



Pharmacy Board of Australia

GUIDELINES ON CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Introduction

These guidelines have been developed by the Pharmacy Board of Australia (the Board) under section 39 of the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law).

These guidelines:

- a. supplement the requirements set out in the Board's *Registration standard: Continuing professional development* (CPD standard)
- b. supplement the requirements set out in the National Law at sections 128 and 109(1)(iii) in relation to pharmacists' obligations to undertake continuing professional development (CPD) and to advise the Board when applying for renewal of registration that the Board's CPD requirements have been met, and
- c. provide guidance to pharmacists in relation to a matter of professional practice, not set down in the legislation or a registration standard, which under section 41 of the National Law, can be used in disciplinary proceedings under the National Law as evidence of what constitutes appropriate professional conduct or practice for pharmacists.

The relevant sections of the National Law are in Attachment 1.

Note: As part of the agreement by the Council of Australian Governments to provide for the National Law, pharmacy ownership, regulation of premises, inspections and related matters do not form part of the National Law. Each jurisdiction will have separate legislation and guidelines for these purposes.

Who needs to use these guidelines?

These guidelines were developed to provide guidance to applicants for general registration and all registered pharmacists, including those changing registration type.

They do not apply to pharmacists with non-practising registration or to students.

What happens if I do not comply with these guidelines?

Pharmacists must comply with all legislation relevant to the practice of pharmacy in the jurisdiction where the practice occurs. Additionally, pharmacists are expected to be aware of and comply with the profession's standards and guidelines (including any other standards or guidelines referred to in those documents), as relevant to their scope of practice and type of registration. The pharmacy practice standards and guidelines can be accessed on the websites of the relevant professional bodies:

- Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) (www.psa.org.au)
- The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (The SHPA) (www.shpa.org.au)

Non-compliance with these guidelines and pharmacy practice standards and guidelines may be notified to the Board for appropriate action under the National Law. Under section 41 of the National Law, these guidelines can be used in disciplinary proceedings under the National Law or law of a co-regulatory jurisdiction as evidence of what constitutes appropriate professional conduct or practice for pharmacists. When considering notifications (complaints) against pharmacists, the Board will give consideration to whether a breach of these guidelines has taken place. The Board will also have regard to the legislation and practice standards and guidelines relevant to pharmacy practice.

Further information for pharmacists regarding the possible outcomes of notifications is available on the website of the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) (www.ahpra.gov.au).

Summary of guidelines

The Board's CPD standard requires registered pharmacists to complete CPD activities that have an aggregate value of 40 or more CPD credits during each 12 month CPD period ending 30 September.

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These guidelines outline the specific requirements that must be met by pharmacists when undertaking CPD to meet the Board's minimum annual CPD requirements.

These guidelines detail the information that pharmacists must record when undertaking CPD to ensure they:

- meet the Board's CPD requirements when they apply to renew their registration¹, and
- maintain satisfactory records of the CPD they have undertaken, which they will need to provide to the Board during its audit of the registration standards, including the CPD standard.

These guidelines also specify the types and range of CPD activities pharmacists are required to undertake to meet the Board's annual CPD requirements for renewal of registration.

Guidelines

Learning and development occurs throughout a pharmacist's career. CPD is an important foundation of lifelong learning and assists pharmacists to maintain competence to practise.

In addition to complying with the Board's CPD standard and these guidelines, pharmacists should also meet the relevant requirements of the Board's *Code of conduct for pharmacists* outlined in Section 7 'Maintaining professional performance'.

1. Developing a continuing professional development plan and undertaking self-directed professional development

Pharmacists should review the current *National Competency Standards Framework for Pharmacists* in Australia to identify the competencies relevant to the role they perform and the services they provide (i.e. their scope of practice), and determine their professional development needs. They should set out a clear plan of activities they intend to undertake to meet their identified professional development needs.

¹ Pharmacists are required to include a declaration that they have complied with their CPD obligations with their application for registration renewal.

During the CPD period, pharmacists are encouraged to regularly review and amend if required, their continuing professional development plan (CPD plan) to ensure that their needs are being met and to incorporate additional needs which evolve. In addition to undertaking planned CPD activities as set out in the CPD plan, pharmacists may also undertake CPD activities that are unplanned as additional professional development needs arise, for example where a pharmacist is required to research an issue to support the care of an individual patient.

Maintaining an adequate record of activities enables pharmacists to review whether their chosen self-directed professional development activities have met their needs as outlined on their CPD plan.

