

Continuing professional development (CPD) policy

Date of implementation	1 April 2014
Date of next review by governing body	1 January 2019
Responsibility for developing, monitoring and reviewing policy	Education co-ordinator; education consultant on behalf of the Advisory Group for Education and Professional Standards (AGEPS)
Associated documents	BACc strategy, education strategy, The Standards of Practice for Acupuncture, CPD handbook, Code of Professional Conduct, Professional Competence Guidelines: Assessing Risk

1.0 Introduction

The British Acupuncture Council's (BACc) mission is to ensure that its members offer treatment that is:

- holistic
- safe
- evidence based
- personalised.

This is achieved through establishing, implementing and maintaining the highest standards and values of pre- and post-qualification education and professional practice. We believe that each member should be in control of their ongoing learning and professional development and that our role, as the professional association, is to provide guidance and personalised support. For this reason, the BACc's CPD scheme is centred on supporting individual members to align their learning to achieving personal development goals and increasing their confidence in maintaining and enhancing their standards of practice.

The BACc places great emphasis on reflective practice to enable members to progress and develop as autonomous, self-directed acupuncture professionals; our CPD scheme therefore is not based on a points system, instead members are required to critically reflect on the impact of their learning on:

- the development of their practice
- patient outcomes.

CPD is defined by the BACc as 'learning that supports the development and work of its members throughout their professional career as acupuncturists.' CPD is regarded as essential for the maintenance and enhancement of the knowledge, skills and attributes needed for effective professional practice.

2.0 Professional development and the Code of Professional Practice

As part of the obligations to their patients, the BAAC's registrants are required to:

... refresh their knowledge and techniques by, for example, attending appropriate seminars and postgraduate training courses, or by undertaking recognised continuing professional development training. Failure to take part in an appropriate amount of postgraduate education will be taken into account by the Professional Conduct Committee if there are any allegations concerning their professional competence.

3.0 Advisory Group for Education and Professional Standards (AGEPS)

The AGEPS has responsibility for recommending the CPD policy and associated procedures subject to approval by the BAAC Governing Board. It is also responsible for reviewing:

- arrangements for the annual CPD audit
- compilation and dissemination of reports on the audit.

Furthermore, the AGEPS has responsibility for:

- monitoring the implementation of the policy
- reviewing the policy.

Membership of the AGEPS comprises:

- a maximum of three members who are acupuncturists and have a background in education, course management, quality assurance, curriculum development and/or training
- a representative from the British Acupuncture Accreditation Board (BAAB)
- a representative from the Council of Heads for Acupuncture Courses (CHAC).

The work of the AGEPS is supported by the education co-ordinator and the education consultant (CPD) and by professional development leads (PDLs) at regional level.

4.0 CPD requirements

Engagement in CPD is a mandatory requirement of membership of the BAAC.

Members are required to:

- undertake a minimum of 30 hours of CPD activity per year. The aim of the CPD is to improve professional practice as defined in The Standards of Practice for Acupuncture (SPA). The range of activities that are accepted as evidence is detailed in the CPD Handbook
- complete an annual declaration of their CPD activity either online or on paper. Members can submit their own records as long as the information provided matches the information requested on the BAAC forms
- reflect on the impact that engagement in CPD has made to their practice and the therapeutic relationship with their patients
- maintain an ongoing record of their CPD. This may be required at the discretion of the AGEPS and/or the Professional Conduct Committee
- participate in the BAAC's audit of CPD when requested.

The deadline for submitting CPD returns is 31 January. Members are sent regular reminders of the deadline through the BAAC's monthly e-news and through The Acupuncturist (BAAC members' magazine).

The AGEPS has responsibility for overseeing the audit of 10 per cent of the CPD returns, randomly chosen, every year. In addition to being a quality check, the purpose of the audit is to support members to reflect on the value of their CPD to their professional practice.

Members who have consistently met the CPD requirements for a minimum of four years are issued with a CPD certificate which is updated on an annual basis.

The BAAC, through its support networks, endeavours to work with members to ensure that they are able to meet the CPD requirements. Any members who persistently do not comply with the CPD requirements over a three-year period may be referred to the Professional Conduct Committee.

4.1 New members

All newly qualified members are automatically put on the BAAC register. In the first full year of practice, members are asked to submit a professional development plan (PDP) detailing their CPD priorities in the forthcoming year. In subsequent years, members are required to submit a full CPD return. New members are supported to meet the BAAC's CPD requirements by professional development leads (PDLs) who:

- facilitate a 'new members' induction event
- provide support for members to access the wide range of BAAC's services
- promote engagement in informal learning activities such as regional group networks, peer learning groups
- provide targeted support as required by members.

4.2 Criteria for exemption

BAAC members are exempt from participation in the CPD scheme if:

- they are practising overseas and are subject to the regulatory requirements of the country of domicile. If such arrangements do not exist, overseas members are expected to submit an annual CPD return to the BAAC. If an overseas member returns to the UK to practise, the BAAC may request evidence of engagement in CPD
- they confirm that they have retired from practice
- their circumstances are exceptional, for example:
 - prolonged sick leave
 - carer responsibilities affecting their ability to practise
 - maternity, paternity or adoption leave for not less than six months in any one calendar year
 - study leave or sabbatical of not less than six months in any one calendar year
 - any other very exceptional circumstances.

All exemptions must be agreed with the education co-ordinator.

Any members returning to practice after a prolonged period of absence (that is longer than two years) will be offered the support available to new members.

5.0 CPD support available through the BAAC

The BAAC does not offer an annual programme of CPD; however members can access the following as part of their professional development:

- regional networks that offer informal opportunities for peer support, mentoring, action learning and workshops
- 1:1 and small group support from professional development leads (PDLs)
- annual national conference
- research activity and symposia
- ad hoc workshops linked to strategic priorities
- business support programme and additional targeted support on marketing and PR.