



Guidance for Continual Professional Development

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Introduction

The Animal Health Professions Register (AHPR) conduct for members is clear that all its registrants have a duty to maintain and continue their development of skills, knowledge and keep abreast of new innovations within their field to make continuous improvements to the standard of service they provide to their patients and clients and to renew registration. This document has been created primarily in line with the RCVS and the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) amongst others.

We have written this document to provide guidance and information to all our new and existing registrants regarding their CPD. The AHPR will conduct an audit on 5% of its registrants by subgroup on an annual basis.

The AHPR expects all of its registrants to maintain competence and to seek to make continuous improvements to the standards of service they provide to their patients and clients. Therefore registrants are expected to engage in CPD to ensure maintenance of the highest possible professional standards.

Language

Throughout this document:

‘Registrant’ or ‘Member’ refers to individuals who have been accepted onto the AHPR register

‘Service user’ refers to anyone who uses or is affected by a registrant’s practice

‘The standards’ refers to the CPD standards unless otherwise stated

‘We’ or ‘us’ refers to the AHPR

‘You’ or ‘your’ refers to a registrant

About us

The AHPR is a voluntary register to raise standards in the industry and assist animal owners and veterinary surgeons in ensuring that the professionals they use to assist in the treatment and health maintenance of their or client’s animals are suitably trained and accountable. We hold a register of professionals (registrants) who meet our standards for their professional skills and behaviour for their respective group. For example, a Veterinary Physiotherapist will belong to the Veterinary Physiotherapy group.

Section 1 - What is CPD and why is it necessary?

Continual professional development (CPD) is the way in which registrants continue to learn and develop their knowledge, skills and behaviours beyond their first formal qualification. It can be defined as “the systematic maintenance, improvement and broadening of knowledge and skills and the development of personal qualities necessary for the execution of professional and technical duties throughout the Member’s working life” (RCVS, 2015). Essentially the CPD process helps you manage your own development on an ongoing basis. Its function is to help you record, review and reflect on what you learn.

The key features of the CPD process

CPD needs to:

- be a documented process
- be self-directed: driven by you, not your employer
- focus on learning from experience, reflective learning and review
- help you set development goals and objectives
- include both formal and informal learning.

What will it do for you?

It can help you to reflect, review and document your learning and to develop and update your professional knowledge and skills. It is also very useful to:

- provides an overview of your professional development to date
- reminds you of your achievements and how far you've progressed
- directs your career and helps you keep your eye on your goals
- uncovers gaps in your skills and capabilities
- Opens up further development needs
- provides examples and scenarios for a CV or interview
- demonstrates your professional standing to clients and employers
- helps you with your career development or a possible career change.

CPD is not just formal courses that lead to a qualification. CPD is any activity from which you learn and develop. This may include the following:

Work based learning – For example, reflecting on experiences at work, considering feedback from service users and/or peers.

Professional activity – For example, being involved in a professional body or giving a presentation at a conference.

Formal education – For example, attending formal courses that lead to a qualification

Self-directed learning – for example, reading articles or books and reflecting on how this information can be used in the registrants practice.

HCPC (2017).

Guidance is given on the different types of CPD activity that may be undertaken by registrants (Appendix A)

AHPR is a self-regulatory body, therefore we believe that our registrants must maintain their competence following qualification and make ongoing improvements to their current knowledge and their standard of service provision. This assists not only with individual registrants' ongoing competence but the standard of the whole register.

Section 2 - The standards

Registrants should be aware that their personal CPD records must be available to the AHPR for inspection on request. These standards are mandatory and AHPR can remove registrants that fail to meet these standards. There are five CPD standards:

- Maintain a continuous, up-to-date and accurate record of the CPD activities;
- Demonstrate that their CPD activities are a mixture of learning activities relevant to current or future practice;
- Seek to ensure that their CPD has contributed to the quality of their practice and service delivery;
- Seek to ensure that their CPD benefits the service user; and
- Upon request, present a written profile (which must be their own work and supported by evidence) explaining how they have met the Standards for CPD for AHPR registrants

AHPR registrants are all individuals and we recognise that the register encompasses a diverse range of practitioners with varying degrees of experience, responsibility, autonomy and learning needs. It is because of this individual basis that we do not regulate employers in any way. Therefore, it is each individual registrants' responsibility to ensure they meet the standards set out in this document.

