



THE LAW SOCIETY  
OF SINGAPORE

**MEMBERS' GUIDE TO  
THE LAW SOCIETY OF SINGAPORE'S  
VOLUNTARY  
MINIMUM CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
SCHEME  
("vMCPD")**

**April 2005 – March 2008**

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***For the latest version of this Guide, please refer to The Law Society of Singapore's CPD website at [www.lawsociety.org.sg/CPD](http://www.lawsociety.org.sg/CPD)***

***For feedback or enquiries on vMCPD, please contact the Director of Training & CPD at 6530 0239 or [cpd@lawsoc.org.sg](mailto:cpd@lawsoc.org.sg).***

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Law Society of Singapore (“**Society**”) is committed to ensuring the continued competence of and high standards of work by its practitioner members through ongoing education post-qualification. Since the late 1970s, the Society has organised training and educational programs for its members first under the auspices of its Committee for Legal Workshops, then the Continuing Legal Education Committee. The latter was renamed the Continuing Professional Development Committee in 2003 to emphasise the need for an integrated approach to professional development, involving not only black letter law, but also the areas of business, management, practice management and personal development.

Throughout the decades, the Society has developed and organised programs to equip lawyers with **up-to-date and relevant knowledge, skills and abilities** beyond what was taught in law school. Programs organised must always remain **aligned with the fast changing landscape of practice and needs of the profession**. For example, in view of increasing competition and convergence of industries, the Society’s continuing professional development programs have increasingly incorporated inter-disciplinary training and networking opportunities for its members.

This Guide serves 2 key purposes:

- a. to outline the **Society’s vision for continuing professional development as an enabling tool** that maintains standards and competence, addresses public interest and generates competitive advantage for the profession; and
- b. to explain the **Society’s scheme for voluntary continuing professional development or vMCPD** for the profession launched on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2005.

## 2. WHAT IS CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT?

Continuing professional development (“**CPD**”) refers to the systematic maintenance, improvement and broadening of relevant knowledge, skills and abilities that enables a professional to successfully carry out his/her professional duties and responsibilities throughout his/her career.

Simply put, it is about ***lifelong learning which makes you consistently better able to do your job as a lawyer.***

### a. Why is CPD important?

As a *self-regulating profession*, the legal profession has to ensure that high standards of professional competence are attained and maintained in the *interests of the profession and, ultimately, the public*. The demands of practice are not static and, as such, ***the Society believes every member should take personal responsibility for his/her own ongoing learning and development as a professional.***

The Society believes that the most practical and effective approach to continuing professional development is one that ***puts lawyers in control of their own learning*** by making them responsible for:

- i. identifying their own learning needs,
- ii. choosing the most appropriate activities to meet these needs based on their own time and resource constraints; and
- iii. putting into practice what they have learnt.

Today, to be a competent and successful legal practitioner involves more than the continued study and acquisition of legal knowledge and skills. Lawyers need to develop different skill sets as their practice develops and matures. For instance, a newly qualified lawyer may require more training in the areas of case management, risk management, professional conduct and ethics; a lawyer about to start his own practice or managing a practice may require stronger grounding in strategic planning, client relationship management, marketing, business development and financial management; and a specialist practitioner may need to develop cross-disciplinary industry knowledge and skills.

**b. What does CPD include?**

In view of the diverse needs of members of the profession, the Society believes that it is vital to have in place a ***balanced and integrated training framework*** that is able to adapt to and address this diversity. Consequently, since 2003, the CPD Committee has adopted the following framework for its CPD planning and implementation:

Program Category	Training Objectives
Professional Practice	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Ground legal professionals in the basics of core practice areas and professional skills so they continue to uphold the highest standards of professionalism.</li><li>2. Update legal professionals on developments in core practice areas.</li><li>3. Identify and provide training in growing or emerging areas of law to retool legal professionals, restructure law practices and adequately meet growing or emerging client needs.</li></ol>
Practice Management	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Communicate the requirements of the Legal Profession Act and the relevant Rules to equip practitioners for continued compliance.</li><li>2. Equip practitioners with specific knowledge, skills and attitudes required in effective law practice management, including in areas such as professional standards, ethics, law practice accounting, risk management and legal technology.</li></ol>
Business & Management	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Provide legal professionals with cross-disciplinary business, management and technical skills to better manage their law practices and to understand the industry or commercial environment in which they practice.</li><li>2. Update legal professionals on developments, trends and best practices in business and management that may be distilled and applied to the business of law.</li><li>3. Provide inter-professional networking opportunities.</li></ol>
Personal Development	Address the broader intellectual, emotional and psychological needs of legal professionals so as to improve their general quality of life.

All CPD programs organised by the Society are classified under one of these 4 Program Categories. Further, all Professional Practice programs are categorised under one of the following Practice Areas:

Category 1 - Commercial/ corporate/ employment/ corporate finance/ commercial finance

Category 2 - Conveyancing/ banking

Category 3 - Crime

Category 4 - Dispute resolution processes & procedure (including litigation, arbitration, mediation, adjudication)

Category 5 - Information technology/ intellectual property

Category 6 - Infrastructure/ projects/ construction

Category 7 - Insurance/ probate & administration/ wills/ trusts/ tax/ wealth management

Category 8 - Matrimonial/ family law

Category 9 - Shipping/ admiralty/ international trade

Category 10 - Others

c. **What activities are considered CPD activities?**

As the needs of each legal professional varies with his/her specific practice and seniority at the Bar, the Society feels that effective CPD cannot be overly prescriptive. In line with our *broad, flexible and needs-based approach*, the Society considers an activity a CPD activity as long as it:

- i. is relevant to the short, medium or long term development of a legal professional;
- ii. has intellectual or practical content; and
- iii. relates primarily to the practice of law or to the legal profession.

