

Australian Association of Social Workers

Continuing Professional Development Policy

V4.1
(March 2023)



AASW

Australian Association
of Social Workers

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1.0 Continuing Professional Development

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is how AASW members (excluding those with student or retired memberships) maintain, improve, and broaden their skills, knowledge, and expertise to continue to develop the capabilities required for professional practice.

CPD is an ongoing process throughout a career and is informed by the changing practice environment, professional domains, new information and community needs.

By completing minimum CPD hours, members are eligible for **Accredited Social Worker status**.

2.0 What is a CPD Activity?

Any activity that a social worker participates in, that contributes towards their learning and development, can be used towards their CPD. The activity does not need to be specifically recognised by any particular body to be considered. Learning and development aspects of a member's role may be considered as CPD, for example activities such as receiving and/or providing supervision.

Members are responsible for keeping a record of their CPD activity in the AASW's recording system known as 'My CPD Record'. A step by step guide of how to record your CPD is provided in the [My CPD Record User Guide](#).

The AASW's [events calendar](#) offers relevant upcoming professional development opportunities nationwide. The AASW's [online professional development platform](#) provides access to a range of online content developed specifically for social workers. This includes dedicated courses, recordings from symposiums, conferences, and workshops. If an event is free, discounted for AASW members or meets Focussed Psychological Strategies requirements, it will be specifically referenced.

3.0 What is the CPD Cycle?

The AASW CPD cycle runs over the financial year from 1 July - 30 June. CPD is calculated based on the time spent engaging in the activity. i.e. a 1-hour activity equates to one hour of CPD that can be recorded. All CPD activity must be recorded in your electronic CPD Record by 30 June of the relevant year.

4.0 Categories

AASW annual CPD requirements are divided into three categories. Members are required to record CPD hours under the most appropriate category for the activity they have engaged in, based on the category descriptions below. For more information on entering activities into the CPD Record please see the [My CPD Record User Guide](#).

4.1 Category 1: Supervision (*Receiving*)

The [AASW Supervision Standards 2014](#) define professional supervision in social work as “a forum for reflection and learning.” Supervision is important to ensure high standards of professional practice.

Category 1 requires that members undertake and record the minimum number of hours of supervision relevant to their practice.

Activities which may be recorded in this category:

- Receiving supervision
- Receiving professional mentoring
- Receiving professional coaching
- Receiving professional consultation (such as contacting the AASW Ethics and Practice Standards Consultation Service)

While supervision by a social worker is preferred, in certain circumstances supervision by another professional may be the most suitable option.

Supervision may be accessed by a range of means including (but not limited to); face-to-face, online, telephone and video/web conferencing.

Members are encouraged to use the [Find a Supervisor](#) advanced search directory on the AASW website to locate a professional supervisor. Members are also encouraged to register their details for the advanced search directory if they meet the requirements and are able to offer professional supervisory/consultancy services to other professionals.

When recording Supervision hours, members can include supervision sessions as one block entry over a financial year period or a shorter period. For more information on entering activities into the CPD Record please see the [My CPD Record User Guide](#). The [Evidence of Supervision Template](#) is available to assist in recording and evidencing supervision hours but does not replace entering the activity details in the CPD Record.

4.2 Category 2: Skills and Knowledge

Regular and ongoing skill and knowledge development is vital for maintaining contemporary social work practice. The AASW encourages all members to participate in active, participatory learning but recognises that each member has different learning needs which are unique and therefore activity types may vary widely.

Activities which may be recorded in this category:

- Develop a CPD Plan
- Academic study
- Conference*
- Learning program
- On demand learning
- Reading publications
- Reflecting on the professional and ethical standards documents
- Research
- Self directed learning
- Seminar
- Symposium*
- Webinar
- Workshop

*Please specify the topics of the relevant sessions attended.

For all self-directed learning, we encourage members to keep a simple record to log their activities for CPD, similar to our [evidence of self-directed learning template](#). Members have the discretion to assess number of hours in these situations.

