

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

# CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD)

Section	Description
A	<b>BEM Committee Responsible for Continuing Professional Development (CPD)</b>
B	<b>Policy Statement: Avenue for appeal and partial / total waiver for CPD</b>
C	<b>Actual Accounting of CPD</b>
D	<b>Accreditation of courses and training providers</b>
E	<b>What can be considered as CPD</b>
F	<b>Filling up of the Summary of CPD Record form</b>
G	<b>Other Matters</b>

### **A. BEM Committee Responsible for Continuing Professional Development (CPD)**

#### **AQ1. Which Committee in BEM is responsible for this policy and implementation:**

AA1. The Committee in BEM which is responsible for CPD is the BEM Training and Education Committee. You can contact this Committee by email at muzilah@bem.org.my

### **B. Policy statement: Avenue for appeal and partial / total waiver for CPD:**

#### **BQ1. How can a Registered Person (PE/PEPC/IOW) above 60 years of age who have retired and or not fully employed, satisfy this requirement while still retaining their registration as PE, PEPC and IOW?**

BA1. Registered Persons aged 60 and above who are still practising as PEPC will have to satisfy the full BEM CPD requirement based on a three-year rolling average of 50 CPD Hours per year. Registered Persons aged 60 and above who are not practising can choose to change their registration to PE in order to satisfy BEM CPD requirement based on a three-year rolling average of 25 CPD Hours per year.

#### **BQ2. Can a Registered Person (PE/PEPC/IOW) who becomes unemployed due to economic downturn apply for exemption?**

BA2. A Registered Person who falls into this category can ask for partial exemption. Registered Persons are reminded that self-learning and further studies are considered CPD activities. Time spent on service activities like serving on IEM, ACEM or BEM Committees also counts toward CPD.

#### **BQ3. Why has BEM opted for 25 (for PE) / 50 (for PEPC) / 10 (for IOW) CPD Hours per year and not 30 or some other figures?**

BA3. BEM has benchmarked with other organizations worldwide and found that these are good figures to begin with. BEM feels that the guidelines make it feasible for an average Registered Person (PE/PEPC/IOW) to obtain the quantum proposed.

**BQ4. What are the implications of a Registered Person who goes overseas and decides to stop collecting the CPD Hours. Would his registration be revoked when the CPD requirements are not fulfilled?**

BA4. A Registered Person (PE/PEPC/IOW) who is practicing overseas and is still desirous of maintaining his BEM registration in Malaysia would still have to comply with the CPD requirements.

However, if he is not practicing engineering at all, he could remain a PE and would only have to obtain 25 CPD Hours annually.

**BQ5. Would a Registered Person (PE/PEPC/IOW) be able to renew his registration when the he/she can only show 7 Hours of CPD a year?**

BA5. A 7-CPD Hour would be unacceptable for a Registered Person. Proper documentation of normal work such as self-study will yield more than 7 CPD Hours. Reading Operational Manuals for example, can constitute CPD when documented.

The Registered Person can still renew his/her registration. However, he/she will have to make up the shortfall during the following 2 years to ensure that a **3-year rolling average of 25/50/10 hours per year can be achieved**, failing which refusal of registration can be made by BEM.

**BQ6. What is the standard number of hours that can be recorded as CPD Hours for a Registered Person (PE/PEPC/IOW) who participates in courses / seminars / conferences on a half or full day basis? What if it is more than a one-day affair?**

BA6. Generally a full day course or seminar could be considered as 6 CPD Hours, and a half-day is 3 Hours. However, in some cases, the discussion may go on till late evening, in which you can use your own judgment to put in more CPD Hours. A record on the details of the activities attended in terms of knowledge contents, background of speakers, venues and programme schedule must be kept as evidence should it be required by the BEM CPD audit.

BEM is aware of the global trends by professional societies to institute a formalised continuing professional development programme.

