

## **CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD)**

### *'Essential Training'*

They have done it! The Institution of Structural Engineers has declared that they intend to make CPD compulsory for members.

Well all credit to them for taking the initiative and how long will it be before the other Engineering Institutions follow suit?

This may sound a harsh or unreasonable step to some members but in this world of rapid change and development how else can we keep up to speed and substantiate our position in a world of constantly emerging technology.

When we fly in today's modern 'fly by wire' aircraft we expect the captain (and his crew) to be competent and fully certificated to be in full control of the sophisticated machine in his charge. We trust his employer to have trained and qualified him to the appropriate standard. He is obliged to participate in and prove his CPD to the customer.

Why then should we in civil engineering be less pragmatic in our approach to society and the customers we serve?

Sustainability is coming to the fore which means in practise we will see longer term contracts and an emphasis on partnership working. To make these contracts work and achieve their objectives, contractors, designers and clients will need to bond and grow together for extended periods of time.

In order to win work contractors will need to demonstrate that they can both offer and deliver using quality staff.

This will involve not only competent and experienced people from the outset but a core of people remaining in post throughout the duration of the contract to give continuity and hence sustainability.

Training schemes will need to be implemented to furnish the needs and requirements of both individuals to aspire to personal goals and collectively for the contract team to grow and develop in order to deliver contract specifications and continuous improvement.

These will not be achieved without CPD!

So what is the real value of CPD?

Well it is the tangible way in which professional growth can be demonstrated. It is an essential ingredient to obtaining a recognised qualification and maintaining the impetus throughout whole life career. It will enhance both professional standing and the Curriculum Vitae.

As quality increases in importance and litigation creeps deeper into public service performance, justification in the form of professional indemnity will become increasingly essential.

The individual can only substantiate his or her action in the professional field by actively pursuing an ongoing course of recognised training that is documented and accepted by the Engineering Council or equivalent registering body.

So how is this achieved in practise? Well the recognised institutions all offer help and advice together with detailed recording programmes which enable you to plan, prepare and record a formal programme tailored to your personal needs.

If you are not already a member of a recognised institution then joining should be your first step. All the institutions registered with the ECuk offer membership at appropriate grades to the individual's level and position within their own career and can offer training and progression advice to achieving own goals.

Next it is essential to structure the training to meet own goals in order to map out and discuss the path to be taken with your employer at your professional development review. Your employer will not be able to give you the necessary support to achieve your goals if you cannot provide commitment to a structured training scheme.

Consider CPD as an integral part of your daily job – it is not an extra to be achieved by you entirely in your own time and at your expense!

Your daily tasks will almost always contain opportunities for CPD. Always keep a diary of your daily appointments and activities. Remember to archive your diaries each year as CPD is continuous. They will become invaluable when it comes to updating your records and training programme. Where possible obtain achievement or attendance certificates to include in your portfolio and include those of significance in your CV.

Sources of CPD include:

- Colleagues (especially your mentor if you have one)
- Lunchtime seminars
- Conferences and symposia
- Training courses (especially tailored ones)
- Branch meetings and site visits of the Engineering Institutions (with additional benefits if you join the committee)
- The technical press (the professional institutions will offer a range of these with membership)
- The internet (a wealth of information when researching specific topics)

The list is not exhaustive and can be tailored and developed according to personal need.

So don't wait until it becomes mandatory – start today. It can be fun as well as rewarding!

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