



RIAI Policy on CPD

Approved by RIAI Council, 4 September 2009

Introduction

CPD, or Continuing Professional Development, is the term used to describe lifelong learning or continuing education as it relates to those active in the professions. There have been several attempts to define the concept, but this one has wide application:

'The systematic maintenance, improvement and broadening of knowledge and skill and the development of personal qualities necessary for the execution of professional and technical duties throughout the practitioner's working life'.

In a rapidly changing environment CPD is the mechanism whereby we work to ensure that professionals are up to date in their field. For the individual, in today's competitive and changing world, CPD is essential for continued employment and advancement. For the practice it is essential for survival. As for the RIAI, one of its most important roles is to provide Architects and Architectural Technicians/Technologists with the intellectual and technical support they need to continue delivering an effective service to society.

"the most precious asset any professional controls is knowledge of the discipline and the skill to apply it effectively. Over the long run it is more important to maintain the value of this asset than the office, the furniture, the computer hardware, or even the bank account." Professor Robert Gutman, Progressive Architecture, June 1992.

It has always been implicitly understood that it is the responsibility of any professional to maintain his or her professional skills. In 1998 the RIAI introduced its first formal CPD policy. In 2008, responding to registration of the title of 'Architect', its new role as Registration Body, and an increasingly complex regulatory, technical, and professional environment, the RIAI drafted a new policy to protect the consumer, support the profession and promote the production of high quality architecture.

Performance Standards

Society, in the shape of the Civil Law, expects of a professional that he or she will exercise reasonable skill and care in the course of employment. The standard applied is "...the ordinary skill of an ordinary competent man exercising that particular art." (*Building and the Law*. David Keane, RIAI, 1993).

Article 22 of European Directive 2005/36/EC on the Recognition of Professional Qualifications requires that:

"in accordance with the procedures specific to each Member State, continuing education and training shall ensure that persons who have completed their studies are able to keep abreast of professional developments to the extent necessary to maintain safe and effective practice."

The Building Control Act 2007 Section 2 defines professional misconduct as "any act, omission or pattern of conduct of the registered professional that – (a) is in breach of the code prepared by the relevant registration body. . . ."

The new RIAI Code of Professional Conduct, drafted under this provision of the Act, includes requirements for the maintenance of professional skills.

Principle 1: Architects should act with honesty and integrity when providing architectural services.

1.2 Architects shall ensure that they continually maintain and develop their professional knowledge and skill in all areas relevant to their practice in the State to the standards established by the Registration Body.

1.3 Architects shall continually seek to raise their standards of excellence in all relevant areas including architectural education, research, training, design, technology, construction methods and practice.”

Principle 3: Architects shall uphold the integrity and dignity of their profession.

3.13 Architects at all times shall maintain a reasonable level of professional skill and competence and at least to the standards as established by the Registration Body.

These principles form the basis of the RIAI Policy on CPD, which applies to any person who is registered on the Register for Architects and to all members of the RIAI, except those who are no longer professionally active.

Purpose

The purpose of RIAI CPD is:

- To support architects and architectural technologists in the production of high quality architecture
- To protect the consumer
- To protect the public interest
- To increase client satisfaction
- To increase effectiveness (for the practice)
- To increase job satisfaction (for the architect or architectural technologist)
- To promote career advancement (for the employee)
- To promote the performance and the reputation of the profession

The pace of change has made keeping up-to-date an increasingly onerous task for the individual practitioner, while increasing expectations on the part of consumers put pressure on both practitioners and the professional bodies to ensure that skills are indeed being maintained. This updated RIAI Policy on CPD is intended to provide a support structure which will help individual registrants and members, and the RIAI as a body, to meet these demands.