Broadly, CPD activities can be classified as ***structured (or formal) or unstructured (or informal)***.

Examples of structured (or formal) CPD activities include:

1. Attending seminars, lectures, workshops, courses and conferences
2. Preparation for, speaking at or chairing seminars, lectures, workshops, courses and conferences
3. Writing legal articles and books, and contributing to legal journals
4. Providing content or other contributions to the Society's e-learning portal or the Singapore Law Gazette

Examples of unstructured (or informal) activities include:

1. Private study, including:
  - a. Reading legal articles and books
  - b. Reading non-legal articles and books relevant to law practice management
  - c. Watching videos/VCDs/CD-roms, listening to cassettes/CDs in areas relevant to the practice of law or law practice management
2. Conducting legal research

**d. How do I Get the Most Out of My CPD Activities?**

As unplanned training activity is unlikely to bring maximum return on any training investment, the CPD Department issued “**A Guide To Getting The Most Out Of Your Continuing Professional Development (“CPD) Activities**” in May 2004. This simple Guide is designed to assist legal professionals and those responsible for the training and development of legal professionals in getting the most out of the time and money spent on CPD activities through a simple *4-step training cycle: planning, acting, practising and evaluating*. A copy of the Guide can be found at [Annex A](#).

**3. ABOUT THE VOLUNTARY MINIMUM CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME (“vMCPD”)**

**a. What is vMCPD?**

vMCPD is a *2 year voluntary pilot project which was extended for a further 1 year* by the Society launched on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2005 for its practitioner members. It is intended to prepare the Society and its practitioner members for the future implementation of a mandatory CPD scheme for the profession. **During vMCPD, there are no mandatory standards or reporting requirements to be met by practitioner members.**

**i. How does vMCPD differ from the Society’s current CPD programs?**

There are 2 key differences between vMCPD and how the Society has managed CPD in the past. During vMCPD, the Society will:

1. Recommend certain **best practices** relating to formal CPD activities which practitioners are encouraged to adhere to (see paragraph 3(a)(ii) below); and
2. Provide certain additional **membership services free-of-charge** for the Society’s practitioner members, namely:
  - a. Assigning and awarding CPD Hours for participation in all [Approved vMCPD Programs](#). Please refer to the vMCPD Best Practice Guidelines for more information on Approved vMCPD Programs.
  - b. Enabling members to register and pay online for CPD programs organised by the Society.
  - c. Ensuring a wide array of Approved vMCPD Programs, including courses organised by training providers approved by the Society (“**Approved Training Providers**”) and third-party courses approved by the Society (“**Approved Training Courses**”). For more details on Approved Training Providers and Approved Training Courses, please refer to the “**Guide to The Law Society of Singapore’s Voluntary Minimum Continuing Professional Development**

**Scheme for External Training Providers**" available on the CPD portal at [www.lawsociety.org.sg/CPD](http://www.lawsociety.org.sg/CPD).

- d. Tracking members' participation in Approved vMCPD Programs during each practice year.
- e. Providing each practitioner member with access to his/her Personal Online Record of Training ("PORT") for the practice year via a new CPD portal developed by the Society for its members. Through PORT, a member will be able to:
  - i. Obtain a summary of his/her individual training history over the practice year generated by the Society for participation in Approved vMCPD Programs. This summary would include information on dates, times, CPD Hours, program category, relevant practice areas and type of participation (e.g. as attendee, speaker, chairperson, facilitator, workshop leader, panelist, resource person); and
  - ii. Maintain a more comprehensive personal training history record by adding his own information on-line about participation in non-Approved vMCPD Programs.

More information on PORT may be found at [www.lawsociety.org.sg/CPD](http://www.lawsociety.org.sg/CPD).

ii. **vMCPD Best Practice Guidelines**

There are no mandatory standards or reporting requirements to be met by members during vMCPD. However, based on its study of the CPD practices and trends in jurisdictions such as the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Australia and Hong Kong, the CPD Committee recommends that, regardless of area of practice or seniority, the Society's practitioner members adhere to the following **vMCPD Best Practice Guidelines**:

1. Each practitioner member should take personal responsibility for planning his/her own CPD using the 4-step training cycle of planning, acting, practising and evaluating suggested by the Society (see **ANNEX A**).
2. Each legal practitioner should attend **at least 10 hours of Approved vMCPD Programs per practice year (i.e. 1 April to 31 March)**.

