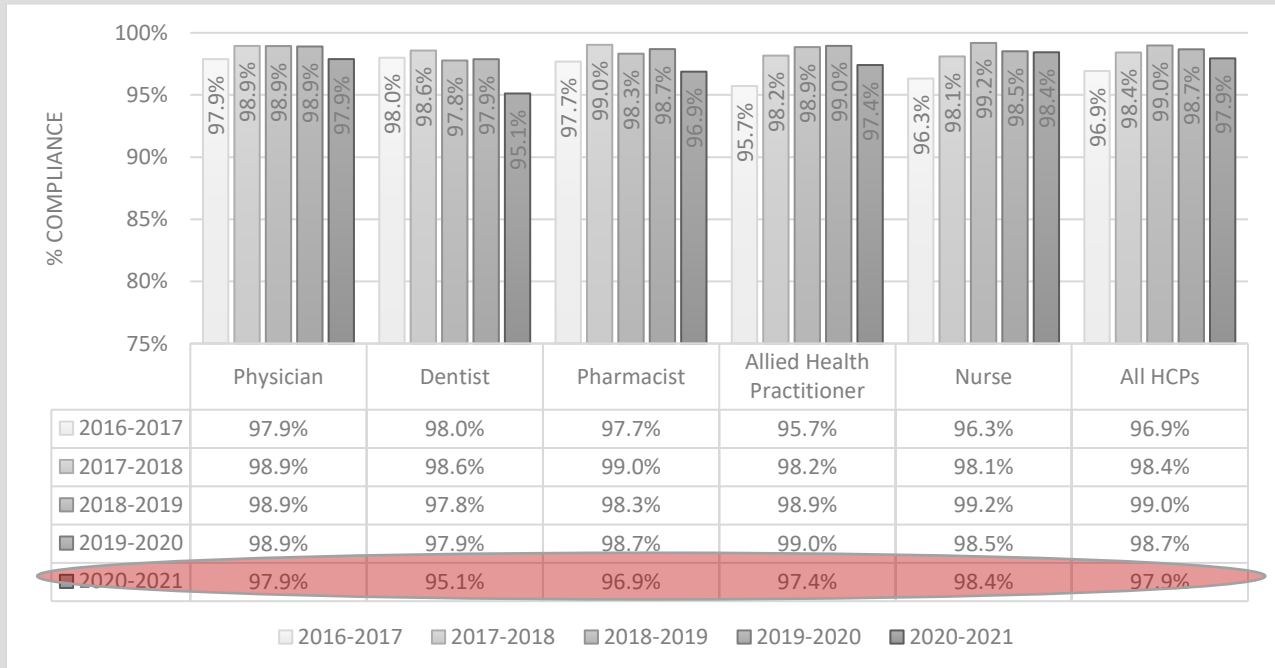


Figure 4: Yearly Comparison of HCPs Corrected Compliance





The compliance of HCPs with the National CME/CPD Program credit requirements in 2020-2021 averaged 88.7% (general compliance) and 97.9% (corrected compliance) (**table 7**).

Although the number of approved and conducted accredited CPD activities (and, consequently, the available educational opportunities) were markedly lower than previous years (**table 4**), HCPs' compliance rates remained fairly the same (**figure 3 and 4**). This was the result of several proactive DHP interventions taken to mitigate COVID-19 pandemic effects on medical education and CPD of HCPs in the State.

COVID-19 Mitigation strategies included:

1. Development and implementation of a **crisis communication plan**: A stakeholder communication plan was prepared and implemented by DHP-AS. The plan focused on orienting stakeholders (mainly, HCPs and CPD providers) with the current crisis situation and DHP actions for their support. Communication and support were mainly provided using remote access online platforms and social media.
2. Steering the change towards developing and conducting **accredited category 1 CPD activities in the online format**: Once a global pandemic situation was declared and restrictions on gatherings became mandatory, DHP-AS communicated to its stakeholders (through official circulars and social media) the ability of the National CPD accreditation system and framework to recognize online and blended formats for conducting category 1 activities. DHP also encouraged CPD providers to follow the worldwide trend of using online platforms for delivering live and self-learning CPD activities. In addition, DHP-AS has conducted several meetings, orientation sessions and seminars providing guidelines and training on how to develop and conduct activities in such formats.
3. Provision of **COVID-19 orientation activities and educational events**: DHP-AS, in collaboration with the Public Health and Quality and Patient Safety departments of the MoPH and other relevant authorities, has developed and conducted several educational events and CPD activities to orient and provide specialty-specific training regarding the COVID-19 pandemic and the national



strategy of dealing with it. In addition, DHP-AS has promoted several national guidelines and educational resources that are intended for self-directed learning of HCPs about this newly emerging disease.

