

# **CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD)** FOR DENTISTS

GENERAL DENTAL COUNCIL



## Dear colleague

Compulsory continuing professional development (CPD) maintains public confidence in the dentists register by showing that dentists keep up to date so that they give their patients the best possible treatment and care.

We are issuing this updated guidance on CPD for dentists for three important reasons.

- Firstly, we are recommending that all dentists carry out CPD in some core subject areas from the beginning of their next CPD cycle. These are subjects which we think all dentists should be able to advise on, whether or not they work in a clinical environment.
- Secondly, we plan to extend compulsory CPD to dental care professionals (DCPs) from 2008. So, you should tell DCP colleagues to start thinking now about planning the CPD they will need to make sure that they are up to date.
- Finally, we are developing a revalidation scheme for all members of the dental team, and compulsory CPD for everyone who registers with us will form an important part of revalidation. The aim of revalidation will be to protect the public by making sure that all dental professionals show that they are fit to stay on our registers. Dental professionals will do this by regularly 'revalidating' their registration, and will need to be able to show that:
  - their knowledge is up to date and relevant to their practice;
  - their professional performance is up to the standards needed to maintain registration; and
  - their behaviour meets the standards set out in our ethical guidance 'Standards for dental professionals'.
- Compulsory CPD is essential to meeting the first of these requirements – that dental professionals' knowledge is up to date and relevant to their practice.
- This guidance replaces our existing guidance documents, 'CPD – what it means for you' and 'CPD – what to do if you take time off the register'.



**Hew Mathewson**  
President

GDC

protecting patients, regulating the dental team

"We aim to

- protect patients
- promote confidence in dental professionals
- be at the forefront of healthcare regulation

We

- register qualified professionals
- set standards of dental practice and conduct
- assure the quality of dental education
- ensure professionals keep up to date
- help patients with complaints about a dental professional
- work to strengthen patient protection"

## Introduction

'Standards for dental professionals' sets out the principles of practice in dentistry. As a dental professional, you are responsible for:

- putting patients' interests first and acting to protect them;
- respecting patients' dignity and choices;
- protecting the confidentiality of patients' information;
- co-operating with other members of the dental team and other healthcare colleagues in the interests of patients;
- maintaining your professional knowledge and competence; and
- being trustworthy.

All dental professionals should carry out CPD to support these principles. By law, dentists must take part in our compulsory CPD scheme. We are planning to extend the compulsory CPD scheme to DCPs from 2008 onwards.

## What is CPD?

We define CPD as 'study, training, courses, seminars, reading and other activities undertaken by a dentist, which could reasonably be expected to advance his or her professional development as a dentist'.

## What do I have to do?

By law, if you are a dentist, you must do, and keep records of, 250 hours of CPD over every five-year cycle. At least 75 of the 250 hours that you do in every five-year cycle must be **verifiable CPD** (see the next column). The purpose of CPD is to provide high-quality patient care. It is very important that the CPD you do takes into account the needs of your patients and is relevant to your practice.

You should use a personal development plan so that you and your patients benefit as much as possible from your CPD. Personal development plans allow you to identify your learning needs, prioritise them, and set a plan for meeting each need and for assessing learning activities afterwards. Examples of personal development plans are available from the British Dental Association, or you can read 'Personal development plans for dentists: The new approach to continuing professional development' by Amar Rughani, with Chris Franklin and Stephen Dixon.

## CPD activities

Activities which could count as CPD include:

- courses and lectures;
- vocational training or general professional training;
- study days;
- educational parts of professional and specialist society meetings;
- peer review and clinical audit;
- distance learning;
- multimedia learning (for example, web-based learning and using a CD-ROM);
- staff training;
- going to educational workshops at conferences;
- reading journals;
- background research; and
- private study.

## What is verifiable CPD?

Over each five-year cycle, 75 of the 250 hours of CPD you do must be verifiable CPD. This means an activity must meet all four of the following conditions.

- 1 You must get and keep a certificate (or other type of documentary proof) proving you took part in the activity. The certificate should come from the activity provider or organiser, and should show the number of hours you spent on the activity.

## The activity itself must have:

- 2 'concise educational aims and objectives' – the activity should have a clear purpose or goal;
- 3 'clear anticipated outcomes' – you should know what you can expect to gain as a result of taking part in the activity; and
- 4 'quality controls' – you should have the chance to give feedback, with a view to improving quality.

We do not approve any educational provider or course for verifiable CPD. Instead, you are responsible for deciding whether or not to count an activity as verifiable CPD. You must use your professional judgement to decide whether or not it meets all four of the above conditions for verifiable CPD. If you are not sure, ask the activity provider to explain whether the activity will meet these four conditions before you agree to doing the activity.

