

Do you have NO HOURS OF CPD?



For many GDC-registered DCPs, July 2013 will be the end of the first five year cycle of verifiable CPD required by the GDC. **Nicky Gough*** reviews the key facts.

The General Dental Council (GDC) introduced compulsory registration and continuing professional development (CPD) for dental care professionals (DCPs) in July 2008. CPD is defined as 'study, training, courses, seminars, reading and other activities which advance your professional development as a dental professional'.¹ The aim is that DCPs should carry out CPD that will support the principles of practice that are set out in the *Standards for dental professionals* booklet.^{1,2} That is, that DCPs are responsible for:

- Putting patients' interests first and acting to protect them
- Respecting patients' dignity and choices
- Protecting the confidentiality of patients' information
- Co-operating with other members of the dental team and other healthcare colleagues in the interests of patients
- Maintaining professional knowledge and competence
- Being trustworthy.

For over 40,000 DCPs who registered on or before August 2008, the first five year CPD cycle is coming to an end in July 2013. However, it has been reported that although one in five DCPs have already recorded the required number of hours, more than one in ten DCPs are yet to record any CPD.³

Verifiable CPD

At the end of the five year cycle the DCP

should have evidence that they have completed a minimum of 50 hours of verifiable CPD. In addition, the GDC have identified core subjects that DCPs should do as part of the 50 hours of verifiable CPD (Table 1).¹

The GDC do not accredit specific CPD providers and it is up to the individual to decide whether the activity meets the set criteria for verifiable CPD which is laid down by the GDC.¹

Criteria for verifiable CPD

- The activity needs to have a clear purpose or aim
- There should be clear anticipated learning outcomes so that it is clear what is to be gained from completing the activity
- There needs to be a method of feedback for quality control purposes so that providers can continue to improve the quality of CPD offered
- A certificate needs to be issued from the CPD organiser which documents the number of hours the CPD activity equates to.

Non-verifiable/general CPD

If the activity does not meet the required criteria to count as verifiable CPD it can be counted towards the required 100 hours of non-verifiable (general) CPD. In addition to the core subjects that DCPs should complete, the GDC recommend that DCPs also complete verifiable or general CPD in the following areas:

- Legal and ethical issues



*Nicky Gough qualified as a dental hygienist from King's College Dental Hospital in 1996 and graduated with a first class BSc (Hons) in Primary Dental Care from the University of Kent in 2011. As well as her clinical work as a dental hygienist, Nicky and her colleague Sue Bagnall run CPD4dentalnurses.co.uk and CPD4dentalhygienists.co.uk.

- Complaints handling
- Oral cancer early detection.¹

Recording CPD

Each year, DCPs are required to record the number of CPD hours that have been completed during the year. At the end of the five year cycle DCPs will be asked to confirm the hours that have been completed over the five years. The GDC will carry out a CPD audit and a percentage of DCPs will then be required to send documentary evidence of their CPD. It is therefore important that records are kept of all the verifiable and general CPD that has been completed. Certificates should be kept and separate verifiable and non-verifiable CPD charts as shown in the example chart (Table 2) can easily be completed.

Not meeting the requirements

DCPs who do not meet the minimum requirement of CPD hours may be taken off the GDC register. This will mean the DCP will be unable to work as a dental nurse, dental hygienist, dental therapist, dental technician or orthodontic therapist until they are able to prove that the requirements of CPD have been met.¹ They will also have to pay a restoration fee in addition to the annual retention fee for that year and provide a character reference and health certificate. If a DCP is taking a break from the register it is important that CPD is maintained so that they are able to restore their name to the register when they choose to return to work. Otherwise they will need to catch up with their CPD before they can do this.⁴

Personal development planning

A recent study of 267 dental nurses published in the *British Dental Journal* reported that 76% of the nurses surveyed did not feel that CPD helped them to do their job better.⁵ An adaptation of the article was published in the last issue of *Vital*.⁶ To enable DCPs and patients to gain maximum benefit from the CPD that is completed, the GDC recommend that a personal development plan (PDP) is used. A PDP is a mechanism by which learning needs can be identified and a commitment can be made to attend to them.⁷ If a DCP selects CPD which relates to a learning need which has personally been identified, it could be considered that this will enable the CPD to impact on the DCP's professional development, which in turn should contribute to improving patient care.

