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**General  
Dental  
Council**

protecting patients,  
regulating the dental team

## **Continuing professional development for dentists**



**As a registered dental professional you have a duty to keep your skills and knowledge up to date so you can give patients the best possible treatment and care. Continuing professional development (CPD) is compulsory, but ideally it should just set out a formal framework for what you are already doing.**

We introduced compulsory continuing professional development for dentists in January 2002. By law, you must take part in our CPD scheme and this guidance explains what we expect from you.

CPD helps to keep up public confidence in the dental register by showing that dentists stay up to date so they can give their patients the best possible treatment.

Your first five-year CPD cycle will begin on 1 January in the year after you first register, unless you were already on the register before 1 January 2002. In this case please check page 9 of this guidance for your start date.

You need to carry out at least 250 hours of CPD every five years. At least 75 of these hours need to be ‘verifiable’ CPD (this is explained on page 4).

You should carry out verifiable CPD in recommended subject areas as part of the 75-hour minimum amount (this is explained on page 5).

You should keep your CPD records for five years after the end of your CPD cycle, as you may be selected for audit (which will mean that you will have to provide evidence to show you have been keeping to the CPD scheme).

Visit [www.gdc-uk.org](http://www.gdc-uk.org) for some suggestions on how to carry out your CPD.

*“I want to improve my knowledge and career. I want to know the latest ideas and treatments.”*

**Yukari Shirley, dental hygienist**

## Introduction

'Standards for dental professionals' sets out the principles of practice in dentistry. As a dental professional, you are responsible for:

- putting patients' interests first and acting to protect them;
- respecting patients' dignity and choices;
- protecting the confidentiality of patients' information;
- co-operating with other members of the dental team and other healthcare colleagues in the interests of patients;
- maintaining your professional knowledge and competence; and
- being trustworthy.

All dental professionals should carry out CPD to support these principles.

## What is CPD?

CPD is study, training, courses, seminars, reading and other activities which advance your professional development as a dental professional. There are two kinds of CPD – general and verifiable.

Examples of CPD			
Courses and lectures	Vocational training or general professional training study days	Educational parts of professional and specialist society meetings	Peer review and clinical audit
Distance learning	Multimedia learning	Staff training	Background research
Private study	Reading journals	Attending conferences	

## What is general CPD?

Activities which benefit your continuing professional development but cannot be independently checked (for example, private study) or do not meet all of the criteria for verifiable CPD criteria can be recorded as general (non-verifiable) CPD.

## What is verifiable CPD?

Over each five-year cycle, 75 of the 250 hours of CPD you do must be verifiable. This means an activity must meet four conditions.

**1** You must get and keep a certificate (or other type of documentary proof) proving you took part in the activity. The certificate should come from the activity provider or organiser, and should show the number of hours you spent on the activity. The certificate or document should record the CPD in hours (if the CPD is recorded as points or credits you will need to get extra evidence, either from the activity provider or from the dental regulator in the country where you took the CPD, to confirm the number of hours the CPD is equivalent to).

The activity itself must have the following.

**2** Concise educational aims and objectives – the activity should have a clear purpose or aim.

**3** Clear anticipated outcomes – you should know what you can expect to gain as a result of taking part in the activity.

**4** Quality controls – you should have the chance to give feedback, with a view to improving quality.

We do not approve any education providers or courses. Instead, you are responsible for deciding whether or not to count an activity as verifiable CPD. You must use your professional judgement to decide whether or not it meets all four conditions.

If you are not sure, ask the activity provider to explain whether the activity will meet the conditions before you agree to do the activity.

If you are satisfied that an activity meets all four conditions, you can count it towards your verifiable CPD requirement. If it does not meet all four conditions, but it still adds to your development as a dentist, you can count the time you spend on the activity as general CPD.

## **What do I have to do?**

By law, if you are a dentist, you must do (and keep records of) 250 hours of CPD over every five-year cycle. At least 75 of the 250 hours that you do in every five-year cycle must be verifiable CPD (this is explained on page 4).

The purpose of CPD is to provide high-quality care. It is very important that the CPD you do takes into account the needs of patients and is relevant to your practice.