**BQ7. Why is the CPD measured on a rolling 3-year average of 25/50 Hours per year for PE/PEPC and 30 Hours over 3 years for IOW, and not just 25/50 and 10 Hours a year respectively?**

BA7. BEM wants to encourage a culture of continuing development and to allow for any shortfalls to be made up in the following years. The excess CPD Hours earned in a particular year are allowed to be carried forward to the following two years.

**BQ8. If in a particular year, you don't accumulate enough Hours, what will happen?**

BA8. You may be asked to confirm in writing the shortfall and propose ways of making up the shortfall in the following year(s), i.e. you have to have a specific plan for yourself.

**BQ9. Is there a platform for a Registered Person (PE/PEPC/IOW) to appeal if he fails to accumulate the required number of Hours?**

BA9. A Registered Person (PE/PEPC/IOW) who fails to accumulate the required number of CPD Hours can appeal by writing to the Board stating valid reasons for his/her shortfall. The Board may at its sole discretion, allow the renewal of registration if the reasons given are acceptable to the Board.

**BQ10. How has the number of Hours in different types of activities been drawn up. Will they be changed in future?**

BA10. The present number was carefully drawn after BEM benchmarking with other organizations. Yes, the categories of activities may be reviewed if there are valid reasons.

**BQ11. What would be the penalty for non-compliance with the CPD requirements?**

BA11. Please refer to the BEM “Circular on CPD Requirements” where the refusal of registration renewal by BEM provided for failure to attain the required CPD Hours.

**BQ12: It is noted that CPD Activity Types 1 and 3 “Formal education and conference and technical meeting” have no maximum limiting hours. What is the rationale? Will it not be better to encourage Registered Persons (PE/PEPC/IOW) to accumulate CPD hours in various types of activity rather than in one.**

BA12. BEM is of the opinion that these two categories are the most direct route for professional development and as such they are not limited in the claimable CPD Hours.

**BQ13: There is a concern from participants that the BEM 25/50/30 CPD Hours may be difficult to achieve.**

BA13. BEM has researched and benchmarked on this subject and found that the required CPD Hours are achievable. There is even a school of thought that, perhaps, 50 hours are too low to demonstrate a person's keenness to pursue a life-long learning agenda, and to keep obsolescence at bay so that he or she is relevant for the time!

**C. Actual accounting of CPD:**

**CQ1. The calculation method stated at the bottom of the table in the form requires the CPD completed from previous two years to be indicated in order to satisfy the three-year rolling average of 50 Hours per year. How will CPD Hours completed during the past two (2) years be counted?**

CA1. Please refer to the following answer to CQ2 on how CPD Hours of the rolling three years can be calculated.

**CQ2. The BEM ‘Circular on CPD Requirements’ states that all PE/PEPC/IOWs are to accumulate an annual average of 25/50/10 respectively for the CPD Hours over a rolling period of 3 years, what happens after that?**

CA2 It is a rolling 3-year average e.g. for PEPC:

2010 55 hrs

2011 60 hrs

2012 50 hrs ; Last 3 yrs CPD hrs: 55 + 60 + 50 = Total: 165 hrs ; Average: 55 hrs

2013 40 hrs ; Last 3 yrs CPD hrs: 60 + 50 + 40 = Total: 150 hrs ; Average: 50 hrs

2014 60 hrs ; Last 3 yrs CPD hrs: 50 + 40 + 60 = Total: 150 hrs ; Average: 50 hrs

2015 60 hrs ; Last 3 yrs CPD hrs: 40 + 60 + 60 = Total: 160 hrs ; Average: 53.33 hrs

**CQ3. How are the CPD Hours calculated? Is this Q&A session counted as CPD? How about IEM meetings? How about management skills workshops/training courses? How about providing mentorship to younger engineers?**

CA3. CPD Hours calculation is given in the BEM Circular on CPD Requirements and the Summary of CPD Record form. Attendance of this session, IEM meetings, management skills workshops/training courses and mentorship of younger engineers count toward CPD Hours.