The AHPR does not set, approve or endorse CPD opportunities or seek to. The AHPR will accredit training providers that provide courses that are externally accredited on the national framework. There are numerous CPD opportunities and it is unfeasible for us to assess and endorse these. If registrants are unsure then they should seek the advice of their associations in the first instance.

Registrants must be able to demonstrate a mixture of different learning activities which assists them in meeting their ongoing competence to practice.

All members are required to achieve at least 25 hours per annum or 50 hours over a rolling two-year period. A maximum of 5 hours per annum of self-directed learning (see Appendix A) is permitted, otherwise registrants can choose to complete their CPD through many routes (see Appendix A). This allows greater autonomy for registrants to choose their preferred CPD method based on their learning needs.

Section 3 - Meeting the standards

To meet the standards, you need to do the following

Standard 1 - Maintain a continuous, up-to-date and accurate record of the CPD activities

What this means:

You need to conduct regular CPD activities (see what constitutes CPD above and Appendix A)

You need to keep an accurate and timely record of what you do in whichever format suits you. We suggest a folder which contains all the relevant evidence and reflections that support this activity.

You need to keep an accurate and timely record of what you do and submit this to us in an approved format if requested.

Your record needs to be a true reflection of the activities that you have personally carried out.

This is your personal record and you may wish to ensure you can access this even if you move employers. You can find examples of the types of evidence in appendix B.

Standard 2 - Demonstrate that your CPD activities are a mixture of learning activities relevant to current or future practice

What this means:

Your CPD must include a mixture of different types of learning/activity.

Your CPD must relate to your registration and practice as a Veterinary/Animal health-professional.

Mixture of activities:

Your CPD must include a mixture of different types of learning. In practice, most registrants naturally carry out multiple types of learning, perhaps without even realising it. Appendix A contains a varied but not exhaustive list of common CPD activities.

Where registrants carry out only one type of learning activity, they are unlikely to have met the required standard.

Your practice:

Your CPD must be relevant to your current or future practice as an individual. This may include clinical or managerial skills, developing your business or your career progression. Whilst registrants have autonomy to decide what is beneficial to them as an individual, they must remember that they may be called upon to explain how a CPD activity relates to them as a veterinary health care professional.

Reflection:

It is now widely accepted that critically reflecting on one's own practice is highly beneficial. All registrants will be expected to reflect on their practice and adapt their personal development plan accordingly.

Standard 3 - Seek to ensure that their CPD has contributed to the quality of their practice and service delivery

What this means:

You should aim for your CPD to improve the way you work and benefit your service users (clients/patients)

If you were audited, we would ask you to tell us about some of the activities you have carried out, what you learnt, how this has improved your practice and how this has benefited your service users.

Service delivery and quality of practice

Your CPD development plan should result in changes to how you practice and improve the service you provide to your clients or your staff. This may not necessarily be a significant change, but may mean an improvement nonetheless. Ideally this should be something you reflect upon thereby ensuring continued improvement. Registrants need to identify who their service users are. For those in clinical first line practice this will likely mean your patients. Those in veterinary education will likely discuss their students.

AHPR has adopted HCPC's 'seek to ensure' term. This is because there may be instances where the CPD activity you conducted is not as effective as you thought it might be. It is difficult to guarantee the actual benefits of a CPD activity on your practice. What is important to remember is that you reflect on why the activity was not as helpful as anticipated and how this may be improved in the future. Where registrants experience this, and can explain this to us and demonstrate your plan to rectify this in future, you are likely to be deemed as having met the standard.

Standard 4 - Upon request, present a written profile (which must be your own work and supported by evidence) explaining how you have met the Standards for CPD for AHPR registrants

What this means:

This is only applicable to those registrants selected for a CPD audit.

You must supply AHPR with the necessary CPD information requested to retain your membership

Your CPD paperwork must be your own work, registrants will sign to this effect

Your CPD submission must be your own work and not contain information from others i.e. plagiarised material. If AHPR suspect this has occurred then the CPD audit will cease and this will be handed to the disciplinary committee to action. AHPR will not accredit any CPD schemes and therefore registrants are free to choose providers and topics that are relevant to their development needs.

