

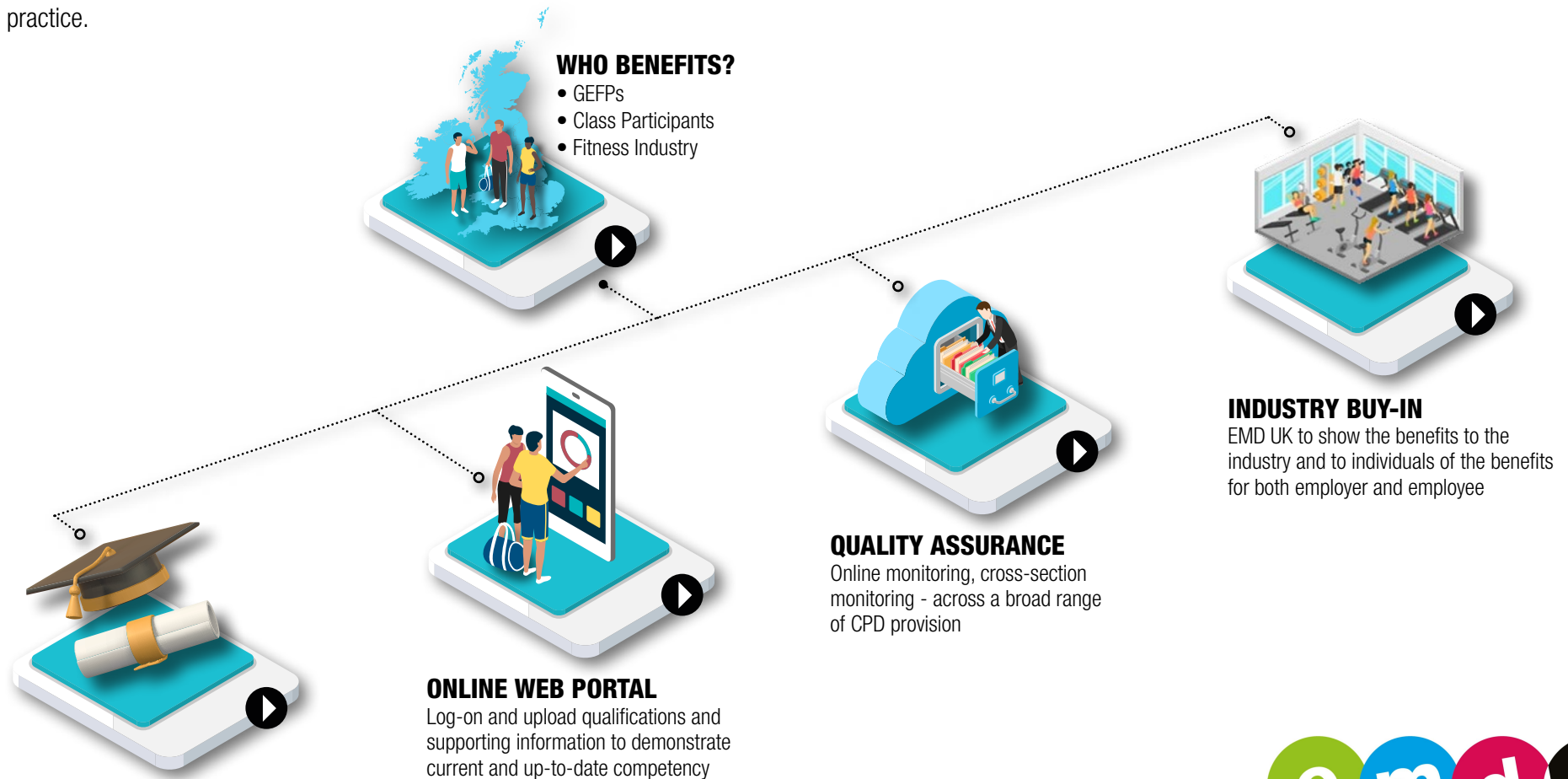
EMD UK: Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Strategy

Continuing professional development of Group Exercise Fitness Professionals (GEFPs) is of critical importance for the ongoing success and reputation of the fitness industry.

CPD is integral in enabling instructors to keep knowledge, skills, and professional standards current and relevant to positively impact their personal and professional practice.

As the GEFP community continues to grow, it has become clear that continuing professional development of GEFPs is an area of critical importance to the fitness industry and at large, the public who engage in group exercise sessions.

This strategy defines CPD as an ongoing, planned learning and development process that enriches and contributes to professional practice and professional development. It is the process that enables fitness professionals to develop and fulfil their professional potential.