#### **D. Accreditation of courses and training providers:**

**DQ1. What are the training courses approved by BEM and who are the approved course training providers?**

DA1. BEM would be giving approval in two categories:

(i) Approval for a given training program/course

(ii) Approval to the training provider

A training provider (such as IEM, MySet or ACEM) could be given a blanket approval and then materials of programs to be held would be forwarded to BEM each time for records. Alternatively, if the provider is not given blanket approval, they can apply for approval on program basis.

**DQ2. Why can't BEM give a blanket approval to all Institutions of Higher Learning(IHLs) rather than to wait for their application?**

DA2. BEM considers all IHLs as capable training providers and their application to run CPD-approved training. However, approval for IHLs as training providers has still to be done on a case-by-case basis.

**DQ3. Can BEM give a blanket approval for all in-house training courses provided by companies?**

DA3. Yes, if in-house training courses meet BEM CPD criteria. Assessment of the in-house programmes shall be done on a case-by-case basis.

**DQ4. Can all courses and seminars be considered for the CPD Hours?**

DA4. When the courses and seminars meet BEM's CPD criteria they can be accorded CPD Hours.

#### **E. What can be considered as CPD:**

**EQ1. Can presentation to final year students at Universities or Old Boy's Club regarding industry experience be considered as paper presentation?**

EA1. No. Presentation of Papers as stated in the 'Circular on CPD Requirements' qualifying for a Time-Weighted Factor of 10 refers to presentation to a professional audience of technical research papers of quality acceptable to professional societies and refereed publications. Presentation to students or social club members can be considered under CPD Activity Type 5 "Engineering Service Activities."

IEM and other professional NGOs should take note of this. Senior Registered Persons should also take this opportunity to offer voluntary service to present papers to disseminate their knowledge and experience.

**EQ2. What about Registered Persons (PE/PEPC/IOW) who are no longer practicing per se but maybe appointed to sit in Board of Directors of Companies? Can a program attended by a Company Director under KLSE's CPD requirement be accepted as BEM CPD?**

EA2. Yes. Any activity of relevance to the Registered Person in his/her professional job as an engineer or an IOW can be considered a CPD activity. A Registered Person who being a Company Director, attends CPD programmes required by KLSE, the Securities Commission of Malaysia or the Companies Commission of Malaysia is considered to have performed continuing professional development since his/her effectiveness and contribution to the Company Board as a technical professional is contingent upon such management and corporate governance skills and knowledge.

**EQ3. There are Registered Persons (PE/PEPC/IOW) who appear not to be involved in engineering services but managing engineering workforce instead? Can they clock sufficient CPD Hours in non-engineering activities?**

EA3. Yes. Engineering management is part of engineering work.

**EQ4. After listening to your intention to allow non-engineering subjects to be acceptable as CPD, how would such subjects upgrade the skills in the engineering profession?**

EA4. Non-engineering subjects which are relevant to the Registered Persons in performing their professional job, like accounting principles, contract laws and human resource management can be considered as CPD.

**EQ5. Is it possible to accumulate CPD Hours for service in IEM committees and preparing papers on specific matters undertaken by such committees?**

EA5. Yes, such activities would be under Activity Type 5 “Engineering Service Activities.” Minutes of meetings showing attendance will be required for BEM auditing purposes.

**EQ6. If the same paper is recycled, can it be considered under Presentation of Papers?**

EA6. No. Not under Activity Type 4 with a Time-Weighted Factor of 10. Such weightage is given due to consideration of the time and efforts needed for such presentation. However, a repeat presentation is likely to be rendering of service to the engineering profession and thus can be considered as Activity Type 5 “Engineering Service Activities.”

**EQ7. What do you mean by Inspections under Activity Type 3 “Conference and Technical Meeting”?**

EA7. Site visits, technical visits, technical briefings and similar activities that can enhance an Registered Person's knowledge and competency. However, if such activities are carried out as part of the Registered Person's job function either as an employee or a consultant, then no CPD would be available.

