

FAQ - Continuing professional development

What is continuing professional development (CPD)?

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is an interactive process to maintain, enhance and extend a practitioner's knowledge, expertise and competence throughout his or her career. It is a process of lifelong learning for all individual practitioners and health care teams that ensures health practitioners' knowledge and skill sets are up-to-date. The CPD cycle involves reviewing practice, identifying learning needs, planning and participating in relevant learning activities, and reflecting on the value of those activities. CPD helps to ensure that the needs of clients are met and that the health outcomes and healthcare priorities of the community are delivered.

All occupational therapists who hold general registration must complete a minimum of 30 hours of CPD per year. These CPD requirements and a guideline explaining them are available on this website. All practitioners must become familiar with these.

What is CPD mandatory?

CPD is mandatory under the National law.

The community has the right to expect that health practitioners will provide services in a competent and contemporary way, and meet best practice standards. CPD is an important component in providing safe and effective services.

All registered health practitioners must undertake CPD. All practitioners must familiarise themselves with the board's CPD requirements. To help you understand this standard, the Board has developed [CPD guidelines](#).

The CPD requirements do not apply to students or practitioners who have been granted 'non-practising' registration.

I live in a rural area and it is difficult for me to access CPD opportunities. What should I do?

Proper professional development is achieved through a wide range of activities practitioners may pursue throughout their career. There are many and varied opportunities for CPD and the Board has ensured that recognized CPD activities include options accessible to those whose opportunities are limited by cost or geography. Examples are provided in the Board's CPD Guidelines.

The Board notes that practitioners who become professionally isolated are at higher risk of lapses in competence or judgment. This includes practitioners isolated by geography. Only a portion of CPD should be self-directed learning with no peer interaction.

If I have done more than 30 hours of CPD do I need to keep a record of all CPD or just enough to equate to 30 hours?

You are not required to provide records beyond 30 hours of CPD if you are audited. However, recording more than 30 hours of CPD covers those instances where you may have included some items that are

questionable in their relevance. You may not have achieved all of your goals upon completing 30 hours of CPD. It's also a good idea to get into the habit of regularly recording your CPD. For all of these reasons, it's good therefore to record all the CPD you do, regardless of whether this is in excess of the required 30 hours per year.

What types of records do I need to keep for CPD?

You need to keep a record of activities and hours of CPD – you can use the [Board's template example](#) if you like. You also need a portfolio of evidence that supports the hours claimed. It can be any type of folder that helps you keep your evidence together. For example, if you attend a seminar, fill out the activity record, record the hours and then put the evidence – something that substantiates the activity – in your portfolio. In the webinar recorded in July 2014, the Chair of the Board showed examples of CPD records and portfolios. The [webinar can be found on our website](#). It's also a good idea to print out the [CPD guidelines and flyer](#) which you can keep with your portfolio as a quick-reference to CPD categories and what counts.

What are the categories for CPD and why are there maximum hours for each category?

The three CPD categories are:

- formal learning (up to a maximum of 25 hours per year)
- informal learning (up to a maximum of 25 hours per year), and
- engaging with the profession (up to a maximum of 10 hours per year).

Maximum hours apply because it's valuable to do a diverse range of CPD activities, across at least two of the categories.

Do I have to document my goals for CPD, or is the CPD record and portfolio of evidence enough?

You do need to document your goals for CPD because clear goals help justify the activities that you're claiming and also demonstrate how the activities that you are claiming relate to your current and/or intended scope of practice. Goals are also a good way to cover changes in your role or place of work, or management duties.

My role is management, so CPD is often not specific to occupational therapy but relevant to management, training, leadership or workplace requirements. Does this CPD still count?

The CPD you undertake has to be relevant or specific to your current and/or intended scope of practice, and you should set goals that reflect this. It is expected that you would be choosing development activities that are relevant to your management and leadership role, aligned with your goals and your scope of practice.

Does CPD count if it's completed overseas?

Yes, if you keep detailed records and a portfolio of evidence. The same tips about record-keeping and relating the activity back to your goals apply, as detailed previously – or look at the [Guidelines: Continuing professional development](#) for further information

CPD – Supervision

What is the best way of recording supervision of students in my CPD portfolio and what category does this count as?

Supervision of students can be recorded for CPD in category three – engaging with the profession.

It is recommended that you record each supervision session separately. It can be on the same template as other sessions, but it should be listed individually for each session. Include the date, the hours, the people who participated, the actions/outcomes and a summary of issues. The record should be signed by all parties.

How many hours can I claim for supervising a 10-week student?

Supervision can be recorded for CPD in category three – engaging with the profession. A maximum of 10 hours can be claimed in this category, out of the total 30 hours of CPD required each year. Evidence needs to be documented as detailed in the answer above.

