

CPD Diary guidelines for Physicians

Table of contents

1. Introduction	2
2. The Federation CPD Scheme	2
3. Types of CPD	2-3
4. CPD credits	3
5. CPD credit guidelines by category	3-5
6. Joining the Federation online CPD system	5
7. Guidance on using the online diary and App	5-7
8. Recording specific types of CPD (using the diary or App)	7-8
9. Additional notes	
10. Appendix 1. Educational activities that qualify as CPD	

The Faculty of Physician Associates (FPA) provides its' own guidance for CPD for Physician Associates at <https://www.fparcp.co.uk/your-career/cpd>

Introduction

Guidance from the General Medical Council (GMC)

CPD is any learning outside of undergraduate education or postgraduate training that helps doctors maintain and improve their performance. It covers the development of knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours across all areas of professional practice. It includes both formal and informal learning activities. The GMC requires that doctors should undertake CPD that covers the whole scope of their professional practice. This includes NHS work, independent practice, voluntary work that involves patients and professional activities such as education, management and research. It is not expected that CPD will be undertaken in every area of their work every year, but doctors should ensure all aspects are covered adequately over the five-year cycle. Each doctor's CPD should be reviewed and discussed at their annual appraisal. [GMC CPD guidance](#).

The Federation CPD Scheme

Principles

The GMC requires doctors to carry out CPD that covers the whole scope of their practice, but does not require doctors to record a certain number of credits annually. The GMC emphasises that at a doctor's appraisal the quality of the CPD and their reflection on that CPD are particularly important.

The Federation of the Royal Colleges of Physicians believes that providing guidance to physicians about the amount of time that they should devote to their professional development is helpful and also believes that a CPD record that includes an indication of the time a physician has committed to their professional development can be useful for appraisers. The Federation also recognises that some physicians prefer a credit-based approach to CPD.

Therefore, the Federation continues to make recommendations regarding the amount of CPD it advises physicians to undertake, although these is not mandatory.

In the Federation CPD system one credit equates to one hour of educational activity.

Participation in the scheme

All Consultant and SAS (Staff Grade, Associate Specialist and Specialty) physicians who have a license to practice are required to provide documentation that they are participating in CPD. Documentation of participation in, and learning from, CPD to the standards set by the Federation is a requirement for revalidation. Physician trainees may also wish to make use of the scheme.

Federation CPD Approval

To help physicians select high quality CPD, the Federation provides a CPD approval service. When a provider applies for their CPD to be approved by the Federation, their application is reviewed by at least one clinician from an appropriate speciality before approval can be granted.

It is recommended that physicians gain most of their external CPD from events that have been approved by the Federation (or another Royal College). Physicians can record events that have not been formally approved by the Federation, but they should endeavour to ensure that the CPD concerned is appropriate to their practice and free from bias.

Types of CPD

To engage in CPD that covers the whole of their practice, physicians should endeavour to engage in clinical CPD (which directly relates to clinical topics) and non-clinical CPD (examples include management courses, educator courses and appraisal training).

External CPD

External CPD is provided from a source outside the physician's employing organisation. Examples include regional, national or international conferences, live-streamed events and external e-learning.

Internal CPD

This is CPD obtained within a physician's employing organisation and is provided solely for local clinicians. Examples include hospital grand rounds, journal clubs, audit meetings and mandatory training. It is recommended that some internal CPD should involve the team within which the physician works.

Personal CPD

Personal CPD includes study such as private reading, preparation for lectures and writing review articles for journals.

A detailed list of educational activities that qualify as CPD in each of these three categories is provided in Appendix 1.

CPD credits

The table below outlines the number of annual credits usually recommended by the Federation. These recommendations for physicians have been waived during the COVID-19 pandemic with no requirement that physicians make up credits in subsequent years.

Annual credit recommendations:

Minimum total credits	50
Minimum external clinical credits	25*
Recommended external non-clinical credits	5

*It is recommended that 5 of these should be in Internal Medicine rather than the physician's main specialty.

