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CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS OF BUILT ENVIRONMENT PROFESSIONS – A UK PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract: ‘Continuing Professional Development’ (CPD) is concerned with the ongoing process of lifelong learning for the maintenance of professional practice. Built environment professional institutions recognise the necessity for CPD in their ‘codes of practice’. Such codes commonly require members to maintain a currency of knowledge and practice through the undertaking of regular CPD. The paper outlines and compares the CPD requirements of 5 UK built environment professional institutions. Together the 5 professional institutions represent a significant diversity of built environment professions, hold a substantial membership and accredit numerous degree programmes. The 5 professional institutions studied within this CPD review paper are:

- The Association of Building Engineers (ABE);
- Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB);
- Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA);
- Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS); and
- The Royal Town Planners Institute (RTPI).

In considering CPD within the built environment, the paper presents each of the 5 professional institutions’:

- definition of CPD;
- minimum CPD requirements of membership;
- considerations as to what qualifies as CPD; and
- activities to monitor CPD undertaking.

Keywords: Continuing Professional Development, Professional Institutions

1. INTRODUCTION

The built environment is both complex and dynamically changing. In order to maintain a currency of knowledge and practice, built environment professionals must undertake regular ‘continuing professional development’ or ‘CPD’. Such CPD can be considered to provide lifelong learning for sustained professionalism.

This paper provides a consolidated review of the CPD requirements of UK Built Environment Professional Institutions and serves as a reference source for the undertaking of inter-professional and international built environment CPD comparison, and for the informing of professionals undertaking CPD activities, novice professionals working towards professional membership and academics, students and graduates of built environment courses.

2. CPD DEFINITIONS OF UK BUILT ENVIRONMENT PROFESSIONAL INSTITUTIONS

‘Continuous Professional Development’ has no single, universal definition. Substantial similarity and agreement in definition does exist though. This is highlighted by the author’s review of the CPD definitions supported by 5 UK Built Environment Professional Institutions. This review is summarised and presented in Figure 1.

Professional Body	CPD Definition
ABE	“systematic maintenance, improvement and broadening of knowledge and skills, and the development of personal qualities necessary for the execution of professional and technical duties throughout the practitioner’s working life” (ABE 2005).
CIOB	“the process of regularly assessing current and future skill and knowledge requirements relevant to your responsibilities, and then planning and implementing an ongoing programme of training and development to address those needs” (CIOB 2004).
RIBA	“any relevant study or activity that enhances a member’s professional development and ability to practice architecture is valid CPD” (RIBA 2005).
RICS	“systematic maintenance, improvement and broadening of professional knowledge, understanding and skill and the development of professional and technical duties throughout the practitioner’s working life” (RICS Rules of Conduct).
RTPI	“those activities which help[ed] you to gain new, or to strengthen existing, knowledge and skills” (RTPI Professional Conduct Advice).

Figure 1: Professional Institutions’ Definitions of Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

3. THE MINIMUM CPD REQUIREMENT OF EACH UK INSTITUTION'S MEMBERSHIP CLASS

The minimum CPD requirement for members of UK Built Environment Professional Institutions varies. This can be seen from the comparison presented in Figure 2.

Professional Body	Minimum CPD Requirement for Member
ABE	35 hours per year OR 105 hours over 3 years
CIOB	No set number of hours per year – the amount will ‘depend on your circumstance, and be appropriate for your responsibilities and ongoing development’
RIBA	35 hours per year AND complete 100 points each year (of which 50% should be structured CPD) AND complete and annual Professional Development Plan (PDP) AND keep records of CPD activity
RICS	60 hours in any 3 year period – with at least 10 hours each year
RTPI	50 hours minimum in any 2 year period

Figure 2: The Minimum Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Requirements of the Professional Institutions

4. THE MONITORING OF CPD ACTIVITY BY 5 UK BUILT ENVIRONMENT PROFESSIONAL INSTITUTIONS

The means by which the 5 UK Professional Institutions monitor membership CPD activity is presented in Figure 3.