**Approved vMCPD Programs** are formal CPD activities, such as seminars, lectures, workshops and discussion groups ,which are either:

- a. Organised by the Society and awarded CPD Hours for the purposes of vMCPD;
- b. Organised by Approved Training Providers and notified to the Society for the purposes of vMCPD; or

- c. Approved Training Courses organised by an external training provider for the purposes of vMCPD.
- 3. Each Approved vMCPD Program should be of a minimum duration of 1 hour, excluding all breaks.
- 4. Each practitioner member should maintain his/her own comprehensive training record for the practice year and retain copies of their training records for a period of 3 years.
- 5. CPD Hours for participation in Approved vMCPD Programs are computed as follows:

	<b>TYPE OF PARTICIPATION</b>	<b>COMPUTATION OF CPD HOURS</b>
1	Attending Approved vMCPD Programs	1 CPD Hour for each 1 hour duration (excluding all breaks)
2	Chairing Approved vMCPD Programs	1 CPD Hour for each 1 hour duration (excluding all breaks)
3	Speaking, teaching, training, facilitating or presenting at Approved vMCPD Programs	2 CPD Hours for each 1 hour duration (excluding all breaks) for the 1 <sup>st</sup> time the event is presented. For repeated presentations, CPD Hours will be awarded only if it can be demonstrated that the content has been substantially changed and such change required additional research, study or preparation by the presenter.
4	Preparation of presentation materials and handouts for Approved vMCPD Programs	1 CPD Hour for each 1 hour duration (excluding all breaks), provided the speaker has confirmed to the Training Department in writing the practitioner member's involvement in such preparation work.

### **iii. vMCPD Attendance Policy**

For the purposes of determining compliance with the vMCPD Best Practice Guidelines set out above, the following policy shall apply to the Society's practitioner members:

- 1. Only participation at Approved vMCPD Programs as set out in the vMCPD Best Practice Guidelines shall be taken into account in computing whether a member has met the recommended 10 CPD Hours.
- 2. A *30-minute grace period* for late arrivals by attendees shall be permitted, except Approved vMCPD Programs of less than 60 minutes for which no grace period shall be permitted. No CPD Hours will be awarded to any participant who arrives after the permitted grace period or is absent from Approved vMCPD Programs.

3. All Approved Training Providers and providers of Approved Training Courses are required to submit to the Training Department attendance records in the format prescribed by the Society, within 2 weeks of the relevant Approved vMCPD Programs, duly signed by the Society's practitioner members.
4. CPD Hours will be awarded to practitioner members for attendance at Approved Training Courses or programs by Approved Training Providers only after the Training Department has received the duly signed attendance records in the prescribed format from the relevant training providers.
5. CPD Hours will be awarded to practitioner members for speaking at, chairing or otherwise actively contributing to (i.e. otherwise than by attending) Approved Training Courses or programs by Approved Training Providers only after the Training Department has received written confirmation from the relevant training providers of such participation.
6. All queries and clarifications relating to this attendance policy should be directed in writing to the Society for the attention of the Director, Training and Continuing Professional Development.

**iv. How Do I Maintain My Training Record**

There are 2 ways to maintain a record of all the training and CPD activities you undergo each year:

1. Maintain a physical record manually by using the form attached in **Annex A (see Appendix 3)**; OR
2. Use the free Personal Online Record of Training (“**PORT**”) specially developed by the Society and provided free-of-charge during vMCPD at [www.lawsociety.org.sg/CPD](http://www.lawsociety.org.sg/CPD). This tool automatically tracks your participation in Approved vMCPD Programs and also allows you to add additional CPD activities you may have undertaken. You may also print and keep a hard copy of your record. More information on how to use PORT may be found at [www.lawsociety.org.sg/CPD](http://www.lawsociety.org.sg/CPD).

Members are encouraged to use PORT as it is the most convenient and comprehensive way of keeping a record of their training history.

**v. Who implements vMCPD at the Society?**

The CPD Committee of the Society will implement the 2-year vMCPD pilot (extended for a further one year) with the assistance of the Training Department. During this period, the CPD Committee will work with the MCPD Steering Committee set up by Council of the Society in 2004 to fine-tune vMCPD and also develop a possible MCPD framework for the profession.

All queries regarding CPD, vMCPD and MCPD by the Society should be directed to the Director, Training & Continuing Professional Development.

**vi. How will the Society Ensure Quality & Relevance of CPD Programs during vMCPD?**

Information in Marketing & Publicity Materials for Approved vMCPD Programs

To help members better plan for and identify suitable CPD activities to meet the best practice guidelines set out in this Guide, the CPD Department will include and request external training providers to include the following information on all marketing and publicity materials for Approved vMCPD Programs:

1. **Assigned CPD Hours** – this will specify the actual duration of the CPD event less all breaks
2. **Program Category** - this will specify what category within the Society's Training Framework the program falls: Professional Practice, Practice Management, Business and Management and Personal Development. Please refer to paragraph 2b above for more details on the Society's Training Framework.
3. **Practice Area** - this applies only to programs within the Professional Practice Program category and will specify the area of legal practice the CPD event relates to.
4. **Training Level** -
  - a. Introductory – no prior knowledge of the subject required
  - b. Intermediate – some prior knowledge of the subject required
  - c. Advanced – substantial/in-depth prior knowledge of the subject required
  - d. Update –prior knowledge of the subject not required but preferred

Approved Training Providers and Approved Training Courses

Further, the Society's Training Department will:

1. Maintain an updated list of Approved Training Providers whose programs will be awarded CPD Hours on the Society's CPD website at [www.lawsoc.org.sg/CPD](http://www.lawsoc.org.sg/CPD). If you participate in (either by attending, chairing or speaking at) any CPD events organised by these Approved Training Providers, the Society will recognise this as participation in formal CPD activities for the purposes of vMCPD and award you with CPD Hours based on the type of participation.
2. Maintain an updated list of Approved Training Courses that will be awarded CPD Hours. If you participate in (either by attending, chairing or speaking at) such

Approved Training Courses, the Society will recognise this as participation in formal CPD activities for the purposes on vMCPD and award you with CPD Hours based on the type of participation.