Five-year credit recommendations

The Federation recommendation over a five-year cycle is a total of 250 CPD credits. Of these, at least 125 should be Clinical External and at least 25 should be Non-Clinical External credits.

CPD Credit Guidelines by Category

1. External CPD

From 2020 the Federation has increased the flexibility in the guidelines relating to the types of external CPD that physicians can record in their diaries. Physicians will need to be prepared to discuss their choices at their appraisal.

a. Activities that are specifically developed for CPD

These allow the physician to determine whether the activity is likely to meet their learning needs.

The Federation now allows any number of credits from the following categories

- Live events (whether approved or not)
- Live streamed events
- MSc courses
- Federation approved courses
- Approved archived (on demand) lectures and webinars
- Approved e-learning
- Unlisted e-learning modules
- Approved podcasts

More detail is provided in notes 1-5 relating to specific categories of CPD below.

We advise that external CPD is obtained from a mixture of the options above, including live events when these are possible.

b. Activities that are designed for another purpose, but which have educational value

The Federation approves limited external CPD credits for the following activities:

- MRCP UK examining activities, maximum 12 credits annually
- First attendance at an ARCP panel (see Note 7 below)

2. Internal CPD:

There is no specific credit recommendation for internal CPD. In line with GMC guidance the Federation recommends that doctors obtain CPD within their Trust and that this should include CPD with the teams in which they work.

3. Personal CPD:

Physicians can record as many personal credits as they wish. Up to 10 of these can contribute to the 50 credits recommended annually, but of these only 10 can relate to examining activities (see Note 6 in the list below).

Notes relating to specific categories of CPD

- 1. Live-streamed external CPD** – Unlimited external credits can be claimed for any live-streamed CPD whether or not it is approved by the Federation. There is no longer a requirement for a local moderator and there is no requirement as to the venue (it can be accessed at home or at work).
- 2. MSc courses or Federation approved courses** – external credits may be claimed for live, live-streamed, or on-demand streamed learning. Similarly, external credits may be claimed for e-learning modules delivered as part of one of these courses. The number of external credits that can be claimed is no longer limited, but preparing course work or personal reading around the topic(s) should be claimed as personal rather than external CPD.
- 3. Approved archived versions of streamed CPD ('on demand')** – There is now no limit to the number of external credits that can be claimed for this type of activity. Where archived lectures or webinars are not approved by the Federation, these should be recorded as personal credits.
- 4. Approved e-learning** – The Federation is increasing the digital options for CPD. These now include approved e-learning modules, approved e-libraries and e-platforms, and approved podcasts. We are introducing changes which will allow physicians to record as many approved e-learning credits as they wish. These will all count as external CPD once the changes to the diary and the App have been made.
- 5. Other e-learning** – Credits for unlisted e-learning modules may also be recorded in the diary and these will now count as external credits rather than personal credits. There is no limit to the number of credits that may be claimed for unlisted e-learning modules. With regards to e-libraries, external credits may only be recorded for approved e-libraries, reading unlisted digital texts should be recorded as personal CPD
- 6. Examining** – Up to 12 external clinical credits may be claimed for national examining activities each year. These credits are currently only available for MRCP (UK) examining activities, SCE examining activities and Diploma in Geriatric Medicine examining activities. With effect from 1.1.23 these credits can also be claimed for examining activities relating to the Medical Schools Council Applied Knowledge Test (MSC-AKT), which will form the written part of the Medical Licensing Assessment. The maximum of 12 credits applies to all of the aforementioned forms of examining activity combined. These credits can now be claimed under the 'National Exams' tab in the 'Add Self Certified Entry' section of the diary. The Federation also allows up to 10 personal credits for examining

activities each year, which can be used for MRCPUK examining activities, SCE examining activities, Diploma in Geriatric Medicine examining activities, MSC-AKT examining activities and/or undergraduate examining. The credits claimed for the MSC-AKT and also personal credits for examining should reflect the proportion of the time spent gaining new or updated knowledge rather than the total time spent on the examining activity. The maximum credits should be 6 credits per day or 3 credits per half day. Examiners can also obtain non-clinical credits for attending organised CPD activities updating them about examination practices, for example those run by MRCPUK. More information can be found at: <https://www.thefederation.uk/about-us/get-involved/cpd-reviewers>

