

CPD Frequently Asked Questions

We have produced the following guide to provide more information on the CPD process. Please let us know if you have any further questions – we would be pleased to add these (and responses of course!) to this guide – by email to gss.capability@statistics.gsi.gov.uk

1. Does the CPD policy apply to everyone or only junior grades?

The CPD policy has been formed as a set of guidelines for all members of the GSG including Assistant Statisticians (ASs) and Statistical Officers (StOs), Grade 6 and 7 Statisticians and statistician members of the SCS. All members of this group will be expected to comply with the policy and it will form part of their appraisal process. CPD log books will be examined by recruitment and promotion panels at all grades (see also FAQ 10). The principle of this policy may also be applied more widely within the GSS to others working in an analytical environment or in the production of National Statistics.

2. How different is this to Personal Development Plans (PDP)?

PDP is a tool used by many organisations for planning your learning activities each year. Once you have completed your learning you should transfer it to your CPD log book – which acts as a permanent record. PDP doesn't always pick up unplanned learning, so you will need to take account of that too. The log book will travel with you as you move from job to job so will serve as a useful record of your CPD throughout your career. Try to use the template supplied if possible.

3. What activities count as CPD?

If you are developing new knowledge or you are refreshing knowledge in any given situation it can be included. Relevant CPD activity may include:

- formal qualifications;
- short training courses;
- conferences;
- seminars, reading, web-learning;
- secondments;
- involvement in collaborative GSS initiatives;
- the acquisition of new statistical skills in order to advise others who may be leading on an application;
- articles written/submitted to publications, on the job learning;
- teaching/coaching – outside normal duties is also relevant (ie the development and presentation of new and revised material, or to new audiences).

4. What is meant by 'real' learning?

The key requirement with any activity listed in the log-book is 'real' learning. By 'real' learning we mean that the activity is not simply repeating existing knowledge or skills but is refreshing old knowledge and providing new insights, competences or learning. For example, if on a seven hour seminar, only four hours were providing new insights and three hours were covering ground you were already familiar with, only four hours should be recorded in the log-book.

5. Will your learning activities depend on the kind of post that you have?

Learning activities will vary according to post. Some posts which involve a high degree of mathematical statistics tend to generate more learning on the job and a number of learning hours can be built up this way. You should think short and long term – be expert at doing your current job, understanding the underlying principles and plan for the future.

6. What about more generalist learning – is this part of CPD?

Yes, it is also important to consider activities that enhance statisticians' generic development in acquiring and refining skills such as influencing, negotiating, decision making, strategic awareness, consultancy and so on. Participation in GSS wide initiatives such as fulfilling roles as international liaison officers, GSS conference organisers etc can all offer excellent opportunities to demonstrate and build on these skills. The GSS Competency Framework sits alongside new Civil Service Competency Framework, which details generic skills and experiences required at each level; statisticians aspiring for promotion should consider how they need to achieve the levels required for both statistical and generalist skills to reach higher grades.

**7. Can I record any learning that I have achieved before joining the GSG?
Only academic qualifications and formal courses attended e.g. MSc modules.**

8. Why should I do CPD? I've been at the same grade for x years and am not going to go for promotion so what's the point?

The world moves on and it is incumbent on you as a professional to keep your skills fully up to date. You will need them when you take on new work or change roles in the future. Consciously updating knowledge and skills leads to key benefits for you and it raises the capability of the GSS as a whole:

- it has a positive impact on job satisfaction, motivation, and greater professional pride;
- it helps to refine our specialist skills;
- it can confer professional recognition and enhance career prospects;
- it empowers individuals to take responsibility for their own development;
- it helps to bind the GSS together;

- it will be a management requirement of all Heads of Profession to check its practice in their statistical team.

9. Why should I fill in my log-book?

The purpose of the 'CPD Log Book' is:

- to keep a running tally of your CPD (planned and unplanned);
- to build a record to present to GSS Interview Boards;
- to help facilitate a discussion with your manager/mentor/HoP as a means of monitoring, evaluating and planning your learning and development. The development discussion should examine the effectiveness of your CPD over the past assessment period and inform your CPD plan for the next.

