

Dental Practitioners CPD

Your guide to the Dental Council's Continuing Professional Development requirements

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Foreword

In April 2015, the Dental Council published guidance which established Continuing Professional Development (CPD) requirements for dentists. The guide provided a framework for dentists to plan and record their engagement with CPD in order to support lifelong learning and promote patient safety. It also provided guidance on how dentists should prioritise CPD activities and maintain proficiency in key areas. Overall, the guide was published in order to assist dentists to meet their ethical obligation to keep their professional knowledge and skills up-to-date, and to undertake CPD.

The landscape of CPD is changing rapidly and the impact of technology on course delivery has been significant. For these reasons, the Dental Council has decided to pause its own role in the approval of CPD activities. Council will now reflect on best practice in the area of CPD in order to consider the likely future direction of dental CPD in Ireland.

This updated guide incorporates Council's decision to pause its approval of activities and includes revised guidance to dentists and to CPD providers. It remains an ethical obligation for dentists to undertake CPD. The purpose of the guide is to assist dentists to meet this ethical obligation, and to promote patient safety and safe practice. Dentists should familiarise themselves with the guide in its entirety.

One of the original aims of the 2015 guide was to prepare the profession for dental CPD becoming mandatory. In April 2019, the National Oral Health Policy was published which includes a commitment to update the Dentists Act as a matter of priority. This commitment is welcomed by the Dental Council and acknowledged as being an important step towards CPD becoming mandatory for dentists.

December 2019

Introduction to CPD

CPD may be defined as the systematic maintenance of your knowledge and skills across all areas of your practice throughout your professional life. It is a continuing, lifelong learning process that complements formal undergraduate and postgraduate education and training. CPD is necessary for you to maintain and improve your standards of professional practice. Effective CPD needs a planned approach to develop, maintain and increase knowledge, clinical skills and professional performance standards with the aim of providing better patient care in a safe environment. In this way, you aim to maintain and improve your competence and skills with regard to the needs of your patients, the members of your dental team and your clinical practice. CPD includes formal activities such as lectures, courses, conferences and workshops as well as self-directed reading and study clubs. CPD can also help you to keep up to date even when you are not practising.

Ethical obligation

Dentists are ethically obliged to maintain and update their knowledge and skills through CPD, and this responsibility is confirmed in the Dental Council's Code of Practice relating to Professional Behaviour and Ethical Conduct. Ongoing and active engagement with CPD is important as it gives your patients and colleagues confidence in your clinical judgement and demonstrates your commitment to high standards, and to your own development as a healthcare professional. This updated guide is intended to support your ongoing engagement with CPD.

Types of CPD activity

For the purposes of this guidance, CPD activities can be considered as being either 'structured' or 'self-directed'. These terms are described below.

Structured CPD

To count as structured, a CPD activity must meet each of the following criteria:

1. The activity must have concise educational aims and objectives;
2. The activity must have clear anticipated outcomes;

3. There must be quality controls in place (e.g. formal opportunity for participants to provide feedback); and
4. There must be documentary proof of attendance from the course organiser.

When planning CPD activities, and in order to make an informed decision as to whether an activity could be considered as being structured, dentists should seek advance information from the provider in relation to the criteria set out above. Dentists should also satisfy themselves in advance that the activity is supported by a full and detailed timetable, and that the credentials and qualifications of those delivering the activity are available. This will help dentists to decide whether a promoted CPD activity meets their professional and personal expectations. Therefore, we encourage you to seek this information directly from course organisers.

Peer-reviewing papers

As an exception to the requirements set out above, you may record each paper you review for a peer-reviewed journal as two hours of structured CPD.

Self-directed CPD

Self-directed CPD activities are those activities which contribute to your professional development, but do not meet all four of the criteria for structured CPD. For example, in most cases, journal reading will be self-directed CPD rather than structured CPD. Similarly, if you attend a course which has concise educational aims, clear anticipated outcomes and the course organiser gives a certificate of attendance but there is no opportunity to give feedback, then the activity could not be considered to meet the criteria for structured CPD. However, these activities may still be recorded as self-directed CPD if you feel the activity has contributed to your own professional development.

There is greater scope within self-directed CPD for dentists to pursue activities which meet their specific requirements, and which support their patients and staff in a holistic manner.

