



## **Continuing Professional Development: Professional and Regulatory Requirements**

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### **Summary**

Recent years have seen enormous advances in the approach taken to Continuing Professional Development (CPD). This document builds on the existing policy of The Society and College of Radiographers and sets out clearly:

- The College's definition of CPD
- The professional's responsibility to undertake and record CPD
- The rationale and practical requirements for CPD accreditation
- The roles of employers, managers and providers of education and training
- The links between the College's requirements for CPD accreditation and the UK regulatory requirements as set out in the Health Professions Council's 'CPD Standards'

### **Introduction**

It is now more than a decade since the College of Radiographers first issued guidance to members with regard to undertaking Continuing Professional Development (CPD)<sup>1</sup>.

Since then the College has invested significantly in an integrated infrastructure to encourage, support and, importantly, to accredit all member practitioners who undertake their CPD in line with the College's defined professional standards for CPD accreditation.

Recent years have seen enormous advances in the approach taken to CPD. The notion of measuring CPD by the number of hours spent on CPD activities has been replaced by one which focuses on the relevance to, and impact on, practice. The increase in use of the Internet and the availability of information technology have seen a move from paper-based to electronic CPD portfolio and record keeping. These same developments have revolutionised learning potential and can provide the professional with a limitless range of CPD opportunities, although traditional learning and media still have their place.

This document builds on existing CPD policy<sup>2</sup> in that it sets out clearly:

- The College's definition of CPD
- The professional's responsibility to undertake and record CPD

- The rationale and practical requirements for CPD accreditation
- The roles of employers, managers and providers of education and training
- The links between the College's requirements for CPD accreditation and the UK regulatory requirements as set out in the Health Professions Council's 'CPD Standards'<sup>3</sup>.

## 1. The College's definition of CPD

1.1 The College of Radiographers defines continuing professional development (CPD) as follows and this new definition replaces any previous definition of CPD by the College of Radiographers:

***An ongoing professional activity in which the practitioner identifies, undertakes and evaluates learning appropriate to the maintenance and development of the highest standards of practice within an evolving scope of practice.***

1.2 It might be helpful to consider some components of this definition in more detail:

1.2.1 '*...an ongoing professional activity...*' CPD is a professional activity and should form part of the practice of all professionals. The individual professional is primarily responsible for his or her CPD and should maintain appropriate standards of practice in this area. These are defined in paragraph 2.2 of this document.

1.2.2 '*... identifies... learning...*' This will normally involve planning learning activities as part of a regular review of practice and learning needs, but it is recognised that learning opportunities will arise spontaneously in the course of practice. It is for the practitioner to identify appropriate learning activities, although this may be done in consultation with a manager or other advisor through a process of development review or similar.

1.2.3 '*...undertakes... learning...*' Learning should be understood in its widest sense; individuals will often have a preferred approach to learning but must recognise that a wide range of learning activities can contribute to CPD. Formal programmes of learning, learning events or self-directed learning are an essential part of CPD but learning is only a part of the CPD process. CPD is a professional process and must be evidenced by an evaluation of its contribution to practice, not simply by documentation of learning or educational achievement. CPD is a professional, not an educational, activity.

1.2.4 '*...evaluates... learning...*' Learning should be evaluated to determine its quality and value as well as its impact on practice.

1.2.5 '*...appropriate... to practice...*' Again, the primary responsibility to determine this lies with the professional, although the advice and guidance of managers and other persons acting in an advisory capacity will be of value.

1.2.6 '*...an evolving scope of practice.*' Practice may evolve through overt development and career progression but practitioners should remember that external developments; changes in legislation or cultural values, for example, will impact on their practice and learning requirements.

## 2. The Professional's Responsibility to Undertake and Record CPD

2.1 The College of Radiographers expects all members to undertake CPD in accordance with 2.2 below, irrespective of level of professional attainment or practice, or of scope of practice.

2.2 The College of Radiographers defines the professional's responsibility to undertake and record CPD as:

*A requirement to review, on a regular basis, practice and associated learning needs, to make every effort to ensure that learning needs are addressed and to keep a portfolio describing a representative sample of learning activities undertaken. The portfolio should evidence the CPD process and should demonstrate clearly the actual or intended impact on practice.*

2.3 It might be helpful to consider some components of this definition in more detail:

2.3.1 '*...regularly review...*' Practitioners need to determine their own needs here, but an annual review with a line manager should be undertaken as a minimum (this could be within the context of local learning and development review processes), with some time set aside by the individual for personal reflection on at least a quarterly basis.

