

Frequently asked questions

27 October 2020

Continuing professional development (CPD)

1. Why should I do CPD?

CPD is an important way for you to maintain and improve your knowledge and skills and to stay up to date in your area of practice, helping you to be a safer and more effective practitioner. Research suggests that CPD may improve patient outcomes. The National Law requires all Boards to develop a continuing professional development (CPD) registration standard.

2. What if I don't work in clinical practice?

All practitioners except those with student or non-practising registration must complete CPD every year. Even if you don't work with patients and your work is in a non-clinical role you must comply with the CPD standard if you have general registration. Some examples of non-clinical roles include health management, administration, education, research, advisory, regulatory or policy development or any other similar role.

You should think about the skills and knowledge that you need in your role when deciding on your learning needs and planning your CPD. Some of the ways you might choose to meet the standard include attending seminars or work-based training, reading and summarising research that relates to your role or meeting with a mentor to discuss how you could improve your work. For more information see '[CPD activities that meet the standard](#)'.

3. How will the Board know that I have met the CPD registration standard?

When you renew your registration, you must declare that you have met the CPD registration standard. If you declare that you did not meet the standard you will be asked for information about how much CPD you did complete and the reason that you were unable to meet the standard. It is important to ensure that your declaration is accurate. The Board may decide to take action including issuing a caution, accepting an undertaking, imposing conditions or referring to Tribunal if you make a false declaration.

4. What happens if I don't meet the CPD registration standard?

If you have not met the CPD registration standard the Board may take action including imposing conditions on your registration or possibly refusing registration. Before making this decision, the Board will consider how much CPD you have completed and the reason/s you failed to meet the standard. The Board may decide that you must do extra CPD hours in the next registration period.

5. Should I keep evidence that I have met the standard?

Yes.

The CPD standard requires you to keep a portfolio that documents your learning goals, records your planned activities and your reflection on how these activities will or have improved your practice. The standard also requires you to keep evidence of the CPD you have completed.

Each year the Board conducts random audits of practitioners for compliance with the CPD standard. If you cannot provide evidence of your compliance the Board may decide to investigate the matter.

6. What if I can't meet the standard?

The Board believes that the range of activities and the timeframe provided, including the pro rata allowance, is flexible enough to enable you to meet the standard except in exceptional circumstances. If exceptional circumstances prevent you from practising and from completing your CPD the Board may grant you an exemption. For more information about exemptions see the Board's [Fact sheet: CPD exemptions](#).

7. Do I need to meet the standard if I'm taking a break from practice?

If you are registered to practise you need to meet the CPD standard. The CPD standard does not apply if you have non-practising registration.

If you are planning a lengthy break from practice you may wish to consider applying for non-practising registration. When you decide to return to practice you must meet the Recency of practice and Professional indemnity insurance arrangements registration standards.

8. What is the CPD cycle?

The CPD cycle (see [Guidelines: Continuing professional development](#)) describes the activities that you should undertake each year. The cycle starts with identifying your learning needs and planning the CPD activities that you will undertake to meet those needs.

Once you have completed these activities you should record your reflections on how your CPD has or will improve your practice. These reflections will inform your CPD planning for the next year (CPD cycle).

9. I completed 20 hours of CPD at my work place, do I have to do extra hours to meet the standard?

As long as the CPD that you completed at your workplace meets the CPD standard by seeking to improve patient/client outcomes, drawing on best available evidence, contributing to your competence and building on your knowledge then you do not have to do any extra hours.

You must also record your learning goals and your reflection on how the workplace CPD activities have improved your practice to meet the CPD standard.

10. Can I count planning and reflecting on my CPD towards the 20 hours?

No. You must complete 20 hours of CPD activities with a minimum of 5 hours in an interactive setting with other practitioners. The time you spend planning and reflecting on the activities that you undertake cannot be included in your 20 hours.

11. 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 recognised CPD activities that include options accessible to those whose opportunities are limited by cost or geography. Examples are provided in the Board's *Guidelines: Continuing professional development*.

12. If I have done more than 20 hours of CPD do I need to keep a record of all CPD or just enough to equate to 20 hours?

You are not required to provide records beyond 20 hours of CPD if you are audited. However, recording more than 20 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 20 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 20 hours per year.

13. 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. Further information about how to record your reflections and learning goals can be found on the Board's [website](#).

14. Can I claim supervision hours if I am in a manager's role? Or if supervising students?

In order for providing supervision to a staff member or student to be claimed as CPD it must:

- seeks to improve patient/client outcomes and experiences
- contributes directly to improving your competence (performance and behaviour) and keeping you up to date in your chosen scope and setting of practice, and
- builds on your existing knowledge.

In your CPD portfolio you must document your learning goals, record the supervision provided and your reflection on how the supervision provided is expected to improve, or have improved your practice.