4.3 Category 3: Professional Identity

Maintaining and developing the professional identity of social work is an important part of professional development as a social worker.

Activities which may be recorded in this category:

- AASW special event (e.g. AGM, Awards)
- Presentation
- Consultation
- Contributing to public dialogue and advocacy
- Contributing to publication
- Contributing to policy and research
- Contributing to the learning of other social workers
- Participation in AASW working group, committee or board
- Participation in discussion group (e.g. AASW Community Hub)*
- Participation in practice group
- World Social Work day activity
- Presenting at a conference, seminar or similar
- Presenting and/or promoting the social work perspective
- Professional networking
- Providing supervision, mentoring or support to social workers
- Publishing journal articles, chapters or a complete book
- Volunteering (must be relevant to social work)

* Post or comment that contributes to the shared professional knowledge of colleagues participating in the discussion group. May provide further context of the discussion topic and/or shared resources, reflecting personal analysis or investigation (minimum 30 minutes)

5.0 Focussed Psychological Strategies - FPS

As an Accredited Mental Health Social Worker, you must complete 10 hours of CPD activities that are relevant to Focussed Psychological Strategies. A range of evidence-based strategies has been approved for use by allied mental health professionals. Acceptable CPD under FPS can include:

1. Psycho-education (including motivational interviewing)
2. Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) including:
 - Behavioural interventions
 - Behavioural modification
 - Exposure techniques
 - Activity scheduling
 - Cognitive interventions
 - Cognitive therapy
3. Relaxation strategies
 - Progressive muscle relaxation
 - Controlled breathing
4. Skills training, which includes:
 - Problem solving skills and training
 - Anger management
 - Social skills training
 - Communication training
 - Stress management
 - Parent management training
5. Interpersonal therapy
6. Narrative Therapy (for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people)
7. Eye Movement Desensitisation Reprocessing (EMDR)

Members are required to assess whether a given CPD activity meets particular FPS areas. This may involve assessing whether a CPD activity covers components of FPS areas through a broader topic. For example, a 4-hour course on trauma may contain 2 hours specifically relevant to FPS. Please consult with your training provider for guidance on relevant FPS content.

6.0 Accredited Social Worker

Members who meet the Accredited Social Worker CPD Goal (have met their CPD requirements) may apply to use the Accredited Social Worker logo. This logo communicates to clients, employers and the public, that the practitioner is a professionally trained and legitimate Social Worker who demonstrates an ongoing commitment to being up to date with the latest research and professional approaches by undertaking the required amount of annual professional development. Members are responsible for ensuring they continue to meet their CPD Requirements each financial year to remain eligible for the Accredited Social Worker logo. For detailed information and how to register please visit the [AASW logos webpage](#).

7.0 Credentials

The AASW's credentialing program increases opportunities for members to gain recognition for specialised social work practice in a range of areas. The credential assures clients and their families, the Australian community, employers, and funding bodies that accredited social workers have acquired a specialised level of expertise in their Practice Career (field of practice).

For more information about credentials please visit the [credentialing program webpage](#).

There are different CPD requirements for members applying for or maintaining AASW credentials to demonstrate that they are engaging in relevant professional development to their practice. The following credentials have specific CPD requirements that must be met before applying for the credential and will require an ongoing annual commitment to maintain the credential:

- Accredited Mental Health Social Worker
- Accredited Clinical Social Worker
- Accredited Family Violence Social Worker
- Accredited Disability Social Worker
- Accredited Child Protection Social Worker

8.0 CPD Goals and Hours Requirements

Members who are applying for or maintaining their Accredited Social Work status or Credentials are required to complete a set number of CPD hours each financial year. Details and evidence of all CPD activities must be entered into the electronic CPD Record by 30 June of each financial year.

Members applying for a Credential may choose to use their current or previous financial year CPD hours for their application up to and including 31 January of that current year. From 1 February each year, the current financial year CPD hours must be used in your application.

