

## Continuing Professional Development Best Practice Guidance for Professionals



### What is CPD?

Broadly, CPD (Continuing Professional Development) is any activity engaged in by a qualified professional through which they continue to develop professionally. This should maintain and enhance existing competences and help you to develop new knowledge and skills. CPD should not be exclusively about formal courses or qualifications (although these can be valuable elements), and may involve development in both technical and non-technical areas. It can include a wide variety of activities such as open learning, private study, work experience and more.

Often people engage in CPD without even realising - for example by attending seminars, engaging in research for a current project, learning from the advice of colleagues or even by reading a journal. If you're a newly qualified professional simply by continuing some of the activities you engaged in as part of your Initial Professional Development (IPD) you will now be engaging in CPD. So you might find it easier than you think to commit to a CPD plan.

### Why do it?

For many professionals engagement in CPD is a requirement to maintain membership of one or more Professional Institutions – membership which is important to their professional standing. However, if you're committed to your career you should see CPD as the chance to maintain and build knowledge and competence for your own personal development rather than just as a chore to satisfy external requirements.

Pre-qualification education and IPD cannot provide all the knowledge and skills that you'll need for your entire career. For example CPD could add to your knowledge of new regulations, or help you learn how to manage projects more effectively.

Engagement in CPD can help you:

- Gain the knowledge and skills you need to specialise or move into a senior or managerial position.
- develop the knowledge and skills required to work in the context of changing markets, technologies or legislation;
- gain or retain membership of a Professional Institution or similar body;
- as an employee - to maintain and gain competences so that you are more likely to be continuously employed;
- as a sole practitioner - to maintain and gain competences in order to remain self-reliant and provide professional services.

### How can you get the most out of your CPD?

If you plan, record, and review your CPD it will help to give some structure to and maximise the benefits of your activities. It will also ensure that you only engage in CPD activities which genuinely meet your needs.

The CPD activities which you engage in are likely to be influenced by a combination of opportunities, interests, ambitions and needs. These are likely to be influenced by employers and Professional Institutions, which in turn may be influenced by client and broader industry expectations.

Focusing on outputs (what competence you develop) rather than inputs (such as how much time you spend engaged in CPD) will also help you get the most out of your CPD.

If you're a member of one or more Professional Institutions you might be required to complete a minimum amount of CPD. In this case you might choose to focus on outputs when planning your CPD whilst making sure you meet the requirements of the relevant Institution.

To summarise, you can improve your approach to CPD by:

- adopting a cycle of review, planning, development, and assessment of achievement;
- taking a more output focused approach; and
- engaging in project based CPD.

**Find out more:**

For further sources of guidance and details of how to improve your approach to CPD visit [www.cic.org.uk/cpd](http://www.cic.org.uk/cpd)

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