

FREE GUIDE FROM OPEN CPD

Making Your Training Skills-Ready

How to define the Aims, Skills, and Outcomes that make your courses and events credible, verifiable, and worth sharing.

01 ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Who this is for, and what you will find inside

This guide is for anyone who delivers training: a course, a workshop, a webinar series, a multi-day event, or an ongoing programme. If you are a training provider, consultant, professional body, or conference organiser who wants your training to mean something beyond the day it is delivered, this guide is for you.

The world of work is changing fast. Employers increasingly hire and promote on demonstrated skills, not job titles. Professional bodies assess members on what they can do, not just how long they have been doing it. Learners expect to walk away with something they can point to.

CPD certificates and digital badges do exactly that. But a certificate is only as good as what it says on it. This guide walks you through the three elements that make the difference: Aims, Skills, and Outcomes. Get these right, and your training is not just delivered, it is recognised.

NO JARGON, NO HARD SELL

This guide explains what makes training credible and how to document it clearly. Open CPD is one way to do it, and we will tell you exactly what we do and do not do.

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SHORT ON TIME?

Use CPD Genie, Open CPD's free AI tool, to extract Aims, Skills, and Outcomes from your existing training materials in seconds. Details at the end of this guide.

01 SECTION 01

The skills recognition gap

Why training without credentials leaves real value on the table, for learners, for buyers, and for your business.

Something is shifting in how skills are valued. Employers are moving away from hiring on qualifications alone, and towards what a person can actually do. Professional memberships, grant applications, and procurement decisions all now ask: what did this training produce?

Your training has always developed real skills. But if you are not documenting them clearly, the value disappears the moment the session ends. The learning happened, and then it became invisible.

Learner value

No formal record means learners cannot add the training to a CV, a LinkedIn profile, or a development log. The skills are real; the evidence does not exist.

Your market position

When buyers compare providers, those issuing verifiable credentials with clearly defined skills stand apart from those issuing a basic PDF, or nothing.

The skills economy

Credentials carrying metadata, what was learned, which skills, who delivered it, are increasingly readable by employers, ATS, and registries.

THE GOOD NEWS

Closing the gap needs no large budget and no submission process. It needs you to know what skills your training develops, document them clearly, and issue a verifiable record.

02 SECTION 02

What makes training accreditation-ready

Three elements every course, event, or programme needs, and how they work together.

Accreditation-ready does not mean waiting for an external body to approve your content. It means your training is documented in a way that makes its value clear and verifiable to anyone who looks.

1 Aims

The educational purpose of the training. What territory does it cover, and what understanding is it designed to build? Aims are the broad frame, the reason the training exists.

2 Skills

The specific, transferable competencies participants will develop. Skills matter most in the skills economy, because they are what employers, professional bodies, and learners themselves can use. They are actionable, specific, and portable.

3 Outcomes

The measurable results participants can demonstrate by the end. Outcomes connect the learning to the real world. What can this person do now that they could not do before?

These three elements are not just for the certificate. Defining them makes your training more focused, easier to market, and more useful to learners. If you already deliver good training you almost certainly have all three, they may just not be written down yet.

03 SECTION 03

Skills: the heart of the credential

What skills are, why they matter most to learners in the skills economy, and how to write them well.

Skills are the specific, transferable competencies participants will develop through your training. They sit at the centre of what makes a credential useful, because they are the element that travels with the learner into whatever comes next: a new role, a promotion, a professional registration, a client proposal.

Why skills are the most important element

When someone reviews a certificate, whether a hiring manager, a professional body assessor, or a procurement officer, they are not primarily interested in how the training was delivered or how long it lasted. They want to know what this person can do.

Skills answer that question directly. Aims set the educational context. Outcomes show the result. Skills are the middle layer that makes the learning portable and recognisable across different professional settings.

IN SHORT

Skills are the currency of the skills economy. Defining them clearly on every training record is one of the most useful things a training provider can do for their learners.

Writing skills well

A well-written skill is specific, actionable, and realistic within the scope of the training. Use verbs that convey capability: apply, analyse, evaluate, design, demonstrate, implement. Avoid vague language like understand or be aware of, which describe exposure, not capability.

Aim for three to five core skills per course. If the training covers a broad range, group related skills into categories, or issue separate credentials per module.

EXAMPLE SKILLS BY DOMAIN

PROJECT MANAGEMENT	Apply risk assessment frameworks to identify, evaluate, and mitigate project challenges.
MARKETING	Apply digital marketing tools to analyse customer engagement and optimise campaign performance.
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT	Design and assess resource management plans across environmental, economic, and social factors.
COACHING & MENTORING	Demonstrate active listening and feedback techniques to support client goal-setting.
HUMAN RESOURCES	Develop performance assessment tools that support career growth and organisational objectives.

ASK YOURSELF

What skills does your training give learners that they did not have before, and can they demonstrate those skills to someone who was not in the room?

04 SECTION 04

Aims and Outcomes

Framing the educational purpose and the measurable results of your training.

Aims, the educational frame

Learning aims articulate the educational purpose of your training. They describe what territory the course covers and what understanding it is designed to build. Aims are not business objectives, they focus on the learning itself.

A good aim uses language like understand, explore, or develop insight into.

EXAMPLE, MARKETING COURSE

"Understand the fundamental principles of digital marketing, including the customer journey, engagement strategies, and campaign optimisation."

Aims differ from business outcomes. "Increase sales" is not a learning aim. "Understand the principles that drive sales processes" is.

Outcomes, the measurable result

Outcomes describe what participants will be able to do by the end of the training. Where skills describe capability, outcomes describe demonstrated application: specific, measurable, and achievable within the scope of the programme.