Professional Body	Monitoring Activity
ABE	The Association conducts random audits to ensure that members are fulfilling their CPD obligations
CIOB	The CIOB checks the CPD records of a random selection of members. Such randomly selected members are required to produce their CPD records for the past year. Members of CIOB boards, committees and panels have their CPD records checked once every 3 years as proof that their knowledge and understanding is up to date. Applicants for corporate membership are required to produce CPD records for the past 3 years as well as a forward development plan for the next year.
RIBA	At the end of every year the RIBA monitors a random sample of chartered members' CPD record sheets. Randomly sampled members who refuse to comply could, after a series of warnings, be suspended from the RIBA.
RICS	In accordance with Rule 38 (c) of the Rules of Conduct, when requested for evidence of a development plan and a record of lifelong learning activities a member shall “send to the Institution within 28 days of being required by the Institution so to do a copy of his records” Record of lifelong learning activities are to be kept by members “for a period of three years after the qualifying activity has been undertaken” (Rule 38(2)).
RTPI	The Institute confidentially monitors CPD records and Professional Development Plans. This is carried out on an annual basis with members being selected randomly. Those members selected are required to submit a CPD record and a PDP for the previous 2 years.

Figure 3: The Monitoring of CPD Activity by the Institutions

5. ASSOCIATION OF BUILDING ENGINEERS

The ABE's Codes of Professional Conduct require every member to "strive to maintain and improve their professional knowledge and to contribute to the best of their ability to the knowledge and understanding of their profession as a whole".

Members' CPD Requirement

ABE members are obliged to record the time spent on CPD and to participate in a minimum of 35 hours CPD per year or 105 hours spread over 3 years.

The Association publishes CPD Guidance Notes within the "Seminar and Workshop" insert section of their monthly journal 'Building Engineer'. This guidance states that members are required:

- to participate in CPD;
- to keep up with developments in their delivery of professional services and the construction industry in general;
- to provide evidence of CPD as an essential element of career advancement and should assist members in enhancing their profile within their organisations and assist in mobility;
- to recognise the increasingly important role in meeting professional liability, consumer protection, and other legal safeguard requirements;
- identify the trends that are to be clearly seen in a way EC Directive affect future working practices;
- to be aware that clients are seeking quality assurance from their professional advisers.

The Association's CPD Guidance Notes further state that CPD activities should relate to:

- Some part of the theory and practice of the member's professional services offered;
- Reinforcement of the knowledge reflecting new technologies and legislation;
- Other aspects related to a member's current or potential employment;
- Future development and diversification of services provided;
- Personal or business skills designed to increase a member's management or business efficiency;
- Other activities which directly or indirectly assist in ensuring the best possible advice.

What constitutes CPD?

The ABE suggests the following (non-exhaustive) list of possible CPD activities:

<i>Events</i>	- lectures, seminars, conferences and technical visits;
<i>Courses</i>	- short residential courses, evening courses, degree or diploma course etc;

<i>Distance learning</i>	- CPD packages, correspondence courses, Open University, open tech. etc;
<i>Personal Study</i>	- Properly directed aims with measurable outcomes. eg. learning a technique up to specifiable standard; producing a book or technical article;
<i>Professional Affairs</i>	- Voluntary work for your profession. Participation in special working parties, reports, relevant committee meetings of professional bodies;
<i>Personal Development</i>	- Any activity which is intended to help the member be a more effective person. Eg. Public speaking, ‘make the most of yourself’ courses; interviewing skills; speed reading; leadership and offices held.

6. CHARTERED INSTITUTE OF BUILDING

The CIOB (2004) define CPD as “the process of regularly assessing current and future skill and knowledge requirements relevant to your responsibilities, and then planning and implementing an ongoing programme of training and development to address those needs”.

Rule 13 of the CIOB Rules of Professional Competence and Conduct places an obligation on every member to “keep themselves informed of current thinking and developments appropriate to the type and level of their responsibility. They should be able to provide evidence that they have undertaken sufficient study and personal development to fulfil their professional obligations in accordance with the current guidelines for Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

The CIOB outline the advantages of CPD by stating that CPD allows a person to:

- Progress your career
- Maintain your professional status;
- Reflect on personal achievements and invest in future development;
- Learn from others and exchange knowledge and ideas;
- Benchmark your performance;
- Demonstrate to colleagues and clients that you are a self-starter and motivated to learn;
- Develop the skills you need to do your job more effectively;
- Learn in a flexible style, identifying and making the most of available development opportunities.

Members’ CPD Requirement

Members are not required to complete a set number of hours per annum. The amount of CPD a member does will “depend on your circumstances, and be appropriate for your responsibilities and ongoing development” (CIOB 2004).