Conclusion

The end of the first five year cycle means that

Table 1 Core verifiable CPD subjects recommended by the GDC

CORE SUBJECTS	Minimum number of hours per five year cycle
Medical emergencies	10
Disinfection and decontamination	5
Radiography and radiation protection (dental nurses, hygienists/therapists)	5
Materials and equipment (dental technicians and clinical dental technicians)	5

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Table 2 Verifiable CPD example record

Date	Title of event or activity	Venue	Provider	Hours
02/10/2012	Radiography and radiation protection	Internet	www.CPD4dentalnurses.co.uk	1
01/11/2012	Reviewing your health and safety risks	Internet	www.nature.com/vital (Vital CPD)	1
16/03/2013	Complaints and communication	Bourne Hall, Epsom, Surrey	CPD Training Solutions Ltd	1

Note: Records should be kept for five years after the end the five year cycle

DCPs who registered on or before July 2008 will need to have evidence of completing at least 50 hours of verifiable and 100 hours of non-verifiable (general) CPD in order to maintain registration. DCPs need to ensure that a log of CPD completed is stored and relevant verifiable CPD certificates can be provided should the GDC require evidence during a CPD audit. Completing a PDP should enable the DCP to select CPD that is relevant to their professional practice and ensure that the CPD completed contributes to raising patient care standards.

1. General Dental Council. *Continuing professional development for dental care professionals*. London: GDC, 2012.
2. General Dental Council. *Standards for dental professionals*. London: GDC, 2005. Available at: <http://www.gdc-uk.org/Newsandpublications/Publications/Publications/StandardsforDentalProfessionals> [1].pdf
3. General Dental Council. CPD Deadline – plan it, do it, log it. *GDC Gazette* summer 2012.
4. General Dental Council. *Restoring your name to the register*. 2012. Available at: <http://www.gdc-uk.org/Dentalprofessionals/Applyforregistration/Pages/Restoration-Page.aspx>
5. Turner S, Ross M K, Ibbetson R J. The impact of General Dental Council registration and continuing professional development on UK dental care professionals: (1) dental nurses. *Br Dent J* 2012; **213**: E2.
6. Turner S, Ross M K, Ibbetson R J. The impact of registration and CPD on dental nurses. *Vital* autumn 2012; 24-31.
7. Rughani A, Franklin C, Dixon S. *Personal development plans for dentists*. Oxon: Radcliffe Medical Press Ltd, 2003.

Editor's note: Turn to page 49 for more information on Vital's own verifiable CPD scheme. You can also include reading Vital articles in your non-verifiable (general) CPD. Just visit the Vital website and browse the articles in the archive which date back to 2003 (free log-in required). www.nature.com/vital/archive/index.html Use the Search box to search on a specific keyword.

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VITAL READER PANEL

Shaun Howe,
Dental Hygienist



‘I have always done postgraduate education since qualifying in 1993. All that happened in 2008 was that I had to record it. I have to date completed 269 hours of vCPD (more courses booked) and do not count my general CPD anymore. Whilst I may be the exception to the rule, I personally seek out training so that I can be the very best I can for my patients.

Some people seem to suggest that CPD requirements are unfair, but the fact is that we have always done it; many just fail to record. The core areas are done in practice anyhow, such as medical emergencies, and I can never understand why deanery courses (and other providers) are so over subscribed. The levels set for five years are actually quite low when we think about it. There is no need to pay out large sums of money to receive good quality training; many fail to see what is around them (deaneries) and I personally plan my year when the deanery publishes its annual list of courses. The argument that CPD requirements are too much falls at the first hurdle as far as I am concerned; our professional lives only begin at qualification and the need for lifelong learning is evident when we meet a colleague who does not know about HTM 01-05 or prominent changes in legislation or even developments in material science.’

Christine Horbury,
(Dental Nurse) Clinical Skills Educator



‘CPD has not really been a worry for me, however, one area of CPD that I feel professionals struggle with is the requirement for non-verifiable CPD. Questions I’ve been asked are: how do I log it, who will know what I’ve read and what do I read? Firstly, you should have an interest in the area of dentistry. If you have an interest then you can easily read around your area and obtain more than enough CPD. Also, I think it’s important to add that it does not necessarily have to be a text book or article that is primarily dental related. For example, we can learn greatly from our colleagues in other areas of health, in such areas as communication.

CPD is about making sure that when you practise, you practise safely, by following evidence-based practice. By doing so, you’re ensuring that your knowledge and competence are up to date, resulting in improved standards of care. CPD should not be left till the end of the five year cycle. As professionals we are lifelong learners, therefore CPD continues, hence the name.’

Steph Horner,
Dental Nurse/Decon Lead



‘My verifiable CPD is already over the required amount. Those I’ve spoken to about CPD have mixed feelings. The issue of expense seems to come up every time and a discrimination between private and NHS practices, with private being charged more for exactly the same course! (NHS £10, private £25.) Magazines that contain CPD articles are a very easy way to gain hours.’