

Continuing Professional Development Frequently Asked Questions

Why are Colleges changing their individual policies?

The Academy's Directors of Continuing Professional Development (DoCPD), developed core headings for CPD which were accepted and approved by all of the Colleges and Faculties and also approved by the Academy Revalidation Development Group in June 2009.

The core model is the link between revalidation and the CPD schemes which are in existence across Colleges and Faculties. For a diverse range of CPD schemes, it will provide a central model which will set the standard for the purposes of revalidation, of which CPD is a major component.

The core model is therefore the final common pathway, by which all CPD schemes will relate to the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges' Ten Principles of CPD.

Membership Queries

I am not a member of a College CPD scheme. What options do I have?

It is strongly recommended that you join your College scheme. If you do not wish to join the College CPD scheme, then you should adhere to the guidance offered by your College, and should present your CPD returns to your appraiser for final approval. If you are a member of a different Medical College to the one which awarded your certificate of completed training (or equivalent), then certification by that college that you are meeting their requirements should be sufficient evidence of CPD to support revalidation.

Participation in your own College scheme may not be necessary if you fall into one of the categories below:

- Participating in a CME or CPD scheme offered by another medical Royal College
- A non-clinical/medical research scientist, with non-clinical membership achieved by publication (published works)
- Located outside the United Kingdom.

I am an ex-member of the College. Can I stay in the College CPD scheme?

You should contact your College or Faculty for advice.

General Principles

Why are there different domains of CPD?

Differentiating what type of CPD, for example clinical, research or academic gives direction to the educational activities that doctors undertake and allows the individual to relate CPD activities to their job plan. Where used, categories such as External, Internal and Personal encourage doctors to participate in a range of balanced educational activities both within and outside the workplace. Medical Royal Colleges and Faculties vary in the categories that they use and you should refer to your College/Faculty guidelines.

How do I decide whether an activity is eligible for external CPD credits?

Generally, activities away from your place of employment are external CPD, but there are different categories which vary from College to College. Please consult your College or Faculty for further advice.

Will research training and course work on-line count towards my credits?

You will need to produce supporting information that any online activity has an educational value. You will need to check with your College or Faculty for details on how many credits you are allowed to collect in this way, and the category to which they are allocated.

I can't seem to get the time or the resources to attend courses these days. What shall I do?

In order that you keep up to date with your practice, whether clinical or not, it is imperative that you set out clearly your CPD priorities for the year in a personal development plan (PDP). Ideally this should then be agreed as your PDP through appraisal. Time and resources can then be identified. Planning prospectively makes your job easier.

I am thinking of going to a conference, and I have sponsorship to attend the conference from a pharmaceutical company. Is it ethical to accept CPD credits for this?

The pharmaceutical companies are governed by strict sponsorship guidance by the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry [ABPI] (in the UK and equivalent in Europe). As long as the conference is approved as being appropriate for CPD, it will generally be reasonable for you to attend. Also, you should be mindful of the GMC's Good Medical Practice (paragraph 73), *"You must be honest in financial and commercial dealings with employers, insurers and other organisations or individuals. In particular;*

- a) Before taking part in discussions about buying or selling goods or services, you must declare any relevant financial or commercial interest that you or your family might have in the transaction*
- b) If you manage finances, you must make sure the funds are used for the purpose for which they were intended and are kept in a separate account from your personal finances. "*

Is there a deadline for submission of annual CPD returns to the College?

This will vary from College to College and you should contact your College or Faculty.

Can I claim for credits even if they are not for categories formally approved by the College?

Yes. If you participate in an activity that was of educational benefit to you, you should be able to self-accredit, for example, at a rate of 1 CPD credit per hour, up to a maximum number of credits per year for any one activity, as allowed by your College. Reflective notes are a recognised way of gathering supporting information of learning. You should check with your College as to how many credits you can count them in this way. Retain any relevant documentation as supporting information of participation and record details of the activity in your CPD portfolio.

