

STEP's CPD Policy

Continuing Professional Development

Introduction

Continuing Professional Development is defined as any learning activity which helps to maintain, develop or increase knowledge, for the purposes of maintaining a high standard of professional practice. CPD can be technical or non-technical.

CPD is a requirement of maintaining membership (see STEP's Code of Professional Conduct)

Rationale for undertaking CPD

It is essential that all members maintain and continue to develop their knowledge and skills relevant to their role, as an obligation to clients, their employing organisation and other members, as well as a benefit to themselves.

Undertaking appropriate CPD:

- Equips members to meet the reasonable expectations of their clients
- Supports employers through a focus on continuing improvement and performance in individual members' professional work roles
- Strengthens the STEP brand on behalf of all members
- Supports the individual in achieving their career goals.

STEP's CPD policy requires members to pro-actively plan, undertake and reflect on the continued development of their work-related knowledge and skills. To make it as efficient and effective as possible, the policy is designed to be:

- Relevant to members in their professional roles
- Flexible enough to cater for individual circumstances
- Simple to manage and complete.

CPD planning and role benchmarking

Existing members can continue to use the 35 hour measure of CPD, until April 2017 when they will be required to use the role benchmarking approach as a means of planning and measuring CPD.

New members entering the Society from April 2014 onwards are required to use role benchmarking.

Role benchmarking involves reviewing your current job description and the new skills or knowledge that you will need in the year ahead, then using those to plan CPD activities. Members will also have the option to plan further ahead, adding skills needed for future roles to their CPD plans, as well as addressing competence for their current roles.

STEP recommends members ensure they develop in the following categories, where relevant to the individual: technical, interpersonal, management, leadership and business skills.

STEP requires members to undertake at least one hour of development activity that relates to professional ethics as part of their annual CPD. Ethics-related CPD content is available free to members via the STEP CPD Centre (www.step.org/cpd).

STEP is following the "outcomes-based approach" to CPD, which focusses on continuing and building competence, rather than compliance with one set of requirements (eg. number of hours) for all.

Well-balanced CPD plans will usually include a mix of "formal" or "structured" CPD and "informal" or "unstructured" CPD, but STEP has chosen not to specify the number of hours that members spend on each.

If your regulator requires you to record hours, or complete a certain number of hours of structured CPD, you should include that in your CPD record. Any CPD that you carry out for regulators or other professional bodies can also be recorded as meeting your STEP CPD requirements.

For more assistance in using role benchmarking, please see the CPD guidelines on www.step.org/cpd

The core principles of the CPD policy

- a. The STEP CPD requirement is applicable to all members of STEP.
- b. In their original application to join STEP and by renewing their membership each year, members agree to meet STEP's CPD requirements and record their CPD activities.
- c. Members must include 1 hour of development work relating to ethics in their development. Members can access free ethics-related CPD content through the STEP CPD Centre.
- d. Members must carry out CPD which is relevant to them in their professional role and is sufficient to enable them to meet the reasonable expectations of their clients (however many days a week they work).
- e. Each individual member should assess their own needs. For example, if a member is fully retired or on maternity leave and doing no work for clients then their CPD requirement, at that time, is nil. If and when a member resumes client work they are expected to be up to date and competent to carry out that work. The individual member needs to plan for and manage the transfer of role.
- f. Members are required to keep a record of their professional development and to be prepared to submit this to the STEP office as requested. An archive of CPD records, going back 3 years on a rolling basis, should be kept.
- g. CPD can be recorded using STEP's forms, STEP's online record keeping facility, an employer's forms or those of another professional body. If an employer's forms are used and do not match STEP's CPD year (1st April to 31st March) then the most up to date form should be submitted if requested.
- h. A random sample audit of CPD records will be carried out on an annual basis. CPD records are assessed by comparing members' key responsibilities and stated CPD objectives for the year. Members are free to change their CPD plans as the year progresses, in response to changes of role, or as a result of reflecting on the effectiveness of previous CPD activities.
- i. If a member fails to submit a CPD record after letter, email and phone contacts then that member will be suspended in accordance with STEP's Code of Professional Conduct. If that member wishes to re-apply for membership they will need to supply an up to date CPD record.