

ATL ADVICE



Learning in the workplace: taking time off for CPD

What is continuing professional development?

Continuing professional development (CPD) is activity that develops attributes and improves knowledge and skills, which can support an individual's needs and improve their professional practice.

Workplace CPD enables staff to reflect on what they are doing, try new approaches and, in doing so, increase students' learning. CPD also offers staff the opportunity to increase skills and knowledge that contribute to career development.

Many people think of CPD as attending a course, but there are different ways CPD can be accessed and delivered.

For more information, members in England should see the Training and Development Agency (TDA) and Institute for Learning (IfL) websites www.tda.gov.uk and www.ifl.ac.uk, which have lists of what is considered CPD in the workplace.

Members in Scotland can find more information from CPD Scotland at www.ltscotland.org.uk/cpdscotland/index.asp, part of the Learning and Teaching Scotland website www.ltscotland.org.uk. The Scottish Government funds a national database of CPD, available at www.ltscotland.org.uk/cpdscotland/cpdfind/searchcpd/index.asp.

In Northern Ireland, members can get more information from the Regional Training Unit for Northern Ireland at www.rtuni.org, as well as their local Education and Library Board Curriculum Advisory and Support Services (CASS) service.

In Wales, the Assembly Government is embarking on a process of reform and reorganisation of CPD opportunities and it is envisaged that all school and college staff will have access to CPD. The bursary

scheme operated by the General Teaching Council for Wales is no longer operating.

What rights to CPD do I have in my workplace?

All workplaces should have policy on learning, development and training that sets out:

- what learning means within that specific workplace
- what support for learning is available for staff
- clear procedures for requesting support for learning.

Only lecturers in the post-compulsory sector in England have the specific right to access CPD as laid out under their IfL membership. Currently the minimum amount of CPD full-time lecturers in England are expected to undertake is 30 hours; see ATL's factsheet Teaching qualifications and CPD in the FE sector available from www.atl.org.uk/factsheets for more on this.

In Scotland, there is a 35-hour CPD commitment for teachers under the Scotland Negotiating Committee for Teachers (SNCT) agreement for professional review and development (PRD). It is recommended that staff at colleges in Scotland should have a minimum of six days of CPD training per year.

While support staff and teachers in England and Wales do not have any requirement to undertake CPD or learning within their workplace, members in the maintained sector in England are able to use the performance management (PM) system within their schools to discuss and press for support to learn. See ATL's advice on performance management and CPD at www.atl.org.uk/pm.

Members in Scotland can find out more about PRD in the Scottish Government's publication Guidelines on the procedure of Professional review and development for teachers in Scotland, available from the Scottish Government website at www.scotland.gov.uk.

In Northern Ireland, the performance review and staff development scheme (PRSD) applies to all qualified teachers other than teachers participating in induction and early professional development and opportunities for professional development are made available to all teaching staff.

In Wales new teachers starting induction are entitled to a grant of £3,700, followed by an EPD (Early Professional Development) grant of £1,000. These are administered by the GTCW. See <http://www.gtcw.org.uk/gtcw/index.php/en/professional-development/induction-and-epd-funding/induction-funding>.

The right to request time off

Regardless of the lack of entitlement to CPD in the workplace, in Great Britain, all education workers have the right to request the time off to train if their workplace has more than 250 staff. For schools and colleges with fewer staff, this right will be extended in April 2011. More information about this is available for members in England, Scotland and Wales at www.direct.gov.uk/en/Employment/Employees/Timeoffandholidays/DG_183635.

Members in Northern Ireland can find out more information at www.delni.gov.uk.

How do I make an application to undertake learning?

Ideally any application for learning should be made during a yearly appraisal or performance management meeting. However, as this is not always achievable, you should ensure that an application is made as soon as possible.

Staff should always refer to any workplace policies on learning and development and follow the procedures in the document. It is advisable to put your request in writing. If you feel you need advice on how putting your request in writing, contact ATL's learning and development team at training@atl.org.uk.

When making your initial request, consider including the points listed below. This is to give your manager, CPD coordinator or other relevant member of staff a clear idea of what it is you want to study, and why and how it will impact your current working.

Any application should contain:

- what you would like to learn

- where the learning will take place
- the provider
- any related costs and time off
- the potential qualifications the learning could lead to (eg ATL courses are accredited at postgraduate level)
- how the learning could relate to current or future roles
- how the learning could improve the performance of both you and your students.

If no timescale for reply is stated in your policy, ask for one within reason, such as 10 to 15 working days. You should expect a written response from the person who can authorise your learning and you should ask for one if this is not covered under your workplace policy.

Can I appeal if my application is refused?

If you have a workplace learning policy, there should be a provision in place to appeal against a decision you think is unfavourable. You should use this in the first instance.

However, if there is neither provision for appeal nor a learning policy, you would be able to appeal by taking out a grievance - see the 'help and advice' section of ATL's website at www.atl.org.uk/help-and-advice/other-issues/grievances.asp for more information about this. Also, speak to your local union learning rep, workplace rep or branch secretary, who can help negotiations for a policy in your workplace or in the case of an appeal.

Claiming expenses

If you are requesting time off, you should also ask for funds from your employer to cover your expenses for travel and any accommodation costs. ATL courses are free to attend so the cost to your employer is greatly reduced. As the training undertaken is of benefit to not only yourself but also your employer this is a reasonable expectation.

Further information

FE members in England should see the IfL's Guidelines for your continuing professional development at www.ifl.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/5501/J11734-IfL-CPD-Guidelines-08.09-web-v3.pdf.

Unionlearn's publication Right to request time off to train – a guide for union learning reps is available at www.unionlearn.org.uk/files/publications/documents/180.pdf.



Need advice?

Your first point of contact is the ATL rep in your school/college. Your local ATL branch is also available to help, or you can contact ATL's member advisors on 020 7930 6441, email info@atl.org.uk. Don't forget there's lots more advice on ATL's website at www.atl.org.uk.

© Association of Teachers and Lecturers 2009. All rights reserved. Information on this sheet may be reproduced or quoted with proper acknowledgement to ATL.