



Ag Rialáil Gairmithe Sláinte
agus Cúraim Shóisialaigh

Regulating Health
Social Care Professionals

Radiographers Registration Board CPD Audit Trend Report

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Introduction

CORU

CORU is responsible for regulating health and social care professions. It comprises the Health and Social Care Professionals Council and the registration boards established under the Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005 (as amended) [The Act].

CORU's role is to protect the public by promoting high standards of professional conduct, professional education, training and competence amongst the designated professions.

It is made up of the Health and Social Care Professionals Council and the Registration Boards, one for each profession named in our Act.

The professions to be regulated are:

- > Clinical Biochemists
- > Counsellors and Psychotherapists
- > Medical Scientists
- > Orthoptists
- > Podiatrists
- > Psychologists
- > Social Care Workers

CORU currently has registers open for the following professions:

- > Dietitians/Dieticians
- > Occupational Therapists
- > Physiotherapists
- > Radiographers and Radiation Therapists
- > Social Workers
- > Speech and Language Therapists/Speech Therapists
- > Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians

Radiographers Registration Board

The Minister for Health appointed the Radiographers Registration Board on 24 January 2012. The Register for Radiographers and Radiation Therapists opened on 31 October 2013.

The Radiographers Registration Board has statutory responsibility for:

- > Establishing and maintaining the register of radiographers and radiation therapists
- > Recognising qualifications gained outside the State
- > Approving and monitoring education and training programmes for entry to the register
- > Setting the code of professional conduct and ethics, which give guidance to professionals on Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

CPD Portfolio Audit

The Radiographers Registration Board introduced their Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Standard and Requirements for radiographers and radiation therapists on 31 October 2015 with the first CPD cycle completed on 31 October 2017.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is a specified requirement in the Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics. CPD is an important tool for registrants to maintain their professional knowledge and skills and is a priority for the Radiographers Registration Board. The role of the Board is to provide support and guidance to registrants regarding CPD. The Board determined to conduct the first audit of their registrants' CPD Portfolios with a mandatory requirement to participate, if selected.

In 2017, radiographers and radiation therapists were advised by their Board that a mandatory CPD audit would take place. The purpose of the audit was to conduct a review of portfolios to establish levels of compliance with the Radiographers Registration Board CPD Standard and Requirements.

The radiographers and radiation therapists CPD audit of the period 31 October 2015 to 31 October 2017 was delayed until 2018, due to CORU's scheduled office move.

This report outlines the findings of the CPD audit and highlights learning achieved through implementation of audit, including general statistics and trends identified. A survey of registrants who participated in the audit was also undertaken using Survey Monkey. Registrants who participated in the audit were invited to provide feedback using open ended questions to enable the gathering of qualitative data.

The Radiographers Registration Board would like to thank registrants who provided invaluable feedback through the online survey and assessors who provided a report of findings, which has helped inform this report.

The findings from the Radiographers Registration Board CPD Audit will inform the development of future monitoring processes and CPD requirements for health and social care professionals regulated by CORU.

Background

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is a core element of CORU's regulatory framework, as specified in the Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005 (as amended). The Act requires a Registration Board to provide guidance and support to registrants concerning the practice of the designated profession and continuing professional development.

The Radiographers Registration Board recognises CPD as integral to professional radiography and radiation therapy practice. As such, the Radiographers Registration Board's Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics ("the Code") requires that registrants participate in CPD on an ongoing basis. Once registered, a radiographer or radiation therapist, is required to abide by their Professional Code of Conduct and Ethics.

The Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics for Radiographers (p.12, 2013) states that you must:

- a) make sure your knowledge, skills and performance are of a high quality, up to date and relevant to your practice
- b) participate in continuing professional development (CPD) on an ongoing basis by identifying your learning needs, making a personal learning plan, implementing the plan and reflecting on the learning you gained from the CPD activities
- c) maintain clear and accurate records of your CPD and submit your records for audits of compliance when requested by your Registration Board
- d) comply with your Registration Board's continuing professional development requirements.

The Health and Social Care Professionals Council, whose role is to oversee and coordinate the activities of Registration Boards, developed the Framework for CPD Standard and Requirements to ensure consistency among professions regulated by CORU. This framework was adopted by the Radiographers Registration Board after consultation with radiographers and radiation therapists, the public and other key stakeholders. The adoption

of the Radiographers CPD Standard and Requirements signalled the commencement of a 24 month CPD audit cycle, which ran from 31 October 2015 to 31 October 2017.

The CPD requirements set by the Radiographers Registration Board were:

1. A registrant must engage in a range of CPD activities on an ongoing basis
2. A registrant must complete 60 CPD credits in each 24-month cycle
3. A registrant must demonstrate that their CPD activities are relevant to their professional role and mindful of current and future practice. CPD should be based on a self-directed review of their knowledge, skills, performance and professional qualities in the context of their professional practice
4. A registrant must maintain an up to date CPD portfolio. The CPD portfolio must include
 - > Description of current professional role and practice setting
 - > Personal learning plan
 - > Record of CPD activities
 - > A minimum of 8 reflections on 8 different CPD activities
 - > Evidence of undertaking CPD activities
5. A registrant must, upon request from the Radiographers Registration Board, submit their CPD portfolio (which must be their own work and supported by evidence) for periodic audits of compliance with the CPD standard and requirements.

