
Continuing Professional Development – Information Note

Undertaking Continuing Professional Development (CPD) as part of lifelong learning is essential to being a professional. Creation of a competent, innovative, forward-looking profession as well as the individual is attained by proactive and targeted learning.

This Information Note sets out the Institute's view on CPD, its requirement of its chartered members and offers guidance on the very broad range of CPD opportunities available to the practitioner.

Each member is encouraged to assess his or her own professional development needs, to set out a professional development plan and to assess how best to achieve its objectives through CPD.

What is Continuing Professional Development?

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is the structured maintenance, improvement and broadening of knowledge and skills and the development of personal qualities that are necessary for the execution of professional and technical duties throughout the practitioner's working life.

Why is it necessary?

There are many reasons for undertaking CPD, such as:

- To remain competent for the benefit of the members client
- To remain competent for the benefit of a members employer
- To remain up-to-date with new developments in an area of expertise
- To gain knowledge to move into a new area of business
- To develop a skill needed for promotion, such as management expertise
- To keep abreast of new advances in technology
- To comply with a statutory requirement

In addition the Institute requires the commitment of its members to CPD to maintain the standing of the Institute amongst other Chartered professions.

What is the requirement for members?

How much learning a member needs to undertake depends on individual circumstances and learning needs to enable them to do their work competently. The outcome of the learning is as important as the number of hours spent on it. However, the Institute expects all practising Fellows and Professional Members to undertake a

minimum of 100 hours of CPD in every three year period. As CPD is continuous, this should normally equate to around 33 hours each year.

What are CPD activities?

CPD activities are seen as embracing the wider aspects of the work of a Chartered Forester or Chartered Arboriculturist. There are a wide range of activities that qualify as CPD and although attendance at formal training courses may be most effective for many members, the Institute recognises that professional development may be achieved through a much wider range of activities.

The Institute wishes to see its members benefit through attendance at its own training events – national, regional and those run in conjunction with others – but this is not mandatory. The following is a checklist of some of the activities and events that may be considered as CPD activities. It is illustrative, not exhaustive, and you should focus on those activities that are relevant to your work and career objectives.

a. *Training events*

A wide range of training events are CPD activities. They may be in-house (i.e. provided by your employer) or external, provided by the Institute or others, provided that the topic is relevant to your professional development. For example:

- Conferences
- Regional Group events
- Study tours
- Discussion meetings
- Seminars
- Training courses

b. *Work-based activities and in-post development*

The range of members' professional activities is extensive and all employment situations should provide some opportunity for professional development. For example:

- Planning and running in-house training events
- Co-ordinating or participating in-house discussion/training groups
- Personnel management skills
- Professional interviews
- Staff training
- Business and financial management skills
- Information technology
- Arbitrator/expert witness
- Secondment

c. *Involvement with the profession*

Many members are involved with the work of the Institute, other professional chartered bodies, industry bodies and trade associations that are relevant to their businesses. This involvement may also offer professional development opportunities. For example:

- Institute Council and committees
- Institute Regional Groups
- Institute examinations
- Qualification accreditation
- Other organisations' committees, panels
- Partnership working

d. Courses and research

A range of opportunities for further qualifications is available to professionals, for example distance learning and part-time study.

Contributions to original research that are outside of your normal professional activity may also qualify as CPD activity.

e. Informal learning and voluntary work

CPD outside of the workplace and other professional activities is progressively becoming a more attractive and useful means of individual professional development. It is important that this form of development is structured, for example, through structured reading and private study, or through voluntary or charity work.

This form of CPD can be efficient and cost-effective and can enhance the practitioner's skills and knowledge, both at general and specialist level.

Categories and exemptions

Practising Member: a chartered member in full or part-time practice or otherwise giving a professional service as a Chartered Forester or Chartered Arboriculturist. Practising members are required to undertake 100 hours of CPD in any three-year period.

Non-practising Member: a chartered member who wishes to be included in this category is required to sign a declaration that he or she is not practising or offering any professional service that would be offered as a Chartered Forester or Chartered Arboriculturist.

Retired: The CPD requirement will be waived whilst the Member remains in this category.

Career Break: Some CPD is normally required of members undertaking career breaks and guidance on this will be provided by the Professional & Educational Standards Committee on an individual basis. Examples of career breaks are maternity or paternity leave and unemployment. In some circumstances full exemption may be granted. A career break of less than one year will not normally provide any exemption from CPD.

Overseas Chartered Members

Chartered members living and working outside of the UK are required to fulfil the 100 hours requirement. It is recognised that they will not have access to Institute events; it is likely, however, that they will have access to similar professional events in their country of residence.

Recording your CPD

The Institute requires its practising chartered members to record the learning that they have undertaken. This allows members to reflect on what has been gained, how it is to be applied and what further learning needs to be undertaken. In addition, keeping records allows a member to demonstrate that the member has sought to maintain competence in the event that a claim or allegation is brought against them.

The form of the CPD record is the responsibility of the member. Describe what learning activities have been undertaken to meet goals, including the type of learning, title, number of hours and date. The Institute advises that the record is maintained on a regular basis and in a form that can be easily monitored such as ICF's on-line recording system in the Members' Area or an equivalent electronic system.

Monitoring

Every practising chartered member, will, on request, provide the Institute with evidence of compliance with its CPD requirements. This monitoring exercise offers the opportunity for members to discuss any concerns they may have regarding the CPD compliance and to provide valuable feed-back to the Professional & Educational Standards Committee. The Committee will provide guidance and advice to any member who is having difficulty in meeting the CPD requirement.

The Institute retains the option to take action for non-compliance with the CPD requirements. Those members who do not respond to a monitoring request or who do not accept the help on offer will be referred to the Professional & Educational Standards Committee. If no progress is achieved the matter will be referred to the Professional Complaints Panel.

Further information

Contact the Professional & Educational Standards Committee through the secretariat on **0131 2401425** or e-mail at **membership@charteredforesters.org**