



Guide to CPD and Professional Development Portfolio

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Introduction to CPD

The Institution, when it was formed in 1918, set as its object to “promote, encourage and improve the science and practice of fire extinction, fire prevention and fire engineering, and all operations and expedients connected therewith, and to give an impulse to ideas likely to be useful in connection with, or in relation to, such science and practice to the members of the Institution and to the community at large”.

The Engineering Council’s definition of Continuing Professional Development is “the systematic maintenance, improvement and broadening knowledge and skill and the development of personal qualities necessary for the execution of professional and technical duties throughout the individuals life”.

As Fire Engineers, we are at the same time, both members and servants of society. Our work and how we undertake it will be influenced by the expectations of society and the experience of being a part of that society. There have been worldwide organisational changes leading to new growing diversity of methods of achieving the necessary learning experience and greater requirement for us as individuals to take on responsibility for our own learning.

The pace of technological and social development has quickened and the life span of information is short. Organisational structures typified by hierarchies, specialist departments, apprenticeship and the concept of a planned career for life are disappearing. They are being replaced by “flatter” structures with an emphasis on adaptability, flexibility, team work, personal judgement and the achievement of objectives. The public perception and expectation of professionals has changed leading to the personal characteristics of professionals being re-defined.

This cultural change has affected education and training by putting increasing emphasis on competency, vocational training, workplace learning and CPD.

It may be the case that you have already started to look after your own development by either having a development portfolio of your own, or by being part of a system that your employer has in place. In either case, nothing in this portfolio should conflict with that, and we envisage that the IFE CPD portfolio system will strengthen and support what you are already doing.

However, if you are in the position of taking up CPD now, this system has been designed so that you can follow the guidelines and get your own portfolio started quickly and easily. In addition, it is intended to be flexible so that you can add your own forms, records and supporting documentation as you progress. The end result should be a comprehensive account of your professional development and progress.

Since 1997, the IFE has advocated the adoption of CPD by all its members as the way to further their knowledge, understanding and expertise in whatever field of Fire Engineering they practice.



Creating a CPD portfolio

(i) Analysis

Having accepted responsibility for learning, the next step is for you to manage that responsibility. The best development will be derived from a properly structured personal development plan, designed for you, by you.

In setting a recommended period of activity, the Institution is not claiming that 25 hours of activity, picked at random from a list of available events, is enough to keep you up to date. Clearly, with such a wide range of individuals at various stages, it is impossible to be so prescriptive. The recommendations are regarded only as a reasonable minimum to guide you.

First think about what you want to achieve and determine whether they are undertaking CPD for advancement, or to keep yourself up to date. Consider the needs of your employer, or prospective employer and identify any known developments with which you may need to be familiar.

- a. If the purpose of the development plan is to assist in maintaining competency in your existing role, then there will be two broad categories of CPD events which need to be undertaken; those which provide the opportunity to practice existing skills or techniques and those which will give the opportunity to prepare for changes in your role.
- b. If the purpose of the plan is to increase your knowledge, skills and abilities in order to gain advancement, then the type and number of CPD activities will need to be wider in scope and greater in number.

The next step is for you to start planning the detail of your personal development plan.

(ii) Planning

There are four stages in the process:

1. Setting your goals and objectives

Identify goals you want to achieve. These may be short, medium or long term goals. Including personal goals with professional goals can be a useful reminder that no one works in isolation and that personal and professional achievements are often interrelated.

People change over time and it is therefore to be expected that your goals may change also, particularly the longer term goals which may therefore be less specific than those identified for short term action.

Once you have identified your goals, consider the relative priorities for each one, as some may be long term and it could be too soon to take specific action on these. Nevertheless they need to be considered, because your short or medium term goals may be linked to their ultimate achievement.

The Appendix contains a suggested form of table for your use. An example of how to complete the table is set out below, however, please note that it is not essential that it is done this way.