Any person, including employers or a member of the public is entitled to make a complaint to the Health and Social Care Professionals Council in relation to the failure to comply with the Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics. As such, a Registration Board may make a complaint against a registrant who does not engage with selection for audit, or where there is evidence that they have not complied with their Code.

Selection for CPD Audit

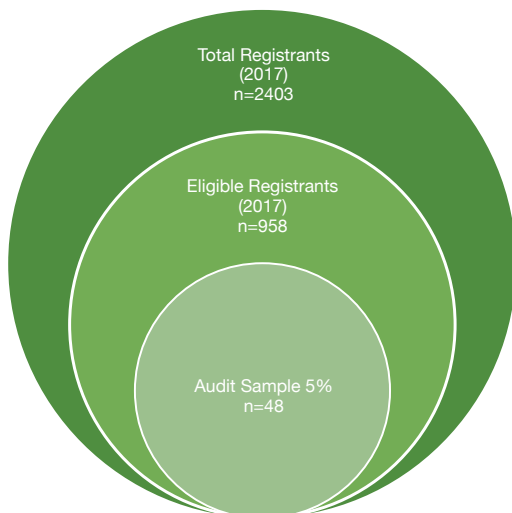
The Radiographers Registration Board determined to call a sample of 5% of registrants. The criteria for selection were:

- › Only registrants who had been on the register for the full two year period from 31 October 2015 to 31 October 2017 were considered eligible for audit.

This ensured that registrants eligible for selection could meet the requirements of the Radiographers Registration Board to attain 60 CPD credits and demonstrate ongoing engagement in CPD throughout the audit period.

On 31 October 2017, 2403 radiographers and radiation therapists were registered with the Radiographers Registration Board. A random selection of 5% of those registered (n=958) during the relevant audit period resulted in a representative sample (n=48) of radiographers and radiation therapists. The nature of a random sample ensured eligible registrants had an equal likelihood of being selected for audit.

Figure 1 | Eligible Registrants and Audit Sample



Notification of selection for audit

Forty eight registrants randomly selected to participate in the CPD audit were notified by email on the 30 April 2018. Those selected were advised that a copy of their CPD portfolio for the audit period (31 October 2015 – 31 October 2017) must be submitted by the 13 June 2018, or deferral sought from the Board on submission of their CPD portfolio.

Registrants were advised that non-engagement with CORU on audit selection would be viewed by their Board as a serious matter, which had implications as provided under their Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics. Those selected were also reminded that any client identifying information must be redacted or removed from all documentation submitted as part of the portfolio. Registrants were requested to submit a copy of their portfolio, as original documentation could not be returned on completion of the audit.

The notification of selection for audit was issued to the primary email contact provided by registrants, with an acknowledgment of intention to participate request (see appendix 1).

Deferral of submission of CPD Portfolio

The Radiographers Registration Board recognise that due to unavoidable circumstances some registrants may need to defer an audit of their CPD portfolio. This may be due to illness, family or personal circumstances or extended leave. This provides an opportunity for those who cannot submit their portfolio, due to circumstances beyond their control, to apply to their Registration Board for deferral of audit. Applications for deferral are considered by the Registration Board on a case by case basis.

The Radiographers Registration Board deferral procedure ensures a fair and just process for registrants, whilst assuring that standards are maintained. The Radiographers Registration Board received applications for and granted deferrals on the following bases:

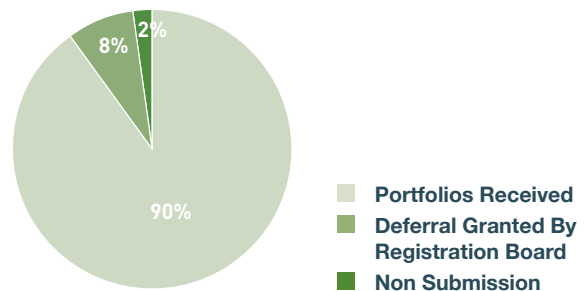
- > Extended periods of leave during the audit period (for example, maternity leave)
- > Extended period of travel and consequent access to portfolio.

Participation in Audit

Of the 48 registrants selected for audit, five registrants applied for a deferral of submission of portfolio.

Four registrants were granted deferral by the Radiographers Registration Board. The Radiographers Registration Board reserved the right to call registrants who deferred for the next CPD audit conducted. One registrant applied for, but did not receive a deferral and subsequently did not submit a portfolio. It had been deemed by the Board that insufficient information was provided as to the reason for deferral. This non-submission of a portfolio concluded with the voluntary removal of the registrant from the register.

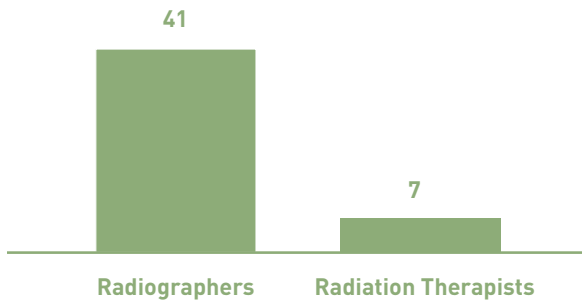
Figure 2 | Audit sample participation (n=48)



Audit Sample

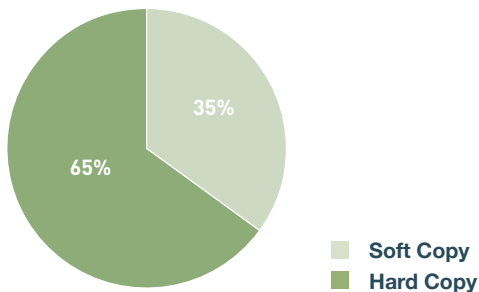
The random selection of eligible registrants reflects the composition of the register, with corresponding percentage of radiographers 85% (n=41) and radiation therapists 15% (n=7) selected for audit.

