



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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1. What is Continuing Professional Development (CPD)?

CPD is a career-long process which involves the tracking and documenting of skills, knowledge and experience gained by the pharmacist. It helps pharmacists to keep their practice and proficiency up to date, maintains standards and improves confidence in the profession.

2. Who should do CPD?

CPD is a legal requirement for all registered pharmacists in Northern Ireland. Every registered pharmacist must meet the requirements of Standard 5 of the Pharmaceutical Society NI's Code – to maintain and develop professional knowledge, skills and competence.

An annual CPD submission and declaration must be made to the Registrar by 31 May, or other date as instructed by the Council of the Pharmaceutical Society NI, except for those pharmacists who have been granted an exemption by the Registrar through the Extenuating Circumstances process (see points 15 & 18 of the [CPD Framework 2021](#))

3. What are the CPD requirements of the Pharmaceutical Society NI?

The [CPD Framework 2021](#) sets out the requirements and conditions that must be met in respect of a registrant's CPD portfolio and the circumstances in which a registrant can be regarded as having failed to comply with the CPD Framework.

4. What if I work in different areas/sectors of pharmacy?

Your CPD activity must be relevant to your current scope of practice. If, for example, you work in academia most of the time but occasionally undertake locum work in community pharmacy, your CPD cycles and portfolio must contain CPD activity relevant to both areas of practice.

5. How do I submit my CPD portfolio?

Instructions on all aspects of the recording and submission of CPD can be found on your ROL CPD homepage.

6. Can I amend or edit my CPD cycles once I've allocated them to my portfolio?

Yes, up to the submission deadline, you can access your submitted portfolio to make amendments, ensuring that you resubmit your portfolio before the deadline.

7. Will my CPD portfolio record be assessed by the Pharmaceutical Society NI?

The Council of the Pharmaceutical Society NI decides the overall percentage of portfolios to be assessed each year. However, a combined approach of random and focused selection will be used. This will include:

- all, or a random selection of a proportion of late CPD submissions;

- a random selection of a defined proportion of portfolios submitted by pharmacists who have changed their scope of practice in the past year; and
- a random selection of a proportion of portfolios submitted by pharmacists who have recently rejoined the Register having not practiced as a pharmacist for a period of 12 months or more.

It is possible that a registrant may be selected for assessment in consecutive years. Should this happen, there is no appeal and the selection remains unchanged.

Early submission of a CPD portfolio may be required for some Restoration or Re-join applications. All such portfolios will be assessed.

8. What if I am living/working outside Northern Ireland?

CPD applies to **all** pharmacists on the Register.

If you are not resident in Northern Ireland or not working as a pharmacist, you must still comply with CPD requirements in order to retain your registration with the Pharmaceutical Society NI.

9. What if I am retired but still undertake a small amount of locum work?

CPD applies to **all** pharmacists on the Register.

CPD requirements apply to you if you undertake pharmacy work of any kind, irrespective of the number of hours you work, to ensure that you continue to maintain and develop knowledge and skills appropriate to your role.

10. What if I am on a career break/unemployed/travelling overseas?

CPD applies to **all** pharmacists on the Register.

CPD requirements apply to you, irrespective of career breaks, unemployment or travel, to ensure that you continue to maintain and develop knowledge and skills appropriate to your role.

11. What if I am working overseas?

CPD applies to **all** pharmacists on the Register.

CPD requirements apply to you, irrespective of the geographical location of their employment, to ensure that you continue to maintain and develop knowledge and skills appropriate to your role.

12. What if I am registered with the Pharmaceutical Society NI but have not been practising as a pharmacist?

CPD applies to **all** pharmacists on the Register.

CPD requirements apply to you, irrespective of whether you have been practising as a pharmacist, to ensure that you continue to maintain and develop knowledge and skills appropriate to your role.

13. I want to join the Register but I have not been registered as a pharmacist in over 12 months. What will my CPD requirement be when I join the Register?

A pharmacist applying to join the Register, who has not been registered as a pharmacist within the last 12 months, will be required to make an early CPD submission for assessment.

This requires the pharmacist to submit 3 CPD cycles, totalling a minimum of 10 hours, undertaken in the current CPD year (i.e. CPD activity undertaken since 01 June). Upon joining the Register, you will be advised of your submission deadline by the CPD Department.

14. I was removed from the Register for CPD non-compliance. What will my CPD requirement be if I want to be restored to the Register?

A pharmacist applying to be restored to the Register, having been removed from the Register for CPD non-compliance, will be required to submit a CPD portfolio totalling a minimum of 30 hours and a minimum of 4 CPD cycles.

The Registrar will decide whether submission of the CPD portfolio will be required prior to completion of registration or within a given timeframe after completion of registration and you will be advised accordingly.

Upon being restored to the Register, you will be advised of your submission deadline by the CPD Department.

15. I withdrew from the Register and now want to rejoin. What will my CPD requirement be when I rejoin the Register?

A pharmacist applying to rejoin the Register, having voluntarily withdrawn from the Register during a previous CPD year, but having failed to submit a CPD portfolio for that year, will be required to make a full CPD portfolio submission within 2 months of rejoining the Register.