Goal/objective	Timescale
Organise my personal development portfolio	Short
Improve my skills at delegating tasks	Medium
Continue to develop command and control skills for operational incidents	Continuous
Practice use of breathing apparatus in realistic conditions	Continuous
Advance my understanding of the managerial techniques of TQM	Medium
Improve my skills in spoken French	Medium
Keep up to date with developments in information technology in fire engineering	Medium
Refresh my knowledge of equal opportunities practice	Short
Improve my skills in risk management analysis	Short
Research personal development techniques, particularly "mentoring"	Medium
Develop information technology skills	Long

This is a "fictional" list of goals, which describes in general terms what is to be achieved. The list includes one or two goals which might have no direct relevance to fire engineering, but are more centred on personal goals. The next step is to carry out a personal needs analysis.

2. Carrying out a personal needs analysis

This process involves you identifying your present knowledge, skill and abilities and strengths and weaknesses. Begin by listing the identifiable qualifications or competencies and then move on to those personal qualities. To use the example of the goal "to develop information technology skills", begin by describing the skills required. The second step is to describe existing skills, before identifying the gaps which need to be met. The table below illustrates the general idea. The Appendix also contains a copy of this table for your use.

Skills required	Existing skills	The gaps
Ability to use a wide range of Windows based office type applications	Basic word processing skills on DOS based application	Knowledge of recent Windows versions and Word, Excel, Access and Power point
Basic understanding of hardware e.g. CD ROM, scanning and communications devices	Good knowledge of basic systems and principles of operation. Some theoretical knowledge of communications	Update on CD ROM technology, detailed knowledge of scanning hardware and software and modern types of communications devices
Detailed understanding of communications software	None	Need to gain practical knowledge of at least two different software packages to enable comparison
Improved keyboard skills	Two finger typing at about 15 words per minute	Improve to 50 words per minute
Ability to use the internet for email	None	Theory and practice of the "net" required



This sample plan looks at ways to develop information technology skills to enable full use to be made of modern office facilities.

3. Identifying your needs

It is important when you are setting the skills required, that the level is properly identified. To use the example of information technology, there is a considerable difference between the ability to use the basic facilities offered by information technology, on a day to day basis and the needs of an advanced user, or the difference between a trainer and someone who intends to return to study at an intermediate level.

In some ways this is the most objective part of the planning process, since it is possible to gather information from a wide variety of sources, such as:

- Professional bodies' rules for grades of membership. In the IFE the rules are contained in the examination rules and the by-laws.
- Job descriptions or advertisements often include an "employee or person specification" which defines any necessary qualifications or prior experience.
- Courses syllabuses indicate the level at which a subject will be taught and any prerequisite courses or qualifications before enrolment can be accepted, organisational mission statements, or statements of values and objectives, often describe the personal qualities required of employees.
- Business plans or forward planning statements by your employing organisation may also give an indication of new skills or abilities required to meet the plan.
- Assessment or appraisal interviews can be a source of information about personal needs.

There may be other well known requirements or aptitudes for a job, such as a head for heights for fire fighters, or a high level of technical or personal motivation for a senior post in an organisation. In each case the goal should be thought about in terms of what is required to meet the need established by others.

4. Determining the gaps with existing skills

Following the process through, it should now be clear what is available and what is required. The final stage is to produce a list of your development needs which fill these gaps.

The list of development needs is the true measure of your CPD needs. The statements should specify exactly what must be achieved and it is important to record them in the development plan. This has been done in the above table and whilst it is not essential to do it this way, it is important that you have a means of listing your development needs.

The four stage process is one which you must undertake individually and can be a very private exercise. It has been suggested that consultation with a friend or colleague may be helpful, but also some professional bodies or groups can provide mentoring schemes which will enable an individual to obtain an independent and objective view. Some employers operate personal appraisal schemes which are modelled on a similar process of goal setting and development planning.

(iii) Regular periodic reviews

On a regular basis, your personal CPD plan needs to be reviewed so that it remains current and of value.



You decide how frequent this review needs to be, but a frequency of not less than one year is recommended. Check that your goals are still relevant and sufficient and ensure that your progress towards your identified goals is on track.

