

Update on CPD for ASPACI

By Andrew Brown

Back in December 2003 I wrote an article on the virtues of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for ASPACI members. Momentum Editor, Mark George wrote an editorial on CPD v Accreditation in the same Volume 11.3, December 2003 Edition of Momentum. You can download that issue of Momentum from Momentum Archive area of the ASPACI website. Archives now go back to Vol 9.2 of July 2001. Enjoy.

Since then the Executive has trialed a draft CPD System that is broadly the same as that discussed in my article. In all 13 members participated in the trial, covering a wide range of member types, occupations, and experience levels. Members were from several States or Territories of Australia as well as overseas. All participants easily met the proposed CPD requirements.

As a result of this successful trial, the Executive has decided to offer the proposal for comment by members.

Remember, CPD is ANY activity that extends or updates your knowledge, skill or judgement in your areas of practice. We need CPD because Technology and methods of work are constantly changing. In such an environment it is not acceptable to rely solely on your basic training – undertaken possibly many years ago - you need to regularly update your knowledge, develop and refine your skills. This means undertaking on-going CPD. Also, for those members that provide expert evidence or reports for court – the courts expect you to maintain and develop your skills in this manner.

Proposed Policy.

This is to be an opt-in Policy, with willing members choosing to participate. It would not be a higher grade of membership or a membership requirement.

Participating members would be “Certified” Members, meaning that they are certified as actively practicing CPD. These members must keep records of their CPD activities and certify compliance with the CPD Policy each year when they renew their membership.

Members would be subject to random audit of their CPD records from time to time. Members that fail to meet the required CPD (or choose not to participate in CPD) would still be full members – otherwise having the same rights and responsibilities as “Certified” Members. Remember that joining ASPACI is not subject to testing or peer review and membership should not be used in a member’s CV as if it was a qualification. Nor should members use post-nominals to indicate their membership.

Certified Members benefit as follows:

- Up to date knowledge in areas of practice;
- Enhanced credibility as an expert witness;
- Can be described as a Certified Member in CV (not as a qualification, but as a recognition of continuing education) but not allowed to use post-nominals.

- Listed as a Certified Member on the ASPACI web page with contact details and areas of practice;
- Future (subject to me sorting the technology out) of services offered with logo etc included (i.e. advertisement page for each Certified Member) at no cost;
- Enquiries made to ASPACI seeking suitable persons practicing in a particular field or region to be referred to Certified Member list on website;
- Able to use Certified Member logo on any correspondence or advertising.



Members failing an audit would be noted as such on the website Certified Members list.

Proposed CPD Requirement.

Certified Members would be required to participate in 100 weighted hours of CPD activity over a rolling 3 year period. That is, at any point in time members would be required to have 100 weighted hours of CPD over the prior three years. The rolling three year period recognises the irregularity of formal training courses and our own biennial ASPACI conference.

For an activity to qualify as CPD it must be related to your career or field of expertise. For many members CPD activities will include both technical and non-technical topics. Non-technical topics may include management, accounting, law, economics, and foreign languages in which you carry out business. If you are undertaking non-technical CPD you should also maintain and update your knowledge in your area(s) of practice. Over a three year period it is expected that the substantial proportion of your CPD would be in your area(s) of practice. If the non-technical CPD you are undertaking is of significant content (eg a law degree), then you must still continue to undertake some technical CPD in your area(s) of practice.

Functions that you routinely perform as part of your employment are not normally claimable. For instance preparing an expert report or evidence for court would not be considered CPD. However, research or testing carried out as part of your work would be considered CPD if it is documented in some form. For on-the-job learning to be claimable you must demonstrate how the activity contributed to your knowledge or skills and how it was acquired.

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There are five main categories of CPD proposed:

- A** Formal Education & Training
- B** Informal Learning Activities
- C** Conferences & Meetings
- D** Presentations and Papers
- E** Service Activities

Each CPD activity has a different time weighting, reflecting the relative benefit or worth of the activity. The weighted hours of CPD of an activity are obtained by multiplying the actual hours spent on the activity by the relevant weighting factor. Eg; participation in a formal (classroom style) short course (such as an IPTM course) would have a weighting factor of 2 (see below). An eight hour class (excluding breaks) would be worth 16 time weighted hours (2 x 8 hours year period).

For many members the most convenient method of keeping sufficient CPD records is through brief entries in their professional diary. However, you may prefer to maintain a spreadsheet so that records are easy to produce when requested for audit. A sample CPD record sheet is shown below for reference.

Category A - Formal Education & Training

(Time weighting factor = 2)

Such activities include formal face-to-face education, distance education and short courses. They may be external to your employment or conducted in-house, but will always include time spent in preparation and/or follow-up, either through lectures and/or self study. A special case relates to the undertaking of the entire course work for a higher degree or post graduate diploma, either by the face-to-face or distance modes, which will cover the CPD requirements for the rolling three-year period containing the course. However, you should continue to record other relevant CPD activities to show that you are continuing to keep up to date throughout the period of higher education study and beyond when completed. For formal face-to-face education the time claimed can include the actual hours of lectures attended and/or research undertaken. For distance learning, the simplest approach is to estimate the equivalent number of hours of formal face-to-face education that would have been involved if this mode had been utilised instead of the distance mode. Short courses are defined as involving presenters who are external to the workplace. They include courses at tertiary institutions that are not taken for award purposes.. Training activities within the workplace that do not involve some form of assessment are classed as on-the-job learning. Note: You must provide evidence of the award (eg copy of certificate or academic transcript) when your records are requested for audit.

