



SER Feedback Report from 2008 CPD Returns

Introduction

During 2008 SER completed the first year of audited CPD Returns. This report is being circulated to inform members of the scheme, professional institutions and other interested organisations regarding the outcome of the process. It is hoped that this information will assist scheme members with the preparation and planning of CPD in future years and assist professional bodies and training organisations with the preparation of programmes and events.

The 2008 CPD Programme

The 2008 CPD Returns were issued to the appropriate Certifiers in February 2009 with the request that they be completed online by 31 March 2009.

In February 2009 there were 17 Certifiers who were notified that they were required to make a CPD return for 2008. During March 2009 two email reminders were also sent. Eventually 17 returns (100%) were submitted by members of the scheme.

The Results of the 2008 CPD Assessments

Every CPD return was assessed by two members of the Jersey Registration Board. Where returns were considered borderline individuals were asked to supply further information and in some cases were referred for consideration by a full meeting of the JRB. The breakdown of the outcome of these assessments is as follows:

CPD Approved	14
CPD Failed to meet standard	3
CPD Not Approved	0

The Failed to meet standard grade has been used in the case of individuals who have made serious efforts to carry out CPD to the required standard and there were no grounds for suspending the individual from the scheme. However the assessment process has identified issues that SER would wish to see addressed in future years. The main reasons for allocating the Failed to meet standard grade were:

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- CPD that was insufficiently focused on matters relating to structural design. Many individuals had for example spent time on Health and Safety training or management training both of which are recognised as being an important part of Professional Development but with content that may not be directly relevant to certification duties and responsibilities and therefore did not count towards the 20 hours of relevant CPD required by the scheme.
- Insufficient explanation was provided regarding the learning outcomes from CPD activities making it impossible for the assessors to understand or assess the relevance of the activities to the role of certification.

Other matters included an over reliance on a single CPD source such as reading of Institution Journals or a lack of planning for future CPD. Those falling within the failed to meet standard category were sent a letter advising them of the reasons for this result and a reminder that failure to rectify the situation by the next year could lead to suspension from membership.

CPD Content

Both the Guidance Note 5 and the CPD Return clearly state that the submission should only include CPD that is relevant to the role of an Approved Certifier. Many Certifiers appear to have misunderstood this basic requirement. Some examples of CPD that was included in returns but is clearly not relevant include

- Management Training
- IT Training
- Nuclear Energy Training
- Planning and Rateable Value Committee Work
- Local Community Activities
- CDM / Health and Safety Training
- Institution / Branch Committee Activities

Many Certifiers gave only very vague details of their plans for CPD for the future year and topics that are not relevant to certification were often included. What is required is a concise statement of particular topics on which the Certifier is intending to concentrate.

This was the first year of formal CPD assessment and it was recognised by SER that it would take some time for the system to bed in and that lessons would be learned by both scheme members and assessors. Certifiers should be aware of SER's aim that CPD should be subject to continuous improvement and that assessment of future CPD returns will be more demanding.

Guidance for the future

Topics on which SER believes many Certifiers would benefit from CPD include:

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- Ground works
- Environmental appraisals
- Soil/structure interaction
- Loadings
- Materials technology
- Disproportionate collapse
- Fire engineering
- Cladding and fixings
- Secondary structural elements
- Design for safe buildability, maintenance and demolition
- Eurocodes
- Design of timber framed structures
- Movement joints

An ideal CPD programme includes a good mix of activities and topics. Seminars and lectures are becoming increasingly accessible to all Certifiers including those who live in outlying areas. For example access can be achieved by viewing web streamed events. Both ICE and IStructE are making more events accessible in this way. However it should be remembered that such events are only one way of undertaking CPD.

Assessors Guidance

In order to provide advice regarding the assessment process the following notes have been prepared by the Jersey Registration Board. It is hoped that these notes will assist Certifiers in the completion of their future CPD returns.

1. Absence of Learning Points:

Where no learning points have been provided within the return assessors will seek to have these submitted by requesting further information via the online system. If this does not produce the necessary information then the assessment will be completed on the basis of the information submitted with the return even if this involves rejecting the stated CPD training.

2. NCE / Journal General Reading:

Where CPD hours are submitted in respect of reading IStructE Journal, ICE proceedings, NCE and various similar technical magazines assessors will consider the amount of detail provided in the learning points to assist in their judgement of the validity and quality of the CPD.

If reference is made to specific articles and papers (which are relevant to certification) and learning points are stated then the hours claimed will be allowed in full (unless they appear to be grossly disproportionate to the topic).

Where only a vague and general statement about reading magazines is made with little or no detail or learning points stated then the benefit the certifiers

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will have obtained from such CPD will be considered to be limited. In such cases regardless of the number of hours claimed the “acceptable” hours will be limited and only part of the time claimed may be considered justified.

3. Training / Mentoring/Lecturing

In many cases certifiers have included mentoring junior staff, assisting in staff training or lecturing to staff, students and school children as part of their CPD. Once again these items will be considered in respect of the relevance of the topic and the level of information and detail provided, with particular emphasis on any new knowledge or benefit the certifier may have gained as a result of these activities.

Where lecturing or providing training is being carried out in respect of a topic which will involve the certifier in a significant level of research and the development of additional knowledge then the hours claimed will be allowed in full (unless they appear disproportionate to the topic).