Figure 3 | Composition of Audit Sample (n=48)



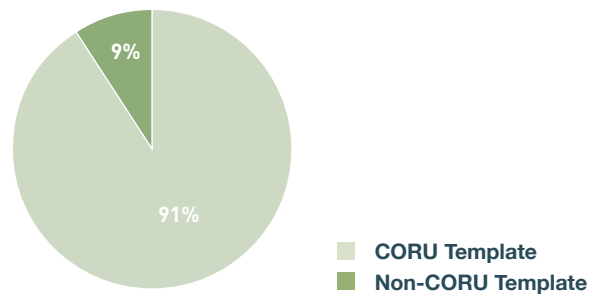
In total, 43 portfolios were submitted to CORU, of which 65% (n=28) were hard copy portfolios and 35% (n=15) were soft copy portfolios received by email.

Figure 4 | Method of Submission (n=43)



Thirty nine (91%) were submitted using the CORU CPD Portfolio template, whilst the remaining 4 (9%) used an alternative template.

Figure 5 | Type of Portfolio Template (n=43)



Although registrants may submit an alternative portfolio template to that provided by CORU, it is notable that at least one registrant had significant difficulties in demonstrating required standards of recording. The reason being that the portfolio template submitted did not provide the required information to demonstrate the Radiographers Registration Board requirements.

Those portfolios submitted using the CORU template were most likely to provide the required information and be processed more quickly through the audit process.

Methodology

The Radiographers Registration Board CPD portfolio review process involved:

1. Initial review of portfolios by CORU executive to assure all required information was provided
2. Review by an external assessor appointed by the Radiographers Registration Board

This review allowed for meaningful feedback to be given to registrants on criteria that was measured during audit. It also aided the individual's learning to better articulate their CPD using a portfolio whilst demonstrating achievement of the Board's CPD requirements.

Stage 1: Review by CORU Executive

An initial review of portfolios received was conducted by a member of the Education Unit in CORU. This review was to assure all required information was submitted and was limited to check for inclusion of:

1. Overview of professional role and practice setting
2. Personal learning plan
3. Record of CPD activities
4. Supporting documentation provided for each learning activity recorded.

In instances where information had been omitted or documentation was missing, the CORU executive contacted the registrant by email and requested submission of outstanding information/documentation. This process was to verify all required information was submitted prior to review by an assessor. It did not include any judgement in relation to achievement of the Radiographers Registration Board CPD requirements.

When all the required documentation had been received by the executive following the initial verification check, additional requests for information and updated documents, the portfolio was reviewed by a Board appointed assessor from the profession.

Stage 2: External Assessor Review

The Radiographers Registration Board approved the appointment of two assessors, a radiographer and a radiation therapist to review CPD portfolios and provide a report on compliance with their CPD requirements. The appointment of CPD portfolio assessors complied with the Health and Social Care Professionals Council guidance that, those eligible would have already been appointed by the Board to facilitate recognition assessments through an open recruitment process and that assessors' must be available to conduct review of portfolios on site in CORU Offices.

The Board appointed assessors based on their knowledge, skills and experience as well as their availability to conduct review of portfolios. The assessors were tasked with reviewing CPD Portfolios against the Radiographers Registration Board CPD requirements.

Prior to review of CPD portfolios, both assessors were required to comply with CORU policies and procedures including, but not limited to:

- > Confidentiality policy and agreement signed by assessors
- > Conflict of interest training undertaken prior to conducting portfolio review
- > Duty to and procedure for declaration of potential conflict of interest completed

In addition, assessors were required to review a list of registrant names selected for audit prior to review of portfolios to allow declaration of any conflict of interest. Registrants selected for audit could also request the names of the assessors, as per CORU policy. No conflicts were declared.

After review of CPD portfolios the assessors compiled a report of recommendations to the Board on the outcome of the audit and compliance with the Board's CPD requirements.

Measurement of CPD Requirements

The Radiographers Registration Board CPD requirements are,

1	A registrant must engage in a range of CPD activities on an ongoing basis.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > A minimum of two different types of learning activities must be recorded, with at least one learning activity recorded every three months in the relevant period.
2	A registrant must complete 60 CPD credits in a 24 month period.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > The total number of CPD credits assigned to learning activities should equate to 60 CPD credits over the relevant 24 months. There must be sufficient supporting documentation to evidence engagement in each CPD activity for which CPD credits are assigned.
3	A registrant must demonstrate that their CPD activities are relevant to their professional role and mindful of current and future practice. CPD should be based on a self-directed review of their knowledge, skills, performance and professional qualities in the context of their professional practice.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > The CPD Portfolio must include a description of the registrant's professional role and practice setting. The learning needs identified in the registrant's personal learning plan should clearly link to their professional role. Learning needs must generally correlate to the learning activities listed on the CPD log with evidence of how learning achieved has informed and is relevant to the registrant's professional practice.
4	A registrant must maintain an up to date CPD portfolio. The CPD portfolio must include, description of current professional role and practice setting, personal learning plan, record of CPD activities, a minimum of 8 reflections on 8 different CPD activities and evidence of undertaking CPD activities.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > All sections of the CPD Portfolio are completed and submitted including a description of professional role and practice setting, a personal learning plan, a log of CPD activities and eight reflective practice reports. These activities should not be dated retrospectively, but evidence continuous engagement in learning and development over the relevant audit period.
5	A registrant must, upon request from the Radiographers Registration Board, submit their CPD Portfolio (which must be of their own work and supported by evidence) for periodic audits of compliance with the CPD standard and requirements.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > The Radiographers Registration Board determined that there was a mandatory requirement for selected registrants to engage with the Board with regard to audit of CPD portfolios.

