

**POLICY ON CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT (CPD)  
OF PERSONS REGISTERED WITH THE  
SOUTH AFRICAN COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL  
SERVICE PROFESSIONS  
(SACSSP)**



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	INTRODUCTION	3
2.	DEFINITIONS	3
3.	VALUE AND PURPOSE OF CPD	3
4.	POINTS AND CRITERIA FOR CPD ACTIVITIES	
4.1	Group activities	4
4.2	Individual activities	6
4.3	Exceptional activities	10
4.4	Activities accredited by other professional councils	10
5.	APPLICATION AND REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS	
5.1	Persons registered with the SACSSP	10
5.2	Non-practising registered persons	11
5.3	First time registrations	11
5.4	Registered persons practicing outside the RSA	11
5.5	Restorations	11
6.	NON-COMPLIANCE	11
7.	FUNCTIONS OF STAKEHOLDERS	
7.1	SACSSP/Professional Board	12
7.2	Approval Panel for CPD activities	12
7.3	Providers of CPD activities	13
7.	CONCLUSION	13
APPENDIX A:	Bloom's Taxonomy: Knowledge (Cognitive Outcomes)	14
	Simpsons Taxonomy: Skills (Psychomotor Outcomes)	14

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Continuing professional development (CPD) is an international, as well as a national means of ensuring that professionals keep pace with developments and advances in their discipline and field of practice.

In a dynamic environment where the needs of communities grow and the demands on professionals become increasingly complex, professionals need to be constantly aware of the challenges they face relating to knowledge, skills and competencies to address these demands. CPD is one way of addressing these challenges.

As a professional Council, the SACSSP focuses on the quality of the services provided to individuals, families, groups, communities and organisations. The Council has recognised the need of professionals to be in the position not only to provide high quality services, but also to feel confident in their abilities to attend to the needs of communities. Through CPD, quality services will be promoted and the capacity of professionals enhanced.

In principle, the SACSSP is committed to a CPD system that is flexible, cost-effective, user-friendly and accessible to all practitioners.

This policy has been shaped by the findings of a quantitative study on the implementation of the 8<sup>th</sup> draft of the CPD policy which was reported on and discussed at nine provincial workshops, and finally consolidated after consultation with the broader constituency.

## 2. DEFINITIONS

2.1 Terms in this document will have the following meaning:

➤ *Continuing professional development (CPD):* A statutorily determined process that requires persons registered with the SACSSP to obtain a specified number of points annually in order to maintain ethical and high quality service by attending or participating in activities of a professional nature in order to remain registered with the SACSSP.

*CPD Approval Panel:* This body is appointed by the SACSSP and is the body certifying that activities and providers meet the required criteria for CPD purposes. The Approval Panel is constituted of a maximum of five experts in the profession of which at least one shall be a member of the relevant professional board.

➤ *CPD activity:* An individual or group event that has been accredited by the Approval Panel to create opportunities for practitioners to gain knowledge, develop skills and shape their attitudes in order to maintain high professional standards.

➤ *Provider:* Any person or body providing an accredited CPD activity.

## 3. VALUE AND PURPOSE OF CPD

The underlying value of CPD is to maintain professional standards that promote excellence in practice. This value supports the purpose of implementing a compulsory system with which all registered persons with the SACSSP should comply. In view of CPD's effect on registration with the SACSSP, it is envisaged that CPD will have a positive impact on both

persons registered with the SACSSP and client systems. Furthermore it will improve professional identity and status, thus promoting high morale in the social work profession.

The purpose of CPD will be to ensure that registered persons retain and continuously develop their attitude, skills and knowledge to maintain professional standards and ethics that promote excellence in practice by enabling them to

- build knowledge, skills and competencies
- provide services that are relevant and appropriate, especially in the South African context
- improve service rendering to individuals, families, groups, communities and organisations;
- facilitate reflective practice;
- keep abreast of current trends, research and developments in the profession;
- assert their professional view in multi sectoral and multi disciplinary contexts;
- function effectively as a member of the multi-disciplinary team;
- keep motivated to continue with practicing the profession
- be supported by and network with other professionals
- reduce occupational stress
- create opportunities to develop own business in providing CPD activities

#### **4. POINTS AND CRITERIA FOR CPD ACTIVITIES**

All registered persons (excluding learners) are required to obtain a *minimum* of 20 CPD points annually.

