

OPEN CPD GUIDE

A Plain Guide to CPD Accreditation

What CPD accreditation actually is, how to structure your training so that learners and employers understand its value, and how to issue verifiable certificates under your own name.

OPEN-CPD.COM CONTINUED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT LTD



Who this guide is for

You deliver training, and you want your learners to leave with a certificate they are proud to show an employer. You have probably read the phrase "CPD accredited" and wondered what sits behind it. This guide answers that in full, so that you can decide what to do next with a clear head.

You will find

A plain description of what CPD is, the structure that makes it meaningful, and what a learner actually receives.

You will not find

A sales brochure, or a claim that your training needs a third party's approval to be worth attending.

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Skills matter. Evidence makes them count.

The skills your learners develop are real. The challenge is that without clear documentation, they stay invisible: to employers asking for evidence, to learners building a professional profile, to anyone trying to judge whether a course was worth their time. CPD is the structure that changes that, with aims, skills and outcomes documented and published under your name.

When that structure is in place, the certificate a learner receives carries genuine weight. Not because a third party approved it, but because the provider stood behind it, setting out what the training aimed to do, what skills it would build, and what would change in practice. That is what makes CPD meaningful. The rest of this guide shows you how to build it.

HOLD ON TO THIS

CPD is the structure that turns real skills into visible, verifiable evidence.

SKILLS

Your training develops real, specific skills. CPD documents them.

EVIDENCE

Clear aims and outcomes make a certificate worth holding.

YOUR FRAMEWORK

The structure behind good CPD fits on one page.

CPD is a structure, not a qualification

CPD is a way of documenting and communicating what training delivers, so that learners and their employers can understand its value. Get the structure right and the training speaks for itself. There are three parts to it.

A

Aims

What the training sets out to do. The purpose, written from your side of the room.

"To give community coaches a working understanding of safeguarding duties."

S

Skills

What the learner will be able to do as a result. Concrete, observable, theirs.

"Recognise a disclosure and record it accurately within the hour."

O

Outcomes

How the learner's practice changes once they are back at work. The part employers care about most.

"Disclosures are escalated the same day, with a written record on file."

You know your subject, your clients and what your sector considers sound practice. The structure is built to be applied by the business that delivers the training, because that is where the knowledge sits.

One course, written out in full

Here is a half-day course documented against the structure. Notice how short it is. Three columns of plain sentences are enough for a learner or an employer to understand what the training was worth.

Safeguarding Essentials for Community Coaches			3 CPD POINTS · HALF DAY
AIMS	SKILLS	OUTCOMES	
• Build a working understanding of safeguarding duties in community sport. • Clarify where a coach's responsibility starts and stops. • Give coaches confidence to act early rather than wait.	• Identify the specific indicators that signal a safeguarding concern. • Take a disclosure record using neutral, non-leading language. • Work through the escalation procedure from first concern to the named safeguarding officer.	• Recognise a safeguarding concern and act on it without waiting to be prompted • Initiate and follow the club's escalation process independently. • Provide informed support to a colleague handling a disclosure.	

Write outcomes in the workplace, not the classroom

If an outcome could only ever happen in the room with you, it is probably a skill. Outcomes describe what changes on Monday.

Three to five points per column

Long lists dilute. Choose the parts of the training you would defend if a learner's manager asked you about them.

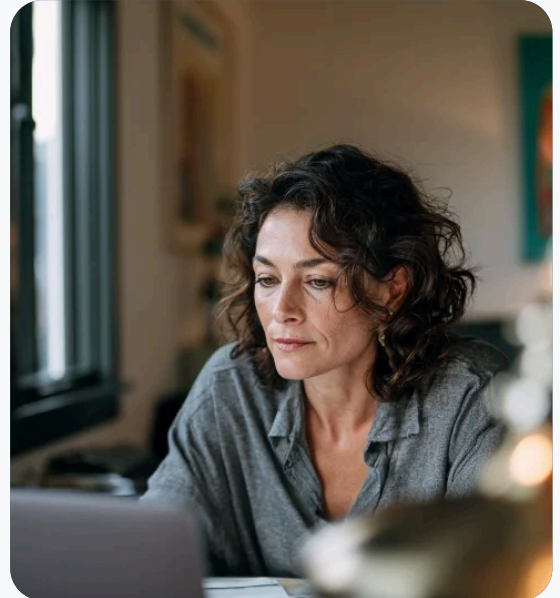
The distinction: skills are what you are taught how to do in the session; outcomes are what you can do independently once you are back at work.

What self-accreditation means

Self-accreditation is the act of publishing your training under your own name, on a third-party platform, with the structure documented clearly. It is not a shortcut. It is a commitment.

The value comes from your willingness to publish: to put your name next to your aims, skills and outcomes somewhere learners and employers can read them. That transparency carries more weight than a logo from a body that reviewed a PDF three years ago.

The credibility comes from you publishing your own training, not from anybody endorsing it. Open CPD provides the structure, the record and the verification. You provide the training and stand behind it.



