

Continuing Professional Development Policy

Guidance and Resources

The core principles of the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) policy

- a. The STEP CPD requirement is applicable to all members except retired members, those in active study and on maternity or long term leave.
- b. Upon joining STEP and by renewing membership each year, members agree to meet STEP's CPD requirements and record their CPD activities. The STEP CPD year runs from 1st April - 31st March each year, in line with our membership year.
- c. Members must include one hour of development work relating to ethics in their development.
- 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 long-term leave and doing no work for clients, 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 when requested. An archive of CPD records, going back three years on a rolling basis, should be retained.
- g. CPD can be recorded using STEP's CPD recording form, an employer's learning and development system or those of another professional body or regulator. If another organisation's forms are used and do not match STEP's CPD year (1st April to 31st March) then the previous CPD year which overlaps the majority of STEP's CPD year should be submitted (e.g. 1st January - 31st December).
- 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. A failure to comply with our CPD requirements may breach our Code of Professional Conduct. This may lead to a referral to the Disciplinary Panel for consideration.
- j. If a member chooses to allow their membership to lapse, they will need to submit a CPD record before their membership can be reinstated.

Introduction

CPD 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, practical or knowledge building.

Carrying out and recording CPD activities is a requirement of maintaining membership (see paragraph 2.2 of the STEP Code of Professional Conduct) and forms part of the annual Member Declaration.

Rationale for undertaking CPD

It is essential that all members maintain and continue to develop their knowledge and skills relevant to their role, as a benefit to them, their employers, clients and the reputation of the trust and estate sector and STEP members as having high professional standards

Undertaking appropriate CPD:

- Equips members to meet the reasonable expectations of their clients
- Maintaining an up to date knowledge on the latest developments in the sector
- 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-based CPD

STEP uses an outcomes-based approach to CPD, which focuses on whether professionals are maintaining and building competence, rather than counting the number of hours spent in training. This requires members to use a role-based approach to CPD planning and recording.

Role-based CPD 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. This means you are using your job description to "benchmark" or measure your CPD. 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.

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.

Definition and examples of Structured or Formal CPD

'Structured' or 'formal' CPD involves validation of knowledge through discussion with others, or some form of assessment to test what you've learnt. The following activities are examples:

- Attendance at conferences, seminars, webinars, workshops, discussion meetings or similar; events involving active contributions, organised by any provider;

- In-house training sessions or technical updates;
- Mentoring and coaching other practitioners or potential practitioners;
- Preparation of lectures, webinars or other forms of presentation;
- Writing books, articles or reviews for the benefit of others, whether for internal or external; publications/ websites. This includes writing for the STEP Journal or other STEP publications.

Definition and examples of Unstructured or Informal CPD

Any form of learning where there is no interaction with other individuals or assessment is classified as unstructured or informal CPD. This would include:

- Use of learning media (online and offline) where it is undertaken on a personal basis, in isolation and without completing any form of assessment.
- Informal, personal research which does not result in a report to clients, colleagues or any other possible audiences.
- Reading textbooks, articles or other written materials that develop a practitioner's skills e.g. trade publications and industry news in any format. The STEP Journal and newsletters are included.

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.

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

CPD Planning and Recording

STEP's CPD year runs from 1 April - 31 March in line with our membership year. If you aren't sure what to plan for, or have a goal in mind and would like to make your CPD count towards it, our Personal Development Plan will help you with your CPD planning. It's not compulsory to use it, but you may find it helpful to plan your personal and professional development for the year ahead.

Your CPD can be recorded using STEP's CPD recording form, an employer's CPD recording tool or those of another professional body or regulator.

The CPD Audit

STEP selects two per cent of members at random for the annual CPD audit. Members will be notified via email if they have been selected for audit review and have two months to submit their CPD records using their own format, or via STEP's CPD recording form. You must also complete a copy of STEP's CPD cover sheet which needs to include your reflective practice.

The reviewers need to see the following things for a CPD record to be signed off:

- Plan: notes to show a member has considered their job description and identified what they should aim to achieve for the year ahead (preferred but not essential).
- CPD Record: completed CPD activities that support or improve the skills needed in their role.
- Review: completed CPD cover sheet to support the completed activities and include reflective practice for three activities including ethics.

More STEP CPD resources and services:

- STEP Qualifications and CPD Learning
- Courses Conferences and branch events
- STEP Knowledge Hub
- STEP Journal and Trusts Quarterly
- Review Jurisdictional Reports
- Industry news digests
- Webinars and web events
- Special Interest Groups
- Academic Community

If you have any further questions about CPD, please visit www.step.org/cpd or email: cpd@step.org