- 7. First attendance as an ARCP panel member** – physicians can claim up to 5 external non-clinical credits the first time they participate as an ARCP panel member, providing formal training or induction is provided. Subsequent participation in ARCP panels will not count towards CPD credit recommendations.
- 8. Exemption credits** – These can be claimed in exceptional circumstances such as long-term illness or absence. They effectively work as placeholders so do not count towards your credit totals on the system.

Joining the Federation online CPD system

All trained physicians are encouraged to join the Federation online CPD System. There is no paper option available for Physicians. To register for the CPD Diary and Physicians' CPD app, the online registration process must be completed by selecting 'Register Online' at <https://cpd.rcplondon.ac.uk>. Once registered, users can log into the CPD diary using the same link. Users can also download the **Physicians' CPD** app on the [iOS store](#) for Apple devices or [Play Store](#) for Android devices. If a diary user is not a subscribing member or fellow of one of three Federation Colleges, they would be required to pay an annual standalone subscription fee.

Each CPD year runs from 1st April to 31st March the following year. There is then a four-month grace period to submit entries until the 31st July.

Guidance on using the online diary and App

Adding Entries Using the online diary

To add approved CPD

After logging onto the CPD Diary:

1. Select 'Add approved entry'
2. The next page will allow you to search for approved live events
3. If you wish to select an approved live event, search by date, specialty, keyword or Federation CPD code. Click on the event and then click 'Add activity' to add it to the CPD Diary. Any external meetings not found by searching in the CPD Diary should be entered under 'Add self-certified entry' (see next section).
4. If you wish to add approved distance learning CPD, select the 'Approved distance learning' tab instead of following step 3. Then select the event you wish to add and click 'Add activity'.
5. Next, it is suggested that you link the activity (live event or distance learning) to the GMC Good Medical Practice domains and your development needs.
6. When you reach the reflection page, **you should adjust the number of credits if you did not attend the whole of a live event**
7. For both live events and distance learning it is necessary to complete a reflection (private) and simple feedback (which may be shared with the provider) following which the relevant number of CPD credits will be added to the Diary.

To add a self-certified entry (external, internal or personal CPD)

After logging onto the CPD Diary:

1. Select 'Add self-certified entry'.
2. Select the relevant tab, 'Clinical', 'Non-clinical', 'Distance learning', 'MRCP' or 'Exemptions'.
3. Enter the date of the CPD, the activity details and the hours claimed.
4. Next select the category or type of CPD from the list available.
5. Click 'Add this activity to your diary'
6. Next, it is suggested that you link the activity to the GMC Good Medical Practice domains and your development needs.
7. Complete a reflection

From the current year diary page, your credit summary can be viewed at any time by clicking 'View your credit summary' just below the tabs at the top of the page. You can see a draft of your appraisal report or a reflection report at any time by selecting the 'Appraisal report' or 'Reflection report' buttons on the left of the current diary year page. The total credits obtained in each year may be viewed at any time by selecting 'credits achieved' from the tabs at the top of the page.

Important note: Claiming only credits due

If you did not attend all sessions of an event you should only claim CPD points for the sessions you attended. For approved events the credit total for that event can be adjusted within the diary and the CPD App.

Generating reports for your appraisal

First check that you have fulfilled all the requirements by clicking the 'Credits achieved' tab. This will show you whether you have fulfilled the 'Year complete' requirements and the recommended number of credits or 'Credit status' for the year in question. It also shows you your credit status for the latest 5 year cycle. If you have fulfilled the credit recommendations but not the 'Year complete' requirements this is likely to be because you have not completed your annual reflection. Return to the current year diary page and click on the 'Annual reflection' button to the left of the page to complete the reflection.