This strategy is relevant to:

- All GEFP instructors, (including employed and freelancers) to structure their own professional development journey
- Employers who have responsibility for GEFP professional development
- Training providers to determine what the outcomes of their CPD interventions are going to be (and to recognise their responsibility to enable learning opportunities)

Investment in CPD is fundamental to meeting the increased appetite for group exercise from individuals and communities (State of the UK Fitness Industry Report, Sweating Your Assets: The Value of Group Exercise, 2018). In a changing world being part of a learning culture is not a luxury but a necessity. CPD contributes to instructor competency, benefits individuals, fitness professionals and their employers. Diversity, inclusion, and retention of skilled GEFPs, especially from under-represented groups, is critical. CPD should offer opportunities for upskilling, regardless of age, education, and experience.

CPD informs and aligns instructors with industry standards, best practices, and approaches to teaching. CPD offers personal development and enhanced business opportunities for GEFPs who wish to maximise their existing skillsets and advance their professional practice or commercial offering.

The vision is to achieve a scenario in which CPD is seen as the norm by the GEFP community, fitness industry employers and the public they serve.

In the first instance, this would rely upon employers to consider evidence of CPD as a part of conditions of employment (for employees) and a condition of service (for freelance/self-employed instructors).

Employers who choose to commission or develop of their 'own-brand' or 'in-house' CPD should be required to satisfy EMD UK CPD quality standards and other relevant national occupational standards (NOS) via a mapping tool.

Core Values: 1. Honesty 2. Inclusion 3. Recognition 4. Excellence

Diversity and Inclusion

EMD UK is committed to the principles of equal opportunities, equality, and diversity. EMD UK opposes all forms of unfair and unlawful discrimination on grounds of age, colour, disability, ethnicity, nationality, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation and any discrimination experienced by other marginalised groups.

CPD processes will ensure that continuing professional development processes will actively seek feedback from these groups and measures to improve learning will be taken.

“The best way to drive performance in an organizations is to create an environment in which information can flow freely, mistakes can be highlighted and help can be offered and received.” **Simon Sinek, The Infinite Game**

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The Context

Embedding a learning culture is not a luxury for GEFPs, but more essential than ever as they play a considerable part in the contributing to the health and well-being of the public they serve.

As we look forward after an unexpected global pandemic, many organisations continue to adapt to the new-normal. Many are experiencing sweeping, rapid changes in what they do, how they do it, and even why they do it. However, the impact of the changes are not all bad - in fact - the aftermath of the pandemic has highlighted the importance of workforce learning and upskilling and ignited the ‘fast-forward button’ on digital learning and online community engagement (<https://ssbr-edu.ch/6-ways-that-covid19-has-had-a-positive-impact-on-businesses/>).

Group Exercise Fitness Instructors who will thrive in the in the 21st century are those who embrace new learning and are motivated to acquire new skills and competencies. Improving skills and knowledge through Continuing Professional Development is the responsibility of every professional across all industries.

Aims

This strategy aims to provide an inclusive approach to CPD for group exercise and fitness professionals based on current good practice that:

- Is rooted in the experience of exercise fitness industry professionals
- Is accessible to the diverse needs of the group exercise workforce, including those who are employed by fitness centres, freelance/self-employed instructors and those working independently in the community
- Contributes to developing a culture of continued professional development and self-evaluation of the impact of learning
- Enables exercise professionals to select relevant and appropriate CPD to complement their professional role(s)
- Contributes to improving the quality and relevance of learning
- Can be applied or assessed against competences and organisational performance
- Empowers CPD providers to offer learning to develop the skills and competences to that contribute to relevant and current skillsets

The Vision

Embedding a learning culture is not a luxury for GEFPs, but more essential than ever as they play a considerable part in the contributing to the health and well-being of the public they serve.

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Outcomes

- Ensure that the UK Group Exercise Fitness Instructor industry retains its position as a facilitator of healthier communities through group exercise fitness activities
- Modernise the process of developing the group exercise instructor workforce
- Encourage and enable freelancers to recognise the value of and importance of continued professional development
- Improve confidence and competence in group exercise professionals
- Improve recruitment and retention in the GEFP workforce