Standards of Recording

The standards of recording expected referred to the inclusion of all required information.

As highlighted under the Radiographers Registration Board CPD requirements, a CPD portfolio must include:

- > Description of current professional role and practice setting
- > Personal learning plan
- > Record of CPD activities
- > 8 reflective practice reports
- > Evidence of undertaking CPD activities

Any missing information from a CPD portfolio (for example, no personal learning plan) would have been considered not to meet the required standard of recording. The initial verification check undertaken by the executive was to assure that all required information was presented by registrants selected for audit. In instances where information had been omitted or was missing, further information was requested of the registrant.

CPD Audit Survey

Following notification of compliance with the Radiographers Registration Board CPD requirements, 43 participants were invited to provide feedback via an online survey (see appendix 2). In total, 18 registrants provided feedback on their experience of the audit and understanding of their Board's CPD requirements.

Radiographers Registration Board CPD Audit Trend Report

The learning achieved through this audit was recognised as being relevant for all health and social care professionals. The findings of this audit contributed to a review of CORU's CPD approach and audit processes undertaken in 2018.

In addition to the findings of compliance with standards of recording and attainment of CPD requirements, registrants who participated in the audit were invited to provide feedback by completing an online survey. This feedback, as well as reports provided by CPD portfolio assessors forms part of the learning achieved and outlined in the Radiographers CPD Audit Trend Report.

Results

CPD Standards of Recording

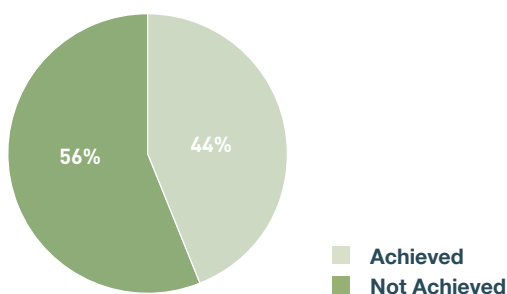
The Radiographers Registration CPD audit provided for an initial verification check, conducted by CORU executive member. This verification check was limited to check for inclusion of:

1. Overview of professional role and practice setting
2. Personal learning plan
3. Record of CPD activities
4. Supporting documentation provided for each learning activity recorded.

In addition, the executive assured that all required signatures/dates were provided in relevant sections of the CPD Portfolio. If there were omissions or missing information, the executive requested further information prior to review by an assessor.

It was notable that on initial submission of portfolio, 44% (n=19) of participants met the required standard of recording, while 56% (n=24) were required to provide further information.

Figure 6 | Standards of recording achieved on initial portfolio submission



In total, 137 individual items were identified as outstanding, on average 6 items per registrant. Indeed, following the initial verification check and submission of further information, assessors required a further 9 items of information be submitted by registrants.

The most common omissions related to missing signatures in relevant sections, headings and declarations on the portfolio. In addition, supporting documentation was omitted or clarification had to be sought with regard to dates for learning activities in which registrants had engaged. At times failure to identify the date of activity undertaken contributed to a lack of evidence of ongoing engagement in CPD, where gaps of three months or greater were evident in their CPD record of activities. On occasion registrants were required to provide information on further activities undertaken but not listed in their portfolio where gaps were evident. Indeed, requests for further information or missing documentation often required a number of requests/contacts or clarifications.

However, it should be noted that in all instances registrants were able to provide the required information.

Attainment of CPD requirements

Of the 43 registrants who submitted portfolios for audit, all were deemed to meet the Radiographers Registration Board CPD requirements, after initial verification checks and requests for further information.

CPD Audit Trends

An internal review of the Radiographers Registration Board CPD Audit process, assessors reports and feedback from registrants who participated in the audit, highlighted key trends.

Overachievement and application of CPD credits

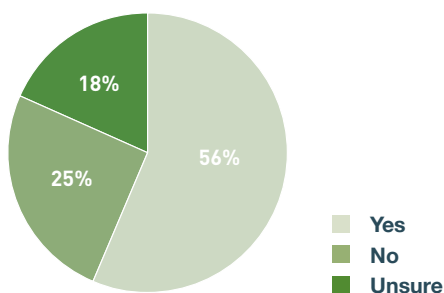
The Radiographers CPD audit evidenced that participants had significantly over achieved with regard to attainment of CPD credits.

Indeed, it was notable that 4550 credits were self-reported by 43 registrants. This averaged 106 hours of learning per registrant. Though the verification of credits meant that not all could be applied, on average 97 hours of learning per registrant was evidenced in a 24 month period.

To verify the credits self-reported, registrants would have been required to provide sufficient evidence of having engaged in the activity, and that the activity occurred during the relevant CPD audit cycle. In this instance, 10 registrants reported activities outside the period 31 October 2015 to 31 October 2017.

