ROYAL STATISTICAL SOCIETY

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

POLICY, GUIDANCE NOTES & HISTORY

Version January 2023

INTRODUCTION

This document will take you through the RSS continuing professional development (CPD) policy, guidance notes and history of its introduction.

Currently CPD is required in four main circumstances:

- Applications for Data Analyst

- Applications for Graduate Statistician (GradStat) made via the competency-based route only

- Applications for Chartered Statistician (CStat) made via both the standard and competency-based routes

- Revalidation of the CStat award – usually required when a CStat holder is selected for audit.

As of April 2020 all members of the RSS have access to the RSS CPD recording tool located within the MyRSS section of the website. Whilst this or the CPD Activity Summary Word document are the suggested methods of recording and submitting CPD to the RSS, it is not a requirement.

CPD POLICY

It is important, for the development of the profession and the maintenance of modern standards, that all practising statisticians should view CPD as a vital part of their personal review process. CPD enhances the credibility of the profession. The Royal Statistical Society encourages all its members, and requires its professionally qualified members, to follow a process of continuous professional review through CPD. The Society provides guidelines on minimum targets at which to aim.

In January 2012 the Society announced to the membership, through an article in *RSSNews*, that holders of Chartered Statistician (CStat) status (including Members and Fellows of the Institute of Statisticians (MIS and FIS) – this applies throughout this document), the introduction of revalidation for the Chartered Statistician, replacing the previous voluntarily requested Maintained Professional Certificate (MPC).

In 2022, the Professional Affairs Committee (PAC) agreed to move away from the five-yearly revalidation requirement for CStat holders. From January 2023, the new model will see a percentage (higher than 1% but no more than 5%) of those CStat holders listed as professionally active selected at random to be revalidated and their submissions audited.

The revalidation process for Chartered Statisticians will require them to provide confirmation and/or evidence of being professionally active and complying with the Society's Code of Conduct and CPD Policy.

As well as revalidation, CPD is also one of the requirements for those members applying for the following categories of professional membership of the RSS:

- **Data Analyst** – a minimum of 30 hours is required within 1 year.

- **Graduate Statistician (GradStat)** made via the competency-based route only – a minimum of 60 hours is required per year for a minimum of 2 years

- **Chartered Statistician (CStat)** made via both the standard and competency-based routes – a minimum of 60 hours is required per year for a minimum of 2 years

The Society defines CPD as follows.

> **CPD is the systematic maintenance, improvement and broadening of knowledge and skill and the development of personal qualities necessary for the execution of professional and technical duties throughout the practitioner's working life.**

The Society believes that:

1. CPD should be a key part of a professional statistician's work ethic;

2. CPD means the development of the "whole person" – statistical and non-statistical, technical and personal;

3. CPD evaluation is essentially a self-assessment process.

CPD is defined in five categories. **Definitions and illustrations of these categories are given in Appendix 1**. The categories are as follows.

1. Work based learning

2. Professional activity

3. Formal / educational

4. Self-directed learning

5. Other

The Society's Policy requires an annual CPD profile of **at least 60 "learning hours" (30 if applying for Data Analyst)** of CPD covering **at least three*** of the above categories, where

$$\text{Learning Hours} = (\text{Actual Hours}) \times (\text{"CPD Value", in range } 0\text{-}1).$$

"CPD Value" is a *personal* assessment of the value of the activity to the individual. Different individuals are likely to gain different benefits from the *same* activity, let alone from different ones. As the assessment is *personal*, the Society will not require details of how it is determined[**].

Practising statisticians engage in a very wide range of activities. Some are obviously statistical; others may be less obviously so. *All* CPD regarded as falling under the Policy should be germane to the person's development as a statistician and it should *all* enable the person to be more effective as a professional statistician to employers or clients; even non-statistical CPD must focus on ability to function as a professional statistician or as a manager of statisticians.

The Society expects that most practising statisticians will ***readily*** find that their CPD activities comfortably exceed the minimum requirements. This includes people who are managing statistical units, and also people such as senior general managers who have previously been active professional statisticians. The Society believes that statisticians are particularly well equipped to fulfil managerial roles, and to use effectively their skills in distilling numerical information for use in any decision making process. As such, managerial CPD can be seen as developing statistical skills.

It is however appreciated that there may be particular years where attainment of the minima is, for various good reasons, not achievable. This may well occur in the case of career breaks, and may also exceptionally occur in other circumstances. Provided that a reasonable level of CPD is undertaken each year, that the overall average continues to exceed the minimum, and that an explanation is given for fluctuations, the Society will take a reasonable approach towards accommodating such CPD profiles.

[*]In **exceptional** circumstances, the Society will be content with coverage of only two categories. It is stressed that this will be **exceptional** and must be fully justified.

