

Fact sheet: CPD exemptions

December 2019

1. Overview

Continuing professional development (CPD) is an important way for you to maintain and improve your knowledge and skills and to stay up to date in your area of practice.

There is a broad range of options available for meeting the Board's CPD registration standard (CPD standard). The Board expects practitioners who hold practising registration to meet the requirements of the CPD standard and believes that the range of activities and the timeframe provided, including the pro rata allowance, is flexible enough to enable you to meet the standard except in exceptional circumstances.

The Board may grant a full or partial exemption or variation from the CPD requirements in exceptional circumstances that have prevented you from practising and created a significant obstacle to your ability to complete CPD. The Board takes the individual circumstances of each application into consideration when it decides whether to grant an exemption from CPD.

Depending on the circumstances the Board may also decide to impose a condition on your registration requiring you to complete additional CPD to make up all or some of the CPD that you did not complete.

2. Planned absence from practice

The CPD standard requires you to identify your learning goals and to plan your CPD. Planning your CPD can help make it more effective. When you are planning a substantial absence from practice the Board expects you to consider how you can meet the CPD requirements. There are a number of flexible and low-cost options for meeting the CPD standard available including reading journal articles relevant to your practice, online learning and internet research. You can also consider registering as non-practising¹ while you are absent from practice.

Generally, the Board will not grant an exemption from CPD for more than one registration period and encourages practitioners who are not practising for more than one year to consider non-practising registration.

3. Exceptional circumstances

An absence from practice on its own does not mean that you will automatically be exempt from the CPD requirements. The absence from practice must be due to exceptional circumstances.

Exceptional circumstances that may entitle you to an exemption are circumstances that prevented you from undertaking your CPD and were unforeseen or out of the ordinary so that you could not have been expected to manage their impact.

¹ Practitioners who hold non-practising registration are not required to meet the CPD registration standard

4. Examples of circumstances that may entitle you to an exemption

Significant illness or injury

You experience a significant illness or injury that means that you are unable to practise for a lengthy period and that prevents you from undertaking CPD.

The illness or injury must prevent you from undertaking CPD as well as preventing you from practising. For example, you may have a condition that means you are not be able to practise but you may be able to complete CPD by doing online learning and reading relevant journal articles.

Bereavement

The death of a member of your immediate family or household that results in you taking a substantial break from practice and prevents you from undertaking CPD.

Carer's leave

You need to provide a lengthy period of care for a member of your immediate family or household because of significant illness or injury and you are prevented from practising and undertaking CPD.

5. Maternity/Paternity/Parental leave

When you take planned maternity/paternity/parental leave the Board expects you to plan CPD around your leave whenever possible. This is because you would usually have time to plan your CPD and because you may also choose to return to work part time and/or do isolated shifts while on parental leave. You also have the option to consider non-practising registration while you are on parental leave.

However, the Board recognises that there may be circumstances associated with an absence from practice due to parental leave that are sufficient to prevent you from undertaking your CPD e.g. a multiple birth, lengthy or frequent absence of a partner or other support, you/your infant or an immediate family member suffer a significant illness or injury.

In these circumstances the Board will consider an exemption on a case by case basis.

6. Examples of circumstances that may not entitle you to an exemption

Leave of absence/travel/study

You will generally not be granted an exemption for planned personal leave, travel or study. The Board expects you to plan your CPD around your absence from practice. There is a flexible range of CPD activities that meet the CPD standard. If you are not planning to practise for a lengthy period, you may choose to register as non-practising so you don't need to meet the requirements of the CPD standard.

7. Full or partial exemption from CPD requirements

The Board will consider several factors when they are deciding whether to grant you an exemption from the CPD requirements. If you have practised for some of the registration year then depending on the nature of the exceptional circumstances Boards would generally expect you to have completed some CPD hours for that year. Usually the Board will not grant a full exemption unless the exceptional circumstances have prevented you from practising and undertaking CPD for most of the registration period. As a general rule the Board will provide an exemption on a pro rata basis.

The following list is indicative only:

- Exceptional circumstances of 3 – 6 months – partial exemption of up to 50%
- Exceptional circumstances of 6 – 9 months – partial exemption of up to 75%
- Exceptional circumstances of 9 – 12 months – up to a full exemption

8. Variation from CPD requirements

The Board may grant a variation from CPD requirements when you demonstrate that the exceptional circumstances have prevented you from meeting the CPD requirements. For example, you are unable to meet a requirement or requirements due to an injury, illness or condition that means that you are unable to participate in a specific requirement or requirements e.g. interactive CPD.

9. Requesting an exemption

When you submit an '*Application for exemption form*' you must provide evidence that you have been or will not be practising and to demonstrate that the exceptional circumstances have created a significant obstacle to your ability to complete CPD. Your application for exemption should include relevant information that explains the nature of the exceptional circumstances and how they adversely impacted on your ability to practise and to complete the CPD requirements. You should include information about:

- the dates when you were not able to practise
- the dates when the exceptional circumstances began and ended or are likely to end
- the nature of the exceptional circumstances and how they impact on your ability to practise and to undertake CPD
- any additional relevant information e.g. how much CPD you have completed (if any)

10. Evidence

You must include as much supporting evidence with your application as possible. Evidence may include:

- medical reports or certificates
- death certificates or correspondence from a medical practitioner or other relevant authority
- letters from your employer regarding absence from practice
- statutory declaration or other proof relevant to the circumstances identified in your request