

Final Draft EFRS Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Recommendations and Guidance Notes

This document provides recommendations for Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for those practicing in the medical imaging / diagnostic, therapy and nuclear medicine branches of the profession of Radiography, encompassing multiple imaging modalities and the resultant distinct professional roles. The EFRS CPD recommendations aim to progress and support members within its profession. The principal goal is to provide recommended guidelines for Radiography CPD activity for consideration by state regulating bodies, as appropriate, and to support jurisdictions where state regulation and CPD considerations for Radiography are developing. These recommendations support the advancement of radiographers and improvement of clinical services for the benefit of the patient (Tables 1 & 2).

EFRS CPD Definition

The EFRS defines CPD as 'the continuous learning process required to maintain, develop and improve one's knowledge, skills and competences to work effectively and safely' [1]. CPD schemes support this continual process of skill development and maintenance. Considerable variation exists in both its interpretation and its application. Terminology such as: 'continuing education' and 'lifelong learning' are often used interchangeably with CPD in the published literature.

Background

It is now widely accepted that the knowledge and skills attained by healthcare professionals in their undergraduate training years provide a foundation for their career and that those knowledge and skills will be insufficient to fully support them in future years. Continuous changes to the evidence base and the continual technological advancements in Radiography result in potential gaps between 'best practice' and 'actual practice'. It is therefore crucial that healthcare professionals build upon the knowledge and skills gained at undergraduate level to ensure their practice is in line with what is considered best practice over time. This process is essential to ensure that patients receive the highest quality care from competently trained professionals.

Continuing Education

Continuing education (CE) beyond graduation is not a new concept. It is commonplace for regulatory bodies to demand compliance with a predefined benchmark, typically in terms of minimum 'credits' or hours which must be dedicated to continuing educational activities. 'Lifelong learning' is a concept which recognises that professional development is an ongoing and continuous process. It aims to approach continuing education in a more systematic and structured manner, encouraging critical reflection and autonomy whilst also recognising the value of the more spontaneous 'experiential learning' in both formal and informal context.

Continuous Professional Development

The primary objective of regulatory bodies is to safeguard the public by ensuring that those wishing to practise in any given discipline are competent to do so, by ensuring that they have attained at least the minimum specified standards. Competence therefore, can be viewed as a state of being and is concerned primarily with one's ability to carry out their role adequately. CPD on the other hand can be viewed as more of a holistic philosophy, with a much broader focus, which acknowledges the multifaceted nature of professional practice and emphasises the importance of personal as well as professional development. In this regard, CPD promotes professional excellence and can be viewed as a mechanism to achieving a state of competence by encouraging self-awareness and accountability.

CPD should align the goals of the individual with those of the organisation (clinical or academic) to effect positive change and enhance service provision for patients.

Why is CPD essential for Radiography?

- The profession and role of the radiographer has changed over the past number of decades due to significant technological developments to a far greater extent than many other professions, indeed Radiography remains subject to constant change. Therefore, Radiographers need to develop and acquire further knowledge throughout their working life.
- Radiographers secure quality and coherence in continuity of care through general knowledge, decisions, planning, guidance and cooperation across professions. Teamwork is a core aspect of daily work. The profession needs to ensure quality standards; this is of particular importance in the development of advanced practice roles for radiographers within multidisciplinary teams.
- Radiographers need to be competent with regard to quality assurance. They need to be able to communicate knowledge on radiography through radiographic practice, teaching, reflection, research and innovation in imaging and interventions, dose planning and radiation treatment, and, as a natural part of the development of the profession.
- Radiographers have the responsibility for patient care during examinations and treatments and need to ensure safe practice and a high level of quality of care to the patient.

European wide Radiography CPD activity

Within the European community there is a growing recognition among those practicing in the medical imaging/diagnostic, therapy and nuclear medicine branches of the profession of Radiography of the importance of CPD in providing an able and competent workforce. In a recent survey conducted by the European Federation of Radiographer Societies (EFRS), 91% of those professional bodies who responded believed there was value in developing a European CPD system providing a clear mandate for the development of this guidance document [2].

Review of Radiography focused CPD published literature

A systematic review of current literature to look at the evidence base was undertaken by the EFRS CPD working group in preparation of these recommendations [3]. Focus was upon commonalities across countries rather than discrepancies between CPD practices to attain an overall understanding of the key matters where common recommendations on CPD will be achieved. This form of data collection supports shared understandings and the promotion of good practice in a democratic way.

Table 1. EFRS Overarching CPD Recommendations & CPD Documentation

CPD Overarching Recommendations			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CPD activity must facilitate a range of options which respect to socioeconomic constraints by including recognised CPD activity which bears no financial cost to participants. CPD activity which bears financial cost is the personal choice of participants. 2. To ensure clarity of CPD relevance an initial section in the CPD records of individuals is required which outlines the participant’s current professional role. 3. Professional societies have a responsibility to provide CPD opportunities for their members: offerings with and without financial implication are recommended. 4. A flexible approach to CPD is recommended, a spectrum of potential activities is encouraged. 5. CPD activity can be credit or outcome based, a mixed model approach is recommended. The principle focus of the activity should be on the relevance of CPD activity to practice enhancement. 6. The participant needs to provide the justification for each CPD activity and evidence its’ alignment to their practice. 7. CPD opportunities offered by professional societies need to encompass the spectrum of imaging specialities in medical imaging and therapy so all participants have options relevant to their own practice. 8. CPD opportunities to promote “Work-Life Balance” principles are encouraged e.g. lunchtime journal clubs. 9. CPD activity planning needs to be realistic and aligned to local resources. CPD resourcing should involve communication between professional societies, clinical departments and academic partners. Collaboration in developing, enhancing and supporting CPD activity is recommended. 10. Professional societies, clinical departments and academic partners should promote and encourage CPD activity and develop appropriate mechanisms of incorporating CPD activity in appraisal/professional review processes. 			
CPD Documentation Recommendations			
Written Evidence	Format of Records	Review of Records	Archiving of Records
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A record of written evidence is required for CPD activity whether it is credit or outcome-based. 2. National language. 3. Word limits are 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Records should be kept using either mandatory templates or in a format that facilitates the required information. 2. Digital or hardcopy document file requirements need to be specified at national level in the case of state registration governance. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Audit of registered radiographers in jurisdictions where CPD is mandatory is supported and should be completed by random selection. 2. A team of reviewers is recommended for audit of individual portfolios and official reports are required. 3. In jurisdictions without 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Audited reports should be archived by the relevant professional society or the official regulating body. 2. Annual reporting of audit activity and compliance is recommended

