



THE CPD ACCREDITATION BUREAU

Accreditation Standard

The criteria every accredited activity must meet

Version 1.0

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1. About this standard

1.1 Purpose

This standard sets out what a learning activity must show to be accredited by The CPD Accreditation Bureau. It is the single reference used by providers preparing a submission, by our assessors when reviewing it, and by anyone who wants to understand what our accreditation means.

Accreditation confirms that an activity offers structured, accurate and well-delivered learning, that it checks learning has taken place, and that the CPD hours it claims are honest. It does not confirm that the activity is a regulated qualification, and it is not an endorsement of a provider's wider products or services.

1.2 Who it applies to

The standard applies to every organisation and individual seeking accreditation, in any country and any sector, and to every format of activity we accredit. The same criteria apply to all providers, whatever their size.

1.3 How to read it

- **Must** means a requirement. An activity that does not meet it cannot be approved.
- **Should** means good practice. Assessors take it into account and may recommend improvements, but it is not a reason on its own for refusal.
- **Evidence** is what you send so the assessor can confirm a requirement is met.

1.4 Status and review

This standard is published openly and reviewed every year by the Bureau's Independent Advisory Panel. Each version carries a number and date. Changes apply to new submissions from the date of publication and to existing activities at their next renewal.

2. Key terms

Term	Meaning
Activity	One course, workshop, eLearning module, webinar, event, podcast series, publication or programme with its own learning outcomes, submitted for accreditation.
Provider	The organisation or individual responsible for designing, delivering and issuing certificates for an activity.
Learner	Any person who takes part in an accredited activity.
Learning outcome	A statement of what a learner will know, understand or be able to do by the end of the activity.
CPD hour	Sixty minutes of active, structured learning, calculated using the method in section 6.
Assessor	A person appointed by the Bureau to review submissions against this standard.
Accreditation number	The unique reference given to each approved activity, for example CPDAB-A-2027-0012.
Certificate number	The unique reference printed on each learner certificate, for example CPDAB-C-2027-000184, which anyone can check on our website.
The mark	The accredited mark of The CPD Accreditation Bureau, licensed to providers for approved activities.
Accreditation period	Twelve months from the date of the approval decision, renewable each year.

3. What can be accredited

3.1 Eligible activities

We accredit structured learning that helps professionals maintain or develop their knowledge and skills.

Eligible formats are:

- Classroom and virtual instructor-led courses and workshops
- eLearning modules and online courses, including SCORM packages
- Live and recorded webinars
- Conferences, seminars and professional events
- Podcasts, videos and publications with defined learning outcomes
- Blended and multi-part programmes

3.2 Activities we do not accredit

- Sales presentations, product demonstrations or promotional content
- Activities without defined learning outcomes
- Regulated qualifications, degrees or credit-bearing awards
- Content that is misleading, unsafe, discriminatory or unlawful
- Training offered by any business in which the Bureau's owners are involved

3.3 Language

Materials are currently reviewed in English. Activities delivered in other languages may be accredited where an accurate English version of the materials is supplied.

4. The accreditation criteria

Every activity is assessed against the eight criteria below. An activity must meet all the requirements of every criterion to be approved.

Code	Criterion	In short
C1	Clear learning outcomes	Learners know what they will gain, stated in measurable terms.
C2	Accurate, current content	The material is correct, well structured and up to date.
C3	Suitable delivery	Methods fit the format, the audience and the outcomes.
C4	Evidence of learning	The activity checks that the outcomes were met.
C5	Competent trainers and authors	The people behind it have the knowledge to teach it.
C6	Honest CPD hours	Hours are calculated by our method and never rounded up.
C7	Learner support	Learners can ask questions, give feedback and raise concerns.
C8	Truthful marketing	Claims about the activity and its accreditation are accurate.

C1 Clear learning outcomes

Learners, employers and assessors must be able to see exactly what an activity sets out to achieve.

Requirements	- The activity must state between two and eight learning outcomes. - Each outcome must describe what the learner will know, understand or be able to do, using an observable verb such as explain, apply, identify or evaluate. - Outcomes must be achievable within the stated CPD hours. - Outcomes must be shared with learners before or at the start of the activity.
Evidence to submit	- The list of learning outcomes, as shown to learners. - A map showing where in the activity each outcome is covered.
What good looks like	Outcomes such as “By the end of this course you will be able to identify the five red flags of money laundering in customer onboarding”, each clearly linked to a section of the content.
Common reasons for changes	- Outcomes written as topics (“AML awareness”) rather than what the learner will be able to do. - Vague verbs such as understand or know about with no way of checking them. - More outcomes than the time allows.

C2 Accurate, current content

What learners are taught must be correct, relevant and reflect current practice, law and regulation.