Write outcomes using action language: design, produce, demonstrate, develop, create.

EXAMPLE, MARKETING COURSE

"Participants will be able to design and implement a basic digital marketing campaign, using social media and SEO strategies to reach a defined target audience."

Outcomes often impress corporate buyers most. They show not just that training happened, but what it produced.

Example outcomes by domain

WHAT A STRONG OUTCOME LOOKS LIKE

Each of these is specific enough that someone who was not in the room could assess whether a learner has met it.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT	Develop a comprehensive project plan including timelines, budget allocations, and risk management strategies.
MARKETING	Design and implement a basic digital marketing campaign, using social media and SEO to reach target audiences.
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT	Prepare a sustainability report assessing the environmental impact of a business process, with actionable improvements.
COACHING & MENTORING	Conduct a structured coaching session, applying active listening and goal-setting to support client development.
HUMAN RESOURCES	Create a customised employee performance assessment tool aligned with organisational goals.

ASK YOURSELF

Are your outcomes specific enough that someone who was not in the room could assess whether a learner has met them?

05 SECTION 05

CPD Points explained

What they mean, how to calculate them, and why they are not the whole story.

CPD points represent the time commitment of structured learning. The standard is simple: one hour of active learning equals one CPD point. But points are a measure of input, not output. The skills and outcomes on the certificate are what demonstrate the value of that time.

While points give a clear picture of effort and duration, the real focus is how well participants can apply and transfer new knowledge and skills to their roles.

HOW TO CALCULATE

ONLINE + SELF-STUDY	2 hrs video lectures + 3 hrs reading + 1 hr assessment = 6 CPD points.
MULTI-DAY PROGRAMME	Two days at 6 hrs active learning per day = 12 CPD points, plus assignments.
MONTHLY WEBINAR SERIES	Each 1-hour webinar = 1 CPD point, accumulating across the series.

SKILLS METADATA TRAVELS WITH THE BADGE

When a learner shares an Open CPD digital badge on LinkedIn or attaches it to a job application, the skills, outcomes, CPD points, and verification link travel with it, readable by employers and professional bodies without any additional explanation.

The Open CPD Charter

A framework for ethical, principled credentialing, and what it means to be a member.

When your organisation joins Open CPD, your CEO or authorised signatory signs the Open CPD Declaration, a commitment to seven core principles. In return, your organisation receives a Certificate of CPD Membership, suitable for sharing with clients, buyers, funders, and regulators.

THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES

1. **Recognition as fundamental practice.** Every person who learns deserves a record of that learning.
2. **Provider responsibility.** The provider takes responsibility for the quality and accuracy of what it certifies.
3. **Clarity and transparency.** Credentials should accurately represent what was learned, how, and for how long.
4. **Ethical recognition.** Credentialing must be fair, inclusive, and accessible to all learners.
5. **Trust and verification.** Records must be accurate, stored securely, and verifiable by any third party in seconds.
6. **Honest representation.** Membership is a commitment to principled self-accreditation, not external validation.
7. **Collective responsibility.** Every member contributes to the credibility of the wider framework.

A PRINCIPLED, DOCUMENTED ANSWER

Procurement teams, HR departments, and professional bodies increasingly ask not just whether training happened, but how it is evidenced and governed. The Charter answers that, without the cost or complexity of formal regulatory accreditation. It is not a quality mark imposed from outside. It is a public commitment you make under your own name, which is exactly what makes it credible.

07 SECTION 07

What your learners receive

Three things, issued automatically every time you run a training session.

1 A CPD Certificate

Professionally branded with your organisation's name, logo, and contact details, alongside the learner's name, course title, outcomes, skills, CPD points, completion date, and a unique verification ID. Tamper-proof after issue, and verifiable online in seconds.

2 A Digital Badge

An Open Badge 2.0 digital badge, an internationally recognised format. The skills metadata is baked into the file: who issued it, what was learned, what skills were gained, when, and how to verify it. Shareable on LinkedIn, email signatures, and CVs.

3 A Public Achievement Page

A permanent, publicly accessible webpage recording the learner's name, the course, the skills and outcomes, who delivered it, and the verification ID, with a persistent URL the learner keeps indefinitely.

5	20+	1 click	Permanent
Sections in every certificate document	Professional templates included	To verify, for any employer or assessor	Records do not expire

08 GETTING STARTED

Three ways to take the next step

You now have the framework to define clear Aims, Skills, and Outcomes, document CPD points accurately, and issue credentials built for the skills economy.

01 · FREE TRIAL

Seven days, all features, no credit card. Set up your first course profile and issue your first certificate.

open-cpd.com/pricing/

02 · TALK TO US

Speak with Marta, Open CPD's founder. Ask anything about how the platform works for your type of training.

open-cpd.com/opencpddemo/

03 · WEEKLY Q&A

Every Wednesday at 9:30am. A live drop-in session, with real examples and other providers.

open-cpd.com/qa/

MEET THE FOUNDER

Talk to Marta directly

Open CPD is founder-led, there is a real person behind every message. Book a 15-minute call and ask anything about how the platform works for your type of training. You will get a straight answer, with no sales pressure.

Marta Kalas · Founder, Open CPD

BEFORE YOU SIGN UP, TRY CPD GENIE

Our free AI tool extracts Aims, Skills, and Outcomes from your existing training materials in under a minute.

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Skills do not disappear when the training ends. But evidence of them can. Let your learning leave a footprint.

— Marta Kalas, Founder, Open CPD

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open-cpd.com · info@open-cpd.com