

CPD matters

A few years ago, the ITI issued a CPD record booklet to all its members, to help us keep track of our Continuing Professional Development. There is no obligation to use the booklet. But it is worth doing so nevertheless. Here's why.

The other day I did something I had been meaning to do for some time – in fact, ever since ITI sent round their newly-hatched CPD record booklet: I sat down and went through my diaries of the last three years, logging all my CPD activities since I became a fully qualified DipTrans lol.

When the booklet first arrived, I made a mental note to fill it in some time, but then promptly mislaid it for about two years. However, once I had dug it out and made a start on this task, I really got into the swing of it and also started mapping out what I would do next in terms of CPD. So that part of the booklet filled up pretty quickly, too.

What had finally prompted me to embark on this exercise was a letter I received via the ITI office containing the CPD record booklet of one of our members, asking me to sign off some LRG events they had attended. This made me realise that I was actually quite unclear as to exactly how this CPD record-keeping worked. Did we have to submit the filled-in booklet to ITI head office on a regular basis? Did we have to fulfil a certain CPD requirement per year? Did this mean that in future I would be inundated with booklets from LRG members and that I would have to verify people's attendance of CPD events even when I would have no way of knowing whether or not they were actually there? What was the point of this booklet anyway?

So I started doing some research. First I asked the Chairman of ITI's Education and Training Committee, who explained that the main purpose of the ITI CPD record was to help us keep track of our CPD for our own benefit and to give a structure to our CPD efforts: planning our CPD, prioritising, and also looking back and seeing what we had achieved.

In terms of formal recognition, and in the rather long term, a record of CPD undertaken will be a requirement for anyone wanting to register for Chartered Linguist status. And it can also be useful for ITI Associates when it comes to applying for full ITI membership – especially if and when a points system to assess qualifications and experience is introduced.

So, there is a sound reason for keeping your CPD record booklet up-to-date. But for the time being there is no need to send it to ITI to be counter-signed or approved. Keep the record book for your own benefit. If you are attending a workshop or lecture, make sure you get the speaker or organiser to sign the booklet. For reading and personal research, your own dated entry is sufficient.

As I found out, it can be quite helpful to start thinking about the things you are planning to do – if only so you can prioritise and, quite importantly, budget for them. Plus looking back and realising how much you have already done by way of CPD, perhaps without even realising it, is also quite rewarding!

There is a useful factsheet downloadable from the ITI website, which explains all about CPD. The booklet itself also includes some instructions, including suggestions as to the key areas in which CPD activities can be undertaken, the kind of training or activity that qualifies as CPD, the recommended amount of CPD one should aim for per year and what to note in the CPD record book.

The main thing is to realise that a great many of our professional activities count towards CPD – and that includes getting involved in the work of regional groups and subject or language networks!

Finally, it is important to recognise that CPD is an integral part of being a professional. It's worth recording it, just to make ourselves aware of this.