



Continuing Professional Development

For Registered Social Workers

2015

Contents

The BCCSW Continuing Professional Development Program	1
Introduction	1
Responsibility of Registrants	2
*Non-Practising Class of Registration	2
Standards for Continuing Professional Development	2
CPD and Registration Renewal	3
Undertaking CPD	4
Step 1	
Review & Self-Assess Areas for Professional Development ...	5
Step 2	
Plan & Identify Goals	5
Step 3	
Implement & Undertake CPD Activities	6
Step 4	
Reflect & Evaluate Learning	6
Step 5	
Submit	7
Categories of CPD activities	7
Failure to Comply with the CPD Program	8
Audit Review	8
Important Dates	9

Version 1 – November 2013

Version 2 – January 2015

Introduction

The BCCSW Continuing Professional Development Program

The BC College of Social Workers, in carrying out the duty of protecting the public interest, is mandated to establish and maintain a continuing competence program. The aim of the program is to promote high practice standards among registrants. Therefore, all **practising*** registrants are required to undertake professional development which maintains and enhances their capacity to practise safely, ethically and effectively within their scope of practice and report their learning to the College annually.

The following definition most accurately reflects the premise of the College's Continuing Professional Development (CPD) program:

"Continuing Professional Development is the maintenance and enhancement of the knowledge, expertise and competence of professionals throughout their careers according to a plan formulated with regard to the needs of the professional, the employer, the profession and society."

The design of the CPD Program is based on self-directed, reflective learning and an 'output' model of planning and recording. This means that registrants need to think about their practice, identify opportunities to develop and to improve their quality of practice, determine the best way to undertake activities that would enhance their practice, then summarize and report the activities.

"What professional knowledge and skills do I need to improve or develop to enhance the quality of my practice so as to promote positive outcomes for the recipients of the services that I provide?"

**Responsibility of Registrants in the Non-Practising Class of Registration*

Registrants in the non-practising class of registration are not required to undertake CPD for the time they are in the non-practising class of registration. There are different requirements upon returning to the Full or Clinical Class of registration, depending on how long a registrant has been in the non-practising class. The specific requirements are stipulated in section 44.1(2) of the College bylaws. It is important to note that after 5 years in the non-practising class, a registrant who wishes to return to practise is required to successfully complete the licensure examination.

Responsibility of Registrants

Undertaking CPD is a mandatory requirement for the ongoing renewal of registration. The bylaws require registrants to undertake a mixture of learning activities of not less than 40 hours of CPD activity per year¹. The CPD cycle runs from November 1 to the following October 31. Registrants are required to report their CPD to the College no later than October 31 of each year to comply with the Standards of CPD.

The College suggests that, wherever possible, work-based opportunities such as annual performance reviews/appraisals and/or practice supervision be used towards the annual CPD requirement and help to formulate learning goals. The College acknowledges that, due to the breadth of social work delivery across BC and organizational capacity, opportunities like performance reviews or supervision may not be available to all registrants.

Standards for Continuing Professional Development

The College has developed Standards for CPD that represent the minimum expectations for engagement with the CPD Program. Registrants should use these Standards in the planning, undertaking, and documenting of ongoing professional development.

Standard 1 Plan continuing professional development activities that will enhance the quality of practice and delivery of services;

Standard 2 Undertake continuing professional development activities that enhance social work ethical conduct;

Standard 3 Actively seek and participate in a range of continuing professional development activities that maintain and advance professional skills and knowledge within current or future scopes of practice;

Standard 4 Seek to ensure that continuing professional development activities promote positive outcomes for recipients;

Standard 5 Accurately maintain an up-to-date record of continuing professional development activities as part of ongoing professional development;

¹ Registrants are granted 6 hours each year in the self-directed category of CPD activities to support them in planning and identifying learning goals and related activities. Of the remaining 34 hours, 3 hours must focus on ethical conduct.

CPD and Registration Renewal

Standard 6 Accurately report completion of continuing professional development activities to the college in a timely manner;

Standard 7 Upon request, provide the college with documentation as part of any audit and review process.

It is a registrant's responsibility to plan, select and undertake activities that meet the Standards for CPD. Meeting these Standards, along with practising within the *Social Workers Act*, Bylaws, and Standards of Practice and Ethics, is the basis upon which a registered social worker meets ongoing competence and practice requirements.

The CPD Program is self-directed and involves the formulation of goals and the identification of a mixture of CPD activities through which registrants may achieve their goals. The greatest benefit is derived when a registrant evaluates opportunities and documents newly acquired learning that will ideally lead to improvements in service delivery outcomes.

