

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD)

Guidance

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Continuing Professional Development

Introduction

Professional development is vital for all nuclear professionals whatever their age or status. There should be a seamless transition between Initial Professional Development (IPD) and Continuing Professional Development after admission to professional membership and/or registration.

Professional development is not just about technical skills, but also about the non-technical aspects of our working lives. It is a rapidly changing world that we live and work in. Keeping up to date with technical developments is vital to all professionals. So too is the need to exhibit interpersonal, presentational, and managerial skills for meeting modern professional expectations.

The Institute's CPD Policy

A principal aim of the Nuclear Institute (NI) is to promote the highest professional and safety standards for the nuclear industry. As part of the activity towards achieving this aim the Institute has in place a professional development strategy for all professional membership grades i.e. Fellow and Member and it is also strongly encouraged for pre-professional grades – Associate and Affiliate.

Maintenance of a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) record is also a condition of retaining professional registration with the relevant Licensing Bodies (e.g. Engineering Council, Science Council or the Society for the Environment).

The following objectives from the Institute's strategy in professional development that focus on CPD are:

- (i) To require that members of the Institute maintain a continuous record of their professional development activity.
- (ii) To monitor the professional development profile of individual members of the Institute at appropriate times (related to maintaining Engineering Council, Science Council and the Society for the Environment licensing conditions and when members are applying for, or transferring between, membership grades).
- (iii) To encourage individual members to aim for the highest standards in continuing professional development by the provision of regular information on professional development opportunities, standards, and requirements, both in the workplace and in the wider profession.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

CPD in the nuclear industry covers a wide and diverse area and it should be emphasised that control of CPD lies in the hands of the individual member where they should be responsible for:

- Managing their own professional development following the Engineering Council, Science Council, or the Society for the Environment Code of Practice if appropriate.
- Choosing which professional development activities to undertake and on what subject matter.
- Maintaining an appropriate balance between technical and non-technical professional development activities, with a good spread of activities from the categories of CPD listed under the section 'CPD Activities'.

Many professional development activities are dictated by employers' requirements and training provision. However, this is only a part of the input to an individual's plans. It may or may not be the most important part, but the individual member must take responsibility for their development plan, even if this is simply to ensure that the employer's provision is adequate and appropriate.

Evidence from surveys shows not only that Institute members have a high level of activity in professional development but also that they are overwhelmingly in control of this development and, most frequently, undertaking the development as a personal initiative.

The NI does not specify a minimum number of CPD hours or CPD points. Our approach is based on qualitative outcomes and benefits gained as we feel that this is more appropriate to professional development and learning rather than relying on quantitative measures such as hours or points.

Reflective Learning

Reflective learning is an integral part of CPD. It provides individuals with opportunities to critically evaluate their experiences, take action to enhance learning and self-awareness and continually improve their professional practice which in turn will contribute to ongoing growth and development. It will also enable individuals to consider how their learning and development has benefited their role, their team, and the wider organisation.

Reflection can also be used to deepen understanding, consolidate learning, and demonstrate how the individual has applied new knowledge and skills in practice. When you document your reflective learning, you should also include insights gained, actions taken, and outcomes achieved.

We recommend that you consider the following to apply reflective learning within your CPD:

- **Self-Reflection**
You should take time to reflect on your strengths and weaknesses and personal/professional goals and consider what went well, what didn't go well and what you have learnt.
- **Apply Reflective Models**
You could use various reflective models or frameworks such as Gibb's Reflective Cycle, Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle, Borton's Reflective Model or Schon's Reflective Model to guide your reflection process. These models typically involve various stages that include description, feelings, evaluation, analysis, conclusion, and action planning.
- **Reflective notes**
You could consider these four elements when constructing reflective notes for each of your CPD activities:
 1. Why did I choose this CPD activity?
 2. What did I learn from this CPD activity?
 3. What am I going to do to apply the learning in my work?
 4. What am I going to do to further develop this learning and/or meet any gaps in my knowledge, skills or understanding?

Benefits of CPD

CPD demonstrates a commitment to maintaining high standards of professionalism and excellence. It allows individuals to stay up to date with the latest trends, techniques, and developments in the nuclear industry and is a crucial investment for both individuals and organisations. Organisations that prioritise CPD demonstrate a commitment to investing in their employees' growth and development as well as fostering continuous learning and success in today's dynamic and competitive work environment.

There are several benefits to both individuals and organisations.

- **Enhanced Skills, Knowledge, and Confidence** through opportunities to acquire new skills, expand knowledge, deepen expertise and boost confidence levels ensuring professionals remain relevant, competent, and competitive.
- **Improved Performance** allowing individuals to apply new insights and best practices to their work, leading to improved efficiency, productivity, quality, and effectiveness in job roles.
- **Career Advancement** through equipping individuals with the skills and qualifications needed to pursue new opportunities and progress within the nuclear profession. It enhances employability, increases promotional prospects, and opens doors to higher-level roles.
- **Employee Engagement and Retention** through opportunities for learning and advancement as this creates a positive work culture, boosts employee morale, and enhances retention rates.
- **Adaptability and Resilience** to help individuals stay agile and responsive to change in a rapidly evolving work environment particularly in the nuclear industry. It cultivates a growth mindset, encourages innovation, and equips professionals with the skills to navigate uncertainty and disruption effectively.

The Personal Professional Development Cycle

The Personal Professional Development Management Cycle is a systematic approach to managing one's professional growth and career advancement. It involves several key stages or steps that individuals can follow to continuously improve their skills, knowledge, and competencies. It is also iterative and cyclical, meaning that it repeats over time. As you progress in your career and continue to move through these stages to adapt to changing circumstances you will acquire new skills and pursue new opportunities for growth.