There are two broad categories of CPD activities, i.e. individual and group. CPD points will be required in a mixed format of individual and group activities, however there is no prescription regarding the number of points to be obtained in a specific category.

Each CPD activity is accredited on merit and a specific number of points is allocated to the activity linked to the criteria and within the indicated range of CPD points.

CPD points are only allocated on completion of the CPD activity. A maximum of 10 accumulated points may be forwarded to the next year for a maximum period of one year.

##### **4.1 Group activities**

A group activity is any organised event, either face to face or via any electronic means where at least 3 people are grouped or assembled for purposes of sharing information, building knowledge, developing skills and/or influencing of attitudes on the subject of professional interest.

Group activities include conferences, workshops, small group discussions and information sessions.

Group activities require approval from the Approval Panel as CPD activities prior to the commencement of the CPD activity. Submission of CPD points for credits for registration purposes are done by the participants as part of their portfolio of evidence.

CPD point allocation for group activities are based on the following criteria:

- Level of participation
- Level of knowledge
- Level of skills development
- Duration of activity

These criteria are applied within a range of levels as indicated in Table 1.

**Table 1: Range of criteria for group activities**

Criteria	Range
Level of participation	Passive listener to active respondent
Level of knowledge <sup>1</sup>	Basic information Understanding Application Analyse Synthesise Evaluation
Level of skills <sup>2</sup> development	Perception Preparing for action Guided response with others assistance Responding habitually Performing difficult tasks automatically Altering responses to fit new situations
Duration	½ day to full day 1 hour to two hours

The following group activities will be recognised for CPD points:

**Conference/Congress/Symposium** is a large gathering of people who meet in a local, regional, provincial, national (South African) or international context to discuss a particular issue of concern reflected in a specific conference theme and sub themes.

**Workshops** refer to intensive study/work/ participatory and sharing discussions and non-credit bearing short courses of no more than 5 days per CPD activity on a particular topic with the purpose of analysing existing knowledge and creating new ideas and knowledge, skills and competencies to address policy, practice and educational challenges.

**Small group discussions** include a minimum of 3 persons with a minimum duration of 1 hour and a maximum of 2 hours focusing on a relevant topic, which may include policies, legislation, book reviews, journal articles, case studies, sharing of best practice models and group supervision. Group supervision will only be considered for CPD points if it is planned, focused and structured with educational objectives on specific topics and/or aimed at skills development with clear evidence of participation. Small group discussions

<sup>1</sup> Bloom, B.S. 1956.(ed) *Taxonomy of Education Objectives: The Classification of Educational Goals*; Susan Fauer Company, Inc. pp 201-207. See *Attachment A* for descriptors.

<sup>2</sup> Simpson, E. J. 1972. *The Classification of Educational Objectives in the Psychomotor Domain*. Washington, DC: Gryphon House. See *Attachment B* for descriptors.

can include in-service training if it has an educational and development focus in a particular field of practice submitted in a programme format.

Small group discussions may occur face to face or via an Internet discussion group.

**Information sessions** assemble people to share information on a particular topic and/or consult stakeholders on new policy, procedures or guidelines to improve professional standards and practice with a minimum duration of 1 hour and a maximum of 3 hours.

The CPD points in Table 2 reflect the range of points that the CPD Approval Panel may allocate based on the above criteria.

**Table 2: CPD points for group activities**

CPD Group Activity	Range of points
<b>Workshop</b> Maximum 5 days	2 – 5 per day
<b>Small group discussion</b> Minimum: 1 hour and Maximum: 2 hours	2 per hour 1 Hour: 2 points 2 Hours: 4 points
<b>Conferences</b>	2 – 4 per day
<b>Information sessions</b> Minimum: 1 hour and Maximum: 2 hours	1.5 per hour 1 Hour: 1.5 points 2 Hours: 3 points

#### 4.2 Individual activities

Individual activities refer to activities where a person is involved on an individual basis in an activity and the onus lies entirely on the individual to convince the Approval Panel of the relevance of the activity for CPD points. No external CPD accredited provider is involved. Individual activities include self-study, formal learning programmes, external examination, short learning programmes, paper presentations, research, authorships, peer reviews, policy analysis, membership and personal wellness. CPD activities of other professions may be recognised for points. The onus is on the registered person to prove the relatedness of the activity for CPD points. The CPD Approval Panel reserves the right not to allocate points.

