



LEMBAGA JURUTERA MALAYSIA

BOARD OF ENGINEERS MALAYSIA

TINGKAT 17, IBU PEJABAT JKR
KOMPLEKS KERJA RAYA MALAYSIA
JALAN SULTAN SALAHUDDIN
50580 KUALA LUMPUR
MALAYSIA



CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD) AWARENESS PROGRAMME

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

ANSWERS TO FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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

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

A1 The committee in BEM which is responsible for CPD is the BEM Training and Education Committee.

You can contact this committee by email at training_exam@bem.org.my

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

BQ1. How can Engineers above 60 years of age who have retired and or / not fully employed, satisfy this requirement while still retaining their registration as Professional Engineers?

BA1. Senior Professional Engineers 60 and above and who are semi-retired with current registration may apply for partial or full exemption.

BQ2. How does this affect Professional Engineers who have retired and no longer work as Engineers?

BA2 Engineers in this category can write to BEM for exemption.

BQ3. Can engineers who become unemployed due to economic downturn apply for exemption?

BA3 PEs who falls into this category can ask for partial exemption. Engineers in this category are reminded that self learning, further studies are all considered part of CPD. Time spent on service activities like serving on IEM, ACEM or BEM Committees also count toward CPD.

BA4. Why has BEM opted for 50 CPD hours and not 30 or some other figures?

BA4. BEM had consulted other organizations worldwide and found that this is good figure to begin with. BEM feels that the guidelines make it feasible for an average PE to clock the required 50 composite hours.

BQ5. What are the implications of an engineer who goes overseas and decides to stop clocking the CPD hours. Would his registration be revoked when the CPD requirement is made mandatory?

BA5. An Engineer practicing overseas and still desirous of maintaining his PE registration in Malaysia would still have to comply with the CPD requirements. However, if he is not practicing engineering at all, then there is no reason he needs to renew his PE registration and therefore his CPD hours is not moot.

BQ6. Once the CPD requirement is officially implemented would a PE be able to renew his registration when the PE can only show 10 hours of CPD?

BA6. For the first few years, implementation could be a bit relaxed. This does not mean that 10 CPD hours would be acceptable. Proper documentation of normal work such as self-study will yield more than 10 CPD hours. Reading Operational Manuals for example can constitute CPD when documented.

- BQ7. What is the standard number of hours that can recorded as CPD hours for an engineer who participates in courses / seminars / conference on a half or full day basis? What if it is more than a day affair?**
- BA7. Generally a day course or seminar should be considered as 6 hours, and half day is 3 hours. However, in some cases, the discussion may go on till late evening, in which case you can use your own judgment to put in more hours. A record must be kept to give reasons should it be required by the auditing party.
Generally BEM is trying to encourage continuous professional development by self. A PE's word is his bond and is therefore expected to record what is fair.
- BQ8. When the CPD requirement is made compulsory say in 2006, will BEM give ample notice to the ALL engineers?**
- BA8. Yes. Engineers will be given ample notice.
- BQ9. Why is the CPD measured on a 3 years average of 50 hours per year, and not just a 50 hours year?**
- BA9. BEM wants to encourage a continuous learning process, and to allow for the shortfalls to be made up in the following years. When BEM launches the CPD, that specific year of launch will be that year's CPD hours, and for those with excess is allowed to carry to the following year.
- BQ10. If in a particular year you don't accumulate enough hours, what will happen?**
- BA10. You may be asked to confirm in writing the shortfall and propose ways of making up the in the following year, i.e. you have to have a specific plan for yourself.
- BQ11. Is there a platform for a PE to appeal if he fails to accumulate the required number of hours?**
- BA11. Yes, the PE can write in an appeal to request for partial or full exemption if there are valid reasons.
- BQ12. How has the division of hours in different categories been drawn up. Will they be changed in future?**
- BA12. The present division had been carefully drawn after BEM has consulted other organizations. Yes, The format may be reviewed if there are valid reasons.
- BQ13. What would be the penalty for non-compliance with the CPD requirement when it is made compulsory?**
- BA13. De-registration of a PE is a consequence when there is persistent non-compliance with CPD requirement.
- BQ14: It is noted that formal education and conference and meeting categories have no maximum limiting hours. What is the rational? Will it not be better to encourage PEs to accumulate CPD hours in various categories rather than in one.**
- BA14. BEM is of the view that these two categories are the most direct route for professional development and as such it is encouraged. However, a lecturer who has a full time job, he or she as a PE organises conferences and teaches courses, cannot claim such time spent for CPD.