I attended a meeting but forgot to collect my certificate

You should ask for the certificate to be forwarded to you. If this is not possible, you may self-accredit for the event if the content was relevant and beneficial to your job (Some Colleges have other mechanisms, for example, the Royal College of Psychiatrists uses peer group approval. Refer to your College or Faculty guidance). Retain any relevant documentation as evidence of participation and record details of the event in your CPD portfolio as supporting information.

I attended a meeting which was not approved. Can I still claim for CPD credits?

Yes. You may self-accredit for the event if the content was relevant and beneficial to your job (Some Colleges have other mechanisms, for example, The Royal College of Psychiatrists uses peer group approval. Refer to your College or Faculty guidance). Retain any relevant documentation as evidence of participation and record details of the event in your CPD portfolio as evidence of learning.

Can I carry credits forward into the next five-year cycle?

No. If you exceed 250 credits in one cycle of revalidation you cannot carry the extra credits into the next five-year cycle.

Can I claim CPD credits for reading and research done via the internet?

Yes. If you do any reading or private research on the Internet that you find educational and relevant to your job, you should write reflective notes in the relevant section of your portfolio. These activities generally count as “Personal” CPD where Colleges or Faculties use this classification, but some Colleges have specific arrangements for formally approved distance-learning activities.

Should I declare everything I consider CPD?

You are encouraged to record as much of your CPD as possible, since this aids reflection and learning. However, it is only necessary to complete the minimum requirement set by your College or Faculty. This is the number of credits against which your supporting information may be audited.

Can I claim CPD credits for undergraduate teaching and examining?

Preparation and/or presentation of undergraduate teaching does not *routinely* qualify for CPD credits. Where a **new** presentation is being prepared, some Colleges or Faculties will allow this (please see relevant College/Faculty guidelines). If a credit claim is thought justified, reflective notes can be used to illustrate points learnt. Credits are not automatically allocated for undergraduate examining alone. If a credit claim is thought justified, you should contact your College or Faculty for further advice.

Can I claim CPD credits for postgraduate teaching and examining?

The details vary between Colleges and Faculties, and you should consult your College or Faculty guidance. Credit claims should be supported by a reflective note.

How can I ensure my reflective note is robust?

Any reflective note which conforms to the DoCPD recommended model (currently in development) will be acceptable. In addition, Colleges and Faculties have their own models, please refer to their guidance.

Retired Doctors

I am retired from clinical practice, but I undertake some medical-related work (locums, medico-legal work, Mental Health Tribunal work, etc). Do I need to continue to acquire CPD credits?

Yes. Doctors must keep up to date with any clinical treatments when undertaking medical related work. Doctors undertaking medical-related work which requires them to be licensed will need to revalidate and participate in CPD.

I am retired from active clinical practice, but want to revalidate. Do I need to fulfil the requirements for CPD?

Doctors who wish to revalidate will need to continue to acquire CPD credits. If you are no longer in active medical practice **of any kind** there is no requirement for you to maintain your licence to practise or to revalidate (Further information can be gained from the GMC website).

The details of your CPD requirements will be available in guidance from your College or Faculty. You will be responsible for making your own arrangements for meeting College CPD requirements, for example, by liaison with a local hospital to attend their specialist meetings.

I am retired and I am now only involved in teaching. Should I revalidate and participate in CPD?

If your employer requires you to keep a licence to practise, you will need to revalidate and participate in CPD.

For information about the requirements for revalidation, you should consult the GMC website.

Doctors Abroad

I am considering working abroad for a short period of two to three years, and wish to return to the UK to work following this period.

The GMC website can provide information about return to practice and other requirements you will need to satisfy. If doctors wish to return to the UK and are maintaining GMC registration, keeping up with CPD would be strongly recommended. Recording your CPD in a portfolio will help to demonstrate that you are meeting the standards of your area of practice and will act as supporting information to take to subsequent appraisals. Remember you may also be required to be CPD compliant with any new professional body with which you register in order to practise abroad.