[**]As an illustration, a 2-day (say 15-hour) training course might actually score 15 "learning hours" for an individual for whom this is a new and relevant topic, whilst a 5 day conference where only 2 days of it could honestly be regarded as "new and developmental" would also score 15.

Recording CPD

Maintenance of CPD records is an important feature of the CPD Policy - not viewed as an unnecessary imposed bureaucratic requirement, but as a normal part of good practice in professional life. Many employers already expect this, often as part of annual appraisal and goal-setting processes. Whether this is the case or not for a practicing statistician, the Society believes it is useful to maintain a "CPD diary" to keep track of CPD activities being undertaken.

To assist members to plan their CPD programme and record activities the Society introduced in April 2020 an online CPD recording tool available for all members that can be accessed via the MyRSS section of the website. There is no obligation to use this particular recording tool for maintaining detailed records – it is offered as a service to those who wish to use it. For those already maintaining records elsewhere, perhaps on a system provided by their employer, they may continue to do so – it is not the intention to ask for unnecessary duplication of effort.

However, the RSS online CPD system is user-friendly, integrated system that not only allows activities to be recorded but also provides reports that summarise the number of learning hours, the categorisation of activities and the benefits gained. It also provides the facility to store supporting documents (referred to as 'resources' in the online system) that form part of the CPD portfolio of information. The Society strongly commends the RSS online CPD system for consideration.

For those who might prefer a 'light-touch' method of recording their CPD activities, the MSWord table 'CPD Activity Summary' might be considered useful. Please see Appendix 2 of this document to see the format of this table. If this option is chosen, then other supporting materials would need to be held separately. An MSWord version of the table 'CPD Activity Summary' can be downloaded from the website here.

Both the online CPD system and the MSWord table demonstrate the importance placed by the Society on reflective practice; that is assessing the benefit of the CPD activities to the development of skills and knowledge and the enhancement of delivery to employers or clients. This helps to ensure that CPD activities are directed at improving performance in the current role and/or supporting career progression.

Whilst not being prescriptive about the system to be used to record CPD activities, if the RSS online CPD system is not being used, it may be necessary to supplement the report produced by the system that is used in order to demonstrate compliance with the Society's CPD Policy. For example, if the categorisation of activities and the number of learning hours are not already included in the activity report from the CPD system routinely used, it may be necessary to additionally produce the following summary table:

CPD Summary Name:	Period:
Category of activity	**Number of learning hours**
Work-based learning	
Professional activity	
Formal/educational	
Self-directed learning	
Other	
TOTAL	

GUIDANCE NOTES: RECORDING CPD

The following guidance notes have been developed from a review of the CPD submissions made as part of the Chartered Scientist revalidation process carried out during 2011. These CPD submissions include those made by CSci holders who were audited and also by those not selected for audit. There were many examples of good practice, but there were also examples which suggested that further clarifying guidance would be helpful on a number of aspects of the CPD Policy of the Society. It is hoped that the below points will aid understanding of the CPD Policy of the Society.

Key information to be captured in a CPD summary

Although the Society is not prescriptive about the approach or system to be used to record CPD activities and provide periodic summaries, there is certain information that is required to be included in the summary. For a 12-month summary it should be clear that at least 60 learning hours of CPD have been undertaken and that the activities cover at least 3 of the 5 categories. Thus if the summary from the system being used does not include this information it will be necessary to provide an additional mapping of activities to categories and provide a table such as the one below:

Category of activity	Total number of learning hours for activities in category
Work based learning	
Professional activity	
Formal/educational	
Self-directed learning	
Other	
TOTAL	

Categorisation of activities

In the Society's CPD Policy a very broad view is taken of what constitutes a CPD activity. In order to emphasise this breadth, activities are split into 5 categories; work based learning, professional activities, formal/educational, self-directed learning and other. Definitions of these categories, and examples of activities that fall in them, is provided as an appendix to the CPD Policy (which can be downloaded at www.rss.org.uk/cpd). There are situations when a case can be made for a particular activity falling into more than one category. In these situations, simply select the category that has the best rationale (given the definitions in the Policy document).

At least 3 out of 5 categories

The Policy indicates that activities should cover at least 3 of the 5 categories in any 12-month period. This is to ensure that a breadth of development activities are undertaken in order to support the overall professional development of a practicing statistician. For example, a statistician working in academia whose work includes research, teaching, consultancy and administrative duties should pay attention to all these aspects of his/her role when considering development planning and the programme of CPD activities to support it. Such a breadth of consideration would normally lead to at least 3 of the categories being covered over a 12-month period.

Exceptionally 2 categories

The Policy also includes the caveat that exceptionally 2 categories will suffice. This is intended to cover the situation where the scope of professional work is somewhat limited or when circumstances preclude certain types of activity being undertaken (e.g. due to lack of mobility or financial constraints). This would include the case when someone is professionally active on only a part-time basis (e.g. when returning from a career break or when semi-retired). However, as the Policy states, the circumstances are exceptional when these situations lead to limitations in the scope of CPD activities being undertaken and need to be justified.

