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Guidance for Providers of Continuing Professional Development Activities for Licensed Immigration Advisers

Continuing professional development (CPD) is a continuous process by which licensed immigration advisers acquire, maintain and enhance their skills. The aim of the CPD requirements is to maintain and develop an individual licensed adviser's ability to practise to a high standard.

The CPD requirements are learner-centred, plan-based and build on insights and reflective practices.

Each licensed immigration adviser is responsible for their own CPD requirements. Advisers need to:

- Identify their own learning needs and maintain a CPD plan and record.
- Complete and reflect on 20 hours of CPD activities in line with their learning needs and action plan.

The main features of the CPD requirements are:

- A CPD plan and record which includes a description of learning needs, an action plan, an activities record, reflections and documentation verifying attendance.
- Acceptable CPD activities must be related to the Immigration Advisers Competency Standards or the Licensed Immigration Advisers Code of Conduct; be relevant to an adviser's learning needs as contained in his or her CPD plan and record; provide advisers with an opportunity for interaction and feedback; and be verifiable by documentation.
- Of relevance to CPD providers is that the CPD activities may come from participating in courses, seminars, conferences, training, coaching, study groups and distance learning programmes.

Will any providers be accredited as CPD providers?

The CPD requirements impose no obligations on CPD providers and do not require either providers of CPD or particular courses to be accredited. The CPD requirements are learner centred and it is up to each individual adviser to decide if an activity meets the definition of a CPD activity, would help them to fulfil their identified learning needs and would best suit their individual learning styles and circumstances. One size does not fit all. The Immigration Advisers Authority will therefore not accredit or approve any CPD providers or particular courses.

CPD providers should not imply that any courses or activities they offer have been 'approved', 'recommended' or 'accredited' by the Immigration Advisers Authority.

What should CPD providers do?

The CPD requirements impose no obligations on CPD providers. However, as a provider you may wish to provide some guidance to advisers on how they may claim your course/ seminar towards their hours of required CPD activities.

Providing CPD activities

To help advisers to identify appropriate activities and activities which fulfil the requirements, CPD providers should consider:

- designing educational activities based on predetermined aims and objectives to meet the needs and demands of anticipated participants;
- structuring educational activities to achieve the anticipated outcomes;
- including details of the aims and objectives and anticipated educational outcomes in advertisements and programmes of activities.
- applying continuous quality improvement processes to their activities

Advisers will want to undertake activities which will help them to meet their CPD requirements and are likely to study promotional information with this in mind.

Can all hours provided be counted?

The onus is on advisers to decide whether relevant learning has occurred and, if so, to count the time spent towards their required hours of activities. Breaks may not be included. Providers may give an indication of the potential CPD hours on their brochures. While it is up to each individual participant to decide if a CPD activity is relevant to their identified learning needs, to keep it simple, most providers are stating the (potential) number of CPD hours – “X CPD hours”

Verifying CPD participation

CPD providers may help advisers verify their participation in the CPD activities provided by providing course participants with a certificate or other appropriate document which shows they attended and which includes:

- a. the adviser’s name
- b. name of CPD provider
- c. the title of course with brief description of topics covered
- d. date and location
- e. number of hours excluding time for breaks.

Providers can verify that advisers completed CPD activities in various ways. Depending on the type of activity these could include completion certificates, attendance records, in-house records and for writers copies of title pages or similar.

Preparation time

PRESENTERS

Presenters can usually count a reasonable amount of their preparation time towards their CPD activities. While they will have to assess the amount of time they can count for themselves, they might ask you for a letter, a copy of the materials or the like to support their assessment.

PARTICIPANTS

Participants may not count course preparation in most cases. In rare cases preparation might be structured as a distance learning programme. It would need to include exercises requiring interaction and feedback and a mechanism to show that participants actually complete the entire programme. Time spent completing a relevant distance learning programme can be included in a CPD plan and record.

Reflections

All advisers are required to reflect on their CPD activities. They should consider what they have learnt, whether they achieved the learning outcomes, what they will do differently as a result of the activity and what else they need to learn about.

Providers could facilitate this process by asking presenters to leave five minutes for this process at the end of a session, and having a discussion to help in the process. You might also provide a form in the course materials for participants to complete.

Acknowledgement

These CPD requirements have drawn on the CPD model adopted by the New Zealand Law Society. This document has been adapted from material prepared by the New Zealand Law Society with their kind permission.