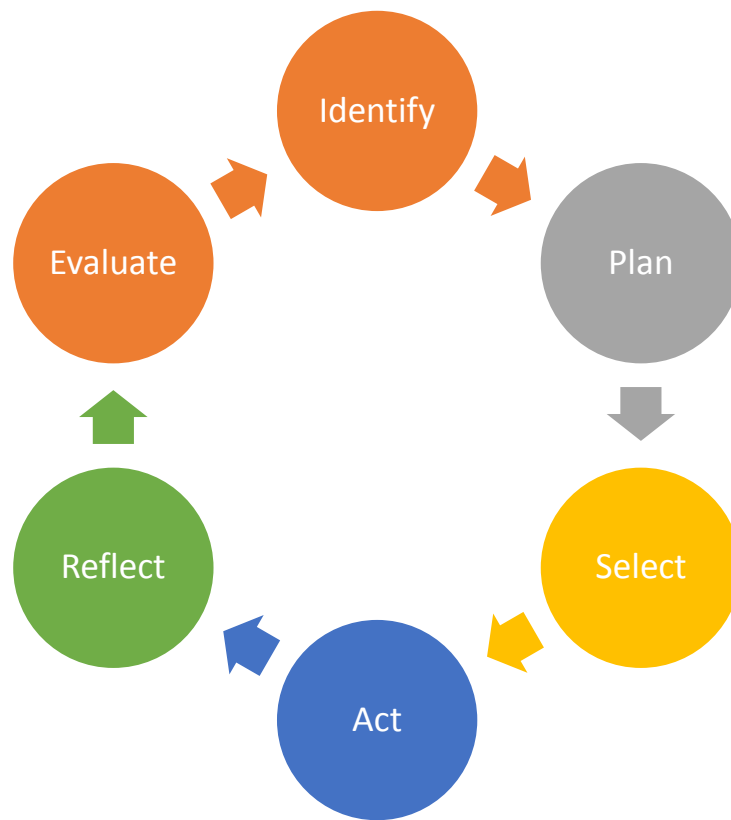




**Continuing
Professional
Development**
for Osteopaths

Six-step guide to planning your CPD



Stage 1: Identify

It may be worth taking time to consider the stage you are at in your professional life, and how this might impact on your development needs:

- Where am I now in my professional life and what have I already achieved?
- What are my strengths and what areas do I need to develop further?
- What challenges in my professional work as an osteopath have I found difficult and not fully addressed?
- What development of my knowledge and skills would enhance my practice as an osteopath for the benefit of my patients?
- What learning activities are ongoing and what progress has been made?
- What areas of interest would I like to pursue further?
- What aspirations do I have for my career and what direction should I take?
- What areas of learning are vital for my career progression?

Reviewing the *Osteopathic Practice Standards*

The new CPD scheme will require you to undertake development activities which relate to each of the four themes of the standards. So it may be a good starting point to familiarise yourself with these. You will not have to cover each of the themes annually – just over a three-year cycle, so you can plan accordingly.

Learning from experience/s in practice

Consider a clinical problem or questions posed by a patient, treatment that went particularly well, care delivered that could have been better, perhaps some difficulty in communicating with a patient, or outcomes of a practice audit or feedback exercise.

Interaction with others

Consider what you might learn from discussion with osteopathic colleagues, other healthcare practitioners and students; participation in practice meetings, conferences or working groups; teaching activities; an appraisal from an employer or peer review of aspects of your professional practice.

Previous CPD activity

It might help to reflect on past CPD activities and consider how successful they have been in meeting your CPD aims. This will enable you to determine what progress you have made and which learning needs might be taken forward, with any necessary modification, to the new CPD cycle.

You might find it helpful to use a Development Plan or Significant Event Analysis template to identify your CPD.

Stage 2: Plan

You have identified several areas of practice where you feel further development would be beneficial. Try to prioritise them in terms of importance – this will help you to plan whether the learning need should be addressed immediately or at a later point within this or another CPD cycle.

Setting learning objectives

Having considered priorities, you are ready to decide what you hope to achieve.

For example: if you have identified that you are unsure about some aspects of clinical neurological testing (a learning need), you could set a learning objective of: 'I will be able to perform a quick, relevant and complete neurological examination to evaluate patients presenting with headache'.

Your learning objectives should be realistic and achievable. Try applying the SMART formula:

Specific: What exactly do I wish to learn?