Work based learning

Work based learning is the category that is often misunderstood; particularly the distinction between 'work based learning' and 'just doing the job'. Typically in every job role there is an element of work based learning; a natural part of most jobs is coming across new situations where an element of learning needs to take place in order to complete the task. (For the full scope of activities falling in this category, see the appendix to the CPD Policy.) However, every part of 'doing the job' does not necessarily have a learning component and those that do are most often not 100% learning activities. Hence the concept of 'learning hours' in the Policy is useful in appropriately recording the extent to which the activity is a learning activity and so can be appropriately weighted.

Learning hours

The concept of learning hours in the CPD Policy is intended to recognise that the learning value of any particular activity (in whatever category) depends on the nature of the activity and its value to the individual. For example, experiential learning (i.e. learning by doing the job) typically occurs in activities that are not 100% learning in nature. As another example, typically only part of the time attending a conference is a genuine learning experience. To cater for this the Policy uses the concept of learning hours and uses the following definition:

Learning Hours = (Actual Hours) × ("CPD Value", in range 0−1).

"CPD Value" is a *personal* assessment of the learning value of the activity to the individual. Determining the CPD value is not a precise science; all that is required is a reasonable and honest assessment of the learning value of the activity to the individual.

Minimum requirement of 60 learning hours in a 12-month period*

The Society's CPD Policy requires a minimum of 60 learning hours per 12-month period. There has been a move away from so called 'input measures' in CPD schemes, such as counting the number of hours CPD undertaken. However, the use of learning hours in the RSS scheme, rather than actual hours, moves away from just counting time committed to activities; placing emphasis on the learning value of the time committed (i.e. an 'output measure').

Generally speaking, most practicing statisticians who are actively managing their professional development and career progression far exceed the minimum requirement of 60 learning hours. The same is also true of those moving into more focused roles in semi-retirement, where time needs to be spent keeping abreast of recent developments and the current 'business' environment so that experience and expertise can be applied in the most relevant and effective way.

 *the minimum is 30 hours within 1 year if applying for Data Analyst

Reflective practice

The assessment of learning hours requires some reflection on the value of an activity as a learning experience. When carrying out this reflection it is advisable to consider both how the activity has helped develop skills and knowledge to improve professional practice; and also how the activity has improved the delivery of services to your employer or client.

If such reflection of outcome or benefit is documented at the activity level it provides useful information that can be combined to make a periodic assessment of the overall value of a programme of CPD activities in advancing performance in the current job role and/or achieving longer term career progression. Such information is valuable input to an employer's appraisal process, leading to goal setting for the next period which will help define the activities that would be valuable to undertake over the next period. This ensures that CPD activities are an integral part of performance improvement and career progression.

CPD to support professional activity

Professional activity may be technical or managerial, part-time or full-time, paid or unpaid. The term 'being professionally active' is loosely defined to include carrying out roles that require the application of skills and knowledge developed during an education and career as a professional statistician. What is important is that the CPD currently being undertaken as a professional statistician is relevant to maintaining and/or enhancing performance in the current role or to preparing for roles that may be aspired to.

Description of CPD activities

It is important that the description of activities presented in a CPD summary is sufficiently detailed to enable a reviewer to fully understand the nature of the activity and be able to appreciate its relevance to the current job role or to future career aspirations. To this end, it is important to avoid or explain acronyms. Also ensure that activities are sufficiently granular to enable a specific description to be given. For example, 'carrying out research' is too nebulous a description and such an activity needs to be broken down into its components, each of which may have a different outcome or benefit. For example, the above example may be broken down into the following activities; 'carrying out a literature review of xyz', 'networking with collaborators on xyz', 'developing methodology to analyse data arising from situation xyz' and/or 'preparing a publication entitled xyz for journal abc'.

APPENDIX 1 ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE CPD CATEGORIES

The Royal Statistical Society CPD policy

The CPD policy of the Society takes a broad view of what constitutes CPD consistent with the following definition.

> *CPD is the systematic maintenance, improvement and broadening of knowledge and skill and the development of personal qualities necessary for the execution of professional and technical duties throughout the practitioner's working life.*

For statisticians, CPD is targeted at the development of competency in the following areas, together with the use of tools (e.g. computer software) to implement the acquired knowledge and skill.

Problem formulation and design

Collection and organisation of data

Modelling and analysis

Presenting, reporting, interpreting

Professional skills

The CPD policy describes CPD evaluation as a self-assessment process from the point of view that the number of "learning hours" of professional development is determined by the individual from the actual number of hours committed to the learning activity and the CPD value of the activity for the individual. The RSS CPD policy sets a requirement for at least 60 learning hours of CPD activity per annum. The policy also encourages reflective practice (i.e. individuals to assess the outcome and benefit of CPD activities to their professional practice).