2.3.2 '*...a portfolio...*' This should be organised in a structured way and should evidence compliance with the College's definition of CPD in 1.1 above. The College's online portfolio, CPD Now, is available to all members at no extra charge and the College strongly recommends its use.

2.3.3 '*...a representative sample...*' It is not feasible to record all CPD activities as many arise on a daily basis in the course of clinical or other professional practice. The requirements for CPD accreditation by the College through CPD Now define the minimum representative sample.

2.3.4 '*...the CPD process...*' See 1.1 and 1.2.1 to 1.2.6 above. A collection of certificates or a list of activities is not sufficient. Evidence of the identification, undertaking and evaluation of learning appropriate to the maintenance and development of practice must be included. CPD Now guides the user through these processes and ensures compliance with these conditions.

2.3.5 '*...actual or intended impact on practice.*' Most CPD activities will demonstrate a positive impact on practice. However, if an activity has been undertaken and has not met this aim it may still be legitimately included in a CPD portfolio provided that the evaluation of the learning undertaken evidences commitment to meet the improvement to practice in question by other means. This might, for instance, be a different programme of learning or a practical, hands-on approach rather than a formal programme.

2.3.6 '*Aspirational*' CPD may also be included. This describes activities undertaken which as yet have no clear impact on practice but are undertaken with a view to future development. Practitioners should exercise judgement with regard to the quantity of aspirational CPD included in their portfolio, as the portfolio should contain sufficient evidence of CPD supporting current practice or immediate developments.

### **3. The Rationale and Practical Requirements for CPD Accreditation**

3.1 CPD forms part of the practice of any professional and for practitioners in clinical imaging, radiotherapy and oncology, appropriate standards of CPD are defined by the College of Radiographers.

3.2 The College of Radiographers alone is uniquely placed to define appropriate standards of CPD for practitioners in clinical imaging, radiation therapy and oncology.

3.3 The College of Radiographers provides for the accreditation of all members' CPD activities.

**The College of Radiographers offers CPD accreditation to all members and promotes the value of the certificate of CPD accreditation as clear evidence that professional standards**

**for CPD have been met. Accreditation and certification are only accessible through CPD Now. Accreditation requires a minimum of twelve CPD activities, appropriately documented in accordance with the requirements of CPD Now, and referenced to an individual CPD framework of six professional outcomes. The twelve activities must have been recorded, or significantly updated, within the two year period immediately preceding the request for accreditation. Accreditation is a process of self-certification and the certificate is generated electronically.**

3.4 CPD accreditation demonstrates that the individual practitioner has met the College's CPD requirements and it is envisaged that a certificate of CPD accreditation will be recognised by the profession as clear evidence that appropriate standards of CPD are being met.

3.5 CPD is concerned with professional practice (in contrast with learning or educational achievement). The professional body alone can define profession-specific standards of CPD and can accredit the practitioner who meets these standards.

3.6 The practical requirements for CPD accreditation are set out in the College's on line CPD portfolio, CPD Now.

3.7 CPD accreditation can only be awarded by the College through CPD Now.

3.8 CPD accreditation will initially be achieved within two years of starting to put together an electronic portfolio through CPD Now. Once certification is achieved it is maintained by adding to the portfolio on a regular basis. The practitioner can use the system to generate a current certificate of CPD accreditation at any time, provided that the conditions for accreditation continue to be met.

3.9 The College will require the submission of a current certificate of CPD accreditation as a condition of the renewal of registration on the Society's register of **assistant practitioners**.

3.10 The College will require the submission of a current certificate of CPD accreditation as a condition of the renewal of registration on the Society's register of **advanced practitioners**.

3.11 For all other practitioners, the College regards the certificate of CPD accreditation as evidence that the practitioner has met appropriate standards of professional accreditation. It must be emphasised that CPD certification cannot of itself provide evidence of competence or of fitness to practice.

## **4. The roles of employers, managers and providers of education and training**

### **4.1 Employers**

4.1.1 The role of the **employer** is set out in the document '*A Strategy for Continuing Professional Development*'<sup>2</sup>.

### **4.2 Managers**

4.2.1 Managers have an interest in staff successfully undertaking CPD and local arrangements such as personal development planning, pay and career progression review and staff supervision may support and be supported by the CPD process.

