Continuing Professional Development

Standards and Guidance

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1.1	Final document for publication	Jude Savage	February 2022
1.2	CPD Standards and Guidance documentation merged. Minor amendments to reflect updates to governance arrangements	Jude Savage	July 2024

Introduction

This document presents the Academy for Healthcare Science's *Standards of Continuing Professional Development* for Registrants.

The standards were originally developed through extensive discussion and consultation with professional bodies, existing voluntary registration bodies, the Modernising Scientific Careers team at the Department of Health, Health Education England and, most importantly, patient and public representatives. These updated standards reflect the changes made to the standards set out in Good Scientific Practice published in April 2021 to ensure alignment between the two documents.

These standards are consistent with the requirements for the Healthcare Science workforce currently regulated by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC).

What is CPD?

Any individual working in healthcare has the potential to cause harm to patients. To reduce the risk of harm and maximize patient safety, all Academy for Healthcare Science ("the Academy") registrants are required to demonstrate that they are fit to practise through Continuing Professional Development (CPD), both in terms of their competency and conduct. This is essential in supporting a culture of continuous learning and improvement, as well as ensuring the professionalism of registrants.

Continuing Professional Development is defined as:

> ***"The process of lifelong learning for all individuals and teams which meets the needs of patients and delivers the health outcomes and healthcare priorities of the NHS and which enables professionals to expand and fulfil their potential"***

CPD is essential for most professions and is a compulsory requirement for registration with the Academy; if you do not maintain your CPD, you are likely to be removed from the register. Please remember to undertake and keep a record of your Continuing Professional Development activity. It is ultimately for the benefit and safety of all patients and the public.

Reasons why you should undertake CPD

CPD helps you maintain or develop your competence and fitness to practise, whether your development objectives are:

- for the purposes of your role or profession;
- required by your employer;
- required to meet a specific career goal; or
- aspirational, to meet your own personal goals

But there are broader reasons, for example:

- Providing a Quality Service – Quality standards in the NHS are safeguarded by a system of Clinical Governance, life-long learning and professional self-regulation. Life-long learning is an investment in quality and CPD is a process of life-long learning for all individuals which enables professionals to expand and fulfil their potential. As a professional it is your responsibility to develop yourself and maintain competence in your work;

- Accreditation – organisations seeking to gain acknowledgement for quality from external agencies will require employees to demonstrate life-long learning. For example, this could relate to Improving Quality in Physiological Services (IQIPS) or medical physics and clinical engineering (MPACE) accreditation;

- CPD does have its benefits for you and may include greater work satisfaction, greater motivation, greater career flexibility and career advancement;

- CPD should be an integral part of your personal development plan;

- Many CPD activities provide evidence against dimensions included in knowledge and Skills frameworks

What can count as CPD?

There are many ways you can undertake CPD. The following are examples of activities and the related areas:

Work-based Learning
- Learning by doing   - Case studies   - Reflective practice   - Audit of patients   - Coaching from others   - Discussions with colleagues   - Peer review   - Gaining and learning from experience   - Secondments   - Work shadowing or job rotation   - Journal club   - In-service training   - Supervising staff or students   - Visiting to other departments and reporting back   - Expanding your role   - Significant analysis of events   - Filling in self-assessment questionnaires   - Project work
Professional activities
- Involvement in a professional body   - Membership of a specialist interest group   - Lecturing, teaching or mentoring   - Being a tutor or examiner   - Branch meetings   - Organising journal clubs or other specialist groups   - Maintaining or developing specialist skills (for example, musical skills)   - Being an expert witness   - Membership of other professional bodies or groups   - Giving presentations at conferences   - Organising accredited courses   - Supervising research   - Being a national assessor

Formal / Educational activities
- Courses   - Further education   - Research   - Attending conferences   - Writing articles or paper   - Going to seminars   - Distance learning   - Going on courses accredited by a professional body   - Planning or running a course
Self-directed learning activities
- Reading books, journals or articles   - Reviewing books or articles   - Updating your knowledge through the internet or TV   - Keeping a file of your progress
Other activities
- Public service   - Voluntary work   - Courses (not directly linked to role)