CPD activities are allocated to one of the following five categories, with a requirement to undertake activities in at least three categories (exceptionally two categories) during each 12month period.

1. Work based learning

2. Professional activity

3. Formal / educational

4. Self-directed learning

5. Other

Detailed elaboration of how these categories are defined is provided below:
Work based learning

Work based learning is professional development that takes place by fulfilling the current job role. Such development naturally takes place as experience is gained in the role, greater independence and responsibility is given, and the complexity and scope of work undertaken increases.

Work based learning also includes in-house learning activities and development opportunities that are provided by the employer as part of staff orientation and development in support of organisational performance and objectives.

Worked based learning – examples:

- Experiential learning: learning by doing the job – gaining, and learning from, experience – expanding role

- In-service training – includes orientation programs, standard operating procedures and employee development

- Receiving coaching from others

- Work shadowing

- Peer review of own work, including presentations to colleagues

- Review of case studies and literature

- Participating in journal club

- Discussions with colleagues – idea generation, problem solving, etc

- Presentations to external clients, regulators, policy makers

- Supervising colleagues or students

- Job rotation, secondments, sabbaticals

- Involvement in the wider work of employer – beyond scope of role

- Post-mortem and lessons-learnt activities following significant projects, events

- Requesting and analysing feedback on performance from colleagues, clients

- Participating in the employer's performance appraisal and goal setting process
  Professional activity

Professional activities that support professional development include participating in the management and organisation of a professional body; and also participating in activities that develop the professional skills and knowledge of other professionals, and participating in activities that apply statistical expertise in the wider community.

Professional activity – examples:

- Involvement in the management of a professional body – officer, organiser, committee member, working group member

- Organiser of a conference, scientific meeting or course

- Being an examiner

- Being a referee for a journal

- Supervisor of research

- Membership of a technical expert group – e.g. special interest group, section or study group

- Being an expert witness

- Lecturing or teaching (new material)

- Giving presentations or being a discussant at conferences or scientific meetings

- Networking with professionals in other organisations

- Coaching or mentoring

Formal / educational

Formal/educational professional development includes the participation in activities that lead to gaining academic/professional qualifications and the attendance at structured learning activities organised by professional bodies, learned societies or training providers; and also the preparation of papers, articles or presentations for a professional audience.

Formal / educational – examples:

- Undertaking a programme of learning or research for an academic qualification

- Attending training courses

- Attending conferences or scientific meetings

- Undertaking distance learning or e-learning activities

- Reading to understand the legal and/or regulatory framework for professional work

- Maintaining or developing specialist skills

- Writing articles or papers

- Preparing presentations for conferences or scientific meetings

- Preparing material for training courses

Self-directed learning

Self-directed learning takes place when the individual takes the initiative in diagnosing learning needs, formulating learning goals, designing learning experiences, identifying and using human and material resources and evaluating learning outcomes.

Self-directed learning – examples:

- Reading books, journals and articles

- Reviewing and summarising books and articles

- Upgrading knowledge through internet searches and the use of electronic information sources

- Reflective practice – assessing benefit of CPD activities to self, client or employer – identifying next steps

<u>Other</u>

Activities which do not require statistical expertise, but which help develop transferable skills and gain experiences that are valuable in the current professional role or in future career directions. These would include involvement in strategic activities for the employer; and activities carried on outside of professional life.

Other – examples:

- Strategic thinking (e.g. projects for employers such as organisational restructuring, strategic planning and resourcing, external/community relations, facility development)

- Leadership skills (e.g. managing a children's sports team, leader of a scouting/guides activity, Chair-person for a club or society)

- Organisation and planning skills (secretary for a club or society, school governor, Parent Teacher Association organiser, church parish councillor)

- Finance skills (e.g. treasurer for a club or society)

- Coaching and counselling skills (e.g. sports coach, Samaritans volunteer, mentoring, tutoring)

APPENDIX 2

CPD Activity Summary

CPD Activities over: • A 12 month period if used for revalidation totalling at least 60 hours of learning • Or a 24 month period if used as part of your CStat/GradStat Application totalling at least 60 hours of learning per year • Or a 12 month period if used as part of your Data Analyst Application totalling at least 60 hours of learning per year		Career Status - *include a brief description of your job role and how it has progressed of the 12 month period.*			
Category	Description of activity	Start Date	End Date	Learning Hours	Outcome/Benefit to practice (i.e. skills/ knowledge gained) or to deliver to employer/client
Worked based learning					
Professional activity					
Formal/ educational					
Formal/ educational					
Self-directed learning					
Other					
TOTAL				XXXXX	