



7 Top Tips

to make the most out of your veterinary CPD

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is an essential part of veterinary practice as it helps ensure professionals keep up to date with the latest industry developments, whilst improving knowledge and skills to provide the best possible care for their patients.



Having a planned approach to CPD is an important and exciting part of your career progression.

It will help you to identify your development needs, focus your learning and make your clinical work more effective. It also means you can spend any CPD budget available to you wisely and reduces the need for last-minute cramming at the end of the year!

We understand that organising your CPD can be a daunting task, especially when you are juggling a busy work schedule. To support you with this, we have put together our **7 Top Tips** which should help you to plan your learning more effectively.

SOME QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF:

1. Map out your learning objectives

Take some time to consider what you really want to achieve from your CPD.

Start by thinking about your objectives and identify the areas you want to develop. A good way to do this is to evaluate your current knowledge and skills. This will help you identify areas to work on and determine the type of CPD you need to undertake. Consider the types of cases you handle, the clinical topics that you are passionate about and the skills you need to improve. It may also be useful to talk to your colleagues and seek feedback on areas you could develop.

· What are your career goals, for example, where do you see yourself in five years' time?

· Do you want to achieve a qualification and if so, what kind?

· What will add experience and progression to your CV?

· How much time do you want to dedicate to training and development?

· Will the CPD you are considering encourage reflection and give you the ability to review your learning along the way?

· What veterinary medicine topics are you passionate about?

2. Set realistic goals

Write down your goals and make them specific and achievable

Once you have identified your needs and objectives, start thinking about setting specific and achievable goals. This will help you stay focused and motivated. Be realistic and prioritise to ensure you achieve the most relevant ones first, but also choose activities that offer the most value and impact on day-to-day practice.

Realistic CPD goals are also important for personal growth – they allow you to focus on areas of development that align with your interests, strengths, and career aspirations. This allows you to build expertise in specific areas of veterinary medicine. Ultimately, CPD is about improving animal care and outcomes. By setting realistic goals, you can focus on acquiring skills, knowledge, and techniques that directly benefit your patients. This will lead to better diagnoses, treatments, and overall veterinary care.

Example goals could include:

- I want to feel more confident in performing dental extractions
- I want to learn how to do a splenectomy

- I need to improve my exotic disease knowledge
- I enjoy orthopaedic surgery, but would like to learn some different techniques
- I would like to gain an additional qualification

3. Choose the right type and provider of CPD

Not all CPD is the same – make sure that you choose your provider wisely

There is a lot of CPD out there! A whole variety of talks, courses, conferences and certificates exist, as well as a mixture of online and in-person options. It is therefore worth thinking about your learning style so that you can get the most out of your CPD. If you prefer hands-on learning, choose workshops and practical sessions. Or if self-directed training suits your work/life balance better, online courses and webinars may be more appropriate.

This is particularly important if you are considering a postgraduate certificate programme. You should choose one that aligns with your goals as well as your learning preferences. Using a provider who will give you a wide range of study choices, as well as advice to go alongside, will help greatly with this.



Face to face



Blended



Online

Look for providers who offer both face-to-face and online learning, as well as a mixture of both (blended). However, remember that not all CPD is created equal, so make sure you:

- Are clear what online learning entails – today's best online learning experience should include live sessions, interactive lessons and case discussions, webinars, online networking forums – not just recorded lectures and PDFs!
- Choose practical training that takes place in wet-lab facilities with the latest equipment and small class sizes (and that you don't get charged extra for these!)
- Have support from peers, specialists and programme tutors – this is critical for an effective learning experience (regardless of it being online or face-to-face).
- Benefit from the opportunity to engage with professionals from around the world - enabling you to share different approaches and work through challenges together.
- Aim for programmes incorporating tuition from world-class speakers who are recognised in their field.
- Ask for speaker biographies to find out more about their special interests and areas of expertise.

4. Explore different types of postgraduate veterinary qualifications

Consider which qualification will help you the most in your professional work and career

There are a number of postgraduate veterinary certificates to choose from, so understanding what's available is the first step. The ISVPS General Practitioner Certificate (GPCert) or Postgraduate Certificate (PgC) are equivalent to level 7 (England, Wales and Northern Ireland), however **the best CPD providers will offer a range of qualifications at different levels to support your career during its various stages.**

SO HOW DO YOU FIND OUT MORE ABOUT YOUR COURSE AND QUALIFICATION?

- Check which body accredits the courses you are considering purchasing

- Ensure that the course and assessments are at an appropriate level for your abilities and needs

- For respected qualifications, there will be an exam to take. Ask for information about the types of assessments, so you know what to expect

- You may wish to take your exams online, so check that this is an option



industry newsletters

emerging trends and advances

conferences and seminars

scientific literature

5. Find resources that keep you informed

Explore what additional resources you will need to help with your study and possible exams

The veterinary profession is constantly evolving. It's essential to supplement your learning with resources that will help keep you up to date with the latest developments. Subscribe to industry newsletters and attend conferences to keep up with emerging trends and advances. Regularly reading scientific literature and attending journal clubs can also help you stay informed.

Talk to your CPD provider, as they should have resources you can tap into, particularly during your studying.





Start



6. Plan your CPD in advance

**Take the time to plan your CPD
– you will gain so much more!**

Planning your CPD activities in advance will help you avoid last-minute rushes.

Set aside time in your schedule to attend CPD activities and also ensure you have thought about how you will approach learning for the CPD year and in the future. Make a CPD plan for the year and include a mix of activities to ensure that you get a well-rounded education. You can also try different ways of learning to see which suits you best.

As well as time, you should also be thinking about budget constraints when selecting your CPD activities. The best providers may not always be the cheapest, but they should offer payment plans to support your investment. Make sure you ask about the options available.

Veterinary surgeons and nurses need to complete 35 and 15 hours of CPD, respectively, every year.



7. Keep a record of your CPD

**Make a note of all your CPD activity
– in the UK you can use the RCVS 1CPD platform**

Veterinary surgeons and nurses need to complete 35 and 15 hours of CPD, respectively, every year. So, keeping a record of your activities, including the dates, type of activity, and the number of hours spent, will help you keep track of your progress and ensure that you meet your requirements. It will also come in handy during performance reviews and when renewing your professional license.

Don't forget, as well as recording your CPD you will also need to reflect on it. This is a requirement of the RCVS if you are in the UK.

This process is usually straightforward and involves putting into words all of the reasons why you decided to study your chosen topic, as well as how it is going to help you in your daily work. It is usually easiest to do your reflections at the same time as documenting your CPD, while it is all still fresh in your mind.

In summary

Planning your veterinary CPD can feel like a challenging task. While it does require careful consideration, you'll be rewarded by feeling more informed, confident and aware of the benefits for your day-to-day work in practice.

Deciding on the right type of CPD and provider is critical, so online research as well as talking to others will help you choose. A good training provider will welcome a discussion, so challenge them to provide evidence of why their education is better than others! The best providers will be able to support you with career path options so you progress whilst pursuing a topic you are passionate about. Quality is important, and investing in ongoing education will pay off with employers and peers recognising that you have been examined in specific areas.

By having a continuing education plan, will help you maximise the value of your veterinary CPD, stay current in your field and improve patient care. This will all help to advance your professional growth and development.

What can be more motivating than that?!

Connect with us!



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To start on your journey to progress,
contact our expert veterinary team for **CPD advice and guidance.**



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