When registrants were asked if they understood how to assign CPD credits for new or enhanced learning, the majority of participants (56%) indicated positively, though almost 44% reported that they did not understand or were unsure how to assign credits.

Figure 7 | Do you understand how to assign CPD credits for new or enhanced learning? (n=16)



An assessor noted that,

‘...there was a significant degree of confusion across almost all submissions around this aspect of the process. There was noted variance across portfolio logs for new learning gained from similar activities with some registrants recording, in some cases, an excessive number of credits for informal activities and others relatively few. In all cases, there was clear confusion around how much information was required to demonstrate new learning achieved.’

Indeed, this variance in understanding was evident in responses to the survey. As one registrant stated,

‘When assigning them [credits] to actual hours spent at courses, study days, online courses etc. [it was understood] but when it came to learning related to journals, inhouse courses, policys etc no I didn’t know.’

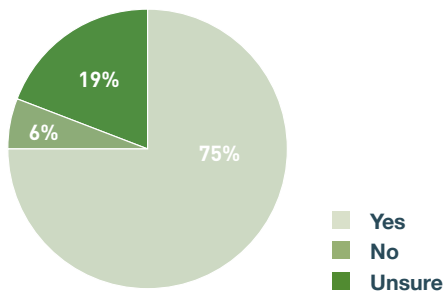
Registrants perception of the relationship between time spent on an activity and credits applied was apparent, as an assessor noted,

‘The new learning gained from any CPD activity should be reflected in the number of CPD credits the registrant has assigned himself or herself, as opposed to the time it has taken to undertake the activity itself. It would be anticipated that the level of information on new learning gained would be commensurate with the volume of CPD credits assigned.’

Range of CPD activities

Overall, participants demonstrated a broad range of CPD activities over the CPD audit period. Indeed, 75% (n=12) indicated that it was possible to assign credits across a range of learning activities.

Figure 8 | Was it possible for you to assign credits across a range of activities? (n=16)



However, two respondents indicated that the range of learning activities available to them was limited.

'I felt that I had only so many activities that I could use or were applicable to my job and if I was audited again the same activities would be used.'

'To some extent there is probably only 3-4 kinds of activities that most radiographers realistically do in their practice.'

Ongoing engagement in CPD

The initial verification check of portfolios highlighted a lack of understanding of the need to evidence ongoing engagement in CPD activities.

The quantitative measure applied required at least one CPD activity in every three month period be recorded. In many instances, this issue was clarified with requests for further information or request for clarification of the date on which the learning activity had occurred. In all instances, where further information was requested to demonstrate ongoing engagement registrants were able to provide this.

An assessor noted,

'There did not appear to be universal understanding or appreciation of the need for ongoing CPD, and the frequency of undertaking that was required. Given the fact that we are looking for registrants to give us an appreciation of ongoing engagement without any periods of dormancy, clarification is required here.'

That ongoing engagement in CPD was not well understood was confirmed in feedback from registrants.

'I learnt this after submitting my portfolio. Didn't realise this was part of my CPD portfolio. Although after reading [CORU executive] guidance, I was able to submit my certs and all material in relation to demonstrating my ongoing engagement in CPD.'

'I understood the ongoing engagement to mean that we should be doing CPD ALL the time, which is pretty impossible to be honest or should I say that it's pretty hard to document it. E.g. a conversation with an expert in a particular field cannot be documented every time, nor should it be.'

For others there appeared to be more of general appreciation of how to demonstrate ongoing engagement in CPD.

'With regular activities e.g. on a monthly or even rolling basis.'

'I interpret this by spreading out the cpd activities over a period of time.'

Experience of preparing and presenting supporting documentation

The submission of supporting documentation was described by some registrants as time consuming and stressful, whilst for others it appeared to be clear and straightforward. The disparity of experiences may relate to preparedness for audit, with some respondents having to seek the required documentation, whilst others had maintained this on an ongoing basis.

“Fine, I kept all supporting documentation in a box file and then used a scanner at work to send it as a PDF file.”

“I had it prepared on an ongoing basis, so just to finish it in the required format took about 8 hours.”

“This wasn’t a problem as the time between being called for audit and the submission date was adequate to collect and prepare documentation.”

Several registrants highlighted the challenges in providing supporting documentation for informal or work based learning. This perpetuated a preference for recording formal learning only, highlighted by an assessor who stated,

“Confusion over what constitutes evidence means that registrants will always favour formal learning, as documentation is much clearer.”

This in turn contributed to challenges in demonstrating ongoing engagement in CPD, where informal or work based learning could have been identified.

The challenges in presenting appropriately redacted supporting documentation to evidence learning also contributed to a preference for formal activities that are more easily evidenced. It was also notable that an assessor cautioned,

“that all patient/client names are removed from submissions, this might mean that ‘log book’ type evidence cannot be submitted but the mentor/supervisor could provide a written verification that the skills had been achieved.”

In addition, the inclusion of large volumes of supporting documentation prompted the majority of registrants to submit a hard copy of their portfolio by post.

Experience of preparing and presenting CPD Portfolio for Audit

That some registrants found the preparation and submission of their portfolio and supporting documentation overly onerous was evident in feedback received.

The amount of time which registrants reported had been required to prepare their portfolio for submission varied significantly, from 8 hours to several weeks. Several registrants commented that this had taken longer than anticipated.