You might like to do this using the “periodic review” prompt sheet contained in this notes. That sheet contains a list of key points that can assist you in forming your own self-questionnaire, which you can adapt further for your own needs by adding more personally relevant questions as necessary. It is wise to record the results of this review and refer to it frequently in order to keep on track. You might also like to use that page when you put together your personal CPD plan for the first time.

In addition, review the CPD activities in which you participate. Reflect on the value of the activity to you personally and whether it is of use to you in your current role, or is of value in developing your potential for future roles.

Reviewing each activity is a comparative process which examines the objectives set, either by the individual or the CPD provider, with what has been achieved and carrying out the basic analysis:

- What was done?
- What was learned?
- How can I use that in the future?

Remember to always record details of all activity and your personal reflection on it, within your activity/participation records.

The annual plan

Review goals and current position:

- Check relevance of goals matched against current role.
- Note changes and adjust accordingly.

Review long-term aims and achievement:

- Check that aims are still being met.
- Ensure long term aims match up to anticipated changes.

Revise short-term achievement and carry forward as necessary:

- Ensure that short term goals are not becoming medium term.
- Question if these aims are supporting the other two and the overall plan.

Assess if needs have been met by activities in year:

- Check that CPD activity has been relevant to needs.
- Also check if pace of activities supports actual needs.

Assess any shortfall where needs have not been met:

- Consider remedial action where serious shortfall occurs.
- Try planning to avoid future shortfall and to get back in line with plan.



Identify strengths and develop or consolidate:

- Review portfolio and look at strengths and consider how these should be applied.
- Consider consolidation of strengths to develop weaknesses.

Identify weaknesses and aim to rectify and enhance:

- Examine causes of weaknesses and how these can be minimised.
- Plan to address these weaknesses by targeting these needs.

Look at opportunities to progress and develop:

- Remember the philosophy of lifetime learning.
- There is always potential for potential.

Look at any potential threat to long term aims and try to address:

- Consider long term objectives and try to identify conflicts with current role.
- Estimate likely effect and take determined action to address, don't sit back

Levels of activity and types of study

(i) Recommended level of CPD activity

The Institution places more emphasis on the outcome of CPD activity rather than satisfying a fixed quota of hours. The Institution believes, however, that the necessary minimum level of personal activity is the equivalent of 25 hours per annum of formal study time.

In order to provide some flexibility for fire engineers from a wide variety of backgrounds, with differing access to formal learning opportunities, the following additional guidance is given:

- a. The recommended level of CPD activity may be spread over more than one year, but must total 75 hours over a period of three years, provided that in no one year there is less than the equivalent of 10 hours of formal study activity carried out.
- b. It is recommended that formal study activities form a minimum of 50% of the activity, with the balance being made up of those activities listed as informal study.

(ii) Recommended types of study

“Formal study activities” are credited on an hour for hour basis and may include the following:

- Courses leading to formal qualifications, including distance learning.
- Attending or lecturing on courses organised by a professional institution or employer, (which may or may not have been validated by a professional body).
- Attending relevant seminars or conferences, including those organised by the division, the Institution or local branches of the Institution.
- For those members with an “operational role” in the control of emergency incidents, formal teaching of strategic or tactical issues, including “desk top” command and control exercises.
- Preparing articles on relevant subjects for publication.



- Meetings of technical committees or working party meetings of a professional nature i.e. national or international standards, government advisory work, or representing a relevant Institution.

“Informal study activities” are credited on a two for one basis i.e. two hours of informal study represents one hour of formal study. Informal study can include the following:

- Reading professional journals and books.
- Updating knowledge through informal study of relevant subjects.
- Part-time responsibilities within unrelated voluntary organisations where this gives opportunities for development which may not be normally available in the work place – such as chairing meetings or for members who are not currently employed in a managerial role, dealing with personnel matters.
- Organised visits to sites or buildings which demonstrate or illustrate fire engineering processes or protection systems.
- Observation and analysis of events in the course of work and reflection on their significance (although it is difficult to ascribe a time to such activity).

