

**CRITERIA 4: Formal CPD - minimum 5 days average p.a. recorded**

This chapter contains:

Overview

- **Guidelines for recording CPD**
- **Evidence Required for Accreditation**
- **Adding Value: the Range of Good Practices**
- **Types of CPD and Corresponding Time Credits**

## Overview

In order to measure, monitor and assess the value-add of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) it is important to record formal developmental activities undertaken by engineering professionals, at all levels, in your organisation. The challenge is to record CPD regardless of whether it was an in-house programme or an activity off-site. Any **planned and structured** activity, other than normal on-job 'learning as you go', that **meaningfully contributes** to the professional development of an engineering professional can be looked upon as constituting **formal CPD**.

The practice of achieving and logging CPD is one which spans many professions, including Accountancy, Law, Medicine and Engineering. Engineers Ireland adheres to best, international standards with regard to Continuing Professional Development.

Specifically, CPD is pinpointed as being a fundamental part of a professional engineer career.

Five days per annum is the minimum average amount of appropriate CPD a professional engineer or technician should be undertaking and recording. In going forward for a Professional title, such as Chartered Engineer, a candidate has to demonstrate that they are actively involved in CPD in this manner.

### **PURPOSE OF ACHIEVING A MINIMUM OF 5 DAYS CPD, PER ANNUM, PER ENGINEER/TECHNICIAN**

- Good CPD records afford clarity that employees are competent. Such records can also help in determining whether the organisation has defined capabilities in certain areas e.g. for the purpose of tendering for contracts.
- Up-to-date source of management information which can be used to make selection and promotion decision.
- Required when applying for professional titles, such as Chartered Engineer.
- Without this fundamental information, organisations can experience quality and cost issues - not to mention systemic failures or legal repercussions

### **TIP: Get professional!**

To gain a Professional Title, such as Chartered Engineer, you must demonstrate that you are actively involved in CPD (an average of 5 days per annum) and you maintain a continuing record of your competence development.

## EVIDENCE FOR ACCREDITATION

### 4.1 Individual CPD must be recorded correctly

- Clear guidelines are followed in recording formal CPD
- **[At audit]** Staff display an understanding of what constitutes formal CPD and therefore what should be recorded

#### HOW CAN YOU DO THIS?

Some people don't identify why they are doing a development activity so they find it difficult to record.

- Before any CPD, managers should talk to staff about why they are doing it
- After an activity, managers should talk to staff about what they learnt and it can benefit them, their team and their organization
- Once people can see why they are learning and what they have learnt, it becomes easy to record.
- See guidelines on "What Constitutes CPD"

### 4.2 Systematic recording of formal CPD

- A CPD Recording system is in place

#### HOW CAN YOU DO THIS?

- Use a format that records the CPD **date** and **duration** as well as **learning outcomes**
- Depending on the size of your organization, and available resources, different options suit different companies. Some use **Paper-based records**; others an **Excel Spreadsheet** system (or other bespoke computer systems) and some invest in an integrated **Learning Management system** which records CPD.
- People forget. Regularly remind staff of what constitutes CPD. Some organisations get very creative. Consider a poster campaign. Some large employers now run CPD summits annually, inviting all relevant professional bodies, colleges and learned institutions to their campus for a day. How could you scale this idea? Engineers Ireland is always happy to have a CPD Executive or a Membership Executive visit your organisation.

### 4.3 A minimum of 5 days CPD, per engineer / technician recorded for a recent 12 month period

- We require accurate CPD records for your engineers and technicians showing a 5 day CPD average (minimum) for a recent 12 month period
- [At audit] Staff can describe recent CPD undertaken

#### HOW CAN YOU DO THIS?

- People who don't attend CPD activities often say they have too much work to do. If people need development, managers must let people take part in development activities, even if it means they have to cover for them. Help managers to see how it's in their interests ultimately to build up people's skills and knowledge.
- Look to see if any manager in particular is holding people back from development

Try to tie development into external qualifications and standards, such as becoming a Chartered Engineer. It gives you and your staff the assurance that they have comparable competencies to people in other good organisations.

