

# Continuing Professional Development Programs

## Introduction

This title explores the different types of continuing profession development ('CPD') programs and activities that enable professionals to fulfil their CPD requirements (which are set out in the CPD Requirements title). The wide range of activities and topics captured by CPD policies means that professionals have a certain degree of autonomy in planning and recording their CPD hours. Most professional bodies now offer an online platform for professionals to record their participation in CPD activities, making the process of updating and keeping records relatively straightforward.

A review of the different types of CPD activities across five professions: doctors, lawyers, accountants, engineers and financial planners, shows the wide range of measurements and caps on claimable hours which guide the fulfilment of a professional's CPD requirements.

This title has the following sections:

- Types of CPD activities
- Lawyers
- Doctors
- Accountants
- Financial Planners
- Summary.

## Types of CPD activities

CPD requirements can be satisfied by a professional's participation in, and completion of, a wide range of activities, including:

**Table1: Types of CPD Activities**

<b>Group Learning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Seminars</li><li>• Workshops</li><li>• Lectures</li><li>• Conferences</li><li>• Discussion Groups</li></ul>
<b>Individual study</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reviewing educational materials – audio/visual or written</li><li>• Completion of online modules</li><li>• Practical skills training</li></ul>
<b>Research</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Writing, editing or publication of a profession-specific article, conference paper, journal article or book</li></ul>
<b>Service</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Holding a position on a committee or board related to the profession</li><li>• Attendance at a professional governing body meeting</li><li>• Teaching or mentoring</li></ul>
<b>Reflection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Maintenance of a learning and reflection record</li></ul>

The diversity of activities which satisfy CPD requirements reflects the increasing integration of CPD into a professional's working hours. This minimises the sense of 'obligation' that might otherwise attach to completion of CPD activities.

Furthermore, the fact that all professions reviewed in this title impose certain limits on the claimable hours for different types of activities or categories reflects the emphasis on ensuring that professionals build their skills through a wide range of experiences. This can be seen through the inclusion of activities such as social media discussion or completion of online modules in some CPD programs. For example, the Financial Planning Association of Australia's ('FPA') core pillars of its CPD policy are:

- ensuring that the 'right' people can become members of the FPA
- ensuring that members adhere to the high standards of profession and they are supported in following professional ideals
- protecting the reputation of members.<sup>1</sup>

These pillars provide a good justification for ensuring that professionals engage in a variety of CPD activities across a range of topics. The related CPD Models title explores the way in which activities such as those listed above form a 'CPD Element Model' within a profession, which in turn, are components of CPD Schemes more broadly. Activities can be categorised into different types of models. For example, activities in the 'Service' column above could be considered to be one component of the Community Model, which emphasises collaboration across the profession. Activities in the 'Reflection' column form part of the Individual Research and Reflection Model, which includes activities that enable a professional to focus on personal areas for improvement and strategies for success.

## Lawyers

As per the CPD Requirements title, rule 8 of the Legal Profession Uniform Continuing Professional Development (Solicitors) Rules 2015 ('CPD Rules') sets out the different activities that fulfil the CPD requirements for lawyers holding a practising certificate in NSW. Under this rule, the following activities may be used to comprise a lawyer's 10 CPD unit requirement per year:

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<sup>1</sup> Financial Planning Association of Australia, *FPA Continuing Professional Development Policy* (June 2016) <[https://fpa.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/2016\\_05\\_18-CPD-Policy-2016\\_5-FINAL.pdf](https://fpa.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/2016_05_18-CPD-Policy-2016_5-FINAL.pdf)> (accessed 1 November 2017).

- a seminar, workshop, or other group learning activity<sup>2</sup>
- the research, preparation or editing of a published legal article <sup>3</sup>
- the preparation and/or presentation of written or oral material to be used in a CPD activity or in other forms of education<sup>4</sup>
- membership of a committee, taskforce or practice section of a professional association, designated local authority or the Law Council of Australia<sup>5</sup>
- postgraduate studies relevant to a solicitor's practice needs<sup>6</sup>
- private study of audio/visual material.<sup>7</sup>

Rule 9 sets out what one unit is equivalent to for each of the activities described above.<sup>8</sup>

Lawyers are obliged to keep records to substantiate their participation in CPD activities. The Law Society has produced a template record for lawyers to use to record their CPD participation.<sup>9</sup>

## Doctors

As explored in the CPD requirements title, the CPD requirements for doctors are largely dictated by the specialist colleges. For doctors with a general registration, however, there is an option to complete CPD using a self-directed program or by satisfying the requirements of a specialist college relevant to their scope of practice. This self-directed program option is explored in the Practitioner-Determined CPD title. As examples, set out below are the CPD program requirements for specialists who are members of three colleges.