Recommended level of CPD activity - summary

25 hours per year of formal study time.

Informal study time equates to half of actual time spent.

May be spread in excess of one year, but in that case 75 hours over three years (provided that any 1 year has no less than 10 hours formal study time).

Formal study not less than 50% of total study time.

Recognised CPD activities

Important Notice

This sample list is only an example and is not intended to exclude other worthwhile activities. It will be for you as an individual member, to demonstrate the development value of any activity in your record of professional development.

Please pay particular attention to those activities which have not been validated by this, or some other professional institution.



Activity (must relate to fire engineering)	Formal/ non formal	Evidence required
Training provided by local IFE branch	Formal	Details of the branch and the course must be provided in your CPD portfolio.
Reading relevant articles (in International Fire Professional journal or other reputable sources including the internet)	Non formal	The article, title, publication and/or website address must be provided in your CPD portfolio.
Attendance at a course/seminar	Formal	The details of the training provider must be provided in your CPD portfolio.
Distance learning courses to include e-learning	Formal	The details of the training provider and the course must be provided in your CPD portfolio.
In-house training by employer	Formal	The employers details and information about the course must be provided in your CPD portfolio.
Academic or professional study	Formal	Full details of the qualification (subjects covered), the provider and the year of study must be provided in your CPD portfolio. Where study for qualification spans more than one year, this activity can be claimed for CPD purposes during each year of the qualification.
Production of a dissertation	Formal	The title of the dissertation and the qualification details must be provided in your CPD portfolio. Where research and writing of a dissertation spans more than one year, this activity can be claimed for CPD purposes each year.
Research	Formal	Full details of the topic for the research and, where applicable, the organisation which has commissioned the research.
Preparation and delivery of training courses	Formal	Full details of the course being delivered must be provided in your CPD portfolio.
Work shadowing	Non formal	Full details of aims and outcomes of the work shadowing sessions to be provided in your CPD portfolio.
Coaching or mentoring (delivered face to face or at a distance with clear aims and objectives for professional development)	Formal	Full details of aims and outcomes of the sessions to be provided in your CPD portfolio.
Participation in development of specialist areas of fire engineering by attending meetings of special interest groups/committees or relevant organisations undertaking such work	Formal	Details of the committee/organisation, the fire engineering being considered to be provided in your CPD portfolio.
Writing on fire engineering (to include material written for journals, publications, magazines, internet)	Formal	Full details on the subject of the piece of writing and, where applicable, the publication/website/organisation for which the material is being produced must be provided in your CPD portfolio.



Validation of activities and study

The validation of CPD activities, either by the Institution, another professional or academic bod, or by employers, is a useful process for both the organiser of the activity and the professional who attends.

The Institution is expanding its capabilities in validating activities, such as conferences, seminars and technical meetings relevant to fire engineering and actively encourages its own branches to organise programmes of validated CPD activities.

It is also recognised and accepted that relevant activities validated by other recognised professional institutions will count towards this Institution's recommended activity level.

The Institution will examine ways in which major employers of fire engineers could be validated as providers of in house CPD and will encourage employers to guide their employees and to consider setting their own CPD requirements.

CPD activities formally validated by the Institution will be permitted to carry the distinctive IFE CPD logo (with the activity hours within, illustrated below) on programmes or advertising materials.

To apply for the validation of events please complete the application form on the Institution's website at www.ife.org.uk/professional

All completed forms should be forwarded on email to Sarah Simpson, Head of Support Services at sarah.simpson@ife.org.uk



The wider engineering community

The Engineering Council (EC) identifies Continuing Professional Development as the process of enhancing competence and acquiring other relevant competencies in response to job demands and personal aspirations, using learning to open up opportunities for career advancement and business success. This is a very desirable path to follow for a multitude of reasons but to ensure your successful process of continuing professional development you will need to follow these guidelines:

- Be committed to continuous learning and development.
- Own your development.
- Manage your development in a systematic manner and in particular through the processes of review, plan, action and evaluation.
- Provide evidence of your development when required.
- Focus any development on achieving outputs, defined through professional or other competence standards.