Category B - Informal Learning Activities

(Time weighting factor 0.5 or 1)

There are two different forms of informal learning activity, namely on-the-job learning, that takes place because of workplace requirements, and private study where you can exercise complete discretion. On-the-job learning requirements usually arise when you undertake a new project and areas are identified where you need to extend your compe-

tency base. It almost always involves another person training you rather than self paced learning. Exceptions could be learning from videos or structured software based training. On the other hand, private study is self paced and is an opportunity for you to direct the way in which your professional career develops. Typical private study activities are the reading of books, journals, manuals, etc and familiarisation with the operation of technological aids, computer programs, equipment, etc. In both cases any activity claimed must pass the simple test that it contributes to the development of your career as a professional. *A time weighting factor of 1 applies to on-the-job learning while a factor of 0.5 applies to private study.* Although you can meet your CPD obligations if you are able to justify the sufficient claims for on-the-job learning and/or private study, you are encouraged to broaden CPD activities to include some formal activities. At least some of your CPD activities should be planned in advance to further develop your competency no matter what stage you are at in your career. Informal learning activities must be supported by sufficient detail to allow a proper assessment when requested for audit. It is not sufficient just to list books, journals, manuals, standards, software etc. without supporting information. Details of the chapters, articles, papers or other relevant information must also be provided so as to give an indication of the new knowledge that was gained. A maximum of 75 time weighted hours of Informal Learning can be claimed in any 3 year period.

Category C - Conferences & Meetings

(Time weighting factor = 1)

Conferences, seminars, workshops, inspections and meetings can be claimed as CPD provided that the content relates to the development of your professional career. This includes those events run by ASPACI, State Regions and other groups to provide information relating to the profession. The hours claimed should be only those for the formal technical presentations, inspections and meetings that you attended at such events and must not include social or travelling time.

Category D - Presentations and Papers

(Time weighting varies)

The preparation and presentation of material for conferences, seminars, symposia and courses in areas related to ASPACI can be claimed. For the preparation and presentation of papers a time weighting factor of 10 should be applied to the actual duration of the presentation if the paper is not published.

Material published in journals and conference papers can be claimed as follows:

- 40 hours per paper for technical papers or research reports for conferences or publications (such as Momentum); or
- 50 hours per paper for papers subject to critical peer review prior to publication (such as SAE).

A maximum of 50 time weighted hours for presentations not involving published papers can be claimed in any 3 year period.

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Category E - Service Activities

(Time weighting factor = 1)

Service to the ASPACI and related areas of interest may be allowable particularly where it contributes to the continuing professional development of others. Within ASPACI, this includes active contributions as a member of the executive at state or national level, participation in CPD audits, review of technical papers prior to publication. A time weighting factor of 1 applies to all such activities. CPD allowable under this heading is limited to 20 time weighted hours can be claimed in any 3 year period

CPD Records made Easy.

The combination of requirements and eligibility for CPD listed above may seem complicated. However record keeping is relatively simple. Those involved in the trial used a spreadsheet that I developed for CPD record keeping. This makes the whole process simple.

The Excel spreadsheet can be downloaded from the ASPACI website so that you can evaluate this CPD proposal.

Just enter and categorise you recent CPD activities. It will check your CPD compliance for the three year period up to the day you run it. The sheet used the Today() function of Excel, so the date is always set to be the current date.

(Activities calculated as older than 3 years won't be counted). Table 1 below shows the sample data provided with my original article.

Time for your Comments.

The executive is now looking for your constructive comments prior to proceeding with any further action on this proposal. Please test you CPD using the spread sheet and then email comments on the proposal to aspaci@aspaci.org.au prior to 30 September 2005. You may also like to vote in the on-line poll as to whether you would be likely to participate in CPD as a Certified Member. The poll is open till 30 September 2005 at the ASPACI website www.aspaci.org.au.



Table 1 - Example CPD Record Sheet:

Date	Type	Details	Time (hours)		
			Actual Hours	Weighting Factor	Weighted Hours
31/03/99	D	Presentation at State Legal Conference	1	10	NIL*
22/02/01	C	IPWEA Road Safety Panel Meeting	3	1	3
27/08/01	C	RTA Bicycle/Motorcycle Safety Forum	5	1	5
27/08/01	C	ASPACI NSW Meeting	3	1	3
01/10/01	B	Journals and Book (see attached details)	12	0.5	6
02/01/02	D	Critical Speed Yaw article for Momentum	-	40	40
11/03/02	C	ASPACI 2002 Conference	24	1	24
15/05/02	C	ASPACI NSW Meeting	3	1	3
17/02/03	A	Vericom Training	16	2	32
05/06/03	C	CivEnEx Exposition	2	1	2
21/06/03	B	Heavy Vehicle Acceleration Testing	8	0.5	4
16/09/03	C	ASPACI NSW Swerve Testing Day	6	1	6
09/10/03	B	Self Learning – Pedestrian Accident Analysis	12	0.5	6
Total CPD Activities (Goal 100 hours / 3 year period)					134

- CPD Activity that is older than three years from current date (01/11/03)

Note, a member can obtain 40 hours for a technical article submitted to Momentum and about 24 hours for attending an ASPACI conference. These combined with one 2-day training course earns a total of 96 hours – which is only 4 hours short of the three year CPD requirement. With other regular activities such as reading Momentum, journals and other material, testing activities, attending trade shows (eg a Motor Show) an active member can easily accumulate 100 hours of CPD over a three year period.