### *The Australasian College of Dermatologists ('ACD')*

Specialists are responsible for recording and tracking their participation in CPD activities with the college using an online CPD logbook. Specialists are not required to submit documentation when logging the CPD hours, however are encouraged to keep such records in the event of an audit.<sup>10</sup>

For each category of activities, the college lists the types of activities that may be used to satisfy the 200-point CPD requirement per year. Different types of activities accrue a different number of points per hour. For example:<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> CPD Rules r 8.1.1.

<sup>3</sup> CPD Rules r 8.1.2.

<sup>4</sup> CPD Rules r 8.1.3.

<sup>5</sup> CPD Rules r 8.1.4.

<sup>6</sup> CPD Rules r 8.1.5.

<sup>7</sup> CPD Rules r 8.2.

<sup>8</sup> CPD Rules r 9.

<sup>9</sup> See Law Society of New South Wales, *Record of CPD Activities*

<<https://www.lawsociety.com.au/cs/groups/public/documents/internetregistry/1040847.pdf>> (accessed 1 November 2017).

<sup>10</sup> The Australasian College of Dermatologists, *Continuing Professional Development Program 2016-17*

<<https://www.dermcoll.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/ACD-CPD-Handbook-2016-2017-FinalV2-UPDATED.pdf>> (accessed 1 November 2017).

<sup>11</sup> See Australasian College of Dermatologists, *CPD Provider Framework* <<http://www.dermcoll.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/CPD-Provider-Framework.pdf>> (accessed 1 November 2017).

**Table 2: The Australasian College of Dermatologists ('ACD')**

<b>1 point/hour</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation in online discussion groups</li> <li>• Attendance at Clinical Meetings or Symposia</li> <li>• Personal reading and study</li> </ul>
<b>2 points/hour</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparing, developing, reviewing or evaluating exams or assessments</li> <li>• Writing and editing publications such as textbooks or journal articles</li> <li>• Supervising or mentoring college trainees and medical students</li> <li>• Participating in quality assurance meetings</li> </ul>
<b>3 points/hour</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upskilling: laser therapy, micrographic surgery and surgical procedures</li> <li>• Participating in clinical trials or dermatological research</li> <li>• Peer review hospital quality assurance activities</li> <li>• Complete learning and professional reading reflection.</li> </ul>

Additionally, the college has a number of online modules that its specialists may complete. The modules span a number of topics, including 'Using Webinars' and 'Intercultural competency for Medical Specialists'. Completion of these modules enables a specialist to claim between 0.5 and 6 points, depending on the module.<sup>12</sup>

*Australasian College for Emergency Medicine ('ACEM')*

Similarly, the ACEM's CPD policy document sets out the different types of activities that will satisfy a specialist's 50-hour CPD requirement. A snapshot of these activities is below, with a more comprehensive guide available on the ACEM website.<sup>13</sup>

**Table 3: Australasian College for Emergency Medicine ('ACEM')**

<b>Group Learning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation in ACEM online discussion forums</li> <li>• Social media discussions</li> <li>• Non-ACEM workshops and courses on communication skills and mentoring etc</li> </ul>
<b>Quality Enhancement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acting as an observer for a routine or new ED</li> <li>• Preparation for site accreditation</li> <li>• Medical practice audit</li> <li>• Peer review of cases – discussion groups, mortality and morbidity meetings</li> </ul>
<b>Self-directed learning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal study</li> <li>• Online educational activities</li> <li>• Reading – ACEM materials and guidance</li> </ul>
<b>Teaching, research and educational development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trainee shift report</li> <li>• Structured interview</li> <li>• Presentation at academic meetings or conferences</li> <li>• Bedside teaching</li> <li>• Writing curriculum, journal articles and textbooks</li> </ul>

<sup>12</sup> The Australasian College of Dermatologists, *Continuing Professional Development Program 2016-17*, above n 10, 5-6.