Case example #1: *Jill submits her application for the Accredited Family Violence Credential on 4 December 2022. She can choose to use her previous FY21/22 or the current FY22/23 CPD hours for her application. If she chooses to use the FY21/22 hours, she must also complete her FY22/23 hours in order to renew her credential by 30 June 2023.*

Case example #2: *Sam submits his application for the Accredited Child Protection Credential on 18 March 2023. He must use his current FY 22/23 CPD hours for his application. When it comes time for renewal of his credential by 30 June 2023, he will have already completed his CPD for that financial year.*

This table provides a summary of your requirements:

CPD Goal Type	Who is it for?	Category 1 Supervision	Category 2 Skills & Knowledge	Category 3 Professional Identity	Total CPD Hours Required
Accredited Social Worker	Any members seeking accreditation. <i>excluding student & retired members</i>	10 Hours	15 Hours	5 Hours	30 hours
Accredited Mental Health Social Worker	Social workers applying for or maintaining AMHSW	10 Hours	15 Hours 20 hours of Category 2 and 3 CPD activities must be related to the Mental Health Practice Career, 10 of which must be Focussed Psychological Strategies.	5 Hours	30 hours
Accredited Clinical Social Worker	Social workers applying for or maintaining Accredited Clinical Social Worker	10 Hours	15 Hours 20 hours of Category 2 and 3 CPD activities must be linked to the Clinical Practice Career.	5 Hours	30 hours
Accredited Family Violence Social Worker	Social workers applying for or maintaining Accredited Family Violence Social Worker	10 Hours	15 Hours 20 hours of Category 2 and 3 CPD activities must be linked to the Family Violence Practice Career	5 Hours	30 hours
Accredited Disability Social Worker	Social workers applying for or maintaining Accredited Disability Social Worker	10 Hours	15 Hours 20 hours of Category 2 and 3 CPD activities must be linked to the Disability Practice Career.	5 Hours	30 hours
Accredited Child Protection Social Worker	Social workers applying for or maintaining Accredited Child Protection Social Worker	10 Hours	15 Hours 20 hours of Category 2 and 3 CPD activities must be linked to the Child Protection Practice Career.	5 Hours	30 hours

Note to the table:

Those with multiple credentials may need to complete extra hours to meet set minimum required hours if the CPD they have completed is not relevant to multiple fields of practice.

Case example #1: Jane is an AMHSW and has completed a 5-hour course on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT). As CBT is on the Focussed Psychological Strategies list and the course was relevant to the Mental Health Practice Career, she is going to log her activity as a Category 2 Skills and Knowledge workshop and link it to both the Mental Health and FPS Practice Career. This will count as 5 hours in total and have reduced her overall CPD requirements to 25 hours remaining. Jane still needs to link 15 hours of activities to Mental Health and 5 hours of FPS activities to meet AMHSW requirements.

Case example #2: Sam has two credentials - AMHSW and Accredited Clinical Social Worker. Sam has a minimum requirement of 30 hours of CPD; however, he must also link 20 hours of activities towards Mental Health, 10 hours of activities towards FPS and 20 hours of activities towards Clinical. Sam has found a course on Conducting a Mental Health Assessment that runs for 8 hours. Sam will log the activity as a Category 2 Skills and Knowledge workshop and link it to both the Mental Health and Clinical Practice Careers. This will count as 8 hours in total and have reduced his overall CPD requirements to 22 hours remaining. Sam still needs to link 12 hours of activities to Mental Health, 12 hours of activities to Clinical and 10 hours of FPS activities to meet his requirements. In Sam's situation, due to his Practice Career requirements with two credentials, Sam may need to undertake more than a total of 30 hours of CPD to meet his requirements.