Examples of CPD evidence

Examples of the various types of evidence for Continuing Professional Development include:

Things you may have produced
- Information leaflets   - Case studies   - Critical literature reviews   - Adapted user/student notes   - Policy or position statements   - Discussion documents   - Procedural documents   - Documents relating to national or local processes (e.g. schemes for peer review, mentorship or clinical supervision)   - Recent job applications   - Reports (e.g. on project work, clinical audit, reviews of activity)   - Business plans   - Protocols   - Guidance materials (e.g. for service users, colleagues or students)   - Clinical audit tools   - Clinical guidelines

- Course assignments
- Action plans
- Course programme documents
- Presentations
- Articles produced for publication
- Questionnaires
- Research papers/proposals/funding applications/ethical approval applications
- Induction materials for new members of staff
- Learning contracts
- Contributions to work of a professional body
- Contributions to work of a special interest group

Materials demonstrating reflection & evaluation of learning & practice

- Profiles drawn from learning portfolios
- Adapted documentation arising from appraisal, clinical supervision, job evaluation, compliance with locally-implemented competence frameworks.
- Documentation from compliance with local or national CPD schemes
- Evaluation of courses/conferences attended
- Personal development plans
- Documented and approved claims for academic credit for prior or experiential learning

Materials acquired from others

- Testimonies
- Letters from users, carers, students or colleagues
- Course certificates

The Academy's Standards for CPD

The Academy standards require that all registrants continue to develop their knowledge and skills while they are registered, and they must:

1. **Maintain a continuous, up-to-date and accurate record of their CPD activities**

2. **Demonstrate that their CPD activities are a mixture of learning activities relevant to current or future practice**

3. **Seek to ensure that their CPD has contributed to the quality of their practice and service delivery**

4. **Seek to ensure that their CPD benefits the service user**

5. **Present a written profile containing evidence of their CPD upon request**

This means that to meet these standards:

- You must keep a record of your CPD, in whatever format is most convenient for you.

- You must make sure your CPD is a mixture of different kinds of activities – not just one kind of learning – and that it is relevant to your work. It could be relevant to your current role or to a planned future role.

- You should aim for your CPD to improve the quality of your work. It may not actually improve your work, due to factors beyond your control, but when you choose your CPD activities you should intend for them to improve your work.

- You should aim for your CPD to benefit service users. You may not be able ensure directly that this happens, but you should have the intention of benefiting service users. Depending on where and how you work, service users might include patients, clients, your team, or students.

- If you are selected for audit, you will need to send us a CPD profile to show how you have met our standards. This process will be undertaken via our online registration system.

Our standards allow you the flexibility to plan your own CPD in a way that suits your work, your learning needs, your preferences, and the time and resources available to you.

Our flexible approach means that your CPD can take account of how you work, whether part-time or full-time, whether in the NHS or in private practice, whether dealing with patients or in management, education or research (or anywhere else). Our standards mean that you can plan your CPD activity to take account of your changing needs but you need to make sure that your CPD meets our standards.

Recording Your CPD Activity

You must retain a record of your CPD activity. If you are a member of a professional body, it will often recommend a particular format for you follow and may provide tools and templates which allow you to record your activity. It should also provide CPD activities and support.

If you are not a member of a professional body – and the Academy recommends that you are a member of a relevant professional body - you still must maintain a record of your CPD. There are a range of formats that you can choose but the key information to be recorded in a simple table, classified under four headings as detailed below:

Date	CPD Activity Description	Reflection/What I have learned	What time was spent learning

CPD Audit

The Academy monitors the CPD activities that registrants undertake for the purposes of patient safety and public confidence, and as a requirement of its accreditation with the Professional Standards Authority. The Academy Registration Rules also allow for the Registrar to send a notice to a Registrant requesting evidence of CPD, at any time, outside a scheduled audit.