Members are responsible for developing their own annual CPD plan, evaluating CPD activity and keeping a record of activities.

What constitutes CPD?

In its webpage ‘What constitutes CPD?’ the CIOB suggests that CPD activities might include:

- Open distance learning (video packages, the Internet, slide/tape packages, correspondence course);
- Private study, including systematic study of appropriate literature or research, or even learning a relevant language;
- Technical and professional conferences, lectures, seminars, workshops, study tours, technical visits and short courses;
- Courses leading to professional qualifications or academic awards;
- Writing articles for publications;
- Teaching (for those not in teaching posts);
- Practice (for those in teaching post);
- Preparing papers and contributing to technical meetings and study groups;
- Examining, tutoring and mentoring.

The current CIOB-recommended approach to CPD is illustrated in Figure 4. Here CPD is considered as a cyclical process.

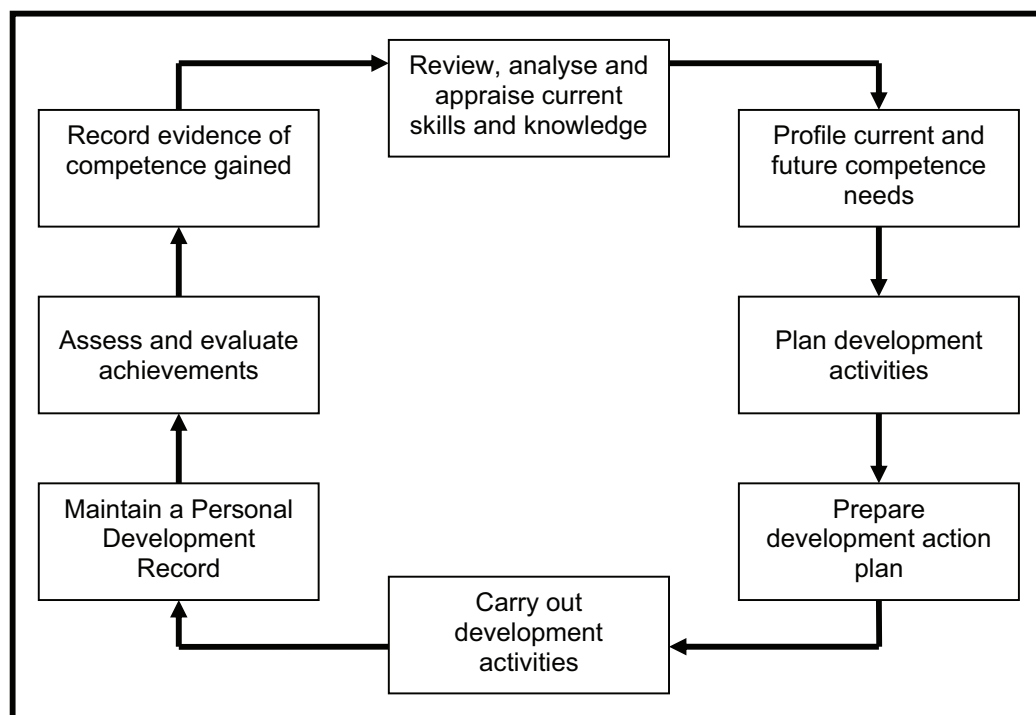


Figure 4: The Cyclical CPD Process (CIOB 2004)

7. ROYAL INSTITUTE OF BRITISH ARCHITECTS

All chartered Members of the RIBA are required to carry out CPD, no matter where in the world they live and work, and no matter what work they do. Only fully retired members are exempt from CPD activities.

Members' CPD Requirement

Chartered members of the RIBA (2005) are each year required to:

- carry out 35 hours of CPD;
- fulfil 100 points of CPD;
- keep track of CPD activity via the RIBA's CPD record sheet.

Further to this, chartered members are recommended to plan training via the RIBA's professional development plan

Calculating the RIBA 'point value' of a CPD activity

For every CPD activity undertaken – from reading to MSc study - a rating of between 1 and 4 is awarded by the RIBA member. The rating relates to the perceived personal value of the CPD activity and is a reflection of 'what was personally got out of the activity'. RIBA explain the rating as thus: "A '1' rating would mean that you didn't get much out of it; a '4' would mean that the activity will help change the way you work".