In order for registered social workers to be eligible to renew their registration, each registrant in the full or clinical class of registration is required to do the following, no later than October 31 of each year:

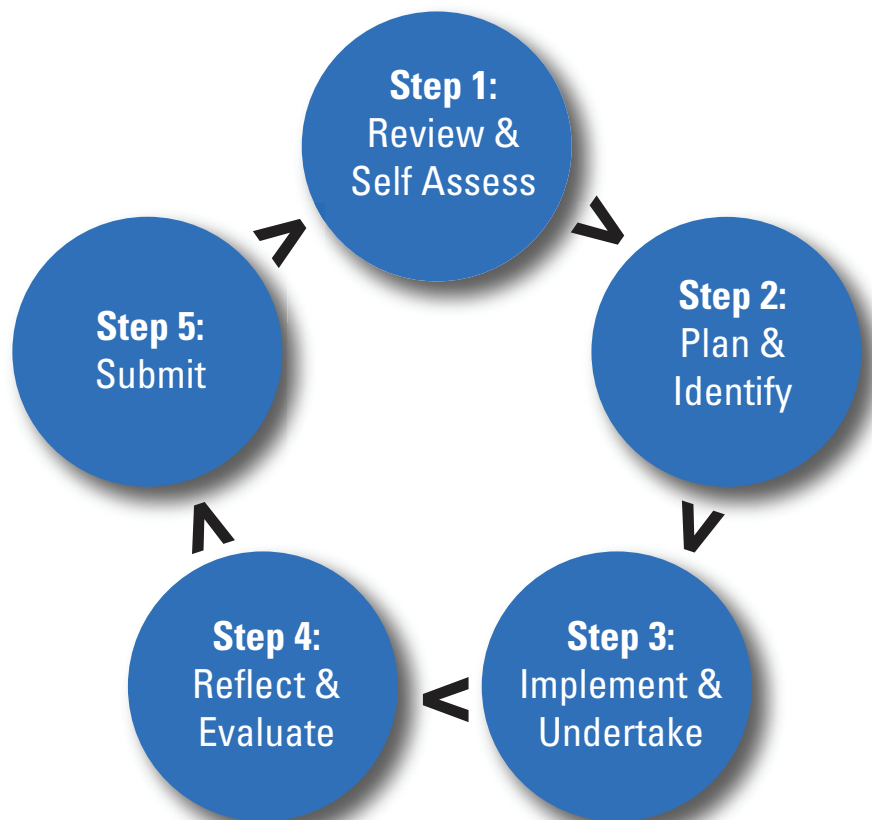
- 1** Identify professional development **goals**;
- 2** Record at least 40 hours of CPD **activities** from a minimum of three of the six Categories of CPD activities;
- 3** Record not less than 3 hours of the total 40 hours dedicated to **ethical conduct**;
- 4** Record a **Statement on Learning** summarizing how the activities undertaken over the CPD year enhanced the registrant's knowledge and skills and sought to improve service delivery outcomes;
- 5** **Submit** all of the above (#1-4) to the College through the online member services portal.

Undertaking CPD

Registrants are strongly encouraged to create their goals early and then regularly log-in to their online member services portal to add activities and update their record of CPD activities.

As professional development is a continuous process, it is unlikely that a registrant will achieve all of their goals in a particular CPD year; thus a registrant may have the same goal or goals over a period of time that exceeds one or a number of CPD cycles.

In developing a CPD plan and completing CPD activities each year, it is recommended that registrants undertake the following steps:



The College has developed a range of materials and tools to support registrants in engaging with the CPD Program. The use of these tools is discretionary and they can be accessed from the College's website.

Step 1

Review & Self-Assess Areas for Professional Development

A useful starting point in beginning to assess and identify strengths and areas for professional development is to reflect upon current scope of practice and review how professional responsibilities are currently being met. To do this, consider what is actually done in the professional role.

It is suggested that registrants assess individual strengths and areas for development (i.e. gaps in current skills and knowledge etc.) in light of emerging practice trends and evidence in the registrant's area or field of practice and then seek feedback on these from a colleague or manager who has relevant expertise within the area/field of practice.

STEP 2

Plan & Identify Goals

Identifying actual areas for professional development can be difficult and wrongly identifying these can result in undertaking CPD activities that do not result in improved practice standards. It is better to first identify CPD goals, and then work out ways of meeting these goals by selecting the CPD activities that would be most effective.

The College recognizes that circumstances change (i.e. change in job/role, new interests) and opportunities may come about that had not been anticipated during the planning stage. Registrants are encouraged to regularly review and make adjustments to identified learning goals. New goals may be entered onto the online recording tool at any time throughout the CPD cycle and existing goals may be edited.

It is important, in order to fulfill the Standards for CPD, to identify goals and plan for activities that seek to improve professional knowledge and skills and promote positive outcomes for the recipients of the services that you provide. These recipients may receive services from direct, private, clinical, administrative, educational, research, policy, management or any other scope

of practice within the broad range of social work practice. Therefore, registrants need to ensure that identified learning goals and associated CPD activities are directly linked to your current or emerging scope of practice.

STEP 3

Implement & Undertake CPD Activities

To successfully fulfill the requirements for the CPD Program, each registrant needs to demonstrate that the cumulative outcome of their CPD activities, completed within the year, sufficiently meet the Standards for CPD.