BQ15: There is a concern from participants that the BEM 50 CPD hours may be difficult to achieve. Why not set it at 20-30 for a start?

BA15. BEM has researched on this subject and found that 50 CPD hours is 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 average of 50 hours per year. However, when CPD is officially implemented in, say 2005/2006, will CPD completed during the voluntary period in 2003 and 2004 be counted?

CA1. Yes, it will be counted. Engineers are therefore encouraged to attend CPD accredited programs / seminars / courses / conferences and keep a record from the present time. However, for those who do not have records for 2003 & 2004, they must have 50 CPD hours in 2005.

CQ2. The manual says that all PEs are to accumulate an average of 50 CPD hours for 3 years, what happens after that?

CA2 It is a moving/rolling 3-year average e.g.:

2003	55					
2004	60					
2005	50	last 3 yrs CPD hrs :	$55 + 60 + 50 =$	Total:	165	Average: 55
2006	40	last 3 yrs CPD hrs :	$60 + 50 + 40 =$	Total:	150	Average: 50
2007	60	last 3 yrs CPD hrs :	$50 + 40 + 60 =$	Total:	150	Average: 50
2008	60	last 3 yrs CPD hrs :	$40 + 60 + 60 =$	Total:	160	Average: 53.33

CQ3. How is the CPD hours calculated? Is this session counted toward the hour(s)? 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 form. Attendance of this session, IEM meetings, management skills workshops/training courses and mentorship to younger engineers count toward CPD hours.

D. Accreditation of courses and course providers:

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

DA1. BEM would be giving approval in two categories:

Approval for a given program/course

Approval to the provider

A provider (such as IEM or ACEM) could be given 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 based 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 is now taking pro-active action and letters would be sent to all IHLs with regard to this requirement.

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

DA3. Yes, if in-house training courses meet with BEM accreditation criteria.

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

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

E. What can be counted for CPD:

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

EA1. Yes, it can be claimed under Presentation of Papers. IEM and other NGOs should take note of this. Senior Engineers should also take this opportunity to offer voluntary service to present papers to disseminate their knowledge and experience.

EQ2. What about PEs 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 for Engineering CPD?

EA2. Yes. It can be classified under Management i.e. Corporate Governance.

EQ3. There are PEs who appear not to be involved in engineering but managing engineers? Can they clock sufficient hours in non-engineering attendance?

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

EQ4. After listening to your intention to allow non-engineering subjects, how does it upgrade the skills in profession?

EA4. Non-engineering can be for the job related purpose, like accountancy principles, contract laws etc.

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

EA5. Yes, it is categorised under Service Activities. Minutes of meetings showing attendance will be required for auditing purposes.

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

EA6. Yes. It is most unlikely that you will be allowed to present the same paper in other like forums.

EQ7. What do you mean by Inspections under Conference and Meetings?

EA7. Site visits, Technical Visits etc

EQ8. Would service as arbitrators or expert witness it be considered for CPD hours?

EA8. Yes. It is under service activities. However, if your job is that of an arbitrator or an expert witness, then no.

EQ9. Would Engineers teaching part time courses in University / Higher Institutions of Learning be considered for the CPD hours?

EA9. No, if it is a salaried job. If it is voluntary job, or for the promotion of engineering, then perhaps the hour spent can be counted. This can be repeated the following year and still will be awarded CPD – under services activities – max 30 hours.

