CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME FOR AUDITORS
INTRODUCTION
Welcome to the RQA Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Scheme for Auditors.

The scheme is designed to encourage high standards among auditors through a transparent, vocational process providing progressive evidence of competence through independent assessment and experience by the completion of a logbook.

The scheme is intended to provide objective evidence of competence in auditing with the necessary underpinning knowledge of audit process and the standards against which audits are performed. Participating auditors can use their logbook to record competence and experience to show employers, clients and regulatory inspectors. The logbook can be used to demonstrate your commitment to professional competence and enhance your career opportunities.

Participation in the scheme is entirely voluntary.

RQA recommends that members demonstrate they have kept themselves up to date with practices and developments appropriate to their role and responsibilities. They should also be able to provide evidence that they continue to maintain their professional competence through systematic improvement and broadening of knowledge and skills. One way of achieving this is through a commitment to the Auditor’s CPD Scheme. However, while this logbook and the CPD Scheme may complement your company’s records of training, competence and career development, they are not intended to replace them.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE SCHEME
The CPD scheme will reflect the stages of auditor development with participating auditors at the following stages:

<table>
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<th>Level</th>
<th>Entry Requirements</th>
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<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>New registrants on the scheme, conducting or wishing to conduct audits under supervision. Assessment of knowledge of one Good Practice quality standard and the international audit standard.</td>
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<td>II</td>
<td>Auditors with at least two years documented audit experience. Assessment of knowledge of the collection and verification of information and the generation of audit findings.</td>
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<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>Auditors with at least four years documented audit experience and should include audits in a range of environments (more than one regulatory standard, type of audit, or geographical territory) conducted as an independent auditor. Assessment of competence in audit planning, conduct and reporting by completion of a case study.</td>
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Entry to the Scheme at Level I
Assessment for entry to the CPD Scheme will include:
• Assessment of your knowledge of:
  1. A particular good practice standard
  2. The international audit standard
• Assessment will be by questionnaire
If you wish to undertake assessments for additional good practice standards, you can do so at any time.

Level II Entry
Before you can be assessed for entry to Level II of the CPD Scheme the following are required:
• Logbook entries demonstrating training in and knowledge of a quality standard (e.g. GLP, GCP)
  Relevant RQA courses include:
    Good Clinical Practice Auditing – Principles and Practice
    Research Quality Assurance for Good Laboratory Practice
    Good Vigilance Practice
• Logbook entries demonstrating training in and knowledge of the audit process
  Relevant RQA courses include:
    The Auditing Course
Training from other sources would be expected and acceptable
• Two years practical, documented experience of auditing
• Completion of a virtual audit exercise including the collection and verification of information and the generation of audit findings

Assessment for entry to Level II of the Auditor’s CPD Scheme will include:
• Assessment of experience by examination of your auditor’s logbook
• Assessment of your written reflection on audit learning and experience

Level III Entry
Before you can be assessed for entry to Level III of the CPD Scheme the following are required:
• Logbook entries demonstrating a minimum four years practical experience of auditing which should include audits in a range of environments conducted as an independent auditor
  “Range of environments” means more than one regulatory standard, type of audit, or geographical territory.
  “Independent auditor” means auditing alone or as lead auditor in an audit team.
• Logbook entries demonstrating training in, and an enhanced understanding of, the audit process and audit techniques
Relevant RQA courses include:

- Observation and Recording for Auditors
- Audit Analysis and Reporting
- Systems Audit
- Practical Pharmacovigilance Auditing
- Process Mapping as a Management and Auditing Tool
- Auditing Computerised Systems

*Training from other sources would be expected and acceptable.*

Assessment for entry to Level III of the CPD Scheme will include:

- Assessment of experience by examination of your auditor's logbook
- Assessment of your written reflection on audit learning and experience
- A formal assessment of competence including:
  - Examination of a written reflection upon the principles of auditing
  - Assessment of an exemplar audit and accompanying commentary and reflection
  - Face-to-face assessment of meeting management and evidence gathering by interview
- The examiners may require candidates to undergo an oral examination.

**Maintaining Registration**

You are expected to maintain an ongoing record of training and experience in your logbook throughout your membership of the scheme, whichever level you are on, and submit your logbook for assessment at intervals not exceeding four years. To maintain registration at Level II or III you will also be required to submit a written reflection on audit learning and experience.

**THE AUDITOR’S LOGBOOK**

Your auditor's logbook is a personal document in which you can document your audit experience.

**Retrospective Logging of Experience**

Many entrants to the Auditor’s CPD Scheme will have been auditing for many years before the initiation of the scheme or before deciding to register. In such cases it is often difficult to provide full details of past activities but the experience may be perfectly valid. A special section is provided for you to record, in general terms, the experience you have gained up to the date when you first received your logbook. Your audit training and experience, in the period before issue of the logbook, can be summarised there.

**Planning Your Own Learning**

There is an expectation that you will plan your own learning from the point when you join the scheme. This should be documented in a personal development plan and this plan should be regularly reviewed and revised.
Logging of Current Experience

Logbook entries for audits conducted should include dates, audit type and the standard(s) against which the audit was conducted. They should not include any commercially sensitive or confidential information.

Logbook entries for training and training courses should include dates, training subjects or course titles.

Recording Learning

Unlike many other CPD schemes, this scheme does not award points for attending professional development events but gives credit for learning. For this reason, maintaining records of learning in your logbook is essential if you want to progress through the scheme. Logbook pages are provided on which to record learning which you have gained from training and from audit experience. These pages also allow you to keep records of how you have made use of this learning.