Pharmacists should ensure that they meet the Board's CPD standard by:

- developing and maintaining their CPD plan
- selecting appropriate CPD activities to address the competencies identified in the CPD plan which are relevant to their scope of practice
- maintaining detailed records of activities undertaken, and
- ensuring that these records can be verified.

2. Accredited and non-accredited CPD

In order to meet the Board's CPD standard and CPD requirement for renewal of registration, pharmacists may choose to undertake accredited CPD activities offered by CPD providers.

As requested by the Board, the Australian Pharmacy Council authorises other organisations to accredit pharmacy CPD activities of CPD providers on their behalf. The Board acknowledges that pharmacists may not have access to accredited CPD activities across the various activity groups or that cover the entire scope of the practice of pharmacy as defined in the Board's CPD standard.

(Note: At this stage the Board has not set a mandatory requirement for a proportion of a pharmacist's CPD activities to be accredited CPD. However, it may choose to do so following a subsequent review of these guidelines).

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The accreditation of CPD activities provides an assurance to pharmacists that an activity has been reviewed for its educational quality and for its relevance to a pharmacist's practice.

When non-accredited activities are considered, it is the pharmacist's responsibility to assess potential activities for quality, suitability and relevance, and to determine whether these will address their individual professional development needs. Activities which are susceptible to commercial bias, such as sponsor-driven product detailing to pharmacists, are unlikely to be of sufficient quality to contribute towards meeting the requirements of the CPD registration standard.

3. Range of activities

The Board recommends that pharmacists undertake a variety of activity types and, where possible, choose across a range of CPD activity groups (Groups 1, 2 and 3 — see 'Definitions') and include interaction with peers. An activity undertaken in one CPD group may be linked to an activity in another CPD group in order to broaden exposure to different learning methods and achieve more varied and enhanced outcomes from CPD undertaken. The Board strongly suggests that pharmacists do not achieve all of the annual CPD credits required for renewal of registration from the one event or source (e.g. an annual conference).

At least 20 of the 40 CPD credits required to meet the Board's CPD registration standard must be achieved by undertaking Group 2 and/or Group 3 CPD activities (that is, a maximum of 20 CPD credits from Group 1 activities).

In determining the intellectual significance of a CPD activity, consideration should be given to its duration. Adequate time should be spent on a CPD activity to ensure consideration of material in suitable depth, which may vary depending on the nature of the topic pursued.

Pharmacists are reminded of their obligation to maintain competency in the two universal domains of the *National Competency Standards Framework for Pharmacists in Australia* endorsed by the Board – Domain 1 *Professional and ethical practice* and Domain 2 *Communication, collaboration and self-management*.

4. Records of CPD undertaken

Maintaining detailed and verifiable records for all CPD undertaken is the pharmacist's responsibility.

Records of CPD activity undertaken during the previous three full CPD periods should be kept, and must include details under all fields specified by the Board.

Records maintained by participants or by providers of CPD on behalf of participants must include details of CPD activities under the following fields when submitted by pharmacists who are audited by the Board.

Area identified requiring professional development (relevant competencies (standards and/or elements and/or performance criteria) from competency standards framework)
Start and finish date of activity
Source or provider details (e.g. journal name, provider name)
Type of activity (e.g. journal article, seminar, lecture, workshop)
Topics covered during activity (specify all topics covered)
Accreditation status (accredited or non-accredited)
CPD activity group (Group 1, 2 or 3)
How activity has impacted practice
Pharmacy Board of Australia CPD credits

Pharmacists may also be required to provide evidence of:

- their CPD plan that demonstrates the relevance of CPD activities undertaken to their scope of practice, and
- participation in CPD activities.

5. Temporary absence from practice

Before returning to practice after an absence, pharmacists have an obligation to assess what changes there have been to practice and what CPD they need to undertake to ensure that they are suitably prepared

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to return to practice. CPD activities for pharmacists returning to practice must be designed to maintain and update knowledge, clinical judgement and technical skills.

Pharmacists who practise for only part of a registration period have an obligation to ensure they remain up-to-date and competent to practise, and must meet the Board's CPD requirements. These pharmacists will be required to declare that they meet the requirements when they apply to renew their registration.

Pharmacists who are absent from practice for a period between one and three years are required to:

- complete a minimum of one year's quota of CPD activities relevant to the intended scope of practice prior to recommencing practice, as well as
- meet the requirements specified in the Board's Recency of practice registration standard.