“It took nearly 48 hours! This is just to fill out the portfolio – I had all the CPD cert files already saved on my computer. I thought it would take an hour or two.”

In addition, some registrants highlighted that they found the recording requirements of the portfolio to be burdensome or repetitive with the same information being provided in different sections of the portfolio suggesting that,

“...the structure of the current portfolio requires a large amount of repetition.”

“Review as some areas overlap. Maybe just include what was learned/achieved and how it impacted your work.”

“A little repetitive, could be more concise.”

It is notable that the personal learning plans submitted tended to have been completed retrospectively, rather than at the outset of the audit period. The purpose of a personal learning plan is to allow a registrant to structure and plan to meet their learning needs over a defined period of time. Indeed, an assessor noted that,

“It was very clear that the majority of audited registrants have no idea of what a PDP [personal development plan] is meant to be and that appraisal processes with management (which annual PDPs should be part of) are not being conducted. At the very least, some managers had no visibility of PDPs prior to inclusion in portfolios otherwise advice would have been given. This meant that PDPs offered for the majority of this cohort were clearly retrospective and ad hoc.”

The retrospective completion of personal learning plans appears to have contributed to a perception amongst registrants of repetition within the portfolio.

Submission of portfolios

Registrants also highlighted difficulties in submission of their portfolio, which several suggested could be addressed by developing an online submission system.

“It was frustrating that a USB could not be used to send the portfolio. I had a number of emails as my portfolio was large. This is definitely an area that should be addressed.”

“When I tried to email the portfolio (including certs), I was sent a message that the CORU email could not accept such large files. I would suggest that in the future, the documents could be uploaded onto the website by the applicant – similar to university websites when applying for a course or a job. Also CORU could adjust their email to allow large files.”

Also highlighted in feedback was the format of CORU templates with one registrant stating that it was a ‘typing and editing nightmare, using the template’.

Support to achieve standards of recording

The extent of support required by CORU executive to enable registrants to achieve the required standards of recording was evident. Indeed, it is notable that requests for further information after the initial verification check generated between 2 to 11 emails per registrant, not including calls or visits to the CORU office.

Given that this was the first audit conducted by the Radiographers Registration Board this is perhaps unsurprising, however highlights a need for further guidance and support for registrants in preparing portfolios for audit.

Figure 9 | Individualised contacts with registrants

Contact with Registrants	No. of Emails
Request Emails	48
Follow up Queries	20
Deferrals and Non Submission	25
Acknowledgment Receipt	43
Query Emails	50
Soft Copy Emails	50
Further Information Requests	146
Notification of Compliance	43
Follow Up Emails	20
Total	445

Reflective Practice

The feedback from registrants with regard to reflective practice reports was varied. For many this had been a positive experience, allowing for more in-depth reflection on their learning that had proven insightful and beneficial to their practice. Indeed, one assessor noted that,

“There were some wonderful examples of reflection identified through the course of this monitoring process. For some the idea (although not without effort) of putting their personal insights and learning down on paper was clearly second nature.”

However, that completion of reflective practice reports had proven challenging was also evident. A number of registrants noted that,

“Rehashing what I thought about an article/ book, study day feels like we’re being treated as children and told to write a ‘story’ about an event or a piece we read. As I said, other colleagues, some with more responsibility than radiographers, have just to submit their CPD events/items on a spreadsheet type of document.”

“Pointless exercise. Certificates of attendance should be sufficient.”

“I found the reflective pieces very tedious, monotonous, repetitive and time consuming, as all was addressed in the CPD descriptions of activities.”

It appears that reflective practice as a tool for deeper learning and personal insight was not well understood, as highlighted by an assessor who stated,

“Reflective accounts could be developed further as often they are recollection/ description rather than critical appraisal.”

Experience of participation in CPD audit

Registrants were invited to comment on any benefits, if at all, from participation in the Radiographers Registration Board CPD Audit. Perhaps unsurprisingly mixed responses were evident in feedback provided. Some registrants highlighted the professional and personal benefits of participation including,

“It helps focus where you are aiming in your career.”

“It helped me structure my learning and demonstrate my professional progression.”

“Made me more aware of all the CPD activities I had undertaken – more than what was actually required of me.”

Whilst others stated that,

“Not really to be honest. I do believe that CPD is worthwhile, but making it so onerous on radiographers has the opposite effect of turning them off the idea. In general, we don’t get much time to do it in work hours and writing 400 words in some pieces is excessive.”

“I don’t feel there were any benefits to me personally.”

However, for others a perceived failure to provide individualised qualitative feedback on their portfolio had been a disappointment. Although, registrants were advised of being compliant with their Board’s CPD requirements, there appears to have been an expectation that comment would be provided on the quality of their portfolio.

“The only feedback given was that you fulfilled requirements.”

“I didn’t receive any feedback as to how I performed in my portfolio.”

It is notable that an assessor commented that though *‘the process of being held to a standard was a huge learning curve for those involved’* that the effort and quality of input by registrants meant that *‘learning was absolutely evident through the course of their portfolios’*.

Discussion

The findings from this audit highlighted a number of key considerations that helped to inform a review of CORU's CPD approach and monitoring processes.