3. List in the CPD Event Calendar available on the Society's CPD website [www.lawsociety.org.sg/CPD](http://www.lawsociety.org.sg/CPD) all Approved Training Courses, and programs by Approved Training Providers notified to the Training Department.
4. Review and update the list of Approved Training Providers and Approved Training Courses from time to time to ensure that appropriate recognition is given to CPD events attended by the Society's members.
5. For the purpose of maintaining quality standards of Approved vMCPD Programs:
  - a. Require all Approved Training Providers and providers of Approved Training Courses to adhere to certain minimum requirements in the planning, organisation and administration of courses which are awarded CPD Hours as set out in the **“Guide to The Law Society of Singapore’s vMCPD for External Training Providers”** available at [www.lawsociety.org.sg/CPD](http://www.lawsociety.org.sg/CPD).
  - b. From time to time conduct audits of Approved vMCPD Programs; and
  - c. Review and monitor all feedback received on Approved vMCPD Programs carefully.

## **Why vMCPD?**

### **i. Objectives**

The key objectives of vMCPD are:

1. to provide critical data and information for the development of a framework for a mandatory MCPD scheme; and
2. to enable the Society and the profession to gradually gear up and prepare for such a mandatory MCPD scheme.

This pilot or trial run is all about how the Society can better add value to the profession in the form of an enhanced CPD scheme.

In essence, the Society will embark on a comprehensive exercise to:

1. gather information that would assist the Society in making decisions about the structure and requirements of a full-scale MCPD scheme for the profession;
2. obtain feedback from members about the relevance, benefits and concerns regarding a full-scale mandatory MCPD scheme; and
3. continue monitoring the developments locally and overseas.

In deciding to implement vMCPD, the Society is conscious that there has been a trend over the past few decades in jurisdictions such as the United States of America, United Kingdom, Australia, Hong Kong and even Malaysia to go beyond merely recognising and espousing the importance of CPD. These jurisdictions have moved towards or implemented some form of mandatory or minimum CPD requirements for lawyers. In Singapore, many other professions have made CPD mandatory.

## ii. Global trends within the legal profession

In most of the developed countries we studied, the legal profession has already embraced some form of mandatory or minimum CPD scheme (“**MCPD**”) which mandate the attaining of a prescribed minimum number of CPD points or hours for renewal of the licence to practise law. A table summarising our findings is set out below.

Country	Mandatory CPD?	Implementation Date for Mandatory CPD	CPD Hours/Points Requirement	Administering Body
Australia, New South Wales <a href="http://www.lawsociety.com.au/page.asp?partID=354">http://www.lawsociety.com.au/page.asp?partID=354</a>	Yes, for both advocates and solicitors	1987. Reviewed in 2000.	10 units (equivalent to 10 hours) per practising year	The Law Society of New South Wales
Australia, Victoria <a href="http://www.cpd.liv.asn.au/categories.asp?cID=4">http://www.cpd.liv.asn.au/categories.asp?cID=4</a>	Yes, for both advocates and solicitors	1 April 2004	10 CPD Scheme units (equivalent to 10 hours) per practising year	The Law Institute of Victoria
Canada	No			
Hong Kong <a href="http://www.hklawsoc.org.hk/public/cpdcourse/default.asp">http://www.hklawsoc.org.hk/public/cpdcourse/default.asp</a>	Yes	1 <sup>st</sup> phase to trainee solicitors & 1 <sup>st</sup> year solicitors in 1991. Mandatory for all solicitors/trainee solicitors since 1 January 2003.	15 CPD Accreditation Points per year for solicitors.	The Law Society of Hong Kong
New Zealand	No			
Malaysia	Not at present.	The Bar Council of Malaysia has been seriously studying the introduction of mandatory CPD since 2001.		
United Kingdom <a href="http://www.lawsociety.org.uk/professional/continuing_law">http://www.lawsociety.org.uk/professional/continuing_law</a>	Yes, for both solicitors and barristers.	1985. Revised on 1 November 2001 to apply to all solicitors and registered European lawyers.	16 hours per practising year	The Law Society of England & Wales
United States of America <a href="http://www.abanet.org/cle/mcleview.html">http://www.abanet.org/cle/mcleview.html</a>	Yes, in 40 states. American Bar Association Model Minimum CLE Rules adopted in 1986.	1 <sup>st</sup> implemented in State of Minnesota in 1975.	15 hours recommended by ABA annually. States impose requirements of between 8 1/3 to 16	Recommended for National level – ABA’s Standing Committee on Continuing Education of the Bar Recommended for State level – Continuing Legal Education

			hours annually.	Committee of the State Bar.
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### iii. Local trends among other professions

In Singapore, most professions we studied have already embraced some form of MCPD. A table summarising our findings is set out below.