<sup>13</sup> See Australasian College for Emergency Medicine, *Continuing Professional Development CPD Activities Guide 2020 CPD Cycle* <[https://acem.org.au/getmedia/30a80b00-d00a-4722-bf98-90b13090678d/CPD577\\_v1\\_CPD\\_ActivitiesGuide\\_2020cycle.pdf.aspx](https://acem.org.au/getmedia/30a80b00-d00a-4722-bf98-90b13090678d/CPD577_v1_CPD_ActivitiesGuide_2020cycle.pdf.aspx)> (accessed 1 November 2017).

Additionally, the college produces a list of skills that satisfy the requirement to perform, teach or supervise core skills and scope of practice skills.<sup>14</sup> The ACEM has an online member portal, which enables specialists to record and document their CPD hours. Evidence is not required to be attached to a submission where the activity was run by the ACEM, the specialist registered for and attended an ACEM event or the specialist conducted a trainee workplace-based assessment within the ACEM member portal.<sup>15</sup>

*Royal Australasian College of Physicians ('RACP')*

Specialists with the RACP can participate in a number of different activities with varied credit value in order to meet their 100 CPD credit requirement.<sup>16</sup>

**Table 4: Royal Australasian College of Physicians ('RACP')**

<b>Practice Review and Improvement (3 credits/hour)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practice and clinical audits</li> <li>• Patient satisfaction studies</li> <li>• Incident reporting and monitoring</li> </ul>
<b>Assessed Learning (2 credits/hour)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PhD studies</li> <li>• Formal postgraduate studies</li> <li>• Courses to learn new techniques</li> </ul>
<b>Educational Development, Teaching and Research (1 credit/hour)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching</li> <li>• Involvement in standards development</li> <li>• Publication</li> </ul>
<b>Group Learning (1 credit/hour)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seminars</li> <li>• Conferences</li> <li>• Hospital and other medical meetings</li> </ul>
<b>Other learning activities (1 credit/hour)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading journals and texts</li> <li>• Information searches</li> <li>• Web-based learning</li> </ul>

For each category of activity, a specialist can count a maximum of 50 credits per year towards their total. An example program provided by the RACP is as follows:<sup>17</sup>

<sup>14</sup> See Australasian College for Emergency Medicine, *Continuing Professional Development – Specialist CPD Procedural Skills List* <[https://acem.org.au/getmedia/412c20f3-382d-4b89-9820-1b26aa8d101a/CPD571\\_v1\\_2020\\_SpecialistCPD\\_Procedural\\_Skills\\_1.pdf.aspx](https://acem.org.au/getmedia/412c20f3-382d-4b89-9820-1b26aa8d101a/CPD571_v1_2020_SpecialistCPD_Procedural_Skills_1.pdf.aspx)> (accessed 1 November 2017).

<sup>15</sup> See Australasian College for Emergency Medicine, *Provision of Evidence Guideline – 2017 CPD Cycle* <[https://acem.org.au/getmedia/12221091-9de8-4401-9b37-e0de8484aa82/CPD\\_EvidenceProvision.pdf.aspx](https://acem.org.au/getmedia/12221091-9de8-4401-9b37-e0de8484aa82/CPD_EvidenceProvision.pdf.aspx)> (accessed 1 November 2017).

<sup>16</sup> The Royal Australasian College of Physicians, *MyCPD Framework* <<https://www.racp.edu.au/docs/default-source/default-document-library/cpd-2017-mycpd-framework.pdf?sfvrsn=4>> (accessed 1 November 2017).

<sup>17</sup> Royal Australasian College of Physicians, *MyCPD Claim Examples* <<https://www.racp.edu.au/docs/default-source/default-document-library/150604---mycpd-claim-examples-2017.pdf?sfvrsn=2>> (accessed 1 November 2017).