A significant finding related to the burden of recording and submission of supporting documentation, as well as challenges with the format of and submission method of CPD portfolios reported by registrants. A number of factors appear to have contributed to this including preparedness for audit, difficulties providing supporting documentation for informal or work based learning, retrospective completion of personal learning plans as well as the evolving understanding of, and value given to, reflective practice.

Whilst it would be expected that registrants would maintain an up to date CPD portfolio on an ongoing basis, it was evident that for some, the portfolio was only prepared on being selected for audit. This appears to have contributed to the perception that sections of the portfolio were repetitive. For example, where a personal learning plan was completed retrospectively, it may appear repetitious of the record of learning activities undertaken. It should be noted that the purpose of the personal learning plan is to provide a tool for registrants to reflect on their learning needs, identify priority needs to be addressed in a defined period and to provide a structured approach to engaging in CPD. Hence, completing a personal learning plan retrospectively provides little value for registrants in having a structured approach to identifying and addressing learning needs.

It is also notable the preference for recording formal learning activities, as opposed to informal or work based activities. Whilst, the requirement to provide supporting documentation certainly contributes to this, feedback from registrants indicates a lack of understanding of what constitutes CPD. It is perhaps unsurprising then that some interpret that a certificate of attendance is sufficient evidence of learning achieved. However, CPD

is concerned with the impact of learning on professional practice for enhancing the quality of service delivery and outcomes for service users. Thus, certificates of attendance provide little insight as to how learning is integrated into practice or what impact this has for the professional, the organisation or the service user.

It is notable that the quality of learning achieved was best articulated in participants record of learning activities and reflective practice reports. The requirement to submit supporting documentation may inadvertently dissuade registrants of the value of informal or work based learning for their professional development. Given that the inclusion of supporting documentation such as leaflets, photocopies of book covers or sign in sheets do not evidence learning achieved or the impact of that learning on practice, the requirement to submit supporting documentation warrants further consideration.

Reflective practice is one of the defining characteristics of professional practice and a cornerstone of the CPD model adopted by CORU. Reflection on learning is understood to increase the learning gained from the activity or experience. However, it was notable that this appeared to be a challenging area for some. Indeed, some registrants perceived the completion of reflective practice reports to be a worthless exercise. The audit indicated that reflective practice was not well understood, with an assessor highlighting that the reports tended to be descriptive, rather than provide a critical analysis of the impact of the learning on practice. That, for some within the profession, reflective practice is a new concept was evident.

If reflective practice is interpreted as a description of an activity or event rather than a tool for critical analysis that can provide deeper learning or insight, it may explain why for some they felt it contributed little to their learning. This interpretation, may be due, in part, to an evolving understanding of, and value for,

reflection on learning among health and social care professionals. A greater understanding of reflective practice, as well as its increasing integration into professional practice, and even undergraduate studies, is likely to alleviate some of the frustrations evident.

It was notable the level of support provided to registrants to achieve the required standards of recording. Given that this was the first audit conducted by the Radiographers Registration Board this is perhaps unsurprising. However, this is likely to have been compounded by the issues encountered with CORU CPD portfolio templates and method of submission. Indeed, the requirement to provide supporting documentation meant that for some, multiple emails had to be sent or that hard copies were submitted by post incurring costs for the registrant. As such a review of CORU CPD portfolio templates, as well as the method for submission of portfolios warrants further consideration. In addition, further support and guidance on preparation of and submission of a CPD portfolio for audit is required.

CPD is a continuous, cyclical process of learning that occurs often and is reinforced through day to day practice. Thus, there would have been an expectation that recording a minimum of one CPD activity in every three month period would not be overly onerous. However, the initial verification check of portfolios highlighted that gaps were evident, where no activity was recorded or where dates of having undertaken the activity were not evident. This resulted in a number of requests for further information or clarification, with frustration expressed by some registrants that this requirement was not fully articulated or well understood. It is acknowledged that clarification with regard to ongoing engagement in CPD is required. However, it should be noted that in all instances registrants were able to provide clarity and/or further information that they had met this requirement.

It was anticipated that registrants would record at minimum two different types of activities in any CPD audit cycle. This requirement ensures that registrants do not rely on one type of activity only, but can recognise the breadth of work based, formal and informal learning opportunities in which they engage. Overall, a good range of activities was demonstrated

by registrants who participated in this audit. Yet, some registrants expressed concern that it would be challenging for their profession to demonstrate a range of learning activities in each audit period. An enhanced understanding of the requirement may alleviate some of the concerns expressed in feedback from registrants.

The absence of formative feedback to individual registrants on the content and quality of their portfolio was highlighted by some registrants. Although, advised that they had been compliant with the Radiographers Registration Board's requirements, disappointment was expressed that further qualitative feedback had not been provided on their continuing professional development. It is hoped that the publication of the Radiographers Registration Board CPD Audit Trend Report may provide insight and learning for all regulated health and social care professionals. However, it should be noted that a Registration Board is required to assure that registrants have a system in place to maintain their skills, knowledge and competence and are compliant with their Board's CPD requirements, rather than provide comment on an individual's CPD.

That registrants were engaging in CPD was evident given the significant over achievement of credits, well and above the minimum requirement of 60 credits. However, it is acknowledged that there was a lack of clarity for some registrants as to how to appropriately apply credits. This was most evident in the application of credits to informal or work based learning. CORU had advised that approximately 1 CPD credit should equate to 1 hour of new or enhanced learning. However, for some the application of credits related to time spent on an activity, rather than giving sufficient consideration of what new or enhanced learning had been achieved. It was anticipated that the greater the number of credits assigned the more detail would be given of what new or enhanced learning had been achieved and its impact on practice. Further guidance is required with regard to determining the appropriate number of CPD credits that should be applied to learning achieved.