You can split your CPD between each of the five years in a way which works for you, but you should spread it out across the five-year cycle as evenly as possible. You can only count CPD you carry out in your CPD cycle. You cannot include any activities you do before your cycle starts, or after it has ended.

You should use a personal development plan so that you and your patients benefit as much as possible from your CPD. Personal development plans allow you to identify your learning needs, prioritise them, and set a plan for meeting each need and for assessing learning activities afterwards.

You can ask your local postgraduate dental deanery or professional association for an example plan.

## **Do I have to do verifiable CPD in any particular subjects?**

We have identified some areas of CPD that dentists should do as part of the overall 75-hour minimum verifiable CPD requirement. These are:

- a** medical emergencies (at least 10 hours in every CPD cycle – and we recommend that you do at least two hours of CPD in this every year);
- b** disinfection and decontamination (at least five hours in every CPD cycle); and
- c** radiography and radiation protection (at least five hours in every CPD cycle).

We also recommend that you keep up to date by doing CPD (verifiable or general) in the following areas.

- Legal and ethical issues
- Complaints handling

## **Working with others**

You may find it useful to carry out CPD with other people – this may be particularly helpful if you are a sole practitioner. In some circumstances, it will be useful for a dental team to carry out training together – for example, in training to handle medical emergencies in the practice.

## **What records must I keep?**

You must keep a record of all the CPD hours that you do, both verifiable (for which you must also keep documentary proof from the activity provider) and general. The total must add up to 250 hours (of which at least 75 must be verifiable CPD) in each five-year cycle.

The records that you keep will be your evidence that you have met the CPD requirements.

You must keep these records for five years after the end of your CPD cycle.

You can download a blank CPD log from our website ([www.gdc-uk.org](http://www.gdc-uk.org)) to help you keep track of your hours, or you can record your hours using your eGDC account.

Whatever you do, you should keep a record of:

- the date of the activity;
- the title or subject matter of the activity;
- the venue (if this applies);
- the name of the organisation or individual running the activity;
- whether you are counting the activity as verifiable or general CPD; and
- the number of hours you spent doing the CPD activity. (You should not include lunch breaks or travel time.)

## **How and when should I send you my CPD?**

At the end of each CPD year we will contact you and ask you to give us the number of verifiable and general CPD hours you have done during the year. You can do this by logging on to eGDC or by filling in and returning the annual declaration form we send.

Towards the end of your five-year cycle, we will send you a statement of the CPD hours you have given us and will ask you to check these hours and send us an end-of-cycle declaration.

## **How do you check that I'm meeting CPD requirements?**

At the end of each five-year cycle we carry out a CPD audit. As part of this we may ask you to send us your full CPD records (including documentary proof of your verifiable CPD) to check that you have met the requirements. For this reason you should keep your CPD records for five years after the end of your cycle.

Please don't send us your records unless we ask you to.

## **What happens if I do not meet the requirements?**

If you do not meet the requirements we may take you off the register. If this happens, you will not be able to practise in the UK, and will not be allowed back on the register until you can show that you have met the CPD requirements for restoring your name to the register.

If you are thinking of leaving the register, or you are removed from the register (for not carrying out CPD or for any other reason), you will need to show evidence that you have done a certain amount of CPD to be allowed back onto the register in the future. This means that you must carry on doing and recording CPD while you are not on the register.

*“We're all part of the dental team and learning together helps strengthen our understanding of each others' work.”*

**Edward Hannaford, dental technician**

## **How much CPD will I have to show to be allowed to restore my name to the register?**

Your CPD cycles – which are fixed in law – carry on running whether or not you are on the register.

For example, if your first CPD cycle began on 1 January 2011, it will end on 31 December 2015. Your second CPD cycle then begins on 1 January 2016 and ends on 31 December 2020, and so on.

Depending on when you left the register, you may need to provide evidence of CPD in order to restore your name to the register.

