

General Optical Council

CPD record review: A guide for registrants

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Introduction

About this guide

Continuing professional development (CPD) is a statutory requirement for all fully-qualified optometrists and dispensing opticians to ensure they keep their skills up-to-date and develop new ones in order to practise safely and protect their patients.

This guide explains the registrant CPD record review process and aims to help you understand what is involved.

Why does the GOC need to undertake a review of registrant CPD records?

We need to undertake a review to ensure that registrants are undertaking CPD which aligns with their scope of practice and professional development needs, and that registrants are keeping good-quality records of the CPD they complete. Review is intended to be a positive process where, if issues are identified, registrants are supported to work on them.

Registrant review has been introduced from the 2022-24 CPD cycle to provide a mechanism of quality assurance that was not required under the previous Continuing Education and Training (CET) scheme, which required advance approval of learning events and for providers to allocate points to registrants. As the CPD scheme is much more flexible than the CET scheme was and registrants are now required to maintain their own records of CPD completed, review of a registrant's records is a proportionate way of quality assuring CPD provision without the heavy administrative burden of advance approval.

When will review take place?

Review of registrant CPD records will take place throughout the three-year CPD cycle.

How are registrants selected for review?

Up to ten percent of registrants will have their CPD records reviewed each CPD cycle. Registrants will receive an email when they are selected for review.

Can any registrant have their records reviewed?

Yes, any fully-qualified registrant can have their records reviewed, including those who are subject to ongoing fitness to practise proceedings. Students will not be subject to review, the exception being student optometrists who are also registered dispensing opticians, who may have their records relating to registration as a dispensing optician reviewed.

How will I know if I have been selected for review?

We will email you to confirm that you have been selected for review. We will contact you again once the review is complete and include any advice or comments from the reviewer. We may also contact you before the review is complete if we need further information or clarification from you in order to complete the review.

Can I opt out of review?

No. Being able to review registrant CPD records is a crucial part of our being able to undertake appropriate quality assurance. We need to ensure that our registrants are maintaining appropriate CPD records, and they have access to learning that will help them to practise safely.

Who will review my CPD records?

Review is undertaken by our registrant CPD reviewers. The reviewers are optometrists and dispensing opticians appointed and trained by the GOC.

As part of the review process, you may also have contact with members of the GOC CPD team, who are our expert in-house staff. You are welcome to contact them with questions at any stage of the review.

What do I need to provide for review to be undertaken?

You will not usually need to provide anything – the review is undertaken by looking at your MyCPD records. It is therefore very important that you make sure your records of CPD activities are as clear and complete as they can be. Guidance on what records need to be kept can be found in our [Continuing Professional Development \(CPD\): A guide for registrants](#) document, available on the GOC website.

In some circumstances, the reviewer may require more information from you. If this is the case, they will let you know during the review. This will usually be if the information was not recorded on MyCPD, if the information is not clear, or if there is a discrepancy in your records. There are many reasons why a reviewer may request further information from you. It is not necessarily a sign that there are faults with your record keeping.

Can a reviewer remove points from my record?

No, reviewers cannot remove points or delete entries from your MyCPD account. They may, however, make recommendations for you to amend your CPD entries, or ask you to consider if the CPD you have undertaken is appropriate for your scope of practice or professional development.

Where do I go if I have questions about review?

If you have questions that are not answered by this guide, please email our CPD team at cpd@optical.org.

CPD record review

1. The review process

Up to ten percent of registrants will be selected for review throughout the CPD cycle. Being selected for review is nothing to be concerned about if you have been keeping good quality records of the CPD and learning that you have undertaken.

1.1 First steps and what we look at

If you are selected for review, you will be notified by email. Review selection happens throughout the three-year CPD cycle. When you receive this notification, no immediate action will be required from you.

We may not look at all the records on your MyCPD account as part of the review, particularly if you are selected for review in the final year of a CPD cycle when you may have completed and uploaded many CPD activities. The reviewer will be given a sample of your records to review. The reviewer will not be able to change which records they are asked to look at and you should not ask them to do so.

1.2 What reviewers are looking for

When reviewing your records, the reviewers are looking to see that you are keeping good quality records of the CPD you have completed, that any reflections you've documented are meaningful, and that the learning is appropriate to your needs.

1.3 Supplying further information

Most registrants will not need to supply any additional information in order for the review of their records to proceed. In some circumstances, however, and depending on how far into the cycle you are chosen for review, you may be asked to supply additional information – for example, if data is missing or if information you have logged on MyCPD is unclear.

If this is the case for you, your reviewer will contact you and explain why they need the information they are asking for. You will need to provide the information as soon as possible, and within 14 calendar days, so that the review can be completed, and a definitive outcome given. If you are unable or decide not to provide further information, then an outcome of “requires improvement” or “serious concerns” may be given by the reviewer.

1.4 Outcomes of CPD record review

You will receive an email from the CPD team once the review has been completed. This will usually be within six weeks of your receiving the initial notification email and will include a short report written by the reviewer with their findings. The potential outcomes of review are outlined below and summarised in Table 1.

It will be clear from the reviewer's report which outcome applies to you, and whether there are any immediate actions for you to take.