Supervision provided as part of your day to day work, for example as a manager, would not be considered acceptable CPD unless you are able to provide a detailed reflection of how the supervision provided is expected to improve or has improved your practice and you can demonstrate that you have undertaken activities such as advanced training in providing supervision, that equips you with skills that enable you to deliver supervision beyond what would be required in your day to day activities.

15. Can I claim supervision hours if I am receiving supervision?

The [Registration standard: Continuing Professional Development](#) requires you to complete at least five hours of interactive CPD activities, as there is some evidence that this facilitates effective learning. It also helps to maintain connections with other practitioners and contemporary practice. Supervision received or provided may be claimed as CPD. In order for supervision received to be claimed as CPD it must:

- Seek to improve patient/client outcomes and experiences
- Contribute directly to improve your competence (performance and behaviour) and keeping you up to date in your chosen scope and setting of practice, and
- Builds upon your existing knowledge

In order for supervision received to be considered acceptable CPD it must incorporate an element where you and your supervisor are reflecting on your practice and considering ways in which you can improve your practice.

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

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 considers that where CPD is a mandatory requirement of a practitioner's job then this would not be considered appropriate CPD for the purposes of the standard. So for example there may be some instances where you are required to complete manual handling/safety induction training or CPR/fire training, as part of your orientation to your work environment. In these instances this would not be considered appropriate CPD for the purposes of the standard. However there may be other instances where a practitioner has undertaken similar training in order to equip them with the skills.

The Board will assess these activities on a case by case basis with reference to the practitioner's role, experience and whether the activities were undertaken in order to improve the practitioner's knowledge/skills.

The [Fact sheet: CPD activities that meet the standard](#) includes a range of activities which are likely to be CPD that will meet the standard.

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 practice as an occupational therapist.

Undertaking your day to day routine work duties cannot be counted as CPD.

17. I have not practised in several years, but am currently registered. How can I build up my CPD portfolio to achieve the 20 hours minimum while not actually employed?

The [Fact sheet: CPD activities that meet the standard](#) and the [Guidelines: Continuing professional development](#) provide some examples of free and low-cost activities that can be undertaken if you are not employed. It is important that all occupational therapists participate regularly in activities that help you to learn and develop. A combination of CPD activities as listed in the Guidelines and Fact sheets on the Board's [website](#) provide good opportunities to maintain and develop currency of knowledge, without accessing formal CPD events.

18. 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.

19. If I work across multiple areas of practice do I need to undertake CPD in each area?

If you are working across multiple practice settings it is important for you to undertake CPD that directly contributes to improving your competence across those different settings.

20. Is there a limit on the number of hours that I can claim for undertaking a specific type of CPD activity?

When you are looking for CPD activities you should consider undertaking a range of activities to help you find CPD that best meets your learning goals. The Board does not define maximum/minimum hours that it would take to undertake certain CPD activities. What is important is that you undertake the CPD activity, document and reflect upon:

- the learning goal that the activity was intended to meet
- what you learnt from undertaking the activity
- whether your learning goal was met (note: your goal may not have been met or only partly met)
- how what you learnt has/hasn't changed your practice

21. What types of activities can be counted as interactive CPD?

Some examples of interactive CPD might include:

1. Meeting with colleagues where you organise a time to catch up with a professional colleague/s to brain storm ways to manage a complex case. You take notes about the discussion and how what you learnt might improve your patient's outcome. You each sign and date your own notes.
2. Practice observations where you spend time observing a professional colleague (may be from a different profession) and record your reflection on how you built on your knowledge and improved your patient outcomes. If you spend time discussing your observations with a colleague, then this would meet the interactive requirement.

22. When should I identify my CPD learning goals?

You should identify your learning goals early in each registration year after you have renewed your registration. You should identify and record your learning needs before you start to plan your CPD activities for the coming registration year. Although you should identify your learning goals in advance, you can update your learning goals at any time during the year. The Board recognises that your learning goals may change in response to factors within your individual professional practice or peer review for example when a patient presents with a condition that you are unfamiliar with or you need to learn or refresh an approach to your work. Learning goals may also change in response to factors outside of your professional practice such as areas identified by your Board, professional association or employer for example cultural safety.

There is more guidance, including factsheets and FAQs, on the Board's *Registration Standard: Continuing professional development* available on its [website](#).

23. What evidence do I need to maintain as part of my CPD portfolio?

The CPD standard requires you to keep records of your CPD portfolio and your CPD activities for at least five years from the date you completed the CPD cycle. These records must be available for audit or if required by the Board as part of an investigation.

You must also keep evidence of CPD activities completed, such as:

- certificates of attainment or attendance, and
- your notes from the CPD activity such as conducting a literature review, or reading case studies or journal articles. In this example, it is expected that these notes will provide a comprehensive summary of the key points of the review and reflect your learning from this activity.

24. Do I need to complete 20hrs of CPD if I registered part-way through a registration period?

Occupational therapists who are registered partway through a registration period must complete a minimum of five hours of CPD for every three months of registration remaining in the registration period.