

**REGISTRAR'S POLICY
CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (COMPETENCY 7)
MAY 2009**

INTRODUCTION

This policy is for licensed immigration advisers who are required to participate actively in relevant professional development activities.

This policy covers:

- The requirements of Competency Standard 7
- The Registrar's policy on what constitutes "relevant" activity
- Guidance to help you plan and participate in CPD
- Explanation of how CPD requirements link to evidence requirements for upgrade and renewal of a licence.

In early 2009 the Registrar consulted on proposals to introduce a structured CPD programme and accredit providers to deliver activities. Further consultation will be required on any proposed competency standard change before proceeding.

Until then the current competency standard and this policy and guidance applies.

COMPETENCY STANDARD 7

Section 36 of the Immigration Advisers Licensing Act requires the Registrar to develop and maintain competency standards. The competency standards must, amongst other things, set out rules and criteria relating to continuing professional development (CPD).

Competency standards may differ according to whether a person holds or is seeking a full licence, a limited licence, or a provisional licence. The current competency standards were *gazetted* in March 2008.

Competency 7 requires full and limited licence holders to "maintain skills and knowledge through participation in relevant professional development activities."

Competency 7 requires provisional licence holders to "develop skills and knowledge through participation in relevant professional development activities."

The following performance indicator applies to all three licence types:

“Participate actively in relevant professional development activities

May include but not limited to – self-directed learning on topics relevant to the provision of immigration advice; reading materials relevant to the provision of immigration advice provided by the Registrar or other organisation; receiving formal instruction, education or training relevant to the provision of immigration advice; attending information sessions, seminars, courses or conferences relevant to the provision of immigration advice; participating in the structured supervision or mentoring of another immigration adviser; active participation in a relevant professional body, organisation or association.”

WHAT IS RELEVANT CPD?

The Registrar considers that for the purposes of Competency 7 “relevant” CPD is CPD where the activity or learning relates to one or more of the competency standards for licensed immigration advisers. This gives advisers a lot of scope to plan CPD activity that is relevant.

The purpose of CPD is to assist an adviser to maintain (if full or limited) or develop (if provisional) skills and knowledge. In order to obtain a licence an adviser must demonstrate competence across 7 competency standards. Once achieved, an adviser must maintain this level of competence during the course of his or her licensing year.

Advisers must explain the connection between the CPD and the competency standard. For example, a Thai food cooking class would not be “relevant” CPD because it does not relate to the competency standards. A seminar on tax for small business would be “relevant” CPD because Competency Standard 6 requires an immigration adviser to “manage the financial aspects of an immigration business”.

Activity or learning that is relevant to any of the obligations in the Code of Conduct is “relevant CPD”. Competency Standard 6 requires all licensed advisers (full, limited and provisional) to demonstrate “understanding of and commitment to the Code of Conduct”. See worked example below.

Activity	Competency Standard	How relevant
<p><i>Free GST seminar offered by the Inland Revenue Department Completed on 6 May 2009 in Wellington</i></p>	<p><i>6.3 – apply business management disciplines</i></p>	<p><i>I work on my own as a licensed immigration adviser and I want to make sure that I'm complying with best business practice on GST. I am reviewing my business practice against clause 8(e) of the Code of Conduct and this seminar helped me understand GST requirements for small businesses.</i></p>

One of the grounds for complaint in the Immigration Advisers Licensing Act is that an adviser is “incompetent”. It is likely that when the Tribunal considers a complaint of “incompetence” the Tribunal will look at whether or not the adviser has met the relevant competency standard in the circumstances of the case.

REGISTRAR’S GUIDANCE AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Registrar recommends the following approach to planning and participating actively in CPD. This guidance constitutes strong recommendations but is not binding on advisers.

Planning and recording your CPD

- Plan your own professional development.

[Download template CPD Planner](#)

You do not have to use this template but you may find it useful in planning your own CPD particularly if you work on your own rather than in a bigger firm and do not have the support of colleagues or supervisors.

- Try and complete a minimum of 20 hours of CPD during the course of your licensing year. Many other professionals complete 20 hours or more of CPD in a year so your CPD will be in line with the CPD of other professionals.
- Think about on which competency standards you need to focus your learning.
- Think about what your development goals are for coming licensing year. If you are planning to upgrade from provisional

to full then use the upgrade tool – "*Climbing the competency ladder*" to help you plan your CPD.

[Download Climbing the Competency Ladder](#)

This document is designed to help provisional licence holders and their supervisors. It helps you compares the competency standard required of a provisional licence holder with the competency standard required of a full licence holder.

- Keep a record of your professional development. When you renew or upgrade your licence you must provide evidence to the Registrar. If you have kept a record of your professional development it will be much easier to compile the necessary evidence.

[Download CPD Record Template](#)

You do not have to use this template but you may find it useful in planning your own CPD particularly if you work on your own rather than in a bigger firm and do not have the support of colleagues or supervisors.

Choosing providers and activities

Until the Registrar introduces a structured CPD programme with and has an accreditation policy he cannot recommend particular providers or guarantee quality of activities. However, this guidance may assist you in choosing a provider.

- Talk to providers of education and find out whether they offer courses and activities that relate to the Immigration Advisers Competency Standards. You could ask a provider the questions below.
- Is the activity relevant to one or more of the competency standards? The tool below is not an exhaustive list of activities but it may give you some ideas when planning and thinking about your own CPD.

[Relevancy Tool](#) – *This may give you some ideas about the sorts of activities and topics that relate to the Competency Standards and are "relevant" CPD.*

- Are there opportunities for active learning?

- Does the provider have a process in place for quality control? (eg feedback)
- Are there opportunities for networking with other licensed advisers?
- Is the cost of the course reasonable given what else is on offer in the market? If cost is an issue, consider courses and seminars that are free of charge.

The website www.business.govt.nz includes a list of training courses, including free courses offered by agencies such as the Inland Revenue Department and the Privacy Commissioner. It also includes some courses that are available online free of charge.

<http://www.business.govt.nz/Developing-business-skills/Business-training-and-courses.aspx>

Immigration New Zealand and the Authority are planning to offer seminars for the immigration advice community timed to coincide with Operational Policy release dates in July and November 2009. Watch this space for further information as soon as it becomes available.

Engaging in active learning

- Include as much active learning as possible in your CPD plans. There are different types of learning.
- Some learning is “self directed learning”. In other words you read materials or text books that are relevant but are not assessed or required to participate.
- Other learning is “active”. In other words you participate in activities which are structured to help you retain and use the information you have learnt. For example, a facilitated workshop where you have the opportunity to engage in discussion and practice skills (for example writing contracts or engagement letters) is more beneficial to your professional development than just reading about contracts or engagement letters.
- Talk to your colleagues, your managers and other licensed advisers about their CPD and what they have found useful.

UPGRADE OR RENEW YOUR LICENCE

When you apply to upgrade or renew your licence you will be required to provide evidence of active participation in relevant CPD.

For further information on Renewal see the [Renewal Policy](#) and application form.

For further information on Upgrading see the [Upgrade Policy](#) and application form.