



Understanding CPD Terminology

Membership Support Factsheet 4



 +44 (0)20 3745 6463
 info@cpdstandards.com
 The Old Station, Moor Lane, Staines upon Thames,
TW18 4BB

Factsheet 4 - Revised - 0224

The CPD Standards Office
INDEPENDENTLY ACCREDITED CPD
www.cpdstandards.com



CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

This factsheet provides an outline of the CPD arena and an understanding of the key terminology used within CPD, L&D and educational forums.

The landscape of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is vast, with many different organisations and stakeholders playing different parts.

There are many definitions of CPD, in its most simple form it is a structured approach towards lifelong learning.

Here are some various definitions from leading organisations which deliver CPD to their professional members:

The General Dental Council, a regulatory body defines CPD as:

"CPD is any learning outside of undergraduate education or postgraduate training that helps you maintain and improve your performance. It covers the development of your knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours across all areas of your professional practice. It includes both formal and informal learning activities."

Rosetta Stone, a training provider defines CPD as:

"Continuing professional development (CPD) provides a structured approach to workplace training and development. Its ethos is the intentional maintenance and development of the knowledge and skills needed to perform in a professional context. CPD incorporates honing and building on current skills as well as learning new ones in order to expand a current job role or prepare for the next career stage."

**General
Medical
Council**

**Rosetta
Stone** 

Amanda Rosewarne, Director of CPD Accreditation and Research at CPDSO, defines CPD as:

**“Continuing, because learning never ceases, regardless of age or seniority;
Professional, because it is focused on professional competence in a professional role,
Development, because its goal is to improve personal performance and enhance an individual’s career.”**

In general, CPD is needed to perform professional responsibilities effectively by:

- Learning new skills
- Maintaining skills and perfecting them
- Reaching new heights of skill levels (being ambitious)

CPD is not a qualification, a degree or any other formal educational qualification e.g. GCSE, A Level or NVQ, rather it is all of the little bits of learning, training activities and educational opportunities that keep qualifications ‘topped up’, and ensure that an individual professional is up to date.

Increasingly, professional bodies, regulators and employers require professional individuals to undertake CPD on an annual basis. Each organisation sets out their CPD requirements, and each individual is then expected to meet their requirements in order to retain their membership, licence to practice, or performance management objectives.

CPD can become confusing as there is a wide variety of terminology, often with different words meaning the same thing. For HR managers overseeing other people’s CPD, or training and learning providers delivering CPD activities, it is useful to be aware of the different terminologies.

FIRST OF ALL – UNDERSTAND THE DIFFERENT ORGANISATIONS THAT HAVE CPD REQUIREMENTS:

Professional Bodies

- A professional body, (also called a professional association, professional organisation, or professional society) is usually a non-profit organisation seeking to further a particular profession, the interests of individuals engaged in that profession and the public interest.
- They promote development opportunities to continue the evolution of the profession or industry.
- Usually not-for-profit organisations, professional bodies can achieve a “chartered” status by which the UK monarchy grant the institution as being an authority within the sector. Once a professional body can offer a chartered title e.g. Chartered Architect, CPD is an annual mandatory requirement of maintaining the title.
- When professional bodies serve members who work for public services, their primary role is to communicate the CPD regulations and policy to those professionals.



Regulatory Bodies

- A professional body, (also called a professional association, professional organisation, or professional society) is usually a non-profit organisation seeking to further a particular profession, the interests of individuals engaged in that profession and the public interest.
- They promote development opportunities to continue the evolution of the profession or industry.
- Usually, not-for-profit organisations, and professional bodies can achieve a “chartered” status by which the UK monarchy grants the institution as being an authority within the sector. Once a professional body can offer a chartered title e.g. Chartered Architect, CPD is an annual mandatory requirement of maintaining the title.
- When professional bodies serve members who work for public services, their primary role is to communicate the CPD regulations and policy to those professionals.

Councils

- In non-regulated areas, councils can act as umbrella organisations for membership across a professional area.
- Councils are private non-profit organisations which advance knowledge, set industry priorities and promote best practices for their sector.

Trade Associations

- A trade association (also known as an industry trade group, business association or sector association) is an organisation founded and funded by businesses that operate in a specific industry and to raise awareness of its importance on a national or international scale.
- Associations may offer other services, such as producing conferences, networking or charitable events or offering classes or educational materials. Many associations are non-profit organisations governed by bylaws and directed by officers who typically tend to work within the sector.



UNDERSTANDING CPD REQUIREMENTS

Professional bodies, trade associations, councils and regulatory bodies detail their CPD requirements as 'CPD Schemes' or as a 'CPD Policy'. These can either take one of three forms:

Input CPD Scheme

Require an individual to gain a set number of CPD hours, points or credits to be achieved across a specified time period.

Output CPD Scheme

Require professionals to plan learning goals or objectives that are specific to their individual learning goals, and then undertake training activities to meet those goals.

Outcome CPD Scheme

This is a combination of inputs and outputs, where an individual professional can undertake a variety of training activities across a certain time period AND must demonstrate how their learning has been applied and improved their professional practice.



SECONDLY, UNDERSTAND THE LANGUAGE FOR CPD SCHEMES:

Within a CPD scheme, there will be details of what is accepted as professional CPD learning activities. There is usually a distinction between learning activities that can be 'verified' and 'non-verified'. The former generally means that the learning was planned, organised and it can be proven that the individual undertook it e.g. attending a training course. Conversely, 'non-verifiable' means that an individual has undertaken some learning spontaneously e.g. by reading.

- 'Verified' vs. 'Non-verifiable' CPD is also termed: Formal and Informal CPD, or Structured and Unstructured CPD.
- 'Unplanned' vs. 'Planned' is defined by the extent professionals 'plan' their CPD and learning activities within their yearly calendars.

THIRDLY, GIVE GUIDANCE ON HOW A CPD ACTIVITY CAN CONTRIBUTE TO A CPD SCHEME:

Verified CPD activities should meet a set of learning objectives, and ultimately improve the quality of an individual professional's service and the standards of the work they carry out.

Once accredited, we equip our training providers with the knowledge to inform their delegates how their training activity contributes to their given CPD requirements, and how to use their CPDSO Certificates. Giving advice and guidance every step of the way.



POINTS AND HOURS – HOW MUCH IS EACH ACTIVITY WORTH?

This is an area which can be quite confusing. As a training provider, it is generally helpful to become knowledgeable on the professional bodies, institutes and regulators that your delegates are members of and familiarise yourself with their CPD scheme or policy.

CPD Standards Office will advise you on the number of CPD hours or points that a learning activity is worth. As a general rule:

- One CPD hour/point is one full contact hour of teaching or learning and can include question-and-answer sessions but breaks or not networking time. One CPD point usually equals one CPD hour.

This varies from sector to sector, and CPDSO advises that if you are listing CPD points on your certificate, you ensure it is fully aligned with the key professional bodies or institutes within your sector. This is the same rule across the globe apart from in Italy, where one CPD point equals half a point.

- In the medical sector, the CPD point allocation varies dependent on the learning activity and topic.

Occasionally people think a point or hour can only be earned if they include an assessment or exam at the end, however, this is a myth as long as there is time given to reflect on the learning outcomes of the learning activity.

