
CPD Credits for GSSA Members

“The half-life of knowledge is eight years. So, after eight years, half of what you know will be forgotten, irrelevant or just plain useless. The answers to the problems keep changing, which means that the professional must be committed to expanding and improving his or her knowledge.” (Sonnenberg 2007)¹.

Continuous Professional Development (CPD) is a term used to describe learning activities that professionals take part in to develop and enhance their skills², thereby expanding and improving their knowledge. It is the systematic maintenance, improvement and broadening of knowledge and skills, and the development of personal qualities necessary for execution of professional and technical duties throughout the individual’s working life³. It refers to the process of tracking and documenting (i.e. keeping a logbook) the skills, knowledge and experience that an individual gains, both formally and informally, beyond any initial training. This may include courses, workshops, informal learning opportunities, or vocational education that helps to expand knowledge or add new skills related to a chosen career.

The key features⁴ of CPD is that it:

- Is a documented process (physically and/or digitally);
- Is self-directed: driven by the individual, not the employer or professional/statutory body;
- Helps the individual focus on learning from experience, reflective learning and review;
- Helps the individual set development goals and objectives;
- It includes both formal and informal learning.

CPD and the GSSA Membership

Clause 7 of the GSSA Code of Ethics states that *“Members shall continue their professional development throughout their careers and shall actively assist and encourage those under their direction to advance their knowledge and experience.....”*. Consequently, it is incumbent upon all members of the GSSA to be aware of their obligations in this respect, which includes logging their relevant CPD activities. Such logging may be as simple as a hard-copy file, a Word or Excel document kept on a member’s personal computer or a formal digital record housed on a website.

¹ Sonnenberg, S. A. (2003). Professionalism in Geology. The Professional Geologist, pp. 27-30.

² <https://www.oxbridgeacademy.edu.za/blog/continuing-professional-development-cpd-matter/>

³ <https://www.jobs.ac.uk/careers-advice/managing-your-career/1318/what-is-continuing-professional-development-cpd>

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While CPD is not a requirement for membership of the GSSA, it is highly recommended for both industry and academic geoscience professionals. However, demonstrating an ongoing commitment to CPD is a requirement of those Members/Fellows who wish to apply for Chartered Status (which is required if the member wishes to be considered as a Competent Person or a Qualified Expert using their GSSA affiliation to sign off on Public Reports).

The GSSA has developed a CPD system, benchmarked against international Geoscience organisations, that is specific to the needs of the geoscientific community. It includes an operational website portal where members can log their activities in a formal setting. The CPD portal is located in the secure, members-only, section of the website (<http://www.gssa.org.za/GSSA/cpd.jsp>). All GSSA members are encouraged to register on the GSSA website, update their personal information and log their CPD points in order to maintain compliance with the GSSA Code of Ethics.

1. **The system is underpinned by the presumption of honesty and integrity by the membership.**
2. CPD points are based upon activity units called Professional Development Hours (PDH), which are convertible to formal professional development credits.

Any questions on the CPD portal on the GSSA website can be directed to Tania Marshall at info@gssa.org.za

CPD Categories/Activities

Four categories have been identified for Professional Development, namely, Formal Learning, Knowledge Contribution, Self-directed Study and Informal Learning, and Professional Practice, categorized as follows:

Activity	Annual Professional Development Hours (PDH) Objective	PDH Weighting	Annual CPD Points Objective	Maximum points per year
Formal Learning	5 days (40 PDH)	1 (1.5- Tested)	40	80
Knowledge Contribution	Not set	3	No maximum	
Self-directed study and informal learning	48 Hours (12PDH)	0.25	12	20
Professional Practice	64 Hours (8PDH)	0.125	8	10
Total	60 PDH		60	110

Formal Learning

Acceptable activities would include:

- Attendance of a formally structured course, seminar, conference, fieldtrip, etc.
- It is highly recommended that at least one course per five-year cycle includes SAMCODES-related training and one course deals with professionalism and ethics training.
- One hour of formal professional development training in a properly structured and recognised course will equate to 1 CPD. Therefore, it may be assumed that a full-day course will attract 8 CPD points and a half-day course would attract 4 CPD points.
 - Additionally, if this is a tested activity the CPD points would be weighted 1.5 times to recognise the additional effort required to study and pass the test.
- Such activities would not be confined to GSSA-organised courses – any relevant formal learning activities may be applicable, local or international (however, study or attendances for undergraduate and post-graduate degrees are not included in this category). Formal, structured in-house training/conferences, as well as relevant e-learning/on-line or live-streaming courses would also be included.
- Any such course can be included in the list by the course leader, without prior accreditation from the GSSA CPD Committee. However, an audit sample (10-15%) of formal courses will be validated annually by the GSSA CPD Committee.
 - Course leaders/organisers are encouraged to keep records of the date, location and duration of the course, presenters (including their CV's/resume's), numbers (and names) of participants as well as copies of the course material and any feedback from the course participants where relevant, in the event that such may be required for course validation. Course validation charges will not be levied by the GSSA.
 - Course participants are encouraged to keep certificates of attendance or any formal documentation/course notes for verification, if such should be required. Note that notification of registration is insufficient to confirm attendance.