Requirements	- Content must be factually accurate and consistent with current law, regulation and recognised good practice in the subject. - Content must be structured in a logical sequence that supports the learning outcomes. - Sources for facts, statistics and legal or regulatory statements must be cited. - Content must have been reviewed or updated within the last twelve months, or sooner where the subject has changed. - Content must be free of promotional material for the provider's other products or services, beyond a brief introduction.
Evidence to submit	- The full materials: slides, handouts, scripts, module content or programme. - The date the content was last reviewed and by whom. - References or a source list where facts or regulation are cited.
What good looks like	Material that a subject expert would recognise as accurate and current, with references to the relevant law or guidance and a clear review date.
Common reasons for changes	- Out-of-date legislation or guidance. - Unreferenced statistics or claims. - Sales content mixed into the learning.

C3 Suitable delivery

The way an activity is delivered must give learners a real chance to achieve the outcomes.

Requirements	- Delivery methods must suit the format, the intended audience and the outcomes. - The activity must include active learning, such as discussion, practice, case studies, questions or tasks, and not rely solely on passive content. - The intended audience and any prerequisite knowledge must be stated. - Reasonable steps must be taken to make the activity accessible, such as captions for video, readable fonts and alternatives for learners with additional needs on request.
Evidence to submit	- A session plan or course outline with timings. - For eLearning, reviewer access to the module or the SCORM package. - A description of the intended audience and how accessibility is supported.
What good looks like	A workshop that alternates short input with practical exercises, or an eLearning module that combines concise content, interactive scenarios and knowledge checks, with captions on all video.
Common reasons for changes	- Long stretches of lecture or reading with no interaction. - No information about the intended audience. - Video without captions or transcripts.

C4 Evidence of learning

Accreditation records learning, not just attendance. Every activity must check that learning has taken place.

Requirements	- The activity must include at least one method of checking learning against the outcomes, such as a quiz, practical task, case study, observed exercise or structured reflection. - Where a quiz is used, a pass mark must be set and learners must be able to retake it. - Certificates must only be issued to learners who complete the activity and its learning check. - For conferences and events, attendance at each session must be recorded and learners must be offered a structured reflection.
Evidence to submit	- The assessment, task or reflection template, with pass criteria where relevant. - A description of how completion and attendance are recorded.
What good looks like	A ten-question scenario quiz mapped to each outcome with an 80% pass mark, or a short reflective log asking learners how they will apply each outcome in their role.
Common reasons for changes	- No learning check at all. - Certificates issued on registration rather than completion. - Questions that test recall of trivia rather than the outcomes.

C5 Competent trainers and authors

Learners must be taught by people with the knowledge and experience to teach the subject well.

Requirements	- Each trainer, facilitator, speaker or content author must have relevant subject knowledge, shown by qualifications, professional experience or both. - Trainers delivering live sessions should have training or experience in adult learning. - The provider must have a way to check the quality of trainers, such as observation or learner feedback review.
Evidence to submit	- A short profile for each trainer or author, showing relevant qualifications and experience. - A description of how trainer quality is monitored.
What good looks like	Profiles showing, for example, a qualified compliance professional with ten years in financial services and a recognised training qualification.
Common reasons for changes	- No information about who delivers or wrote the content. - Trainers whose background is unrelated to the subject.

C6 Honest CPD hours

CPD hours are what learners record and what employers and regulators rely on. They must never be overstated.

Requirements	- CPD hours must be calculated using the method in section 6 of this standard. - Hours must be rounded down to the nearest half hour, never up. - The calculation must be explained in the submission. - The same number of hours must be used on all marketing and certificates for the activity.
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Evidence to submit	• The CPD hours claimed and a short explanation of how they were calculated. • For eLearning, the pilot completion times or the estimate method used.
What good looks like	A one-day workshop running 9:00 to 17:00 with 75 minutes of breaks, claimed as 6.5 CPD hours with the calculation shown.
Common reasons for changes	• Counting breaks, lunch, registration or networking. • eLearning hours based on the maximum time rather than typical completion time. • Rounding up.

C7 Learner support

Learners must be able to get help, give feedback and raise a concern.

Requirements	• Learners must have a clear way to ask questions about the content during or after the activity. • The provider must collect learner feedback on every accredited activity and review it at least once a year. • The provider must have a complaints procedure for learners. • Learners must be told how to contact the Bureau if they have a concern about the accreditation.
Evidence to submit	• How learners can ask questions, and the expected response time. • The feedback form or survey used. • The provider's learner complaints procedure.
What good looks like	A post-course survey reviewed each quarter, a named contact who replies within two working days, and a complaints procedure linked from the course page.
Common reasons for changes	• No feedback collected. • No route for learners to raise a concern.

