

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

Q1. What is CPD?

Answer. CPD is the systematic maintenance, improvement and broadening of knowledge and skills to ensure continuing competence as a professional throughout an individual's career. It enables individuals to demonstrate their personal commitment to the taking of responsibility for their own lifelong learning and career development.

Q2. Why CPD?

Answer. CPD helps to ensure the maintenance and improvement of competence, professional knowledge and skills, which is necessary in a developing world with rapid changes in technology and business processes.

Employers, clients and the public continually demand improving standards, faster and at lower cost. CPD helps individuals prepare and cope with these demands and provides them with a means of keeping up to date with developments in their areas of expertise and of demonstrating that their level of competence reflects the latest best practice.

Individual career changes often involve a requirement for the acquisition of additional skills and knowledge, CPD enables individuals to achieve this whilst contributing to their own professional development.

Q3. How do I undertake CPD?

Answer. The onus is on the individual to take responsibility for their own CPD programme.

Most Professional Institutions provide a framework for CPD. Generally, these schemes are voluntary and there is no prescription in the amount of time or in the format of recording. The key objective is to demonstrate :

- what has been done
- what has been learnt
- what development has resulted.

The key requirement, therefore, is to keep records and the best way to record CPD is in a Personal Development Plan (PDP).

Q4. What counts as CPD?

Answer. CPD is about the development needs of individuals and what the individual can do to achieve them. CPD embraces those activities which help an individual to gain new skills and knowledge or to strengthen existing skills and knowledge, resulting in an improvement in individual competence .

CPD activities are many and varied because learning can take place in many different situations. CPD can be formal activities such as training courses and qualifications, but it also includes informal activities which lead to learning and development, both personal and professional e.g. reading.

These are some examples :

- Informal:
 - o work experience projects
 - o coaching and mentoring
 - o job rotation and work shadowing
 - o planned and structured reading
 - o attendance at technical and professional events and meetings
 - o using multi-media resources
 - o preparation of material - for courses, presentations, meetings or publication
- Formal:
 - o attendance at short courses, conferences, seminars, workshops
 - o distance learning with use of audio, video or multi-media resources and other distance-learning material.
 - o studying for a qualification
 - o undertaking research

To count as CPD, an activity should either be capable of improving competence or have contributed to the improvement of competence.

Q5. How do I start my CPD?

Answer. Firstly you must confirm what your development needs are. Do this by identifying things like:

- the main responsibilities and activities of your current work
- the areas about which you require a good level of knowledge
- the skills you need
- any short term changes that you are aware of.

Next consider where you think you have any gaps in these requirements and list them. Consider and prioritise your development needs on the basis of the highlighted gaps.

Q6. What form should my CPD record take?

Answer. Because individuals have to take responsibility for their own CPD programme, the format of recording is what best suits an individual's own needs.

Most Professional Institutions provide a framework for CPD. Generally, these schemes are voluntary and there is no prescription in the amount of time or in the format of recording.

Items that should be covered in a CPD record are:

- List of activities undertaken
- Date of each activity
- Description of the activity (e.g. home-based reading, conference attendance)
- Time attributable to each activity
- Contribution of the activity to learning & development

Q7. Where and how can I get help in doing CPD?

Answer. Most Professional institutions offer CPD programmes and GRW Buy-Lines Ltd has an information database which it can use to deal with your queries and put you in touch with the most appropriate organisation.

GRW Buy-Lines Ltd can also advise you on best fit training programmes and courses.

For further information on any of the above contact:

Geoff Warren, GRW Buy-Lines Ltd

Tel: 01285 850505 Fax: 01285 850516

E-mail: geoff@grwbuylines.com

url: www.grwbuylines.com