Knowledge Contribution

- The preparation and presentation of a course or a lecture (this does not include academics whose day-to-day job includes lecturing). The time, effort and study involved will be suitably rewarded e.g. a one-hour lecture could attract additional CPD points by virtue of being weighted three times. There is no maximum CPD for this category – the contributors should receive the full benefit of their efforts (*theoretically, a member could acquire all their CPD points through this activity which is especially applicable in the case where geologists may be unemployed and/or are not able to attend formal courses*).
- Acceptable activities would include:
 - Preparation⁵ and presentation of professional development material, courses or technical lectures (as above, an audit sample may be verified by the GSSA CPD Committee – members are encouraged to keep copies of lectures and formal course programmes, or certificates of

⁵ For *guidance* – typically, 5 PDH of preparation per hour of (new) lecture and 1.5 PDH for preparation of a repeat lecture

presentation, where applicable). This does not include formal teaching programmes for which the individual is engaged in full-time employment.

- Time spent leading field-trips, writing⁶, publishing, reviewing or refereeing papers, CPR's, etc.
- Time spent by Geoscience Post Graduates involved in academic demonstration and/or Teaching Assistant duties⁷.
- A special dispensation is available for post-graduate students (part-time or full-time), whereby 10 (Hons), 20 (MSc) or 40 (PhD) PDH may be claimed in the year of graduation.

Self-directed Study and Informal Learning

- As this is not a structured nor as intensive an activity as is, for example, course attendance, this category would attract fewer points e.g. 1 PDH could attract 0.25 CDP points. This activity will be subject to an annual maximum so that members cannot simply achieve their annual quota by claiming, for example, to have read the SAJG every day.
- Acceptable activities would include:
 - Attendance at non-structured, informal lectures (for example, the Geo-talks at UWWR, UJ, WimSA events, African Mining Network Dinner series of events, GSSA/SAIMM branch lectures, Alex du Toit Memorial Lecture, etc.);
 - Reading of relevant Journal articles;
 - Personal research (including research for technical/academic papers, presentations or CPRs).
 - Viewing of on-line presentations, such as the Wits Geoscience and GSSA YouTube series.

Most of these activities are not auditable – the member is not required to provide a list of journal articles or websites visited.

Professional Practice

- This might be defined as self-development to meet or exceed the requirements of the role of a professional geologist. This does not include day-to-day work but covers the work activity extended beyond the routine but that does enhance the member's professional skills set. This acknowledges the current active professional status of the member and serves to acknowledge that a great deal of professional development occurs on the job. CPD's would be awarded on the basis of 8PDH of this activity being equivalent to 1CPD.
- Acceptable activities may include:
 - Acquisition of significant skill sets such as the member would add to his/ her CV and could readily be justified to the peer group.
 - Developing applicable soft-skills, such as general managerial/business skills, relevant language skills, software courses, advanced 4-wheel driving, first-aid, mine safety courses, etc.

⁶ For *guidance* – a sole/first author might claim 1PDH per page (±500 words) and a second/subsequent author might claim 0.5PDH per page. This does not include time spent on research, which must be claimed under "Self-Directed Study and Informal Learning".

⁷ Signed validation records need to be uploaded for all such applications.

- The writing of, for example, standard practices (SOP's) or articles for relevant non-technical Journals, newsletters, websites
- Leading or taking part in internal workshops, "career days", social/environmental upliftment activities (related to Social Licence to operate), etc.
- Attending events such as Electra Mining, etc.
- Organising committee of relevant conferences, courses, workshops, etc;
- Actively contributing to one or more applicable statutory or professional organisations, committees or councils (GSSA, SAIMM, SAMCODES, SACNASP, CGS, etc).
- Time spent in mentoring (formal/informal)

Exemptions

Note that no general exemptions for members who are for example, unemployed, retrenched or retired (but still looking for work or working part-time) are available. The GSSA CPD system has been so designed such that these ones could give of their time and knowledge and still earn CPD, *even when they could no longer afford to pay for and go to courses*. For example:

- An unemployed Masters/PhD graduate could claim some PDH time after being awarded their degree for time spent on writing up a paper and getting it published.
- Other activities could include:
 - Present results of their research at a GSSA event or lunchtime lecture
 - Sign up as a mentor
 - Sign up for Demonstration/Teaching Assistant duties
 - Attend free on-line webinars, courses, lunch-time lectures, etc.
 - Become members of SAMCODES Committees or Working Groups
 - Organising/participating in GSSA activities
 - Meetings Subcommittee
 - Social Media subcommittee
 - Branches & Divisions
 - Assist with GSSA Website/Facebook/Geobulletin contributions
- An unemployed/retired individual might claim for time spent on preparation and presenting at a meeting of the Egoli Branch, for example.
- An unemployed/retired individual might claim for time spent contributing to:
 - SAMCODE Committee meetings
 - Organisation/participation in GSSA branch/division activities
 - Assisting with GSSA social media and/or events organisation
 - Reviewing technical papers

Academics

- Academic and/or Post-doc members are not exempt from CPD requirements.
- Student Members undertaking full/part time post-graduate studies are not exempt from CPD requirements.

Members abroad

Members abroad are not exempt from CPD requirements. The GSSA system is so designed that members working/living anywhere can obtain credits. Alternatively, CPD compliance with any international system will also be considered.

Field-based geologists in remote areas

Field-based geologists (local or in remote areas) are not exempt from CPD requirements.

Full exemption

The GSSA allows that fully retired members (members who no longer do any consulting or work of a geoscience nature) are exempt from CPD requirements.

Partial exemption

Partial exemption for two-thirds of the annual CPD requirement of 40CPD credits for a specific year is available on application to:

- Members on special leave (maternity/paternity/parental, extended sick-leave or leave of absence)
- Members who motivate special circumstances – these will be considered on a case-by-case basis

CPD for GSSA members registered with SACNASP

Starting in January 2015, SACNASP (South African Council for Natural Scientific Professions) initiated a mandatory system of accumulating CPD points for all registered natural scientists. SACNASP has a website portal where CPD activity can be logged. It is notable that, since SACNASP services many fields of practice, their CPD system is necessarily broad and non-specific.

Therefore, in November 2017, the GSSA and SACNASP signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that will obviate unnecessary duplication and afford the registered Professional Natural Scientist *who is also a member of the GSSA* a more applicable means of recording CPD points. In terms of this MOU, SACNASP agrees to recognize that GSSA members may use the GSSA system hosted by, and accessed through, the GSSA website, and which is specifically designed for the Geology and Earth Science fields of practice. In turn, the GSSA agrees to recognize the SACNASP system accessed by GSSA members through the SACNASP portal. *Note, however, that a combination of the two systems will not be acceptable – either the individual must log all their points under the SACNASP system OR all their points through the GSSA portal.*

Henceforth, all SACNASP-registered geoscientists, who are also registered with the GSSA, will only be required to record their ongoing professional development in either the GSSA system or the SACNASP system⁸. It is the responsibility of the member to log their own CPD points on whichever system they choose. Neither the GSSA, nor SACNASP will be responsible for hunting down which

⁸ Note that logging of CPD is required under only one system, not both.

courses have been attended by which members. All GSSA members are encouraged to register on the GSSA website and log their CPD points in order to maintain compliance SACNASP regulatory requirements.

The GSSA will be responsible for ensuring that all GSSA-managed courses are uploaded to the SACNASP website. Other service providers are responsible for their own courses

SACNASP will afford recognition of the GSSA CPD system on the following basis:

1. The GSSA will audit some 10% of all members CPD credits over the five-year period. If selected for audit, members will be required to send verification of their CPD activities in the form of a certificate, list of results, record of attendance or a written verification from the institution that presented the developmental activity, as well as any other information that the GSSA may request.
2. *Annually, before the end of April*, GSSA members should log into the SACNASP website and supply the required information (see section below on *“Updating your CPD points on the SACNASP website”*). The onus is on each member to submit his/her points on the SACNASP website. The GSSA will not be responsible for members who fail to comply with this obligation.

Updating your CPD points on the SACNASP website

- The member should have logged all relevant CPD activities on the GSSA website by the 31 March of each year.
- The member should download the **CPD_Log.pdf** document from the GSSA website
- The member must log into the SACNASP CPD website (www.sacnaspcpd.org) before 30 April and navigate to the DASHBOARD.
 - Upload the **CPD_Log.pdf** as confirmation of compliance.
- Once the members CPD log has been confirmed, the SACNASP system will reflect the members CPD status as compliant for the year.