**EQ8. Would service as an arbitrator or expert witness be eligible for CPD Hours?**

EA8. Yes. It is Activity Type 5 “Engineering Service Activities.” However, if you are engaged with remuneration as an arbitrator or an expert witness, then no.

**EQ9. Would Registered Persons teaching part time courses in University / Institutions of Higher Learning be eligible for CPD Hours?**

EA9. No, if it is a salaried appointment. If it is voluntary for the promotion of engineering, then it could be considered as Activity Type 5 “Engineering Service Activities” with an annual maximum allowable of 30 CPD Hours.

**EQ10. In the civil service, the Registered Persons are sometimes involved in setting questions and correcting papers for departmental tests. Can such activity be eligible for CPD Hours? What if the activity is a paid full/part-time affair?**

EA10. If it is for the promotion of engineering on a voluntary basis, then the hours spent can be counted towards CPD. No eligibility for CPD Hours if it is a paid or compensated engagement, or it is part of the normal job function.

**EQ11. Very often Registered Persons in big firms will be made responsible to train students in attachment. Is the time spent in these extra duties counted as CPD?**

EA11. If such an involvement is not part of the job function of the Registered Person then the hours spent can be counted as CPD Hours.

**EQ12. Are the hours spent on providing in-house training counted as CPD hours?**

EA12. Yes, if you are doing it on a voluntary basis. However, if your job function involves training, then no.

**EQ13. For the Public Sector, it is common that the government servants would be sent to attend courses which are not engineering. Can these be considered as CPD?**

EA13. Yes, there is a lot of cross boundary multi-skill and competency requirement in a Registered Person's job function. Some are considered as soft skills which contribute towards the job performance of a Registered Person.

**EQ14. Can Registered Persons with civil engineering background who attend M&E conferences be allowed to claim CPD Hours?**

EA14. Yes, there are a lot of cross boundary multi-skill and competency requirement in a Registered Person's job function. Registered Persons who have civil engineering background would better understand and thus able to perform their functions in designs or operations which involve an inter-phase of disciplines as in the case of electrical pumping systems in a sewage treatment plant project.

**EQ15. Would a Registered Person with electrical engineering background who attends a training course in civil engineering be eligible for CPD?**

EA15. Yes, for the same reasons as EA14 above.

**EQ16. How about soft skills training for Registered Persons? For example, Communication Skills Workshop. Are they counted as CPD?**

EA16. Yes. Please refer to answers EA18 and EA19 below too.

**EQ17. Sometimes we attend product briefings, can these talks be counted as CPD?**

EA17. Yes, product briefings usually touch on technical innovations and engineering R&D.

**EQ18. Can a Registered Person clock in CPD Hours when he studies in topics related to his hobby and personal interest like fishes, Formula I cars or stock markets?**

EA18. It normally would not be considered as CPD. As CPD means *Continuing Professional Development*, only activities which contribute and enhance the professional development of the Registered Person would be relevant and eligible. If it enhances your professional development then it can be counted. A case in question is scuba diving. If by scuba diving a Registered Person is able to enhance his skills in order to undertake a new assignment to do underwater structure inspection, then scuba diving is CPD. If a Registered Person is to be posted to Dubai and knowledge in Arabic can enhance his/her professional duty, then learning Arabic is CPD. Yes, judgement is needed and documentary proof of new posting or new job functions would be needed in case of BEM audit.

**EQ19. For Registered Persons involved in organizing non-engineering courses and seminars, can they consider such activity as Activity Type 5 "Engineering Service Activities" and be eligible for CPD Hours?**

EA19. Yes, if such courses and seminars benefit Registered Persons professionally, and involvement is voluntary. Non-engineering subject matters such as effective communication, accounting and finance, human resource management, corporate governance, sustainability, contract laws and risk management; and perhaps even dress codes and etiquette, are important if not imperative to the professional life of Registered Persons especially as they move up the management ladder and become leaders of organisations. Such topics are therefore considered as CPD material and eligible for CPD Hours. However, topics like multilevel marketing, personal health, how to stop smoking, personal finance, parenting skills and alternative

medicine may be important to the personal life of Registered Persons but not to their professional life; and therefore, would not be considered as CPD relevant.