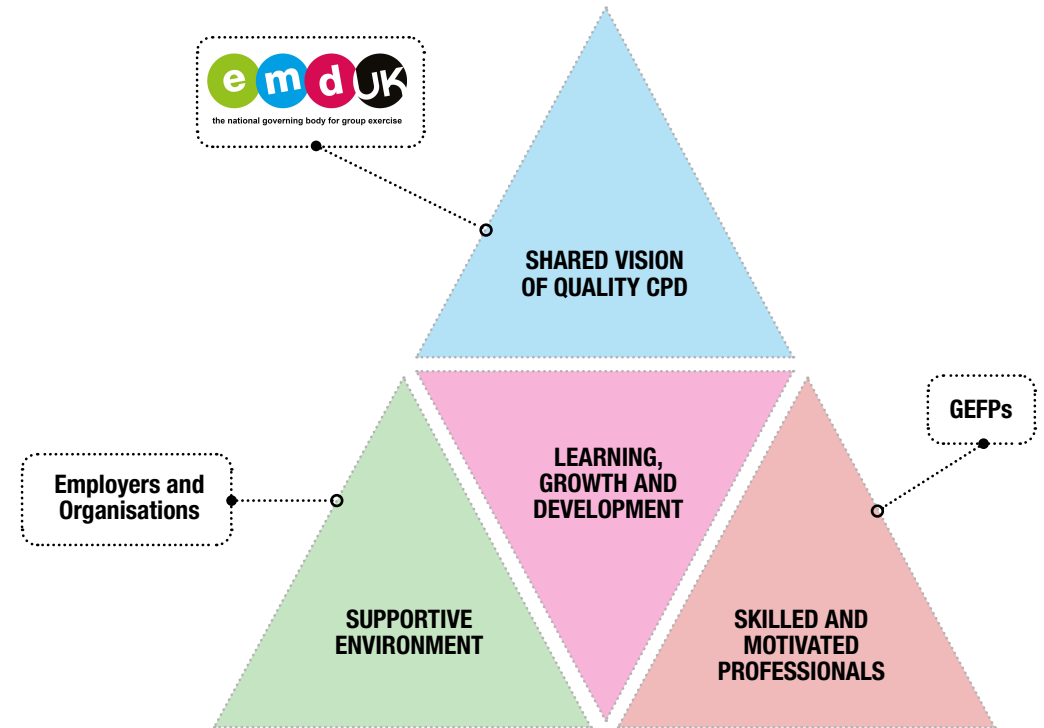
This strategy is relevant to:

- Group fitness exercise professionals
- Employers with responsibility for the group exercise professional workforce
- Providers of learning and development to the fitness community and group exercise professional workforce

The intention is to support group exercise professionals and employers to implement CPD by promoting:

- A model for developing a coherent and consistent approach to CPD
- A shared understanding of CPD within the current industry context
- A fresh system and process for implementing CPD exemplars for CPD

Components of Successful CPD Implementation



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The Importance of CPD

The strategy is relevant to the GEFPs, employers and group exercise managers, and it encompasses learning at all levels. It reflects a development model which values and promotes recognition of a wide variety of approaches to continuing professional development and enables flexible career pathways.

With the challenges of Brexit and the pandemic, critical skills shortages, and the need to respond to the rapid evolution of technology and changing participant habits, it is more important than ever before to recruit and retain a workforce who can guarantee continuity of skilled delivery during periods of change. Identifying and signposting appropriate continuing professional development for industry professionals is key to attracting and retaining talented practitioners and supporting and equipping them for the challenges -and delights -of working in this exciting and important industry.

Continuing professional development in this sector has generally been informal in nature and occurs organically rather than strategically planned. As a result, GEFPs working in the fitness sector are frequently required to develop new knowledge and skills - often without direction from the fitness industry at large and fitness centres that engage their services.

Continuing Professional Development is about investing in career-long improvement. It is a commitment to lifelong learning. CPD encourages looking forward and identifying opportunities to learn something new, refresh existing knowledge, improve skills, or simply keep up to date with the latest developments within a particular profession or industry.

In practice, CPD can mean everything from taking a training course or attending an educational event, to studying for new qualifications or learning new aspects of a job.

What is Competency?

In this strategy, a competency is defined as having the relevant skills, knowledge, understanding and attributes to do a specified job in a particular context to an agreed standard.

The Challenges

The onus is on the individual to take personal responsibility for their learning and professional development. There is no mandate for GEFPs to pursue continuing professional development to guarantee skills are up to date and fit for purpose. In a sector driven heavily by freelancer instructors, a change is required in the way the fitness industry invests in developing and growing its group exercise workforce.

Subsequently, the fitness industry and the public benefit when GEFPs incorporate new or improved skills in their professional practice. Although CPD may be encouraged, there is no established precept for GEFPs to pursue continuing professional development to guarantee skills are valid, current, and fit for purpose.

