



Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for Forensic and Expert Social Anthropology and Aligned Professionals

NOTE: This document is based on the RAI Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for Forensic Anthropology and Aligned Professionals (Version 2). The document has been minimally modified in order to suit the practice of forensic and expert social anthropology.

The current version of this document incorporates amendments made following feedback on an earlier draft from senior international forensic and expert social anthropology practitioners.

1. COMPETENCE

The requirement for the demonstration of competence in forensic and expert practice is enshrined within the Forensic Science Regulator's Code of Practice and Conduct (CoPC)¹² and it is clear that it will be part of the requirements for all forensic and expert practitioners working within the justice system in the UK and internationally. This also fits with the RAI Code of Practice for Forensic and Expert Social Anthropology.

The RAI has adopted the Skills for Justice definition of competence endorsed by the Forensic Science Regulator.

"The skills, knowledge and understanding required to carry out a role, evidenced consistently over time through performance in the workplace".

Skills for Justice have developed a competence assessment framework within which mechanisms for the assessment of various knowledge and skills are suggested.

2. CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Continuing professional development (CPD) encompasses a wide range of activities which contribute to lifelong learning in support of career development and the maintenance (and in some cases demonstration) of competence in practice. It includes a wide range of formal learning (leading to an assessed award or certificate), informal learning and experiential learning. CPD activities promote and demonstrate professional growth rather than include what would be considered as normal business activities.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/forensic-science-providers-codes-of-practice-and-conduct-2021-issue-7>

² [TBC pending formalisation of FESA CDP]

CPD can be used as a demonstrative mechanism for some of the requirements for evidencing continued competence within the Skills for Justice and other frameworks. However, it should be noted that, while CPD will fulfil some of the requirements of competence demonstration, it is not of itself sufficient to demonstrate all aspects of competence. Other mechanisms such as knowledge tests, fieldwork, desktop work and peer review are also suggested as normal professional activities in this regard.

Continuing professional development forms a vital part of any professional accreditation and competence assessment system. It is also a normal part of the requirements for membership of a professional body.

3. CPD SYSTEM FOR FORENSIC AND EXPERT SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY

The RAI has devised a simple yet comprehensive CPD system for Forensic and Expert Social Anthropology, designed to be achievable across the various practitioner levels and different practitioner backgrounds (academic, museum/public sector based or fulltime professional practice). The scheme is designed to encourage practitioner development through the three practitioner levels adopted by the RAI. It is also designed to be fit for purpose in terms of addressing the requirements of a CPD system as a means of demonstrating competence as suggested by Skills for Justice and the Forensic Science Regulator.

The proposed CPD system is not a points-based system, rather practitioners are required to present a five-year professional development plan on registration onto the scheme and maintain a continuous record (portfolio) of their professional development against this plan. Practitioners may, if they wish, produce an annual audit of their CPD activities and this can be tracked against their development plan as part of their normal internal annual review process (if applicable). This is aimed at facilitating and encouraging short- and medium-term career development planning.

3.1. REQUIREMENTS

There are two tiers of CPD activity designated as Level 1 and Level 2. These activities are separated to reflect the different skill levels expected with differing levels of practitioners. The activities within each grouping have been designed to ensure that the exercise is achievable by the relevant practitioners irrespective of their working environment (police force, academic, forensic science provider etc.) over the five-year period. Practitioners will be expected to submit proof that they have achieved the designated number of activities dependent upon their practitioner level during the five-year CPD period.

Each of the three practitioner levels have a different number of designated Level 1 and Level 2 CPD activities on a sliding scale designed to allow individual practitioners freedom of choice of activity, thus reflecting and acknowledging the different work environments within the profession. Each activity from each level will only be counted once within each five-year CPD period. Activities must be spread across the five-year period (for example undertaking courses on an annual basis rather than in the same year).

3.2. CPD ACTIVITIES AND REQUIREMENTS

LEVEL 1

1. Author, co-author or editor of a book/book chapter, evidenced by an appropriate reference.
2. Author or co-author of a peer-reviewed journal article evidenced by proof of acceptance of the paper or the published paper.
3. Attendance at a professionally relevant conference evidenced by certificate of attendance.
4. Oral presentation at a professionally appropriate conference, evidenced by appropriate reference in conference program.
5. Presentation of a poster (either as first or other author) at a professionally appropriate conference, evidenced by a copy of the poster and appropriate reference in conference program.
6. Attendance at and completion of, a professionally relevant course/specialist training/workshop with no final assessment, evidenced by a certificate of attendance.
7. Collaboration with colleagues from other institutions (UK or international) on advancing the candidate's knowledge in Forensic and Expert Social Anthropology, evidenced by a reflective summary with outcomes and learning achieved.
8. Reflective case study including evidence of a literature review to demonstrate learning and knowledge of current published material on an area of forensic and expert anthropology new to the candidate – evidenced by a reflective critical summary with references.

LEVEL 2

1. Publication of a research paper in a peer-reviewed journal in which the practitioner is either the lead author or corresponding author (proof of acceptance of the paper or the published paper is required). This requirement must demonstrate the acquisition of new knowledge rather than the condensate of existing knowledge as one would expect in book chapters or edited works. As such book chapters, review papers, edited works and professional magazines will not be accepted as fulfilment of these criteria.
2. Attendance and successful completion of a professionally relevant course/training/workshop which culminates in a final assessment, evidenced by a certificate of completion and proof of successful completion of a final examination or equivalent.
3. Successful completion of a relevant proficiency test or equivalent.
4. Acting as an external examiner for a professionally relevant course (not necessarily forensic science based and can be in a relevant topic e.g. fieldwork methods) or acting as an external examiner for a postgraduate research degree (MSc/MA by research or PhD), evidenced by an appropriate letter of appointment.
5. Acting as a peer reviewer for a professional journal, evidenced by an email acceptance of the review.

6. Initiating, developing and delivering an external professional training course, evidenced by an outline of the training materials produced and course delivery date.

3.3. CPD REQUIREMENTS OVER 5 YEARS

PRACTITIONER	CPD ACTIVITIES	
	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2
FESA I	3 OUT OF 8	2 OUT OF 6
FESA II	3 OUT OF 8	2 OUT OF 6
FESA III	3 OUT OF 8	N/A

3.4. CPD PORTFOLIO

A portfolio containing a record of CPD activities should be maintained and prefaced with a professional development plan, submitted at the time of registration for the CPD scheme. This can be submitted, either as a paper copy or online. It is recognised that the original CPD development plan may change and such changes should be updated within the portfolio.

3.5. CPD ASSESSMENT

CPD will be formally assessed every five years against the requirements balanced to the individual's practitioner level. The assessment will be by submission of their portfolio and appropriate evidence of attainment of the activities claimed.