



CC_HR23 Continuous Professional Development Policy

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1. What is Continued Professional Development

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is a continuing learning process that complements formal undergraduate and postgraduate education and training. CPD requires doctors to maintain and improve their standards across all areas of their practice. (Throughout this document, 'practice' includes all the professional roles that doctors currently perform and those that they plan to perform.) CPD should also encourage and support specific changes in practice and career development. It has a role to play in helping doctors to keep up to date when they are not practicing.

2. Who is this guidance for?

This guidance is designed to help:

- doctors considering how to maintain and improve their practice;
- doctors having their yearly appraisal at work;
- doctors having their licence to practise revalidated by us;
- doctors considering a change in their career;
- doctors performing professional roles (including teaching, research, management, and clinical practice) as each of these roles has a part to play in high-quality patient care;
- professional colleagues involved in helping doctors maintain and improve their practice (for example, through appraisals or mentoring)

3. Regulation

The GMC's Education Committee has a duty to promote high standards in, and to co-ordinate all stages of, medical education. It has set out the following core guidance in regard to Knowledge, skills and performance (Domain 1 of Good Medical Practice 2013):

3.1 Develop and Maintain your professional performance

- You must be competent in all aspects of your work, including management, research and teaching.
- You must keep your professional knowledge and skills up to date.
- You must regularly take part in activities that maintain and develop your competence and performance.
- You should be willing to find and take part in structured support opportunities offered by your employer or contracting body (for example, mentoring). You should do this when you join an organisation and whenever your role changes significantly throughout your career.
- You must be familiar with guidelines and developments that affect your work.
- You must keep up to date with, and follow, the law, our guidance and other regulations relevant to your work.
- You must take steps to monitor and improve the quality of your work.

3.2 Apply knowledge and skills to practice

- You must recognise and work within the limits of your competence.
- You must have the necessary knowledge of the English language to provide a good standard of practice and care in the UK.

- You must provide a good standard of practice and care. If you assess, diagnose or treat patients, you must:
 - adequately assess the patient's conditions, taking account of their history (including the symptoms and psychological, spiritual, social and cultural factors), their views and values; where necessary, examine the patient
 - promptly provide or arrange suitable advice, investigations or treatment where necessary
 - refer a patient to another practitioner when this serves the patient's needs.

- In providing clinical care you must:
 - prescribe drugs or treatment, including repeat prescriptions, only when you have adequate knowledge of the patient's health and are satisfied that the drugs or treatment serve the patient's needs
 - provide effective treatments based on the best available evidence
 - take all possible steps to alleviate pain and distress whether or not a cure may be possible
 - consult colleagues where appropriate
 - respect the patient's right to seek a second opinion
 - check that the care or treatment you provide for each patient is compatible with any other treatments the patient is receiving, including (where possible) self-prescribed over-the-counter medications
 - wherever possible, avoid providing medical care to yourself or anyone with whom you have a close personal relationship.
 - You must be satisfied that you have consent or other valid authority before you carry out any examination or investigation, provide treatment or involve patients or volunteers in teaching or research.
 - You must make good use of the resources available to you.

3.3 Record your work clearly, accurately and legibly

- Documents you make (including clinical records) to formally record your work must be clear, accurate and legible. You should make records at the same time as the events you are recording or as soon as possible afterwards.
- You must keep records that contain personal information about patients, colleagues or others securely, and in line with any data protection requirements.
- Clinical records should include:
 - relevant clinical findings
 - the decisions made and actions agreed, and who is making the decisions and agreeing the actions
 - the information given to patients
 - any drugs prescribed or other investigation or treatment
 - who is making the record and when.

4. Revalidation

Revalidation was introduced in December 2012. If you hold a licence to practise, you are legally required to revalidate, usually every five years, by having a regular appraisal based on GMC core guidance for doctors. The specific revalidation date can be accessed via GMC online.

CPD allows doctors to demonstrate that they are maintaining their skills in their practice. It also allows doctors to develop professionally and to learn from more informal experiences that are not part of the revalidation process. It is for these reasons that CPD is important. Doctors should use lifelong learning to make sure that they remain competent in their practice.