Freelance and employed GEFPs may be having to navigate their CPD within the constraints of time, finances and in the absence of meaningful collaboration or structured feedback from fitness employers. Professional feedback is critical to nourish and inspire instructors towards excellence in their craft. (*ideafit.com* July 2, 2015).

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The Ambition

The ambition is to offer a CPD strategy and supporting framework that applies to the whole group exercise and fitness community across all organisations and settings. It reflects a professional development model which values and promotes recognition of all group exercise and fitness roles all organisations and settings and seeks to enable flexible career pathways.

THE AMBITION AIMS TO:

- Introduce the concept of CPD as central to the continued success of the group fitness exercise community in the UK cultivate the notion of personal responsibility for CPD
- Create the expectation of high standards and continual improvement amongst employers leading to CPD becoming the norm rather than the exception
- Introduce a CPD framework that defines, structures, and aligns CPD to group exercise professional and industry needs
- Educate practitioners and employers in the purpose and processes associated with selecting and completing CPD
- Foster a culture in which group exercise practitioners and employers use the framework to identify skills gaps and development needs

Professional Standards *(Education and Training Foundation)*

Professional Values and Attributes

Develop your own judgment of what works and does not work in your teaching and training.



1. Critically reflect on and evaluate your practices, values, and beliefs to improve learner outcomes.
2. Promote and embed education for sustainable development (ESD) across learning and working practices.
3. Inspire, motivate, and raise aspirations of learners by communicating high expectations and a passion for learning.
4. Support and develop learners' confidence, autonomy and thinking skills, taking account of their needs and starting points.
5. Value and champion diversity, equality of opportunity, inclusion and social equity.
6. Develop collaborative and respectful relationships with learners, colleagues and external stakeholders.
7. Engage with and promote a culture of continuous learning and quality improvement.

Professional Knowledge and Understanding

Develop deep and critically informed knowledge and understanding in theory and practice.



8. Develop and update knowledge of your subject specialism, taking account of new practices, research and/ or industry requirements.
9. Critically review and apply your knowledge of educational research, pedagogy, and assessment to develop evidence-informed practice.
10. Share and update knowledge of effective practice with colleagues, networks and/ or research communities to support improvement.
11. Develop and apply your knowledge of special educational needs and disabilities to create inclusive learning experiences.
12. Understand your teaching role and responsibilities and how these are influenced by legal, regulatory, institutional and ethical contexts.

Professional Skills

Develop your expertise and skills to ensure the best outcomes for learners.



13. Promote and support positive learner behaviour, attitudes and wellbeing.
14. Apply motivational, coaching and skill development strategies to help learners progress and achieve.
15. Plan and deliver learning programmes that are safe, inclusive, stretching and relevant to learners' needs.
16. Select and use digital technologies safely and effectively to promote learning.
17. Develop learners' mathematics, English, digital and wider employability skills.
18. Provide access to up-to-date information, advice and guidance so that learners can take ownership of their learning and make informed progression choices.
19. Apply appropriate and fair methods of assessment and provide constructive and timely feedback to support learning and achievement.
20. Develop enrichment and progression opportunities for learners through collaboration with employers, higher education and/ or community groups.

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What counts as 'CPD' within the GEPF community?

CPD, although easy to recognise, can be difficult to define. The common view is that CPD is learning and development activities beyond that derived from their initial training (Collin et al, 2012). CPD refers to the process of gaining and building of professional skills.

Any formal or informal activity from which a person learns or develops professionally can be considered eligible for CPD. However, CPD activities must complement GEPFs professional practice and enhance the service they provide.

CPD includes any activity which increased knowledge, understanding skills that improves professional performance. This relates to any new skills, knowledge or experience you gain beyond your initial training. For CPD to have maximum impact is must be applied.

Which CPD activities are relevant?

CPD includes formal programmes, on-the-job development, and qualifications as well as informal learning through experience. CPD makes learning conscious and active to enhance application in the workplace. Learning can include a variety of approaches:

- Work-based learning
- Obtaining additional qualifications
- Professional activities
- Formal learning and education leading to recognised awards
- Self-directed learning

Examples of CPD learning include:

- In-person and virtual learning via industry and commercial training providers
- Work-based learning through supervision or work-shadowing opportunities
- Formal and informal peer coaching and mentoring in which instructors learn from another professional via informal and formal experiential learning
- Reflective practice on professional planned and unplanned learning experiences
- Qualifications required for registration or to meet minimal national standards

This strategy defines CPD as:

Any planned learning and development activity that enhances professional practice and complements the quality of service provided.