Figure 1: Example of credit totals by category

<b>Category 1: Practice Review &amp; Appraisal</b>		
<b>(3 credit per hour, max 50 credits)</b>	<b>Hours</b>	<b>Credits</b>
Monthly morbidity and mortality meetings	10	30
Department of Neurology audit	5	15

<b>Category 3: Educational Development, Teaching &amp; Research</b>		
<b>(2 credit per hour, max 50 credits)</b>	<b>Hours</b>	<b>Credits</b>
Teaching medical students and registrars	15	15
FRACP Clinical Examiner	30	30
Presentation at Neurology Workshop (including preparation)	3	3

<b>Category 4: Group Learning Activities</b>		
<b>(1 credit per hour, max 50 credits)</b>	<b>Hours</b>	<b>Credits</b>
Attendance conference of the American Epilepsy Society	18	18
Attendance at Neurology Workshop	5	5

<b>Category 5: Other Learning Activities</b>		
<b>(1 credit per hour, max 50 credits)</b>	<b>Hours</b>	<b>Credits</b>
Web-based learning: UpToDate	22	22

The RACP has an online portal which its specialists can use to record their CPD participation.

## Accountants

*Chartered Practising Accountants Australia ('CPA Australia')*

CPA Australia categorises activities that a member may participate in to complete their CPD requirements as follows.

For 'structured reading, video or audio' and 'mentoring,' a member is able to claim up to 10 hours for these per year. All other activities have no limit on their claimable hours.<sup>18</sup> Members also have access to an Online CPD Diary, which is an online platform enabling them to maintain a record of the activities. The online CPD diary automatically updates when a member attends a CPA Australia training session, such as a seminar, workshop or Congress.<sup>19</sup> Alternatively, members may choose to keep a printable record, which they fill out manually and send to CPA Australia at the end of each triennium.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup> CPA Australia, *Continuing Professional Development* <<https://www.cpaaustralia.com.au/member-services/continuing-professional-development>> (accessed 1 November 2017).

<sup>19</sup> CPA Australia, above n 18.

<sup>20</sup> See CPA Australia, *Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Activities Record* <[https://www.cpaaustralia.com.au/~/\\_media/corporate/allfiles/document/member/cpd-activities-form.pdf](https://www.cpaaustralia.com.au/~/_media/corporate/allfiles/document/member/cpd-activities-form.pdf)> (accessed 1 November 2017).

Evidence must be maintained for 12 months after the end of each triennium for the purpose of ensuring adequate records are held to satisfy any audit requests.

## Engineers

Engineers Australia sets out a number of different activities that a member may participate in to satisfy their CPD requirements. Of note is the emphasis on 'Service to the Profession,' which includes a number of different positions:<sup>21</sup>

- Volunteer on boards or committees of Engineers Australia
- Panel member on tertiary course accreditation visits
- Interviewer on chartered status and assessment panels
- Reviewing technical publications
- Assisting with CPD audits
- Serving as a volunteer on other boards and committees
- Mentoring a colleague for work experience purposes
- Preparation of written submissions, contributions to and participation in technical standards related meetings.

There are caps on the number of claimable hours for some activities, including:<sup>22</sup>

- Learning activities – 75 hours
- Private study – 18 hours
- Service – 15 hours
- Preparation of papers published in journals and conference proceedings – 45 hours per paper
- Papers subject to critical peer review prior to publication – 75 hours.

Members may record their participation in CPD activities manually or online. Furthermore, Engineers Australia has released an app called myCPD, which allows members to access online training courses related to project management, technical engineering, risk management and career development. The app also enables members to record their CPD hours.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Engineers Australia, *Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Types and Examples* <[https://www.engineersaustralia.org.au/sites/default/files/content-files/2016-12/cpd\\_types\\_and\\_conditions\\_20012016\\_final.pdf](https://www.engineersaustralia.org.au/sites/default/files/content-files/2016-12/cpd_types_and_conditions_20012016_final.pdf)> (accessed 1 November 2017).

<sup>22</sup> Engineers Australia, *CPD – Types and Conditions* <[https://www.engineersaustralia.org.au/sites/default/files/content-files/2016-12/cpd\\_types\\_and\\_conditions\\_march\\_2014.pdf](https://www.engineersaustralia.org.au/sites/default/files/content-files/2016-12/cpd_types_and_conditions_march_2014.pdf)> (accessed 1 November 2017).

