
Continuing Professional Development

Learning for Life

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What is CPD?

Continuing Professional Development, or CPD, can be defined as the maintenance, improvement and broadening of knowledge, skills, and personal qualities necessary for the execution of your professional and technical duties.

Every time that you act in a professional capacity you make judgments based on your knowledge, skills and expertise. Competent professionals routinely maintain and update their expertise in ways appropriate to their role (education, research, management, etc) and thereby develop the attributes that enable them to act in a professional capacity.

Our CPD scheme has been designed to provide a framework to formally recognise the ways in which you update and maintain your expertise. This formal recognition is important because there is increasing pressure for professionals within the workplace not only to achieve excellence but also to show evidence of continuing competence and excellence at all stages of a career.

Through our CPD framework the Royal Society of Biology is aiming to enhance the recognition, status and employability of our members and produce a mechanism by which our members with Professional Recognition Awards can demonstrate their credibility and distinction.

CPD engenders public confidence in professionals and gives employers' confidence in their employees. In increasingly competitive environments, whether in research, business, education, or any modern workplace, CPD provides an important edge.

Royal Society of Biology CPD will enable you to:

- ❑ retain control over your development activities
- ❑ demonstrate your commitment to maintaining and developing competence
- ❑ provide support for appraisals and pay negotiations
- ❑ maintain a reputation as a professional
- ❑ give you a competitive edge
- ❑ progress more rapidly through both membership and Professional Recognition Award levels

Our scheme will enable us to:

- ❑ support the needs of our members through its flexibility
- ❑ enhance the reputation of our Professional Recognition Awards with employers and the public through its monitoring system

How does Royal Society of Biology CPD work?

We encourage a focused, flexible approach to CPD. It is not prescriptive but provides you with tools to establish your own personal development plan and to build up a portfolio. The scheme will complement any programmes run by your employer or other professional bodies. Activities that you already engage in for other schemes will form valid contributions to our scheme.

Our scheme is based on a CPD cycle of ‘think, plan, do, review’:

- **Think:** Analyse your present situation and identify areas for development. [Self-analysis underpins effective career development.]
- **Plan:** Decide what formal and informal activities will help you to achieve your goals.
- **Do:** Carry out and record these activities
- **Review:** Evaluate how useful the activities were.

There is a single system used for all members of the Royal Society of Biology, making it simple for people progressing through or maintain our professional recognition awards.

The CPD system is maintained online, via the members area, and you upload each activity, either as it is completed or at the end of your CPD year. Activities can fall under one of the 5 areas below;

1. Work based learning
2. Professional activity
3. Formal/Educational
4. Self-directed learning
5. Other

When you select the area your activity falls under, you will also be given various sub-categories for your activity to allocate the number of points that can be claimed for each hour you have spent on your activity.

To recognise both achievement and effort, a credit scheme has been devised to sit alongside the recording of outcomes, designating a specific number of points to each hour spent on activities within each sub-category. To pass the CPD year, 50 points must be gained and there are restrictions on the number of points that can be claimed in each of the five areas. The tables overleaf contain more information on the CPD areas, sub-categories and point limits.

The Society also understands that for some individuals achieving 50 points may be difficult, therefore, should you feel your annual CPD submission meets the learning outcomes of CPD we will still assess your application.

