

Frequently asked questions

From 1 December 2020

Continuing professional development (CPD)

1. Why should I do CPD?

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, helping you to be a safer and more effective optometrist. [Research¹](#) suggests that CPD may improve patient outcomes. The National Law requires all Boards to develop a continuing professional development registration standard (CPD standard).

2. How much CPD do I need to do?

Optometrists who have a scheduled medicines endorsement must complete a minimum of 30 hours of CPD each year which must include a minimum of 10 hours relating to the endorsement.

Optometrists who do not hold an endorsement must complete a minimum of 20 hours of CPD each year.

3. I completed more than the required hours of CPD this year can I use the extra hours next year?

No, you cannot 'carry over' hours from one year to the next. There is a broad range of flexible options available for meeting the CPD standard. The Board believes that the CPD standard is flexible enough to enable you to complete a minimum of 30 hours in each year or 20 hours if you don't hold a scheduled medicines endorsement.

4. How do I choose CPD that meets the Board's CPD standard?

Your CPD does not need to be accredited/approved by the Board or other CPD provider. Instead you must choose CPD activities that meet your learning goals and the criteria that are set out in the CPD standard.

The CPD standard requires you to complete CPD that seeks to improve patient outcomes and experiences, draws on best available evidence that is supported by research where possible, improves your competence and keeps you up to date and builds on your existing knowledge.

¹ 'Summary of research to inform registration standards review' under the Additional information section on the Codes, Guidelines and Policies tab on the Board's website.

5. What type of CPR training do I need to do?

The cardiopulmonary resuscitation training must be with an approved training provider. You must complete CPR training once every three years. You must meet the Board's requirement no matter what length of time the certificate of completion provided by the Training Provider is valid for.

Training courses registered on the Training.gov.au website for 'Perform CPR' meet the Board's CPD standard. This includes the familiar providers such as:

- Australian Red Cross
- Surf Life Saving Australia
- St John Ambulance Australia
- Royal Life Saving Australia

You can find an approved provider on the Australian Government [MySkills website](http://MySkills.website).

6. What if I don't work in clinical practice?

All optometrists except those with student or non-practising registration must complete CPD every year. Even if you don't work with patients and your work is in a non-clinical role you must comply with the CPD standard if you have general registration. Some examples of non-clinical roles include health management, administration, education, research, advisory, regulatory or policy development or any other similar role.

You should think about the skills and knowledge that you need in your role when deciding on your learning needs and planning your CPD. Some of the ways you might choose to meet the standard include attending seminars or work-based training, reading and summarising research that relates to your role or meeting with a mentor to discuss how you could improve your work. For more information see '*CPD activities that meet the standard*'.

7. How will the Board know that I have met the CPD registration standard?

When you renew your registration, you must declare that you have met the CPD registration standard. If you declare that you did not meet the standard you will be asked for information about how much CPD you did complete and the reason that you were unable to meet the standard. It is important to ensure that your declaration is accurate. The Board may decide to take action including issuing a caution, accepting an undertaking, imposing conditions or referring to Tribunal if you make a false declaration. The Board may audit your compliance with the CPD registration standard.

8. Are there exemptions from the CPD registration standard?

Exemptions from CPD may be provided in exceptional circumstances that prevent you from working and from completing any CPD. For more information about when you may be entitled to an exemption from CPD see the [Fact Sheet – CPD exemptions](#) on the Board's website.

9. What happens if I don't meet the CPD registration standard?

If you have not met the CPD registration standard the Board may take action including imposing conditions on your registration or possibly refusing registration. Before making this decision, the Board will consider how much CPD you have completed and the reason/s you failed to meet the standard. The Board may decide that you must do extra CPD hours in the next registration period.

10. Should I keep evidence that I have met the standard?

Yes, you must keep records of your CPD activities for 5 years. The CPD standard requires you to keep a portfolio that documents your learning goals, records your planned activities and your reflection on how these activities will or have improved your practice. The standard also requires you to keep evidence of the CPD you have completed.

Each year the Board conducts random audits of optometrists for compliance with the CPD standard. If you cannot provide evidence of your compliance the Board may decide to investigate the matter.

11. What if I can't meet the standard?

The Board believes that the range of activities and the timeframe provided is flexible enough to enable you to meet the standard except in exceptional circumstances. If exceptional circumstances prevent you from practising and from completing your CPD the Board may grant you an exemption. For more information about exemptions see the Board's Fact sheet: CPD exemptions.

12. Do I need to meet the standard if I'm taking a break from practice?

If you are registered to practise you need to meet the CPD standard. The CPD standard does not apply if you have non-practising registration.

If you are planning a lengthy break from practice you may wish to consider applying for non-practising registration. When you decide to return to practice you must meet the Professional indemnity insurance arrangements and Recency of practice registration standards. If you don't meet the Recency of practice standard you must submit a return to practice plan with your application for general registration. For more information see the Board's [Recency of practice registration standard and FAQ](#).

13. What is the CPD cycle?

The CPD cycle as described in the CPD guidelines outlines the activities that you should undertake each year. The cycle starts with identifying your learning goals and planning the CPD activities that you will undertake to meet those needs.

Once you have completed these activities you should record your reflections on how your CPD has or will improve your practice. These reflections will inform your CPD planning for the next year.

14. I completed all my CPD hours at my work place, do I have to do extra hours to meet the standard?

As long as the CPD that you completed at your workplace meets the CPD standard by seeking to improve patient/client outcomes, drawing on best available evidence, contributing to your competence and building on your knowledge then you do not have to do any extra hours. You must also undertake a minimum of five hours of interactive CPD and include no more than five hours of non-scientific/non-clinical CPD.

You must also record your learning goals and your reflection on how the workplace CPD activities have improved your practice to meet the CPD standard.

15. Can I count planning and reflecting on my CPD towards the hours I must complete?

No. You must complete 30 hours (or 20 hours if you don't hold a scheduled medicines endorsement) of CPD activities with a minimum of 5 hours in an interactive setting with other optometrists. The time you spend planning and reflecting on the activities that you undertake cannot be included in your total hours.