Scope of Practice: The model intends to embrace CPD activities for group exercise disciplines that historically sit outside of the 'group exercise' CPD remit (for example; Qi Gong, Tai Chi, Yoga Alliance, etc) and a wide range of approaches to continuing professional development and encompasses learning at all levels. It aims to enable fitness professionals to grow in competence and confidence and fulfil their potential as a competent fitness professional.

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What value does CPD bring?

1. Commitment to high standards:

CPD opens hearts and minds to new teaching approaches, research, and professional standards. CPD facilitates 'just-in-time' adaptations and improvements to teaching practise to and professional practice (<https://pdf.sciencedirectassets.com>).

2. A compliant and confident workforce: Instructors who participate in CPD activities are better equipped to meet the diverse needs of their learners and offer more targeted solutions (<https://educationstudies.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/BESA-Journal-EF-9-2-5-bartleton.pdf>).

3. Peer learning and growth: CPD activities and collaboration with other professionals can provide a sense of professional direction and assist in developing new skills fresh perspectives and stay abreast of industry trends and developments (<https://doi.org/10.1080/0158037X.2010.517994>).

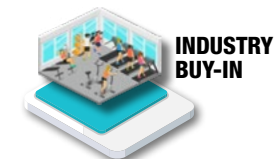
4. Promotion of lifelong learning: In this dynamic industry, regular CPD is an efficient way to keep updated with new research, industry developments, emerging trends.

5. Be an industry influencer: Completing a CPD accredited programme helps signpost instructor credentials and professionalism to the public, employers, and the industry at large (<https://www.cpdstandards.com/resources/benefits-of-cpd>).

6. A competent and compliant workforce CPD is required for GEFPs to maintain their professional status. Instructors are required to a commit to continuous learning and professional development that amounts to a certain number of learning hours.

CPD provides a panoramic view of a person's skill set - motivating GEFPs to hone their skills and upskill where there are skill gaps.

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Types of CPD

There is not a prescribed method for achieving CPD. Any activity which provides a professional development benefit to personal development would be considered as relevant CPD. The type of CPD varies according to the different learning methods.

The CPD falls into three distinct types:

1. Formal CPD

Includes participating in training events, qualifications, courses (in-person and e-learning), professional courses and knowledge or skill-based workshops, conferences, further education, communities of practice, research, writing articles or papers, online learning where participation can be evidenced via learning outcomes. Lecturing, shadowing, and networking in a profession-related project, being a representative on a committee, a national assessor, tutor, or internal quality assurer and mentoring.

2. Informal CPD

Includes learning that is more passive with no interaction with the tutor. For example, watching video tutorials or lectures, listening to podcasts, reading case studies, industry updates and journals, and viewing videos.

3. Autonomous CPD

Includes autonomous, self-learning relating to your professional role. For example, reflective practise, research, reading online and offline article and reviews, research reviews of publications/industry publications. conference plus participation in networks, communities of practice and special interest groups.

GEFPs: Planning their CPD

EMD UK encourages its members to track their CPD, both formal and informal via a CPD log or tracker. Tracking or logging your CPD creates a record of the learning and development activities which have been undertaken and contributed to your annual CPD plan.

A comprehensive log or tracker should provide space for reflection and evaluation of the activity undertaken.

EMD UK members will have access to an online:

- Self-assessment tool, which is a quick and easy way to assess your current practice against the twenty Professional Standards to identify areas of development (as shown on page 6)
- CPD log (accessible via the EMD UK dashboard) which will enable members to set and track CPD activity, and identify which relevant Professional Standard applies

As a registered member, GEFPs must:

- Keep an up-to-date and accurate record of CPD activities within the EMD UK dashboard
- Record a range of CPD activities relevant to current or future practice
- Show clearly how they have reflected, planned, actioned and evaluated your development needs and indicate how this will have an impact in your practice
- Submit their CPD record for audit on request
- Consent to being part of EMD UK's random sampling quality assurance process

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Meeting CPD Requirements

How will GEFPs demonstrate relevant and sufficient CPD?

- Complete regular CPD activities to accumulate CPD points
- Complete a range of different CPD activities
- Complete learning activities that are relevant to their professional role *
- Complete a self-reflection activity towards improving their practice and the experience of those they serve

If selected, contribute to an audit as part of EMD UK's random sampling strategy CPD points are a measurement of the amount of CPD that has been undertaken.

In practice, **one CPD point** is equivalent to **one hour** of learning.

* If you are required to obtain a specific CPD activity, for example, first aid or safeguarding.

How much CPD is required?

