

Enhanced CPD: a practical guide

In the first of a two-part series, Louis Mackenzie, Head of Clinical Training at Simplyhealth Professionals, describes the changes in CPD requirements that will affect all members of the dental team next year.

A compulsory legal requirement of registration as a dental professional is to take part in the GDC's continuing professional development (CPD) scheme, aimed at helping maintain public confidence that all registrants are keeping their knowledge and skills up to date.

Although the current GDC requirements for CPD have been in place since 2008, some weaknesses have been identified:

- ▲ The existing scheme records only the number of hours logged, irrespective of how relevant the CPD is to individual registrants
- ▲ Non-verifiable CPD is impossible to audit
- ▲ There has been a significant increase in the availability of non-quality controlled CPD products
- ▲ It is possible to go for years without doing any CPD at all.

Starting next year (1st January for dentists and 1st August for DCPs), all dental professionals must begin what is termed **Enhanced Continuing Professional Development (ECPD)**.

With ECPD, the GDC aims to 'ensure CPD activity is firmly embedded in the professional life of dental professionals' and 'is intended to support registrants in doing CPD regularly, in accordance with our standards and within their current scope of practice'.



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What will change?

The main changes are as follows:

- ▲ There will be a reduction in the overall minimum requirements by the removal of non-verifiable CPD
- ▲ There will be an increase in the minimum requirements for verifiable CPD hours (see Table 1)
- ▲ There will be a requirement to spread CPD activity more evenly over the five-year cycle
- ▲ All dentists and DCPs will be required to write an individual five-year personal development plan (PDP)
- ▲ CPD hours and a declaration that CPD requirements have been met must be recorded annually to maintain registration
- ▲ Registrants will be encouraged to engage with CPD through planned, focussed study with an emphasis on reflection.

Members of dental teams who are mid-cycle when the changes occur will be able to calculate their individual requirements using an online 'transition tool' at <https://www.gdc-uk.org/professionals/cpd/enhanced-cpd>. The GDC website also contains guidelines for personal

development plans, which are the subject of the second article in this series.

Verifiable CPD

CPD is defined in law as:

Lectures, seminars, courses, individual study and other activities that can be included in CPD records if it can be reasonably expected to enhance professional development as a dentist or dental care professional (DCP) and is relevant to their practice or intended practice.

Verifiable CPD, meanwhile, is defined in law as:

Having documentary evidence that the dentist or DCP has undertaken the CPD and documentary evidence that the CPD has:

- ▲ Concise educational aims and objectives
- ▲ Clear anticipated outcomes
- ▲ Quality controls.

The GDC has set four learning outcomes for ECPD (see Table 2) which are an amalgamation of the nine principles published in their 2013 Standards for the Dental

Registrant group	Minimum hours per 5 years	Average hours per year
Dentists	100	20
Hygienists Therapists Orthodontic Therapists Clinical Dental Technicians	75	15
Dental Nurses Technicians	50	10

Table 1: Minimum CPD hour requirements for a five year cycle by category

Learning outcomes	
1	Effective communication with patients, the dental team, and others across dentistry, including when obtaining consent, dealing with complaints and raising concerns when patients are at risk
2	Effective management of self and effective management of others or effective work with others in the dental team, in the interests of patients at all times; providing constructive leadership where appropriate
3	Maintenance and development of knowledge and skill within your field of practice
4	Maintenance of skills, behaviours and attitudes which maintain patient confidence in you and the dental profession and put patients' interests first

Table 2: GDC learning outcomes for CPD

Highly recommended CPD subjects	Recommended subjects
Medical emergencies CPD cycle & ≥ 2	Recommended minimum 10 hours per hours per year
Disinfection and decontamination cycle	Recommended minimum ≥ 5 hours per
Radiography and radiation protection cycle	Recommended minimum ≥ 5 hours per
Recommended CPD subjects	
Legal and ethical issues	
Complaints handling	
Oral cancer: early detection	
Safeguarding children and young people	
Safeguarding vulnerable adults	

Table 3: GDC highly recommended and recommended CPD subjects

Team document. The GDC states that registrants should use their own professional judgement to plan and undertake CPD that is relevant to their field of practice and they will be expected to map each of their ECPD activities against one or more of these learning outcomes.

While the GDC does not have the legal right to make any CPD subject compulsory, they will continue to identify specific topics that may be expected to make a contribution to patient safety (see Table 3).

ECPD records

While CPD cycles will remain five years long, registrants will be required to make an annual statement that must include:

- ▲ The number of whole CPD hours undertaken that year (even if zero!)
- ▲ Confirmation that a CPD record has been kept
- ▲ Confirmation that the CPD is relevant to the registrant's field of practice
- ▲ A declaration that the information provided is full and accurate.

Prompts will be sent approximately six weeks before year end, although statements may be updated at any time in advance. An important change is that once the declaration period is closed it will not be possible to amend CPD statements for the previous year(s).

Unsurprisingly ECPD will require more written documentation, including:

- ▲ A five year PDP (planned CPD activities and associated learning outcomes, which may be adapted as needs change)
- ▲ A CPD log (including date, hours and learning outcomes mapped against completed activities)
- ▲ Evidence from CPD providers for each activity (eg CPD certificate)
- ▲ Evidence that each CPD activity is subject to quality controls.

While the existing requirement to submit non-verifiable CPD hours will be removed, it will no longer be acceptable to complete non-verifiable CPD for two consecutive years. Dentists and DCPs must declare a minimum of 10 hours in any two-year period, even if the minimum requirements for the whole five-year cycle have already been met. It will only be acceptable to declare zero hours for one year if at least 10 hours have been declared for the previous year or a minimum of 10 hours are to be completed during the following year. Extensions of 56 days may be applied for in writing six months before the end of CPD cycles.

Random audits

The GDC will continue to carry out random CPD audits of 5% of registrants, selected proportionately from each category. ECPD records may be requested at any point in the five-year cycle and for five years after a cycle is complete.

The changes summarised above were published on the GDC website on 22nd March 2017 and full details are available at <https://www.gdc-uk.org/professionals/cpd/requirements>.

By the time the CPD changes come into effect, all Simplyhealth Professionals conferences, forums, seminars, hands-on courses, online and personalised in-practice training courses will have undergone any necessary enhancements to ensure that they continue to meet or exceed the quality assurance protocols recommended by the GDC.