Audit outcome	Description
Passed	The records are of a good standard and are sufficiently detailed to be able to demonstrate your learning. The reviewer may still give tips for improvement of your records. No more action is required from you.
Requires improvement	Improvement is required in your record-keeping and/or your learning may not be appropriate or on track. Your reviewer will provide information on what you need to do to reach an acceptable standard, with reference to the Standards of Practice for Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians . This outcome may require a further, targeted review of your records within the next 12 months.
Serious concerns	There are serious issues with your record-keeping and/or there is evidence that your learning may not align with your needs or with the Standards of Practice for Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians. Depending on the extent of the issue(s) identified, further steps may need to be taken. This may include referral to the Fitness to Practise team.

Table 1 - CPD record review outcomes

1.4.1 Review outcome - passed

If you receive this outcome from the reviewer, your CPD records are of a good or acceptable standard, and they are sufficiently detailed to evidence your learning. No further action is required, and the review has been passed.

The reviewer may provide in their report some suggestions on how you may be able to further improve your records.

We expect that most registrants will receive this outcome if they are keeping honest and diligent records.

1.4.2 Review outcome - requires improvement

If you receive this outcome from the reviewer, you will need to take action in accordance with the reviewer's recommendations. You will be given specific actions and timeframes in which we expect you to complete them. If you cannot complete the actions within the specified timeframes for any reason, you must contact the CPD team (cpd@optical.org) as soon as possible to advise of this and explain why. Failure to respond or to take the actions requested with no explanation will result in a move to a 'serious concerns' outcome.

An example leading to this outcome would be where poor, incomplete, or inappropriate evidence has been supplied.

Registrants receiving a 'requires improvement' outcome may be subject to targeted review (see 1.5 Targeted review, below). If the review is successfully passed at that point, no further targeted steps will be taken. If, following the targeted review you receive another 'requires improvement' or 'serious concerns' outcome, depending on the extent of the issue(s) identified, further steps may need to be taken and this may include referral to the Fitness to Practise (FTP) team.

1.4.3 Review outcome - serious concerns

If you receive this outcome from the reviewer, the issues with your record-keeping and/or CPD learning activities will be itemised with information about how these issues render you in breach of the Standards of Practice for Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians and/or the where concerns are deep-seated and cannot be easily remedied, although you will still be given an opportunity to make improvements to your record-keeping and/or reassess the CPD activities you are undertaking. The CPD team will support you in doing this.

An example of a serious concern would be dishonestly entering CPD that you have not completed on your MyCPD record. Such a case would amount to misconduct and would be in breach of the Standards of Practice for Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians.

The GOC's Director of Regulatory Strategy will review all instances of registrants receiving this outcome. Taking into account the advice from the reviewer, a decision will be made on the necessary next steps. This may involve a referral to the Fitness to Practise team. If this is the case, you will receive written notification of what will happen next.

1.5 Targeted review

Registrants receiving an outcome of 'requires improvement' may be subject to a targeted review in the following 12 months. As part of targeted review, the reviewer will look at a selection of CPD records and consider if the registrant has acted in accordance with the recommendations reported in the previous review as a whole. A new, definitive outcome of pass, requires improvement, or serious concerns will be given following targeted review.

1.6 Appealing the outcome of the review

If, after receiving your reviewer's report, you disagree with the outcome you have been given, the first step would be to discuss this with the CPD team. They cannot change the outcome you have been given, but they can explain why you have received that outcome and provide clarity (if needed) on the comments.

If you still disagree with the outcome following discussion with the CPD team, you can ask for this to be escalated to an outcome appeal. You should contact the CPD team in the first instance at cpd@optical.org. The GOC's Director of Regulatory Strategy will look at your appeal, review the decision, and aim to provide a response to you within 30 calendar days.

2. What happens to your data?

2.1 Processing data during registrant review

Your CPD records and any further information you provide may be viewed by the GOC and our agents if you are selected for CPD review. Information you upload and input in MyCPD including your reflections are intended for your personal use. However, the reviewer has a duty to act upon any information that may raise concerns about your fitness to practise. We will process your data as permitted by the Data Protection Act 2018. Data will be used for the purposes of conducting the review.

For more information on how we use and handle data as an organisation, please contact our Governance team at foi@optical.org.

2.2 Data retention after review outcomes

Once the review has been completed, how we handle your data is determined by the outcome of the review. If the review is passed, then the review data we hold will be subject to the GOC's CPD data retention policy and retained for two complete cycles beyond the current cycle.

If the outcome was 'requires improvement', the data and review outcome will be stored according to the CPD data retention policy and subsequently reviewed as part of your targeted review.

If the outcome was 'serious concerns', then the GOC may pass your data and the outcome of the review onto the Fitness to Practise team. In this case, the data will be retained according to the CPD and, if relevant, the Fitness to Practise data retention policies.

2.3 Using information and data from registrant CPD review

The GOC may use information and data from registrant CPD review for research purposes, reporting, and for the purposes of reviewing our internal systems and procedures. No data that could identify the registrant will be contained in any report.



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Tel: 020 7580 3898 Fax: 020 7436 3525 Email: goc@optical.org (general enquiries); cpd@optical.org (CPD enquiries)
Twitter: [@GOC_UK](https://twitter.com/GOC_UK)

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