This learning log serves as a point of focus for you to review recent learning so that you can identify strengths and weaknesses and gain new levels of understanding. By reviewing this information you can improve your audit skills and professionalism.

Your log can also provide opportunities to identify where you are experiencing difficulty and require further support, demonstrating that you are taking control over your continuing professional development.

Typical contents of a learning log include:

**What was the Learning Activity?**

Description: What happened? What activities were involved? When did it happen?

**What did you learn from it?**

Feelings: What were you thinking/feeling as the event developed?
Did you feel out of your depth?
How did you respond to conflict/criticism?

Evaluation: What was good/bad about the experience?
What did it tell you about your strengths and weaknesses?

Analysis: What did you learn from the situation?
Did it result in a better way to complete the task or a clearer understanding of the task requirements?

Conclusion: What else could you have done?
Which activities enhanced the experience?
Which activities were redundant/wasteful/unnecessary?

**How have you/will you use this?**

Action Plan: If it happens again what would you do differently?

**Written Reflections on Learning**

For entry to Levels II and III and to maintain registration at those levels, you will be required to prepare written reflections on audit learning and experience. Keeping a record of learning points in your logbook will provide the data on which to base this reflection.
Reflective learning bridges the gap between theory and practice enabling you to step back and examine what has been learnt and how it improves your abilities as an auditor.

Reflective learning provides a structured opportunity for you to analyse your experiences, promoting learning from both good and bad experience.

It promotes professional competence by encouraging you to recognise mistakes and weaknesses and then take action to improve your competence.

When you write a reflection upon your learning, it provides proof of your progression in thinking and understanding.

**ASSESSMENT**

**Presenting Your Logbook**

To maintain your registration and for entry to Levels II and III, you will be required to submit your logbook for assessment. Photocopies of logbook pages may be submitted by mail or scanned pages can be submitted electronically. Original logbook pages should not be sent.

What will the assessors be looking for?

The assessors will be looking for records of the audits you have conducted, including information on:

**Audit Experience**
- What audits were conducted?
- Against which standards?
- What was your role in the audit?
- How many auditors were involved?

**Audit Training**

Which auditor training have you received?
- Did the courses change any aspect of your auditing approach? – if so, why?
- How do you intend, or did you, change your approach to auditing following the training?
- Would you recommend the course to colleagues?
- What other training and/or work experience do you plan in the future to further enhance your audit skills?

Examples of audit logbook entries are provided in each section of the logbook for your guidance.
Written Reflections on Learning
What will the assessors be looking for?
The assessors will be looking for evidence that you have addressed all stages of the learning cycle as previously described.

Such as:

Experience
A description of the experiences, both good and bad, that you have gained as an auditor, or through observation of another auditor.

Observation
Sufficient detail of audit experience(s) so that you can accurately reflect on what you learnt as a result of your experience(s).

Reflection
What you have learnt from the experience(s). How your audit behaviour has/will change as a result of your experience(s).

Planning
What you intend to do to improve your audit skills in the future, e.g. attend further auditor training courses, identification of audit mentors, etc.

Examples of completed reflective learning logs for you to review prior to completing your logbook can be obtained from the RQA office. (Or are available on the RQA website).

Written Reflection on the Principles of Audit
For entry to Level III you will be required to prepare a written reflection on the principles of audit in order to demonstrate to the assessors your understanding of:
- the ethics of audit;
- the obligation to report truthfully and accurately;
- diligence and judgement in auditing;
- independence as the basis for impartiality;
- reliable, reproducible audit based on evidence;
- the roles and responsibilities of guides and observers;
- the audit closure process;
- the collection and verification of evidence by observation of activities;
- communication with audit team and auditees during the audit.

Submission of an Exemplar Audit
For entry to Level III you will be required to submit all the documentation associated with an audit (from first notification of audit through to audit report) together with a commentary and reflection on the events of the audit and the decisions made.
These records will be used to assess your ability to:
- negotiate and define audit objectives;
- negotiate and define audit scope;
- negotiate and define audit criteria;
- determine audit feasibility;
- select an effective audit team;
- establish contact and negotiate conditions for audit;
• prepare and agree an audit plan;
• prepare appropriate checklists, sampling plans and forms;
• collect and verify evidence by review of documents;
• collect and verify evidence by review of records;
• generate audit findings;
• prepare audit conclusions;
• prepare an audit report (including auditee responses, audit report approval and distribution).

The audit described may be a real audit (with confidential information expunged) or a fictitious audit constructed from your own experience.

**Face-to-Face Assessment**

For entry to Level III you will be required to attend a face-to-face assessment in order to demonstrate to the assessors your ability to:

• conduct an opening meeting;
• collect and verify evidence by interview;
• conduct a closing meeting;
• verify corrective action.

**Oral Examination**

Some candidates for Level III entry may be asked to attend an oral examination so that assessors can clarify any areas of uncertainty which remain after other assessments have been made.

**FEES**

When you apply to join the Auditor’s CPD scheme you will pay a registration fee. This fee will cover the cost of processing your application, give you access to two questionnaires on-line and, if you complete these successfully, your Auditor’s Logbook and Certificates of Achievement. The registration fee also includes your first year’s scheme membership subscription.

There are assessments involved in moving from Level I to Level II, from Level II to Level III and in maintaining registration. A fee will be charged for each assessment.

There will be an annual subscription to cover the costs of maintaining the register of auditors in the scheme.

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