

# SEAI BER Assessor CPD Policy

V1.3



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## Introduction

SEAI recognises the importance of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in maintaining and raising assessor's professional standards.

CPD is the process of regularly assessing current and future skills and knowledge requirements relevant to assessor responsibilities, then planning and implementing an ongoing programme of training and development to address these needs. It is designed to help position assessors to keep pace with changing technologies and to target specific needs to enable assessors to learn collaboratively and independently.

By agreeing to the Code of Practice all assessors commit to ongoing self-improvement, see chapter 4 of the [code of practice](#).

## What is CPD

CPD is about keeping professional skills and knowledge up to date and appropriate for your work.

SEAI recognises the importance of CPD in helping assessors to develop their existing skills and knowledge through lifelong learning.

CPD will also encourage assessors to continue to follow changes in legislation, technology and working practices, and equips them with the tools they need to cope positively with a fast-changing workplace.

Attaining a professional qualification is not the end of an assessor's professional development, just one stage in the process of lifelong learning.

## Why CPD

The benefit of CPD is that it allows assessors to continuously learn and develop, keeping knowledge up to date.

Assessors can continue to maintain a clear understanding of their obligations to deliver a high-quality service in the marketplace and ensure the delivery of a technically proficient and timely service to clients, with high standards of professional conduct.

In an environment of rapidly changing technology, more demanding consumers and greater scrutiny on professionals and organisations alike, CPD helps:

- Demonstrate a commitment to maintaining and developing professional standards
- Improve assessor motivation & adaptability and enhance job satisfaction
- Protect the public interest and increase client satisfaction
- Increase effectiveness and deliver high performance
- Promote career advancement and career resilience
- Promote the performance and the reputation of the profession
- Keep pace with the standards of others in the same field
- Stay up to date with changing trends
- You become more effective in the workplace
- You stay interested in your profession
- You have increased understanding of the implications of your work
- You can help advance the body of knowledge and technology within your profession
- It gives you access to experts in the fields
- Potential to increase public confidence in a professional or group of professionals

## CPD Requirement

CPD is mandatory for all registered BER assessors.

CPD activities are measured in credits. 1 hour of learning time = 1 CPD credit unless otherwise specified by SEAI.

It is a requirement to undertake a minimum of 20 credits per calendar year.

Due to the differences in methodology, assessors who are both domestic and non-domestic must undertake a minimum of 20 credits per calendar year relevant to their role as a domestic BER assessor and a minimum of 20 credits per calendar year relevant to their role as a non-domestic BER assessor. Where a CPD activity is relevant to both domestic and non-domestic practice, the same credits can be used to meet the requirements for both.

An example of a one-day training course, where the training starts at 9am and ends at 5pm, with a 1-hour break for lunch, the CPD credits would be 7 CPD credits.

A minimum of 50% of CPD activity (10 credits) per year must be formal, the remaining 50% (10 credits) can comprise either formal or informal relevant professional learning.

At times there will be a mandatory requirement for registered assessors to attend particular CPD activities from time to time, i.e., methodology change. We will advise assessors in advance when this need arises.

## What counts as CPD

A diverse range of activities qualify as CPD.

Formal CPD can be any form of structured learning that has clear learning objectives and outcomes that relates to your role as a BER assessor, such as a professional course or structured online training. It could also be learning that includes an assessment measure.

Assessor mentoring audits are included in formal CPD. Webinars by SEAI are included in formal CPD.

Informal CPD is any self-managed learning that is relevant or related to the assessor's professional role.

Examples below of what can count as **formal** CPD:

- SEAI BER webinars
- Attendance at a documentation and practice audit on site (audit number required) – 3 CPD credits
- Attendance at a virtual and office documentation and practice audit (audit number required) – 1 CPD credit
  - o **CPD credits are not awarded for data or desk review audits.**
- Courses/workshops/webinars that are relevant to an assessor's knowledge of the methodology and technologies required for the role of a BER assessor
- Professional bodies CPD activities relevant to an assessor's knowledge of the methodology and technologies required for the role of a BER assessor
- Relevant further education relevant to an assessor's knowledge of the methodology and technologies required for the role of a BER assessor

Examples below of what can count as **informal** CPD:

- Attendance at informal seminars or events where the focus is on knowledge sharing.
- Relevant self-directed learning
- Attendance at the Energy Show, industry seminars, etc.
- Reading relevant newsletters, journals, etc.
  - o Reading each BER assessor newsletter entitles you to 0.5 informal CPD credits.
- Committee membership that relates to Building Energy Ratings.
- Courses/workshops/webinars that are relevant to an assessor's knowledge that an assessor may not be able to attend online or in person and can only view the recording back at a later stage. If there is no documentation to indicate that you attended the course/workshop/webinar, this can be considered as informal CPD.

## What does not count as CPD

Any activity that does not have a clear learning purpose, or does not relate to an assessor's role cannot be considered as appropriate CPD. For example, activities such as networking, social events, team meetings or informal planning events and involvements in boards, committees or clubs that have little or no relevance to an assessor's professional role, cannot count towards their CPD requirements.

**SEAI recognises the importance of the following activities but to ensure that CPD activities relate to the methodology and technologies of a BER assessor, the following activities will not count as CPD,**

- Desk Review Audit
- Data Review Audit
- Non-BER audits
- Non-accredited internal training
- Safe pass course

## CPD cycle

The CPD calendar year runs from 1<sup>st</sup> January to 31<sup>st</sup> December each year.