If you are satisfied that an activity meets all four of the conditions, you can count it towards the verifiable CPD requirement. If it doesn't meet all four conditions, it isn't verifiable CPD.

### Do I have to do verifiable CPD in any particular subjects?

We have identified three areas of CPD that all dentists should do as part of the overall 75-hour minimum verifiable CPD requirement. These are:

- a medical emergencies (at least 10 hours in every CPD cycle);
- b disinfection and decontamination (at least five hours in every CPD cycle); and
- c radiography and radiation protection (at least five hours in every CPD cycle).

We recommend that you do CPD in medical emergencies every year.

If you work in a clinical environment, we also recommend that you keep yourself up to date by doing CPD (verifiable or general) in legal and ethical issues, and handling complaints.

### When should I start doing CPD in the core subjects?

We recommend that you begin to include the core subjects in your CPD from the beginning of your second CPD cycle. The table at the back of this booklet explains when your second CPD cycle starts. If you work within the NHS, you will already have a responsibility to carry out CPD in some of the core areas.

If you are not yet a registered dentist, or you first joined the register in 2006, you will need to include the core areas in your CPD from the beginning of your first five-year CPD cycle. Your first CPD cycle will start in January in the year following the year in which you first register with us (for example, if you first register with us at any time during 2006, you will begin your first CPD cycle on 1 January 2007).

### What is general CPD?

If you are not satisfied that an activity meets all four of the conditions for verifiable CPD, but it still adds to your continuing professional development as a dentist, you can count the time you spend on the activity as **general CPD**. Your general CPD may include activities such as reading journals, background research and private study.

### Working with others

You may find it useful to carry out CPD with other people, particularly if you are a single-handed practitioner. Dentists should discuss and review their CPD with others as appropriate. In some circumstances, it will be useful for the whole dental team to carry out training together, for example, in training to handle medical emergencies in the practice.

### What records must I keep?

You must keep a personal record of all the CPD hours that you do – both verifiable CPD hours (for which you must also keep documentary proof from the activity provider) and general CPD hours – up to a total of 250 hours (of which 75 are verifiable CPD) in each five-year cycle.

The records that you keep (including documentary proof of verifiable CPD) will be your evidence that you have met the CPD requirements.

You may use the recording format on the back of this booklet for your records. You can download copies of the recording form from our website at [www.gdc-uk.org](http://www.gdc-uk.org)

You can use a different recording method if you prefer. Whatever method you use, you should keep a record of:

- the date of the activity;
- the title or subject matter of the activity;
- the venue (if this applies);
- the name of the organisation or individual running the activity;
- whether you are counting the activity as verifiable or general CPD; and
- the number of hours you spent doing the CPD activity. (You should not include lunch breaks or travel time.)

### How will you check that I am meeting the CPD requirements?

After the end of each year of your five-year cycle, we will ask you to fill in a CPD annual return statement. You must do this by law. You will need to fill in the number of hours of verifiable CPD and general CPD that you have done the year before. We will keep a record of the CPD hours you send to us.

At the end of each five-year cycle we may ask you to send us your full CPD records (including documentary proof of your verifiable CPD) to check that you have met the requirements. You should not send us your records unless we ask you to do so.

### What happens if I do not meet the CPD requirements?

If you do not meet the requirements, we may take you off the register. If this happens, you will not be allowed back on the register until you can show that you have met the CPD requirements for rejoining the register (see below).

If you are thinking of leaving the register, or you are removed from the register (for not carrying out CPD or for any other reason), you will need to show evidence that you have done a certain amount of CPD to be allowed back onto the register in the future. This means that you must carry on doing and recording CPD while you are not on the register.

### How much CPD will I have to show to be allowed to rejoin the register?

Your CPD cycles – which are fixed in law – carry on running whether or not you are on the register.

For example, if your first CPD cycle began on 1 January 2002, it will end on 31 December 2006. Your second CPD cycle then begins on 1 January 2007 and ends on 31 December 2011, and so on.

#### To rejoin the register you will have to:

show evidence that you have completed CPD from the beginning of the CPD cycle in which you left the register, until the date of your application to rejoin the register, at an average rate of 50 hours of CPD (of which 15 are verifiable CPD) each year.

For example, if you are two years into your first CPD cycle and take two years off the register to work abroad, you will need to show that you have done four years' worth of CPD – 200 hours (50 x 4) of which 60 (15 x 4) are verifiable CPD – before you can rejoin the register.