Section 4 - The audit process

Five percent of each subgroup registrants will be chosen every year for a CPD audit. At annual renewal every registrants will sign a declaration to state that they have met the standards, including those of CPD. Those registrants chosen will be informed and sent the details of the information we require to complete the audit process. If you are unable to undertake the audit then you must inform us immediately and may request it be deferred with a supporting statement (see below). The deadline for submitting your CPD audit documentation is 90 days from the AHPR CPD audit letter telling you that you were selected.

If you do not send in the paperwork within 90 days, or, the information we require to complete the audit, we may remove you from the register. We will only audit those registrants who have been qualified for 2 or more years. Recent graduates therefore, will not automatically be eligible for audit but may find that their CPD documentation may be requested if they are called before a disciplinary hearing or when their 2 years become due.

Upon receipt of your CPD documentation we will confirm if we feel your initial submission is sufficient to go before the panel. The CPD panel will typically reach one of three outcomes. Firstly, that your submission meets the standard, at which point they will inform you of such. Second, we request more information/evidence to support your submission. Thirdly, that your submission does not meet the standard and that you will be removed from the register, retaining the right to appeal that decision.

The panel will consist of a CPD officer and one other member of the register's committee or its delegated representative. One of the panel will be a representative from the relevant subgroup. Whilst we assess your CPD documentation you will remain on the register (if you are a continuing registrant).

If the CPD panel do not feel you have met the standard, and are unlikely to do so, then you are likely to be removed from the register. If this is the case, and you disagree with their decision, you retain the right to appeal this decision.

In such a case, the registrant must inform the panel that they wish to appeal this decision within 7 days of the CPD panel's decision, stating why you think this decision is wrong, any grounds you think relevant and whether you prefer a hearing or that they consider your previously submitted documents and the contents of your appeal letter.

The CPD appeals panel will inform you of a date for this hearing (if you chose this option) and the panel will typically consist of two CPD officers and another discipline specific member of the register. The registrant may bring a representative to the panel hearing which may be another full. The registrant must inform the appeals panel of the name and title of any representative they intend to bring in their appeals letter.

Where members are successful in this appeal, they will automatically need to submit the CPD documentation within a 2 year time period. Registrants who have been through this appeals process and been successful, should expect their future CPD submissions to experience increased scrutiny from the CPD panel.

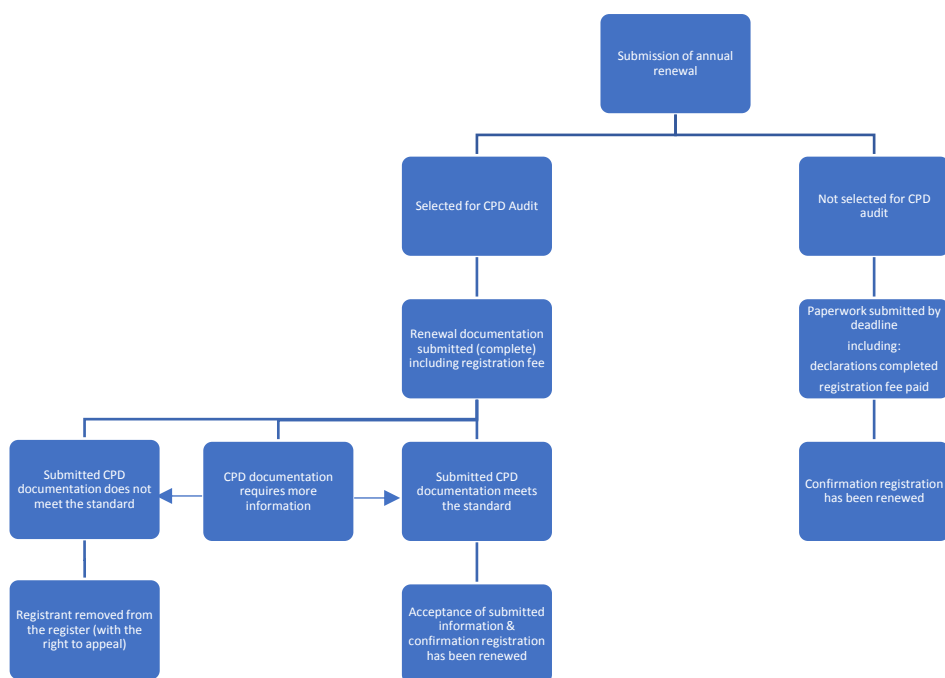
Deferral

Registrants may choose to defer being part of the CPD audit when selected. This may be due to maternity, serious illness or a bereavement for example. We will ask you to support this request with

evidence to ensure that we handle your request fairly whilst maintaining our obligations to other registrants selected for audit and the wider register. If you can participate in this process but feel you have ongoing issues that may affect your ability to fully comply with our requirements then registrants should make this clear when they receive notification of selection and on the CPD submission.