Measurable: How will I know when I have achieved my learning objective?

Achievable: Have I been realistic in terms of time, cost and support constraints?

Relevant: Is the objective really relevant to my identified learning needs to advance my professional development as an osteopath?

Timed: What deadlines should I set for achieving the objective?

Prioritising learning

You can then prioritise your learning objectives. This will enable you to plan short, medium and long-term learning activities.

For example, improving your case history recording, could be completed by attending a one-day seminar. Others, such as undertaking an MSc degree or other postgraduate qualification, may take several years.

You could look to break up these long-term learning aims into more manageable objectives for CPD purposes. Taking the example of the MSc degree, you could break this into smaller objectives relating to the degree's published modules, which could be completed over a shorter period and contribute to your CPD returns for a given year. Set a time by which you should have completed each learning objective. This will help you to monitor your progress throughout the CPD year, as well as reviewing how realistic and achievable the objective is.

Stage 3: Select

Consider what types of learning activity would best address a particular objective, as well as your personal circumstances. If you are located in a remote area, you may wish to place more emphasis on activities such as distance learning, e.g. online courses and email correspondence with other healthcare practitioners. As with the current scheme, the new CPD scheme requires at least half of your CPD requirement to be 'learning with others'.

Focus on the quality of learning activities, not just on the quantity. The activities should inspire you, relate to your professional work as an osteopath, and meet the targets you have identified for your learning needs.

The level of the activity should be carefully considered. Activities should not be selected if they are unlikely to consolidate or enhance existing knowledge. Along similar lines, when learning with others, the knowledge level of the person involved in the interaction should be appropriate for the activity being completed.

For example: if an osteopath discusses anatomy with a patient who does not possess anatomical knowledge, there is likely to be a very limited learning and development opportunity for the osteopath. Similarly, when using reference materials such as books, scientific papers, journals, websites, etc., consider the appropriateness of the level and the audience that it is aimed at.

Other questions to consider:

- How will you meet the requirement that at least half of your CPD activity should comprise learning with others?
- What activities will suit the way you learn?
- What new learning activity have you not tried before?
- What resources and opportunities are available?

It's not always necessary for CPD to be delivered in formal courses. Shared activities with colleagues can be equally beneficial – perhaps as part of a local network, or even within your practice. Case-based discussions with colleagues can provide excellent CPD activities.

Learning opportunities might arise at any time in practice. You may encounter a patient with a condition you were unfamiliar with, or where you feel that, for some reason, your communication approach was not as successful as you would hope. These issues can generate background research, reflection, and perhaps discussion with colleagues, which you can document and record as evidence of your ongoing development.

Don't underestimate the learning you do every day. Whether you've been working on projects, undertaking research or recently started in a new practice, make sure you make the most of day-to-day learning by taking the time to regularly reflect on your learning.

You may find it helpful to use an Action plan for each CPD activity.

Stage 4: Act

Once you have clearly identified your objectives, and have made a plan for the desired learning activities, you can put the plan into action. It will help keep CPD manageable if you try to follow the deadline you set for each objective. Keep notes and evidence of CPD activities completed, to form part of your CPD Record. This will help you to reflect on what you have achieved and how successfully this addressed your original identified learning needs.

Stage 5: Reflect

Twenty-first century workplaces and working lives are busy. Without realising it we have a multitude of learning experiences every moment of every day. Reflective Practice can make sense of these experiences and transform them into insights and practical strategies for personal growth and organisational impact. It can enhance critical thinking, deepen self-awareness and improve communication skills.

Stage 6: Evaluate

Having implemented your plan of action, consider whether you have achieved your original learning objectives. You may find that only some of your aims were achieved, or that the activities did not help at all.

Some questions you might want to ask yourself are:

- What have I learnt?
- Did I achieve my learning outcomes?
- What kind of unplanned outcomes or challenges arose from this experience?
- Which barriers or blocks did I have to overcome?
- How have I applied this learning at work?
- What was the impact of this learning to my practice?
- What lessons can I take from this experience?

This evaluation, for example through a CPD reflection form, allows you to reassess your current situation and plan for future CPD based on your experiences.

Your planning, undertaking of CPD and reflection on the impact of this learning on your practice will inform the basis of your Peer Discussion Review towards the end of the three-year cycle under the new CPD scheme, and will enable you to demonstrate how you have met the scheme's requirements.