Profession	Mandatory CPD?	Implementation Date for Mandatory CPD	CPD Hours/Points Requirement	Administering Body
Architects <a href="http://www.sia.org.sg/cpd">www.sia.org.sg/cpd</a>	Yes	2003	20 credit points (generally equivalent to up to 80 hours) per year	Singapore Institute of Architects, Board of Architects
Doctors <a href="http://www.smc.gov.sg/html/ContMedEdu.html">www.smc.gov.sg/html/ContMedEdu.html</a>	Yes	1 January 2003	Doctors with 1-year practising certificates – 25 CME points (generally equivalent to 25-50 hours) per year  Doctors with 2-year practising certificate – 50 CME points (generally equivalent to 50-100 hours) over 2 years	Singapore Medical Council
Engineers <a href="http://www.peb.gov.sg/peb/html/cpdguide.html">www.peb.gov.sg/peb/html/cpdguide.html</a>	Yes	1 November 2003	40 Professional Development Units (generally equivalent to up to 80 hours) per year	Professional Engineers Board
Financial Planners <a href="http://www.fpas.org.sg/static/aboutCPD/CPDRequirements.asp">http://www.fpas.org.sg/static/aboutCPD/CPDRequirements.asp</a>	Yes		15 CPD hours per year for Associate Financial Planners  20 CPD hours per year for Associate Wealth Planners  30 CPD hours per year for Certified Financial Planners	Financial Planning Association of Singapore
Public Accountants <a href="http://www.icpas.org.sg/course/cpe_list.asp?ctid=5">http://www.icpas.org.sg/course/cpe_list.asp?ctid=5</a> <a href="http://www.acra.gov.sg/legislation/practice1608.html">http://www.acra.gov.sg/legislation/practice1608.html</a>	Yes	1 July 2005 (practising members) and 1 July 1996 (non-practising members)  Revised August 2004	40 CPE Hours	Accounting and Corporate Regulatory Authority of Singapore
Valuers/ Surveyors <a href="http://www.sisv.org.sg/cpd.html">www.sisv.org.sg/cpd.html</a>	Yes	January 1992	60 hours in 3 year period	Singapore Institute of Surveyors and Valuers

Others, such as certified internal auditors, general insurance front end operatives and life insurance representatives /supervisors, also have some form of MCPD requirements.

**In view of such global and local trends, the Society feels strongly that the legal profession in Singapore should seriously consider the need for and benefits of introducing some form of MCPD. Hence, vMCPD.**

## 4. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### Questions About Continuing Professional Development (“CPD”)

#### **Q1 What does the Society mean by CPD?**

A1 Continuing professional development (“CPD”) refers to the systematic maintenance, improvement and broadening of relevant knowledge, skills and abilities that enables a professional to successfully carry out his/her professional duties and responsibilities throughout his/her career. Simply put, it is about lifelong learning which makes you consistently better able to do your job as a lawyer.

As the needs of each legal practitioner varies with his/her specific practice and his seniority at the Bar, the Society adopts a broad, flexible and needs-based approach that puts lawyers in control of their own learning. The Society considers an activity a CPD activity as long as it is:

1. relevant to the short, medium or long term development of a legal practitioner;
2. has intellectual or practical content; and
3. relates primarily to the practice of law or to the legal profession.

#### **Q2 How does the legal profession in Singapore compare with the legal profession in other jurisdictions with regards CPD?**

A2 In most of the developed countries we studied, the legal profession has already embraced some form of minimum or mandatory continuing professional development requirements which mandate the attaining of a prescribed minimum number of CPD points for renewal of the licence to practice law. A table summarising our findings is set out below.

Country	Mandatory CPD?	Implementation Date for Mandatory CPD	CPD Hours/Points Requirement	Administering Body
Australia, New South Wales <a href="http://www.lawsociety.com.au/page.asp?partID=354">http://www.lawsociety.com.au/page.asp?partID=354</a>	Yes, for both advocates and solicitors	1987. Reviewed in 2000.	10 units (equivalent to 10 hours) per practising year	The Law Society of New South Wales
Australia, Victoria <a href="http://www.cpd.liv.asn.au/categories.asp?cID=4">http://www.cpd.liv.asn.au/categories.asp?cID=4</a>	Yes, for both advocates and solicitors	1 April 2004	10 CPD Scheme units (equivalent to 10 hours) per practising year	The Law Institute of Victoria
Canada	No			
Hong Kong <a href="http://www.hklawsoc.org.hk/public/cpdcourse/default.asp">http://www.hklawsoc.org.hk/public/cpdcourse/default.asp</a>	Yes	1 <sup>st</sup> phase to trainee solicitors & 1 <sup>st</sup> year solicitors in 1991. Mandatory for all solicitors/trainee solicitors since 1 January 2003.	15 CPD Accreditation Points per year for solicitors.	The Law Society of Hong Kong
New Zealand	No			
Malaysia	Not at present.	The Bar Council of Malaysia has been seriously studying the introduction of mandatory CPD since 2001.		
United Kingdom <a href="http://www.lawsociety.org.uk/professional/continuing.law">http://www.lawsociety.org.uk/professional/continuing.law</a>	Yes, for both solicitors and barristers.	1985. Revised on 1 November 2001 to apply to all solicitors and registered European lawyers.	16 hours per practising year	The Law Society of England & Wales

