

The College's Self-Directed Learning Program

Maximize your CPD points while expanding your scope of practice: create a learning plan

Practicing College members have the option of submitting a Learning Plan to the College if they are involved in numerous informal learning activities for which they wish to claim continuing professional development (CPD) points. While informal learning activities such as attending workshops, meetings, and self-study through books and journals are eligible for CPD points as outlined in Schedule 4 of the *College of Applied Biology Rules*, members are limited to claiming 15 points per year for these activities, unless a Learning Plan is filed with the College.

Focused learning goals, learning methods and resources, as well as proposed measures of achievement and outcomes should be outlined in learning plans. These plans are an especially valuable tool if you are seeking to expand your area(s) of practice simply out of interest, in response to an opportunity, or due to a change in employment. Submitting a Learning Plan to the College will exclude you from the annual CPD point limit for informal study and will assist you in developing a step-wise process to help ensure you are duly diligent in expanding your competency to match a desired area of practice.

How to develop a learning plan

After identifying your learning objectives, consider the associated skills sets and knowledge that you will have to acquire, as well as the various means of learning available to you. Learning methods tend to be similar regardless of practice area, and will likely include reading textbooks and journal articles, conducting related internet research, contacting or meeting with experts, and possibly field-based outings with or without the company of someone more experienced in the desired practice area (a mentor). Learning methods documented in the Learning Plan may also include formal courses offered by accredited post-secondary institutions, employers, government and professional associations. The final stage of developing the Learning Plan is developing objective criteria that will help both you and the College gauge the effectiveness of the plan. It is recommended that you seek the advice of a qualified resource professional or the College to

assist with drafting your Learning Plan. The duration and depth of a Learning Plan depends on the extent of practice expansion – i.e. how related the desired area of practice is to your current practice area(s).

Learning Plan activities must also be documented in the CPD form as they are completed, and will be subject to review by the Audit and Practice Review Committee in accordance with Rule 16. Signed copies of the Learning Plans submitted to the College will also be stored in your member file for reference.

It is important to be aware that filing a Learning Plan with the College alone is not sufficient to demonstrate your due diligence in achieving competency in a new area of practice. You should also consider enrolling in formal training, working with a qualified resource professional that can perform the role of a mentor, and ensuring peer review of your work. Further advice to members seeking to expand their area(s) of practice is found in the May 2014 issue of *College Matters* and is also archived online: <https://www.cab-bc.org/file-download/expanding-your-practice>

For more information about Learning Plans, or to access the template form used to submit Learning Plans, please visit the CPD section of the College's website: <https://www.cab-bc.org/continuing-professional-development>. 