CPD - The Five Activity Areas and Their Categories

Activity Area	Category	Additional Guidance	Points / Hour	Evidence Required
Work Based Learning (a maximum of 20 CPD points can be claimed under this heading)	Experiential Learning	(e.g. on the job learning; learning from experience; expanding job role)	2	Summary of activity details and benefits gained
	In – Service Training	(e.g. orientation programmes; operating procedures; employee development)	2	Summary of activity details and benefits gained
	Receiving Coaching From Others		2	Summary of activity details and benefits gained
	Work Shadowing		2	Summary of activity details and benefits gained
	Peer Review of Own Work	(e.g. presentations to colleagues; direction on created documents)	2	Summary of activity details and benefits gained
	Review of Case Studies and Literature		2	Summary of activity details and benefits gained
	Participation in Journal Club		2	Summary of activity details and benefits gained
	Discussions with Colleagues	(e.g. idea generation, problem solving)	2	Summary of activity details and benefits gained
	Presentations	(e.g. to external clients, regulators or policy makers)	2	Copy of presentation
	Supervising Colleagues or Students		2	Summary of activity details and benefits gained
	Job Rotation, Secondments or Sabbaticals		2	Summary of activity details and benefits gained
	Involvement in Employer Work	(e.g. beyond scope of role)	2	Summary of activity details and benefits gained
	Lesson Learnt Activities		2	Summary of activity details and benefits gained
	Request and Analysis of Feedback	(on your performance from colleagues or clients)	2	Summary of activity details and benefits gained
	Participation in Appraisal and Goal Setting		1	Summary of activity details and benefits gained
	Preparation of Bids	(preparation and submission of research or financial bids)	2	Summary of activity details and benefits gained
	Course Development	(produce a new course, substantially revise existing or revise based on evaluation)	2	Summary of course / revisions / evaluation
Other	Any other activity that takes place in the fulfilling of your current role	1	Summary of activity details and benefits gained	

Professional Activity (a maximum of 20 CPD points can be claimed under this heading)	Professional Body Involvement	(e.g. officer; organiser; committee member; working group member)	2	Summary of activity details and benefits gained
	Organiser	(e.g. conference, scientific meeting or course)	2	Summary of activity details and benefits gained
	Being an Examiner		2	Summary of activity details and benefits gained
	Being a Referee for a Journal		2	Summary of activity details and benefits gained
	Technical Group Membership	(e.g. special interest group; section or study group)	2	Summary of activity details and benefits gained
	Being an Expert Witness		2	Summary of activity details and benefits gained
	Lecturing or Teaching	(specifically new material)	2	Summary of activity details and benefits gained
	Presentation Giving or Discussant	(at conferences or scientific meetings)	2	Copy of presentation / programme of event
	Networking with other professionals		1	Summary of activity details and benefits gained
	Coaching or mentoring		2	Summary of activity details and benefits gained
	Other	Any other activity that aids your professional development through a professional body or develops the skills of others	1	Summary of activity details and benefits gained

Formal / Educational (a maximum of 30 CPD points can be claimed under this heading)	Programme of Learning for Academic Qualification		2	Certificate of attendance / achievement
	Attendance at Training Course		2	Certificate of attendance
	Attendance at Society of Biology Approved Events		3	Certificate of attendance
	Attendance at Conferences or Scientific Meetings		2	Certificate of attendance
	Distance Learning	(including e-learning)	2	Certificate of achievement / registering
	Reading Professional Framework	(e.g. understanding legal or regulatory frameworks)	2	Summary of activity details and benefits gained
	Maintenance / Development Specialist Skills		2	Summary of activity details and benefits gained
	Writing Articles or Papers		2	Copy of article / paper
	Presentation Preparation	e.g. for conferences of scientific meetings)	2	Summary of activity details and benefits gained / copy of presentation
	Training Material Preparation		2	Summary of activity details and benefits gained
	Other	Other activities that lead to qualifications or involve attendance at structured learning activities	1	Summary of activity details and benefits gained