I practise outside the UK, but I wish to continue to undertake CPD and revalidate in the UK. What do I need to do?

If you want to continue with your CPD you should ideally participate in your College or Faculty's CPD scheme or follow recommendations in that scheme.

For information about meeting the requirements for revalidation while you are outside the UK, consult the GMC website.

Part-time Doctors

I only work part time. Is the number of credits I have to achieve over the five years reduced because of this?

No. All doctors must acquire a minimum of 250 credits over a five-year period.

I work part-time and I am only entitled to 50% study leave budget. I note that I need to fulfil the same CPD requirements as full-time doctors. What does the College recommend to doctors in my circumstances?

This is a Terms and Conditions of service matter. It can be taken up with the Local Negotiating Committee which will represent you to the management of the Trust dealing with study leave budgets. Published recommendations from DoCPD, AoMRC and professional standard setting bodies may be useful as supporting evidence.

Non-Clinical Roles

I work entirely in a non clinical role (eg, Principal of Faculty of Medicine, Medical Director, Trust Chief Executive Officer, Postgraduate Dean, Department of Health role). Am I required to participate in CPD?

Yes, if you wish to revalidate. The content of your CPD activities should reflect and support the range of your professional practice.

I work mainly in a managerial/other non-clinical role with a small amount of clinical practice. How shall I fulfil the requirements of the CPD programme?

Your CPD requirement would be the same as for those in full-time clinical practice. You will need to demonstrate that your CPD activities are linked to your job-plan. You will need to undertake clinical educational activities relating to the clinical area in which you practise and non-clinical educational activities relating to your non-clinical work.

I am involved in research/teaching with no clinical work, and do not wish to return to clinical work in the future. What are my requirements for CPD and revalidation?

If your employer requires you to keep a licence to practise, you will need to revalidate and participate in CPD.

For information about the requirements for revalidation, you should consult the GMC website.

Specialist roles

I work in a limited/specialist area. Can I participate in proportionate CPD according to the amount of specialist practice I carry out as I do not carry out any generalist practice?

You will need to demonstrate that your CPD activities are linked to your job-plan and discuss this at appraisal. No special recommendations are made for doctors practising in a limited/specialist area.

I have a mixed role (for example, a general practitioner with a special interest, GPwSI). What is my position in terms of revalidation?

You will need to participate in the CPD programme which reflects the components of your job plan. As you practise mainly as a GP, you will need to follow the RCGP CPD programme. In addition, you will need to demonstrate that you are following the standards set within any specialist area of practice and

you should be able to take appropriate supporting information to your appraisal as required.

I practise full-time in the independent sector. I find it difficult to fulfil the requirements for CPD; can the College be flexible in terms of CPD requirements?

No. If you are employed in the independent sector, you will be required to fulfil all CPD requirements, including the requirement of 50 credits per year. You may be able to achieve this by, for example, making a special arrangement with a local NHS hospital to attend their local educational meetings, collaborate in a local or regional audit against national standards or by attending regional clinical meetings directly relevant to your speciality.

Special Circumstances

What if I am unable to participate in CPD due to sick leave or maternity leave?

There is no waiver for the requirement of 250 points of CPD in five years. Short periods of absence from CPD or imbalance in one year can, and should, be redressed over the five year period. If you are unable to participate in CPD for any long period of time, for example as a result of sick leave or maternity leave, you should contact the CPD Department in your College for advice.

I am currently suspended, awaiting a decision from the GMC. How can I satisfy the CPD requirements?

Colleges are expected to encourage those currently suspended by the GMC to continue with their CPD activities as far as possible. The range of activities that are accessible will be reduced, but you should aim to satisfy the overall CPD requirement if you can. Online learning and reflective notes may be helpful under these circumstances.

I am being retrained after suspension. How can I satisfy the CPD requirements?

This should be discussed as part of your return to work agreement. Colleges are expected to encourage those currently suspended by the GMC to continue with their CPD activities. Suspended doctors should attempt to satisfy all CPD category requirements, including the local category requirement.