Surplus CPD credits cannot be carried into the following year.

## Audit Process

A sample of CPD records are checked for compliance to ensure 20 CPD credits within the calendar year.

The SEAI Code of Practice requires that a BER assessor is required from time to time to update, at his/her own cost, their skills and/or resources to meet the standards required on an ongoing basis by SEAI; this may be subject to verification by SEAI or its appointed agents or contractors in order to approve the renewal of registrations.

SEAI may audit an assessor's CPD to confirm that the minimum amount of CPD credits are completed in a calendar year.

Selection of BER assessors for CPD is on both a targeted and random basis.

Selection of an assessor for audit should not be interpreted as implying any prior presumption by SEAI of there being a non-compliance with the CPD audit.

If an assessor is selected for audit, the assessor must provide evidence confirming completion of the set amount of CPD in a calendar year.

If an assessor is selected for an audit of their CPD, they will have 14 calendar days to submit the required evidence from the issuing of the notification of an audit request.

When the required evidence is received, this will be verified to ensure that it contains the following information:

- Activity name
- If a CPD activity is not an SEAI BER webinar, please provide a short description of the activity and how it relates to your role as a BER assessor.
- Date of CPD
- Number of CPD hours/credits
- Indicate whether CPD was formal or informal
- Audit number of Documentation and Practice audit (if applicable)
- Evidence of CPD activities will be necessary for formal CPD credits to be recognised.
  - The number of CPD credits should be referenced on any evidence
- For informal CPD, provide the date, venue and host body in lieu of evidence

On completion of an audit, all findings are formally notified to the assessor in writing, issued to the assessor's registered email address.

The assessor may seek a review of the findings of the audit by SEAI within 14 calendar days of the issue of the audit findings.

## CPD non-compliance

As per the Code of Practice - SEAI will monitor the continuous professional development (CPD) activities of BER/DEC assessors annually as part of the process to continue or renew BER/DEC assessor registrations.

A BER assessor may be deemed non-compliant if they fail to engage with SEAI in terms of the CPD requirements.

A BER assessor who has been deemed non-compliant with the CPD requirements, should expect to see an increase in the level of Documentation & Practice audits received.

Non-compliance with the CPD requirements may be deemed as a breach of the Code of Practice and an appropriate sanction may be applied.

## CPD Best Practice

**Planning** CPD activities allow you to set and prioritise learning goals and decide what actions you will undertake to achieve them. This will help you to target your learning effectively.

**Recording** CPD activities allow you to keep a record for your future reference as well as demonstrating adherence to the CPD policy. It also allows you to look at the balance of your CPD activities over a period.

**Reflecting** on your CPD activities allow you to ask yourself questions such as: "What did/will I learn? And "How did I apply the learning?" It provides the opportunity to consider what further CPD activities might be undertaken to reach your professional goals.

## Exemptions

All BER assessors are required to undertake and record 20 credits of CPD.

However, SEAI recognises that there are circumstances where an assessor is unable to meet the 20-credit CPD activities requirement. Assessors will have the opportunity to inform SEAI of these circumstances.

These circumstances can include:

**Maternity leave:** If you are not publishing BER certificates, you are not required to meet the full CPD requirements while on maternity leave of more than 6 months in a given CPD cycle. However, where a maternity leave is less than 6 months in a given CPD cycle, you are required to meet a pro-rata equivalent of the 20-credit requirement.

**Parental leave:** If you are not publishing BER certificates and if you take parental leave you are required to meet a pro-rata equivalent of the 20-credit requirement for the period of the CPD cycle you are registered.

**Long-term illness:** If you are not publishing BER certificates, you are not required to meet the full CPD requirements during a period of long-term illness.

**Carer's Leave:** If you are not publishing BER certificates, you are not required to meet the full CPD requirements while on carer's leave of more than 6 months in a given CPD cycle. However, where carer's leave is less than 6 months in a given CPD cycle, you are required to meet a pro-rata equivalent of the 20-credit requirement.

**Other:** There may be other circumstances where a member is unable to meet the 20-credit requirement. SEAI will determine if these circumstances excuse a member from meeting the 20-credit requirement. However, not every reason for not meeting the 20-credit requirement will be valid. Reasons such as a lack of time, a lack of available CPD activities or insufficient funds to pay are not considered valid.

An exemption cannot be requested retrospectively after being asked to verify compliance with the CPD requirements.

## Amendments to the CPD policy

SEAI, in its capacity as the Issuing Authority under the Regulations, has the right, from time to time, to issue directions to BER/DEC assessors in relation to the matters set out in Regulation 17(1) of the Regulations, including codes of practice to be respected by BER/DEC assessors, such as this Code. As a result, SEAI reserves the right to review and amend this Code and may also issue other directions to BER/DEC assessors, in accordance with the Regulations.

BER/DEC assessors shall be made aware of any proposed amendments to the CPD policy by email or by way of an update to the Code displayed on SEAI's website. SEAI may invite BER/DEC assessors to submit comments on or provide a response to the proposed amendments. For the most up to date version of the Code, which is binding on all BER/DEC assessors pursuant to Regulation 17(2) of the Regulations, BER/DEC assessors should visit SEAI's website (<https://www.seai.ie/energy-in-business/ber-assessor-support/>).

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