

## Guide to CPD – Early Career

If you are just starting out on your career, the concept of CPD may be new to you. It might be a bit of a shock to realise that learning doesn't stop just because you have left college or university, but continued learning throughout your career is important for a number of reasons:

- Development within your current role
- Meeting changing needs within your role
- To meet future career objectives
- To keep things interesting
- To make you more attractive as a current (and prospective) employee

If you are aiming to become a corporate member of our Institute, or gain a professional registration such as becoming chartered, it is a requirement that you actively participate in CPD and record what you have done.

### I don't know what CPD is...

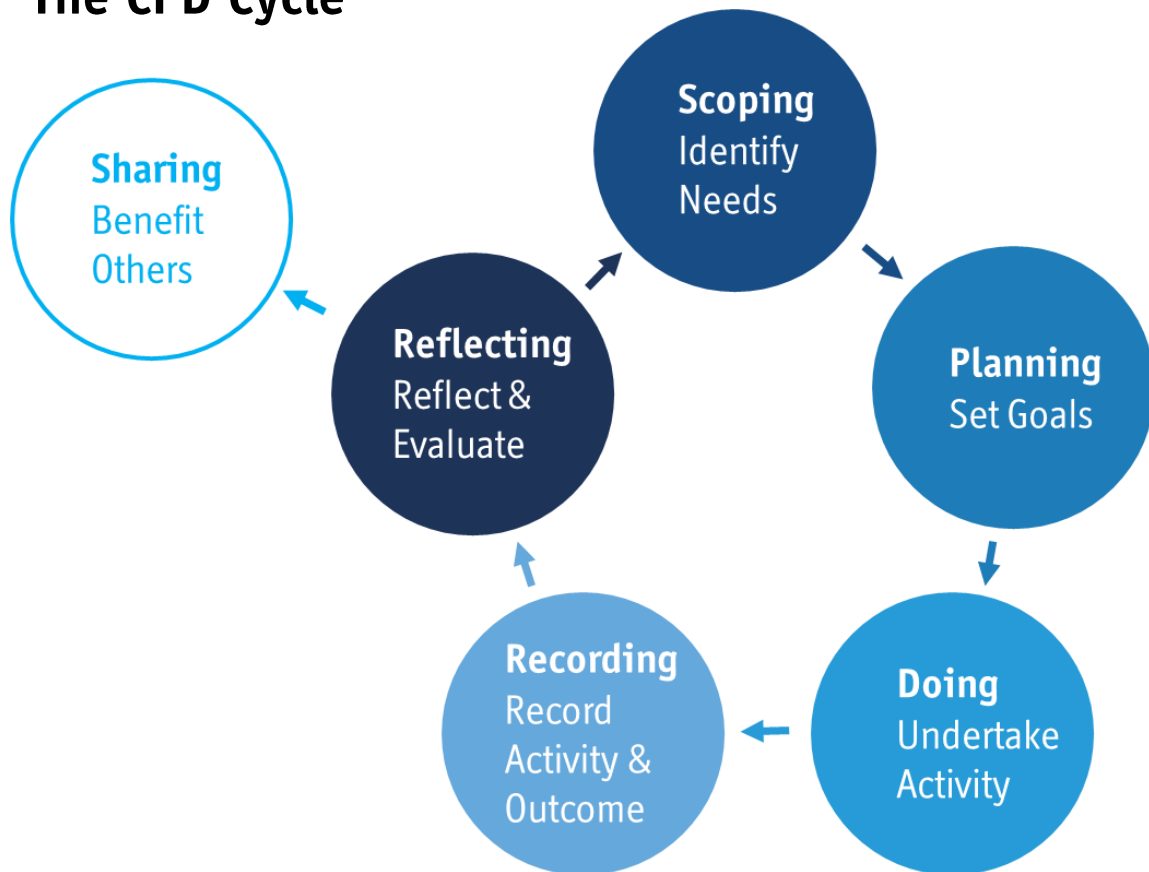
Let's start by decoding that acronym – CPD is Continuing Professional Development. It's how we make sure that as our career grows, our skills and capabilities are able to keep pace. The key word is "Continuing" – CPD shouldn't be something we just pick up when we are wanting a promotion or applying for professional registration, it should be something that we do as a key part of our working lives. The leading companies and managers recognise this and provide plenty of support for their employees, but ultimately it's down to YOU.

### But I don't know where to begin...

Don't worry – it probably won't be perfect straightaway, but the important thing is that you do make a start – and your Institute is a great place to get some support. You are probably undertaking a lot of development anyway, without knowing it perhaps. But CPD is so much more effective if you do it as part of a cycle, with some planning before and reflection afterwards. There's also an opportunity to use what you've learnt to help others.

A good place to begin is by setting aside some time to think about the direction you'd like your career to go – the classic interview question "Where do you see yourself in five or ten years' time?". Then consider what skills you already have to get you there - are there any things you might need to work on? Are there any things missing altogether?

## The CPD Cycle



That's probably the hardest part. Once you've got this you've made a start – you can now identify activities that are going to meet your needs. It doesn't all have to be done at once and you will probably need to prioritise – quality beats quantity every time. Make sure that you record what you've done – plus what you got out of it and what else you might need to do to meet your goal. This reflection stage is often neglected, but it's really helpful as it means that your CPD will continually evolve to meet your needs as your career develops. Don't forget to share what you learn – both by coaching others and by putting what you've learned into practice.

### Use your Institute

The Institute of Water is all about development – it's why we exist. Make the most of your membership by participating in events and using the services the Institute offers – The Water Mentoring Programme and Online CPD tool would both be great places to start. Helping others with their CPD can be a wonderful way of developing some of the skills you'll need as you advance in your career.

If you are having difficulty, don't struggle on alone – contact the Institute and we can put you in touch with someone who can help. It's why we are here!