

Managing & Tracking Your CPD Points

DE-MYSTIFYING THE CPD PROGRAM

The College's Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Program was established to uphold the public interest by ensuring registered and in-training members maintain currency and competence in their field of practice. Secondly, professionals are encouraged to share their expertise for the benefit of the public and their profession. The CPD program provides incentive to engage in such activities.

The Audit and Practice Review Committee administers the College's CPD program and currently monitors the CPD activities of members through the annual audit program. Members who are chosen randomly to undergo an audit (or who volunteer to be audited) are required to submit up-to-date CPD records for the previous three-year period, a completed audit questionnaire, and a current resumé.

From the CPD forms submitted to the College, auditors have found many misperceptions about what activities are and are not eligible for CPD points. The most recent revisions to Schedule 4 of the *College of Applied Biology Rules*, which describes the CPD program, attempt to address these misperceptions and provide greater clarity for members in tracking their CPD activities.

STAY TUNED: The Audit and Practice Review Committee is currently exploring options for an online CPD tracking platform to streamline both tracking and monitoring of CPD points.

Confronting the top misperceptions about CPD

College members cannot claim CPD points for activities that are part of the routine duties and expectations of their employment.

- > *Example:* Joe, Senior Habitat Biologist at X company, cannot claim CPD points for reviewing the work of Dawn, Junior Habitat Biologist at X company. Joe can, however, claim points for delivering a guest presentation to officials at the Ministry of Environment, even if he is asked to do so by virtue of his employment at X company.

College members can claim CPD points for reading books or online resources related to applied biology (informal learning in the applied biology category – section 2.2.2 of Schedule 4); and for reading articles related to business, management, or a discipline on the periphery of applied biology that contributes to their knowledge and competence in the performance of their work (informal activities in the general professional learning category – section 2.1.1 of Schedule 4).

- > *Example:* Aquatic biologist Cindy can claim CPD points for reading an online best management practices document on algal identification under the informal learning in applied biology category. She can claim points under the informal learning general professional category for reviewing recently updated climate change projections, and also for reading the book 'Time Management for Dummies'.

GET INVOLVED IN YOUR COMMUNITY! College members can now claim 10 points (previously 5) for advising or being on the board of a community group that does work related to applied biology.

College members can claim CPD points for mentoring practicing or aspiring biologists whether or not they are members of the College, unless training others is a common expectation of one's position of employment (e.g. the relationship between a manager and junior biologist).

- > *Example:* Charlene, Manager of Y Company, cannot claim CPD points for mentoring Frank, a new hire. She can however claim CPD points for mentoring her friend's daughter, who is in her 3rd year of a biology program and trying to identify an area of specialization.

College members are encouraged to engage directly in research and to publish their research by virtue of the CPD points awarded for these activities.

- > *Example:* Darren, who received an NRC grant to identify the impacts of microbeads derived from detergents on lake trout, is eligible to claim CPD points for his work on this project and additional CPD points for any publication resulting from it.

Schedule 4 describes the eligibility criteria for CPD activities: <https://www.cab-bc.org/file-download/schedule-4> . 

Managing & Tracking Your CPD Points

Recent changes to the CPD Rules

- > CPD points can be claimed for mentoring aspiring or practicing biologists who are not members of the College.
- > Full-time employment is considered to be a minimum of 30 hours/week.
- > The annual point limit for general professional learning activities (formal and informal) has increased to 15.
- > The annual point limits for publishing scientific journals, contributing to books, writing guidelines, or conducting research has increased to 15 per project.
- > The annual point limit for acting as an expert witness has increased to 10.
- > The annual point limit for advising or being on the board of a community group that does work related to applied biology, or for participating in citizen science initiatives (e.g. bioblitzes, bird counts) has increased to 10.
- > The point valuation for those who hold elected office on Council has been increased to 15 per year.
- > Non-Council members who serve on College committees are now eligible to claim 10 points a year.



Reflections on a pleasant audit experience

I have been a Councillor for the College for the past 7 years and an auditor for the past four. There, it's out, I'm an auditor and I might be calling you someday! So, you can prepare now or panic later...

The audit process is critical to ensure ourselves and others that Professional Biologists are qualified and competent in their fields of practice, and that they practise continual learning to keep up-to-date and/or to expand their competency. As an auditor I try to establish a supportive relationship with the auditee and treat it as a learning exercise for both parties. In the early years it was evident that the process was not user friendly and we have made significant improvements to ensure reporting is as painless as possible. Still, most auditees seem to see it as a chore, some even see it as a threat, instead of an important learning tool and compass for their career path.

So, imagine my surprise this year when, having left a voice mail with Mike Demarchi identifying myself as his auditor and requesting a chat that he responded in less than 30 minutes seeming eager to discuss his submission. And then, get this-- he thanked me for doing it!! Its not that Mike needed the audit, his submission was well laid out, complete with details on his Continuing Professional Development credits (CPDs) - courses taken, reports read and work with others that had expanded his knowledge and his competencies. What was important to Mike was that we were doing the audits and that made the profession more professional.

So, why was Mike prepared and what does he think about CPDs? Well, Mike compares preparing for audits the same as doing taxes, its going to happen so you might as well be prepared and make it as painless as possible. It doesn't hurt that his company regularly reviews the professional development of its staff and has staff workshops on the audit process and how to keep up to date on your CPD form. If your company is not as pro-active or if you work alone, the College's website provides direction on how to use the Continuing Professional Development form and even has a self-auditing process so you can measure your own progress to ensure that, when your lucky number is drawn, you'll be ready. Or, you can just wait for my phone call...

Brian Clark, RPBio #227