10. How will the log-book be used in recruitment/promotion panels?

The CPD log book is a compulsory part of the application process for statisticians and will form part of the sift criteria; those applying for jobs from outside the GSS and from other analytical professions will also be required to show evidence of CPD as part of the application process.

Your signed off log book will need to be presented to the selection panel each time you apply for a new job. If you cannot demonstrate that you are continuing your professional development to the required standard, then you may lose valuable sift marks and overall interview scores.

11. If people are not in competition with each other when compiling CPD, how will the information be used in recruitment?

The purpose of using CPD as part of the recruitment and selection process is to show that the person is committed to the learning and development process. You are not in competition with anybody else – learning should be specific to your needs. However, the 30 hours minimum requirement for statistical learning will be part of the assessment.

12. What is the role of my Head of Profession in relation to the CPD process?

As a professional, responsibility for completion of CPD primarily rests with you as an individual. Statistical Heads of Profession have however given certain undertakings to the National Statistician and these are set out in the HoP 'Roles and Responsibilities' document.

HoPs are committed to: maintain and improve the statistical competency of both the GSS and their organisation through recruitment, training and development; establish and promote a learning culture for all GSS staff within their organisation; champion the Continuous Professional Development Programme (CPD); and ensure access and opportunities for personal development are open to all.

13. My department doesn't have a lot of money for training, what can I do?

CPD is about far more than just attending formal training courses. Relevant CPD activity may include formal qualifications, short training courses, conferences, seminars, reading and on the job learning. Teaching/coaching - outside normal duties, is also relevant (i.e. the development and presentation of new and revised material, or to new audiences). HoPs can advise on shorter, more targeted statistical training that might be specific to particular departments – this could include training in a new area of expertise or refreshing previously acquired skills.

14. I'm finding it difficult to find time for learning and development and my manager isn't helping/doesn't seem to value CPD. What can I do?

Talk to your HoP or statistical mentor. All HoPs are mandated to introduce and manage the CPD policy within their departments. The role of managers/mentors/HoPs includes the monitoring, evaluation and endorsement of any professional development that is undertaken. They will also need to keep an eye on the running tally of CPD over a five year period to make sure the individual is making up for any periods of low statistical CPD activity.

15. When learning is signed off by a line manager what does this entail?

The line manager will endorse the learning event and comment on the impact, focussing in particular on the competencies developed and how the learning was used. The endorsement should also confirm that the hours completed reflect real learning i.e. learning that can be applied and reinforced in the individual's day to day role.

CPD log books, generally kept as an electronic record, should be printed off annually so that managers/mentors/HoPs and individuals can sign it off by hand. He or she should also confirm that a meaningful development review has taken place and that you are working towards filling out the 'level' appropriate to your career stage.

16. As a line manager, how can I be sure that the hours my staff are writing down in their log books are correct or that it's 'real' learning and development?

There needs to be an element of trust in any good working relationship. However it is important, when reviewing learning as part of the endorsement of the log book, that you are clear on how any planned and unplanned learning has made an impact on the day to day work of your staff member.

17. What happens if I am on secondment?

If you are working in a job outside of the statistical profession, then you will need to make sure that over a five year period you have achieved your 30 hours a year statistical learning. Talk to your statistical mentor about the best way to achieve this.

18. Please can you describe to me what the GSS expects statisticians on maternity leave / career breaks to do in the way of fulfilling the GSS CPD policy?

Those off for only a year or two should catch up quite quickly, e.g. they would catch up with their minimum statistical learning requirement by spreading the learning over four or three years.

Those who are away longer will have to effectively learn a new job on their return, so assuming they return to an analytical post they should be doing some stats CPD as part of learning their job.

You should also consider the following:

While away:

- Find and maintain contact with a statistical mentor who keeps in touch regularly. Most organisations will have generic 'keep in touch' procedures.
- Keep up to date with new statistical developments as best you can
- Attend the GSG Conference if possible (via your parent organisation)

On return:

- First year back complete 50 hours statistical learning to start the catch up process (using what you are learning for the new role to score on the CPD front)
- You will need to bear in mind that returners from a long absence will also have to catch up on quite a lot of general CPD.