When everything is complete you can generate reports and/or certificates as required:

1. **Appraisal report** – From the current year diary page select 'Appraisal report' from the buttons on the left. You can generate a PDF report by clicking 'Export to PDF' near the top of the page. For access via the Physicians' CPD app, please see our [Video tutorial](#).
2. **Reflection report** – From the current year diary page select 'Reflection report' from the buttons on the left. You can generate a PDF report by clicking 'Export to PDF' near the top of the page.
3. **Credit certificates** – Click on 'Credits achieved'. You can generate a certificate for the year in question by clicking 'Certificate' for the relevant year and for the current 5 year cycle by clicking 'Certificate' adjacent to the information relating to the current 5 year cycle.

Adding Entries Using the Physicians App

Approved entries ([Click here for Video Tutorial](#))

1. Press the + button on the Home screen
2. Select 'Approved'
3. Search for an event using the filter or by date
4. Select the appropriate event
5. You can adjust the number of credits if you did not attend the whole meeting
6. Click 'Add to diary'
7. You need to complete a reflection and feedback before the credits will be added to your total
8. It is also recommended that you link the activity (live event or distance learning) to the GMC Good Medical Practice domains and your development needs.

Self-certified entries ([Click here for Video Tutorial](#))

1. Press the + button on the Home screen
2. Select self-certified
3. Enter the title of the activity
4. The date will be set at the date you record the activity, this can be changed by selecting the date field and adjusting
5. Enter the number of credits (1 credit per hour of CPD)
6. Select clinical or non-clinical for the type of activity
7. Select external, internal or personal for 'Category'
8. Select the class of activity
9. Click 'Add to diary'
10. Complete reflection to claim credits
11. It is also recommended that you link the activity (live event or distance learning) to the GMC Good Medical Practice domains and your development needs.

Important note: Claiming only credits due

If you did not attend all sessions of an event you should only claim CPD points for the sessions you attended. For approved events the credit total for that event can be adjusted within the diary and the CPD App.

Recording specific types of CPD (using the diary or App)

1. Archived (on demand) access within 4 weeks of the livestreamed event

For the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic we have automatically granted approval for archived access to approved livestreamed events to help busy clinicians. You can record this activity in your diary by using the code number issued to you (i.e. RCP123456) in the same way as if you had attended the livestreamed event. Should you not have the code number, we recommend you search via the livestream date, specialty, or keywords under the 'Add Approved Entry' section.

2. Archived (on demand) access more than 4 weeks after a live event

If the provider has applied for this and it has been approved, it will be listed in the distance learning section of the CPD diary. Select the activity from this section in the usual way and make sure you claim the correct number of credits for the amount of CPD you have accessed 'on demand' by changing the default number. Please note that the Federation policy is not to approve satellite symposia or sessions organised by pharmaceutical or device companies. You can visit approved archived events more than once if you wish to access more of the available content. If you do this in the same CPD diary year you can update your original diary entry, adjusting the credits and reflection. See section 5 below for more detail.

3. Distance Learning (including e-learning)

Work is in progress to remove the cap of 10 approved distance learning credits within the CPD Diary. Self-certified distance learning can now be added as external CPD via the 'Distance Learning' tab under 'Add Self-Certified Entry'. On the Physicians' CPD app, 'Self-Certified Distance Learning' is present as an option of 'Class' when you add a self-certified entry.

4. Approved e-Platforms and e-Libraries

These large e-learning resources are listed in the distance learning section of the CPD Diary and may be visited on multiple occasions. E-platforms usually consist of e-learning modules and other on demand activities such as archived webinars or lectures. You can claim 1 credit for each hour of CPD activity. Please make sure you select the correct number of CPD credits by changing the default number. E-libraries are only approved where they offer a tracking mechanism and certificate when you visit, you can claim 1 credit per hour of activity on an approved e-library, again please make sure you claim the correct number of credits by changing the default number. When you revisit an e-library or e-platform in the same diary year, we advise that you update the first entry for that resource in your CPD diary (see section 5 below for more detail).

