

CRITERIA 2: CPD POLICY

This chapter contains:

Overview

- **Guidelines for developing a CPD Policy**
- **Evidence Required for Accreditation**
- **Adding Value: the Range of Good Practices**

OVERVIEW

One of the biggest challenges for employers of engineers and technicians today is to maintain competitive advantage. To do this, they need to attract, retain and develop very high-caliber manpower. A vital component of any suite of HR Development policies in an engineering organisation is a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Policy, to ensure that engineering professionals ‘don’t stand still.’

Continuing Professional Development of employees also reflects a significant investment of resources on behalf of any organisation. A comprehensive CPD policy (and supporting CPD systems and practices) can ensure that the development needs of individual employees are prioritised in line with business objectives, thus adding value to the bottom line.

PURPOSE OF CPD POLICY

- Demonstrates upper Management’s commitment to CPD

Answers the “Why” and the “How” of your organisation’s involvement in CPD
Why is CPD important for the business?

How should an engineer go about planning their CPD?

Where should CPD be recorded?

- Provides a summary of all relevant CPD activities
 - Identification of Individual Training Needs via Performance Management System
 - Maintenance of CPD Records
 - Commitment of 5 days CPD minimum, on average, per engineer / technician per annum
 - Mentoring process
 - Evaluating the impact of CPD etc
 - Knowledge Sharing / Knowledge Management
- Defines the roles and responsibilities of all parties in relation to CPD

TIP!

CPD Policy Saves Money!

Many organisations have found that, with a clear CPD policy in place, they can reduce the financial outlay needed for people development. A clear policy makes organisation’s more focused on blended learning activities, not just paid-for training. A clear policy helps prioritise CPD activities according to needs.

EVIDENCE FOR ACCREDITATION

2.1 Integrated policy covering all aspects of CPD.

- An umbrella policy, that clearly communicates the developmental opportunities available to all engineers and technicians within the organisation
- Worded to suit the culture of the organisation
- Defines the roles and responsibilities of all parties in relation to CPD
- Outlines the broad, holistic nature of CPD

HOW CAN YOU DO THIS?

- See the end of this Chapter for a sample CPD policy which you can amend to fit your culture and scale.
- Once you've drafted your CPD policy, make sure that you ask your Engineers Ireland adviser to check it for you.
- Then share it with the board/management team to get good buy-in. Engineers Ireland can present on the benefits of achieving the prestigious CPD Accredited Employer standard to your management team.

2.2 Policy approved by senior management

- Upper management have signed off on the overall CPD policy
- [At audit] Upper management understand the overall costs and benefits of CPD
- [At audit] Upper management can describe CPD systems that they have put in place to support the development of engineering professionals in order to improve the organisation's performance

HOW CAN YOU DO THIS?

- Get upper management to talk to other organisations about the value they get from being a CPD Accredited Employer.
- If upper management say time is an issue, assure management that a team of CPD 'champions' will share work on the project, including a champion in HR / Training as well as your Engineering leader(s), Quality and Finance.
- If upper management say resources are an issue, be creative. Most CPD systems and practices don't need much financing and a good CPD plan will actually see your Training spend reduced! Ask your Engineers Ireland adviser about other possible resource-saving ideas.

2.3 Policy well communicated to staff

- **[At audit]** Managers at all levels understand what they need to do to support the development of their staff
- **[At audit]** Staff understand what their manager should be doing to support their development
- **[At audit]** Staff who are new to the organisation, or new to the job, can confirm they have had the CPD policy effectively communicated to them
- **[At audit]** Management and staff can give examples of their own CPD

HOW CAN YOU DO THIS?

- Think of the communication of your CPD policy in the same way you would a Health & Safety policy or a Fire Safety policy. Think about your audience(s) and the best medium to get the CPD policy ‘into their hands’ e.g. Induction, Staff Handbook, e-mail, Newsletter, a special launch etc
- Talking promotes understanding. Get management talking about what they can do better to support staff. Get staff talking about what they can do to support their own CPD. Get HR / Training involved as ‘the honest broker’ on CPD matters.
- Ensure all staff understand the difference between CPD and Training. CPD, which may include formal training, is a much broader and more inclusive approach to maintaining core competencies. See our guidelines at the end of this Chapter “What Constitutes CPD?”

Tip: Your CPD Policy

Your CPD Policy can be used at recruitment fairs and at interview, in order to sell the clear benefits of your organisation’s Continuing Professional Development (CPD) systems and practices in creating a good environment for lifelong learning for engineers and technicians

GOOD PRACTICES

Standard Good Practices

- Covering all aspects of CPD
- Approved by senior management
- Published and well-communicated to all relevant staff

Advanced Good Practices

- Employer sets aside specific financial resources, as well as other resources, dedicated to CPD as an organisational priority
- Leaders/Managers who practice their CPD skills, to benefit their staff, are celebrated and rewarded by their employer
- Annual formal measurement of employee engagement/satisfaction e.g. Employee Survey, a Culture audit

THREE THOUGHTS

- **Remember, adults have different learning preferences. CPD is not just training. It includes a range of formal learning activity. How will you get your engineering staff to understand this distinction?**
- **A policy is just a collection of words unless it is effectively communicated, and regularly re-communicated.**
- **CPD should be enjoyable. It can offer novel and stimulating experiences. Does your company make CPD fun?**