



CURRENT THINKING ON... GETTING YOUR CPD IN ORDER

Welcome to our CPD module series for community pharmacy technicians. Written in conjunction with the *Pharmacy Magazine* CPD series, it will mirror the magazine's programme throughout the year. The series has been designed for you to use as part of your continuing professional development. Reflection exercises have been included to help start you off in the CPD learning cycle.

Contributing author: Nicola Tyers, The Pharmacy Training Company and Medway Clinical Commissioning Group.



With summer over and autumn marching on, now is a good time to take stock of developments in both continuing professional development (CPD) and continuing fitness to practise (CfTP), as boundaries between these two areas have now become blurred.

CPD has been embedded in the membership of many professions for some time, and for many years there has been growing public demand for health professionals to be more accountable and for a system that is more responsive to their needs. This includes the idea that members of professional bodies (registrants) are checked regularly to determine whether

they are fit to practise and serve the community and not, as previously, checked only at the point of registration.

What is CPD?

As CPD has been around for quite a long while now, it may seem strange to ask what it is, but with so many changes afoot, it's worth considering the question. In 2009, the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) was formed as a new pharmacy regulator and professional body. The GPhC describes CPD as "a continual process of lifelong learning". It is also understood that CPD ensures that registrants are equipped to undertake their role both safely and effectively.

The importance of CPD is well recognised and most pharmacy professionals will do CPD regularly. However, this may be superficial. How many professionals are engaged and motivated enough to take a co-ordinated approach, reflect on where there are gaps in their knowledge and record the training they do?

CPD cycle

To help pharmacy professionals achieve CPD in a structured way that can be assessed, the GPhC has a CPD cycle that follows four stages, as seen in Figure 1.

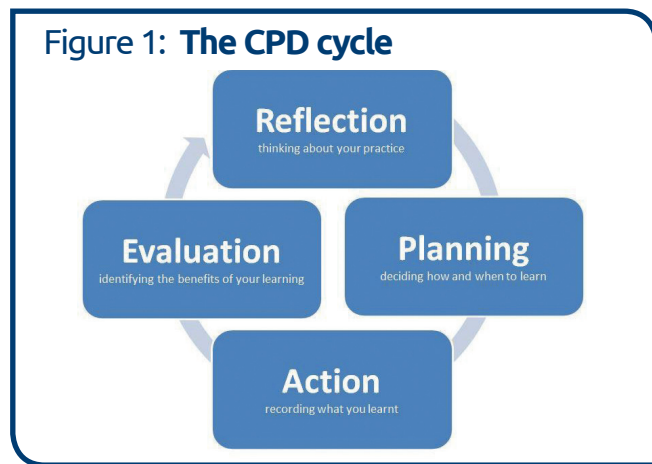
In an ideal world, the majority of learning would be planned through a period of reflection, but this may

MODULE NUMBER: 72

AIM: To update pharmacy technicians on CPD requirements, possible changes and how to remain fit to practise.

OBJECTIVES: After studying this module, pharmacy technicians will:

- Understand the key CPD requirements
- Appreciate the need to complete CPD
- Be able to discuss the importance of reflection and the benefits to their practice.



not always be practical as some learning experiences are not planned. To address this, the GPhC allows CPD to start at any stage in the cycle. However, at least three of the nine annual entries must start at reflection. Since learning something that is applied in practice is key, all CPD must include the evaluation stage to demonstrate the benefits to your development and practice. Evidence has shown that registrants find it easiest to start their CPD at either the reflection or action stage.

A good way to start is by looking at the GPhC

document *Plan and Record*, which is available at: pharmacyregulation.org/sites/default/files/GPhC%20Plan%20and%20Record%20g.pdf. Remember that CPD must be relevant to your area of practice and should reflect the work you do. Ideally, you should rotate through the different stages:

- Reflect on where you are, where you want to get to and what the gap is
- Plan what you need to do to address the gap
- Undertake the 'doing'
- Evaluate what you have done and its impact.

Reflection and goal setting

Reflection is critical to pharmacy professional practice. There are two types:

Informal reflection includes self-questioning and developing self-awareness of our own assumptions. Usually, something happens that prompts us to informally reflect. Questions that may help include:

- What happened and why?
- Who was involved and where and when did this take place?
- What was my role in this?
- What did I do well and what could I improve?
- What was the impact (both on myself and others) of what I did or didn't do?
- What have I learnt and what could I change to improve the outcome?

Formal reflection involves drawing on research and theory, providing/using guidance and frameworks for practice, and identifying learning needs against these. These questions may help to get you started:

- What does my role require me to do?
- Is there a framework that covers my role?
- Have I got the right knowledge and skills?
- How can I develop further?

Once you have identified any gaps, the next step is to identify the goal that you want to achieve – if you have no goal then you are not going to develop further. This is where setting SMART objectives comes in. SMART stands for: specific, measurable, achievable, realistic/relevant and time bound.