Where a lecture is being prepared based on the certifiers existing knowledge and experience he/she will personally achieve limited benefit (although it is recognised that preparing a lecture usually involves a beneficial clearing and ordering of the mind from which the certifier may gain further insight into his/her topic and in feedback from a general discussion by an audience). In such cases it will be appropriate to allow a maximum of 2 hours CPD for the preparation of the training in respect of a single lecture or 4 hours where multiple lectures have been prepared.

In respect of mentoring junior staff the “acceptable” hours will be discounted unless the certifier has demonstrated a strong case for personal learning from the exercise.

Certifiers must clearly demonstrate the increased knowledge they have gained from these activities to enable the assessors to make a judgement as to how much relevant time should be credited to such activities.

4. CDM / Safety Training

Whilst an up to date awareness of the requirements of the CDM Regulations and General Health and Safety obligations is obviously an essential requirement for designers as certifiers we are confirming the compliance of the buildings with the building bye-laws (Jersey) 2007 and except where specifically included or implied in these documents certification does not require assessment of the Health and Safety Risks during construction or operation of the building.

CDM and Safety training should therefore not be considered relevant as part of an SER CPD submission except where detailed and relevant learning points are stated in the submission. Once again the assessors’ judgement of the

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relevance of the CPD will be based on the information provided in the submission.

5. IT / Software Training

A fairly wide variety of IT and software issues have been submitted as part of certifiers CPD ranging from researching purchase of new software to updating/uploading previous software, learning or familiarising new programmes or training staff on the use of programmes.

The first test of relevance is what is the programme and is its use relevant to certification activities? General “office” software, use of library search programmes, and/or design programmes unrelated to the scope of certification will be discounted in full. Programmes meeting this test, including Structural design and Analysis programmes, should then be further considered in respect of the following:

Researching the purchase of new programmes and updating / uploading previous software will again be discounted as there will be limited relevant benefit obtained.

Where the certifier is gaining familiarity with analysis / design programmes, whose primary use will be in the role of designer none the less the certifier must be familiar with the workings and the limitations of the programme to enable him/her to assess the suitability of the designs produced. Some allowance may be made for such activities where they are included within a submission however such activities should only form a limited proportion of the overall CPD and once again the assessors’ judgement will reflect the level of detail/justification provided and any clear benefits which have been gained from such activities.

Again clear learning points should be stated and the assessors will base their judgement on these.

6. SER Audits (including preparation for and response to)

Whilst certifiers will obviously gain considerable benefit from the audits this will be considered as the normal execution of their certification duties rather than CPD and a maximum of 2 hours will be permitted (reflecting the fact that there would be some benefit gained). Modification of office procedures following audit will be discounted if listed as a separate activity.

7. Sustainability

This heading covers a wide variety of topics included in CPD returns and whilst generally it is not directly related to certification the impending increases in energy standards to be incorporated from 2010 will have significant impacts on structural design and lead to developments which the certifiers will require to be aware of.

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Where the CPD submitted has clear relevance to the structural engineering aspects of buildings, and detailed learning points are provided, CPD under this heading will be allowed only where the certifier has demonstrated its relevance and where the hours claimed are considered to be commensurate with any benefits gained, for example a 1 day sustainability seminar may only have 1 hour which is relevant to structural certification / engineering.

All other cases of general reading or course attendance related to sustainability where there is no specific linkage to structure and certification, either in the topic or the stated learning points, will be discounted in full.

8. Waterproofing / Gas Protection

Again whilst these may have implications on the structural design of buildings the scope of SER certification does not cover these issues therefore they are of little relevance and the assessors' judgement will be based on the justification provided.

9. Seismic Design / Loading

Whilst Seismic effects may be considered for some categories of structure this is not a requirement of the building bye-laws (Jersey) 2007. On the other hand developing an understanding of structural response to Seismic loading brings in useful structural concepts of dynamics and energy.

It is therefore considered appropriate that some allowance for CPD relating to Seismic activities should be allowed where submitted, however this be limited in respect of the relevance of the benefits in understanding gained from these activities.

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10. Foreign Projects / Standards and Codes

This was a feature of a number of submissions in the 2008 CPD assessment and given the current economic circumstances it is likely that more certifiers employed by the bigger practices will become involved in the design of projects overseas which will require them to learn about alternative codes of practices, building regulations and practices.

Such activities have no obvious relevance to certification in Jersey and will therefore be discounted in full unless clear and relevant learning points are stated.

11. SUDS / Flooding

Although these topics may be relevant to some cases Building Permit Applications, these are clearly outside the scope of certification and any CPD submitted in respect of these topics will be discounted in full.

12. Work Based Learning

The 2008 submissions saw an increased reliance on work based learning and given the current economic conditions it is anticipated that this trend will increase into 2009 submissions and probably beyond as companies training budgets are reduced.

It is recognised that project related work based learning can be a valid and valuable part of an individual's CPD however this only applies where the certifier is working on something new to extend his/her knowledge and capabilities or updating his/her knowledge in a given field.

In judging the value and relevance of such activities assessors will rely heavily on the stated learning points to make a judgement on whether or not the certifier will have learned anything new and beneficial through the activities registered or whether he/she is more likely to have just been carrying out his/her normal duties using existing knowledge and experience.

Assessors will make a judgement as to the benefits gained and decide on how much of the recorded CPD to allow as valid, if necessary requesting further information from the certifiers.

December 2009