### If you are off the register for one year or less

You will not need to show any CPD evidence to rejoin the register, unless you come off the register in one CPD cycle and apply to rejoin it in the next. If you do this, you will have to show that you have done the CPD needed for the whole of the CPD cycle in which you left the register. In other words, you will have to show that you have done 250 hours of CPD (of which 75 are verifiable CPD).

### If you are off the register for five years or more

You will have to show that you have completed 250 hours of CPD (of which 75 hours are verifiable CPD) in the five-year period ending on the date of your application to rejoin the register.

### What do you mean by 'CPD evidence'?

By evidence, we mean your CPD records and documentary proof of any activity you want to count as verifiable CPD. If you take time off the register, you should continue to keep records of CPD and certificates as proof of verifiable CPD in exactly the same way as you would if you were on the register.

### What happens if I don't show enough CPD evidence when I apply to rejoin the register?

If you don't show enough CPD, you risk not being allowed to rejoin the register. If this happens, you will be able to appeal against the decision.

### Contact us before you leave the register

You should take account of the CPD rules before you make a decision to leave the register, and you will need to make sure that you know what you will have to do to rejoin the register in the future. Make sure you know before you go!

## Checklist

- Use a personal development plan to help you decide how you will meet the minimum requirement of 250 hours of CPD, of which at least 75 hours are verifiable CPD.
- Decide on a recording format for your CPD activity (for example, GDC recording form). Consider keeping separate records for verifiable CPD and general CPD.
- Always ask yourself 'does this activity contribute towards my continuing professional development?' For verifiable CPD, also check that the verifiable CPD conditions have been met.
- Make sure you are up to date in core areas, including medical emergencies, disinfection and decontamination, and radiography and radiation protection. You should carry out a minimum number of hours in each of these areas as part of your verifiable CPD.
- If you work in a clinical environment, also make sure that you carry out CPD (verifiable or general) in legal and ethical issues and handling complaints.
- For all verifiable CPD, make sure that you have documentary proof of your involvement, for example, a certificate.
- Remember to send us an annual statement of your CPD hours when we ask you for it.
- If you are thinking of taking time off the register, remember that you will need to carry on doing CPD while you are off the register.
- Ring our registration department on 020 7887 3800 before you go, to check that you understand the CPD requirements.
- Carry on keeping records of the CPD that you do while you are off the register, including documentary proof of any CPD you want to count as verifiable CPD.
- Ring us at any time if you need advice on the CPD requirements.

## If you have any questions about CPD

Visit our website at [www.gdc-uk.org](http://www.gdc-uk.org)

Or contact us in the following ways:

<b>telephone:</b>	on 020 7887 3800
<b>e-mail:</b>	GDCRegistration@gdc-uk.org
<b>fax:</b>	on 020 7487 2643
<b>post:</b>	Registration Department 37 Wimpole Street London W1G 8DQ

## Our staff are here to help you.

### Further CPD advice sheets

We have produced the following advice sheets on CPD for dentists working in particular circumstances.

- CPD for dentists working as teachers or researchers
- CPD for dentists in vocational training
- CPD for dentists in postgraduate training
- CPD for dentists in medical training
- CPD for dentists working overseas

We have also produced an advice sheet for educational providers of CPD, so that they can make sure they help dentists to meet our requirements.

You can find all of these advice sheets on our website.

## Second CPD cycle start-dates

### Dentists who first registered before 1 January 2002

Date of first registration	Start-date of 1st CPD cycle	Start-date of 2nd CPD cycle
Between 1 January 1990 and 31 December 2001	1 January 2002 (if you were on the register on 31 December 2001)	1 January 2007 (if you were on the register on 31 December 2001)
	1 January 2003 (if you were not on the register on 31 December 2001)	1 January 2008 (if you were not on the register on 31 December 2001)
Between 1 January 1980 and 31 December 1989	1 January 2003	1 January 2008
On or before 31 December 1979	1 January 2004	1 January 2009

### Dentists who first registered from 1 January 2002 – 31 December 2005

If you first registered during or after 2002, your first CPD cycle runs from 1 January in the year following your date of first registration.

Date of first registration	Start-date of 1st CPD cycle	Start-date of 2nd CPD cycle
Any time in 2002	1 January 2003	1 January 2008
Any time in 2003	1 January 2004	1 January 2009
Any time in 2004	1 January 2005	1 January 2010
Any time in 2005	1 January 2006	1 January 2011

If you are not yet a registered dentist, or you first joined the register in 2006, you will need to include the core areas in your CPD from the beginning of your first five-year CPD cycle.