- All EMD UK GEFPs members are required to undertake CPD.
- A minimum of 10 HOURS CPD, and unlimited maximum is required each calendar year

Of which:

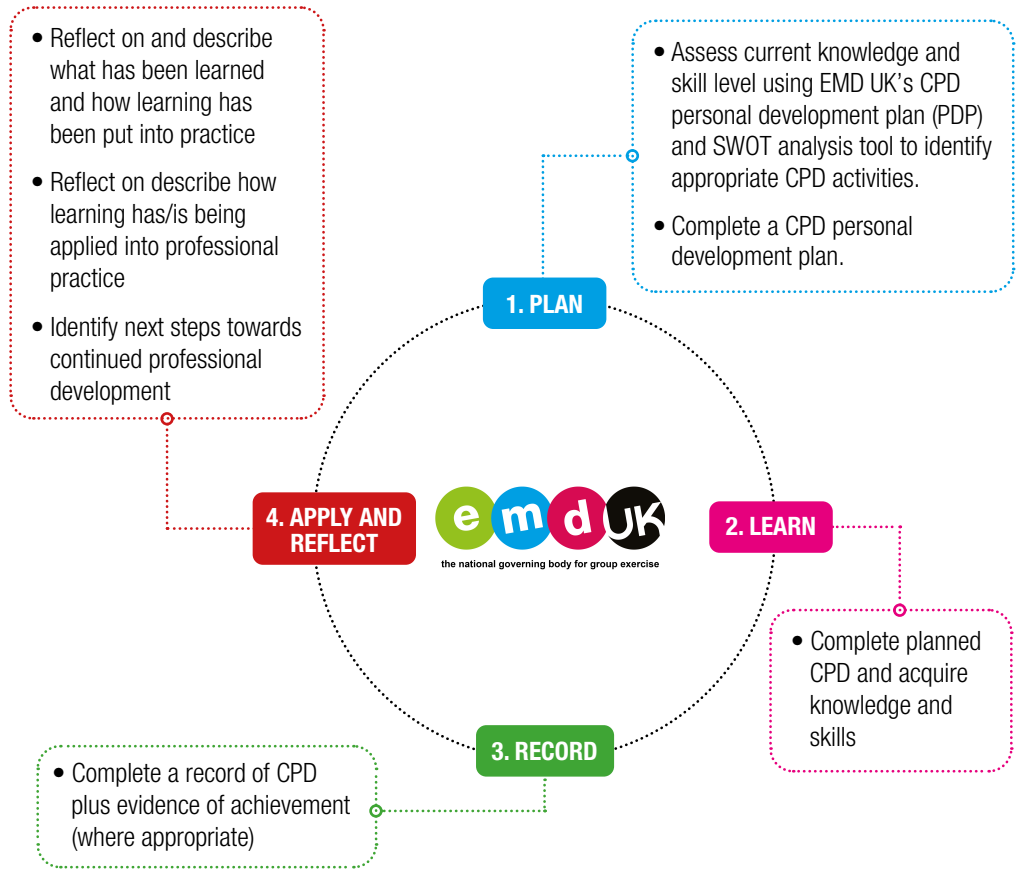
- 6 hours should be CPD completed should be Formal CPD where learning is participative and can learning can be evidenced via achievement of learning outcomes
- 4 hours can be a blend of Informal and Autonomous CPD

Minimum Entry Point =

Equivalent to Level 2 industry recognised qualification achievement for group exercise instructor award.

CPD Model for collecting CPD evidence

There are FOUR STAGES:



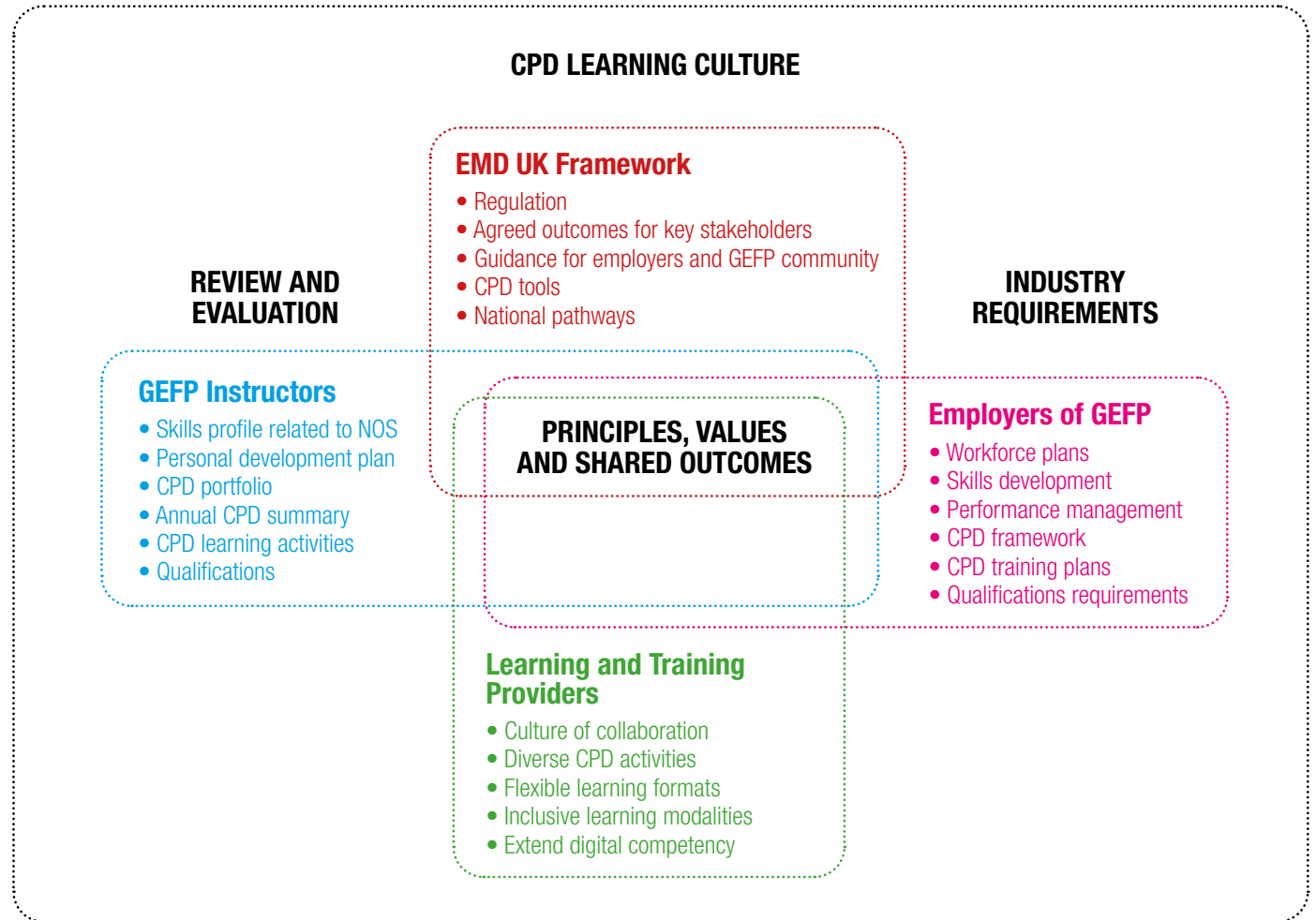
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Fitness Industry Systems Model for Implementing CPD Strategy

EMD UK commits to an integrated approach to implement this CPD strategy. The approach includes relevant stakeholders and acknowledges the need for a number of key elements to align for a successful strategy. The model includes the intention that employers of GEFPs are an important contributor to a national CPD framework.



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CPD recording and evidence collection is assumed to be collected and retained via EMD UK's online web portal. Below are two examples of some of the information

GEFPs would be required to produce as part of a CPD process that includes verifiable evidence towards CPD (CPD Plan and CPD Record). The aim would be create

online forms to mirror GEFPs CPD journey to track CPD completion and provide prompts and encouragement towards ongoing professional development

CPD PERSONAL PLAN

NAME		TIME PERIOD - FROM:		TO:
WHERE DO I WANT TO BE BY THE END OF THIS PERIOD? WHAT TO I WANT TO BE DOING?				
<i>E.G. By this time next year I want to develop my teaching skills</i>				
WHAT DO I WANT/NEED TO LEARN AND WHY?	WHAT WILL I DO TO ACHIEVE THIS?	WHAT RESOURCES OR SUPPORT WILL I NEED?	WHAT WILL SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?	TARGET DATES FOR REVIEW AND COMPLETION
<i>Current view of effective adult learning and teaching methods</i> <i>How to motivate people so I can be an inspirational leader</i> <i>How to make my classes more inclusive for people who may have conditions or may have a disability</i>	<i>Seek and attend training sessions that update my knowledge and skills in diverse needs</i> <i>Find a mentor</i> <i>Watch EMD UK's online teaching instruction virtual sessions</i>	<i>Allocate time to research best practice</i> <i>Online training on motivating others and personalising to individual needs</i> <i>A mentor to guide me (can be online or in-person)</i>	<i>Having added new techniques in how I deliver my training session</i> <i>Attracting a more inclusive and diverse participant group</i> <i>(Mentor) Demonstrate new and different approaches to teaching and being given advice to improve and an action plan.</i> <i>The opportunity to practice and some feedback</i> <i>Feeling inspired</i>	<i>Within 1 month</i> <i>Within 3 months</i> <i>This week</i>