An absence of more than three years is not regarded by the Board as a temporary absence. Such practitioners will be required to meet the requirements of the Board's Recency of practice registration standard and any supporting guidelines issued by the Board.

Definitions

The Board uses the following classification for CPD activities and allocated CPD credit levels.

Group 1: information accessed without assessment

Descriptor

didactic presentations, and activities with little or no attendee interaction

Examples

attending or listening to continuing professional development (CPD) presentations; attending Grand Rounds; attending conferences or seminars without interaction such as group work/case studies; reading journals without completion of a successful assessment; preparing and delivering teaching material to students or interns if this activity addresses your professional development needs; preparing for external review (e.g. Australian Council on Healthcare Standards, Quality

Care Pharmacy Program); researching an issue to support the care of an individual patient

CPD credits

one Pharmacy Board of Australia CPD credit per hour of activity

Group 2: knowledge or skills improved with assessment

Descriptor

activities where the participant's acquisition of knowledge or skills can be demonstrated, for example through successful completion of some form of assessment. The activities provide for the measurement of a participant's achievement of the professional development objectives and individual feedback on performance in assessments

Examples

undertaking assessment of CPD (e.g. multiple choice questions or other types of structured assessments related to online modules, education events or journal reading, with formal assessment which has a defined pass mark); gaining some form of credentialing by assessment or examination; undertaking formal postgraduate courses; participating in an interactive workshop; undertaking a case study (e.g. National Prescribing Service); researching and preparing an accredited learning activity; maintaining a log or journal in relation to an activity to demonstrate the achievement, problem management and knowledge acquired

CPD credits

two Pharmacy Board of Australia CPD credits per hour of activity

Group 3: quality or practice-improvement facilitated

Descriptor

activities where an assessment of existing practice (of an individual or within a pharmacy practice), and the needs and barriers to changes in this practice, is undertaken prior to the development of a particular activity. As a result, the activity addresses identified professional development needs with a reflection post-activity to evaluate practice change or outcomes resulting from the activity. Such an activity most likely will extend over a number of weeks or months.

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Examples

work undertaken for the presentation of a paper or poster at a conference or publication of an article in a peer-reviewed journal; providing the lead in workplace quality or practice improvement activities through an activity such as a drug utilisation review; having active involvement in a special interest group leading to demonstrated practice change; using information obtained from a CPD activity to facilitate quality or practice improvement e.g. a protocol identified through a CPD activity, implementing the protocol to improve practice and evaluating resulting practice change or outcomes.

CPD credits

three Pharmacy Board of Australia CPD credits per hour of activity

Continuing professional development is the means by which members of the profession maintain, improve and broaden their knowledge, expertise and competence, and develop the personal and professional qualities required throughout their professional lives.

A **continuing professional development plan (CPD plan)** is a pharmacist's individual plan of activities that they intend to undertake during a CPD period. It is devised through self-reflection against the *National Competency Standards Framework for Pharmacists in Australia*, and identification of knowledge gaps to be addressed through CPD. A CPD plan should be regularly reviewed and amended, for example to include additional needs as they arise, to ensure that professional development needs are being met.

A **co-regulatory jurisdiction** means a participating jurisdiction in which the National Law declares that the jurisdiction is not participating in the health, performance and conduct process provided by Divisions 3 to 12 of Part 8. Queensland and New South Wales are co-regulatory jurisdictions.

Practice means any role, whether remunerated or not, in which the individual uses their skills and knowledge as a pharmacist in their profession. For the purposes of this registration standard, practice is not restricted to the provision of direct clinical care. It also includes working in a direct non-clinical relationship with clients; working in management, administration, education, research,

advisory, regulatory or policy development roles; and any other roles that impact on safe, effective delivery of services in the profession.

Scope of practice means the professional role and services that an individual health practitioner is educated and competent to perform.

References

Pharmacy Board of Australia *Registration standard: Continuing professional development*

Pharmacy Board of Australia *Registration standard: Recency of practice*

Pharmacy Board of Australia *Code of Conduct for registered health practitioners*

Pharmacy Board of Australia *Frequently asked questions - continuing professional development*

Pharmacy Board of Australia *Frequently asked questions on continuing professional development for pharmacists and pharmacy interns*

National Competency Standards Framework for Pharmacists in Australia (current version)

Review

These guidelines will be reviewed at least every five years.

Last reviewed: 1 December 2015

These guidelines replace the previous guidelines dated 1 July 2010.