

# CPD update: the benefits of work-based learning

It is widely accepted that individuals learn in different ways, and ACCA's continuing professional development (CPD) programme recognises this. In fact, there is a wide range of different work-based activities which can count towards your CPD. Sara Llewellyn, ACCA's Learning & Development Policy Manager, explains.

## preferred learning styles

We all have preferred ways of learning and learn better through some activities than others. Being able to identify your preferred method of learning or 'individual learning style' is invaluable. You can identify the way you prefer to learn through ACCA's professional development matrix (PDM). We have used an approach developed by Peter Honey and Alan Mumford. This will provide you with a suggestion as to whether you are a **pragmatist**, **reflector**, **activist** or **theorist** when it comes to your preferred learning style; and this, in turn, will help you think about what learning activities suit you best.

## learning at work

Courses and seminars do, of course, have a central role in maintaining and developing skills and knowledge. However, it is worth considering a range of approaches when planning your CPD, keeping your learning style uppermost in your planning. CPD must, of course, be relevant to your job and/or your career aspirations; so it naturally follows that work-based learning will contribute towards your CPD. In fact, if you are following the unit route, it's very likely that you're already undertaking work-based learning activity that could count as verifiable CPD. The examples below help to demonstrate this.

Remember that other types of learning that you undertake at work or for your employer (for example, computer-based training or e-learning and in-house or externally-sourced training), can also contribute to your CPD. Providing you can answer 'yes' to the three questions below, you can record the learning activity as verifiable CPD.

1. Was the learning activity relevant to your career?
2. Can you explain how you will apply the learning in the workplace?
3. Can you provide evidence that you undertook the learning activity?

Activity	How it becomes verifiable
Coaching a team member	You may spend time studying coaching techniques such as 'allowing your staff member to reach their own solutions'. The time preparing for such a session would be verifiable CPD: you can explain how it is relevant and how you applied the learning. Keep your preparation notes, your diary entry, and ask the staff member to confirm the meeting took place.
Being coached	The time you spend with your coach can count as CPD if you can explain how it is relevant and how you will apply the learning. You can show it took place by keeping your preparation notes, your diary entry or asking your coach to confirm the meeting.
Preparing for a presentation or writing a report	If you have to prepare for a presentation or write a report in a new area or topic, then the research you undertake can be verifiable CPD. Your evidence can even be the report or presentation itself.
Consulting colleagues	Think about the number of occasions you've learned something from a briefing from an expert or colleague. Such briefings may be full of information and knowledge which is new to you, and it may result in your refining your approach or taking different actions than planned. Keep a record of when you have learned something significant from such a discussion, noting the time you put aside, what you learned and how you'll apply your acquired knowledge.

Sara Llewellyn  
- learning and  
development policy  
manager, ACCA