4. Considerate implementation of **CPD Cycle closure appeal process**: DHP-AS identified the pandemic as a “force majeure” and, therefore, approved several resultant situations (e.g., being infected, being recruited as a pandemic front liner or being kept outside the country due to travel restrictions) as qualifiers for partial waiving of credit requirements (equivalent to the duration of identified pandemic situation), as long as proper evidence and supporting documentation were presented.
5. Granting **extension of license validity**: DHP granted an extension of license validity for HCPs whose licenses were due for renewal during the peaks of pandemic waves. The extension granting was proactive and had a major role in assuring and supporting HCPs, especially those who served as COVID-19 front liners, and in maintaining the need/availability balance of CPD activities.

2.2.2. Healthcare Practitioners’ Satisfaction with the National CPD Program

During the reporting period (March 7, 2020 to March 6, 2021), 18,980 HCPs completed a CPD cycle closure feedback form. The majority of HCPs (90.6%) agree that the National CPD Program, as is, is beneficial to them and adds to their professional development. About two thirds of (63.4%) of HCPs explained that they did not have any difficulty in complying with the mandatory CPD requirements and more than 80% of HCPs were satisfied with almost all aspects of the program (e.g., reasonability of CPD requirements, variety and availability of CPD activities recognized by the National Framework, orientation and support by DHP, etc.). The cost of CPD activities, however, was a concern for 16% of the HCPs. Most of HCPs selected the provision of free online CPD resources and educational events by DHP-AS as the two best initiatives that can be adopted to improve their compliance (figures 5, 6, 7 and 8). On average, nurses (followed by pharmacists) showed the highest satisfaction (figure 9).