Currently the Academy undertakes a bi-annual CPD audit of its registrants, similar to the Health and Care Professions Council schedule for statutory registers.

During the audit, the Academy registration system automatically selects 3% of all registered individuals at random.

What happens if I am selected for audit?

You will be notified by email by the Registrar, with the relevant information and links to submit your CPD undertaken over the previous two years. **If selected, it is mandatory for the registrant to respond; a failure to provide evidence of CPD could result in being removed from the Register.**

You will be required to submit your continuing professional development record to us for inspection within 21 days of the notice. We will also send out reminders at weekly intervals to those who have not begun to undertake their submission.

The final deadline to provide evidence of CPD is approximately 8 weeks after the initial notification; if you have not responded after seven weeks you will receive daily reminders in the last week.

If you do not respond to the request for CPD evidence by the deadline, there will be an opportunity to consider any extenuating circumstances for non-submission which you must put in writing to theRegistrar setting out the circumstances and reasons why you need an extension or are unable to submit. Once you have contacted the Registrar, the circumstances will be reviewed. The registrar will then make a decision and in some cases defer until the next audit.

If you still do not provide the required CPD evidence, you will be referred to the Registrar and may be removed from the Register.

How do I submit my CPD?

The process is undertaken via your Academy online account, which allows for evidence to be uploaded for assessment. Full information and guidance is available once you log in and select the 'CPD' option, but if you have any questions you can email the Registration Administrator at registration@ahcs.ac.uk for advice.

If you are selected for CPD audit, you will be asked to provide:

1. **A Summary of your practice history for the last two years** (maximum 500 words)

2. **A Personal Statement,** identifying how you have met the AHCS CPD standards, how your CPD activities improved the quality of your work and, if your CPD activities have not benefited service users, what you will do in the future (maximum 1500 words)

3. **A Summary of the Supporting Evidence Submitted**, with a brief description of the evidence, number of pages and / or description of the evidence format.

CPD Profile Assessment

The expected timescale for assessing CPD profiles is between four and six weeks after submission. CPD profiles will be processed in the order received, which means that the earlier you send us your completed profile, the sooner you will receive your decision.

During the assessment of the profile, your registration will be unaffected if you have renewed your registration, made payment, and are not subject to any fitness to practise allegation.

The assessors will consider your CPD profile and make a decision against each of the standards. based on the evidence you provide. The Academy asks assessors to consider each CPD profile individually and to make sensible and reasoned decisions and recommendations.

The outcomes for a profile assessment depend on whether you meet, partly meet or do not meet the standards. In each case, the CPD assessors will make a decision based solely on the information you have provided.

The following table contains guidance and questions to help when preparing your Personal Statement identifying how you have met the Academy's CPD standards.

Standard	Main questions:	Supplementary questions:
1. A registrant must maintain a continuous, up-to-date and accurate record of their CPD activities.	• Does your evidence include a summary sheet of all your CPD activities undertaken in the last two years?	• How have you kept an up-to-date and accurate record of your CPD activities? • How did you record your CPD activities? • Who (if anyone) approved your plan for undertaking CPD activities?
2. A registrant must demonstrate that their CPD activities are a mixture of learning activities relevant to current or future practice.	• What different types of learning activity have you undertaken? • How is your CPD relevant to your work? • What parts of your role are affected by your CPD?	• How did you identify your learning needs? • How did you decide on what CPD activities to undertake? • How did you make sure your mix of CPD activities is appropriate to meet your needs? • How has the mixture of learning activities been relevant to your current or future work?
3. A registrant must seek to ensure that their CPD has contributed to the quality of their practice and service delivery.	• How have you updated your knowledge and skills over the past two years? • How has this learning affected how you work?	• How does your learning relate to your ability to work safely, effectively and legally?

| 4. A registrant must seek to ensure that their CPD benefits the service user. | • How has your learning benefitted your service users? | • How does your professional development relate to your changing work?
• What aspects of your work have changed as a result of your CPD? |
| 5. A registrant must present a written profile containing evidence of their CPD upon request. | • Have I included all the parts to the profile with evidence that supports my personal statement? | |

The extent to which you meet the standards may vary from standard to standard. For example, you might meet some standards while only partly meeting others. The CPD assessors will look at your CPD profile to make a decision and recommendation, which they will justify.

