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European Association for Professions in Biomedical Science

Policy on Continuing Professional Development for Biomedical Scientists

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Policy on Continuous Professional Development

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1 Continuing Professional Development

1.1 Definition

Continuing professional development (CPD) is part of the broad process of life-long learning. It relates specifically to the maintenance of clinical and scientific knowledge, together with skills and professional performance. .

1.2 Statement

CPD is essential for maintaining professional status and enhances the competence of Biomedical Scientists.

EPBS recommends mandatory CPD.

1.3 Characteristics

There are three essential characteristics of CPD:

- That it is continuous – it starts after the initial attainment of professional qualifications and is constantly sustained throughout a career
- That it is professional – the learning activities relate to the practice of Biomedical Science
- That it involves development – professional practice is constantly evolving and personal knowledge, skills and behaviours must grow in keeping with current best practice.

CPD is clearly a tool for enhancing competence.

1.4 Beneficiaries

When Biomedical Scientists engage in CPD, they develop professionally and individually.

Other beneficiaries of CPD are:

- Patients
- Clinicians
- Employers
- Healthcare providers
- Insurers

2 CPD Activities

EPBS advocates that employers should allow Biomedical Scientists protected time for formal CPD. Biomedical Scientists recognise the need to keep up-to-date with developments in professional knowledge and practice.

CPD activities should include a full spectrum of professional, scientific and managerial activities of the individual. This includes areas relating to continuing education, lecturing, teaching, scientific publishing and laboratory practice.

2.1 Scope of CPD activities:

- 1) Professional activities
- 2) Educational activities
- 3) Lecturing and teaching
- 4) Publishing
- 5) Vocational activities
- 6) Non accredited scientific activities

Further education such as acquiring Masters and PhD degrees are also considered to constitute CPD.

2.2 CPD programs

EPBS acknowledges that teaching and learning processes may vary from country to country and thus there cannot be a single CPD program for all member states.

CPD programs provide Biomedical Scientists with a framework within which to plan, monitor and evidence their CPD records. This enables specific and general activities to be structured in order to deliver intended outcomes.

2.3 CPD timeframes:

Clearly defined measurable and reasonable cycles should be used.

2.4 Credit/point system:

The credit system should use defined measurements, which could be related to:

- ECTS (European Credit Transfer System)
- ECVETS (European credits for vocational education and training system)
- UEC (European Credits – used in European Dossier - 1995)
- other recognized acceptable credit systems

2.5 Evaluation and Auditing of CPD

EPBS recommends that there must be some form of recognised evaluation of the effectiveness of CPD.

The mechanisms for auditing of CPD are dependent upon whether CPD is mandatory or non-mandatory in respective member countries. Regular reflective learning assessment of CPD activities and feedback to employees and employers/ supervisors is considered necessary. Thus it is recommended that evaluation of CPD is performed by the national registration body or professional body, or other as appropriate.

A degree of independent scrutiny should be incorporated for validation via appropriate peer review.

Depending on whether CPD is currently mandatory or not, failure to acquire sufficient CPD credits may result in measures ranging from having to repeat a CPD cycle, to loss of licence to practice or removal from the member country's national register.

CPD participation is fundamental to ensuring the continued provision, maintenance and development of Biomedical Scientist's necessary skills and competencies.

3 References:

www.amlis.ie/cpd

www.ibms.org/.../education-development:cpd

<http://www.salute.gov.it/ecm/ecm.jsp>

http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc50_en.htm