Figure 5: Perceived benefit of participation in the National CPD Program

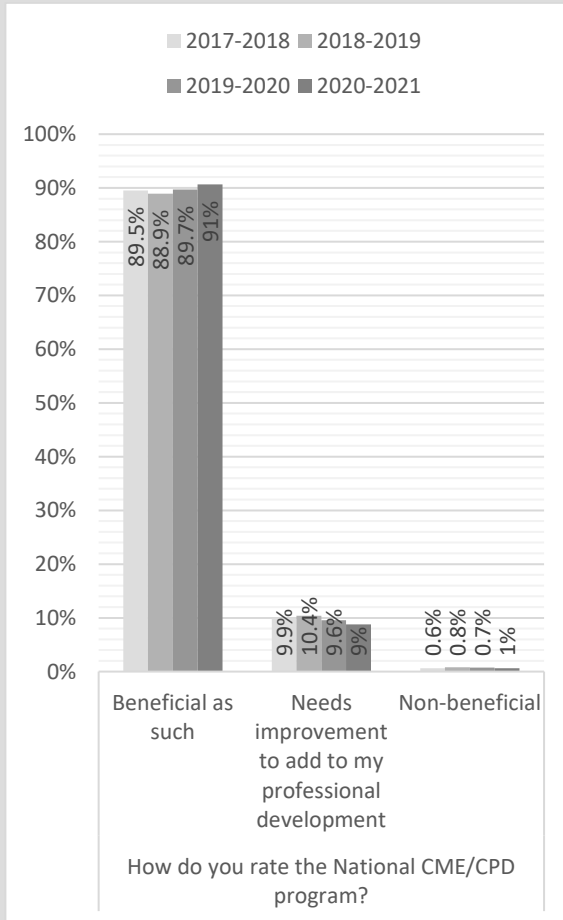


Figure 6: Perceived difficulty in completing mandatory CPD requirements

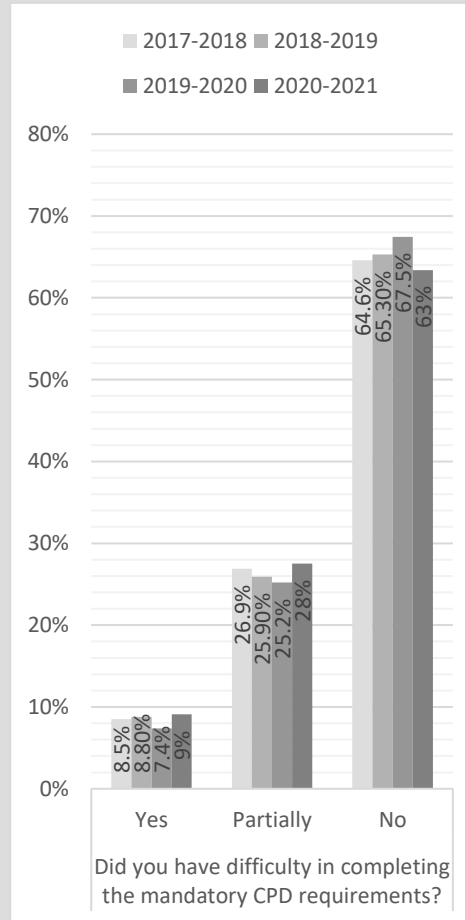


Figure 7: Initiatives that can improve participation in the National CPD Program

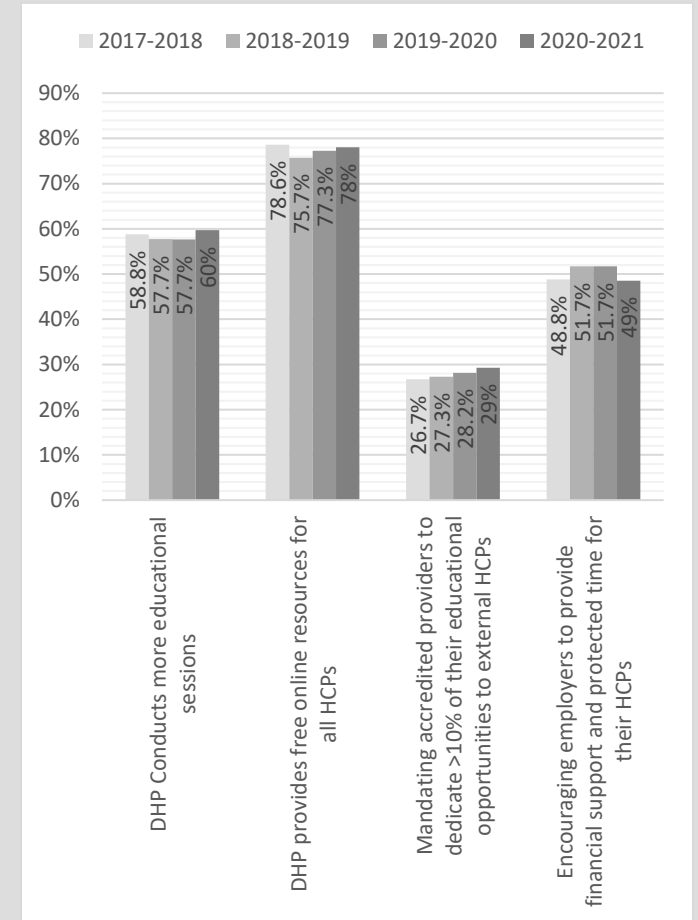




Figure 8: HCPs' Satisfaction with Different Components of the National CPD Program (Yearly Comparison)