C8 Truthful marketing

How an activity is described must match what was approved, and must not overstate what accreditation means.

Requirements	• Marketing must describe the activity accurately, including its CPD hours and format. • The activity must be described as "accredited by The CPD Accreditation Bureau" only once approved, and only while accreditation is valid. • Marketing must not suggest that accreditation is a qualification, a regulatory approval or an endorsement of the provider's other products. • The accreditation number must appear alongside the mark.
Evidence to submit	• The marketing description and any web page or brochure text for the activity.
What good looks like	A course page that states "6.5 CPD hours. Accredited by The CPD Accreditation Bureau, accreditation number CPDAB-A-2027-0012", with the mark used as set out in section 8.
Common reasons for changes	• Calling CPD accreditation a qualification or certification of competence. • Using the mark across a whole website when only some activities are accredited. • Advertising as accredited before approval.

5. Provider responsibilities

In addition to the criteria for each activity, every accredited provider must:

1. Be a legally identifiable organisation or individual, with accurate contact details on our register.
2. Comply with applicable law, including data protection law, when handling learner information.
3. Keep records of each learner's completion, CPD hours and certificate number for at least three years.
4. Tell us within ten working days of any significant change to an accredited activity, as defined in section 9.
5. Co-operate with spot checks, including giving an assessor access to attend or review an activity.
6. Use the mark and certificates only as set out in this standard.
7. Respond to concerns we raise within ten working days.

6. Calculating CPD hours

6.1 General rules

- **One CPD hour** equals sixty minutes of active, structured learning.
- **Increments:** hours are expressed in half-hour steps, always rounded down.
- **Minimum:** an activity must provide at least 0.5 CPD hours.
- **Excluded time:** breaks, meals, registration, introductions of more than five minutes, networking, exhibitions, sponsor presentations and travel never count.
- **Required preparation:** pre-reading or post-course tasks may be included only if they are compulsory, set out in the materials, and needed to meet the outcomes.

6.2 Method by format

Format	How hours are calculated
Courses and workshops	Scheduled learning time, minus all breaks and excluded time. Add compulsory pre-work or tasks at their estimated completion time.
eLearning	The typical completion time, based on a pilot with at least five representative learners (use the median time). If no pilot is possible, use a documented estimate of reading, media and activity time, which the assessor will check.
Live webinars	Scheduled session length, minus introductions over five minutes and any promotional content.
Recorded webinars, video and podcasts	Running time of the learning content, plus the time for any compulsory learning check.
Conferences and events	Each session is given its own hours. Learners claim hours only for the sessions they attend, as recorded by the provider.
Publications	Estimated reading time at 200 words per minute for technical or professional text, plus the time for any compulsory learning check.
Blended programmes	The sum of each component, calculated by its own method.

6.3 Worked examples

Activity	Calculation	CPD hours
Workshop, 9:00 to 17:00, two 15-minute breaks and a 45-minute lunch	8 hours minus 1 hour 15 minutes = 6 hours 45 minutes	6.5
eLearning module, median pilot time 52 minutes, plus a 10-minute quiz	62 minutes	1.0
60-minute live webinar with a 10-minute sponsor introduction	60 minus 10 = 50 minutes	0.5
Article of 4,500 words with a 5-question check taking 8 minutes	$22.5 + 8 = 30.5$ minutes	0.5

7. Learner certificates

7.1 Required content

Every certificate issued for an accredited activity must show:

1. The learner's full name
2. The title of the activity, exactly as approved
3. The provider's name
4. The date of completion
5. The CPD hours earned
6. The accreditation number
7. The unique certificate number
8. The mark of The CPD Accreditation Bureau
9. A QR code or web address where the certificate can be verified

7.2 Issuing rules

- Certificates must be issued through the Bureau's certificate system, so that each one receives a unique number and can be verified.
- Certificates must only be issued to learners who complete the activity and its learning check.
- For conferences, certificates must list only the sessions and hours actually attended.
- Certificates may only be issued while the activity's accreditation is valid.
- A certificate, once issued, remains valid even if the activity's accreditation later lapses.

8. Using the mark

The mark is licensed to providers for approved activities only. To protect its meaning for everyone, providers must:

1. Use the mark only on materials for activities that are currently accredited.
2. Always show the accreditation number next to the mark.
3. Use the mark exactly as supplied, without changing its colours, proportions or wording.
4. Not use the mark in a way that suggests the whole organisation, or activities that are not accredited, are approved.
5. Not suggest that the mark represents a qualification, a licence, or approval by a government or regulator.
6. Remove the mark from all materials within 30 days of accreditation lapsing, being suspended or being withdrawn.

Brand guidelines with approved versions of the mark are provided on approval.