**EQ20. If we act as a mentor to graduate engineers, would it be considered as CPD and how many CPD Hours would be claimable?**

EA20. Yes, if the mentorship scheme is comparable to the mentorship programme instituted by the IEM. Personal arrangement of mentorship should have the rigour in its governance and implementation comparable with that put in place by the IEM (15 CPD Hours per year are allowed by IEM for mentorship of one mentee). With proper governance, the quantum of contact hours with the mentee can be the CPD Hours claimable.

**EQ21. If a Registered Person who is a lecturer and his job scope includes organizing national conferences, acting as internal and external examiner, participating in competitions on inventions and organising field trips; would these activities be considered as CPD?**

EA21. No, since these activities are part of responsibilities of a salaried position. They would be considered CPD under Activity Type 5 “Engineering Service Activities” if they are not normally a part of the Registered Person’s job scope.

**EQ22. Under CPD Activity Type 1 “Formal Education and Training,” can non-engineering courses like computer programming, accountancy and contract law be considered as CPD?**

EA22. Yes. Please refer to answers EA18 and EA19 too.

**EQ23. If you act as an IEM Professional Interviewer, can that be considered as CPD?**

EA23. Yes, as it is considered CPD Activity Type 5 “Engineering Service Activities.” IEM has proposed 8 CPD Hours for the Principal Interviewer and 6 CPD Hours for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Interviewer for the time spent.

**EQ24. If a Principal of a company sponsors a staff who is a Registered Person (PE/PEPC/IOW) to attend BEM CPD accredited course, would he get CPD Hours as well?**

EA24. No, not for the Principal. The staff who is a Registered Person (PE/PEPC/IOW) gets his CPD Hours.

**F. Filling up of the Summary of CPD Record form:**

**FQ1. Besides filling up the Summary of CPD Record, do we need to substantiate it with any other documents? Perhaps receipts or certificates of attendance? Is it sufficient to only submit the Summary of CPD Record sheet upon yearly renewal?**

FA1. When filling up Summary of CPD Record form (Lampiran B1), it is prudent to be able to have some form of documentation bearing in mind that your CPD submission may be audited by BEM at any time. BEM can ask for documents to substantiate your claim.

**FQ2. It appears to be very time consuming to fill in the Summary of CPD Record form (Lampiran B1).**

FA2. When you fill in the form as you participate in the CPD activities like attending seminars, etc., it is like logging in the job sheets, and it becomes a routine. It is difficult when CPD recording is left to the end of the year when the renewal of registration is due.

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**G. Other matters:**

**GQ1. Some of the CPD accredited courses are very expensive. Does BEM provide subsidy to reduce the cost of undertaking CPD?**

GA1. On a case-to-case basis BEM could consider subsidising non-profit organizers of accredited CPD courses. Professional societies such as IEM, ACEM, MySet and COWAM do organise CPD courses and seminars at reasonable fees.

**GQ2. Would BEM intervene and assist the Registered Persons (PE/PEPC/IOW) whose employers are not sympathetic toward their CPD needs?**

GA2. No. BEM has no *locus standi* to intervene. However, by going on a roadshow, it is hoped that employers as well as employees will be aware of the importance of CPD.

**GQ3. If Registered Persons (PE/PEPC/IOW) are encouraged to record hours as he thinks fit, will it satisfy the objective of CPD? Since non-engineering courses can be considered for CPD Hours, how does BEM attain its CPD objectives?**

GA3. BEM has to assume that all Registered Persons (PE/PEPC/IOW) are persons of integrity, and are honest with themselves. Non-engineering or non-technical courses may be vital for a Registered Person's continuing professional development especially if they are related to knowledge and competency related to project and organisation management.