Where this deferment has been agreed, registrants should understand that they will automatically then be selected for audit at the next renewal.

CPD AUDIT FLOWCHART SUMMARY



Section 5 Putting your CPD profile together

This section provides guidance on what is expected of registrants and their CPD submission. This submission consists of:

- A summary of your current status and practice history (up to 500 words)
- A statement on how you believe you have met the standards
- A chronological list of CPD activities you have undertaken in the last two years (example at Appendix A)
- Any supporting evidence
- Practice history – this should contain a description of your current role(s) or any that you have held in this period. This information is used to assess whether your CPD is relevant to your current role(s).
- Standards statement – this should contain, in your own words, how you believe you have met the AHPR CPD standards.
- Chronological list of CPD activities – this should contain details of various activities you have undertaken in this period (see Section 1).
- Supporting evidence – this allows you to demonstrate that you have attended external CPD activities or undertaken certain activities.
- More information??

Planning your CPD

You should review your CPD needs regularly and plan ahead so that you can make the most of development opportunities as they arise. Planning ahead will also enable you to take part in more cost-effective and focused activities, rather than attending seminars or other events ad hoc, and then finding that they perhaps did not meet your needs. If you take part in an appraisal process at work, this will help you to identify areas you need to concentrate on, and should also provide you with an auditable record of your agreed development plans and activities. Remember that undertaking CPD is not just about attending courses - it's about continuing your professional learning in whatever way best helps you to maintain your competence and helps you to improve the professional service you provide.

FAQ's

Is CPD mandatory?

Yes; The AHPR expects all of its registrants to maintain competence and to seek to make continuous improvements to the standards of service they provide to their patients and clients. Therefore registrants are expected to engage in CPD to ensure maintenance of the highest possible professional standards.

When do I need to submit my CPD records?

Only if you are selected for CPD audit purposes (see above).

I only work part time – do I have to do the same amount of CPD as someone working full time?

Yes. We would expect you to undertake the same mandatory CPD as someone working full-time.

I'm retired/non-practising/on parental leave – do I need to do any CPD?

If you are no longer working as a practitioner we would not expect you to undertake CPD. However if you return to practice we would expect you to take note of the areas where you need to update through CPD or maybe retrain in certain areas to be sure you are competent to undertake your role.

I haven't been working in practice for a few years – what CPD should I do?

If you are planning to return to work after a break from practice, you may wish to use the 'Day One or Year One competences' to track your level of competency. Once you return to practice, you should not undertake any procedures for which you are not competent. You may find it useful to undertake a 'return to practice' refresher course before you start back at work and/or arrange for some supervision when you start back until you feel confident to work unsupervised.

Appendix A - Types of CPD activity

Work based learning

Reflective practice

Learning by doing

Clinical audit

Case studies

Case conferences

Discussions with colleagues

Peer review

Work shadowing

Secondments

Job rotation

In service training

Supervising or training staff or students

Visiting other departments or specialty fields and reporting findings back

Expanding your role

Analysing specific events

Filling in self-assessment questionnaires

Project work or project management

Professional activity

Involvement in a professional body

Active membership of a specialist interest group (must be demonstrable)

Lecturing or teaching

Mentoring

Being an examiner

Being a tutor

Branch/Regional meetings

Organising journal clubs or other specialist groups

Being an expert witness

Giving presentations at conferences

Organising accredited courses

Supervising or conducting research

Formal external education

AHPR prefers courses that are externally accredited by a recognised awarding body. This seeks to ensure that registrants are accessing a robust and worthwhile educational course. Courses that do not have this may vary significantly in quality and may therefore be of limited use to registrants.

Courses

Further education

Research

Attending conferences/seminars

Writing articles or papers

Distance learning

Planning or running a course

Self-directed learning:

Reading journals/articles

Reviewing books or articles

Updating knowledge through the internet or TV

Keeping a file of your learning, reflections and future learning needs

This is not an exhaustive list, merely an indication of some of the main types of CPD that may be undertaken.