Planning CPD activities

There are a wide range of activities that enable you to undertake CPD, and the GPhC encourages you to use a variety of these, including:

- Gaining knowledge and skills on conferences and courses
- Practice-based learning, including feedback from patients and audits
- Analysis and review of critical incidents you have experienced
- Self-directed learning, including reading, writing or undertaking research
- Learning with others, e.g. talking to colleagues or going to workshops.

Things to consider are the evidence base, the time needed to achieve this, the academic level, what suits your learning style and the time you have available.

standards and framework

CPD standards

The GPhC standards for CPD aim to ensure that pharmacy professionals are able to practise safely and effectively, and all CPD entries must comply with these standards. They are available to view at: pharmacyregulation.org/sites/default/files/Standards%20for%20continuing%20professional%20development%20s.pdf.

CPD framework

The GPhC also has a CPD framework, available at: pharmacyregulation.org/education/continuing-professional-development/cpd-framework, which details what registrants must do to meet its standards. This framework is being updated and, at the time of going to press, there is an ongoing consultation (see page 36 for more on this) regarding randomly selecting a small portion (minimum of 2.5 per cent) of pharmacy professionals on an annual basis, rather than calling the records of all registrants once every five years, as is currently the case.

Table 1: Pharmacy-focused CPD support

Communications International Group <i>(Training Matters, Pharmacy Magazine, P3, Independent Community Pharmacist)</i>	tmmagazine.co.uk pharmacymagazine.co.uk p3pharmacy.co.uk independentpharmacist.co.uk
Association of Pharmacy Technicians UK (APTUK)	aptuk.org/about-us/continuing-professional-development/cpd-support
Centre for Pharmacy Postgraduate Education	cppe.ac.uk/support/cpd-help
NHS Education for Scotland	nes.scot.nhs.uk/education-and-training/by-discipline/pharmacy/about-nes-pharmacy/audit,-cpd,-sea/cpd-how-can-we-help.aspx
Wales Centre For Pharmacy Professional Education	wcppe.org.uk/learning

Action and evaluation

When taking action, you simply need to record what you did, what you have learnt and when the learning was undertaken or completed. If you undertake unplanned learning, you can start to record a CPD entry at the action stage. Next, you need to evaluate your CPD by looking at the success of your learning activities and understanding whether what you have learnt has benefited or will benefit your practice as a pharmacy professional.

Once you've got all the information together for your CPD, start documenting it right away. Read the 'Criteria for Good CPD Recording Practice' in section 6 of the GPhC's *Plan and Record* document to explore what is being looked for in your records.

Remember, you must record

your CPD – if it's not written down, it didn't happen.

Win-win

While healthcare regulators require CPD to demonstrate that registrants are professionally accountable to patients and the public, it's important not to lose sight of the fact that there are benefits to the individual undertaking the CPD. These include:

- Building your confidence and credibility
- Showcasing your achievements

- Helping you achieve your career goals
- Helping you cope positively with change by constantly updating your skill set
- Supporting you to be more productive and efficient.

Getting help

A good place to start is the company or organisation that you work for, who may well have advice on CPD. Otherwise, there are many other organisations that provide help and you can find a list of a few of these in Table 1.

Continuing Fitness to Practise

As of 2018, pharmacy professionals will need to adjust to the future requirements of CftP. Currently a number of pilots are being undertaken and CPD will make up a key part of the GPhC's Continuing Fitness to Practise Framework. The GPhC's pilot involves 1,000 volunteers (pharmacists and pharmacy technicians) and the data is to be collated in January 2017 with a consultation proposed for 2017/18. It is likely that

“Continuing professional development is a continual process of lifelong learning”

registrants will need to do the following:

- Complete an annual renewal (as currently)
- Undertake and record CPD (there may be changes to what currently exists)
- Record a peer discussion (although this is being explored for impact and feasibility)
- Record a case study on a change to practice for the benefit to patients or service users (again this is being explored for impact and feasibility).

top tips

- Don't make it too complicated – break it into manageable, bite-sized chunks
- Start as many CPD cycles as possible at the 'reflection' stage of the cycle, and embed reflective practice into your everyday work
- Think about what you want to achieve and identify how to do this
- Use SMART objectives
- Record it – if you don't, it didn't happen
- Embrace CPD – it's here to stay.



reflective exercise

- Have you listed the CPD you've done since your last submission to the regulator?
- How many entries have you got and are these relevant to your area of practice?
- Do you need to break these down into further SMART entries?
- How about moving from being reactive to proactive, planning your future CPD and linking it into your personal development plan?

Go to www.tmmagazine.co.uk to answer the CPD questions. When you pass, you'll be able to download a certificate to showcase your learning. You can also add this to your online, personalised learning log.

Next month: We focus on falls prevention and osteoporosis.