

CANCER LEARNING: Resource review methodology

A key component of the *Strengthening Cancer Care Professional Development Packages for Cancer Professionals* project is the development of *Cancer Learning* – a web-based hub that sources evidence-based resources for cancer professionals. It is essential that the resources referred to on *Cancer Learning* are accurate, current, relevant and written to an acceptable standard.

It is essential that the resources included have been developed independent of commercial interests. Resources developed or funded by a commercial organisation will be considered subject to the policy outlined below.

This document outlines the quality assurance approach to reviewing resources prior to inclusion on *Cancer Learning*. The approach is based on the methodology used in assessing resources for inclusion on the CareSearch website for palliative care practitioners in Australia (<http://www.caresearch.com.au/home/Default.aspx>) as well as criteria outlined in the following documents:

- Evaluating websites (developed by Lesley University)
http://www.lesley.edu/library/guides/research/evaluating_web.html
- Infotrek – Evaluating resources (developed by Curtin University)
<http://library.curtin.edu.au/infotrek/trek8.html>
- The DISCERN Instrument for appraisal of consumer health information
http://www.discern.org.uk/background_to_discern.php
- The Picker Institute guide to Assessing the quality of information to support people in making decisions about their health and healthcare (2006)

REVIEW PROCESS

Cancer Australia is committed to ensuring that the process for review of resources for inclusion on *Cancer Learning* is reproducible and transparent. Four checklists have been developed to guide the review process:

- Checklist 1: provides a list of criteria for automatic inclusion of resources (to be completed for all resources)
- Checklist 2: provides an approach to reviewing the quality and reliability of resources that do not meet the criteria for automatic inclusion
- Checklist 3: summarises key information in relation to the resource for inclusion on the Hub to guide users in selection of resources (to be completed for all included resources)
- Checklist 4: provides a series of questions for completion by sponsoring organisations to complete when submitting a resource for inclusion on the Cancer Learning website (see policy about sponsoring organisations).

Automatic inclusion

A list of criteria for approved providers has been developed. Resources developed by these approved providers will automatically be included on the hub as long as they are relevant and current.

Approved providers must use:

- a peer-reviewed development process
- an evidence-based approach
- an independent, unbiased approach.

The list of approved providers is given in Checklist 1. Resources developed by approved providers that meet the requirements of currency and relevance should be included on the Hub and Checklist 3 should be completed.

Organisations may apply to be an approved provider by contacting the *Cancer Learning* team. Inclusion as a preferred provider will be dependent on the organisation meeting the criteria identified above and will be subject to approval by the *Cancer Learning* Steering Committee.

Screening and assessment process

Resources that meet the criteria for currency and relevance but are not developed by an approved provider should be reviewed by a *Cancer Learning* team member using Checklist 2. If there is any doubt about whether a resource meets the criteria for inclusion, the following steps should be considered.

- If information is missing about the process for developing and updating the resource, the *Cancer Learning* team may contact the resource developer to obtain more details on which to base a decision.
- If there is any disagreement about the relevance and quality of content of a resource, it should be forwarded to two expert reviewers with Checklist 2b; selection of reviewers will depend on the topic of the resource but typically should include an academic and clinical expert. Each reviewer should recommend whether the resource should be included on *Cancer Learning*.
- If a resolution cannot be reached about inclusion of the resource, referral to the Steering Committee may be required. The Steering Committee should also be contacted for matters relating to policies for inclusion or exclusion of resources or selection of approved providers.

If a resource meets the criteria for inclusion and is viewed as appropriate by the expert reviewers, the resource should be included and Checklist 3 should be completed by a *Cancer Learning* team member to identify key summary information for inclusion on the hub.

A list of excluded resources and the reason for exclusion should be maintained by the *Cancer Learning* team.

The screening and assessment process outlined above was trialled prior to its use with two reviewers and a random selection of 10 resources to check for ease of use of the checklists and reproducibility of responses.

Date of publication

Resources for inclusion on the *Cancer Learning* website should be current and reflect latest evidence. As a general rule, resources should have been developed or updated within the last 5 years. Resources should include evidence published within 1 year of the date of publication of the resource.

Cancer Australia recognises that for some information topics, the evidence base is not rapidly changing. For such topics, older resources may be considered. Where there is any doubt about whether a resource reflects current evidence, it should be forwarded to two expert reviewers for a decision in line with the screening and assessment process.

Journal articles form an important evidence base for information resources and as such, lists of journal articles provided on the *Cancer Learning* website are not limited by the same date restrictions as the information resources.

Policy about sponsoring organisations

Resources included on the *Cancer Learning* website must meet clinical and ethical standards and have the primary purpose of improving the quality of patient care. It is essential that, where resources are funded by a sponsoring organisation, an ethical relationship exists in relation to the development and delivery of the resource to health care professionals.

In relation to this policy, a sponsoring organisation is defined as a company or organisation that operates on the basis of commercial gain. Sponsorship may include a negotiated agreement by which the sponsoring organisation provides funds, goods or services in return for publicity or other benefits.