4.2.2 Managers should understand that, although the bulk of an employee's CPD will centre on the maintenance and development of knowledge of skills pertinent to the employee's current post and role in service delivery, the employee nonetheless is entitled to undertake some aspirational CPD that may have no apparent immediate relevance to practice (see 2.3.6 above). Resources may

permit the funding of CPD activities where these coincide with education and training required to support service development. Employees must accept that this will rarely be the case with aspirational activities.

4.2.3 The individual's CPD portfolio is a personal record and service managers, or indeed anybody else, do not have the right to examine the portfolio. However, it is clearly in the employee's interest to provide evidence of CPD undertaken to demonstrate compliance with the requirements of local review processes and managers are entitled to ask for this.

4.2.4 Managers may wish to see evidence that protected study time is being used appropriately. The College recommends that employees evidence this in two ways:

- by evidencing previously agreed learning and development objectives met as part of the processes of personal development planning, pay and career progression review or similar local arrangements. If protected study time is given the employee cannot reasonably cite lack of time as a reason for not meeting previously agreed objectives
- by providing a current certificate of CPD accreditation from the College of Radiographers (although managers should note that it may take up to two years for the initial certification to be achieved, see 3.8 above).

4.2.5 A range of features included in CPD Now can support practitioners and managers in meeting local learning and development requirements. These include:

- the facility to reference CPD activities to the NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework (KSF) with automated electronic links between the individual practitioner's CPD framework and personal KSF
- the facility to produce a summary report, listing what is recorded against the individual's core and specific dimensions of the KSF; it is envisaged that this will streamline the KSF review process for employees and managers
- a CPD programme for newly qualified staff to evidence progression during the period of preceptorship, linked to a suggested KSF outline. Managers may also find this programme helpful for practitioners who require support in getting started with self-directed learning and portfolio work.

## 5. Providers of Education and Training

5.1 The College of Radiographers provides for the accreditation of all learning products; including conferences and seminars, short courses, applications training, digital learning packages, publications, video clips and podcasts – that aim to provide CPD opportunities for practitioners in clinical imaging, radiotherapy and oncology. To distinguish this process from the accreditation of individual practitioners, the term 'CPD endorsement' is preferred.

5.2 CPD endorsement is awarded by the College of Radiographers' Approvals and Accreditation Board. Application for endorsement should be made to the approvals administrator in the first instance at [approval@sor.org](mailto:approval@sor.org) .

## 6. Regulatory Requirements

6.1 Radiographers who practice in the United Kingdom must be registered with the UK regulatory body, The Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC).

6.2 HCPC registration carries a requirement to comply with the HCPC's 'CPD Standards'. These are a set of conditions introduced in July 2006 and registrants are required to confirm compliance when registering and renewing registration. More detailed information is available on the HCPC website at [www.hcpc-uk.org](http://www.hcpc-uk.org).

6.3 The HCPC CPD Standards are a generic requirement common to all professions regulated by the HCPC. In compiling the CPD Standards, the HCPC recognised that specific professions set their own CPD requirements for professional purposes. The HCPC CPD Standards were designed to accommodate, not to replace or compromise, individual professions' CPD requirements and the CPD programmes organised by professional bodies.

6.4 The HCPC will carry out a random sampling of registrants to ensure compliance (the HCPC calls this process 'CPD audit')

6.5 The Society and College of Radiographers supports its members in meeting the regulatory requirement in three ways:

- by providing a range of CPD opportunities through its journals, conference and events programme and other professional activities
- by ensuring that the College's own CPD standards match, as a minimum, those of the regulatory body. In other words, if a practitioner meets the College's standards for CPD accreditation, he or she can be confident that the regulatory requirement is addressed
- by including in CPD Now a template for the statement required by the HCPC CPD audit to prove that the registrant is meeting the CPD Standards (the HCPC refers to this as a 'CPD profile'). This can be generated quickly and easily using the data already held in the user's CPD portfolio.

6.6 It must be understood that the HCPC will not accept a certificate of CPD accreditation from the College of Radiographers as evidence of compliance with its CPD Standards. A CPD profile must be submitted (see paragraph 6.5 bullet point 3 above).

## References

1. The College of Radiographers. Continuing Professional Development Strategy: Final Report of Working Party London SCoR 1996
2. The College of Radiographers. A Strategy for Continuing Professional Development London SCoR 2003
3. Health Professions Council CPD and Your Registration London HPC July 2006

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