**GQ4. If BEM allows formal and informal learning to be eligible for CPD Hours, won't it be defeating the purpose of CPD if Registered Persons (PE/PEPC/IOW) claiming CPD Hours which in actual fact are not beneficial to his professional development?**

GA4. BEM has to assume that all Registered Persons (PE/PEPC/IOW) are of integrity, and are honest with themselves as would be expected of professionals. When you think an activity is not a CPD activity as defined by the BEM Circular on CPD Requirements, or not related to your professional development, then CPD Hours should not be claimed.

**GQ5. What happens if a Registered Person (PE/PEPC/IOW) chooses to concentrate and collect CPD Hours in one type of CPD activity only?**

GA5. This is permitted in so far as the type of CPD activity can allow the required quantum of CPD Hours. Only CPD Activity Type 1 "Formal Education and Training" and Type 3 "Conference and Technical Meeting" would be relevant.

**GQ6. Will BEM help to promote and educate the public and Registered Persons (PE/PEPC/IOW) on the importance of CPD?**

GA6. Yes. For example, this session is meant not only for Registered Persons (PE/PEPC/IOW) but also the employers.

**GQ7. Do we have the employer's support, in terms of getting time off or payment for courses attended?**

GA7. Yes, BEM is trying to get employers to be aware of our CPD requirements and also to get the employers to support by having more in-house courses or to allow Registered Persons (PE/PEPC/IOW) to attend courses beneficial for CPD.

**GQ8. CPD seems to be focused on two aspects of professional development: technical competence and personal quality. While the requirement of technical competence is quite clear, how does the emphasis on personal quality come into the picture?**

GA8. Examples of technical competence development include knowledge and skills in managing projects; managing engineering services firms; promoting engineering knowledge within and outside the company. Personal qualities such as integrity will ensure sustainability of projects, providing leadership and fighting corruption.

**GQ9. There is need to publicise more about CPD so that training can be part of employers' work philosophy.**

GA9. BEM shall continue to publicise and to bring awareness to the engineering community and the public at large through its publications, awareness campaigns and roadshows.  
Registered Persons (PE/PEPC/IOW) and employers need to think about career development and succession plans in order to ensure sustainability of business and operations.

**GQ10. There are very limited opportunities for Registered Persons (PE/PEPC/IOW) working as maintenance personnel to attend training courses. Is there any suggestion to improve this situation?**

GA10. The onus is on the Registered Persons (PE/PEPC/IOW) to persuade their employers to provide training and education opportunities.

Registered Persons could organise in-house technical talks and engineering knowledge related activities on maintenance and operational efficiency.

**GQ11. Generally the comment from the floor is that they support CPD, however, they just wonder if BEM can arrange for free courses to be run.**

GA11. BEM from time to time would be organising suitable courses at a reduced charge.

**GA12. Will BEM be able to encourage employers to provide opportunities for CPD?**

GA12. Yes, BEM is hoping that by bringing more awareness to the employers as well as the Registered Persons (PE/PEPC/IOWs) there would be better understanding of the benefits of CPD and more commitment to CPD.

**GQ13. If Professional Trading Providers are allowed to charge high fees, will it not be disadvantageous for the Registered Persons (PE/PEPC/IOW) to comply with BEM CPD requirements? Can BEM control the maximum fees chargeable?**

GA13. No. There would not be real disadvantage. Market forces will be able to regulate the 'supply and demand' of training offerings. Professional societies such as IEM, ACEM, MySet, COWAM and institutions of higher learning do organise CPD courses and seminars at reasonable fees. Registered Persons could avoid expensive training courses and choose value for money and reasonably priced training programmes. BEM might be able to influence the training fees charged if the training providers apply for their programmes to be approved for CPD Hours.