Individual activities are defined as follows:

**Self study of scientific articles and books** which require reflection on scientific articles/books either according to a questionnaire in the particular journal (if available) or a guideline of the SACSSP.

**Formal learning programme** includes a whole qualification on any relevant topic related to the working environment with proof of registration, progress and successful completion

of a whole qualification. For studies towards a master's qualification points will be allocated for a maximum of three years and towards a doctoral programme for 5 years. For a post-graduate diploma points will be allocated for a maximum of two years. Additional points will be allocated on successful completion of a qualification.

**External examination** refers to practitioners assessing postgraduate studies.

**Short learning Programmes** describe all short programmes, whether credits are awarded or not, and are inclusive of skills programmes, credit-bearing short courses and non-credit-bearing short courses.

Two short learning programmes are distinguished:

- A **short course** is a type of short learning programme through which a learner does not receive credits towards a formal learning registered on the SAQA database.
- A **skills programme** is occupationally based and when completed will constitute credits towards a qualification registered on the NQF.

**Paper presentations** include a written paper presented in a plenary or breakaway session, guest lecturer at a Higher Education Institution, introductory presentation in a panel session, poster presentation, WEB-based presentation or video production. Paper presentations include the preparation, presentation and facilitation of a discussion.

**Research** refers to an investigation by one or more persons into a particular field or area of practice to obtain facts that will inform practice and improve service delivery and which culminated in best practice models and/or publications (individual activity).

**Authorship** entails publications in books, in scientific or practice journals, authored as a sole author, a co-author, editor or contributor. It also includes training manuals and protocols.

**Peer reviews** involve commenting on the professional activities and work of colleagues upon formal request, including monographs, manuscripts and book reviews, amongst others.

**Position paper/legislative and policy analyses** entail responding in writing to policies and legislative issues reflecting a critical analysis in order to influence or shape policies and legislation.

**Membership** includes evidence of being a registered and active member of any international, national, regional or local organisation which protect and promote the professional interests of the profession and professionals. A maximum of 2 points per person will be allocated for membership.

**Personal wellness** refers to a structured programme that is considered by the CPD Approval Panel as contributing to the individual's ability to cope more effectively with the demands of the profession.

The requirements and points for individual CPD activities are indicated in the following Table 3.

**Table 3: Individual CPD Activities**

<b>INDIVIDUAL CPD ACTIVITIES</b>		
<b>CPD activity</b>	<b>Requirements</b>	<b>Points</b>
<b>Self study</b>		
- Scientific articles	Submission of completed questionnaire	1
- SACSSP Newsletter		1
- Books		5
<b>Formal Learning Programme</b>	Proof of registration and progress	10 per annum
	Proof of relevant whole qualification	10 on completion
<b>External examination</b> (Applies to practitioners)	Proof from HEI	MSW dissertation: 4 Doctoral thesis: 6
<b>Paper presentations</b>		
- Conference presenter	Written submission	8
- Plenary		6
- Breakaway group		
- Guest lecturer at higher tertiary institution	Written submission	6
- Panel session	With introductory presentation	4
	Without introductory presentation	2
- Poster	Visual presentation	4
- WEB - based	Visual presentation	4
- Video production	Visual presentation	6
<b>Research</b>		
- Best practice model	Written submission	10

- Publication (see 'authorship' points below)		
<b>Short learning programme</b> (Based on level, duration & relevance)	Proof of successful completion	
- Short course		5 – 20
- Skills programme		5 - 20
<b>Authorship</b>		
- Book [ <i>On publication</i> ]	Proof of publication	Sole author: 30 Co-author: 15 Editor: 20 Contributor: 10
- Scientific Article [ <i>on publication</i> ]	Proof of publication	Sole author: 10 Co-author(s): 5
- Professional/practice article [ <i>on publication</i> ]	Proof of publication	Sole author: 5 Co-author: 2.5
- Training manuals/ protocols	Independent peer review or employer's report	Author: 10 Co-author: 5
<b>Peer reviews</b>		
- Manuscripts	Invitation and acknowledgment of task completed	2
- Research proposals		2
- Mongraphs		4
- Book reviews		5
<b>Position paper/legislative and policy analyses</b>	Proof of written submissions	1 - 4
<b>Membership</b> (Maximum of 2 points)	Proof of current membership	
- Professional Association		1
- National/ provincial/ regional social service structure		1