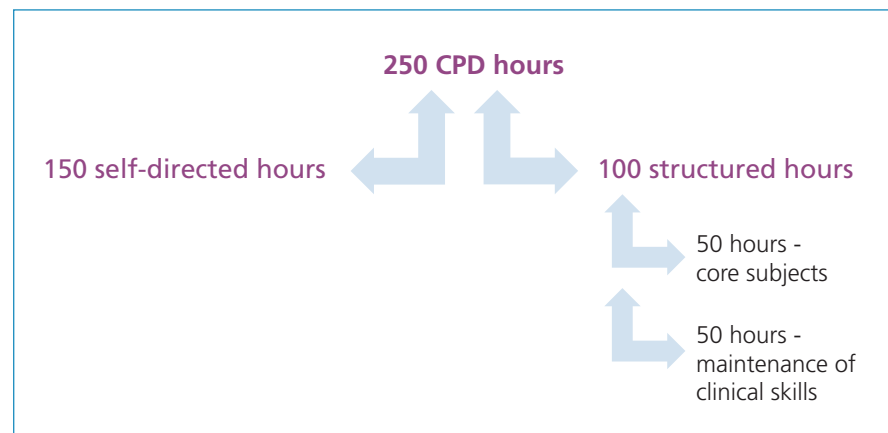
Amount of CPD activity

The Dental Council recommends that you complete, and keep records of, at least 50 hours of CPD every year. A minimum of 20 of these hours should be structured. While the exact amount of CPD hours completed may vary from year to year, you should complete at least 250 hours of CPD every five years, of which a minimum of 100 hours should be structured.

Of these 100 structured hours, it is recommended that a minimum of 50 structured hours are allocated to the core CPD subjects set out below. These are areas relating to patient safety and regulatory compliance in which the Dental Council expects all dentists to be proficient.

A minimum of 50 structured hours should also be allocated to the maintenance of clinical skills. These should cover a broad range of topics appropriate to your specific individual practice and your patients' needs.

DIAGRAM 1: CPD requirements in a 5-year cycle



Hands-on clinical activities

Hands-on and practical activities can be recorded as double the hours actually spent e.g. a one-hour practical session can be recorded as two hours for the purposes of meeting minimum time requirements.

Minimum time allocations

The overall minimum time allocations for structured and self-directed hours is set out below: -

(a) Core CPD subjects	Hours per 5-year cycle
Infection prevention and control	10
Radiology informatics and radiation protection	5
Professional communication, including:	10
• Relationship management	
• Ethical and legal issues	
• Conflict resolution	
• Handling of complaints	
• Communication	
Medical emergencies (excluding Basic Life Support*)	5
Audit	7
Record keeping	5
Governance, including:	8
• Workplace legislation / HR	
• Health and safety at work	
• Development of practice protocols (team based)	
	50
(b) Maintenance of clinical skills	50
	100 hours (structured)
(c) Self-directed activities	150 hours (self-directed)
5-Year Total	250 hours

*Note regarding Basic Life Support: You are obliged to maintain valid Basic Life Support (BLS) accreditation. The time taken to maintain BLS accreditation is in addition to the core CPD activities set out above.

Planning for CPD

STEP 1: Understand the time requirement

Make sure you understand the time requirement, as illustrated above and described earlier.

STEP 2: Identify appropriate activities

Identify those CPD activities that fulfil your anticipated professional requirements and that meet the overall requirements set out in this guidance, including core activities and activities which maintain clinical skills. You should be able to justify the rationale for undertaking all activities. Overall, your focus should be on your individual requirements, your day-to-day practice, and patient safety.

STEP 3: Record your CPD activities

It is your responsibility to keep records that support your engagement with CPD activities, and to keep those records safe. For structured activities, CPD providers should provide you with full details of the activity in advance of the activity. Proof of attendance should also be provided. These records should be maintained carefully by you. For self-directed activities, you should retain a copy of the same information you used to satisfy yourself that the activity in question met your professional and personal requirements. As above, you should be able to justify your participation in each of your CPD activities.

You can use the Dental Council recording form to record activities. This is available to download from the Council's website. Structured and self-directed CPD activity should be recorded separately. For all activities, it is recommended that you record the following information at a minimum.

- Your name and Dental Council registration number
- Date of CPD activity
- Type of CPD activity (structured or self-directed)
- Venue (where appropriate)
- The name of the organisation or individual(s) delivering the activity
- The title and subject matter of the activity

- The number of hours you spent doing the CPD activity (not including lunch breaks or travel time)

Currently you are not required to submit any documentary evidence of your CPD engagement to the Dental Council.

Possible sources of CPD

The following activities are potential sources of CPD. The list is not exhaustive:

- Courses and lectures
- Educational elements of professional and specialist society meetings
- Peer review and clinical audit
- Distance learning
- Multimedia learning
- Staff training
- Background research
- Private study or study groups
- Journal reading
- Attendance at conferences

For Course Organisers

- Course organisers should provide the same level of information and assurances directly to potential attendees as would previously have been provided to the Dental Council to confirm whether an activity can be considered as structured, or otherwise.
- It is important for providers to provide as much information as possible when promoting CPD activities. This will help potential attendees to make informed decisions on whether an activity will meet their professional and personal expectations.
- When promoting CPD activities, the credentials and relevant qualifications for each presenter should be provided. The details provided in relation to presenters should be sufficient to justify their role in leading or presenting activities.