The Engineering Council establishes professional development policies and encourages good practice so that they underpin the professional competence of registered engineers throughout working life.



This is achieved by:

- Publication of a framework of requirements for professional development, together with criteria and guidance on implementation.
- Facilitating and supporting action, especially by professional Institutions, towards the establishment of good practice.
- Representing the engineering profession in the UK and overseas on professional development matters.

You can find further information on Continuing Professional Development in the wider engineering context through the following link:

www.engc.org.uk/education--skills/professional-development-/continuing-professional-development

Professional goals/objectives guidance notes

This is the core part of your portfolio and is your plan for the future.

It is important that you record your goals as and when you identify them, in the date identified column, so that you will be able to track your progress.

Record the long, medium, or short timescale of these goals in the timescale column. You can refer to the main guidance pages for timescale usage.

To support your allocated timescale and to act as a prompt, enter a realistic date for projected completion.

Review your record regularly to remind yourself of the dates you have set.

Remember to record actual completion as this serves to act as a reminder to finish the task and to ensure that realistic timescales have been used for each task. This in turn will act as an aid to future planning of timescales.

Personal needs analysis guidance notes

The personal needs analysis uses a simple three column approach.

First there is the skills required column where you can enter all, or part, of the elements from your job description. It may be that you wish to continually review all parts, or concentrate on sections for your development.

In the next column, existing skills is where you can record your current skills levels objectively balanced against your role, or requirements of your job.

Finally, we come to the identified gaps column which, in some ways, may be the most difficult. However, if you look at this form as a whole and complete it as fully and objectively as you can, you will find that it will act as an introspective aid to your abilities and capabilities.

It is then for you to use this aid to your advantage.



Map of career progression guidance notes

By recording information regularly you can maintain a chronological account of progression. It's always important to set an aim or goal for each role as this can help to refresh the memory, stop complacency and help to prevent getting "in a rut".

Summary of CPD activities guidance notes

You can update this form regularly to show what you have participated in and what you learned. The most important part of this form is the time column which shows that you have satisfied IFE expectations and that the information is valid and current.

CPD attendance/participation guidance notes

This form can be used as a tool to confirm your CPD activities and are issued at CPD events. Boxes are provided for you to enter details at the time, or shortly after the event. It is not mandatory to complete these but they are provided as an aid to maintaining your portfolio and addressing your development needs.

The last section accreditation for other personal/professional development schemes has been included as a potential means of integration with other development schemes.

Many employers have their own systems in place and IFE activities often overlap elements of these systems. With a view to accreditation arrangements coming into place in the future, this section is provided so that employers can be approached with a clear record of your activity.

To validate the activity, a section has been provided for the appropriate representatives to act as "signatories" to approve accreditation.



Appendices

Professional goals/objectives guidance form

Name:

Date identified	Goal/objective	Timescale Short/Medium/Long	Projected completion	Actual completion

Personal needs analysis form

Name:

Skills required	Existing skills	Identified gaps



Map of career progression form

Name:

Date	Role/grade	Company	Development aim

Summary of CPD activities form

Name:

Date	Time (Actual)		Theme and activity	Learning point(s) and how it can be applied
	Formal	Informal		



CPD attendance/participation record

Name:

Membership no: (if applicable)

Attended the following CPD accredited event:

Date and venue:

.....

.....

Providers & presenters:

.....

.....

.....

Activity & event details:

.....

.....

.....

This activity was organised and facilitated by:

and has been approved by the Institution of Fire Engineers as providing hours of CPD activity.

Validated by:

Name: **Signature:**

Date: **IFE position:**



Summary details form

Name:

Personal objectives and development aims

Professional objectives and development aims

Learning outcomes and how they can be applied

Identified further needs

Accreditation for other personal/professional development schemes

Development system name	
Section reference (if applicable)	
Accreditation agreed (name of authorised person)	
Authorised signature and date	