- National/ International professional bodies		1
- Union		1
<b>Personal wellness</b>	Proof of provider, programme and duration	1 - 2

### 4.3 Exceptional activities

There may be instances of a specific individual activity not included in the list of activities of the SACSSP's CPD policy, but where the activity warrants consideration for the allocation of CPD points. In such cases, the registered person should compile a substantial motivation and keep in portfolio of evidence.

### 4.4 Activities accredited by other professional councils

Activities approved for CPD purposes by other professional statutory councils or professional boards, may also be approved as relevant activities with a certain number of CPD points. The CPD Approval Panel will consider such activities in terms of their appropriateness for the professions registered with the SACSSP and the criteria.

In this category a registered person has two options with regard to the submission of the activity for CPD:

- Submission of the activity as an individual activity to be approved for the allocation of CPD points. Proof of attendance and the programme must be included in the portfolio of evidence, indicating the CPD approval number of the other professional council, as well as the number of CPD points that were allocated to the CPD activity. The Approval Panel of the SACSSP will then consider the relevance of the activity for the social service professional and allocate the number of CPD points that the person may obtain.
- The activity may also be submitted by the provider to the Approval Panel of the SACSSP for consideration, particularly if a number of social service professionals are likely to attend. The normal procedures will then be followed to approve the activity as a CPD group activity and to allocate the number of CPD points. It is, however, important to note that the points allocated will be in alignment with the SACSSP's CPD point system and not with the applying professional council's point allocation for the particular activity.

## 5. APPLICATION AND REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

### 5.1 Persons registered with SACSSP

- Each registered person must maintain a portfolio of evidence of CPD activities to the value of 20 points for each financial year.

- This portfolio of evidence must be submitted **only** at the SACSSP's request which will be based on a random<sup>3</sup> selection. It is obligatory to begin accumulating CPD points from 1 April 2010. The first random selections for portfolio of evidence will commence after 1 April 2011.
- Submissions of portfolio of evidence will be in a cycle of three years<sup>4</sup>. Portfolios must provide evidence, however, of accumulated points to the value of 20 points for each of the financial years from 1 April 2010.

## **5.2 Non-practising registered persons**

When non-practising registered persons re-enter practice, they will be obliged to commence with the accumulation of CPD points in the year of re-entry.

## **5.3 First time registrations**

Anyone who registers for the first time in a particular year, with specific reference to the year after graduation, will be obliged to commence with his/her CPD programme in the year of registration. However, the person will only be required to submit CPD points for registration purposes in the following year.

## **5.4 Registered persons practicing outside the RSA**

Registered persons who are practising abroad are required to comply with CPD requirements.

## **5.5 Restorations**

Any person whose name has been removed from the register will be obliged to commence with accumulation of CPD points in the year of restoration.

## **6. NON-COMPLIANCE<sup>5</sup>**

The Approval Panel will investigate the reasons for non-compliance after which the names of non-compliant practitioners will be sent to the Professional Boards for follow up.

The Professional Boards may take the following actions:

- A letter will be sent to the practitioner requesting a reason for the non compliance. The practitioner will be required to furnish the Professional Board with a letter of explanation within two weeks of receipt of the letter of enquiry.
- Should the explanation be acceptable, the practitioner will be given six months to comply with the CPD requirements. Evidence of such compliance must be received by the Professional Board within two weeks of the end of the six months period.

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<sup>3</sup> A random sample is a probability sampling method which implies a random selection from a list of the names of the registered persons.

<sup>4</sup> This means that each registered persons will be required to submit a portfolio of evidence at least once in three years. However, due to the random sampling technique, a call for submission by registered persons may be more than once in the cycle of three years. Submission will therefore range from a minimum of one to a maximum of three in a cycle of three years.

