Guidance on Continuing Professional Development
for Professional Degree Programs

Continuing professional development (CPD) is a specific model that fosters and supports self-directed lifelong learning. Individuals who adopt the CPD approach accept the responsibility to fully engage in and document their learning through reflecting on their practice, assessing and identifying professional learning needs and opportunities, developing and implementing a personal learning plan, and evaluating their learning outcomes with the goal of enhancing the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values required for their pharmacy practice.

The purpose of this document is to offer guidance on the components of the CPD model as well as the skills and behaviors needed in self-directed lifelong learning.

Definitions

Lifelong Learning: the ongoing process of active participation in formal and informal learning and professional development activities that assists in maintaining and enhancing competence, advancing professional practice, and supporting achievement of career goals.

Continuing Pharmacy Education (CPE): a structured educational activity designed or intended to support continuing development to maintain and enhance competence.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD): a self-directed, ongoing, systematic and outcomes-focused approach to lifelong learning that is applied into practice.

The Components of the CPD Approach (Refer to Figure 1)

- **Reflect** - Examining and considering personal knowledge skills, abilities, beliefs, biases, motivation and emotions that could enhance or limit performance, personal and professional growth. Reflection involves self-assessment or self-appraisal on personal and organizational needs and goals. The act of self-assessment involves observing, analyzing, and reflecting on performance, judging the degree to which it meets standards/criteria, and determining strategies for improvement.

- **Plan** - Designing a personal development plan to include both formal and informal learning activities to achieve intended outcomes. Planning involves the process of defining learning objectives, learning activities, required resources and measures of success, and articulating the plan with colleagues to support learning over an extended period of time.

- **Learn** - Putting the learning plan into action to meet identified needs and goals utilizing an appropriate range of learning activities and methods

- **Evaluate** – Assessing learning plan implementation and achievement of objectives by considering outcomes and impact. Evaluation involves regular review of progress, evaluation of learning successes, challenges and evidence of attainment or mastery.

- **Apply** – Bridging the classroom and the workplace. Application involves incorporating learned knowledge, skills, attitudes and values into practice.

- **Record and Review** (integral to all stages) - Documenting learning needs, learning objectives, learning plans and learning progress aligned with career goals. The record and review process facilitates identification and achievement of professional development through describing, analyzing, interpreting and evaluating the stages of CPD with the purpose of improving knowledge, skills and learning abilities.

- **Learning Portfolio (or CPD Portfolio):** a collection of material that records and reflects past experiences as well as present and planned activities in order to achieve identified future learning needs. It provides a mechanism for thinking about one's professional development in a planned and systematic way.

Figure 1: CPD Cycle

© 2014 ACPE
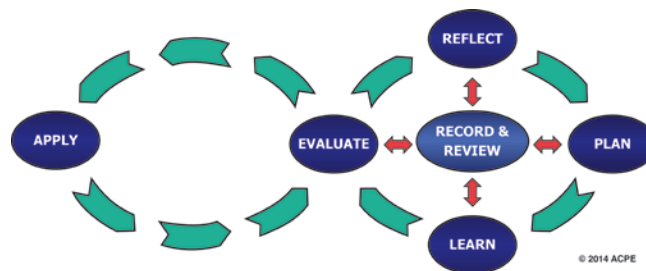
Guidance on Components of CPD

Skills/Behaviors for **Reflection** include:
- Identifying personal learning styles and preferences
- Identifying needs arising from an evolving health care system
- Identifying competencies for performing work responsibilities and professional needs
- Analyzing competency and/or performance gaps
- Demonstrating awareness of the importance of learning and commitment to continuing personal and professional development.
- Incorporating peer/expert assessment and observations
- Identifying and describing instances of learning

Skills/Behaviors for **Planning** include:
- Incorporating evidence from reflection (e.g. evaluations, surveys, feedback)
- Identifying goals and creating SMART objectives in order to achieve goals
- Establishing learning needs consistent with identified gaps
- Identifying learning activities and resources to meet objectives
- Identifying realistic time frames
- Reviewing learning plan for specificity and achievability
- Asking for and negotiating buy-in for the plan
- Surveying the environment to determine available learning resources

Skills/Behaviors for **Learning** include:
- Implementing a personal learning plan
- Actively synthesizing, analyzing, and assimilating information
- Personalizing learning for relevance to practice
- Engaging in cognitive processes reflective of taxonomies of learning
- Adapting to a wide variety of teaching methodologies

Skills/Behaviors for **Evaluation** include:
- Regularly analyzing and interpreting learning impact on performance and other relevant outcomes
- Evaluating learning with the purpose of improving knowledge, skills and learning abilities
- Regularly assessing opportunities for improvement in practice based on learning (e.g. commitment to change)
- Engaging peers in review of learning plans and evidence of success
- Articulating a future direction for learning, including specific goals that can be refined and addressed in future learning plans

Activities consistent with CPD may include but are not limited to:

Faculty/Staff
- Continuing education activities
- Academic coursework or postgraduate education
- Professional and scholarly meetings
- Conducting research
- Presentation and publication of scholarly works
- Officer/committee membership of school or professional organization
- Annual retreat or colloquium
- Faculty mentoring programs
- Performance reviews - goal setting/planning for coming year
- Peer teaching observation/feedback
- Creation and execution of teaching

Preceptors
- Continuing education activities
- Preceptor development seminars or other professional/scholarly meetings
- Academic coursework or postgraduate education
- Annual preceptor retreats
- Activities with students (e.g. journal club, case presentations, etc.)
- Development of rotation materials
- Mentoring and assisting with student projects
- Presentation and publication of scholarly works

<u>Students</u>
- Student government service committees
- Involvement in professional organizations (e.g. state, local, national)
- Involvement in areas of scholarship and research
- Seminars/electives related to personal and/or professional development (e.g. leadership, business etiquette, curriculum vitae development, communication skills)
- Career fairs
- Residency showcases/Poster sessions
- Community service, public health activities
- Strength assessments or reflective writing
- Video-recorded consultations with patients

Assessment of CPD Skills and Behaviors

Assessing the achievement of CPD skills and behaviors is essential. Documentation should be concise, clear, complete, and cohesive while supporting evidence of career goals, learning needs, objectives/plans, and progress. Tools (e.g. portfolios) used to support professional development are a valuable means to ascertain achievement of CPD-related competencies.