

# Making continuing professional development click

**C**ontinuing professional development (CPD) is viewed by many organizations as a cornerstone of competence. In Ontario, the majority of the province's 37 self-regulated professions now require members to undertake mandated CPD. Professional bodies look at a range of approaches, many of which are outlined on the Internet. Here's a look at some of them:

## **The Association of Professional Engineers, Geologists and Geophysicists of Alberta** <http://www.apegga.org>

APEGGA has opted for mandated CPD programs. Its website includes detailed information for practising professional members. Click "Members" at the top left. The "Professional Development" link on the left leads to a comprehensive set of links to guideline summaries, blank program and activity record forms, lists of course and seminar providers, a Q & A, and more.

## **Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of BC** <http://www.apeg.bc.ca>

APEGBC makes CPD voluntary but provides good online support, via clear guidelines, listings of professional development events, and such links as the Distance Education Multimedia Conferences via CD-Rom. Click on "Professional Development" at the top to begin. The voluntary "Online Recording Centre" is an interesting feature, consisting of a confidential online recording module in which members can log professional development activities.

## **National Society of Professional Engineers** <http://www.nspe.org/>

In the U.S., states set their own competence requirements. Adoption of requirements is ultimately decided by the state's legislature, PE licensing board, and/or professional society. From the "Licensure, Ethics and the Law" link on the left, choose "Licensure" then click on "Professional Development (PD)." From the PD link, select "Continued Professional Competency: Status in the States" which gives a snapshot of where particular states sit. Click on the "NCEES list of state boards" for details on each state.

## **Learnon.org** <http://www.learnon.org>

The American Society for Engineering Education's Learnon site provides extensive continuing and distance education links, including a huge searchable course database, a career site, links to educational resources, free trade magazine subscriptions, and more. Click on the "Course search" link to limit your search by credit type, course type, and location. Although this is an American site, many of the courses listed are offered through distance education.

## **International Association of Continuing Engineering Education** <http://www.iacee.org/>

The IACEE works to "support and enhance lifelong technical education and training, and advanced engineering education worldwide," including specific needs of engineers in developing nations. From the "Publications" link, you can read past issues of the newsletter. A list of the IACEE's reports is also available.

## **Ontario College of Teachers 2002 Survey** <http://www.oct.on.ca/english/selfreg.asp>

This summary of the College of Teachers'

2002 survey is a good snapshot of the range of continuing education requirements. Organizations' requirements are continually evolving, so it is worthwhile to visit individual organizations' websites for details.

## **Royal College of Dental Surgeons of Ontario** <http://www.rcdso.org/>

Ontario dentists take a mandated approach to CPD. The RCDSO's Continuing Education Credit system works on a three-year cycle, and is an integral part of its larger Quality Assurance Program. Click "Quality Assurance" on the left, then "Continuing Education Credits" at the top for an outline of the program, a list of suitable activities, and a list of approved sponsors of continuing education programs. The "Quality Assessment" link describes the preventive approach taken to quality assurance.

## **Ontario Association of Architects** <http://www.oaa.on.ca/>

The OAA takes a five-pronged approach to its Professional Excellence Program. The mandatory continuing education component comprises a mix of standardized, OAA-approved "Professional Renewal" courses and activities, and "Self-Directed" activities to be chosen by individuals. Click on "Programs" at the top to begin. The "Education, including Mandatory Continuing Education" link in the centre provides details and further links. Go to "Self-Directed," for example, for a breakdown of the points allocated to various educational activities.

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*Reference Department of the University of Toronto's Engineering and Computer Science Library*

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