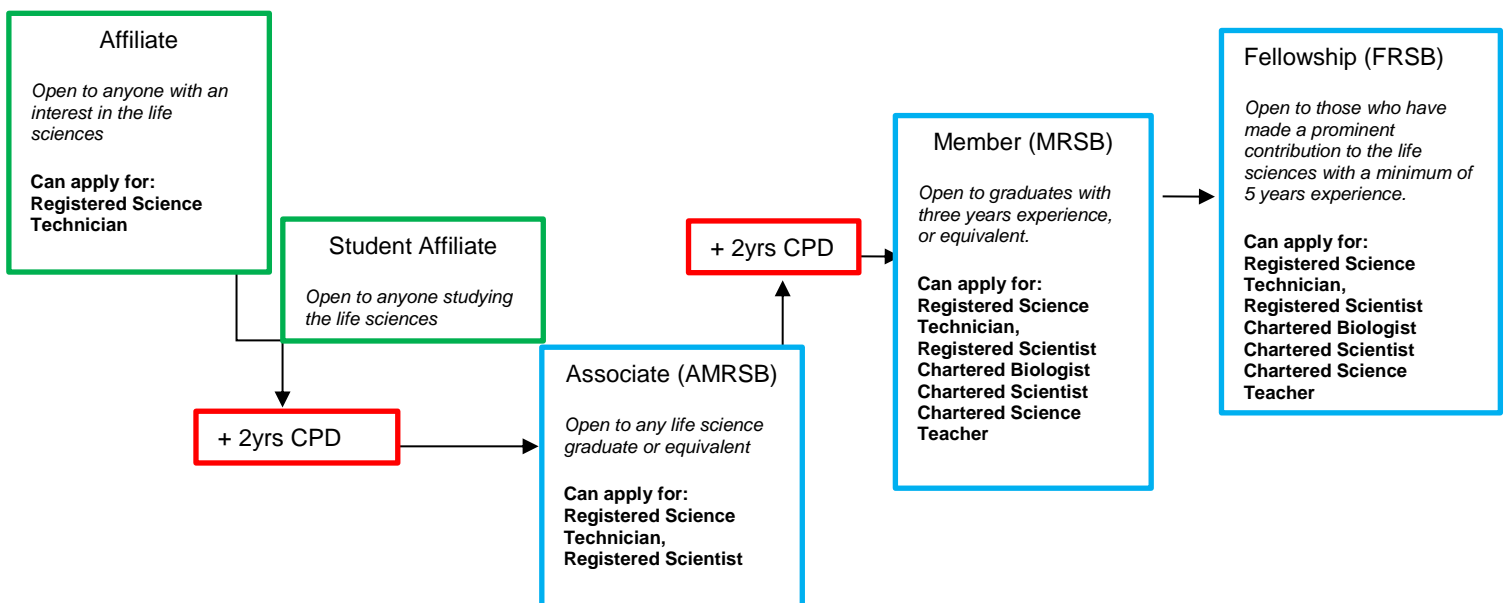
Self - Directed Learning (a maximum of 10 CPD points can be claimed under this heading)	Reading	(e.g. books; journals or articles)	1	Summary of activity details and benefits gained
	Reviewing and Summarising	(e.g. books or articles)	1	Summary of activity details and benefits gained
	Upgrading knowledge	(e.g. through internet searches or other electronic resources)	1	Summary of activity details and benefits gained
	Reflective Practice	(e.g. assessing CPD benefit and identifying next steps)	1	Summary of activity details and benefits gained
	Other	Any other activity where you have taken initiative to diagnose your needs, formulated goals using resources or evaluated the outcome.	1	Summary of activity details and benefits gained
Other (a maximum of 10 CPD points can be claimed under this heading)	Finance Skills	(e.g. treasurer for club or society)	1	Summary of activity details and benefits gained
	Strategic Thinking	(e.g. a role in organisational restructuring; strategic planning; faculty development; external or community relations)	1	Summary of activity details and benefits gained
	Leadership Skills	(e.g. manager for sports or children's team; leader at scouts or guides; chairperson at a club or society)	1	Summary of activity details and benefits gained
	Coaching and Counselling Skills	(e.g. sports coach; Samaritans volunteer; mentoring; tutoring)	1	Summary of activity details and benefits gained
	Organisation and Planning Skills	(e.g. secretary for club or society; school government; PTA organiser; church parish organiser)	1	Summary of activity details and benefits gained
	Other	Any other activity that develops transferable skills valuable in your current role or future career	1	Summary of activity details and benefits gained

What happens at the end of my CPD year?

After 50 claimable points have been entered onto your CPD area with corresponding evidence for each activity, a certificate will become available for you to save or print as appropriate.

This certificate confirming your CPD progression will also be saved on your members' area for 5 years, allowing you easy access if you require it for any professional recognition awards or membership upgrades you decide to apply for.

Completing CPD years can also mean entry into an exciting new stage of your professional career. Two years of CPD allow progression onto the next stage of Membership, with the added benefits of professional recognition awards offered at each level, as highlighted in our progress chart below.