If the CPD assessors decide that you meet most of the standards, but you only partly meet some, we will normally ask you for more information so that the CPD assessors can make a final decision / recommendation.

If the CPD assessors decide that you have not met one or more of the standards, we will normally write to you to explain that your CPD profile does not meet the standards; the Registrar will then review your feedback before a decision is made on whether you can continue to remain on the register.

If you don't agree with the outcome of the audit or the assessors comments, in the first instance you should email the Registration Administrator at registration@ahcs.ac.uk.

The following table lists the standards required of Academy registrants for Continuing Professional Development, against each of the standards are listed the criteria used by assessors to assess a CPD profile. Knowledge of these criteria will help you in providing evidence of your CPD if you are selected for audit. The Registration Rules also state that you could be asked to provide the evidence at any time.

Standard	Standard not met	Standard partly met	Standard met
1. A registrant must maintain a continuous, up-to-date and accurate record of their CPD activities.	The registrant has not provided evidence that they have kept a record of their CPD.	There is some evidence that the registrant has kept a record of their CPD. For example, they have described keeping a record.	There is evidence that the registrant has maintained a record of their CPD activities, and as part of their supporting evidence they have submitted a brief summary of all the CPD activities they have undertaken.
2. A registrant must demonstrate that their CPD activities are a mixture of learning activities relevant to current or future practice.	The registrant has not undertaken any CPD activities. Or The registrant's CPD consists of only one type of CPD activity. Or The registrant's CPD is not relevant to their current or future practice, as described in the 'summary of practice'.	The registrant has undertaken two types of CPD activity, but they have not explained why they have concentrated just on those. Or There is some evidence that the registrant's CPD is relevant to current or future work, but this is not made clear.	The registrant's CPD includes three or more types of CPD activity. Or The registrant's CPD includes two types of CPD activity and their CPD profile has explained why they have chosen to concentrate only on those types of activity. And There is evidence that the registrant's CPD activities are relevant to their current or future practice and the link is clear in the personal statement.
3. A registrant must seek to ensure that their CPD has contributed to the quality of their practice and service delivery.	There is no evidence that the registrant's CPD activities have improved the quality of their work, or that they have aimed for their CPD to improve the quality of their work.	There is some suggestion that the registrant's CPD has improved their work – improvement is hinted at in the information they have provided but they have not given any evidence to support this.	The registrant's personal statement shows that their CPD activities have improved the quality of their work and this is backed up with evidence. Or The registrant has shown how they believed that their CPD might improve the quality of their work,

			and had planned for this, but this had not been the case. The registrant's statement must show that they have considered why this has happened, and what they will do next to make sure their CPD will improve the quality of their work in the future.)
4. **A registrant must seek to ensure that their CPD benefits the service user.**	The registrant has not provided any information which explains any benefit to service users	There is limited information about how the registrant's CPD activities have benefited service users.

Or

The registrant has stated a benefit to service users but not given any evidence or explanation to support this. | The registrant has shown (through evidence provided or an explanation given) how their CPD activities have benefited service users, either directly or indirectly.

Or

The registrant has shown how they believed their CPD would benefit service users, but this has not been the case. (The profile must show that they have considered why this has happened and what you will do next to make sure their CPD will benefit service users in the future.) |
| 5. **A registrant must present a written profile containing evidence of their CPD upon request.** | The registrant did not return their profile by the deadline. | The registrant has provided a profile by the deadline, but it was incomplete (for example, they said that evidence was to follow). | The registrant submitted their profile by the deadline. |