

The Dos and Don'ts of writing a CPD cycle

CPD cycles are made up of 4 sections – **Reflection**, **Planning**, **Action** and **Evaluation** covered by **six criteria**. **All criteria are essential** and must be completed successfully for the cycle to meet the required standard. All sections are interdependent and do not stand alone.

Tell the story of your learning in each cycle:

- Specifically, what did I need to learn?
- Why did I need to learn it?
- What did I plan to do to meet the learning needs?
- Explain my activities to meet the learning needs
- Summarise what I have learnt from all my learning needs
- Reflect on my learning and explain with examples how I put it into practice currently or in the future.

Reflection

Criterion 1

- Make a statement of learning intent.
- Record the specific learning need/s.

Criterion 2

- Record how it/they was/were identified by contextualising how the learning need came about.

Planning

Criterion 3

- Plan an activity to meet learning need.
- Set realistic, appropriate and achievable objectives.
- Don't overcomplicate and try to do too much.
- Make the learning time limited and provide a planned completion date.

Action

Criterion 4

- Provide a summary of what was learned during each learning activity,
- Include examples of personal learning.
- Clear examples to show a sufficient depth of learning and understanding.

Evaluation

Criterion 5

- Evaluate if learning needs have been met and whether practice has changed or will change.
- Give specific examples of the impact of the CPD learning on professional practice either now or at some stage in the future.

Criterion 6

- Ensure you have correctly selected current or future practice based on information provided in criterion 5
- Ensure you have mapped your learning needs throughout reflection, planning, action and evaluation i.e. did you tell the story from start to finish?

Reflection

1. I identified the following specific learning need(s)... (500 word maximum)

Here you should make a clear statement of learning intent and record the specific learning need/s

Checklist:

- Did I make a clear statement of learning intent?
- Was I specific in identifying my learning needs? (doing this correctly provides focus to complete planning, action and evaluation stages)
- Did I break big topics into smaller, achievable pieces of learning?
- Did I ensure my learning needs were specific, precise, succinct and measurable?
- Did I avoid using ONLY verbs such as 'review', 'update', or 'learn about'? Clearly state your specific learning needs. *Example – I need to learn more about Jext, an adrenaline auto injector device. Specifically, I need to learn: 1. What is the therapeutic dose of adrenaline in a Jext device? 2. What is the technique used to administer a Jext device, how should it be stored and what is the shelf life?*
- Did I avoid making ambiguous statements such as 'the main issue', 'the latest development,' etc followed by a non-specific statement?
- Did I include details here of why I wanted to learn and how I identified the learning need? This should not be added here and should be added to the planning stage (Criterion 2)

2. I wanted to learn about this because (give context for learning activity / activities) ... (500 word maximum)

Here you must record how the learning need/s was/were identified by contextualising how your learning need/s came about.

Checklist:

- Did I contextualise my learning with a clear trigger/prompt for the learning need, recording how the learning need was identified? (You must give a clear explanation of why you wanted to learn and how the need was identified).
- Did I include my learning needs in this section? They should appear above in criterion 1
- Did I avoid using phrases like 'I feel I need to know more about...' or similar without a further explanation?

Planning

3. I plan/planned to complete the following learning activity/activities to meet the identified learning need(s). (Please describe the learning activity/activities and the planned completion date(s)).

In this section you must plan an activity or activities to meet the learning need/s that you identified in criterion 1.

Checklist:

- Did I plan an appropriate activity or activities to meet the learning need/s identified in Criterion 1?
- Did I clearly document all learning activities I plan to undertake?
- Did my activity or activities address all the learning needs?
- Did I provide an achievable completion date for the learning and record this date?
- Did I set realistic, appropriate and realistic objectives?
- Did I provide full details of the learning activity to allow the assessor to source the learning independently? Avoid using generic vague planned activities such as 'a workshop/course/article'.
- Did I overcomplicate and try to do too much? For example, diabetes is a large area to address and rather than many learning needs covering almost everything to do with this subject area you should consider a smaller more manageable chunk of learning.
- Did I avoid including details of an activity that would be undertaken because of the CPD learning e.g. delivering training, writing an SOP? For example, attending a course is the learning activity. Taking your learning back to the workplace and training your staff is application of the learning and should not therefore be included under planning. All instances where you applied your learning should be included in the evaluation stage where you demonstrate how you put your planning into practice.
- Did I include a vague piece of learning with no further detail in the planning stage or elsewhere in the cycle?

Action

4. In meeting the identified learning need(s), I completed the following learning activity/activities

In the action stage you must provide details of all learning activities in the activity table

Checklist:

- Did I populate all fields in the activity table relating to title of learning activity date, time and evidence.
- Did I record N/A in the evidence section? This is not acceptable and does not meet standard
- Did I record the form of evidence in the evidence section e.g. certificate? (The uploading of evidence is currently optional)
- Did I keep a copy of my evidence should the assessor ask for this to be submitted?
- Did I provide full details relating to each learning activity that would allow the assessor to source the activity? 'Online course' or 'article on the internet' without reference to the source is unacceptable.
- Did I claim CPD hours for an activity that is an application of learning? As noted above in the planning checklist (criterion 2), all application of learning must be in the evaluation stage. They should not be included as an activity in the action list of activities undertaken. As these activities are not learning these hours will be deducted from the total hours claimed in the cycle.
- Did I include completing a test or assessment e.g. an MCQ? Again, this is applying your learning after the learning has been completed. This should be included in the evaluation stage. These hours will be deducted from the total cycle hours. NICPLD courses end by asking you to complete MCQs and you should not make reference to them here. You can refer to them in the evaluation stage but alongside other evidence of how you put your learning into practice now or in the future.

