

All change please... Enhanced CPD



Priya Sharma¹ explains the GDC's new CPD scheme due to start on 1 August 2018 for DCPs.

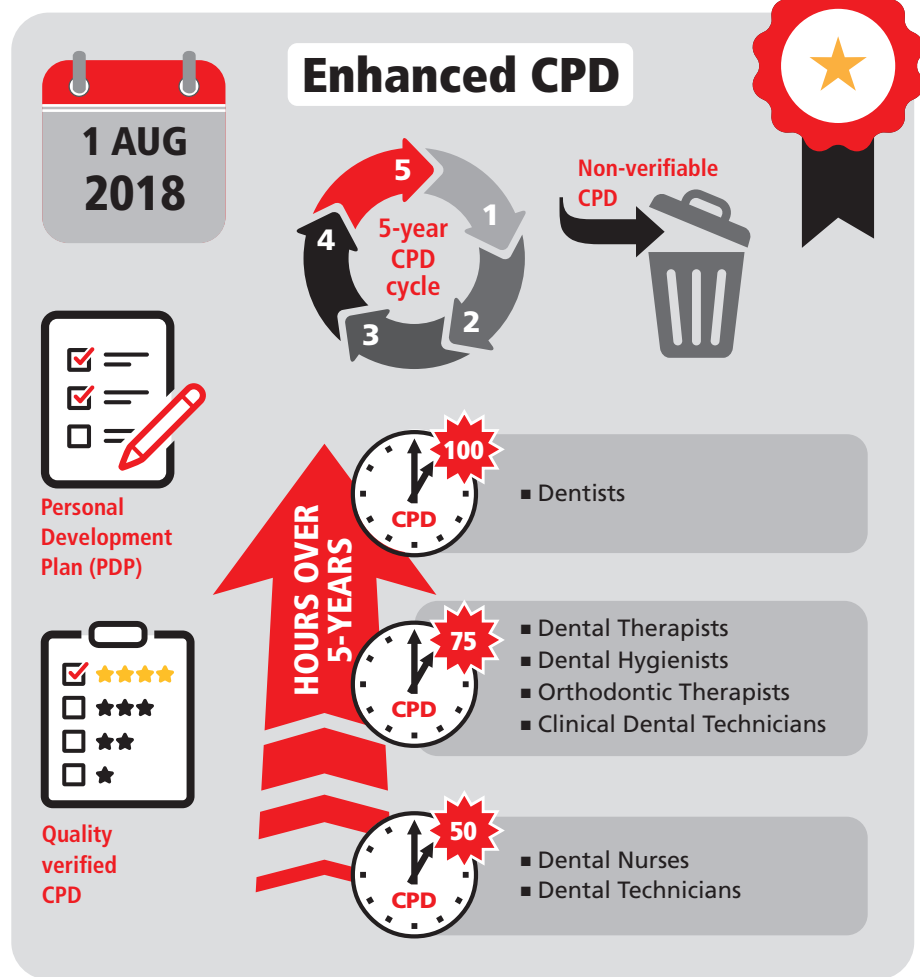
Embedded in your life

Recently much attention has focused on enhanced continuing professional development (ECPD). According to the General Dental Council (GDC) this new scheme 'will ensure CPD activity is firmly embedded in the professional life of dental professionals. It is intended to support registrants in doing CPD regularly, in accordance with our standards and within their current scope of practice'. The Chief Executive of the GDC, Ian Brack, said that 'Having a better system for continuing professional development – with a much clearer emphasis on planning development, reflecting on learning and embedding that learning into current practice – ties in with prevention of patient harm element which was one of the principles set out in *Shifting the balance*.¹

Quality not quantity

The restructuring of professional learning will focus on the quality of CPD as opposed to the quantity. It will move away from doing CPD for the sake of meeting requirements and progress to engaging registrants to take charge of their learning needs in order to improve their skills and abilities throughout their professional life. It is an evolving process and the learning is part of the journey.

¹ Priya Sharma BA (Dist.), BSc (Pharm.), RDN, FRSA, FRSPH is a dental nurse and dental practice manager in London and a GDC fitness to practise panellist. Priya graduated as a pharmacist and sociologist in Canada. Her work experience includes pharmacy, medical information, pharmacovigilance, teaching at university, presenting at national conferences and medical writing.



The ECPD requirements will begin on 1 January 2018 for dentists and 1 August 2018 for dental care professionals (DCPs). Many DCPs will be commencing their new five-year cycle in August hence will not be caught in the conversion from the old to the new. For those registrants who find themselves mid-cycle there are transitional arrangements. In simple terms a pro-rata scheme will apply and a simple transitional tool may be found on the General Dental Council (GDC's) website.² If a registrant is unsure as to where

they are in their cycle it is easy to determine on egdc-uk.org.

This article will highlight what ECPD is and how to comply with the GDC's new requirements.