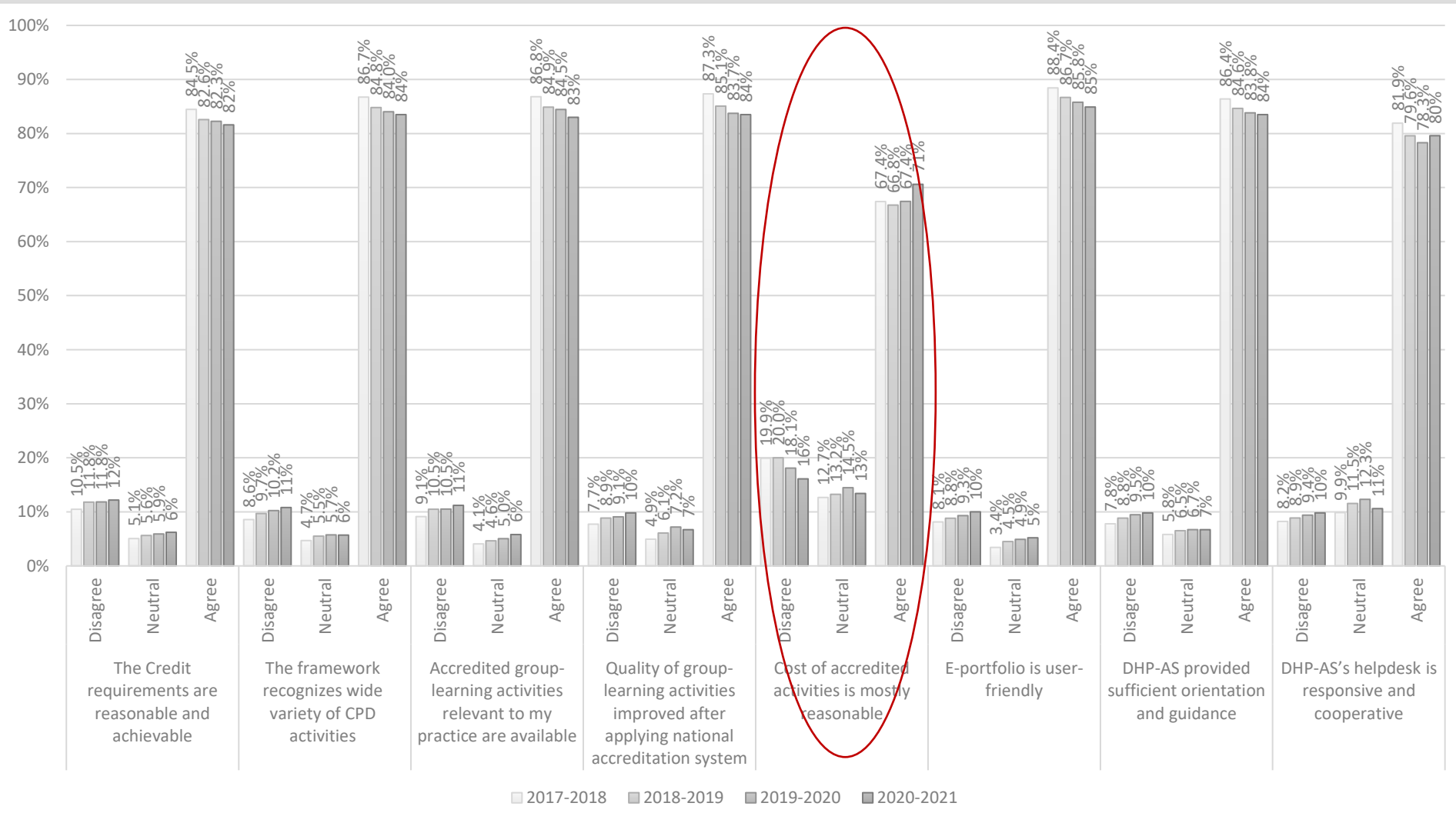
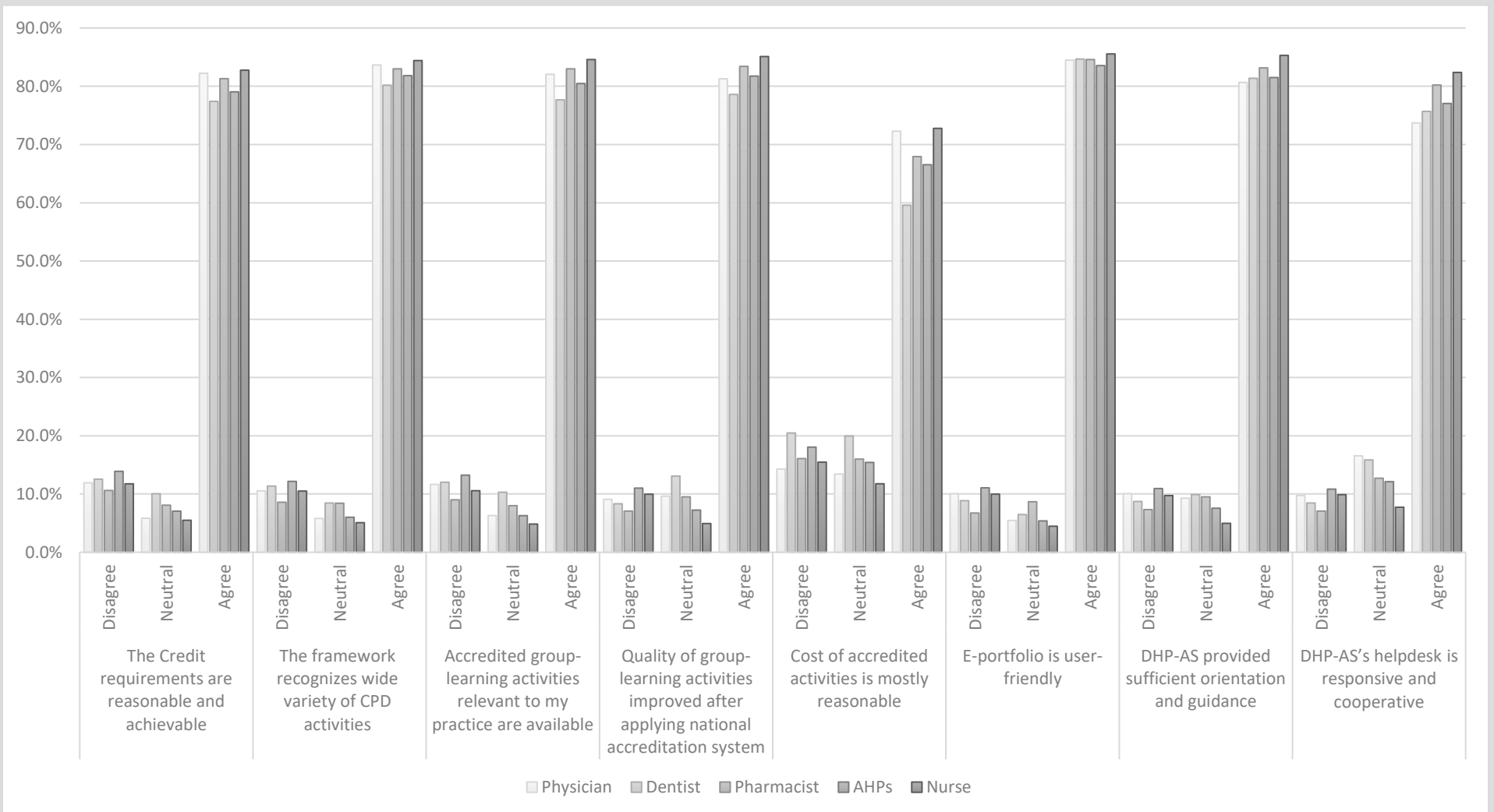