EQ10. In the civil service, the engineers are sometimes involved in setting questions and correcting papers for in-house tests. Can they be considered 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 perhaps the hour spent can be counted. If the course is repeated, it can still be counted if it is on a voluntary service – in a way it is dissemination of information or training the junior engineers.

Not counted if it is a salaried job, or part of the normal job function.

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

EA11. Not to be considered for CPD hours if it is part of your normal duty. If it is for the promotion of engineering, then perhaps the hour spent can be counted, but if the induction course is repeated, then the second time round cannot be counted. Use your own judgment.

EQ12. Is the hours spent on providing in house training counted toward CPD hours?

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

EQ13. For Public Sectors, it is common that the government servants would be sent to attend courses, which are not engineering related. Can these be considered for CPD hours?

EA13. Yes, there are a lot of cross boundary requirement in a practicing engineer's job function. Some are considered as soft skills. Attendance of the same courses every year will not count toward CPD.

EQ14. Can civil engineers who attend M&E conferences be allowed to credit such time as CPD hours?

EA14. Yes, there are a lot of cross boundary requirement in practicing engineer's job function. It is good if civil engineers designing a sewage treatment plant know about electrical pumping system.

EQ15. If an electrical engineer attends a training course on civil engineering, is that counted toward CPD?

EA15. Yes for similar reason as above.

EQ16. How about soft skills training for the engineers? For example, Communication Skills Workshop. Are they counted toward CPD?

EA16. Yes.

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

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

EQ18. Can engineers clock in hours which he uses to study some topics regarding his hobby and not related to engineering? Like fishes, Formula 1 cars development etc?

EA18. It is totally up to your own judgment. If it is engineering related and enhances your professional development then it can be counted.

EQ19. For those involved in the organizing non-engineering related courses/seminars, can they consider these services for CPD hours?

EA19. If this benefits the engineers, then it can be counted especially if you are serving a non profit organization.

EQ20. If we act as mentor would it be counted as CPD and how many hours can give?

EA20. Yes, If you act as mentor, it can be classified as service activity. If you meet up with the candidate twice a year for 4 hours each I supposed 8 hours for CPD is fair.

EQ21. If a lecturer's jobs include organizing national conferences, acting as internal and external examiner, winning prizes for inventions and organising field trips, would these be considered?

EA21. Organising National Conferences is considered a service activity, therefore Yes. When acting as internal and external examiner is considered a service activity, therefore ,Yes.

When a faculty has won a prize for some inventions which is then written up for presentation – Yes.

Organising field trips is considered a service activity, therefore, Yes.

Such activities when done on voluntary basis and not part of salaried position all earn CPD hours.

EQ22. Under formal training can course related to non-engineering like computer programming, accountancy etc be counted?

EA22. Yes.

EQ23. If you act a Professional Interviewer, can that be considered for CPD?

EA23. Yes, generally an Interviewer is expected to spend at least two hours reading the reports and drawings, spend another two hours for the interview and reading the essays. Thus 4 hours per candidate is fair.

EQ24. If a Principal of a company sponsors a staff who is a PE to attend the course, will he get CPD Point?

EA24. No, not for the Principal; but the staff who is a PE gets his CPD hours.

F. Filling up of the forms for CPD record:

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

FA1. When filling up CPD records, it is prudent to be able to have some form of documentation bearing in mind that your file may be audited by BEM at anytime. BEM can ask for documents to substantiate your claim.

FQ2. It appears that it is very time consuming to fill in the records.

FA2. When you fill in the form as you attend seminars ,etc it is like logging in the job sheets, it becomes routine. It becomes difficult when it is left to be done last minute at the end of the year when the renewal of registration is due.

G. Other matters:

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

GA1. BEM has been subsidising non-profit organizers or course providers when the courses are for the benefit of engineers. But it will not do so for commercial course-providers.

GQ2. Would BEM intervene and assists the employees / engineers who are working in companies that are not sympathetic toward employee's CPD requirement?

GA2. No. BEM cannot intervene. However, by going on a roadshow, it is hope that employers and employees will be aware of the importance of CPD.