9. Decisions, renewal and changes

9.1 Decision outcomes

Outcome	What it means
Approved	The activity meets every requirement. It receives an accreditation number, the mark and a register listing for twelve months.
Changes needed	The activity is close to meeting the standard. Written feedback explains what to change. One free resubmission is allowed within 30 days, and the changes are reviewed within five working days.
Not approved	The activity does not meet the standard. Written reasons are given. A substantially revised activity may be submitted later, or the decision may be appealed.

Decisions are issued within ten working days of a complete submission, or five working days with fast-track review.

9.2 Renewal

- Accreditation lasts twelve months from the decision date and is renewed each year as part of the provider's membership.
- Before renewal the provider confirms that each activity is still current. A short renewal check follows.
- Renewed activities do not use the provider's plan allowance, which applies to new activities only.
- If membership is not renewed, accreditation lapses and the register shows the activity as expired.

9.3 Changes to an accredited activity

A significant change is any change to the learning outcomes, more than a quarter of the content, the CPD hours, the delivery format or the lead trainer or author. Providers must tell us within ten working days. Minor changes, such as updating dates or correcting errors, do not need to be reported. Where changes are large enough to alter the activity, it is reviewed as a new submission.

10. Spot checks, suspension and withdrawal

10.1 Spot checks

The Bureau may check any accredited activity at any time during its accreditation period, including by attending, accessing or reviewing it, and by asking for completion and certificate records.

10.2 Grounds for suspension or withdrawal

- The activity no longer meets this standard
- The mark or certificates are misused
- Marketing is misleading about the activity or its accreditation
- The provider does not co-operate with a spot check or respond to a concern
- Fees remain unpaid after reminders

10.3 Process

1. We write to the provider setting out the concern and the evidence.
2. The provider has ten working days to respond and, where possible, put things right.
3. We decide whether to take no action, require changes, suspend or withdraw accreditation, and give reasons in writing.
4. Suspension or withdrawal is shown on the public register.
5. The provider may appeal under our published complaints and appeals procedure within 20 working days.

In cases of serious risk to learners, such as fraudulent certificates, we may suspend accreditation immediately while the matter is investigated.

11. Review of this standard

The Independent Advisory Panel reviews this standard every year, taking into account feedback from providers, learners and assessors, and changes in good practice. Proposed significant changes are shared with accredited providers before they take effect.

Version history

Version	Date	Changes
1.0	October 2026	First published version.

Appendix A. Self-assessment checklist

Work through this checklist before you submit. If you can answer yes to every question and point to the evidence, your activity is ready for review.

Ref	Question	Yes	Evidence
C1	Are there 2 to 8 learning outcomes, each using an observable verb?	☐	
C1	Is each outcome covered in a clearly identified part of the activity?	☐	
C1	Are outcomes shown to learners before or at the start?	☐	
C2	Is all content accurate and in line with current law, regulation and practice?	☐	
C2	Are facts, statistics and regulatory statements referenced?	☐	
C2	Has the content been reviewed in the last twelve months?	☐	
C2	Is the activity free of sales or promotional content?	☐	
C3	Does the activity include active learning, not only passive content?	☐	
C3	Are the intended audience and any prerequisites stated?	☐	
C3	Is the activity accessible, for example captions on video?	☐	
C4	Is there a learning check mapped to the outcomes?	☐	
C4	If a quiz is used, is there a pass mark and a chance to retake?	☐	
C4	Are certificates issued only on completion of the activity and check?	☐	
C5	Is there a profile for every trainer or author showing relevant expertise?	☐	
C5	Do you monitor trainer quality?	☐	
C6	Have you calculated hours using section 6, excluding breaks and networking?	☐	
C6	Are hours rounded down to the nearest half hour?	☐	
C6	Are the same hours used in all marketing and on certificates?	☐	
C7	Can learners ask questions and get a reply?	☐	
C7	Do you collect and review learner feedback?	☐	
C7	Do you have a learner complaints procedure?	☐	
C8	Is the marketing accurate, including hours and format?	☐	
C8	Does the marketing avoid calling accreditation a qualification or regulatory approval?	☐	

Appendix B. Submission checklist

For every activity

- Title, format and intended audience
- Learning outcomes and a map showing where each is covered
- Session plan or course outline with timings
- CPD hours and how they were calculated
- The learning check, with pass criteria where relevant
- Trainer or author profiles
- How learners ask questions, give feedback and complain
- The marketing description of the activity

By format, also include

Format	Additional materials
Courses and workshops	Slides, handouts and any exercises used
eLearning	Reviewer access to the module or the SCORM package, and pilot completion times
Webinars	Slides, or the recording for recorded webinars
Conferences and events	The programme with session timings, speakers and how attendance is recorded
Podcasts and video	The episodes or video files and any learning check
Publications	The full text, word count and any learning check