<sup>23</sup> See Engineers Australia, *myCPD* <<http://mycpd.engineersaustralia.org.au/>> (accessed 1 November 2017).

## Financial planners

### *Financial Planning Association of Australia ('FPA')*

The FPA has a comprehensive policy document which sets out the CPD requirements of its members. FPA requires its members to develop a Professional Development Plan and Record. These obligations are more thoroughly explored in the Practitioner-Determined CPD title. As discussed in the CPD Requirements title, members are required to complete between 25 and 35 hours (depending on registration type) of CPD activities spanning six 'Professional Dimensions.' Whilst specific guidance is not provided on the types of activities that will satisfy these requirements, there are guidelines regarding the content of activities that fall under each dimension:<sup>24</sup>

**Table 5: Financial Planning Association of Australia ('FPA')**

<b>Professional Dimension</b>	<b>Activity content</b>
<b>Capability</b>	Theoretical knowledge and practice relating to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investment, products or facilities an adviser is authorised to provide advice on</li> <li>• Cash flow management</li> <li>• Taxation treatment of an investment or facility</li> <li>• Management of financial planning practices</li> <li>• Equal Opportunity and OH&amp;S</li> <li>• Privacy and Information Security</li> <li>• Trade Practices Act</li> </ul>
<b>Professional Conduct</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ethical frameworks eg FPA Code of Ethics and Rules of Professional Conduct</li> <li>• Ethical dilemmas, practices and decision making</li> <li>• Dispute Resolution</li> <li>• Complaints Management</li> </ul>
<b>Critical Thinking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification and analysis of client objectives</li> <li>• Product analysis and selection</li> <li>• Coordinating and implementing a financial plan</li> <li>• Client data collection</li> <li>• Research techniques</li> </ul>
<b>Reflective Practice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflection on professional performance</li> <li>• Work style diagnostics</li> <li>• Development and execution of a comprehensive Professional Development Plan</li> </ul>
<b>Interdependence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involvement in FPA committees</li> <li>• Structured and unstructured mentoring</li> <li>• Financial Planning Week activities</li> <li>• Community education</li> <li>• Representing the FPA in Government lobbying</li> <li>• Pro bono work</li> </ul>
<b>Attributes and performance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Client relationship management – building rapport, dealing with client concerns, sales and influencing skills</li> <li>• Providing feedback</li> <li>• Negotiation</li> <li>• Interpersonal and business communication skills</li> <li>• Team management</li> </ul>

<sup>24</sup> Financial Planning Association of Australia, *FPA Continuing Professional Development Policy* (June 2016) 3 <[https://fpa.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/2016\\_05\\_18-CPD-Policy-2016\\_5-FINAL.pdf](https://fpa.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/2016_05_18-CPD-Policy-2016_5-FINAL.pdf)> (accessed 1 November 2017).



These activities may be FPA-accredited or non-accredited. However, non-accredited activities can only comprise 50 per cent of a member's claimable CPD hours. An activity can only be FPA accredited if it meets the FPA quality accreditation standards, which are administered by trained 'CPD Assessors,' who usually accredit sessions within their own organisation.<sup>25</sup>

Members must record their CPD hours in a Professional Development Plan, which, amongst other requirements, lists the type of activity and relevant Professional Dimension.<sup>26</sup>

## Summary

It is evident that CPD activities take a wide variety of forms across different professions. Different types of activities can be categorised into different models of CPD, a concept which is explored more thoroughly in the CPD Models title. Whilst group and individual learning are common to all of the professions canvassed in this title, it is clear that the specialist medical colleges in particular, prescribe relatively detailed guidelines for the activities that will enable a specialist to complete their CPD hours and credits. Apart from capping claimable time for certain activities, other professions appear to adopt a more broad-based approach, whereby individual professionals are given autonomy over the types of activities that satisfy their CPD requirements. This notion of autonomy is explored more thoroughly in the Practitioner-Determined CPD title.

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<sup>25</sup> Financial Planning Association of Australia, *FPA Continuing Professional Development Policy*, above n 24, 16.

<sup>26</sup> Financial Planning Association of Australia, *CPD Recording Template* <<https://fpa.com.au/education/continuing-professional-development/cpd-policy/>> (accessed 1 November 2017).