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Document Control

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Why?

As a rail trainer and/or assessor, CPD has been a mandatory requirement since June 2013 on the NSAR Skills Backbone. NSAR are still observing difficulties in trainers/assessors understanding of what CPD is, how to record it and submit it within mandated timescales. NSAR continues to observe:

- Failure to submit CPD portfolios by the 30th June each year.
- Of those, submitted, around 50% do not meet the required standard and are rejected.
- 20% of approved submissions just meet the standard with feedback provided for corrective actions to be taken during subsequent CPD years.

What?

During 2016/17, if submissions fail to meet the criteria they will be rejected with feedback provided as to the reasons for the rejection.

Common Issues?

The most common issues observed are:

- Incorrect categories being used (submitting items of being mentored as coaching and mentoring others or attending train the trainer courses, participating in training reviews as developing new training/assessment material).
- Excessive hours within categories – hours that exceed category caps are excluded from totals.
- None/very few evidence files to support the submission.
- Failure to record descriptions and self-reflections regarding learning e.g. what will be done differently and what will be done next.
- Incompatible file uploads (.bmp) resulting in an inability to view evidence files including zip file uploads which do not open.
- Use of completing mandatory annual trainer exams and reviewing updates to The Rule Book, Network Rail Standards and Training Toolkit lesson plans as CPD – these are standard requirements of the role of a trainer/assessor and not development.
- Sole activities being duplicated in different categories in order to increase total hour numbers (on occasion deliberately, with different file names in attempts to avoid detection)

- Reading and updating knowledge which does not have any tangible outputs to contribute to a trainer/assessor's professional development

What does it mean for me?

Trainers/Assessors are required to:

- consider the common issues detailed above
- review your CPD activity plans/submissions to date and take any corrective actions required
- complete all future CPD submissions in line with this briefing and guidance, to make sure that there are not reoccurrences of the common issues above resulting in rejection of CPD submissions

Please note, it is essential that evidence files are clearly associated to the individual and CPD year being undertaken.

Should further guidance support be required, seek this from your manager who will contact NSAR for support if required.

When?

Actions to review current submissions is to be taken **as soon as possible** and, most certainly, before the end of the 16/17 CPD year.

What Next?

NSAR will undertake regular reviews of CPD Portfolios on Skills Backbone and provide feedback where appropriate. Formal approval of submitted portfolios will be completed within 3 months of the CPD year-end (end of September). Where a CPD submission cannot be approved feedback will be given why approval was not able to take place. All feedback during and post CPD year should be discussed with your manager, seek clarification if needed and corrective actions implemented in either the remainder of the current CPD year or the following year's submission as applicable.

Where there is insufficient evidence of a robust approach to CPD by an individual NSAR retains the right to suspend assurance to train/assess, until the relevant CPD is complete. Please note that this would be a last resort as ultimately the value of CPD accrues to the trainer/assessor, the learner, the employer and the rail industry.

Further Information

Should further guidance support be required, seek this from your manager who will contact NSAR for support if required.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Why are there caps on CPD category activities?

Continuous Professional Development by virtue of its nature has to be wide ranging to make sure that the whole spectrum of professional trainer/assessor skills are addressed and continue to improve year on year. The caps on categories make sure that a wide range of professional/technical skills and knowledge are addressed.

Why are we required to provide evidence of our activities?

CPD requirements in all other industries require evidence to underpin self-declarations and to this end the requirement is no different from any other form of continuous professional development. Evidence also helps NSAR to help you as further detail can be gained from the evidence, which can confirm its relevance to the text submitted for any item. Finally, it is vital that the activity can be attributable to the individual and the CPD year in question; this can only be achieved by the provision of evidence to the activity submission.

Why are NSAR undertaking more rigorous review of CPD portfolios now?

To maintain high standards and uphold workforce safety it is essential that all trainers and assessors are working to the highest possible standards in their profession. As a rail trainer and/or assessor, CPD has been a mandatory requirement since June 2013 on the NSAR Skills Backbone with quality levels of submissions not showing any improvement. A more rigorous approach is now essential to ensure that the standards which are mandated of the rail industry's workforce trainers and assessors are maintained.

Will more rigorous review of my CPD portfolio result in any sanctions being placed on me as a trainer/assessor?

In all other industry CPD scheme's, where portfolios do not reach the required standard then approval to continue delivering in the profession is withdrawn. CPD is a requirement of both NR/L2/CTM/202 and the RTAS Rules and failure to meet the requirements of these standards have consequential actions. To this end failure to undertake CPD as required will result in suspension of capabilities to make sure corrective actions are taken and professional levels are re-established. Failure to submit the portfolio at all will be considered as a severe breach of CPD requirements - substandard submissions can be improved throughout the year but where support and guidance has not been sought or provided a suspension is deemed suitable.

What do I do if I am having difficulties in being able to complete the minimum requirements of CPD?

In the first instance, you should seek support from your manager as early as you can in the CPD year so that your company has the opportunity to take action to support you. Additionally, NSAR can be reached out to at any time in order to avoid a suspension action having to be taken.

Will I be notified directly if there are any issues with my CPD portfolio both in progress and submitted?

All communications are made inside the Skills Backbone system and it is within your own profile CPD view that you will be able to see any status changes or feedback provided. It is your responsibility to make sure that you view it regularly, as you should be doing anyway in order to build your portfolio throughout the year.

If I do not understand the feedback provided by NSAR what should I do?

The feedback provided will be as detailed and clear as possible but in the event that you do not understand or have further questions regarding it you should discuss it with your manager in the first instance. Where understanding is still not secured you should contact your NSAR Assurance Manager to request support.

If there are some file types that are incompatible with the system then what files are accepted by the system?

The files which are accepted by the system and allow NSAR to open them are:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PDF	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Doc
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Docx	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Jpeg
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• JPG	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Xls
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PNG	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PPT