United States of America <a href="http://www.abanet.org/cle/mcle_view.html">http://www.abanet.org/cle/mcle_view.html</a>	Yes, in 40 states. American Bar Association Model Minimum CLE Rules adopted in 1986.	1 <sup>st</sup> implemented in State of Minnesota in 1975.	15 hours recommended by ABA annually. States impose requirements of between 8 1/3 to 16 hours annually.	Recommended for National level – ABA's Standing Committee on Continuing Education of the Bar Recommended for State level – Continuing Legal Education Committee of the State Bar.
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**Q3 How does the legal profession in Singapore compare with other professions in Singapore with regards CPD?**

**A3** Most professions in Singapore have already embraced some form of minimum or mandatory continuing professional development requirements. A table summarising our findings is set out below.

Profession	Mandatory CPD?	Implementation Date for Mandatory CPD	CPD Hours/Points Requirement	Administering Body
Architects <a href="http://www.sia.org.sg/cpd">www.sia.org.sg/cpd</a>	Yes	2003	20 credit points (generally equivalent to up to 80 hours) per year	Singapore Institute of Architects, Board of Architects
Doctors <a href="http://www.smc.gov.sg/html/ContMedEdu.html">www.smc.gov.sg/html/ContMedEdu.html</a>	Yes	1 January 2003	Doctors with 1-year practising certificates – 25 CME points (generally equivalent to 25-50 hours) per year Doctors with 2-year practising certificate – 50 CME points (generally equivalent to 50-100 hours) over 2 years	Singapore Medical Council
Engineers <a href="http://www.peb.gov.sg/peb/html/cpd_guide.html">www.peb.gov.sg/peb/html/cpd_guide.html</a>	Yes	1 November 2003	40 Professional Development Units (generally equivalent to up to 80 hours) per year	Professional Engineers Board
Financial Planners <a href="http://www.fpas.org.sg/static/aboutCPD/CPDRequirements.asp">http://www.fpas.org.sg/static/aboutCPD/CPDRequirements.asp</a>	Yes		15 CPD hours per year for Associate Financial Planners 20 CPD hours per year for Associate Wealth Planners 30 CPD hours per year for Certified Financial Planners	Financial Planning Association of Singapore
Public Accountants <a href="http://www.icpas.org.sg/courses/cpe_list.asp?ctid=5">http://www.icpas.org.sg/courses/cpe_list.asp?ctid=5</a> <a href="http://www.acra.gov.sg/legislation/practice1608.html">http://www.acra.gov.sg/legislation/practice1608.html</a>	Yes	1 July 2005 (practising members) and 1 July 1996 (non-practising members) Revised August 2004	40 CPE Hours	Accounting and Corporate Regulatory Authority of Singapore
Valuers/ Surveyors <a href="http://www.sisv.org.sg/cpd.html">www.sisv.org.sg/cpd.html</a>	Yes	January 1992	60 hours in 3 year period	Singapore Institute of Surveyors and Valuers

Others such as certified internal auditors, general insurance front end operatives and life insurance representatives /supervisors also have some form of MCPD requirements.

#### **Questions About Voluntary Minimum Continuing Professional Development (“vMCPD”)**

**Q4 What is vMCPD and what does it aim to achieve?**

**A4** vMCPD refers to The Law Society of Singapore’s “Voluntary Minimum Continuing Professional Development Scheme”, a 2-year voluntary pilot project launched on 1 April 2005 (which was extended for

*a further 1 year)* intended as a trial run to prepare the Society and its members for the future implementation of a mandatory CPD scheme for the profession.

During vMCPD, the Society aims to add value for members through an *enhanced CPD scheme* which:

1. provides practitioner members with a suite of additional training-related services; as well as
2. sets out certain vMCPD best practice guidelines for its practitioner members.

The key objectives of vMCPD are:

1. to provide critical data and information for the development of a framework for a mandatory MCPD scheme; and
2. to enable the Society and the profession to gradually gear up and prepare for such a mandatory MCPD scheme.

**Q5 What does vMCPD mean for me as a lawyer?**

**A5** As a member of a *self-regulating profession*, you have a responsibility to ensure that high standards of professional competence are attained and maintained in the *interests of the profession and, ultimately, the public*. The demands of practice are not static, and as such *the Society believes every member should take personal responsibility for his/her own ongoing learning and development as a professional*. This is what vMCPD means for you – the individual practitioner. It is an avenue for you to ensure your continued relevance and competence in the public interest and, ultimately, your own.

**Q6 Will vMCPD impact my Practising Certification application or renewal?**

**A6** No. During vMCPD, there are *no mandatory standards or reporting requirements* to be met by practitioner members in order to apply for or renew their license to practise law in Singapore.

**Q7 What must I do to comply with vMCPD?**

**A7** Although there are *no mandatory standards or reporting requirements* to be met by practitioner members during vMCPD, the Society recommends that practitioner members adhere to the following **vMCPD Best Practice Guidelines**:

1. Each practitioner member should take personal responsibility for planning this/her own CPD using the [4-step cycle](#) suggested by the Society (see **ANNEX A**).
2. Each practitioner member should attend **at least 10 hours of Approved vMCPD Programs** (see **Q10 below**) per practice year (i.e. 1 April to 31 March).
3. Each practitioner member should maintain his/her own comprehensive training record for the practice year and retain such records for 3 years.