All resources developed with financial assistance from a sponsoring organisation must be approved for inclusion on the *Cancer Learning* website by the *Cancer Learning* Steering Committee or their designates. Any sponsoring organisation wishing to submit a resource for inclusion on the website should complete Checklist 4, which identifies the approach used to develop the resource.

Resources funded by a sponsoring organisation will not be included on the *Cancer Learning* website if there is input from its sponsor(s) to the design, development or content of the resource, or for educational activities, to the delivery of the activity.

Resources will not be included on the *Cancer Learning* website if they directly or indirectly promote:

- product brand names and generic names of products for the purposes of marketing
- products or modes of treatment disproportionate to their normal contribution to good quality patient care
- products or modes of treatment in areas of clinical practice where accepted management standards are lacking and a balanced rationale is not provided
- experimental treatments that do not have the support of the medical profession by reason of inconclusive evidence that such treatments deliver therapeutic benefits
- theories that are not supported by scientific evidence

- techniques that do not have the support of scientific evidence, or the medical profession as preferred techniques or which are not supported by accepted medical theory.

When there is uncertainty about the clinical, scientific or ethical standards of a resource, Cancer Australia reserves the right to seek clarification on the development process, program design and evidence-based methodology and to reject the resource if, in the sole discretion of Cancer Australia, it fails to meet the clinical and ethical requirements in line with the objectives of the Cancer Learning website.

Where a resource has been developed with funding from a sponsoring organisation, this should be clearly stated on the resource and this will be flagged on the *Cancer Learning* website.

The resource must also be consistent with the Australian Medical Association Code of Ethics (<http://www.ama.com.au/web.nsf/tag/amacodeofethics>) and the Medicines Australia Code of Conduct (<http://www.medicinesaustralia.com.au/pages/page5.asp>).

Educational activities developed by sponsoring organisations

Educational activities included on the *Cancer Learning* website that are funded by sponsoring organisations may include presentations related to a company product; however, such presentations or input must:

- be an addendum and completely separated from the education activity being delivered
- not involve the speaker/facilitator of the educational activity in any way
- not be used when determining the duration of an education activity when calculating the number of CPD points that will be allocated.

Entertainment and meals should be separated from the focus of the activity, which is the education content. Trade displays may precede or follow the education activity, but may not be integrated with the educational activity in any manner.

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CHECKLIST 1: APPROVED DEVELOPERS

To be completed for ALL resources

1. Is the resource on a topic relevant for inclusion on *Cancer Learning*? Yes/No
2. Is the resource current (ie developed within past 5 years)? Yes/No

AND

3. Is the resource listed on the HealthInsite website? Yes/No
4. Is the resource accredited by the Health on the Net (HON) Foundation Code of Conduct? Yes/No
5. Is the resource an article published in a peer-reviewed journal? Yes/No
6. Was the resource developed by one or more of the following providers?
 - Australian Cancer Network
 - Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing
 - Australian Institute for Health and Welfare
 - Cancer Australia
 - Cancer Institute NSW
 - Clinical Oncological Society of Australia
 - Department of Human Services Victoria
 - EdCan
 - National Breast Cancer Centre/National Breast and Ovarian Cancer Centre
 - National Health and Medical Research Council
 - Palliative Care Australia
 - The Cancer Council Australia
 - Australian Professional Colleges (RACS, RACGP, RCPA, RACP, RCNA, MOGA)

If yes to Questions 1 and 2 and one or more of Questions 3–6, include resource and complete Checklist 3

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CHECKLIST 2a: QUALITY & RELIABILITY OF RESOURCES

To be completed by a *Cancer Learning* team member for all current and relevant resources that have not been developed by an approved provider. Reviewers should use their judgement about whether the combined responses to these questions should result in inclusion of the resource. If there is any doubt or disagreement between the two reviewers about the responses or outcome, the resource should be forwarded for assessment by two expert reviewers.

Topic	Rating	Explanatory notes
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the aim/purpose of the resource clear? Yes No 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look for an introductory statement about the aims and target audience for the resource For educational resources look for a statement about the learning objectives
Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the content address the stated aim/purpose? Yes No 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check that the contents of the resource are in line with the stated aim/learning objectives of the resource
Currency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the date of development/update of the resource provided? Yes No 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look for a statement about the date of development and/or update of the resource If the date of development is not stated, look for the date of copyright of the resource If the date of development/update is >5 years ago, do not include, unless the evidence base has not changed and the resource is still of relevance (<i>if in doubt refer to an expert reviewer</i>) If the resource is on a topic in a rapidly changing field and it has not been updated within the past 2 years, consider whether it is appropriate for inclusion (<i>if in doubt, refer to an expert reviewer</i>)

Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the authors/editorial board clearly stated? Yes No 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For standalone resources, look for authorship in the publishing information, introduction or appendices • For websites, look for information in the 'About' or 'Home' section or in a footnote on the website
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the content/layout well developed? Yes No 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check that the document is free of typographical errors, has a consist format, and a clear and logical layout • For websites, check that the information loads easily and that navigation is easy to follow
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are references provided? Yes No 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For standalone resources, look for a reference list at the end of the resource or in footnotes throughout the document; or look for details of the source information in the introduction • For websites, look for a References section on the site • For resources without references, check whether they have been developed with input from a reputable source (<i>if in doubt, refer to a clinical expert</i>)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are references current? Yes No N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check the currency of references in relation to the publication date of the resource
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are links to websites functional and current? Yes No N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check that links or website addresses provided in the resource are working and link to the appropriate website
Objectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the funding body clearly stated? Yes No • Does the resource have a commercial sponsor? Yes No 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look for a statement in the copyright or publishing information about who funded the development of the resource • Look for commercial advertisements in the resource (<i>If there is any doubt about the appropriateness of the resource based on the funder or commercial sponsor, refer the policy for sponsoring organisations</i>)

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CHECKLIST 2b: QUALITY & RELIABILITY OF RESOURCES

To be completed by two expert reviewers for relevant and current resources for which there is uncertainty or disagreement following completion of Checklist 2a.

Topic	Rating	Explanatory notes
Clinical value	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is the content accurate? Yes No Don't know• Does the content reflect current practice Yes No Don't know• Did you find the site/resource interesting/useful? Yes No• Would you recommend this resource to a colleague? Yes No	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Check whether the content accurately describes the topic• Check whether the content reflects current best practice or thinking
Any other comments		

Final grade: acceptable/not acceptable

Name(s) of evaluator(s):

Date of evaluation:

If resource meets requirements, complete Checklist 3.

CHECKLIST 3: FORMAT AND AVAILABILITY

To be completed for all included resources.

Aspect of resource	Description	Details/comments
Resource title	Title of resource: Website url:	
Format What is the format of the resource?	<input type="checkbox"/> Website – information only <input type="checkbox"/> Website – educational program <input type="checkbox"/> Printed resource <input type="checkbox"/> PDF file on website <input type="checkbox"/> Workshop kit <input type="checkbox"/> Workshop (one-off) <input type="checkbox"/> Training course (modular) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Face-to-face <input type="checkbox"/> Distance learning <input type="checkbox"/> Video/DVD <input type="checkbox"/> CD-ROM <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	
Developer Who funded and developed the resource?	Developing organisation:	
	Funding organisation: (if different to developer)	
	*If international – add disclaimer	
Accreditation For educational resources only	Accrediting body:	
	CPD points:	
Currency When was the resource developed?	Date of development:	
	Date of update*:	
	*If > 5 years – do not include	
Target audience Who is the resource aimed at?	<input type="checkbox"/> Multidisciplinary <input type="checkbox"/> General practice <input type="checkbox"/> Specialist: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> All specialists <input type="checkbox"/> Surgeons <input type="checkbox"/> Physicians <input type="checkbox"/> Pathologists <input type="checkbox"/> Radiologists <input type="checkbox"/> Medical oncologists <input type="checkbox"/> Palliative care <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ 	

	<p>Allied health:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> All allied health</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Nurses</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Physiotherapists</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Social workers</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Psychologists</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Counsellors</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Health service administration</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other _____</p>	
<p>Topic</p>	<p>Cancer type</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> All</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Breast</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Lung</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Colorectal</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Prostate/urological</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Gynaecological</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Head and neck</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Lymphoma/leukaemia</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Melanoma</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other _____</p> <p>Stage of cancer journey</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> All</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Prevention</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Risk</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Diagnosis</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Treatment</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Follow-up</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Supportive care</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other _____</p> <p>Interest area</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Multidisciplinary care</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Care coordination</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Data management</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Communication skills</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other _____</p>	

<p>Purpose What is the primary purpose of the resource?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Information <input type="checkbox"/> Education (ie has learning objectives) <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Policy <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	
<p>Accessibility Who can access the resource?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Publicly available <input type="checkbox"/> Limited availability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Registered health professional <input type="checkbox"/> Professional college <input type="checkbox"/> Institution <input type="checkbox"/> State/Territory <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ 	
<p>Cost Is there a cost associated with the resource?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Free of charge <input type="checkbox"/> Payment required Cost: \$ <input type="checkbox"/> Reduced costs for members Cost: \$	
<p>Additional information Any additional comments that would be valuable for users</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Large file size <input type="checkbox"/> Available in other languages <input type="checkbox"/> Related resources <input type="checkbox"/> Other	

CHECKLIST 4: SPONSORED RESOURCES

To be completed for all resources submitted for inclusion by a sponsoring organisation.

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Name of resource

Name of sponsoring organisation

1. What is the topic of resource?
2. Who is the target audience for the resource?
3. Which organisation developed the content for the resource?
4. Did an expert advisory panel oversee the development of the resource?
5. Is a reference list included?
6. Did the sponsoring organisation provide advice, guidance or contribute to the content for the resource?