

Continuing professional development

What it means and how to record it effectively

Continuing professional development (CPD) is the term used to describe a person's commitment to lifelong learning and is an essential part of any quality professional's career. It is defined as any activity that helps you develop your expertise, achieve your career goals and engage with your colleagues in new and effective ways. CPD is also recognised by employers as evidence of a proactive approach to professional development.

Undertaking CPD and documenting it is a fundamental requirement of being a Chartered Quality Professional and is recommended for all members. It's important our members recognise the benefits of managing their professional growth and understand why they need to develop their potential through SMART objectives (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound). The CQI uses a flexible framework to capture the wide range of activities you can undertake for your CPD and our three-step process provides a structured approach for recording and evidencing your achievements.

Here's our three-step guide on how to undertake and record your CPD:

3 steps of CPD

Step 1

PLAN – identify your learning objectives

Planning your learning objectives is a really important stage of CPD because it helps you use your time effectively and tailor activities to suit your needs better. It's vital you consider both your short-term and long-term career aspirations, and assess your current knowledge and skills, in order to identify what you want to learn over the next 12 months.

What you need to do:

- List three to four achievable objectives
- Don't limit yourself to the skills you need to do your job – ie you could decide you want to help others by passing on your knowledge
- Use notes from your last work appraisal to help you understand your strengths and weaknesses
- Make sure your plan is fit for purpose.

How the CQI can help:

- Use our CPD log to plan and record your CPD
- Use the CQI Competency Framework to identify new skills within the scope of the profession
- Research the experience you need to land your next role by checking job requirements at qualityjobs.org.uk
- Review our membership grade criteria to find out what you need to become a Chartered Quality Professional

Step 2

DO – plan and record your activities

You can record any professional activity that helps you achieve your objectives but it should be proportionate and relevant to your role. The amount of CPD that you record can be proportionate to your role and circumstances – ie if you work part-time, on a voluntary basis or are retired. Also, the CQI does not require CPD to be undertaken in a set number of hours.

What you need to do:

- Set aside 45 minutes in your diary every three months to update your CPD record
- Plan and record activities and identify what you hope to gain from each of them
- If someone is helping you with one of your activities, encourage them to meet to discuss your approach. Be specific about what you need from them
- If you're recording CPD for your employer or another membership body the CQI will accept this as evidence of your plans, providing you demonstrate that you're identifying and meeting your own development needs.

How the CQI can help:

- Log in to access resources such as technical papers, *Quality World* magazine and the CQI e-library
- Also in My CQI, make sure your email address is up to date so you receive our monthly Knowledge email, packed full of information for your CPD.

Step 3

REFLECT – assess your success

The essence of CPD is planning and reflection. People who reflect are able to retain more information and are more efficient at applying it to improve their performance. However, if an activity doesn't go as expected you still need to reflect on what happened, making note of what you need to do differently in order to achieve that learning objective.

What you need to do:

- Update your CPD plan, adding in any missing information
- Reflect on your activities and achievements and how they helped you to develop, and don't forget to ensure that you put these skills into practice
- At the end of the year look at the objectives you haven't achieved and what further work is required to achieve them
- Start your CPD plan for the next year, using your current log to help inform your new objectives.

How the CQI can help:

- Visit your local CQI branch where you can discuss ideas and solutions with other quality professionals
- Join the CQI LinkedIn group for further networking opportunities: linkedin.com
- Share your new knowledge with others by contributing to CQI publications (*Quality World* and the Knowledge email), just send your ideas to: editorial@quality.org

What counts as CPD?

- Work experience (particularly new projects or initiatives)
- Volunteering in a professional capacity
- On-the-job training (either given or received)
- Completion of qualifications
- Short courses and workshops
- Private study, such as reading or research
- Mentoring and coaching
- Attending events and conferences
- Learning a new language
- e-learning via webinars or distance learning.

This isn't an exhaustive list. If you have done something that has helped develop your competence and achieve your objectives, feel free to record it.

More...

For resources and guidance log in to:

quality.org/members-area