- The duration of activities provided should exclude time allocated for registration, breaks, lunch etc. Full timetables should be included if there is more than one lecturer presenting.
- The timetable should show clearly the proportion of the activity that has a hands-on clinical component (if any). Hands-on and practical activities can be recorded as double the hours actually spent on them e.g. a 1-hour practical session can be recorded as 2 hours for the purposes of meeting minimum time requirements.
- Course organisers should retain the signed attendance sheets for their own records for at least five years. The attendance sheets must not be sent to the Dental Council. A sample attendance sheet can be downloaded from the Dental Council's website www.dentalcouncil.ie.

Frequently Asked Questions

As a dentist, what are my obligations in relation to CPD?

It is an ethical obligation for dentists to keep their professional knowledge and skills up-to-date, and to undertake CPD. This is confirmed in the Dental Council's Code of Practice relating to Professional Behaviour and Ethical Conduct. The Dental Council has issued additional CPD guidance to the profession to support this ethical obligation. You should note that your failure to engage in CPD may become a factor should a patient make a complaint to the Dental Council or take action against you for negligent treatment.

What if I work part-time, work as a locum or I am a temporary registrant?

CPD is an ethical obligation for all registrants, including those who work part-time, those who are retired but want to remain on the register, and temporary registrants.

Does the Dental Council directly approve CPD activities?

No. The Dental Council has paused its role in the approval of CPD activities. However, the criteria for structured activities are clear. Providers should provide the necessary assurances in advance to potential attendees to demonstrate how the criteria for structured activities will be met. Dentists should satisfy themselves that the details available regarding a prospective CPD activity meets their personal and professional expectations.

Is it my responsibility to keep records regarding CPD?

Yes. The recording of CPD is your responsibility. If you attend a course, it is your responsibility to record details and to make sure you receive proof of attendance. The Dental Council recommends that you record your structured and self-directed CPD as you undertake it. Recording evidence of your participation in CPD will be very important when CPD becomes mandatory by law.

What happens if I am not sure what to record?

The Dental Council has produced a sample recording form showing the information you should keep. It is recommended that you keep separate forms for recording structured and self-directed CPD.

Can I count an activity I attend abroad as structured CPD?

Activities that meet the criteria for structured CPD can be recorded as such, regardless of location. For activities attended in jurisdictions where dental CPD is mandatory, dentists may wish to seek confirmation that the activity in question meets the requirements of the relevant regulator.

What happens if I take time out to go abroad, or take a short career break?

The Dental Council recommends that you retain your Irish registration if you plan to take a break from practice or work abroad for a limited period of time. In the context of a short career break, dentists should still arrange to meet the overall minimum time requirement over the course of a five-year cycle. Any deficit arising in a particular year should be addressed in subsequent years in order to meet overall requirements.

Should I send my CPD recording form and the documentary proof to the Dental Council?

No. You should retain your own CPD records. You are not required to submit any documentary evidence to the Council just yet, though this may change when CPD becomes mandatory. You should retain your records for at least five years, but you are welcome to retain them for longer if you wish.

I am undertaking postgraduate training; do I need to do CPD also?

Dentists on recognised postgraduate training programmes are not expected to

undertake additional CPD while enrolled on the programme as they are deemed to be meeting their obligations through their engagement with postgraduate training

Can CPD activities include those which are intended to support my own health and wellbeing?

Yes. The Dental Council's Code of Practice relating to Professional Behaviour and Ethical Conduct confirms that dentists must maintain their own health and wellbeing in order to satisfactorily carry out their duties as a dentist. Such activities may be accounted for as self-directed activities. Dentists should strive to strike a balance in their CPD activities that reflects their own professional and personal circumstances in a way that promotes patient safety and safe practice.

When will dental CPD become mandatory in Ireland?

This requires new legislation. A priority action in the National Oral Health Policy that was published in April 2019 is to update the Dentists Act. The stated timeline for priority actions is completion within three years. The Dental Council views this as a significant step towards dental CPD becoming mandatory, and Council will continue to engage with the relevant parties including the Minister for Health towards achieving this goal.

Appendix 1: Sample CPD Form

Dental Council
An Comhairle Fiacailíreachta

Record of Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Name _____

Dental Council Registration Number _____

Structured / Self Directed CPD

Date	Title Of Event/Activity	Venue	Provider	Subject Matter	Hours	Comments

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Download CPD Form template from www.dentalcouncil.ie

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