



GSSA Continuing Professional Development Policy



#cherish
#promote
#prosper

Continuous Professional Development (“CPD”) is a term used to describe learning activities that professionals take part in to develop and enhance their skills¹, 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 life². It refers to the process of tracking and documenting 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 features³ of CPD is that it:

- Is self-directed: driven by the individual, not the employer or registering (professional/statutory) body;
- Is a documented process (physically and/or digitally);
- 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.

1. 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.

The GSSA has developed a CPD system, benchmarked against other international Geoscience organisations, that is sensitive 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 activities 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. However, good governance requires that the system be subject to annual auditing by both the GSSA and SACNASP. Guidance is given for activities that might be included, but the application of the system is based on principles and not strict rules.
2. CPD points or credits are based upon activity units called Professional Development Hours (PDH), which are convertible to formal CPD points. The system is not based on points credited for specific activities or doing work (for being employed), rather it is based on the time spent pursuing professional development activities.
3. The CPD cycle is a five-year system – the current cycle runs concurrent with the SACNASP cycle (from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2022). (The cycle then closes, everything reverts to zero and the following five-year cycle begins.

¹ <https://www.oxbridgeacademy.edu.za/blog/continuing-professional-development-cpd-matter/>

² <https://www.jobs.ac.uk/careers-advice/managing-your-career/1318/what-is-continuing-professional-development-cpd>

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

2. 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. Members are encouraged, but not obligated, to log hours and activities across the spectrum, as possible. It is fundamental to the CPD philosophy that the goal is personal development and not simply collecting points.

2.1. Formal Learning

Acceptable activities would include (but not be confined to):

- Attendance of formally structured courses, seminars, conferences, field-trips, etc. such events are typically confined to related technical knowledge and/or skills provided by a third party. It is highly recommended that at least one course per five-year cycle includes SAMCODES-related training.
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One hour of formal professional development training in a properly structured and recognised course will equate to 1 CPD. Therefore, 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 (typically confined to related geoscience knowledge/skills provided by a third party). Formal, structured in-house training/conferences, as well as relevant e-learning, on-line, webinar, correspondence or live-streaming courses would also be included in this category.

Any such course can be included in the list by the course leader or a course participant, without prior accreditation from the GSSA CPD Committee. However, an audit sample (some 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 proof of registration is insufficient to confirm attendance.

2.2. Knowledge Contribution

The preparation and presentation of material contributing to professional development (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 (but not restricted to):

- Preparation⁴ 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 presentation, where applicable).
- Time spent leading field-trips, writing⁵, publishing, reviewing or refereeing papers, CPR's, etc.

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.

An author publishing a relevant book would be entitled to claim 20PDH (60CPD credits) in the year of publication.

2.3. 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 is subject to an annual maximum.

Acceptable activities would include (but not be limited to):

- 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, geoscience-related, Journal articles;
- Personal research (including research for technical/academic papers, presentations or CPRs).
- Viewing of on-line presentations, such as the Wits Geoscience YouTube series.

It is recognised that these activities are not auditable, and a member is not required to provide a list of journal articles read or websites visited for research purposes.

2.4. 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 category acknowledges the current active professional status of the member and serves to recognise 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. This category is also subject to an annual maximum

Acceptable activities may include (but not restricted to):

- 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 or business courses, relevant language skills, software training, advanced 4-wheel driving, first-aid, mine-rescue training, etc.
- Attending professionalism/ethics courses;
- 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 or environmental upliftment activities related to a Social License to operate, etc.
- Attending events such as Electra Mining;

⁴ For *guidance* – typically, 5 PDH of preparation per hour of (new) lecture and 1.5 PDH for preparation of a repeat lecture

⁵ 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".

- Being on the 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) and being mentored.

Likewise, many of these activities are not auditable.

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

3. Exemptions

3.1. 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.

3.2. Partial exemption

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

- Members on special leave, such as maternity/paternity/parental leave, leave-of-absence, or *extended* sick-leave;
- Members with extraordinary special circumstances (these will be considered on a case-by-case basis)

3.3. No Exemption

Note that no general exemptions for members who for example, have been retrenched, are unemployed 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;
- An unemployed/retrenched or retired individual might claim for time spent:

- Preparing and presenting at a meeting of the Egoli Branch, for example.
- As members of the various SAMCODE Committees or Working Groups
- Organising and/or participating in GSSA branch or division activities
- Assisting with GSSA website/Facebook contributions/maintenance
- Reviewing technical papers for SAJG or related conferences

Academics

Academic and/or Post-doc members are not exempt from CPD requirements. Members undertaking full or part time post-graduate studies are not exempt from CPD requirements, although special dispensations are available in the year of graduation (see section on Knowledge Contribution above).