**Q8 Will vMCPD add additional costs to my practising as a lawyer?**

**A8** No, for 2 reasons:

Firstly, as there are no mandatory requirements to be met, there are no required additional compliance costs for a practitioner.

Secondly and more importantly, to ensure your continued competence as a professional, you would already be committed to investing effort and expense into continuously maintaining and updating your knowledge, skills and abilities in your chosen areas of practice, regardless of the recommended minimum standards prescribed by the Society.

**Q9 How do I calculate CPD Hours for the purpose of vMCPD?**

**A9** During vMCPD, the Society will assign CPD Hours to all Approved vMCPD Programs (see **Q10 below**) as follows:

<b>TYPE OF PARTICIPATION</b>	<b>COMPUTATION OF CPD HOURS</b>
Attending Approved vMCPD Programs	1 CPD Hour for each 1 hour duration (excluding all breaks)
Chairing Approved vMCPD Programs	1 CPD Hour for each 1 hour duration (excluding all breaks)
Speaking, teaching, training, facilitating or presenting at Approved vMCPD Programs	2 CPD Hours for each 1 hour duration (excluding all breaks) for the 1 <sup>st</sup> time the event is presented. For repeated presentations, CPD Hours will be awarded only if it can be demonstrated that the content has been substantially changed and such change required additional research, study or preparation by the presenter.
Preparation of presentation materials and handouts for Approved vMCPD Programs	1 CPD Hour for each 1 hour duration (excluding all breaks), provided the speaker has confirmed to the Training Department in writing the practitioner member's involvement in such preparation work.

**Q10 What programs qualify for CPD Hours under vMCPD?**

**A10** CPD Hours will be awarded for all **Approved vMCPD Programs**, i.e. formal CPD activities such as seminars, lectures, workshops and discussion groups which are either:

- a. Organised by the Society and awarded CPD Hours for the purposes of vMCPD;
- b. Organised by Approved Training Providers and notified to the Society for the purposes of vMCPD; or
- c. Approved Training Courses organised by an external training provider for the purposes of vMCPD.

**Q11 What training providers are recognised by the Society under vMCPD? What training courses are recognised by the Society under vMCPD?**

**A11** During vMCPD, the Society will accept applications from third party training providers to either:

1. become Approved Training Providers whose programs are automatically allocated CPD Hours upon notification to the Society in accordance with the Terms and Conditions for Approved Training Providers, OR
2. have any of their courses approved by the Society as Approved Training Courses and allocated CPD Hours to the Society in accordance with the Terms and Conditions for Providers of Approved Training Courses.

For more details about Approved Training Providers and Approved Training Courses, please refer to the **“Guide to The Law Society of Singapore’s Voluntary Minimum Continuing Professional Development Scheme for External Training Providers”** available at [www.lawsociety.org.sg/CPD](http://www.lawsociety.org.sg/CPD). A current list of all Approved Training Providers and Approved Training Courses may also be found at the Society’s CPD website.

**Q12 How do I maintain my personal training record?**

**A12** There are 2 ways to maintain a record of all the training and CPD activities you undergo each year:

1. Maintain a physical record manually by using the form attached in **Annex A (see Appendix 3)**;  
OR
2. Use the Personal Online Record of Training (“**PORT**”) specially developed by the Society and provided free-of-charge for practitioner members during vMCPD at [www.lawsoc.org.sg/CPD](http://www.lawsoc.org.sg/CPD). This tool automatically tracks your participation in Approved vMCPD Programs and also allows you to add additional CPD activities you may have undertaken. You may also print and keep a hard copy of your record. More information on how to use PORT may be found at [www.lawsociety.org.sg/CPD](http://www.lawsociety.org.sg/CPD).

You are encouraged to use PORT as it is the most convenient and comprehensive way of keeping a record of your training history.

## ANNEX A

### A GUIDE TO GETTING THE MOST OUT OF YOUR CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ("CPD) ACTIVITIES



THE LAW SOCIETY  
OF SINGAPORE

### A GUIDE TO GETTING THE MOST OUT OF YOUR CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ("CPD") ACTIVITIES

#### Objective

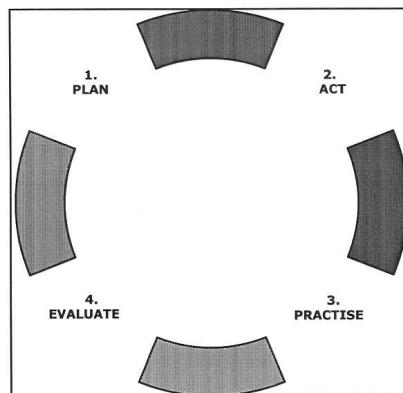
The Law Society of Singapore believes that:

1. a commitment to continuing education and training is a defining characteristic of any profession;
2. learning is a life-long process;
3. legal professionals learn both through the day-to-day practice of law and through formal continuing professional development activities;
4. the legal profession as a whole has a collective responsibility to ensure its continuing professional development; and
5. the ultimate responsibility lies with the individual to ensure his own continuing professional development needs.