GQ3. There is some ambiguity in the tabulation of maximum hours allowed in informal learning, tables and the write-up does not tally.

GA3. Yes, informal learning from reading or self study earns a maximum of 10 CPD hours, whereas the total for the informal section is max. of 20. The explanation will be reworded to further clarify this.

GQ4. If engineers are encouraged to record hours as he thinks fit, will it satisfy the objective of CPD? It seems that other non-engineering related courses can be considered for CPD hours, how does BEM attain its objective?

GA4. BEM has to assume that all PEs are persons of integrity, and are honest with themselves. Non- engineering or non-technical courses may be vital for an engineer's training especially if it is related to training to be a good manager.

GQ5. If BEM allows for formal and informal mode of learning to gather CPD points, won't it be defeating the purpose if PEs are not actually benefiting from the courses or whatever activities that he has claimed but in actual fact is of no use to his professional improvement?

GA5. BEM has to assume that all PEs are of integrity, and are honest with themselves. When you think that it is not related to your engineering development, then it should not be recorded. Self improvement that is not directly related to your work cannot constitute CPD hours. Self improvement is however encouraged as when it benefits the person in the PE, the PE also benefits.

GQ6. What happens if an Engineer chooses to concentrate and collect CPD hours in one category only?

GA6. This is permitted in so far as the category can carry all the CPD hours.

GQ7. Will BEM help to promote (and educate) the public and the Engineers of the requirements for CPD?

GA7. Yes. For example this session is meant not only for the engineers but also the engineers/employers.

GQ8. Do we have the employer's support, in terms of getting time off or payment for courses attended?

GA8. Yes, BEM and IEM Training Centre is trying to get employers aware of our CPD requirement and also to get the employers to support by having more in-house courses or to allow engineers to attend courses beneficial to the company.

GQ9. 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?

GA9. Examples were given such as managing projects; managing engineering services firms; promoting engineering within the company and outside the company. Personal qualities such as integrity will ensure sustainability of projects, providing leadership and fighting corruption. FIDIC for example provides courses that attend to the intangible, when the values are absorbed, Engineers become leaders.

GQ10. There is need to publicise more about CPD so that training can be part of companies working philosophy.

GA10. This session is one of the first of a series in the country (the third one so far). The plan is to have fourteen more throughout Malaysia. Engineers / employers need to think about career development and succession plans in order to ensure sustainability of business and operation.

GQ11. There are very limited opportunities for maintenance engineers to attend training courses. Is there any suggestion to improve this situation?

GA11. It is the responsibility of engineers to persuade their employers to provide training opportunities. Suggestions were given in order to score CPD hours/points. For example, there may be a new regulation to impose energy efficiency; the engineer could carry suitable in house research activities to find ways to best ensure energy efficiency in his/her plant. Another example was given in the (in house) training of para-professional in the organization/plant.

GQ12. How is the response to the CPD requirement so far?

GA12. There has been too much focus on the academic aspects of CPD. The questions gathered from each location are being compiled for study.

GQ13. 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.

GA13. Generally BEM will not be directly involved in providing courses. IEM Training Centre has been appointed to provide training and run courses at reasonable cost.

BEM also subsidises course provider from non-profit organisation so that registered PE can get special discount on course/seminar registration fee.

GA14. Will BEM be able to encourage employers to provide opportunities for CPD?

GA14 Yes, BEM is hoping that by this awareness program road-show, the employers as well as the employee (PEs) are equally committed to CPD requirements.

GQ15. If Professional Conference and Seminar Providers are continued to allow to charge high fees will it not be disadvantage for engineers? Can BEM control the maximum fees chargeable?

GA15. No. BEM will not regulate. It is believed the market forces will be able to regulate this. In this matter IEM and ACEM and other universities should be encouraged to organise more course at a lower price.

GQ16. Is BEM able to arrange for funding especially from Human Resource Development fund?

GA16. BEM will look into this. IEM training Centre will be directed to pursue this matter.