9.0 Evidence

You are required to keep evidence of all CPD activities for a minimum of 2 years. The AASW recommends that you upload your evidence to your electronic CPD record in your member centre. You may be required to provide evidence of CPD to the AASW at any time. Evidence can include, but is not limited to: a certificate of attendance; signed supervision attendance record/invoices or receipts; a letter from a supervisor confirming dates and times; [Evidence of Supervision Template](#), [Evidence of self-directed learning template](#), journal subscription receipts or a statutory declaration (in cases where other forms of evidence are not available).

10.0 CPD Audits

The AASW will conduct annual CPD audits, at its discretion-to ensure members are providing details and evidence of their CPD requirements in order to maintain their entitlement to the use of the AASW logos and Credentials. It is a mandatory requirement that members comply with the CPD audit procedure.

Members will be notified in writing if they are to be part of any CPD audit process. Members will have the opportunity to provide additional activity and evidence within the audit process timeframe. The AASW will provide assistance and guidance throughout the audit process. Following the completion of an audit process, audited members will be notified of the outcome. Failure to provide details and evidence of all CPD activities may result in a loss of use of the AASW logo and Credential.. The AASW Privacy Policy outlines the circumstances and nature of any information being provided to a third party under statutory, legislative or contractual obligations.

It is the responsibility of the member to ensure that details and evidence of all CPD activities are entered accurately into their electronic CPD Record to meet CPD requirements by 30 June of the relevant CPD cycle. Extensions to update the electronic CPD Record will be considered, at the discretion of the AASW Audit Team.

Failure to meet CPD requirements may result in a loss of use of the AASW logo and/or Credential.

11.0 Special Circumstances

11.1 Part time versus full time requirements

The CPD requirements are the same for part time workers as they are for full time workers. It is the view of the AASW that it is equally important for all social workers to remain up to date with the latest theories and practice and the requirements outlined in this document are the minimum expectations that are achievable over a year period.

11.2 Reduced CPD hours

Should a member experience difficulty in achieving their CPD requirements due to professional or personal circumstances, they may be eligible for reduced requirements in exceptional circumstances.

Professional or personal exceptional circumstances include, but are not limited to, prolonged illness, family obligations and circumstances, financial or other hardship, and career transition. Please note that the full requirement for FPS related CPD for AMHSWs must be met regardless of circumstances.

Special circumstances enquiries should be directed to cpd@aasw.asn.au

Please include the following details:

- Reason for not being able to engage in CPD
- Dates in which CPD is not able/was not able to be engaged in
- Written evidence of time away from work/from being able to engage in CPD.

Examples of evidence: letter from employer confirming dates of leave, letter from medical provider confirming dates unable to work, or a statutory declaration.

CPD Reduction requests must be submitted to the CPD Team by **no later than 31 May** each year for consideration.

11.3 Extensions

Extensions to update the electronic CPD Record will be considered. Determination of any extension is at the discretion of the AASW CPD Audit Team.

Version 4.1 effective date: 31.03.2023

Document Owner: Education and Training Manager

Version	Date	Description	Author
3.0	15.07.2020	Refreshed policy, revised credential CPD hours, and revised Learning Plan requirements.	CPD Program Manager
3.1	17.09.2020	Update to Cover note Terminology of trademark/logo	CPD Program Manager
3.2	18.11.2020	2.0 Remove reference to CPD Endorsement 7.0 Minor wording change 8.0 Additional text and clarification	CPD Program Manager
3.3	19.01.2021	4.2 Additional text and clarification on Category 2 and Category 3 activities	CPD Program Manager
3.4	05.04.2022	8.0 Updated dates in case examples	CPD Program Manager
4.0	19.09.2022	Fully revised policy	CPD Program Manager
4.1	23.02.2023	'Field of practice' terminology replaced with 'Practice/Career' throughout document. 4.0 Categories table; 20 hours relevant to the credential Practice/Career must be achieved in Category 2 and Category 3 CPD activities	CPD Program Manager

Review period: Annual (12 months) or as required

March 2023

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