

Guidance On Continuing Professional Development

INTRODUCTION

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is the systematic maintenance, improvement and broadening of knowledge, understanding and skills, and the development of the personal qualities, necessary to carry out professional and technical duties throughout a member's working life. Continuing Professional Development will therefore enable the member to:

- Update professional competence, so that practice is fully in line with current requirements.
- Develop personal and management skills.
- Broaden experience leading to new career opportunities.

Continuing Professional Development can be achieved through a range of activities, both in and outside the workplace, which are related to members' careers as professional engineers. The types of activity which contribute towards members' Continuing Professional Development and their obligations as members of the Royal Institution of Naval Architects are described below.

The Institution and employers can assist members in achieving their Continuing Professional Development targets, but the responsibility rests with members to meet their individual needs at the different stages in their careers.

THE INSTITUTION AND CPD

All Fellows, Members and Associate Members who are in or seeking active work are required to take all reasonable steps to maintain and develop their professional competence and knowledge after election.

The Institution requires that CPD activities should be authenticated either by mentors, employers or the providers of CPD. Some informal learning activities may be self-authenticated. The roles of the mentor, employer and the Institution in assisting members to achieve their CPD are described below.

The Institution places an obligation on its members to plan and record their CPD and to produce evidence of their CPD achievement. The Institution may request to see a member's CPD Plan and Record at any time. Members will also be required to submit them when applying for transfer to Fellow.

CPD Plan

A member's personal CPD Plan provides a structured framework within which career objectives can be identified, progress achieved and personal development measured. It should cover personal and professional development and be updated regularly as the member's career develops. The CPD Plan is therefore a personal and unique document which should lead the members through their professional development, and enable them to face change with confidence and to develop their careers. Advice on producing and updating CPD Plans should be sought from the mentor, employer or the Institution.

CPD Record

A record of CPD activities undertaken and the hours claimed should be maintained. Evidence of CPD activity should also be included where appropriate, such as certificates issued on satisfactory completion of conferences or training courses. The CPD Record should be available for inspection by the Institution.

There is no prescribed format for the CPD Record, which should be comprehensive and include the date and type of the activity, a description of the activity and the hours claimed for it.

Mentor

A mentor is an experienced and suitably qualified engineer, preferably a member of the Institution, whose role is to provide the member with specific guidance on the formation and development of a member's CPD Plan, and to give advice on achieving CPD. The mentor may also authenticate a member's CPD Record. It is recommended that members seek the agreement of suitably qualified members of the Institution, who may be their line manager or supervising engineer, to act as their mentors.

As a member become more experienced, the relationship with the mentors should become less formal. The function may be carried out by the member's immediate superiors or a suitably qualified colleagues who can assist the member in carrying out a periodic career reviews.

Employers

Members' employers will also be able to advise and assist them in achieving their CPD, and can authenticate activities such as in-house training.

The Institution

The Professional Affairs Department of the Institution can provide general advice to members on achieving their CPD, and can assist in finding a mentor.

TYPES OF CPD

For an activity to qualify as CPD it must be related to a member's career as a professional engineer. For many members, their CPD activities will include both technical and non-technical topics. Non-technical topics might include management, accounting, law, economics and foreign languages if they are necessary to enable members to do their jobs. However, functions which members routinely perform as part of their employment do not normally qualify as a CPD activity. For instance, university lecturers cannot consider the lectures they present as part of their normal duties to be activities which count towards their CPD. If in doubt as to whether an activity counts towards their CPD, members should seek the advice of their mentor or the Institution.

The actual hours accumulated in activities of these types will count towards the CPD requirement. The number of hours of each type of activity will vary for each member, and it would be possible for the total requirement to be achieved in just one type. However, it is important to ensure that the activities which contribute towards a member's CPD requirement reflect a well balanced input and come from a range of different sources. Therefore, with the exception of full time education, a limit is placed on the total amount of hours which can be claimed for any one type of CPD activity.

The six main types of CPD activity are:

- Formal education and training
- Informal Learning
- Conferences and Meetings
- Presentations and Papers
- Institution Activities
- Industry involvement (per academia)

Formal Education and Training

This includes formal face-to-face education, distance learning, short courses and formal on-the-job training. Most activities of this type will involve assessment.

For face-to-face education, the actual hours of lectures attended and/or research undertaken will count towards the CPD requirement. For distance learning, the equivalent number of hours of face-to-face education which would have been involved should be estimated.

It is recommended that a maximum of 50% of a member's total CPD requirement be claimed for this type of activity. However, where a member is undertaking a higher degree or post-graduate course, the time spent may fully count towards the CPD requirement.

Informal Learning

Informal learning activities include the reading of books, journals, manuals, etc and familiarisation with the operation of technological aids, computer programmes, equipment, etc.

Informal learning activities include on-the-job learning that takes place because of workplace requirements, and private study where the member can exercise complete discretion. On-the-job learning requirements usually arise where a member undertakes a new project or job and identifies the need to extend their competency base. Private study is an opportunity for members to direct the way in which their professional careers develops.

In all cases, any activity which is claimed against the CPD requirement must pass the simple test that it contributes towards the development of a member's career as a professional engineer.

A maximum of 75% of the total CPD requirement may be claimed for informal learning activities.

Conferences and Meetings

These include conference, workshops, symposia and technical meetings, either at Headquarters or the Branches, at which papers are presented. All such events run by the Institution meet the CPD requirements, as do those run by other organisations provided that their content relates to and furthers the development of the member's professional career. The hours claimed should be those attended at the presentations and discussions relevant to the member's professional career.

A maximum of 50% of total CPD requirement may be claimed for this type of activity.

Presentations and Papers

The preparation and presentation of material for courses, conferences, workshops, seminars and symposia can be claimed if these activities contribute towards the advancement of the engineering related competencies of others. The time spent in the preparation of papers which are published in journals and transactions or material designed to promote the awareness of engineering and its benefits to society can also be claimed.

A maximum of 50% of total CPD requirement may be claimed for this type of activity.

Institution Activities

Institution activities may count towards CPD where they contribute to the continuing professional development of others. This includes membership of Institution standing committees and groups, Professional Review interviews, acting as a mentor, course accreditation, refereeing of technical papers before publication, co-ordinating conferences and the technical aspects of work undertaken on or for other national or institution committees and bodies.

A maximum of 25% of the total CPD requirement may be claimed by this type of activity.

Industry Involvement (per academia)

Engineers employed in academic positions are expected to foster links with industry to the benefit of engineering education, research and practice. This requirement also ensures that they are exposed to developments in engineering and management practice outside academia. Industry involvement may be achieved through a range of activities, including consultancy services and the supervision of industry sponsored research and design projects. The preparation and presentation of training courses specifically designed to further the continuing professional development of individuals in industry may also be claimed.

Professional engineers in academic positions should aim to achieve at least 25% of their CPD requirement through industry involvement.