THE OPEN CPD CHARTER

Every provider on the platform accredits under a shared set of principles: document the structure honestly, describe only what the training delivers, keep the record open to inspection, and correct anything found to be wrong. The Charter is what makes accreditation through Open CPD principled rather than casual. It is short, it is public, and you sign up to it when you publish.

Systems accredited through Open CPD

Powered by Open CPD

The record your learner keeps

Three things are issued together, from the same record, the moment you press send.



Page one of a five-section PDF. Your name, your logo, your course.

The CPD certificate

A single PDF in five sections: the certificate itself, then the course detail, your provider profile, the learner's details, and the verification information. Branded as yours, not ours.

The digital badge

An Open Badge 2.0, so it works everywhere that standard is read. Learners add it to LinkedIn, a CV or an email signature, and the badge carries the course detail with it.

The achievement page

A permanent public URL tied to the issuing record. Anyone the learner shares it with sees the same detail you published, with no login required.

What verification means in practice

A certificate is only as good as the check behind it. Every certificate issued through Open CPD can be checked online instantly, by anyone, without contacting you.

STEP ONE

Unique IDs

The verification ID printed on the certificate goes into the public verification page.

STEP TWO

The record appears

Learner, course, provider, points and date, exactly as issued.

STEP THREE

Tamper-proof

Once issued, the record is permanent and cannot be altered, by you or by us.

VERIFICATION RECORD

achievements.open-cpd.com/OCPD-7K42-QN18

LEARNER

ISSUED BY

CPD POINTS

STATUS

Ellen Whitfield

Your organisation

3

Valid

Records are stored so that they remain permanent and verifiable after issue. For a learner, that means a certificate they can still prove in five years. For you, it means an audit trail you did not have to build.

Getting started, in 3 steps

You provide the learning. You provide the accreditation. The platform provides the certificates and badges. Here is what your side looks like.



Set up your organisation

Name, logo and contact details. This is what appears on every certificate you issue. Fifteen minutes, once.

Build your course profiles

Create profiles for each course, the structure is given, the content is your: aims, skills, outcomes, duration and CPD points. You can create and amend them, no limits.

Issue certificates

One learner at a time, or a whole cohort by CSV upload. Certificates and badges go out together, instantly.

FREE TOOL: CPD GENIE

If writing aims, skills and outcomes from a blank page feels daunting, CPD Genie reads your existing training materials and drafts them for you. You edit and approve, because the judgement stays yours. It is free to use.

One day to your first certificate is realistic. Not because the work is trivial, but because it is a couple of hours of focused setup rather than a submission and a wait.

Is this for me?

Providers arrive with very different volumes. Three patterns cover most of them. See which one sounds like you.

Occasional issuers

CONSULTANTS, SPEAKERS,
EVENT ORGANISERS

You run a programme now and then and want certificates ready when you do. Pay as you go suits this: buy credits, use them when a cohort finishes, no monthly commitment. A low course volume is a good reason to start lean.

Regular training businesses

SCHEDULED COURSES EVERY
MONTH

Certificates are part of your delivery, so they need to be dependable rather than interesting. A monthly subscription keeps them running in the background, with the course profiles you built once reused every cohort.

High-volume providers

FOR HIGHER VOLUMES, WITH
AN LMS

You already track completions in a learning platform. Certificates can be triggered from it directly, through the API or a Zapier connection, so issuing happens without anybody logging in.

What it costs

Published, and the same for everyone. Start on the Pay As You Go or pick whichever tier matches how often you issue. Credits are valid for 12 months.

GETTING STARTED

Start now

Create your account, set up a course profile and see the record end to end.
open-cpd.com/pricing

PAY AS YOU GO

£50

25 credits, no expiry pressure. For programmes that run a few times a year.

BUSINESS

£45 / month

30 certificates a month. The usual choice for a training business with a schedule.

PROFESSIONAL

£90 / month

120 certificates a month, for higher volumes and multiple course profiles.

UK charities receive double credits

Higher volumes are quoted on request.

Prices are correct at the date of printing. Current pricing is always published at open-cpd.com/pricing.

Some CPD providers offer to review and validate your training content. That is a different service. Because CPD has no regulatory body, there is no external standard they check against, and the mark they issue reflects their own criteria, not a universal benchmark. Open CPD takes a different position: the structure is yours to apply, the record is yours to publish, and the accountability sits with you.

Three ways to start

You downloaded a guide, not a contract. All three of these are genuine offers, and none of them commits you to the next one.

Start now

PICK A PLAN AND SET UP

Set up one course profile and issue a certificate.

[START NOW](#)

Book a 15-minute demo

ONE CALL, YOUR QUESTIONS

Bring one of your own courses and we will structure it together on the call.

[BOOK A DEMO](#)

Join a live webinar

WEEKLY, DROP IN AND OUT

An open Q&A session. Listen in without speaking if you would rather just watch.

[JOIN A WEBINAR](#)

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