Can I claim supervision hours if I am in a manager's role managing other allied health professions, such as psychologists and physios? Or if supervising other students, such as nurses?

In category three of CPD, you can claim up to 10 hours for activities which contribute to maintaining and developing quality in service delivery, training and development of students in occupational therapy and other disciplines. The Board's CPD guideline will help you to identify what activities you can claim for CPD hours.

Does the supervision received as category two CPD have to be provided by a registered occupational therapist?

To be claimed as CPD in category two, the supervision received should be delivered by an occupational therapist with general registration, and it should relate to your CPD goals around your own scope of practice.

CPD - Evidence

Often our team meetings include some kind of learning as we discuss various clients. Is this acceptable as category two CPD, with minutes as evidence?

A record of attendance alone is not enough evidence that CPD has occurred in this case. What needs to be documented is the learning that occurred – this could be done in a variety of ways, such as hand written notes, or reflective journaling under category two – informal learning. Keep a record of hours, date and participants but most importantly, document the learning outcomes.

Is there a usual acceptable range of time for reading journal articles/texts to count for CPD?

Reading counts in category two – informal learning, and up to 25 hours can be claimed as CPD in this category each year. It needs to be professional reading that is relevant to your goals and scope of practice. You should keep notes, or document in a journal your reflections about its relevance. You could make margin notes as you're reading or write a summary at the end about the things you learned.

Can I use the PD Tracker on the Occupational Therapy Australia website as evidence if audited, instead of using the CPD template on the Occupational Therapy Board of Australia website?

It is not mandatory to use our CPD template. You can create or use a template that suits your needs – as long as it contains sufficient detail. Note that if you are audited, you will need to provide a record of activities and evidence which substantiates the activities you have claimed.

What counts as CPD? Can I include mandatory training such as infection control, first aid, manual handling? Can I include research projects?

The CPD you do has to be relevant or specific to your current and/or intended scope of practice, and you should set goals that reflect this. You can then assess whether the activities you're recording relate back to these goals and your scope of practice.

The Board's CPD standard includes a range of formal and informal activities, as well as engagement with the profession. You can refer to the [CPD flyer](#) as a quick-reference to what counts.

Some examples of things that would not count as CPD include: fire or building evacuation training, checking emails, general communication in the workplace or time spent compiling your CPD portfolio. If you're unsure about whether an activity counts, ask yourself if you are developing or learning by doing these activities, in relation to your scope of practice as an occupational therapist.

I have not practised in several years, but am currently registered. How can I build up my CPD portfolio to achieve the 30 hours minimum while not actually employed?

Look at the list of options on the [CPD flyer](#) for some ideas. Activities in category two – informal learning, are a good option, particularly free or low-cost activities such as reading. The CPD requirements in the informal learning category have been developed with accessibility and affordability in mind. It is important that all occupational therapists participate regularly in activities that help you to learn and develop. A combination of activities in categories two and three can provide good opportunities to maintain and develop currency of knowledge, without accessing formal CPD events.

Do the CPD requirements remain the same for those on maternity/paternity leave?

If you maintain general registration, yes, the CPD requirements are the same – 30 hours of CPD per year. You could consider applying in advance for a [partial exemption for CPD](#) or switching to non-practising registration if you are planning an extended break during which you will not be practising as an occupational therapist.

Are there exemptions for hours of CPD required if you work part-time?

No, as the expectation is that if you are practising, you need to maintain currency and be undertaking development activities, regardless of the hours worked each week. We all need to engage in ongoing learning to update our knowledge, skills and to maintain currency of practice.

CPD - Non-practising

What is the minimum number of CPD hours for an occupational therapist with non-practising registration?

If you hold non-practising registration, then there is no requirement to meet the Board's CPD standard of 30 hours per year.

I have had 2.5 years not practising and therefore am only registered as 'non-practising'. Will I be required to do 30 hours of CPD before applying for general registration?

No, you won't need to meet the Board's CPD standard before applying for general registration, provided you meet the recency of practice standard (i.e. you have practised for at least six months full-time equivalent in the past five years). Once you have general registration, you will need to complete 30 hours of CPD per year.

CPD – Partial exemptions

Who do I apply to for consideration of special circumstances for partial exemptions form 30 hours CPD?

You must submit a request for a CPD exemption in writing to AHPRA before the end of the registration period (30 November each year). Special circumstances are ill health, maternity/paternity or parenting leave, travelling overseas, ongoing medical condition, carers leave or other extenuating circumstances. The Board's position is that even while not working, it is reasonable and not overly burdensome to normally expect a minimum of 12 hours of CPD by a practitioner for each registration period, unless a compelling reason exists to accept fewer hours of CPD. Refer to the [partial exemptions guidance document](#) for further information. This document also contains a request form and address details for lodgement of the form.