Upon rejoining the Register, you will be advised of your submission deadline by the CPD Department.

A pharmacist applying to rejoin the Register, having voluntarily withdrawn from the Register during a previous CPD year, having submitted a CPD portfolio for that year, will not be required to make an early CPD submission.

16. What if I am dual registered but spend most of my time working in another jurisdiction?

CPD applies to **all** pharmacists on the Register.

CPD requirements apply to you, irrespective of whether you are dual registered and have been practising as a pharmacist in another jurisdiction, to ensure that you continue to maintain and develop knowledge and skills appropriate to your role. CPD activity can be undertaken in any jurisdiction.

Dual registrants must comply with the CPD requirements, including the form and manner of submission, of each regulator.

17. How do I know if I am eligible to apply for Extenuating Circumstances?

If you are unsure if you are eligible to apply for Extenuating Circumstances, you should refer to points 17 – 25 in the [CPD Framework 2021](#) where generally accepted and unaccepted circumstances are detailed.

Applications for Extenuating Circumstances must be made on the appropriate application form and must be supported by the required documentary evidence only – no evidentiary substitutes will be accepted.

The operational deadline for receipt of applications is 30 April each year.

Should extenuating circumstances occur after the operational deadline, a late application can be made and may be considered at the Registrar's discretion.

18. What happens if I miss the CPD submission deadline?

If you fail to submit a CPD portfolio by the submission deadline, having failed to provide the Registrar with a 'reasonable excuse', you will be non-compliant with the CPD Framework.

The submissions portal may be opened for an extended period of 7 days to facilitate late submissions. All, or a random selection of, late submissions will be selected for assessment.

Where a registrant fails to submit a CPD portfolio by the end of the 7-day extension period, the Registrar will follow the statutory procedure to have the name of the registrant removed from the Register, as set out by Articles 5-8 of the Regulations [\[The Council of the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland \(Continuing Professional Development\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2012\]](#).

19. When can I submit my CPD portfolio?

Portfolios can be submitted on ROL from 09:00 on 01 April until midnight on 31 May.

For those registrants who wish to submit a paper-based portfolio, 2 copies (1 anonymised) and a completed declaration must be received at our offices, at 73 University Street, Belfast BT7 1HL, by the submission deadline. Paper-based portfolios must be submitted on the forms specified in the CPD Resources section of our website.

20. What type of activities should I include in my CPD portfolio?

In considering CPD cycles for inclusion in their portfolios, pharmacists should take account of the range of their current scope of practice and working environment. This includes the amount of time spent acting in an annotated role or in an educational supervisor (formerly pre-registration tutor) role.

21. What feedback will I receive on my CPD portfolio?

A feedback report will be provided on ROL for portfolios that have been assessed by a CPD Assessor.

Feedback is more detailed for portfolio records that have not met the standard and less detailed for portfolio records that have met the standard.

Feedback is formative and will focus on the parts of the CPD cycle where improvements might be made.

22. Can the Pharmaceutical Society NI check my CPD portfolio for me before I submit it?

This facility is not available from the Regulator.

The Pharmacy Forum NI offers facilitation support to registrants. For details, contact the Pharmacy Forum NI on 028 9032 6927.

23. Who can access my CPD ROL account?

Only the registrant will have access to their ROL account unless express permission for them is given for another party.

When your CPD portfolio has been submitted, the Pharmaceutical Society NI will have full access to the CPD portfolio. If your CPD portfolio is selected for assessment, the CPD Assessor Team will have access to the portfolio.

24. If I apply to withdraw from the Register, will I be required to submit CPD?

The operational deadline for receipt of a correctly completed application to Withdraw from the Register (with a removal date of no later than 31 May) is midnight on 10 May. Late applications will only be considered at the discretion of the Registrar.

Registrants who have not made such an application by the operational deadline will be required to meet all CPD requirements for the CPD year.

25. What happens if my CPD portfolio is assessed and doesn't meet the standard?

If, at assessment, your portfolio does not meet the standard, you will enter into the remedial stage of the annual CPD process – Reassessment 1.

For Reassessment 1, you will have 9 weeks to submit 3 new cycles, totalling a minimum of 10 hours and undertaken since 01 June. This submission will be assessed against the published criteria by a CPD assessor. You will be advised of the date and time when the portal will close for your Reassessment 1 submission by the CPD Department.

If your Reassessment 1 portfolio does not meet the standard, you will enter into Reassessment 2. You will have a further 9 weeks to submit 3 new cycles, totalling a minimum of 10 hours and undertaken since 01 June. This submission will be assessed against the published criteria by a CPD assessor. You will be advised of the date and time when the portal will close for your Reassessment 2 submission by the CPD Department.

If your Reassessment 2 portfolio does not meet the standard, the Registrar will initiate steps to remove your name from the Register under Article 3 of the CPD Regulations.

26. Will I have access to my CPD cycles from previous years when Membership Online is defunct?

Yes, all CPD activity recorded on Membership Online will be transferred to your ROL homepage.