

## **Continuing Professional Development (CPD)**

### General requirements

- (a) Accredited Paralegals are required to complete a minimum of 10 hours of CPD per annum.
- (b) Accredited Paralegals are responsible for identifying and planning their own CPD (often done in consultation with their supervising solicitor).
- (c) The CPD year for Accredited Paralegals runs from 1 February to 31 January of the following year. The exception is for Trainee Accredited Paralegals, where the 10 hours of CPD must be completed within one year of the commencement of the traineeship.
- (d) All CPD must be recorded in the member section of the Law Society's website to demonstrate that they have (i) identified their learning needs (ii) planned CPD activity to address those needs (iii) undertaken relevant CPD (iv) evaluated the CPD activity, what was learnt and how the lessons of the CPD activity can be put into practice.
- (e) Annually, a 5% random sample of members will have their plan, record and justifications examined. They will also be asked to forward evidence of their CPD activity. The Society also reserves the right to use risk-based sampling when necessary.

### Hours, exemptions and waivers

- (f) CPD hours must consist of:
  - i. a minimum of five hours of verifiable CPD per year for each accreditation held (i.e. with one accreditation a minimum of 10 hours CPD must be undertaken whereas with two accreditations a minimum of 15 hours CPD must be undertaken)
  - ii. a minimum of five hours of private study CPD per year
  - iii. the requirements are not reduced for those working part-time.
- (g) There are no formal exemptions from the CPD requirements although Accredited Paralegals can appeal to the Committee
- (h) The following waivers apply:
  - i. long-term illness for twelve weeks or more in respect of the same illness in any practice year may reduce the CPD requirement in proportion to the number of weeks worked during the practice year, rounded up to the nearest complete hour.
  - ii. maternity/adoption leave may reduce their CPD requirement in proportion to the number of weeks worked in the practice year rounded up to the nearest complete hour in accordance with the formula below.

Divide the number of weeks worked by 5.2 and round up to the nearest whole number e.g. Accredited Paralegals who work between 37 and 39 weeks in a practice year will require to undertake 8 hours CPD that year.

## Nature of CPD

All training chosen must help maintain or develop knowledge or skills relevant to the current or likely future careers. The range of activities recognised for CPD is deliberately wide-ranging. The focus is on relevance, continuing competence, enhancement of skills and compliance with the Society's conduct and service standards.

As well as traditional methods like attending courses, the following activities could be counted for CPD purposes: structured coaching, online training, distance learning and private study

- (i) Examples of areas of study:
  - i. specific update on law, legal knowledge or legal procedure
  - ii. management and organisation
  - iii. professional skills (e.g. communication skills)
  - iv. client care
  - v. ethics, attitudes and values (including anti-money laundering)
  - vi. risk management
  - vii. commercial awareness
  - viii. any area designed to improve an individual's ability to operate properly and effectively as an Accredited Paralegal.
  
- (j) Verifiable CPD should meet the following criteria:
  - i. have educational aims and objectives relevant to your development
  - ii. have clearly anticipated outcomes (e.g. what do you expect to learn from attending the course)
  - iii. have quality controls (ie. you should be given the opportunity to give feedback or ask questions)
  - iv. be verifiable (ie. able to be evidenced) from the activity organiser and indicate the number of hours (entailed).
  
- (k) Non-verifiable CPD may include any of the following:
  - i. reading relevant reports, journals or legal papers
  - ii. general reading of professional magazines (e.g. The Journal or Scots Law Times)
  - iii. non-structured coaching or mentoring sessions
  - iv. writing on law e.g. law books, journals, publications for clients, client's own publication, newspapers and magazines
  - v. research which relates to legal topics or has relevance to the practice/organisation which results in some form of written document, precedent, memorandum etc.
  - vi. internal training on case management systems or other internal systems.

Undertaking compulsory training for reason other than CPD regulations may count as long as it is relevant i.e. undertaking CPD for another body (e.g. STEP, SPA or SOLAS).