5. How to update distance learning entries within a diary year

Within your CPD diary, select the title of the resource, then the 'Reflections' tab to add additional reflections and adjust the number of credits. The maximum character count is just over 1000 per question and all text will appear on your Reflection Report. At present if you record more than 10 external approved distance learning credits, the additional credits will appear as personal credits. Work is in progress to address this.

6. CPD credits for attending multiple streams at live-streamed events that are also available 'on demand'

Where a large meeting with multiple streams of education is made available 'on demand', it is possible to attend a session that coincided with a session that you attended live. Where the event has been approved for extended archived (on demand) access, it is possible to claim more credits than are available for attending the live meeting alone. The reason is that the number of credits available for the live event and the number for extended archived (on demand) access are treated separately. When an event has been approved for extended archived access it will be found both in the 'approved activity' section and the 'approved distance learning' section of the CPD Diary.

Additional notes

Audit

Previously an annual 5% validation audit was carried out requiring evidence that participants had fulfilled their annual requirement and had maintained a true record of their activities. This audit process has now been superseded by an electronic audit carried out to check the number of diary users completing the minimum credit recommendations. One of the remits of the appraisal and revalidation process is to confirm whether a doctor has undertaken sufficient CPD that covers the whole of their practice.

Appendix 1: Educational activities that qualify as CPD

External	Internal	Personal
Approved external meetings	Trust or employer mandatory training	Carrying out information searches
Unlisted external meetings (those that have not been approved by the Federation)	Grand rounds	Preparing a new presentation for a conference
Work related to MSc or an approved academic course	Audit and quality improvement meetings	Participating in Committees/Working parties
Approved streamed live CPD	Internal postgraduate lectures	Reading Journals and texts
Unlisted streamed live CPD	Local seminars or workshops	Refereeing articles and texts
Approved e-learning from the Federation Diary list	Morbidity and mortality meetings	Undertaking a research project
Unlisted e-learning (e-learning not approved by the Federation)	Journal clubs	Undertaking QA/peer reviews
National examining activities (listed in section 6, page 4-5)		Writing examination questions or examining
Approved archived lectures and webinars (from the Federation Diary list)		Writing review articles and texts
ARCP panel member (first attendance only)		

CPD credits for physicians providing teaching or training

In the sections below the words 'teacher' and 'teaching' are used to refer to the provision of education or training for other health professionals and/or trainee health professionals.

1. Physicians can claim **external CPD credits** when they receive formal training for a teaching role and this is provided external to their place of employment. This applies whether they receive generic training for a teaching role or the training relates to the provision of a specific course. The training should be recorded as unlisted external CPD unless approval for the training has been sought from the Federation and granted.
2. Physicians can claim **personal CPD credits** for teaching activities in the following circumstances:
 - Time spent preparing for a new or updated presentation, lecture or teaching session. The number of credits should reflect the preparation time.
 - Any new learning for the teacher that occurs during the teaching they provide. This could be learning related to teaching skills (e.g. feedback from a colleague or learning from watching a co-presenter deliver teaching). It could also be new clinical knowledge gained during a teaching experience, this might include some further reading after the teaching session stimulated by a question or point raised during the teaching. When teaching on courses (for example those preparing candidates for an examination) it may include new or updated learning from the clinical cases selected for the course or the clinical scenarios prepared for the course. The new learning should be associated with a reflection in the CPD Diary. The number of credits should reflect the proportion of the teaching or training that resulted in new knowledge and should not simply list the amount of time spent teaching.
 - During informal teaching, new learning may also occur and the learning together with any associated reading that follows it should be entered in the diary for personal credits.