RIAI Policy

RIAI Policy on CPD can be summarized under the following headings:

- **Application**
- **Standards**
- **Requirements**
- **Recommendations**
- **Sanctions**
- **Confidentiality**
- **Supports**

Application

This Policy comes into force on 1st October 2009 and applies to any person who is registered on the Register for Architects (registrants) and to all members of the RIAI, except those who are no longer professionally active. For those on maternity, parental, carer, or long-term sick leave, not involved in architecture or construction, semi-retired or unemployed it will be deemed sufficient to meet the full requirement through Unstructured CPD including, where possible, relevant online programme provision.

The RIAI may at its absolute discretion waive or relax CPD requirements in any particular case if its satisfied that doing so will not result in undue risk to clients or the public.

Where a registrant/member is responsible for the employment of others, he/she shall support them in meeting their CPD obligations and shall develop and maintain a CPD policy within the employing organisation.

Standards

The RIAI *Standards of Knowledge, Skill and Competence* for Architects and for Architectural Technicians/Technologists represent the minimum standards required. Any person to whom the Policy applies must take all reasonable steps to maintain an appropriate level of professional skills and, at a minimum, to maintain on a consistent basis the requirements of the relevant *RIAI Standard of Knowledge, Skill and Competence*.

While the *Standards* represent the baseline requirements that can be expected of a general practitioner at a given level, registrant/members can be expected to have greater expertise in certain areas, and indeed additional areas of expertise according to their specialism and/or career progression. The *Standards* provide a benchmark against which registrant/members can measure themselves and thus identify areas where development may be required or desirable.

Requirements

The RIAI requires the following minimum level of CPD involvement.

- 1) In the course of each year, each registrant/member must accumulate a total of 40 hours of CPD activity, divided as follows:
 - a. 20 hours Structured CPD
 - b. 20 hours Unstructured CPD
 - The year runs from October to September.
 - 1 hour of learning time = 1 CPD point unless otherwise specified by the RIAI.
 - 'Structured' CPD is a learning activity for which the learning outcomes are identified by the provider in advance. (A 'learning outcome' is a statement of what the learner is expected to know, understand or be able to do on successful completion of the activity.) All other forms of CPD activity are regarded as 'Unstructured'.
 - Structured CPD does not have to be provided, approved or accredited by the RIAI.

Structured CPD

Provided that they confirm to the definition for Structured CPD, activities qualifying as Structured CPD Activity can include:

- 'CPD designated' RIAI events (including educational events organised by Regional Groups, etc.)
- Relevant online seminars such as those provided or recommended by the RIAI
- RIAI/UCD Professional Practice Lecture Series
- Relevant educational events run by IEI, SCS, and other professional organisations
- Events recommended or listed by the RIAI in its CPD Resources information
- Relevant courses/programmes run by recognised educational institutions
- Relevant conferences, lectures, seminars and workshops
- Structured site visits and study tours
- Technical demonstrations
- RIAI CPD Network seminars and visits
- Service on Council or on an appropriate RIAI Committee

The number of Structured CPD hours that can be claimed is limited to learning-time; time spent in registration or coffee/meal breaks does not count. Participation in Structured CPD must be supported by attendance records/certificates, test results or evidence of successful completion of a course.

Unstructured CPD

Activities qualifying as Unstructured CPD Activity can include:

- Personal study or development
- Reading *Architecture Ireland*
- Reading RIAI *E-Bulletins*
- Unstructured Site visits (site visits to one's own projects are excluded) and Study Tours
- Attendance at relevant court cases, oral hearings, etc. (proceedings involving one's own practice excluded)
- Exhibitions
- Case studies, other than for course requirements.
- Peer review (routine in-house design reviews are excluded)
- Original research (unless research is one's principal activity)
- Delivery of lectures (lectures about one's own practice excluded)
- Writing for publication
- Reading books, journals, technical literature, etc.

Whether Structured or Unstructured, each learning activity or event must be completed by a 'Reflection' prepared by the participant. This is an integral part of the process of adding the activity to the registrant/member's CPD Record and advice and worked examples are provided in the RIAI CPD Engage User Manual. However, someone engaged in a formal educational programme or working towards a particular qualification - certificate, diploma, degree, or accreditation - need complete only one Reflection for that activity at the end of the course or of the CPD year, whichever is earlier.