To arrive at an overall rating for an activity the points rating assigned by the members is multiplied by the hours spent on the activity. A member can award an automatic 75 points for a CPD activity that leads to a qualification in a relevant professional discipline or for attending any course of 5 days or more duration.

What constitutes CPD?

The RIBA considers that any relevant study or activity that enhances a member's professional development and ability to practice architecture is valid CPD. The RIBA describes two types of CPD: 'structured' and 'general'.

- Structured CPD is viewed as "any activity done in a classroom or lecture setting, whether with other people in a room or via online learning, with specific stated learning outcomes;
- General CPD is viewed as any other CPD activity.

The RIBA recommends that members should aim for 50% of their CPD to be 'structured' in nature. In support of this the RIBA offers a CPD programme and a free "RIBA CPD Providers Network".

8. ROYAL INSTITUTION OF CHARTERED SURVEYORS

The RICS view CPD as ‘a life-long learning approach to planning, managing and getting the most from your own development’. Rule 35 of the RICS Rules of Conduct Regulation 2004 defines lifelong learning as ‘systematic maintenance, improvement and broadening of professional knowledge, understanding and skill and the development of professional and technical duties throughout the practitioner’s working life’.

Members’ CPD Requirement

RICS members must have a structured learning plan and complete a minimum 60 hours of CPD or lifelong learning activity in any three-year period, with at least 10 hours conducted each year.

The key features of CPD are described by the RICS in ‘What is CPD?’ as:

- Ownership of CPD by the individual.
- Emphasis on learning from a wide range of activities.
- Integration of learning and work - the concept of work as a learning experience.
- Emphasis on "outcomes" - answering the questions "what did you learn?" and "how do you plan to apply this learning?" - rather than "what learning event did you experience?"
- CPD should not be seen as an additional task to your normal duties.

Recording Lifelong Learning Activity (CPD) and Personal Development Planners

RICS members are obliged to undertake lifelong learning and to review and up-date their development plan at least once a year (Rules of Conduct (2004) Rule 38 (a)). Each member’s must record qualifying life long learning activities (Rule 38 (b)). Rule 38 (b) of the Code of conduct states that the record shall include “dates, subject-matters, speakers, total time.... and brief evaluations of the effectiveness that [the member’s] participation in such qualifying activity has had”.

The important factor is to show that some significant learning has taken place. The RICS requires members to choose one of the following recording formats:

- RICS personal development planner (PDP) (downloadable in either PDF or Microsoft Word formats) ;
- In-house electronic recording system (must reflect aims of RICS PDP);
- RICS web-based planner known as "My CPD" accessible from the members' homepage.

Online recording is compulsory for

- members admitted on or after 1 January 2004; and
- members who have entered into an undertaking as required by the RICS Professional Conduct Panel.

What constitutes Lifelong Learning (CPD) ?

RICS recognises that many activities can qualify as lifelong learning and that lifelong learning activity is not limited to formal training courses, seminars and workshops. The RICS also recognises that the individual member is best placed to personally assess and determine relevant lifelong learning activity.

Activities that ‘qualify’ as lifelong learning are detailed in the Institution’s Rules of Conduct (2004) Rule 35 (a – d). Rule 35 of the Rules of Conduct defines lifelong learning “qualifying activity” as meaning the study of:

- a) Some part of the theory and practice of surveying as defined in the Royal Charter;
- b) Other professional and/or technical surveying topics related to a Member’s current or potential occupations;
- c) Topics relating to the acquisition of personal, business management or consultancy skills; and/or such other topics considered by the Institution to be within the purview of one or more of its Faculties, or as may be advised or promoted as qualifying by the Institution from time to time, intended to increase a Member’s management or business efficiency and effectiveness.

In further support of lifelong learning activity, the RICS provides a comprehensive list of potential activities and events from which members may be able to obtain suitable and worthwhile learning outcomes. The list is entitled “Qualifying Learning Activities” and is sub-divided into four categories:

1. Professional work-based activities
2. Self-directed and informal learning
3. Personal activities outside work
4. Courses, seminars and conferences

9. ROYAL TOWN PLANNING INSTITUTE

Paragraph 1 of the RTPI’s Code of Professional Conduct (2003) states “Members shall take all reasonable steps to maintain their professional competence throughout their working lives and shall comply with the council’s continuing professional development regulations as amended from time to time”.

