

The Society of Light and Lighting

CPD: a guide for members



As a member of the Society of Light and Lighting you undertake to maintain your professional competence throughout your career. Continuing Professional Development means the systematic maintenance, improvement and broadening of your knowledge and skills. It is about learning and putting into practice new competences year after year, and investing in your future.

CPD is also about planning, capturing and evaluating your learning and, as your career develops, about assisting the professional development of others.

This guide is designed to assist you.

What drives CPD?

The emergence of **new demands and priorities** in the profession – for example, using sustainable technologies – forces you to develop new professional competences. Changes in the law or Regulations mean not only updating yourself on what those changes are, but also understanding how they will impact on your work.

Equally, **new challenges** at work – a different type of client, unusual project specifications, an unfamiliar site – have the potential to broaden your experience and thus your professional effectiveness.

Any **organisational change**, such as adopting a new IT system at work, entails training and learning for everyone and represents, at a personal level, important CPD.

When you **change job roles or move employers** there is an even steeper learning curve. Often a new job brings increased responsibility for the work of others, and demands a rapid and systematic upgrading of your management skills. Increasing seniority will require leadership skills, as well as training, developing and mentoring others. All of these, if they are to be done well, demand new learning on your part.

Aside from these external factors, your own decisions about **career aims and aspirations** will be decisive in shaping your CPD. Personal circumstances – where you live, and your family responsibilities, for example – will affect the pace and direction of your professional development.

What you know about your own strengths and weaknesses will strongly influence the direction you take: sometimes an annual performance appraisal will prompt this kind of self-examination. It is a mistake to use CPD just to 'fill the

gaps' in what you know and can do. Try to ensure that **building on your strengths** drives some of the development activities you choose.

CPD goes on all day, every day. Every time you face a new challenge, find out about a new component, talk to a client or read the technical press, you are engaged in learning.

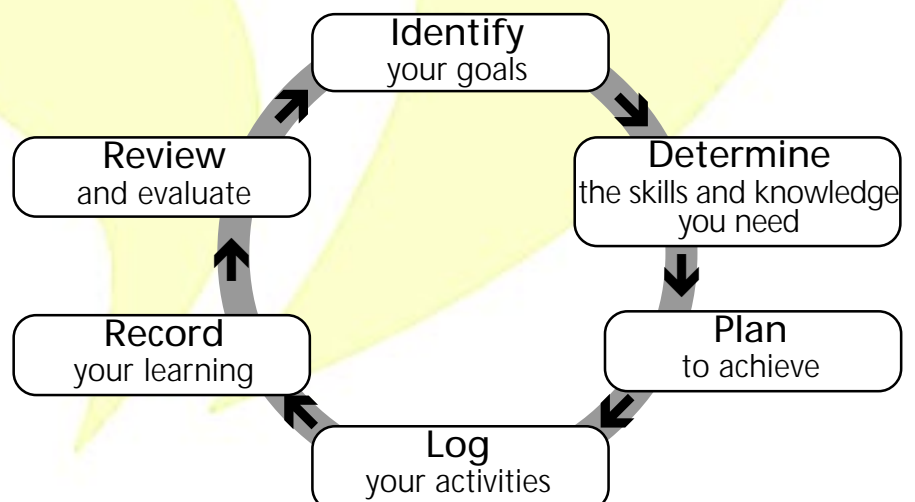
CPD activities

The Society believes that professional development is not limited to attending formal lectures and seminars. This belief is reflected in the categories under which it classifies CPD:

- on-the-job learning
- private reading and study
- in-house conferences and meetings
- CIBSE Regional or Group meetings
- CIBSE and SLL technical meetings
- academic studies including vocational qualifications
- professional institutional committee work
- writing papers and articles
- occasional lecturing
- distance learning
- assisting and supporting others
- actively contributing to science and engineering groups in education

Periodically, a random sample of members is selected and asked to complete a monitoring return to the Society's Education and Membership Committee, describing the Development Plan they are working to, and the activities they have undertaken in the previous year. They are asked to make their own evaluation, and review the effectiveness of what has been done. They will then receive feedback and advice from Committee members.

The planning and review cycle



Identify your goals

The answer to the question:

“What do I aim to achieve from professional development?”

comes from an analysis of the current situation. You should produce an outline statement of what you are aiming for, and the time frame for achieving it.

Determine the skills and knowledge you need

Determining the skills and knowledge you need requires an awareness of what the job demands and good self-knowledge too, of your own strengths and weaknesses.

Plan to achieve

The Plan you draw up will take into account the learning opportunities available, the time and resources you have at your disposal and, again, a realistic projected date for completion. Be aware of all the demands on your time and energy, including those outside work, and ensure that rest and recreation are included.

Log and record

Logging your activities and recording your learning are two distinct activities. The first requires a simple factual record of what you did, when and where, sufficient to trigger your recollection of the event: an entry in your diary or planner may be all that is needed. The second requires more thought: what new skill or knowledge have you acquired?

Review and evaluate

The Review stage asks you to compare the learning you have achieved with the goals you set yourself. Inevitably, some of what you have achieved will have been opportunistic and unplanned: how does where you are now affect your future aims and plans?

CPD at work

On-the-job activities which offer CPD opportunities might include:

- attending technical presentations of new products/components
- interaction with professionals from other disciplines, for example at project and site meetings
- leading and facilitating meetings and presentations of all kinds
- understanding the demands of new regulations or legislation
- listening to a new client's brief, and devising a plan to meet it

- departmental and interdepartmental meetings – bouncing ideas off colleagues
- teaching, training, coaching and mentoring others, for example new recruits
- getting to grips with a new aspect of ICT
- managing a dispute or conflict situation

As an individual professional it is essential for your development plan to be wholly owned by you. So if you are employed in a large organisation you need to:

- **Think** about the ways in which your employer, directly or indirectly, supports your CPD
- **Make sure** your employer is aware of how your SLL membership benefits them.

You can decide the form that your records will take. There are numerous models to work from: most share the same basic features and perform a similar function. For example, if the Society asks to see your CPD records, it will accept up-to date information in any of the following formats:

- the CPD Planning and Evaluation Record available on the website www.sll.org.uk under Continuing Professional Development in the Membership section
- records created using pro formas from other professional bodies
- the form specified by your current or previous employer
- an achievement record template from a college or university

CPD for life

Over time, your CPD needs to evolve and change. Your skills of reflection and analysis develop, and decisions about which activities to choose are easier to make and more likely to be right. Your personal toolkit of management skills will be extensive, as will be the breadth of your technical expertise.

However, the need for updating and remaining abreast of technological, scientific and commercial change remains.

At this stage the emphasis may shift from self development to supporting the development of others, by serving the Institution or your community. There are particular skill sets, such as mentoring and chairing meetings, associated with each of these activities which you may need to acquire.

Later, as retirement approaches, good habits of CPD sustained over the years will assist you in making decisions about how to wind down your professional career.

For a more detailed description of continuing professional development see the CIBSE CPD brochure which can be downloaded at from the CIBSE website www.cibse.org in the CPD part of the membership section or at <http://www.cibse.org/index.cfm?go=home.show&TopSecID=14&PageID=501&L1=501>