- **Planning and Goal Setting** through the development of a personalised plan detailing the activities you will undertake to reach your objectives. Through periodic review of your goals and aspirations accounting for your evolving skills and interests, you should adjust your objectives and development plan accordingly. This will help to ensure that it aligns with your long-term career trajectory.
- **Implementing Development Activities** through enrolling in courses, attending seminars, seeking mentorship, working on projects, or pursuing further qualifications (see CPD activities for more information). Implementing your plan systematically will help you keep track of your progress along the way.

- **Reflecting and Evaluating** through regular reflection on your experiences, achievements, and challenges and evaluation of your progress towards your objectives. This will help you adjust your approach as necessary to address any gaps or areas for improvement as necessary.
- **Feedback and Review** through periodically reviewing progress against development objectives you will be able to assess the effectiveness of the development activities undertaken and identify any areas for improvement. You should also seek feedback from your manager, mentors, colleagues etc. to gain insights into your performance and identify any further development needs.

Your Professional Development Plan

It is useful to create a Personal Development Plan (PDP). Establishing a comprehensive and actionable PDP will allow you to take control of your career and help you achieve your goals. As part of a professional membership application, you will be required to submit your PDP to demonstrate your commitment to ongoing learning and development.

The NI does not stipulate the format or content of the PDP and can be simple or challenging appropriate to your role and responsibilities.

You may want to consider developing a strategy for your Professional Development Plan that follows the Personal Professional Development Cycle model in the above.

CPD Activities

CPD encompasses various types of learning and development activities aimed at enhancing professional knowledge, skills, and competencies tailored to individual learning preferences and professional development goals. You should undertake activities that add to your skills, knowledge and experience and are relevant to your job and career development needs. There are virtually no limitations to the range of subjects that can count as professional development (see list below). It is your career - whatever is relevant to your present or future career is eligible. We recommend that wherever possible this should be related to the NI's Nuclear Professionalism Standard and activities should be chosen in collaboration with your employer.

- **Work based learning** refers to activities related to your own job or work environment. These could include on-the-job training, shadowing experienced colleagues, participating in projects or committees, and gaining practical experience through hands-on tasks.
- **Professional activities** refer to activities that provide opportunities for networking, knowledge sharing, and staying updated on industry trends. These could include engaging with professional organisations, attending conferences, seminars, workshops, and industry events through the NI Young Generation Network (YGN) or local NI branches, participating in professional associations, serving on committees, and presenting at conferences or webinars.
- **Formal/educational** could include pursuing higher education degrees, diplomas, certifications, and vocational qualifications. These programs may be offered by universities, colleges, training institutions, or online learning platforms and are designed to deepen knowledge, acquire new skills, and obtain recognised qualifications relevant to your role.

- **Self-directed learning** refers to taking the initiative to identify learning needs, set goals, and pursue learning independently. This may include reading books, journals, and online articles, watching appropriate TV programmes, listening to podcasts or radio programmes, participating in online courses or webinars, and engaging in reflective practices to apply learning to real-world situations.
- **Informal learning and other activities** refer to activities that take place both inside and outside the workplace and includes both technical and non-technical. Within the workplace it may include mentoring or coaching, attending professional development events organised by employers, attending industry exhibitions. Outside the workplace it may include volunteering in the local community for the benefit of society e.g. acting as a school governor, parish councillor or sitting on a committee.

NB For compliance with the Science Council CPD requirements under standard 2, CSci registrants must satisfy at least three (exceptionally 2) of the above categories.

Completing and submitting your CPD Record

The NI is not prescriptive about the format and content of your record as this is your choice, but it should be related to your job needs, career development and competences.

The maintenance of a CPD record is a requirement of professional membership and registration. Failure to maintain an adequate record or submit a CPD return upon request will put an individual's professional membership and/or registration at risk.

mycareerpath®

We accept CPD records in any format, but we recommend using **mycareerpath®**, an online Professional Development System available for use by all NI members. This tool was developed by the Engineering Council and has profiles for all professional membership and registration grades the Institute offers, including the Science Council and the Society for the Environment. Other features allow users to create plans, upload evidence, and generate reports to send to mentors, colleagues, or professional institutions for online review. The tool is accessible by desktop, tablet, and smart phone.

It allows all NI members to record activities and experiences that contribute to their professional development throughout the year and reflect upon how this learning has helped them. The tool can also be used to build evidence for applications to professional membership and/or registration with the Engineering Council, Science Council, and the Society for the Environment.

To access it and set up your profile to start recording your CPD, you will need to login into your online account through **MyNI**. A short step-by-step guide is available on the NI website to assist members in setting up their profile.

Start using mycareerpath® now and get into the habit of logging CPD throughout the year.

Mandatory Reporting of CPD

Each year, the NI will undertake a random sample of a proportion of its professional members to confirm that they are undertaking CPD. This sample will include all professionally active members and those registered through the NI with the Engineering Council, Science Council, and the Society of the Environment.

Individuals have 3 months from the request to submit their CPD declaration. In the event of a non-submission or failure to provide the evidence when requested or engage with the process, will put an individual's membership and (if applicable) professional registration at risk.

Each member audited will be provided with feedback and in the event of an unsatisfactory submission, support to the member will be offered.

Extenuating circumstances

In some cases, Professional Members and registrants may be unable to comply with the NI CPD policy, for example if they are no longer professionally active or in cases of unemployment, maternity, or sick leave. In these circumstances records will not be subject to audit.

Further information

Engineering Council: [CPD information](#)

Science Council: [CPD Standards for Registrants](#)

Society for the Environment: [CPD Policy](#)