- If you have been off the register for less than one year and your five-year CPD cycle has not ended during this time, you will not need to provide evidence.
- If you have been off the register for less than one year and your five-year CPD cycle ended during this time, you will need to provide documentary proof that you have done 250 hours of CPD in the five years immediately before your application (and 75 hours of this must be verifiable).
- If you have been off the register for more than one year and your five-year CPD cycle has not ended during this time, you will need to provide documentary proof that you have done 50 hours of CPD for each complete year of the cycle that has passed. At least 15 hours in each year must be verifiable CPD.
- If you have been off the register for more than one year and your five-year CPD cycle has ended, you will need to provide documentary proof that you have done 250 hours of CPD in the five years immediately before your application (and 75 hours of this must be verifiable).

## **What do you mean by CPD ‘evidence’?**

By evidence, we mean your CPD records and documentary proof of any activity you want to count as verifiable CPD. If you take time off the register, you should continue to keep records of CPD and certificates as proof of verifiable CPD in exactly the same way as if you were on the register.

You cannot count any CPD you did before your CPD cycle began. You can only count CPD you carry out within the dates of your five-year cycle.

## What happens if I don't show enough CPD evidence when I apply to restore my name to the register?

If you don't show enough CPD, you risk not being allowed to restore your name to the register. If this happens, you will be able to appeal against the decision.

## Contact us before you leave the register

You should consider the CPD rules before you decide to leave the register, and make sure that you know what you will have to do to restore your name to the register in the future. Make sure you know before you go.

## When do I start my CPD?

The start date for your CPD cycle depends on the date you first registered in the UK. Your CPD cycle is always five years long, and this is the period in which you must complete your compulsory number of hours.

When you registered	Your first CPD cycle start date
On or after 1 January 2002	1 January in the year after you first registered
Between 1 January 1990 and 31 December 2001	1 January 2002 (if you were on the register on 31 December 2001)  1 January 2003 (if you were not on the register on 31 December 2001)
Between 1 January 1980 and 31 December 1989	1 January 2003
On or before 31 December 1979	1 January 2004

## CPD checklist

- Use a personal development plan to help decide how you will meet the minimum requirement of 250 hours, of which at least 75 hours are verifiable.
- Decide how you are going to record your activities. Consider keeping separate records for verifiable and general CPD.
- Always ask yourself: 'Does this activity contribute towards my continuing professional development?'
- For verifiable CPD, check that the four conditions have been met.
- Make sure you are up to date in core areas, including medical emergencies, disinfection and decontamination, and radiography and radiation protection. You should carry out a minimum number of hours in each of these areas as part of your verifiable CPD.
- We recommend that you carry out CPD (verifiable or general) in legal and ethical issues and handling complaints.
- For all verifiable CPD, make sure you have documentary proof of your involvement, for example, a certificate.
- Keep your CPD records for five years after the end of your CPD cycle, as you may be selected for audit (which will mean that you will have to give evidence to show you have been keeping to the CPD scheme).
- When we ask you to give us the number of CPD hours you have done during the year, you can do this by logging on to eGDC or by filling in and returning the annual declaration form we send. Only send us your CPD evidence when we ask for it.
- If you are thinking of taking time off the register, remember that you'll need to carry on doing CPD while you are off the register. You must keep records of the CPD that you do while you are off the register, including documentary proof of any CPD you want to count as verifiable CPD.
- If you decide to leave the register, ring 0845 222 4141 to check that you understand the CPD requirements if you want to restore your name to the register.

## **If you have any questions about CPD**

Visit [www.gdc-uk.org](http://www.gdc-uk.org) or contact us using the following contact details.

Phone: 0845 222 4141

Email: [information@gdc-uk.org](mailto:information@gdc-uk.org)

Fax: 020 7487 2643

Post:

Registration Team (CPD)

General Dental Council

37 Wimpole Street

London W1G 8DQ

**We are here to help you.**

## **Further CPD advice sheets**

Visit our website for advice sheets on:

- CPD for dental professionals working in teaching and research
- CPD for dental professionals in vocational training
- CPD for dental professionals in postgraduate training
- CPD for dental professionals in medical training
- CPD for dental professionals working overseas

**Visit [www.gdc-uk.org](http://www.gdc-uk.org) for more information on CPD,  
or visit [www.eGDC-uk.org](http://www.eGDC-uk.org) to log your hours using  
your eGDC account.**

**We want to make sure that everyone can access our services.**

**If you would like a copy of this leaflet in a different format (for example, in large print or audio), please contact us.**

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