



INSTITUTE OF PARALEGALS

Setting Standards. Promoting Professionalism.

Continuing Professional Development Frequently Asked Questions

What is Continuing Professional Development?

According to the DTI, CPD can be defined as *“the means by which members of professional associations maintain, improve and broaden their knowledge and skills and develop the personal qualities required in their professional lives.”*

As you can see, CPD encompasses both knowledge and skills required by professionals to enable them to remain both competent and relevant as the profession evolves and consumers demands change.

Why does IoP have a CPD Scheme?

The IoP considers that it is vital that its members have not only a personal responsibility to maintain their competence but also a collective responsibility towards all members of the profession. CPD enables the IoP to maintain quality assurance of its members.

Who must undertake CPD?

All members except associate or retired members must undertake CPD. The standard is 10 hours per year and 12 hours for Fellows and those holding PPR Practising Certificates.

How are hours calculated?

The minimum recorded CPD must be of at least 30 minutes duration in order for any real benefit to be gained from the activity. At least half of the CPD must be considered core to the activities of the Paralegal.

What records should be kept?

The IoP provides a template CPD log that can be used by members to record their CPD. For each activity to count as CPD members should record the title or subject matter; the duration in hours and retain some proof that the activity was undertaken. If proof is unable to be provided then the activity will be covered in the signed declaration at the point of renewal of membership.

What about career breaks, illness, maternity leave?

Members who feel that there are special circumstances that may preclude them from fulfilling their CPD obligations in any given year, can apply for temporary dispensation. Any such requests must be in writing and sent to the Head of Membership who will pass the information to the CPD compliance officer for determination.

How does the IoP ensure that members comply with their CPD obligations?

Members of the Institute must sign an annual declaration stating that they have met their CPD requirements during the previous year.

The IoP also conducts an annual random sample of between 5-10% of all members who are required to undertake CPD. Members who are selected as part of the sample are required to submit their CPD records for the previous year.

How does CPD Compliance work?

The IoP's aim is to assist its members who may have had difficulty with their CPD or the recording of it and to make recommendations about future conduct.

Where a member has failed to fulfil their CPD obligations, the IoP will seek remedial action to rectify the situation.

Any member who fails to fulfil their CPD obligations will have its CPD record examined by the Secretariat as undertaking CPD is a requirement of membership. Any extenuating circumstances will be taken into account.

The secretariat has the power to remove from membership any member who has not undertaken CPD, and who have not been able to rectify this satisfactorily by undertakings or any other means. It is only in extreme cases that such action would be taken and therefore is a very rare occurrence.

Where can I obtain further advice?

The IoP Membership team are here to help with any queries. Please contact them via info@theiop.org