



Frequently Asked Questions: Continuing Education & IPU Requirements

Q: Are there free or low-cost ways to earn IPU's toward recertification?

Yes. Many free and low-cost continuing education opportunities are available worldwide, including webinars, self-study modules, professional association programming, and journal-based activities. Recertification does not require paid courses or commercial vendor programs.

Q: Does the updated Industry Partner definition mean I can no longer earn IPU's from a consulting or education business I've used before?

No. Independent IP consulting, coaching, research, and education businesses are not considered Industry Partners solely because they charge for their services. An Industry Partner is an organization whose primary business is producing, marketing, selling, re-selling, or distributing health care products or services used by or on patients. Charging a fee for education or consulting does not, by itself, make an organization an Industry Partner. Activities may be eligible when the education is independently developed, evidence-based, and free from commercial promotion or vendor influence.

Q: I run (or use) an independent consulting business that offers IPU-eligible content. Does this change affect me?

If your business's purpose is IPC consulting, coaching, research, or education — rather than producing, marketing, or selling a product or service — and the specific activity in question doesn't promote a commercial product or service, this change does not reclassify you as an Industry Partner. If you have questions about a specific course or activity, contact CBIC directly for clarification.

Q: Why did CBIC create an Industry Partner definition?

The goal is to make sure that when a commercial vendor funds, develops, or promotes its own products through an educational activity, that activity is held to the same standard used across the continuing education field. This aligns CBIC with the independence standards that accredited continuing education providers already apply to commercially supported activities, rather than asking CBIC to judge the objectivity of individual vendor activities case by case. This protects the credibility and objectivity of IPU-eligible content — it is not intended to restrict access to independent, evidence-based education.

Q: Does this mean industry-funded education is no longer eligible for IPU's?

No. Industry sponsorship or funding alone does not disqualify an activity. An industry-funded activity can be IPU-eligible when three conditions are met:

- The sponsor does not select the speaker, or determine, influence, develop, review, or modify the educational content.

- The speaker is not employed by the sponsoring Industry Partner (see below).
- Either the Industry Partner or the continuing education provider of record holds accreditation or authorization to award a recognized equivalent such as CEU, CNE, or CME.

Q: Can a speaker employed by an Industry Partner present an activity that earns IPU's?

No. Where an Industry Partner funds, develops, or sponsors an educational activity, the speaker may not be an employee of that Industry Partner.

This is a limit on who controls educational content, not a judgment about the expertise of industry-employed clinicians. Many are experienced infection preventionists and respected subject matter experts, and their sessions are often valuable. The same approach is used in accredited continuing education, where employees of companies that produce or sell health care products generally may not control the content of an accredited activity. Applying it here means CBIC relies on an established, objective standard rather than evaluating the objectivity of individual vendor activities case by case.

Importantly, this does not prohibit these sessions. Industry-employed educators may continue to present at chapter meetings, in-services, product training, and exhibit programming. Those activities simply do not earn IPU's.

Where a speaker is employed by an organization meeting the Industry Partner definition, and the activity relates to that organization's products or services, or the speaker is presenting in a representative capacity for that organization, the activity is subject to the Industry Partner requirements (accreditation and no vendor-directed content) — regardless of whether that organization is the activity's formal sponsor, and regardless of whether the activity has a sponsor at all.

A speaker's employment by an Industry Partner does not, by itself, trigger these requirements where the speaker is presenting independently developed content unrelated to that organization's products or services and is not presenting in a representative capacity for that organization.

Q: What does this mean for chapter and local education that relies on clinical educators employed by manufacturers?

CBIC recognizes this is a meaningful change for chapter programming, and there are several workable paths:

- Unrestricted educational support. An Industry Partner may fund an activity while the chapter independently selects the speaker and controls the content.
- Accredited provider of record. A chapter may deliver the activity through an accredited continuing education provider, which allows the activity to award a recognized equivalent.

- Separate the sessions. Vendor-led product education can continue alongside IPU-eligible programming as clearly distinct offerings.

Chapters with questions about a specific meeting or speaker are encouraged to contact CBIC at info@cbic.org before finalizing the agenda.

Q: When does this take effect, and does it apply to activities I have already completed or registered for? These requirements apply to activities held on or after June 29, 2026. IPU earned from activities completed before that date remain valid for the recertification cycle in which they were earned. If you have already registered for an activity scheduled after that date, contact CBIC at info@cbic.org.

Q: How can I confirm before I register that an activity will count toward my IPU? Ask the organizer two questions: whether the activity awards a recognized equivalent such as CEU, CNE, or CME, and who the accredited provider of record is. If the answer to either is unclear, contact CBIC before registering.

Q: Can you provide more examples of free or low-cost IPU or IPU that do not require travel?

- **Membership in a professional infection prevention and control organization** (e.g., APIC, IPAC Canada, IDSA, SHEA). Membership itself does not earn IPU, but it often includes free access to webinars and discounted rates on in-person and virtual conferences. Attendance at a single-day conference earns 5 IPU; a multi-day conference earns 10 IPU.
- **Serving in a leadership role on a professional organization's committee** (e.g., annual conference planning, public policy) earns 3 IPU per year.
- **Infection Control Risk Assessment (ICRA) training** — education for contractors, facility staff, and tradespeople on safely managing construction, renovation, and maintenance projects in healthcare facilities. The curriculum focuses on mitigating infection risk, controlling dust and pathogens, and implementing air pressure controls to protect vulnerable patients. These sessions are typically free and held locally through trade and apprenticeship training centers in the United States; comparable trade training programs may be available in other countries.
- **Participating in a formal mentorship program** earns 3 IPU per year.

Q: What options are available for certificants who live outside North America or in a low- or middle-income country?

CBIC recognizes that access to continuing education varies by region, and there are several pathways designed to reduce costs and geographic barriers:

- **Tiered fees:** Some professional associations offer tiered membership fees based on country of residence, and CBIC offers tiered recertification fees based on country of residence.

- **Regional or provincial health departments**, such as Public Health Ontario, SEHA, or the Department of Health – Abu Dhabi, often provide relevant educational programming.
- **Providers approved or licensed by regional accrediting or licensing bodies**, such as the Saudi Commission for Health Specialties.
- **Providers accredited by international accrediting organizations**, such as the European Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (EACCME) or the Saudi Central Board for Accreditation of Healthcare Institutions (CBAHI).
- **Independent education providers** that offer free or reduced-cost infection prevention and control sessions, including openly accessible recorded libraries. Certificants should confirm that the specific activity awards a recognized equivalent such as CEU, CNE, or CME.
- **APIC chapters outside North America**, including chapters in Egypt and Saudi Arabia, which regularly offer educational programming.

The examples above are illustrative only. Naming a category or an organization here is not an endorsement, approval, or pre-qualification by CBIC, and does not guarantee that a given activity will earn IPU. Eligibility is determined by the activity, not by the provider.

A broad range of free and low-cost continuing education options is available to certificants worldwide. If you're aware of an accessible IPU option we haven't listed here, we welcome you to share it with us at info@cbic.org so we can help other certificants benefit from it as well.