#### Tip: Reward recorders

Some leading, CPD ACCREDITED EMPLOYERS reward staff who log/record an average of 5 days CPD per annum. Some pay their Subscription fees to a Professional body. Others offer them lunch with top management.

Sample Sectors	Average number of CPD days recorded p.a.
Construction	5
Consultancy	6.4
ICT	9
Pharma/Medical Device	9
High-end Manufacturing	10
<i>All Sectors</i>	<i>7.72</i>

## How to Record CPD - 3 options

Tracking and recording CPD is not exceedingly complex but, depending on available resources, different options suit different organisations. We most commonly come across three approaches.

### 1 - The Paper Approach

The Paper Approach is a very common method used to track CPD.

- Training requirements for each position can be documented
- CPD/Training records for each person are retained
- Certifications, attendance sheets, qualifications etc are recorded
- All employees typically have a Manila Folder to hold all physical pieces of paper
- These folders are stored in a secure area

A wholly paper-based system tends to be feasible only for the smallest of organisations.

The key advantages are:

- Very inexpensive in terms of materials (paper, ink, folders)
- Paper offers excellent flexibility in terms of tracking and recording details of any type of CPD, from an educational site visit to the completion of a Diploma

The primary disadvantages of such a system are:

- Time and effort expended to manage a paper-based system
- Cumbersome when it comes to flagging important follow-up training

### 2 - The Hybrid System

The Hybrid Approach is also a commonly deployed method for tracking CPD.

- Computer-based tools are used to help track CPD data i.e. Excel spreadsheets, Access databases
- Training requirements for each position documented on computer
- Training records on computer and typically on a physical piece of paper (often to record approval signatures)
- Certificates, attendance sheets held in Manila Folder and may also be scanned into computer system

Clearly, the Hybrid system leverages the computer where possible but in many cases is still dependent on paper as the official tracking mechanism.

Advantages:

- Basic computer tools, such as Excel, require limited investment.
- May suit small to medium-sized organisations

- Like paper, a blank Excel spreadsheet offers a very flexible format for tracking and recording CPD
- Excel can be networked so that individuals (at a number of locations) can input data which is collated into one Master spreadsheet
- Important update training can be easily flagged

Disadvantages:

- The maintenance required to manage and synchronize two systems
- Such systems do not cope well with significant scale-ups in terms of workload as the paperwork end of things can become daunting if official signatures are required of a trainee and the person verifying the training.

### 3 – Computer Software applications

A range of Training control tools, utilizing computer software applications, are available, including Recording Modules on Learning Management Systems. Good systems can:

- Support a geographically-distributed model that requires individual's participation to input data
- Continually perform gap analyses between required and completed CPD
- Automatically assign training and development tasks based on the gap analysis
- Allow staff to view their CPD plans and records
- Support electronic signatures
- Synchronize changes between Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and their associated courses
- Automatically trigger required training based on document changes
- Provide real-time reports

Advantages:

- Leverages the computer and reduces paperwork
- May suit medium- to large-sized organisations
- Eases the communication challenge in terms of update notifications and visibility of who needs to be upskilled in what areas
- Can assist in being 'audit ready' within a short space of time

Disadvantages:

- Typically requires a large up-front investment
- Can requires rigorous systems back-up and systems support functions

Which option do you think best suits your organisation?

# Good Practices

## Standard Good Practices

- Targeted CPD carried out in accordance with individual CPD plan
- Individual CPD records maintained and updated
- Minimum average of 5 days CPD per engineer/ technician annually

## Advanced Good Practices

- Recording of all formal CPD through an integrated system e.g. HR system or a Learning Management System
- CPD average of 8-10 days, as appropriate to engineering sector

## THREE THOUGHTS

- "Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at twenty or eighty." Henry Ford
- Watch out for 'course junkies' and 'shy starters'. Everybody should be involved in CPD, not just the vocal few

You can get a lot of formal CPD for free! Check our guidelines: "What Constitutes CPD"