

Continuing Professional Development (example from UK NAO)

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) may be defined as: *“A systematic and planned approach to the maintenance, enhancement and development of knowledge, skills and expertise that continues throughout a professional’s career, and is to the mutual benefit of the individual, the employer, the professional body and society as a whole”*. CPD should be established at each level of an SAI, which should be monitored with appropriate documentation maintained.

Professional development programmes should be reviewed periodically.

CPD is necessary to ensure that staff are committed constantly to update their knowledge and skills to maintain their professional competence. A planned approach to undertake and record CPD enables the SAI to demonstrate its commitment to high standards of professional, technical and management competence.

The following guidelines apply to CPD:

- The SAI should set down a minimum number of hours (say 40) of CPD that staff must achieve each year. Of the minimum requirement, at least half should be spent on formal activities;
 - All staff should maintain a portfolio of their CPD, comprising a summary learning and development record and relevant supporting evidence. Brief summaries of the benefits of the learning activity should be recorded. These are likely to refer to greater understanding of the work area, improved skill level, and enhanced performance;
 - Supporting evidence should confirm that the development activities have been undertaken. Examples of evidence might be: certificates of attendance at courses, executive summaries of reports written, or terms of reference for projects;
 - All staff should undertake some technical CPD, but attention should also be given to management and personal development needs. Staff should decide on the appropriate balance, bearing in mind their particular circumstances;
 - Specific activities selected should show an appropriate balance of formal and informal learning:
 - Formal learning includes any activity for which there is a pre-defined objective or outcome. Examples are: courses, workshops, conferences, projects, working groups, research and open learning programmes, and
 - Informal learning includes activities which result in learning, but which involve a less structured approach. Examples include: “professional” voluntary work, committee work, secondments, visits and work shadowing.
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