2) Where the registrant/member is providing services on the basis of a specific RIAI Accreditation (e.g. Conservation, PSDP, etc.) at least 8 hours of Structured CPD must relate to that topic.

3) Every registrant/member must undertake at least one component of the RIAI CPD Refresher Course every year. From 2009 this programme will take the form of a number of seminars delivered online annually in response to developments and changes in the areas of:

- Statutes and Regulations
- Building Contract and Procurement Risk Management and Insurances
- Any other matters (including technological issues) of a serious nature which in the opinion of the RIAI should be brought to the attention of registrants/members.

4) Every registrant/member must read Practice Notes, Practice and/or Member *E-Bulletins*, the *CPD E-Zine* and all other circulated material which is given a 'CPD Designation' by the RIAI and make themselves familiar with the contents of those items which are relevant to their own responsibilities. This contributes to the Unstructured requirement. If carried out consistently and conscientiously this could in some cases meet the full requirement for Unstructured CPD.

5) Registrant/members must use **RIAI CPD Engage** to record their CPD.

6) EEA Registrants/and Architect Members who have been admitted without the requirement to complete an Irish examination in or assessment of professional practice have undertaken to ensure that they have sufficient knowledge of Irish Law, Regulations and Professional and Contract Procedures for practice in Ireland. This undertaking must be fulfilled within one year of the date of Registration/Membership by attendance at the lectures delivered at an RIAI approved course in professional practice. Where the CPD hours involved exceed 40, the balance of hours can be credited towards their CPD obligation for the following year.

Note: CPD completed to meet the requirements of other professional or registration bodies can count towards RIAI requirements provided that it relates to the relevant RIAI *Standard of Knowledge, Skill and Competence*.

Recommendations

Professionals have a duty to ensure that they are capable of providing the services they offer. Within the context of RIAI CPD Requirements it is the responsibility of each registrant/member to judge the best approach to undertaking the CPD activity necessary to;

- a. maintain compliance with the relevant *Standard of Knowledge, Skill and Competence*, and
- b. acquire and maintain the skills appropriate to their current activities and chosen career path.

What is appropriate for a partner in an architectural practice will differ from what is necessary for a junior employee; the needs of a lecturer in the history of architecture will differ from those of a technician/technologist working for a Local Authority.

Each registrant/member should carry out a self-assessment against the relevant *Standard of Knowledge, Skill and Competence*, develop a personal CPD strategy, and at least once a year should review progress and consider an outline plan of action for the months ahead.

Once a registrant/member has ensured his/her compliance with the relevant *Standard* he/she is free to choose the CPD topics which are most relevant to his/her own interests and responsibilities. Registrant/members are encouraged to consider their CPD activities in terms of both organisational and personal needs.

It is recommended that, in general, not more than fifty percent of the CPD hours accumulated in any one year should be spent on any one topic. This does not apply to someone engaged in a formal educational programme or working towards a particular qualification (certificate, diploma, degree, or accreditation).

It is important that any CPD activity undertaken, whether Structured or Unstructured, is deliberate, focused and planned with a particular educational end in view. To this end the RIAI recommends adoption of the cycle of Self Assessment – Planning – Learning – Reflection – Self Assessment which is supported by the **RIAI CPDEngage** system. This can result in what has been described as an upward “Virtuous spiral” of positive self awareness, self-confidence and professional improvement.

Monitoring

Compliance with RIAI CPD Requirements is mandatory. Registrants/members must keep records to demonstrate their compliance and should do so using the online system provided by RIAI CPD Engage. Members will periodically receive automatically generated notifications of their current CPD status. At the end of each cycle the number of CPD hours recorded for each member will be monitored automatically through RIAI CPD Engage. In addition, a proportion of CPD records will be randomly selected by computer for detailed audit each year. Registrants/members whose records are being audited will be notified. RIAI education staff will have no involvement in monitoring members’ records. The monitoring function will be carried out separately under the supervision of the Registrar.

