Learning while earning

Online courses, industry events, BRANZ seminars and books as well as site visits are among the options building industry employees can partake in as part of their ongoing professional development.

By Phil Stewart, Technical and Engineering Writing, Auckland

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is essential for advancing professional skills, and the array of learning opportunities on offer these days means it is hardly a chore.

Fast-changing technology and legal requirements in the industry add to the need to continually upgrade beyond initial qualifications and previous work experience.

What’s on offer

Building industry institutes and associations in New Zealand provide comprehensive platforms for members to upgrade their skills and knowledge.

New Zealand Institute of Architects

The NZIA’s formal CPD programme of courses, events and training allocates CPD points that a practitioner accumulates as they progress.

The New Zealand Registered Architects Board sets the criteria for awarding points and contracts NZIA to administer the programme.

Most CPD events are lectures, short courses, seminars or industry presentations. NZIA also offers CPD Online for members to continue their CPD at their own pace. Many online events are 1-hour video clips of presentations and seminars backed up with self-assessment forms.

John Albert, Professional Services Manager, NZIA, says architects can select the learning best suited to their specialist areas.

‘Specialists in urban design and planning, for example, will select the training within the five competency areas that match this. Architects are also encouraged to undertake individual activity, including further study, speaking at conferences or writing articles.’

Institution of Professional Engineers NZ

IPENZ’s CPD programme includes regular professional development courses for members and non-members across the country. These cover different areas of study categorised as essential skills, technical skills and legal. Most are delivered as interactive seminars or webinars.

IPENZ hosts its career development resources through a members’ website area that includes tools to record CPD and work history, access to a range of publications, and career and mentoring tools.

Brett Williams, IPENZ Director Learning and Assessment, says that CPD involves much more than just technical learning.

Keeping up with the latest changes and innovations is vital to staying successful.

‘The Registered Architects Board prescribes five core competency areas architects need to cover – design, documentation, project management, practice management and core professional development,’ he notes.

‘NZIA provides learning across all of these, and it’s up to each architect to determine the courses they will most benefit from.

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BY PHIL STEWART, TECHNICAL AND ENGINEERING WRITING, AUCKLAND
We consider any activity that contributes to the development of an engineer’s practice to be valid CPD, and that will change as an engineer progresses in their career.

Beyond our formal CPD courses, our branches and technical interest groups offer a wide programme including technical talks, site visits, networking events and conferences.

Architectural Designers New Zealand
ADNZ provides professional development through a formal CPD programme of seminars, with its Defign magazine and blog, with the annual Architectural Design Awards and through ongoing ADNZ brand marketing.

For a member, annual CPD compliance requirements include attending an annual conference, monthly branch meetings and trade presentations as well as set levels of ADNZ seminars and educational presentations.

The CPD Seminar Series of presentations and seminars is held across the country, each worth ADNZ CPD points, LBP skills maintenance CPD points and Registered Architects Board CPD points. Authorised organisations can provide training courses and award CPD points for attendance at these.

The ADNZ website members’ section lets members chat online with their peers, book events, learn online and monitor and record CPD points. The My CPD Points page automatically updates equivalent records on the LBP Skills Maintenance Programme.

Auckland’s Warren Darling from Darling Designs has been designing homes for 30 years and is an ADNZ member.

‘Fulfilling ADNZ’s CPD requirements each year means you keep up with the play on new products and design developments – that’s where a lot of the value lies,’ he says.

‘It takes about 48 hours per year for me to meet my CPD point criteria. This is not directly productive time, but the rules we work under are changing all the time, and it’s keeping up with the latest changes and innovations that is vital to staying successful.’

Registered Master Builders Association
Master Builders believes one of the major reasons members join is to access the industry knowledge and training they provide through short courses and seminars.

Many of the courses deliver NZQA construct trade unit standards, for example, a low-level scaffolding unit standard 9184 1-day course. Completing these gives builders nationally recognised qualifications.

Its training programmes also include courses in a soft-skills category – examples include the 4-hour courses Marketing made easy and Understanding and managing stress.

Importantly, training events are assigned LBP skills maintenance points, allowing builders to keep up their LBP requirements.

Members can also attend discounted New Zealand Red Cross first aid training courses.

Certified Builders Association
Certified Builders provides ongoing professional development by holding regular Tool Box Seminars on a variety of topics. They also host trade-training events around the country. Attendance at these earns members LBP skills maintenance points.

The members’ area of the Certified Builders website details upcoming seminars and trade training and helps members develop learning plans and track their LBP points.

Certified Builders Association Chief Executive Grant Florence says the way consumers perceive training is not to be overlooked. ‘As a trade association, one of our core roles is to provide ongoing education, training and support to our members to foster best practice and set a high standard of professionalism,’ he says. ‘This, in turn, contributes to consumer confidence and trust.’

Building Officials Institute of NZ
BOINZ’s Training Academy is for members and also non-member LBP-accredited practitioners in other parts of the industry.

Training Academy events are in house or through endorsed organisations, and each is allocated CPD points. Events cover a broad spectrum of meetings, courses, seminars, individual study and attendance at regional or branch meetings. Members can track their points on a CPD log.

The BOINZ website has other features to help members develop their professional skills:

- An online Building Controls Tool Box provides access any time to key guidelines and standards.
- An online BOINZ Forum lets members discuss ideas and projects.
- The quarterly e-magazine Straight Up has topical stories and information.

New Zealand Institute of Building
NZIOB has a broad range of CPD activities including site visits, presentations, seminars and an online learning programme. Each is worth CPD credits that can be tracked on an online CPD diary.

NZIOB also gives credits for other industry-related work or service completed, such as publishing material or completing formal education.

What BRANZ offers
BRANZ has a full package of learning opportunities that attracts CPD points. These range from an evolving seminar series, to books and regular publications such as Build, Builder’s Mate, Guideline and bulletins. Epubs and previous seminars are available online.