Figure 9: 2020-2021 HCPs' Satisfaction with the National CPD Program (by Profession)





3. International Recognition of Qatar's National CPD Program and Accreditation System

In 2020, DHP-AS has managed to renew its Substantive Equivalency agreement with two of the most renowned accreditation systems in the field of medical CME/CPD, the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC) and the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) of the USA. The agreements were renewed after a meticulous review and benchmarking process by the counterpart and highlighted the quality of DHP accreditation processes.

In addition, DHP-AS maintained a recognition of credit agreements with RCPSC, the American Medical Association (AMA), and the American Academy for Family Physicians (AAFP), by which CPD credits granted by DHP-accredited activities will be recognized as equivalent to Royal College Maintenance of Certification (MOC) and AMA and AAFP credits, respectively, and vice versa.

DHP-AS also maintained its unique agreement with the RCPSC, by which RCPSC will recognize fulfillment of DHP-AS CPD cycle requirements as equivalent and substitutive for participation in the RCPSC's MOC program

Details of DHP-AS mutual recognition agreements are included in **table 8**.

Moreover, in 2020-2021, DHP-AS has actively participated in the work led by the International Academy for CPD Accreditation (IACPDA) for developing a global system (standards and processes) for “substantive equivalency between CPD/CME accreditation systems”. Being one of the leading organizations involved in mutual substantive equivalency, DHP-AS is expected to be a founding and core member in the committee deciding on IACPDA substantive equivalency.



**Table 8: Recognition of the National CPD Program and Accreditation System
(March 2021)**

Agreement	Start Date	Validity
1. Credit equivalency agreement with the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP).	March, 2016	Indefinite
2. Credit conversion agreement with the American Medical Association (AMA).	January 1, 2017	December 31, 2022 (Renewed on January 1, 2019)
3. Credit conversion agreement with the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC).	January 1, 2017	December 31, 2021
4. Maintenance of Certification Program Exemption Agreement with the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC).	January 1, 2017	December 31, 2021
5. Substantial Equivalency agreement with the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC).	January 1, 2017	December 31, 2025 (Renewed in December 2020)
6. Substantial Equivalency agreement with the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME).	December 2, 2016	December 31, 2024 (Renewed in December 2020)

4. Scholarly and International Contributions

DHP-AS has not published any research articles during the period between March 2020 – March 2021. However, two research publications are in the process of development. In addition, a thesis about healthcare practitioners' participation in the National CPD Program has been prepared and discussed by one of DHP-AS's team members, in partial fulfilment of her master's degree.