Standards 1 through 4 can successfully be met by undertaking relevant CPD activities that form part of the overall annual CPD plan (**Standard 1**). The activities undertaken need to seek to develop knowledge and skills to enhance the quality of delivery of services and to improve outcomes (**Standard 4**). The CPD activities that are reported to the College must reflect a mixture of activities that cumulatively amount to a minimum of 40 hours (**Standard 3**). To achieve this, a registrant's completed submission will consist of CPD activities that fall within *at least* three of the six categories of CPD activity (please refer to the document titled Categories of CPD Activities for more details). Each year, within the 40 hours, there must be not less than three hours of CPD activities related to ethical conduct (**Standard 2**).

All registrants are granted six hours in recognition of the time dedicated to identify learning goals and plan relevant CPD activities. These hours are automatically credited on the registrant's online recording tool.

STEP 4

Reflect & Evaluate Learning

The role of reflection is an integral part of effective professional social work practice and development. Once a registrant completes activities within their CPD plan, it is important to identify and evaluate what learning may have been acquired (i.e. what professional skills and knowledge have been enhanced?) and how this newly acquired learning may promote better outcomes for the recipients of the services provided and overall enhances the quality of practice delivery.

This reflective piece is captured in the Statement on Learning which is the second to last step in the submission process. The Statement on Learning provides the opportunity to articulate how the CPD activities undertaken throughout the year have sought to enhance the quality of your practice. It may be useful to utilize a reflective journal or diary to record your thoughts throughout the year, as this type of evaluation process can be very informative in planning your CPD in future years.

STEP 5

Submit

Registrants are required to document professional development by maintaining a continuous, up-to-date and accurate record of CPD activities (**Standard 5**). Each registrant is also required to report these activities to the College (**Standard 6**). To complete the CPD program, each registrant must declare that the Standards for CPD have been met and submit their CPD goals, activities and statement on learning to the College.

While registrants may record CPD activities as they are completed in the CPD section of the online member services portal, it is expected and required that registrants retain any records relating to their continuing professional development activities for five years.

As the CPD program is built upon principles of self-directed learning, the College is open to considering the approach to professional development that a particular registrant has undertaken in meeting the Standards for CPD. Individual registrants are best suited to determine their approach to CPD.

The CPD Program is self-directed as it takes into account that social workers have varying professional development needs, differing opportunities to access resources and different ways of learning.

While the College is not prescriptive about which CPD activities should be undertaken with the exception of ethical conduct, it is required that registrants engage in a *mixture* of activities with the aim of developing or improving professional knowledge and skills to enhance the quality of social work delivery. We

Failure to Comply with the CPD Program

also expect that registrants will participate in various types of professional development activities over consecutive years. To support this, we have identified broad categories of CPD activities and the maximum hours of CPD activities that can qualify under each category towards the total 40 hours of CPD in any given year. Please refer to the document titled Categories of CPD Activities to review these categories.

The Bylaws establish that registrants who are in the full or clinical classes of registration who do not comply with the requirements of the CPD program by October 31 of each year will have their status changed to “Not in Good Standing – CPD”. Registrants with the status “Not in Good Standing – CPD” are not eligible to renew their registration until they have complied with the outstanding CPD requirements and their registration status is returned to “Good Standing.” If a registrant does not complete CPD by January 31 and their status remains as “Not in Good Standing – CPD” their registration will be cancelled. A registrant with a status of “Not in Good Standing – CPD”, who transfers to the Non-Practicing class of registration after November 1, cannot renew their registration and registration will be cancelled after January 31 until they comply with the CPD requirements and return to a status of “Good Standing.”

Any registrant whose registration has been cancelled may reinstate their registration by complying with the bylaws, including CPD, and paying a reinstatement fee on or before April 30. After that date a new application is required to regain registration. Requirements for registration include a licensure examination, after September 1, 2015.

Audit Review

Currently, the College is not conducting audits on CPD submissions, however, it is anticipated that in the future, on an annual basis, a percentage of registrants will be requested to provide additional documentation for audit review by the Quality Assurance Committee (**Standard 7**).

This audit review process is intended to confirm the nature of a registrant’s claim and declaration in meeting the Standards for CPD and to assess the effectiveness of the CPD program.

Important Dates

- October 31** CPD Reporting Deadline.
- November 1** Registration status changes to “Not in Good Standing – CPD” for failing to declare or complete CPD requirements by this deadline.
- January 31** Registration Renewal (all CPD requirements must be completed).
- April 30** Reinstatement deadline following non-payment of fees (additional reinstatement fee applies).

The College is keen to support its registrants in completing the requirements for the CPD program by facilitating their engagement in meaningful continuous professional development. Please email any questions or suggestions related to CPD to: cpdsupport@bccsw.ca

Acknowledgements

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Reference

Madden, C.A. and Mitchell, V.A. (1993) *Professional Standards and Competence: A Survey of Continuing Education for the Professions*. Bristol: Department for Continuing Education, University of Bristol.