The new requirements

Only verified CPD quality assured by the provider will be accepted by the regulator in order to demonstrate credibility. It is the hope that this will increase public confidence in those that are on the register whilst ensuring

all dental professionals are keeping their knowledge and skills current.

There has been an overall reduction in the actual number of hours that registrants need to carry out in light of the removal of non-verifiable CPD, however, an increase in the number of hours of verifiable CPD. The hours of verifiable CPD required in each five year cycle are:

- 50 hours to be carried out by dental nurses and dental technicians
- 75 hours to be carried out by dental therapists, dental hygienists, orthodontic therapists and clinical dental technicians
- 100 hours to be carried out by dentists.

Verifiable CPD is a learning activity which has clear documented aims, outcomes and objectives along with rigorous quality control measures. In addition, documentary evidence such as a certificate will serve as proof that the activity was completed. There will also be a requirement to make annual declarations of the CPD that has been carried out and that the registrant is meeting the requirements. It is imperative that CPD is carried out regularly: at least ten hours in two years. Failure to comply with the requirements of ECPD can result in the removal of your name from the GDC register.

Personal development plans

All dental professionals will need to create a personal development plan (PDP) outlining their personal learning needs encouraging professional development and lifelong learning. At this stage it is important for dental professionals to analyse their own practice and their specific learning requirements. It also would be helpful to speak to the wider dental team and colleagues to help enrich your PDP. The GDC suggests 'patient feedback, complaints, audits, significant event analysis and peer review processes, or dental practice evaluations' may assist the individual in creating their PDP. A PDP is a useful learning tool that can be created in a simple easy to use table format. It may be useful to have the following as part of your PDP:

- Aims and objectives
- Planned activities/learning
- Timeframe
- Verifiable CPD undertaken
- Number of hours
- Reflection
- The meeting of at least one of the GDC's learning outcomes.

Ensure that you complete your PDP as various CPD activities are completed and do so consistently throughout the five-year cycle.

Learning outcomes

The next step is to identify verified CPD that will meet the needs of your PDP. Each CPD activity will need to meet at least one of the GDC's learning outcomes and these should be noted on your PDP. The GDC has set four learning outcomes that are generally derived from the *Standards for the dental team*³ and you must clearly document which outcome the CPD is related to. These are outlined below:

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.

Once the verified CPD is completed the registrant must reflect. The GDC states: 'Following the CPD activity the registrant can reflect on its impact by considering how it has or will enable them to maintain and develop their skills. It would enable them to evaluate how their CPD contributes to supporting them to practise in accordance with our standards and how it has contributed positively to the wider context of patient care'. This allows for critical thinking skills, incorporating the newly acquired knowledge into practice and determining if there is still the potential to further expand a registrant's knowledge base. Indeed, this will directly impact an individual's awareness and understanding of their own thought processes.

You will find that the 'thinking about thinking' approach will further raise awareness of the full cognitive process. Learning is individually unique to each person and each registrant will have their own position of knowledge. Newly acquired knowledge must be related to knowledge prior to the learning activity and what changes have and can be implemented. Therefore the introspective processes should be succinctly documented in your PDP. In fact, we continuously reflect in our personal and professional lives without us realising the fine details of the process. Under ECPD

registrants just need to make this a conscious, recognised, intentional and recorded process.

Impact on practice

Finally, the registrant must record their learning activity, outlining the impact that the integration and application of newly acquired knowledge has had on their clinical practice. In turn they may still identify gaps and the need for further learning; subsequently these can be added to a PDP leading to cyclic lifelong comprehensive learning.

Therefore the CPD record should consist of the PDP, a log of completed learning including date, number of verifiable hours and which learning outcome it covered, and evidence, such as a certificate, that the activity was completed. The ECPD record should be kept for a minimum of ten years as the GDC can audit your learning at any time and up to five years following a cycle.

Essentially the ECPD cycle will allow dental professionals to tailor to their own personal learning needs while reflecting. It is important not to get discouraged at the beginning and that making the initial efforts is progress within itself. As with all change it may seem a bit overwhelming at first but once registrants begin the process it will most certainly enrich knowledge and clinical abilities.

1. General Dental Council. *Shifting the balance: a better, fairer system of dental regulation*. Updated 9 March 2017. Available at: <https://www.gdc-uk.org/about/what-we-do/regulatory-reform> (accessed September 2017).
2. General Dental Council. Enhanced CPD transition tool. Available at: <https://gdc.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/ecpdtool> (accessed September 2017).
3. General Dental Council. *Standards for the dental team*. Updated 14 August 2017. Available at: <https://www.gdc-uk.org/professionals/standards/team> (accessed September 2017).

Editor's note: BDJ Team will continue to offer registered DCPs ten free hours of verifiable CPD a year. To access the CPD Hub, visit <https://cpd.bda.org/login/index.php>.



bdjteam2017154