However, *unplanned training activity is unlikely to bring maximum return on your training investment*. This simple Guide is designed to provide basic assistance to legal professionals and those responsible for the training and development of legal professionals in their respective law practices, organizations, divisions or departments **on best practices to get the most out of the time and money spent** on continuing professional development activities.

#### Our Simple 4-Step CPD Plan

We recommend that all legal professionals use a simple cyclical 4-step process:



#### STEP 1 - PLAN

In this stage, you should:

1. Determine your career plan in terms of short (1 year), medium (3 years) and long (5 years) -term goals in consultation with your immediate supervisor;
2. Identify your training needs. One way to do this is to conduct a SWOT analysis to identify your Strengths & Weaknesses, as well as the Opportunities & Threats around you – You may wish to use our sample **Training Needs Analysis Form** (Appendix 1) as a starting point. This helps you pinpoint where you are NOW, and where you hope to be at some point in the future. Remember that even if you have done a Training Needs Analysis at some earlier point in your career, your



work and personal circumstances may have changed and it may be time to conduct another analysis;

3. Prioritize your needs; &
4. Identify the methods & activities available to meet these needs.

Once the Training Needs Analysis is completed, use our sample **CPD Plan** (Appendix 2) template to prioritise your training needs and set out clearly how you aim to get from where you are now to where you hope to be.

It is good to keep a Training Record to monitor how well you have implemented your training plan. Check out our sample **CPD Record** (Appendix 3) for your use.

#### **STEP 2 - ACT**

The best laid plans are useless if not acted upon. The next move is yours – acting upon the CPD Plan you have mapped out. Identify and sign up for the types of activities you want to embark upon. There are a variety of seminars, workshops and other courses offered by the Law Society – check them out at the CPD website at [www.lawsociety.org.sg/CPD](http://www.lawsociety.org.sg/CPD). In addition, there are also programmes offered by the Singapore Academy of Law, the National University of Singapore and other commercial providers.

#### **STEP 3 - PRACTISE**

After attending training, it is vital that you *put what is learnt into practice* so that this results in tangible improvements in the way you work and in the knowledge you apply at work and ultimately, in the performance and profitability of your employer!

#### **STEP 4 - EVALUATE**

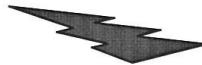
It is possible to evaluate training at 4 levels:

1. *Reaction*– what do you think & feel after the training event?
2. *Learning* – what knowledge have you acquired from the training?
3. *Behaviour*– how are you applying the training received?
4. *Results* – how has the performance of your organization/team been enhanced or improved as a result of your training?

In line with the above 4 levels, we recommend that you evaluate:

1. The training provided (including the event organization, course objectives, speakers/trainers/instructors) - this has the added advantage of providing the organizer with input on how participants responded to the programme and how to improve;
2. Yourself, before and after the training; &
3. Your organization or team, if possible.

Of course, what you learn after evaluating yourself and your organisation would then lead you to fine-tune and adjust your CPD Plan. **Back to Step 1!**



We hope this brief Guide has been of some assistance to you. Should you have feedback or suggestions for the CPD Department, please do not hesitate to contact us.

June Tan  
Director, Training & Continuing Professional Development  
May 2004



## APPENDIX 1

### SAMPLE TRAINING NEEDS ANALYSIS

**Name:** Mr. Junior Partner

**Organisation:** ABC LLC

**Admission No.** 123/1998

**For Period:** 1 January 2004      **to**      31 December 2004

<b>Strengths</b>		<b>Weaknesses</b>	
What are your strengths?	What training & development action should be taken given the Opportunities & Threats around you?	What are your weaknesses?	What training & development action should be taken given the Opportunities & Threats around you?
Knowledge:		Knowledge:	
Skills:		Skills:	
Attitudes:		Attitudes:	
<b>Opportunities</b>		<b>Threats</b>	
What are the opportunities currently available to you, your team, department, firm or the profession at large?	What training & development action should you take in response?	What are the threats to you, your team, department, firm or the profession at large?	What training & development action should you take in response?
Knowledge:		Knowledge:	
Skills:		Skills:	
Attitudes:		Attitudes:	
KNOWLEDGE=understanding of or information about a subject which has been obtained by experience or study		SKILL=an ability to do an activity or job well	
ATTITUDE=a feeling or opinion about something or someone, or a way of behaving that is caused by this			



## APPENDIX 2

### SAMPLE CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

**Name:** Mr. Junior Partner

**Organisation:** ABC LLC

**Admission No.** 123/1998

**For Period:** 1 January 2004      **to**      31 December 2004

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, ATTITUDES TO BE DEVELOPED	PRIORITY (HIGH, MEDIUM, LOW)	METHOD OF DEVELOPMENT (E.G. SEMINAR, WORKSHOP, CERTIFICATION, ON- THE-JOB TRAINING)	TO BE COMPLETED BY:
Skills in effective delegation & supervision of staff	Medium	½ day seminar organized by the Law Society	30 June 2004



**APPENDIX 3**  
**SAMPLE MANUAL TRAINING RECORD**

Event Date/Time	Event Title	Module/Session	Program Category	Relevant Practice Area	Training Provider	Training Level	Type of Participation	Participation Status	Fees Paid (incl GST)	CPD Hours	Comments

E.g. whether to follow up with more advanced courses, whether a different activity is better suited for the training subject matter