DHP-AS team has also participated in two major international conferences in 2020, the "ACCME 2020 Online Meeting" and the "2020 Cologne Consensus Conference".

In addition, one of the DHP-AS team members (DHP-AS's Education Supervisor) has been selected by the International Academy for CPD Accreditation to lead the "Asian Pacific/Gulf regional working group" entrusted to review and provide



feedback on the “process documents” for determining “Substantive Equivalency between CPD/CME Accreditation Systems”. The working group concluded its work in February 2021.

5. Building Capacity of CPD Professionals

During the period between March 7, 2020 and March 6, 2021, DHP-AS has conducted several accreditation refreshers and CPD professional orientation and capacity building events (**table 9**). Two of those activities were organized in collaboration with Qatar University – Healthcare.

**Table 9: Capacity Building Activities Provided/Co-Provided by DHP-AS
(March 7, 2020 – March 6, 2021)**

Event	Date	Number of Participants	Organizer
1. Harnessing Collaboration - Stakeholders' Collaboration in the Field of CME/CPD	June 17, 2020	30	Qatar University – Health
2. Challenges and opportunities for delivering CPD activities during the COVID-19 pandemic	July 15, 2020	60	Qatar University – Health (in collaboration with DHP-AS)
3. CPD Provider Accreditation Refresher Session	July 22, 2020	24	DHP-AS
4. CPD Activity Accreditation Refresher Session	July 23, 2020	26	DHP-AS

Even though the interaction on Qatar’s Healthcare CPD Community (an online platform created for CPD professionals to engage, collaborate and share their professional experience) was very limited during the year 2020 – 2021, DHP-AS has plans to revive and foster the activities of the CPD community in the coming years. The plans were intended to commence in 2020 but were hindered by the pandemic crisis.



6. Orientation and Support for Healthcare Practitioners

DHP-AS continued to provide orientation and support for healthcare practitioners through different channels of communication including a dedicated hotline, electronic helpdesk, and face-to-face meetings. In addition, DHP-AS has provided a refresher seminar about the National CME/CPD Program and participated in another (hosted by Qatar Petroleum – Healthcare Department) about how healthcare practitioners can maintain CPD requirements during the pandemic (**table 10**).

7. Educational Resources for Healthcare Practitioners

In addition to its role in ensuring the availability and accessibility of outstanding educational resources offered by CPD providers in Qatar, DHP-AS plays a supporting role in the provision of quality educational resources to HCPs.

During the period between March 7, 2020 and March 6, 2021, DHP-AS planned and conducted, in collaboration with other MoPH departments and some of the accredited CPD providers in the state (e.g., HMC, PHCC, and Qatar Petroleum – Healthcare Department), several accredited CPD activities (**table 10**). The activities provided more than 523 free educational opportunities for healthcare practitioners, especially those underprivileged HCPs not working for accredited CPD providers.



Table 10: Educational Activities Provided by DHP-AS

(March 7, 2020 – March 6, 2021)

Activity	Date	Number of Educational Opportunities Provided	CPD Provider
1. Updates in Healthcare: Updates on Coronavirus Infections and NOVEL CORONAVIRUS "COVID-19" Alert	18/05/2020	35	DHP-AS (in collaboration with Healthcare Quality and Patient Safety and Public Health Departments of MoPH)
	07/06/2020	11	
	07/07/2020	22	
	08/07/2020	21	
	15/07/2020	21	
2. Upper Respiratory Tract Sampling in the Context of COVID-19	22/07/2020	20	DHP-AS (in collaboration with Healthcare Quality and Patient Safety Department of MoPH)
	28/07/2020	17	
	17/08/2020	17	
	02/09/2020	17	
	27/10/2020	13	
	16/12/2020	17	
	01/02/2021	18	
	28/11/2020	51	
	12/12/2020	20	
	02/01/2021	17	
3. Written Examination Preparation Workshop	23/01/2021	33	DHP-AS (in collaboration with Examination Committee of Qatari Board of Medical Specialties)
	30/01/2021	23	
	13/02/2021	31	
	06/03/2021	17	
4. Weekly CPD Session - Maintaining CPD Requirement During the Pandemic	13/1/2021	102	Qatar Petroleum – Healthcare Department
Total		523	

The National Continuous Medical Education Framework

"Continuous Development, Enhanced Performance"

Accredited Education Providers



Qatar's National CME/CPD Accreditation System and Framework