Royal Society of Biology staff will randomly audit 2.5% of all CPD uploads for quality control. If your CPD submission is selected for audit, all this means is that two CPD assessors for the Society will review your activities and evidence uploaded to ensure you are meeting the required standard.

Society staff members are also required to randomly select for audit 2.5% of CPD submissions under each classification of our Professional Recognition Awards (RSciTech, RSci, CSci, CSciTeach and CBiol).

If applicable, in an audit we will work with you to develop your submission appropriately and ensure your uploaded evidence conveys the required information. You will be given a period of three months to successfully meet the audit requirements. However, although unlikely, if an audit reveals that applicants

cannot sufficiently illustrate maintenance of their Professional Recognition standards, the award may have to be removed.

Frequently asked questions

Why should I do CPD?

CPD is a useful process that adds value to your existing capabilities by demonstrating your commitment to your development. More and more people are engaging in CPD to demonstrate that they are keeping abreast of developments in their field. It improves your employability or promotion prospects and maintains flexibility for changing roles or career moves.

Our scheme provides you with a framework for furthering your professional development and demonstrates to others that you take responsibility for your learning and competence. It will aid your progression through the categories of membership.

I'm used to taking opportunities to develop myself as and when they come up. Why should I make more work for myself by planning ahead and reflecting on it?

Formally planning your CPD gives you better control of your development. Whilst opportunistic development has its own value, actively thinking about your needs, planning, recording and reflecting on them is a powerful learning tool. Formalising your development turns it even more to your advantage. It's like going through your stores to make a shopping list instead of shopping just when you are hungry. If you do the latter you might impulse-buy items you don't absolutely need and miss out on some staples and end up paying more!

I'm already in a CPD scheme. How will I find time for the Society's CPD scheme too?

Much of your existing CPD can count towards our CPD scheme. There are many other activities that you probably already do that would also count.

Why do I have to keep records? It's a waste of my time.

Keeping records is an important part of a learning cycle and will help you identify strengths and those areas that still need development. Records are also your most visible way of proving your engagement with CPD and your professionalism. A CPD record can be useful support, e.g. during an appraisal.

I'm doing some distance learning for an MSc – will this count?

Yes, this can count. Depending on your work, aspects will count as formal or informal.

What counts as CPD?

Basically, any activity that develops your work-related knowledge and skills counts as CPD. It can be formal (like attending conferences) or informal (like reading relevant journals). We are not prescriptive about what must be done; it is for you to decide what you need. If you are in doubt as to whether an activity counts towards CPD, consider how it benefits you. If you can demonstrate that it has enhanced skills or knowledge relevant to your work, chances are, it counts.

What if I'm unemployed?

CPD is not just for practicing professionals; it's a good way of showing potential employers that you take your development seriously, even when not employed.

Our scheme accepts informal CPD as well as formal, there are therefore many opportunities to find activities that enhance your skills and maintain your general abilities. The principles are the same; identify areas you would like to develop and methods of developing them, then evaluate their benefit.

What is an approved activity?

We have an Approval scheme to evaluate CPD activities offered by providers and grant approval to those that meet certain criteria. Such activities may include talks, lectures, conferences, courses, workshops and other activities for training and development purposes. Approved events are counted at 3 credits an hour, allowing you to meet your 50 point requirement sooner. Approved events carry the statement, "Approved by the Society of Biology for purposes of CPD, this event may be counted as X CPD points".

As a member, your participation at Society Approved Events is discounted and you'll hear about all the great events we approve in our Member's Newsletter.

50 points seems small, can I do more?

Many of our members quickly meet our minimum requirements for annual progression; CPD however, is about much more than just hitting a standard level. Although they will not add to your 'claimable' point's total, activities should continue to be logged throughout the year. This allows you to illustrate to yourself and others the wide ranging activities you have engaged in throughout the year to develop your professional skills.

Still have questions?

Should you have any questions regarding the information provided in this document, find that the document does not address your concerns, or want to discuss our Professional Recognition further please contact cpd@rsb.org.uk and we will be happy to advise you further.