<sup>5</sup> With acknowledgement to the *Continuing Professional Development Guidelines for the Health Professions*. 21 June 2005.

- Should the practitioner not comply with the requirement his/her name will be forwarded without delay to the Committee for Preliminary Inquiry to deal with the matter according to the *Rules relating to the acts or omissions of a social worker a social auxiliary worker or a student social worker which shall constitute unprofessional or improper conduct and the Regulations regarding the conducting of inquires into alleged unprofessional conduct.*
- The Committee for Preliminary Inquiry may decide on the basis of evidence, to grant a final additional 6 month period to comply with the CPD requirements.

## **7. FUNCTIONS OF STAKEHOLDERS**

### **7.1 SACSSP/Professional Board**

The SACSSP will accept responsibility for the following:

- Establishing a basic infrastructure to ensure an efficient CPD system
- All administrative processes related to the CPD system
- Determining the criteria for the approval of CPD points
- Appointing and supporting the CPD Approval Panel in collaboration with the Professional Board
- Promoting CPD
- Monitoring and evaluating the CPD system
- Quality assuring of CPD activities
- Creating and maintaining an internal data base of approved CPD activities and service providers. The delegated official allocated by the SACSSP will maintain a register with the particulars of each approved activity, the number of CPD points allocated to the activity and the approval number allocated to the activity by the SACSSP.

### **7.2 Approval Panel for CPD activities**

- All activities and points must first be approved by the CPD Approval Panel based on the criteria and requirements for CPD points as articulated in this policy.
- All approved CPD group activities will be allocated an approval number by the Approval Panel.
- The CPD Approval Panel may decline to approve applications if such application fails to meet the criteria.
- When any disagreements arise between providers and the Approval Panel, the application for the approval of the CPD activity will be referred to the Professional Board for consideration during a full meeting of the Professional Board.
- The Approval Panel shall have guidelines for the approval of CPD activities and the allocation of CPD points.

### 7.3 Providers of CPD activities

- Prospective providers must submit applications in the format prescribed by the Professional Board.
- An activity is accredited for a period of 1 year.
- Applicants will be required to pay a set fee for the processing of each CPD activity. The prescribed fees are:
  - R100 for a CPD activity offered to practitioners at no cost to the practitioner
  - R500 for a CPD activity offered to practitioners at a specified/registration fee
- On completion of the activity, the provider must provide a certificate to the registered person, reflecting the approval number of the CPD activity, as well as the number of CPD points and the particulars of the person who completed the activity. This certificate must be kept in the registered person's portfolio of evidence.

## 7. CONCLUSION

This policy will be enacted once regulations have been promulgated in terms of the Social Service Professions Act, No 110 of 1978, as amended. Amendments to the policy will be done in collaboration with all stakeholders.

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## **BLOOM'S TAXONOMY: KNOWLEDGE (COGNITIVE OUTCOMES)**

1. **Knowledge:** Remembering basic information such as facts, vocabulary, concepts.
2. **Understanding:** Grasping the meaning of the content
3. **Application:** Using abstractions, rules, ideas, etc. in concrete situations
4. **Analyse:** Combining elements, pieces or parts to form a whole or create a new pattern.
5. **Synthesise:** Combining elements, pieces or parts to form a whole or create a new pattern.
6. **Evaluation:** Make judgement about the extent to which methods satisfied the criteria.

Source: Bloom, B. S. (1956) (ed.) *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: The Classification of Educational Goals*; Susan Fauer Company, Inc. pp. 201-207.

## **SIMPSONS TAXONOMY: SKILLS (PSYCHOMOTOR OUTCOMES)**

1. **Perception:** Becoming aware of stimulation and the need for action
2. **Set for action:** Preparing for action
3. **Guided Response:** Responding with assistance from a teacher or coach
4. **Mechanism:** Responding habitually
5. **Complex Response:** Resolving uncertainty and performing difficult tasks automatically :
6. **Adaption and Origination:** Altering responses to fit new situations, Creating new acts or expressions

Source: Simpson E. J. (1972). *The Classification of Educational Objectives in the Psychomotor Domain*. Washington, DC: Gryphon House.