Registrants/members who do not have access to the internet must keep a hard copy record of their CPD activity which they must submit to the RIAI by 30 September each year.

Sanctions

Any person failing to meet the requirements will be alerted to the deficiency before the end of the year and at the end of the year given a period of 6 weeks grace within which to make good.

If still not compliant at the end of the grace period the registrant/member will be asked to provide an explanation for his/her non-compliance. Unless there is good reason the matter will be referred to the Professional Conduct Committee. Sanctions open to the Professional Conduct Committee include censure, fines, suspension, conditions for continued registration, and removal from the register.

Confidentiality

Every RIAI member has password-protected access to their own RIAI CPD Engage account, and should not divulge their password to any third party. RIAI education staff will have no function in monitoring members’ records. Any procedures relating to non-compliance will be carried out under the supervision of the Registrar on terms of strict confidentiality. Every member’s CPD record is given by the member on the basis that the RIAI will keep it confidential and the RIAI agrees to do so. The RIAI regards the CPD record

as personal information for the purposes of the Data Protection Acts and the Freedom of Information Act 1997, as amended.

Supports

1. *RIAI Online CPD System*

RIAI CPD Engage provides a centralised source including all of the key information and tools members need to plan and undertake CPD effectively. It includes the RIAI Standards of Knowledge Skill and Competences against which members should self-assess regularly to plan their CPD. The system also includes a catalogue of upcoming programmes and can notify members of programmes in their stated areas of interest. RIAI CPD Engage is available to all active architect, associate, architectural graduate and architectural technician/technologist members and fellows who are up-to-date with their subscriptions and who have provided the Institute with a valid unique email address.

2. *RIAI Resources*

Available on the Online CPD System is all basic RIAI documentation, including Practice Notes, Standard Documents, lists of relevant legislation and of essential reference publications.

3. *RIAI CPD Refresher Course*

Intensive online seminars providing an up-date on essential information. The courses emphasise what members must inform themselves about, and brief them on recent and imminent developments.

4. *On-Going RIAI CPD Courses*

The RIAI provides a range of CPD activities, in response to external events such as new legislation, the needs of members' and recommendations of the CPD Advisory Committee. The development of CPD events by Regional Groups is to be encouraged and supported.

5. *CPD Designation*

To help members identify CPD content, the RIAI will assign a 'CPD designation' together with Credit Hours and Learning Outcomes to suitable RIAI events, service on RIAI Council and Committees, relevant articles in Irish Architect, CPD related material included in RIAI circulations, and on the RIAI website.

6. *RIAI CPD Network*

Under the RIAI CPD Network system, building industry manufacturers and suppliers active in Ireland can submit specially designed trade literature, design guides, seminars, etc. to the RIAI for assessment. Once a proposal meets the standards set out in the *RIAI Guidelines for the Preparation of CPD Publications or Events* it is given RIAI approval, and the company is allowed to publish the material or launch the event under the 'RIAI CPD Network' logo.

Members can use materials or events carrying the RIAI CPD Network logo for their own personal CPD or as a source for In-house CPD sessions in a Practice, knowing that they have been subject to RIAI educational evaluation.

7. *CPD Certificates and Recording*

To assist members in maintaining a record of their CPD activities the RIAI will issue evidence of attendance for all RIAI CPD events. The online system provides tools for CPD planning and recording.

8. *CPD Advisory Committee*

The CPD Advisory Committee includes representatives from Administration, the Board of Architectural Education and other Divisions of the RIAI. Its role is to:

- Identify CPD needs of the profession
- Provide professional input to planning of the RIAI CPD Programme
- Instigate new or other courses as necessary
- Accredite CPD events/materials
- Review performance of CPD policy in action.