

## Continuing Professional Development

Continuing professional development (CPD) is a continuous personal development process pursued by a professional person who knows their strengths and has identified potential weaknesses in their knowledge, skills and abilities. Ideally it should be a proactive process, but can sometimes be reactive where an individual may have been involved in a situation with a poor outcome due to gap in experience. An example may be where they may have applied for a job, but failed to be successful due to a particular skill they lack in comparison to the other candidates.

CPD can therefore be a good tool for career progression. An individual needs to identify potential opportunities where their career can grow eg up the career ladder and/or to improve salary. One way of gaining new skills quickly and progressively is to move into the interim field, which can be generalist or specialist depending on the need identified. The individual, might for example, need to gain experience working in the field of compensation and benefits if they have not been exposed to this. Another way of improving a career might be for an HR professional, for example, to move into a different department to fully understand how its operation and line manage other types of staff.

Other tools for CPD might be to read books or articles to fill knowledge gaps. Within all industries there are new developments all the time and professionals have to stay up to date to remain credible. Industry magazines are usually a good way to keep in the know of existing and forthcoming developments.

Another interesting way to develop knowledge is to attend seminars on topical subjects. For example, an individual may have to manage a TUPE situation and if lacking in that area, would need to identify a suitable workshop to attend. Cost can be an issue with many companies having to fund CPD and there are usually a range of workshops in all price regions.

A record of all CPD events should be kept and regularly updated. CPD can be recorded on a template document detailing the event that took place, what happened, what they learned from it and how they will use the new knowledge in the future. A suitable template can be found on the CIPD website for HR professionals to use. The CIPD recognises CPD by awarding progressive levels of accreditation depending on the length of years undertaken, which should be a career lifetime's process.

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