Doctors are responsible for keeping themselves up to date in all areas of their practice. All clinicians must provide revalidation documentation to the company to evidence that they are up to date and fit to practice medicine.

5. Culture and Environment

This guidance promotes combined support for both formal and informal CPD opportunities by doctors, professional colleagues and organisations that doctors work within. This support may be direct or indirect. It might include recognising the importance of creating and maintaining a learning environment within which CPD can take place.

What doctors learn at medical school and during postgraduate training needs to be updated throughout their careers to reflect changes in practice. CPD should encourage and motivate doctors to learn. It should be closely related to each doctor's individual needs, ambitions and personal learning styles. This focus on the doctor's learning needs will support changes and improvements in practice.

The ultimate purpose of CPD is to contribute to high-quality patient care. As a result, CPD should take into account the needs and wishes of patients. Doctors should also reflect changes in the needs and attitudes of modern society as a whole. This focus should shape CPD experiences or activities.

Modern healthcare is provided through a complex system within a constantly-changing environment. Partnerships are created between disciplines, professions, agencies, organisations, patients and the public. Communication and co-operation are important for improving healthcare for patients. CPD opportunities should take into account the environment within which medicine is practiced.

The need to promote equality and value diversity underpins all stages of patient care. Every decision made should take it into account. This concept relates directly and indirectly to patient care. For example, doctors must not allow their views about patients to influence the treatment that is provided or arranged for patients. And doctors must not allow their views about their colleagues to influence the way that they respect and treat their colleagues.

6. Principles for CPD

CPD springs from and is a vital influence on professional life. The way in which individual doctors take part in CPD will depend on:

- their specialty
- the opportunities available
- their priorities
- their personal learning styles and preferences.
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We encourage this diversity, as without it CPD activities would be less effective.

There are, however, certain principles that those involved in CPD may want to bear in mind:

- CPD contributes to improved patient healthcare and to a healthier society.
- Each individual is responsible for taking part in and recording their own relevant CPD activities.
- CPD also helps doctors to improve their professional effectiveness, career opportunities and work satisfaction.
- CPD should cover all areas of Good Medical Practice. Doctors should keep up to date in all areas of their practice.

- Doctors should also recognise when unexpected opportunities for CPD arise and should allow time to consider and discuss these opportunities informally. A range of different activities will normally be suitable.
- CPD should also include public and patient involvement. For example, patients and the public should be involved in developing CPD schemes, setting standards and monitoring quality. Doctors must be up to date with what patients and the public expect.
- Doctors should discuss and review their CPD with others. Yearly appraisal gives a formal, structured opportunity for doctors to discuss their CPD needs. Appraisal provides a way of making sure that any CPD identified is relevant to a doctor's practice and learning needs. Doctors should use personal development plans to make sure that they, their organisations and patients benefit as much as possible from their CPD.
- Assessment measures, where available, should be used for part of doctors' CPD. These measures should allow doctors to be clear about how they are developing. They will help doctors to judge their progress. Valid and reliable assessment tools and systems are still developing. (Indeed, developing these tools would be a valuable CPD activity for doctors.)

7. Content of CPD Activity

The [*GMP framework for appraisal and revalidation*](#) provides a useful structure for discussing your CPD during appraisal. Your CPD activities should take account of the domains and attributes in the framework. But you don't have to match your CPD against every element of the framework.

The domains are:

- knowledge, skills and performance
- safety and quality
- communication, partnership and teamwork
- maintaining trust.
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You should look for developmental opportunities across all four domains and not confine your learning to the areas of your practice in which you feel most comfortable.

The GMC provides guidance to help doctors to plan and reflect on their learning opportunities and prepare to discuss this at appraisals. This can be found at:

http://www.gmc-uk.org/education/continuing_professional_development/cpd_guidance.asp

There is no single correct way to do CPD. How you meet your learning needs will depend on your own preferred ways of learning, what you are trying to learn and the opportunities available to you. You should, however, seek a variety of activities that allow you to learn in different ways. There is evidence that undertaking a range of different CPD activities to address a particular learning need is likely to be more effective than one-off events

Your CPD should be a mix of formal and informal learning. It should include activities that take place locally where you work, as well as at regional, national or international levels. It may be helpful to set out how particular activities will support the learning objectives in your PDP, and to discuss with relevant colleagues what resources you will need.