Further to this the supplementary regulations to the Code of Professional Conduct define CPD as:

“The systematic maintenance, improvement and broadening of knowledge and skill and the development of personal qualities necessary for the execution of professional and technical duties throughout the practitioner’s working life.”

Members’ CPD Requirement

Annex A to the Code of Professional Conduct requires that:

“Every Corporate Member, Legal Associate, Technical Member and academically qualified Student shall

- a) at least once a year prepare a professional development plan for the next two years identifying his or her personal professional development needs;
- b) in any two year period undertake a minimum of 50 hours CPD activity related to the undertaking or managing of town planning;
- c) maintain a written record of his or her CPD activity;
- d) submit to the Institute on request and in such form as may be prescribed by the Institute:
 - i. a copy of his or her professional development plan or plans covering the previous two years;
 - ii. a written record of his or her CPD activity over the same period of two years, with an assessment of the value to him or her of each activity recorded and an explanation of the relationship between the CPD undertaken and the professional development plan or plans covering the period in question, taking into account any revisions to the plan made during the two year period;
 - iii. a copy of his or her current professional development plan if not already submitted under ‘i.’ above;
 - iv. where appropriate, an explanation of his or her reasons for not having complied with any part of this regulation. ”

The RTPI provides its members with further detailed guidance regarding CPD in the “Professional Conduct Advice Note No 1 – Continuing Professional Development, (2003).

In summary this documents provides:

- Information about the CPD obligation of RTPI members
- Advice – concerning ‘the professional development plan’, implementation of the plan, what counts as CPD and each member’s own CPD record;
- Monitoring CPD and sanctions;
- How CPD obligations affect particular groups of members;
- Employers’ and managers’ CPD responsibilities to others;
- Examples of professional development plans; and
- A CPD record form

What counts as CPD?

Section ‘3.20’ of the RTPI’s Professional Conduct Advice Note No 1 identifies CPD as “those activities which helped you to gain new, or to strengthen existing, knowledge and skills. Nothing should be automatically accepted as CPD. Even a training course on a mainstream planning topic may not be CPD for you personally...if you got nothing out of it.

The Advice Note continues with the following ‘is it CPD?’ guidance:

“To decide whether a particular piece of CPD is likely to be (or actually was) appropriate, ask: “Is it likely to make me (or has it in fact made me) more competent?” As long as you can demonstrate that your CPD is related to the undertaking or managing of town planning, it will be acceptable.”

The RTPI’s Professional Conduct Advice Note (2003) -further identifies a significant variety of ways of carrying out CPD. The following are all considered acceptable CPD, “provided they are related to planning work, relevant to your needs and effective in making you more competent”:

- home-based learning such as distance learning packages, systematic study or structured reading on particular themes or topics (but not routine reading of the technical press, which the Institute considers should form part of members’ everyday professional activities);
- action-based learning (there are various definitions of action-based learning. In this context it means a learning process involving a systematic, structured approach to the identification of problems in the work place and the search for solutions, with clear benefit to the individual member in terms of meeting the personal CPD needs identified in his or her PDP);
- the preparation of material for courses, technical meetings or publication in the technical press;
- supervised and academic research;
- background reading, research or preparation required in order to tackle a new area of work, such as teaching, for those in practice; practice, for those in teaching; or secondments and job exchanges (but not the day to day work in these new areas);
- RTPI activities of a technical or professional nature, e.g. involvement in specialist working parties or panels, planning aid work, or acting as a consultee on topics of professional interest (membership of a branch executive committee or of the Institute’s Council would not normally count in themselves, but preparation of or participation in discussion of professional issues related to the needs identified in your PDP could do so);
- conferences, seminars, workshops and other technical and professional events and meetings, including in-house training;
- courses leading to a qualification, including for example an N/SVQ.

10. CONCLUSION

This paper has reviewed and presented the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) requirements of 5 UK Built Environment Professional Institutions.

The five professional institutions considered within this review encompass a significant and diverse range of UK built environment professions. In reviewing CPD the paper has outlined each Institution's definition of CPD, minimum Membership class requirements for CPD, means of monitoring CPD activity, and what activities each Institution considered to constitute CPD.

This paper provides a consolidated review of the CPD requirements of UK Built Environment Professional Institutions and serves as a reference source for the undertaking of inter-professional and international built environment CPD comparison, and for the informing of professionals undertaking CPD activities.

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