Field-based geologists in remote areas

Field-based geologists (local or in remote areas) are not exempt from CPD requirements. Such ones can obtain credits through, for example, on-line or correspondence studies, writing/publishing papers, personal research, mentoring, organising and taking part in internal workshops and organising relevant social upliftment activities.

Members abroad

Members abroad are not exempt from CPD requirements. The GSSA system is so designed that members working/living anywhere can obtain credits. Members may also comply with a mandatory CPD program for another local or international engineering and/or geoscience association where their membership is in-good-standing, and the program is comparable.

4. 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.

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 under the GSSA portal.*

So, all SACNASP-registered geoscientists, who are also members of the GSSA, will only be required to record their ongoing professional development in either the GSSA system or the SACNASP system⁶. 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 courses have been attended by which members.

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

⁶ Note that logging of CPD is required under only one system, not both.

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. The onus is on each member to submit his/her points on the SACNASP website. The GSSA is not responsible for sending a members CPD information to SACNASP and will not be responsible for members who fail to comply with this obligation.
3. Annually, the GSSA is required to submit to SACNASP, a list of all GSSA members⁷ CPD compliance status.

4.1. Logging your CPD credits on the GSSA website

On the GSSA website (www.gssa.org.za), go to “Members Access” and log in with your member username and password). Update your personal information under “My Details” – it is especially important to include your SACNASP registration number (if relevant) and note whether you are doing your CPD on the GSSA or SACNASP website.

Input PDH activities under “My PDH Points” and the system will automatically calculate the relevant CPD points and include them in a summary table. The system will also generate a standardised report⁸ (CPD_Log.pdf) that the member can download and include with a CV.

GSSA members also registered with SACNASP must then log into the SACNASP website <https://cpd.sacnasp.org.za/#/> (during April of 2019, for example), log into their portfolio and upload⁹ the CPD_Log.pdf document detailing their activities for the previous year. The SACNASP system will automatically credit the member with full CPD status. Note that this accreditation will only take place annually after the CPD_Log.pdf has been uploaded and not on an ongoing basis.

4.2. Logging your CPD points on the SACNASP system

A GSSA member who wishes, may prefer to log their CPD points on the SACNASP website. The log-in portal is <https://cpd.sacnasp.org.za/#/>. Annually, the members will need to download a certificate of CPD compliance from the SACNASP website⁹ and upload it to the GSSA website, to be accredited.

More information on the SACNASP system is contained in documentation on the GSSA CPD webpage as well as on the SACNASP website. All queries regarding the SACNASP system must be directed to SACNASP.

⁷ That is, only GSSA members who are also registered with SACNASP.

⁸ This feature is currently absent but will be available before April 2019.

⁹ This functionality will also only become available during early 2019.

5. NOTES TO MEMBERS

- It is to be appreciated that the CPD system is still in its infancy and certain aspects of the website may be lacking in full functionality. Please note that the CPD sub-committee is working to enhance features and keep course lists up to date.
- Any questions on the application of CPD or the CPD portal on the GSSA website can be directed to info@gssa.org.za. A number of documents and presentations can also be downloaded from the website, with detailed instructions on how to add PDH/CPD credits to one's profile.

Please report any problems with entering PDH activities/hours – the CPD sub-committee is aware of some of the issues and is working to solve them.

- It is fundamental to remember that CPD is a self-directed process and is the personal responsibility of each individual member. It is not the obligation of either the members employer or the professional or statutory body to provide activities or to log and/or submit CPD credits on behalf of the member.

Employers will certainly benefit from having a workforce that is professional, experienced and up-to-date. They may also benefit themselves in terms of the Mining Charters obligation to invest in Human Resource Development and to assist in developing and implementing career progression plans. The GSSA would, therefore, encourage employers to support their members' efforts in their continued professional development, recognising that such support may not necessarily always be financial in nature.