



Engineering Council CPD Policy Statement

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Document History

Document Location

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Revision History

Revision date	Summary of Changes
17/10/2013	First edition
12/02/2015	Updated to refer to 'professionally active' in place of 'retired'

Approvals

This document requires the following approvals.

Name	Title	Date of Issue	Version
Registration Standards Committee	-	3/9/13	0.8
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Distribution

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Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Policy Statement

CPD is understood across most professions as the systematic acquisition of knowledge and skills, and the development of personal qualities, to maintain and enhance professional competence¹. All members of professional engineering institutions have an obligation to undertake CPD, and to support the learning of others. For Engineering Council registrants, this obligation underpins the value of the professional titles of Engineering Technician, ICT Technician, Incorporated Engineer and Chartered Engineer, as well as serving society and enabling it to have confidence in the engineering profession.

CPD has several purposes, which will vary in relation to registrants' circumstances, their needs and their career progression. Very often registrants will do CPD to assure their continuing competence in their current job. At other times, CPD may be done to enable a different role within or outside their organisation (which may have more management content or which may not be a pure engineering role). Equally, CPD may help them follow a longer term career development plan, or to enhance their professionalism in a wider context than a specific job role. The focus of registrants' learning may therefore be on different areas of competence at different times.

CPD can also take a variety of different forms. At its heart is informal learning through the challenges and opportunities of working life, and interaction with others (eg colleagues, customers, suppliers) including professionals from other disciplines. However this may be supplemented by structured activities such as courses, distance learning programmes, private study, preparation of papers and presentations, mentoring, involvement in professional body activities, or relevant voluntary work. (This list is not intended to be exhaustive). Individual registrants are best placed to determine their needs and how to meet them. Often, employers or experienced colleagues will play a significant part in this, but individuals should be responsible and proactive in seeking professional development opportunities.

While most engineering professionals undertake CPD, this is often on a casual basis, without any deliberate planning, recording of activities, or conscious reflection. Whatever its purpose or nature, learning through CPD should be reflective and should relate to specific objectives even if these are only to maintain their professional engineering competence. Having a regularly reviewed development plan will facilitate learning, although there will always be a place for unplanned activities. Registrants should record both their CPD activities and what they have learned or achieved through them, and relate this to any planned objectives. Doing this will help them to determine their future needs and plan accordingly, as part of a cyclical process. It will also encourage an outcome-based approach which is more appropriate to professional learning than relying solely on quantitative measures such as hours or points.

One of the main functions of a professional body is promoting and supporting the professional development of its members. The professional engineering institutions (PEIs) licensed by the Engineering Council advise and support their members on CPD in a number of ways, such as providing guidance, resources and mentoring programmes. A number

¹ The five areas of technical and non-technical professional competence for Engineering Council registrants are set out in UK-SPEC and the ICT Technician Standard

provide CPD planning and recording systems, and review their members' CPD from time to time. They should in future strengthen their support by reviewing a random sample of their professionally active registrants' CPD records each year and providing appropriate feedback. The sample need not include registrants who are not professionally active or those on career breaks for any reason (e.g. maternity or paternity leave, parenthood, unemployment etc).

Explanatory Note

At present, PEIs are obliged under the Engineering Council's Registration Code of Practice to monitor their registrants' CPD as follows:

Licensed Members shall establish and implement appropriate policies and practices for CPD, and in particular shall:

- recognise CPD as an integral part of a Licensed Member's mission;
- establish and keep under review an appropriate policy;
- allocate responsibility and resources to carry out the policy;
- promote to registrants and employers the aims, importance and benefits of CPD achievements, contributing to business and individual success;
- guide and support registrants to achieve benefits from CPD;
- be aware of the needs of registrants within their technical discipline and related areas;
- encourage provision to meet the needs of members;
- monitor, through an appropriate review system, the CPD of registrants;
- evaluate the effectiveness of the policy.

However the nature of any monitoring is left to PEIs to decide and many only review individuals' CPD at the time of a change in membership grade (eg Member to Fellow) or registration category. A number of institutions though have adopted a more systematic approach and regularly invite groups of their members to submit their CPD records for review and evaluation. Their aim in doing this has not been to police their members, but to encourage a culture in which members will naturally engage in CPD and take ownership of their own learning and development. The Engineering Council believes that adopting this approach across the engineering profession should help all registrants to plan and reflect upon their learning and development in a more conscious way, thus benefitting them, their employers, and society.

This would strengthen the professional obligation upon registrants to undertake CPD, but would not introduce any new mandatory requirements. There are no plans to introduce any system of revalidation of registration, nor is it proposed that there should be sanctions for individuals who do not make returns when requested. That would be a matter for individual institutions to decide, and those which have begun to request members to submit their CPD records for review have generally looked for other ways of encouraging members to make returns. Matters such as sample size, or the format in which a return is requested would equally be matters for institutions to determine, as would the way in which any feedback might be given. Institutions could, for example, accept records prepared as part of an employer's staff development and appraisal system, or to meet the requirements of another professional or regulatory body, or for the purposes of a specific licensing regime. The Engineering Council will encourage and facilitate the sharing of thinking and practice between licensed institutions on this and other matters.

It is hoped that all institutions will be able to implement sample monitoring by no later than 1 January 2017. This is an aspirational target date which should allow institutions sufficient

time to publicise and explain the nature and purpose of monitoring to their members, and to ensure that the institution itself has the capability to maintain a monitoring process. This might include having not only appropriate IT-based systems to facilitate the submission of returns, but also a pool of members willing and competent to review them. This transitional period would also allow further discussion between the Engineering Council and institutions around issues such as the definition of professionally active members, and other matters which might need further definition or clarification such as what might constitute appropriate feedback.