

# CPD: INVEST IN YOURSELF

Plan your continuing professional development ahead to better target topics relevant to your role and experience and to maximise your learning outcomes.

Continuing professional development (CPD) is seen by some practitioners through the lens of obtaining points and compliance. This is a missed opportunity as it provides an important vehicle to upskill, enhance productivity and client service and be the best you can be in your role.

As we move into the second half of the CPD year, it's a good time to reflect and think about your development and learning goals for the next five months. Don't put this off until the new year and be caught out in a last-minute compliance rush. With some simple forward planning, you can better target topics that are relevant to your role, more nuanced to your level of experience and that will maximise your learning outcomes. Here are five tips to get you started.

## Reflect

Take the time to step back and reflect on your role, goals and development needs. What additional skills and knowledge would assist you to do your job and enhance your performance and client service?

Developing your technical skills and keeping up to date with changes in the law and practice are obviously critical, but don't forget about the importance of honing the application of your ethical and professional obligations in your practice and "soft skills" such as effective supervision, delegation, communication, resilience and leadership. Developing skills in project management, technology and managing cyber risk will also help you be at the top of your game.

## Research

Once you have identified some key areas of focus, research available resources and programs.

The LIV and legal education service providers offer a wide range of live and on-demand webinars, seminars, conferences and e-learning courses. Many universities, the College of Law and Leo Cussen also provide post graduate courses in specialist areas targeted to practising lawyers and are run as single subjects over a short period, without the need to enrol in a formal degree.

If you can't find what you need, consider engaging an accredited specialist, barrister or other thought leader to present or run bespoke workshops for your firm on topics of interest. Reaching out to your professional networks, searching online and reading relevant articles are great ways to start finding the right specialist. LPLC's podcast series *More than Knowing the Law*<sup>1</sup> covers common key areas of focus for practitioners like supervision, communication and cyber security and may be a good starting point for understanding your firm's needs as well as identifying experts in these fields.

## Map out your plan

Write down a list of the learning and development opportunities you plan to commit to.

Check that you have covered the minimum CPD compliance obligations across the four areas of ethics and professional responsibility; practice management and business skills; professional skills; and substantive law. The Victorian Legal Services Board and

Commissioner (VLSB+C) has guidelines to help with this task which you can access on its website.

## Keep up to date

Think about how you keep up to date with changes to the law as well as the relevant processes and procedures required to do the work. For example, practising in litigation requires up to the minute knowledge of case law, legislation, civil procedure, practice notes, notices and e-filing procedures of the various courts and tribunals. Could you improve or streamline how you obtain and monitor this information?

Law Library Victoria has a helpful guide that outlines free legal alert services. Many websites allow you to subscribe to email alerts or RSS feeds to inform you of legal developments. Also, consider whether you might benefit from a subscription to online legal news and information providers that will send curated content and newsletters specific to your practice area and needs direct to your inbox. You also need to stay on top of sector developments relevant to your practice and clients. Alerts in this area will provide you with the insights you need to stay ahead of the complex issues affecting your clients and give context to understand the practical implications of any law changes.

## Build your networks

Take the time to build networks with supportive colleagues. This will provide you with further development and learning opportunities as well as a forum to discuss risk management and other issues affecting your practice. Building networks has the added benefit of building your profile and reputation, and may potentially lead to work referrals. ■

This column is provided by the **Legal Practitioners' Liability Committee**. For further information ph 9672 3800 or visit [www.lplc.com.au](http://www.lplc.com.au).

1. Reframing supervision as the greatest compliment, LPLC and Anna Hinder: 21 January 2022; When saying no is right – navigating difficult conversations, LPLC and Deb Assheton, 7 April 2022; Cyber Security – Not just a technology risk, LPLC and Susie Jones: 15 October 2021.

## TIPS

- CPD is not just about compliance. It is an opportunity to upskill and maximise your performance, productivity and client service.
- While technical knowledge is critical, don't forget the importance of honing the application of your ethical and professional obligations in your practice and critical soft skills such as supervision and communication.
- If you can't find the topics you need online, consider engaging an accredited specialist, barrister or other thought leader to provide bespoke training for your firm.