<p>recommended for individual entries. Maximum of 1,000 words per entry.</p> <p>4. Typed text formatting.</p> <p>5. Scanned certificates are recommended as acceptable.</p> <p>6. A minimum of one CPD entry in every three month period is advised.</p>	<p>3. Formal national CPD guidelines should be provided for referral.</p> <p>4. Critical self-reflection is included in all CPD entries.</p>	<p>mandatory state regulation professional or employer oversight is recommended e.g. CPD review as part of staff appraisal in the workplace.</p>	<p>as appropriate.</p> <p>3. Feedback/feed-forward reports should be made available to radiographers audited.</p> <p>4. Individuals need to maintain their CPD records for each CPD audit period.</p> <p>5. CPD review performed in the workplace should be archived by line managers locally.</p>
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Table 2. EFRS Recommended CPD Content

CPD Content Recommendations			
Patient	Individual	Service	Profession
<p><u>Plan and Discuss:</u></p> <p>Motivation for activity focussing on how patient examinations/treatments/care will be enhanced.</p>	<p>Personal motivation for undertaking the CPD activity.</p>	<p>How the activity will benefit the imaging service provided.</p>	<p>The benefit gained for the profession.</p>
<p><u>State:</u></p> <p>How the knowledge, skills or competences gained will benefit the patient.</p>	<p>How the knowledge skills or competencies involved in the activity improve personal practice.</p>	<p>How the impact on personal practice benefits the imaging service provided.</p>	<p>Positive outcomes for the profession.</p>
<p><u>Reflect:</u></p> <p>On how the activity has impacted on professional behaviour or perceptions when interacting with patients.</p>	<p>On any changes in professional practice upon completion of the CPD activity.</p>	<p>On how changes in behaviour/perceptions have impacted upon the imaging service provided.</p>	<p>On outcomes/impact for the profession.</p>
<p><u>Comment:</u></p> <p>On the format of CPD activity and its appropriateness for the aims of the CPD activity and the suitability of the learning space used e.g. case study review in clinical department; formal course in an educational institution; journal reading at home.</p>	<p>On why this model of CPD activity was selected and justify the appropriateness. Include drivers e.g. flexibility of activity undertaken, low cost and barriers e.g. cost, access to resources etc.</p>	<p>On how the imaging service supported the activity and what further steps could be taken to improve support mechanisms.</p>	<p>On how the profession supported the activity and what further steps could be taken to improve support mechanisms.</p>
<p><u>Consider:</u></p> <p>How alternative forms of CPD would support similar outcomes in relation to patient examination/treatment/care. Include a reflection of any perceived barriers to alternate forms of activity.</p>	<p>How your CPD activity is meeting a multi modal and model approach and whether there are barriers preventing potential diversity and why.</p>	<p>How your imaging department could support diversity in your approach to CPD.</p>	<p>How your professional society could approach diversity in your approach to CPD.</p>

EFRS CPD additional notes:

1. The effectiveness of CPD should be measurable in terms of its outcomes, the measurement of success may often be anecdotal rather than quantitative.
2. Benefits have been cited in the literature in having several modes of CPD activity running alongside one another for better learning outcomes. Therefore, it is recommended that CPD should come from a range of activities such as: self-reflection, workshops, patient testimonials, service user testimonials, courses, study days, accredited learning provided by educational institutions, research and audit.
3. A range of learning 'spaces'; such as workplace experiential learning (on-the-job), home and academic arenas are recommended. There is debate concerning the ideal 'space' for learning with no definitive answer; a standardising approach is therefore unadvised.
4. Achievement of an appropriate work life balance is important and where possible a proportion of CPD opportunities should be made available during working hours by the employing institution with protected CPD time assigned to work schedules. Financially supported offerings should also be available from the profession on an annual basis and these offerings should encompass the needs of all branches of the profession.
5. Professional societies need to develop strategic plans in relation to CPD and give consideration to how communication and technology resources can be optimised to support CPD activity nationally. Additionally, collaboration between the clinical managers and educators to support CPD should be evident within each country.
6. It is recommended that evidence of CPD activity in the form of a CPD portfolio forms part of staff recruitment, promotion and performance appraisal processes within clinical and/or educational institutions for professionals practicing with the profession of Radiography.

Summary

The primary feature of CPD activity should be the resulting impact - on patients, the service, the profession, and the individual; with all stakeholders working in partnership. CPD activity must be flexible/multi-modal to support a dynamic and growing workforce. All stakeholders should utilise communication and technology resources and make efforts to improve collaboration between the management, regulators and educators to support radiographers to develop meaningful CPD.

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