Overall the level of compliance with this audit was very high. Yet, it cannot go unnoticed the level of direction from the executive that was

required to ensure the standard of recording had been met. If assessment had been undertaken on initial submission of portfolios, without a verification check, the level of compliance would be a cause of concern. However, this would not have been reflective of the extent and quality of CPD being undertaken by registrants. It would be anticipated that as registrants become more familiar with the audit process and their Board's CPD requirements, they would be more likely to meet the required standards of recording on first submission of portfolio. In addition, the provision of further guidance and support can enhance registrants standard of recording to demonstrate compliance with their Registration Boards CPD requirements.

This audit trend report provides significant learning for regulated health and social care professionals, as well as for CORU, on achievement of the standard of recording and CPD requirements.

Appendix 1

Template Email Notifying Selection for Audit

Dear [Name],

I am writing to inform you that you have been randomly selected for auditing of your Continuing Professional Development (CPD) portfolio by the Radiographers Registration Board. You are required to submit your (CPD) portfolio for review as you have been selected as part of the five percent randomly generated sample. You must submit your CPD portfolio within 30 working days of the date 30/04/2018. **Please acknowledge receipt of this email.**

Please be reminded submission of your portfolio is mandatory. If you are not in a position to take part in the audit, you may contact CPDAudit@coru.ie for further information on the deferral process. The Board will decide on deferral requests on a case by case basis. You will be informed once this decision has been made.

Submitted portfolios will be reviewed against the CPD Requirements issued by the Board, which are:

1. Engage in a range of CPD activities on an on-going basis.
2. Complete 60 CPD credits in each 24-month cycle.
3. Demonstrate that the CPD activities are relevant to your professional role, taking account of current and future practice.
4. Maintain an up to date CPD portfolio. The CPD portfolio must include:
 - > Description of current professional role and practice setting
 - > Personal learning plan
 - > Record of CPD activities
 - > Reflections on a number of CPD activities
 - > Evidence of undertaking CPD activities

A portfolio template is available for your use on the CORU [website](#).

Non-engagement with CORU on the audit will be viewed by the Board as a serious matter and has potential implications for a registrant as provided for under their Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics. All registrants are reminded that any client identifying information should be redacted or removed from documentation submitted as part of the portfolio.

Portfolios can be submitted by email, post or a combination of both if this suits your needs. Please remember that a copy of your portfolio or copies of any supporting documentation should be submitted, as these will not be returned to you on the completion of the audit.

If submitting by email please send to: CPDAudit@coru.ie

If submitting by post please send to: **CPD Audit, CORU, 5th Floor, Infinity Building, George's Lane, Smithfield, Dublin 7, D07 E98Y.**

Please quote your Registration Number XXXXXX in all correspondence with CORU regarding the CPD Audit.

Please note that if you are not in a position to participate in the audit, you must contact CPDAudit@coru.ie. The CPD team will provide you with guidance on the deferral process. And additional queries should be directed to CPDAudit@coru.ie

Appendix 2

Survey of Participants

DATA PROTECTION AND FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

This survey is voluntary. By completing it you are agreeing to allow your responses to be analysed by CORU for the purpose of seeking feedback on the recent CPD audit. A report on the survey will be compiled and will be published on CORU's website shortly after the process is complete.

The information you provide to this survey will be stored in a secure and confidential manner by CORU, it will only be used for the purposes outlined above and it will be maintained as per the CORU's record retention policy. CORU uses SurveyMonkey to gather feedback to our public consultations. Full details of how your information is processed via SurveyMonkey is documented in this privacy policy.

Please be advised that submissions made to CORU are subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2014.

1. Do you agree to the terms above? By selecting Yes you are confirming you consent to providing your answers to the questions in this survey.

- Yes
 No

Dear Registrant,

CORU is currently reviewing the CPD model implemented by all the Registration Boards. We are interested in learning your opinion on the recent CPD audit. We are now inviting all audited registrants to complete a short survey to help us evaluate the CPD requirements and the implementation of the current CPD model. This is a voluntary survey.

The survey should take only 5 minutes to complete and will close on August 26 2018, we would appreciate if you could complete your response before then. We are aware that this submission time is short and over the holiday period, but it is necessary to meet designated timelines for the CPD audit review.

We would request you refrain from adding any comments which may identify you, as all responses should be anonymous. Your feedback in this survey will be included in an audit trend report which may be published by CORU.

Thank you for your assistance.

Q1. Did you know how to assign CPD credits for new and enhanced learning?

Q2. Was it possible for you to assign credits across a range of activities?

Q3. How did you interpret the need for demonstrating ongoing engagement in CPD in your portfolio submission?

Q4. What was your experience of preparing and presenting your supporting documentation?

Q5. Could you estimate the number of hours it took you to prepare the CPD portfolio for audit?

Q6. Did you perceive any benefits from participating in this CPD audit process?

Q7. How did you find the experience of preparing reflective practice reports as part of the CPD portfolio submission?

Q8. Do you have any recommendations on the CORU portfolio template design?

Q9. Any other comments?



Ag Rialáil Gairmithe Sláinte
agus Cúraim Shóisialaigh

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