



# 3 Minute Guide to CPD

## Minute 1: What is CPD?

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is commonly defined as:

**“Intentionally developing the knowledge, skills and personal knowledge needed to perform professional responsibilities”.**

CPD activities can range from formal educational activities such as instructor-led training courses, through to work based learning such as mentoring, or self-directed learning such as e-learning courses or structured reading.

## Who undertakes CPD?

Across the UK workforce, CPD is expected of most individual professionals, and is generally governed by professional bodies or regulators within each sector. It is also an increasing expectation from employers.

There are currently over 1600 professional bodies, institutes and membership associations representing all industries and professions in the UK. All have CPD policies which are called ‘CPD schemes’. The requirements of the schemes are increasingly stringent as institutes use the CPD schemes to uphold best practice and professional standards. As a result, the CPD scheme usually forms a key policy of the institute, and is often written into the institute’s code of conduct for its members.

# Understanding CPD Schemes

Professional institutes CPD schemes and their requirements vary on a spectrum of mandatory to obligatory to voluntary. Typically, if the institute is operating within an industry where a regulator is present, the regulator will expect the institutes within that industry to enforce mandatory CPD requirements to their individual members.

Regulated industries include healthcare, social work, accountancy, legal and financial services, hence in a regulated industry individual professionals who do not keep up to date with their CPD can lose their licence to practice.

Alternatively, CPD schemes can be obligatory, that is, individuals are expected to undertake regular CPD and record it independently. Here, an institute will ‘spot check’ a proportion of its members to ensure they are doing so.

Lastly, in a decreasing number of cases, an institute’s CPD scheme can be voluntary, that is, individual professionals are encouraged to do CPD regularly but are not required to keep, or submit CPD records to the institute.

There are three main ways that professional bodies structure their CPD schemes

## Input Schemes

- Require an individual to gain a set number of CPD hours, points or credits across a specified time period e.g. financial advisors must achieve 35 hours CPD over the course of a year by undertaking different training and learning activities.

## Output Schemes

- Require an individual professional to plan learning goals or objectives that are specific to their learning requirements, and then undertake training activities to meet those goals. To do this individuals are typically encouraged to follow a professional development cycle, which does not generally stipulate a set number of hours to be spent on their training activities.

## Outcome Schemes

- This scheme is a relatively new development and is utilised heavily within the medical profession. Here individual professionals must undertake a number of training activities (often governed by a set number of hours), but must demonstrate how their learning has impacted their role positively and improved their professional practice.

Alternatively, CPD requirements are often mandatory if an institute has a 'Chartered Status' for its members. Here an individual will have completed various professional qualifications and demonstrated that they can apply their knowledge effectively to the professional role. Many institutes have a chartered status for example – chartered marketer, chartered psychologist, chartered statistician.

## Providing CPD

## Minute 2:

Any organisation, or individual, can become a provider of CPD activities. Professionals in every sector need to undertake CPD, and so there is a demand for activities that are appropriate for CPD across every discipline, topic and skill set.

There are a variety of different ways to offer CPD activities. The 'traditional educational' methods are typically training courses, workshops or seminars. Recent developments in work-based learning and technology have seen 'new forms' of CPD including online activities e.g. a webinar, or coaching.

Organisations that provide CPD typically fall into two categories - Providers or Employers:

### Providers

**Delivering activities to external clients including:**

- Commercial providers of training, workshops, conferences and online learning activities
- Independent coaches and coaching organisations
- Employers who offer training and development activities to their clients, as



### Employers

**Providing training and learning activities for their employees including:**

- Private Sector Companies & Plc's
- Public Sector
- Charitable Organisations
- Not-for-Profit Organisations

## Minute 3:

## What do we know about CPD?

As well as overseeing the CPD Standards Office, the Professional Development Consortium is home to the CPD Research Project. This was launched in 2010 at Kingston University, and has surveyed over 1000 professional individuals and conducted numerous interviews with professional bodies, institutes and employers.

This comprehensive and ongoing study has provided us with a rich understanding of CPD and how it should be structured, delivered and recorded, in order to be effective and worthwhile.

The CPD Research Project found that many individuals do not think positively about CPD, our findings indicate that this is due to:

Training courses are often of poor quality with many professionals reporting negative or disappointing experiences with bad instructors, death by power point or sales content.

The majority of individual professionals undertake CPD activities on their own and as a result feel quite isolated, perceiving it as a burden on top of everyday workloads.

Few institutes or professional bodies provide any feedback on CPD records. In many cases, this means that individual professionals submit their CPD record year after year without receiving any communications on its quality or their CPD success. It is unsurprising that this becomes demotivating after some time.

These findings demonstrate that in order to be effective, CPD must be:

- ✓ Social and collaborative between peer or professional groups
- ✓ Recognised and rewarded by professional bodies or employers.
- ✓ Improved through high quality training provision and positive experience of CPD activities.

**To move the findings forward, the Professional Development Consortium is:**

**Progressing knowledge through research:** The third phase of the CPD Research Project is entitled 'Celebrating and Rewarding CPD Success' and is exploring effective recognition mechanisms for CPD schemes housed by both professional bodies and employers.

**Working to raise the quality of CPD provision:** through the work of the CPD Standards Office.



## About the CPD Standard Office

The CPD Standards Office is part of the Professional Development Consortium. It is the only authoritative organisation, working with the CPD Institute, which offers independent CPD accreditation. This has been developed in consultation with professional bodies, regulators, membership organisations, and employers and from the findings of Phase 1 of the Consortium's CPD Research Project

The CPD Standards Office currently accredits learning across five different areas:

Events

Speaking

Online &

Coaching

Training  
Courses

Mobile  
Learning

Each area has its own criteria and requirements which have been established from our comprehensive research into CPD. There is a set assessment process for each area, and a dedicated accredited-mark:



Once a provider's training or learning activity has met the criteria successfully, it is awarded the accredited-mark for that area and receives a dedicated mark which includes its formal provider number and the time period for which it is accredited. The following is an example for a training course provider:

The CPD Standards Office

CPD PROVIDER: 60048  
2017 - 2018

[www.cpdstandards.com](http://www.cpdstandards.com)



If you would like to find out more about the CPD Standards Office, or become an accredited provider or coach, please contact our friendly team at:

T: 0203 745 6463 E: [info@cpdstandards.com](mailto:info@cpdstandards.com)  
W: [www.cpdstandards.com](http://www.cpdstandards.com)