Summary of what has been learned in relation to the identified learning need(s)

(500 word maximum)

Here you must provide a summary of what you have learnt relating to each specific learning need and associated planned activity.

Checklist:

- Did I provide a specific summary, with examples? The summary must provide detail on **each** specific identified learning need and associated planned activity in criterion 1 and criterion 2
- Was my summary of learning of sufficient content to show depth of learning to justify the hours claimed?
- Did I include broad generic statements of what I learned without going into specifics? For example you record "*I was able to competently explain and demonstrate to the patient how to correctly use the Jext device when he/she came to collect them*". This is insufficient and you must elaborate further and show you can apply your learning by explaining what you did. Follow this up with wording such as "*I was able to explain Jext is administered at a right angle into the thigh and held for 10 seconds until a click is heard. If required a second dose should be used 5-15 mins after initial dose. It has a shelf life of 18 months and so patients need to renew their prescriptions for Jext every 18 months.*"
- Did I provide a summary of learning with insufficient depth to show I completed the learning?
- Did I provide details of what I have learnt? You must not copy and paste learning outcomes of a course, workshop etc into your cycle.

Evaluation

5. Having met the specific learning need(s) identified, my practice has changed or will change as follows: (500 word maximum)

In the evaluation stage you should reflect on your learning and explain how learning needs have been met and whether practice has changed or will change.

Give specific examples of the impact of the CPD learning on professional practice either now or at some stage in the future.

Checklist:

- Did I specifically provide details of clear application of what I learnt?
- Did I provide a clear example of how learning has been implemented or will be implemented or how practice has changed or will change?
- Does my example/s provide a depth of learning which clearly shows an impact on my practice?
- Did I mention implementing or how I will implement learning nor previously referenced in reflection or action stages? (If so, this is unacceptable).
- Did I avoid using phrases like 'I feel that I can now' with no justification of why I feel that way?
- Did I avoid using generic statements relating to practice without details of when and how they apply?
- Did I tick I have applied my learning already in practice, but the wording indicates it applies to future practice e.g. 'I will'? Registrants must accurately tick the correct box. The opposite is also true in relation to future practice. A maximum of 25% of cycles can be future practice. Any more than this and the portfolio does not meet standard. There is no stipulation that you must provide 25% of cycles related to future practice however you must not do more than 25%.

6. I confirm that the identified learning need(s) has/have been fully addressed in this CPD cycle

Your selection of "direct" or "simulated/future" evaluation (tick boxes) must reflect the application of your learning described in 5 above.

This CPD cycle has been directly evaluated within my current practice and environment (minimum of 75% of cycles submitted) Tick as appropriate.

Checklist:

- Did I clearly identify specific learning needs in Criterion 1? (If not, you cannot demonstrate what learning needs you have met and therefore your learning needs have not been fully addressed and cycle does not meet standard?).
- Did I correctly tick when the cycle was evaluated? Current or future practice?
- Did I clearly map all my learning needs through reflection, planning action and evaluation stages? To meet standard, you must map at least one learning need through all four stages of the cycle and all learning needs through the action stage, including summary of learning.

Further information

At the start of each cycle, you will be asked to select the following and you should select appropriately:

- Is your cycle is scheduled or unscheduled?
- Is this learning activity within my current scope of practice? This is an area requiring great care. Current practice refers to the current time period in which you are applying your learning.
- Is this learning activity relevant to the safe and effective practice of pharmacy? A small number of cycles will not specifically relate directly to the safe and effective practice of pharmacy e.g. you carry out fire warden training in an academic setting. There are no issues with selecting 'no' in instances like this.

At the end of each cycle, you are asked to select your area of practice, as follows

- Community
- Pharmacy Prescriber
- Primary Care / Practice
- Training
- Hospital
- Industry
- Academia
- Other

You will also be asked to respond Yes or No to the following two statements:

- I have recently returned to practice within the last 12 months – select 'yes' here in each cycle if you have returned to practice within the last 12 months. This does not only mean when you have been out of the workforce for a period and return, but also if you have returned to work after maternity leave, longer period of illness etc. If you have been granted an extenuating circumstance for the previous CPD period, then this should indicate you need to declare 'yes'.
- I have changed my scope of practice within the last 12 months. You must select yes or no in each cycle. For example, you may be changing your employer which is also a change in your scope of practice. If you are including a cycle which relates to your new work role then you must record this correctly. A pharmacist who changes job role from one sector to another through the CPD year is expected to provide a range of cycles to reflect both job roles e.g. moving midway through the CPD year from GPP to hospital pharmacy will require cycles relating to both these sectors to demonstrate learning, understanding and application.