

Continuing Professional Development

Continuing professional development (**CPD**) is essential to maintaining high standards of professional practice, relevance and currency of qualifications, and experience. It ensures that lawyers are continually updating and improving their skills, thereby maintaining the quality of the services delivered to their clients and the general public.

CPD for lawyers that is meaningful and relevant is important for maintaining excellence in the provision of legal services to both businesses and the community. The focus for lawyers should be on good learning and development outcomes, rather than on compliance as an aim in itself.

If you hold a current practising certificate, each year you need to complete a minimum of 10 hours of CPD activities across each of the four prescribed competency areas. The CPD year runs from 1 April through to 31 March of the following year.

CPD Rules

Under the Uniform Law Scheme, the CPD [rules for barristers](#) and the [rules for solicitors](#) outline the types of activities you can undertake and for which you can earn CPD points.

You must complete at least one hour in each of the following four areas:

- ethics and professional responsibility;
- practice management and business skills;
- professional skills; and
- substantive law.

There are a range of options for completing CPD. You can:

- participate in a lecture, seminar, workshop or discussion group either in person or via a web-based programme. Webinars and online activities should take place in real time and involve an interactive element;
- research, prepare or edit a legal article;
- prepare, or present, or both, a CPD activity;
- be a member of a legal committee, taskforce or practice section, if the work is of substantial significance to the practice of law and assists your professional development; and
- complete postgraduate studies relevant to your practice needs
- undertake private study of audio/visual materials or other educational activities if it is specifically designed to update your knowledge or skills.



QUICK FACTS

CPD is governed by CPD rules for Barristers and Solicitors.

CPD points accrued before 1 July 2022 can be carried over for the remainder of the CPD year.

The competency areas for CPD remain the same, with some slight expansion of Business Skills under Practice Management.

Three excess CPD point can be carried into the next CPD year.

CPD verification audits may be conducted.

Evidence of CPD points earned must be kept for a period of three years.

An undertaking can be entered into if CPD point's requirements are not met in any given year.

Management systems directions may be used to require appropriate CPD study is undertaken for specific legal fields.

There are limits to the number of hours you can do for each activity, please see the table below.

CPD Activity	Units of Activity	Limits that Apply
Participate in a lecture, seminar, workshop or discussion group.	One unit per hour of activity.	No limits.
Research, prepare and/ or edit a legal article.	One unit per 1,000 words.	No more than five CPD units per year.
Prepare and/ or present CPD activity.	One unit per hour of activity.	No more than five CPD units per year.
Be a member of a legal committee, taskforce or practice section.	One unit per two hours of activity.	No more than three CPD units per year.
Postgraduate studies.	One unit per hour of activity.	No limits.
Private study of audio/ visual materials or other educational activities.	One. unit per hour of activity	No limits for the 2019/20 and 2020/21 practising year.

Lawyers who are unable to comply with CPD requirements

If you are unable to comply with your CPD obligations for other reasons (e.g. illness or other special circumstances) you can seek an exemption from the requirement to undertake CPD activities in full or in part.

CPD reporting

When you apply to renew your practising certificate, you must declare whether you've met your CPD requirements for the year. If you haven't met your CPD requirements, you should provide details of any exemptions granted to you, or include an explanation as to why you have not met your CPD requirements (see 'Outcome of not meeting CPD requirements' below).

Verification (audit)

Uniform Law rules for CPD give more clarification on how the Board can carry out audits of lawyers' CPD compliance. CPD verification audits can cover the most recent CPD year, or any of the three previous years.

If you're selected for an audit, it is expected that you will need to verify, within a given time, that you've met your CPD obligations. You can provide any of the following documents to prove you have attended each CPD session:

- your CPD record card; and
- supporting evidence (e.g. receipts, copies of presentation notes, copies of enrolment records or certificates of completion).

Outcome of not meeting CPD requirements

If you haven't met your CPD requirements for the year, it is likely that you will be required to make up the deficient CPD points within the current or next CPD period and provide periodic reports of CPD activities you have earned.

Successive periods of not meeting CPD requirements or an absence of a reasonable and satisfactory explanation will be taken seriously as a breach of professional obligations. In some circumstances, we may also consider disciplinary action against you that may affect your suitability to practice.

Exemptions

You can get an exemption from completing some or all of your CPD activities for the year under certain circumstances. Some reasons for exemption include:

- if you have a disability or you have suffered an illness preventing you from completing CPD
- hardship or other special circumstances
- parental leave

To apply for an exemption, please contact our office and discuss your needs with our staff. You may also be eligible for an exemption if you only practised for part of the CPD year. In this case you only need to complete CPD units for the time that you held a practising certificate. The [pro-rata calculation table in the CPD rules](#) will show you how many units you need to complete.

Transitional arrangements

Under the *Legal Profession Uniform Law Application Act 2022* (**Application Act**) CPD points accrued prior to 1 July 2022 carry over for the remainder of the CPD year.

Approved CPD providers will continue to be approved.

The new CPDMS currently being commissioned by the Legal Practice Board will facilitate the transfer to Uniform Law for CPD.

Points accrued by government lawyers under CPD arrangements are recognised and can be carried over into the remainder of the CPD period following 1 July 2022.