Some of your learning should aim to help improve how your teams work, their contribution to the organisation in which they are based and how you work within those teams. In a multiprofessional team, for example, it may help to develop leadership skills. If your CPD is focusing on making the team more effective, it should be undertaken alongside team colleagues.

You should participate in peer-based learning in your specialty or field of practice. There are many ways to do this, such as peer reviews and peer tutoring. You can also learn in specialty networks, or through CPD

schemes or programmes run by medical royal colleges or professional associations. Discussing and disseminating your learning to others may help consolidate your learning and enhance that of the team.

Doctors can learn from all aspects of professional work:

- informed discussion with colleagues
- Data audits
- Complaints and compliments
- Significant events
- Results of work based assessments
- Feedback from patients and colleagues

8. The Role of Organisations

Doctors will normally look to a relevant organisation for help with CPD. These organisations can provide advice on what to do and how to collect the evidence required. They can also help doctors to confirm that they are taking part in CPD in a suitable way.

There are several different ways in which organisations might be involved. These include:

- providing general and specific guidance;
- assessing or recognising courses;
- providing colleagues of the same professional level who can monitor CPD activities and confirm that they have been carried out; and
- confirming that the activities were suitable for CPD.

Organisations can provide guidance on areas such as:

- the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviour expected of a doctor;
- the commitment that it would be sensible to make to different areas of CPD;
- the different ways in which doctors can assess their own areas of strength and highlight areas of personal development, so that they can make the most effective use of CPD for themselves and for patients;
- the professional standards expected within a specialty;
- how to benefit from the knowledge and experience of colleagues within a specialty, from other disciplines, professions and agencies, and from patients; and
- the different methods of taking part in CPD, including distance learning and flexible learning.

Professional organisations can formally recognise a doctor's CPD activities. These organisations are developing systems which will allow them to check that a doctor has taken part in the activities they claim and that these activities are suitable.

The academy of medical royal colleges has published a helpful framework for involving royal colleges in CPD called '10 principles of CPD' (20 May 2014) and can be found at:

http://www.aomrc.org.uk/doc_details/9327-10-principles-of-cpd.

This framework has been approved by all the medical royal colleges. It provides the opportunity to adopt a standard approach to CPD across specialties. Medical schools, higher education institutions and other organisations also provide helpful courses.

8.1 The role of Communitas Clinics Ltd

Communitas Clinics Ltd recognises the benefits of allowing enough resources for doctors to carry out CPD activities.

Resources, such as time to think and access to on-site educational facilities, is made available to all doctors to allow them to develop professionally.

9. Opportunities for doctors

It may be more difficult for some groups of doctors to attend formal CPD activities or to find opportunities for CPD in their professional life. These groups include:

- doctors who are working part time or who hold a portfolio of different careers
- doctors working outside managed institutions
- doctors in locum posts
- doctors outside the training grade structure; and
- doctors who have limited access to medically qualified colleagues.

Doctors must make sure that they are competent to carry out their work. It is recognised that the experience gained by doctors in these groups may lead to new opportunities to achieve CPD. Although at first it can be difficult to find opportunities for CPD, there are organisations that can help. You will find a [list of these organisations](#) available on the GMC website.

Many organisations can offer CPD opportunities to doctors and there are different ways in which doctors can take part in CPD. These include flexible working, distance learning and on-line learning. Advice is available from the organisations mentioned in this guidance.

10. References

https://www.gmc-uk.org/Continuing_professional_development_guidance_for_all_doctors_0316.pdf_56438625.pdf

https://www.gmc-uk.org/guidance/ethical_guidance/28872.asp

11. VERSION HISTORY TABLE

VERSION	DATE UPDATED	UPDATED BY	REASONS
8. Human Resources Policy	14/12/2015	AB	Separated from archived HR policy. Who is this guidance for moved to section 3 Regulation – GMC good medical practice updated Revalidation renamed and updated Section 10 – 10 principles of CPD Policy template updated. Issued at V1.0.
1.0	18/12/2017	AB	Reviewed. References added. Issued as V1.1

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