

Mandatory Continuing Professional Development and you

April 2007 will see the introduction of Mandatory Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in the Northern Territory. Other jurisdictions have implemented a mandatory Continuing Legal Education or CPD Scheme for a number of years: New South Wales since 1987, Victoria 2004, Queensland 2005 and Western Australia 2006.

The premise of CPD is founded in the idea that practitioners have a continuing obligation to themselves and to the community to participate in professional development that improves their ability to engage in the practice of law by extending their knowledge and skills in areas that are relevant to their current and future practice needs.

Practitioners are required to complete a minimum of 12 CPD points in a CPD year to maintain their practising certificate. The CPD year begins on 1 April and ends on 31 March the following year.

CPD activities can be undertaken through a broad range of providers; professional organisations, educational institutions and in-house trainers. You decide which activities satisfy your individual requirements.

CPD points can be attained through a variety of activities – it's not just a matter of attending seminars at a set location.

The following table is an example of CPD activities and their points value:

Activity type	CPD points	Maximum points per year
attending a seminar, workshop, lecture, conference, (including video conferences and web streamed conferences and seminars) discussion groups	1 hour = 1 point <i>(breaks not included)</i>	6 CPD points for a single activity*
audio, or video material specifically designed for the purpose of updating a practitioner's legal knowledge	1 hour = 1 point	6 CPD points
preparation and/or presentation for seminars e.g. presenting LSNT CPD seminars 1 hour = 1 point	4 points for substantive presentation (incl preparation)	6 CPD points
lecturing in, GDLP, Master of Laws or Bachelor of Laws or other appropriate university course	1 hour = 1 point	6 CPD points
writing an article for a legal publication or a legal article in a non-legal publication, structural editing of legal material and the refereeing of an article	1000 words = 1 point	6 CPD points for a single article* see note
completion of approved specialist accreditation course in the year of their attempt	12 points	12 points

Note: CPD points cannot be claimed in respect of an article that deals with substantially the same content as a presentation for which CPD points have been claimed.

Remember CPD is an opportunity for you to develop your abilities as a solicitor/barrister and provide a higher standard of legal counsel to your clients.

Keeping up with the requirements under Mandatory CPD won't be onerous because you are probably doing it anyway. As a professional, you are likely to be spending time keeping up with new legislation and technology, improving your performance skills

and understanding changing market environments. Mandatory CPD simply formalises this process.

For a further information please refer to the LSNT Continuing Professional Development Guidelines and *CPD: A Guide for Practitioners*. Both documents are available on the Law Society's website www.lawsocnt.asn.au or by emailing the Professional Development Officer pdo@lawsocnt.asn.au.