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CPD RECORD

DATE	ACTIVITY AND TYPE OF LEARNING	EVIDENCE	LEARNING OUTCOMES	LINKS TO COMPETENCES DEMONSTRATED	TIME (DAYS/HOURS)
00.00.00	<p>WHAT YOU DID</p> <p><i>E.G. Attended a motivating course: 'Teaching Skills for Teachers'</i></p> <p><i>Read an article by ACSM on the principles & processes of effective learning and asked another GEFP to observe my session and give me feedback</i></p>	<p>HOW YOU RECORDED IT</p> <p><i>E.G. I got a certificate of attendance 'Teaching Skills for Teachers'</i></p>	<p>WHAT YOU LEARNT</p> <p><i>E.G. Training course: Understanding of how participants' mind works during learning</i></p> <p><i>New and innovative ideas for teaching to engage all learners more</i></p> <p><i>Learned new ways to engage less-motivated participants take responsibility for their objectives by involving them in creating them</i></p>	<p>HOW YOU PUT IT INTO PRACTICE</p> <p><i>More initial engagement with participants before, during & after classes. Revisited my teaching methods and changed how I structured my verbal and visual delivery. Added new verbal and visual teaching tools</i></p>	<p><i>12 hours</i></p> <p><i>(4 hrs - course)</i></p> <p><i>(3 hrs - mentor support)</i></p> <p><i>2.5 hours practicing with another instructor, gaining class participant feedback - see video attached)</i></p> <p><i>2.5 hours planning new class delivery</i></p>

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The QA needs to be fully considered and discussed to identify specific outcomes and make a plan that is sensitive and accommodating to the variety of industry stakeholders it will affect.

Key requirements of a CPD quality assurance system:

- The system must have a clear purpose and be meaningful to stakeholders
- The system and criteria must accommodate a broad range of CPD provision
- The system must promote collection of 'high quality CPD'
- Sampling must occur across the full range of CPD disciplines, attainment formats and evidence of completion
- Assessment and review must be undertaken by trained, suitably experienced assessors
- Assessment must be fair and reliable across different CPD disciplines
- CPD providers should be supported and encouraged to engage in the process ensure the provision of high quality CPD that is relevant, current, and sufficient to meet its intended outcomes.
- Assessment decisions must be fair and reliable across different CPD disciplines
- Costs and benefits must be considered in the system of quality assurance
- CPD accreditation must be continually reviewed and open to future development (https://chartered.college/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Piloting-a-CPD-QA-system-Final-Report_April-2021.pdf).

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Ultimately, the success of the CPD strategy relies, in part, on GEFP, employer and training provider commitment towards this strategy. You will probably have a well-honed strategy in place and this will ultimately be part of the CPD strategy.

To achieve this, EMD UK CPD strategy should focus on the following:

1. **CPD framework:** to structure and define the competencies required for best practice. To plan CPD programmes and interventions. To grow the learning culture for CPD.
2. **CPD process:** to describe best practice in CPD planning and delivery for group exercise fitness instructors and employers in the fitness sector including an online portal for GEFPs to log their CPD record (guidance doc: see Professional Standards for Teachers and Trainers in the Further Education and Training Sector, Education & Training Foundation, 2022 on page 6 of this document).
3. **CPD promotion & commissioning:** to promote and commission high-quality fit-for-purpose CPD in the areas most required by the fitness industry (which maps to the framework) and can demonstrate impact to GEFPs (as outlined in point no. 2 above).
4. **Measuring impact:** of high quality, current and relevant CPD that demonstrates a return on investment, achieves potential outcomes and has a positive effect on the industry. Highlight EMD UK's expectations for a high calibre of CPD activities across the group exercise workforce.
5. **Accreditation of high quality CPD providers:** to professionally acknowledge and recognise providers of CPD who can demonstrate that they offer effective and relevant CPD that conforms to the framework and process.
6. **Engage Industry influencers:** through networking, information exchanges via communication - clear, timely and relevant information and build upon a growing trust in the process.
7. **Encourage ownership:** every GEFP has a stake in this (change happens better and faster when everyone buys in and 'owns' the process. Build a sense of community to give GEFPs a voice - listen, talk and take action).

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