



VETERINARY SURGEONS BOARD OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Guidelines

New [CPD Guidelines](#) for Veterinary Surgeons commenced on 1 January 2021.

FAQs for Veterinary Surgeons

1. Do the new CPD requirements add to my workload?

Not in the long run. CPD is the process of acquiring, maintaining and enhancing the skills and knowledge needed for your professional practice. CPD is an investment in better and more effective practice. Carefully planned CPD to meet your learning needs will enhance your professional skills – for your benefit and that of your patients and clients. It will also reduce the likelihood of complaints being made about your treatment of patients. If a complaint is made about your level of competency, your CPD activity will assist you to respond effectively and efficiently to that complaint.

2. Will CPD improve my competency?

Yes. Evidence that CPD improves patient outcomes is beyond question. CPD need not be specifically related to studies in veterinary science. You may identify a need for CPD in areas such as practice management or client communication skills. Enhanced skills make you a better and more resilient practitioner. That adds value to you as a professional, contributes to better results for your patients and leads to improved client satisfaction.

3. Why have CPD Guidelines for veterinary surgeons changed in South Australia but not in other States or Territories of Australia?

As a regulator, the Board's objective is to protect the interests of consumers of veterinary services. It does this by setting high professional standards of competence and conduct for veterinary surgeons. South Australia is the first Australian jurisdiction to respond to draft CPD Guidelines prepared at a national level in 2017. Following commencement of the new [CPD Guidelines](#) in South Australia, the Veterinary Council of New Zealand adopted a similar contemporary approach to CPD regulation in March 2021 including the requirement for veterinary surgeons to record learning outcomes. It is expected that other Australian States and Territories will follow.

4. Do the new CPD Guidelines require me to do more hours of CPD?

No. The new [CPD Guidelines](#) allow veterinary surgeons to count twice as many units of unstructured CPD, such as attending a non-assessed webinar or reading a professional journal.



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Previously, only one unit could be counted for each two hours of unstructured CPD activity, with up to 45 units of unstructured CPD every three years. So, to achieve 45 units of unstructured CPD, a veterinary surgeon had to do 90 hours over three years, plus a further 15 hours of structured CPD. Now veterinary surgeons can allocate a flat rate of one CPD unit to each hour of CPD activity. This simplifies counting CPD units and allows more time for veterinary surgeons to plan, record and evaluate their CPD.

5. What is a reflective record of learning outcomes and why is it important to maintain this record?

You need to maintain CPD records that include your reflection on your learning and how you expect it to improve your professional practice. This is consistent with the approach of other professional regulators, such as the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency. Reflecting on your CPD activities means taking time to think about what you learnt, how it applies to your professional practice and whether you could change your professional practice to improve outcomes. Evidence suggests that reflecting on what you have learnt and how it could change your professional practice improves your learning and outcomes. The following resources will assist you to reflect on your CPD activity and maintain CPD records:

[Reflecting on your Continuing Professional Development](#)

[Maintaining Continuing Professional Development Records](#)

Disclaimer

The above FAQs are for general information only and are not intended to be complete. It is your responsibility to exercise your professional judgement and seek appropriate professional and/or legal advice on complying with codes, professional standards and guidelines prepared by the Veterinary Surgeons Board of South Australia under the *Veterinary Practice Act 2003*.