

Australian Association of Social Workers

Continuing Professional Development Policy

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AASW

Australian Association
of Social Workers

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Preamble

Continuing Professional Development is fundamental to the ongoing integrity, capability and accountability of the social work profession. It ensures that members uphold contemporary standards of ethical, safe, and evidence-informed practice and supports continuous improvement in client outcomes, service delivery, and workforce sustainability. As a profession committed to evidence-informed practice, public safety and social justice, the AASW recognises CPD as essential for strengthening professional identity, meeting community expectations, and maintaining trust in social work practice. This policy outlines the expectations, requirements, and guiding principles that underpin CPD for all eligible AASW members.

1.0 Continuing Professional Development

Continuing Professional Development is the process by which AASW members maintain, improve and broaden their professional knowledge, expertise and competence to ensure safe, ethical and effective practice. CPD is a mandatory requirement for all practising members (excluding students and retirees) and is essential to uphold public trust, professional accountability, and contemporary standards of care.

CPD supports members in adapting to emerging practice challenges, evolving community needs, and changes in policy or evidence. Completion of the minimum annual CPD requirements grants members the Accredited Social Worker status, recognising their ongoing commitment to professional excellence. Members must also supply appropriate supporting evidence to demonstrate completion of these requirements, which may be requested at any time for compliance or audit purposes.

2.0 What is a CPD Activity?

Any activity that a social worker participates in that contributes towards their learning and development can be used towards their CPD. The activity does not need to be specifically recognised by any particular body to be considered. Learning and development aspects of a member's role may be considered as CPD, for example activities such as receiving and/or providing supervision.

Members are responsible for keeping a record of their CPD activity in the AASW's recording system known as 'My CPD Record'.

A step-by-step guide on how to record CPD is available in the [My CPD Record User Guide](#).

The [AASW's Professional Development](#) pages on the website offers upcoming relevant, social work specific, professional development opportunities nationwide as well as access to a range of online content through AASW's on demand learning platform.

3.0 What is the CPD Cycle?

The AASW CPD cycle runs over the financial year from 1 July - 30 June. CPD is calculated based on the time spent engaging in the activity. i.e. a 1-hour activity equates to one hour of CPD that can be recorded. All CPD activity must be recorded in your electronic CPD Record by 30 June of the relevant year.

4.0 Categories

AASW annual CPD requirements are divided into three categories. Members are required to record CPD hours under the most appropriate category for the activity they have engaged in, based on the category descriptions below.

4.1 Category 1: Supervision (Receiving)

Supervision is a forum for reflection and learning and is essential to maintaining high standards of professional practice.

In accordance with the [Practice Standards \(May 2023\)](#) and the [Practice Standards Supplement - Standard 8](#), AASW members are expected to receive supervision from a qualified social worker. Supervision by a qualified and experienced social worker is the expected standard. However, in circumstances where it may be more appropriate for supervision to be provided by another professional. The supervisor should be experienced, skilled, and relevant to the supervisee's area of practice.

Category 1 requires that members undertake and record the minimum number of hours of supervision relevant to their practice.

Activities which may be recorded in this category:

- Receiving supervision
- Receiving professional mentoring
- Receiving professional coaching
- Receiving professional consultation (such as contacting the AASW Ethics and Practice Standards Consultation Service)

Supervision may be accessed by a range of means including (but not limited to); face-to-face, online, telephone and video/web conferencing.

Members are encouraged to use the [Find a Social Worker](#) advanced search directory on the AASW website to locate a professional supervisor. Using the Practice Listings search, select Supervision from the practice area drop down list, add your location and click Search. Members are also encouraged to register their details for the advanced search directory if they meet the requirements and are able to offer professional supervisory/consultancy services to other professionals.

When recording Supervision hours, members can include supervision sessions as one block entry over a financial year period or a shorter period. The [Evidence of Supervision Template](#) is available to assist in recording and evidencing supervision hours, but does not replace entering the activity details in the CPD Record. The Evidence of Supervision Template can be uploaded to meet evidence requirements.

4.2 Category 2: Skills and Knowledge

Regular and ongoing skill and knowledge development is vital for maintaining contemporary social work practice. The AASW encourages all members to participate in active, participatory learning but recognises that each member has different learning needs which are unique and therefore activity types may vary widely.

Category 2 activities must have **defined learning outcomes**, where participants walk away with clear, structured skills and knowledge development. These activities typically involve interactive and structured learning methods that contribute to professional competency.

Activities in this category include:

- Research and academic study
- Conferences, symposiums, seminars, webinars, and workshops
- Self-directed learning (with a structured learning plan or reflection component)
- Structured online learning programs
- Training courses with measurable skill acquisition

For all self-directed learning, we encourage members to keep a simple record to log their activities for CPD, similar to our [evidence of self-directed learning template](#). Members have the discretion to assess the number of hours in these situations. Keeping a record in this way will also meet the evidence requirements for CPD.

4.3 Category 3: Professional Identity

Maintaining and developing the professional identity of social work is a crucial aspect of professional development for social workers. This category emphasises activities that promote engagement with the profession, professional networking, and advocacy.

Activities which may be recorded in this category:

- Attending AASW special events (e.g., AGM, Awards)
- Participating in practice groups, working groups, committees or boards
- Presenting at conferences, seminars, or similar events
- Engaging in World Social Work Day activities
- Contributing to public dialogue, advocacy, policy, or research
- Promoting or presenting the social work perspective
- Publishing articles, book chapters, or complete books
- Contributing to professional publications or the learning of others
- Providing supervision, mentoring, or support to social workers and students
- Professional networking or volunteering in social work-related initiatives
- Participating in discussion groups (e.g., AASW Community Hub)*
- Viewing recorded AASW presentations that support professional identity

** Posts or comments should contribute to the shared professional knowledge of colleagues participating in the discussion group. Contributions may provide further context of the discussion topic, share resources, or reflect personal analysis or investigation (minimum 30 minutes).*

5.0 Focussed Psychological Strategies - FPS

As an Accredited Mental Health Social Worker, you must complete 10 hours of CPD activities that are relevant to Focussed Psychological Strategies. A range of evidence-based strategies has been approved for use by allied mental health professionals. Acceptable CPD under FPS can include:

1. Psycho-education (including motivational interviewing)
2. Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) including:
 - Behavioural interventions
 - Behavioural modification
 - Exposure techniques
 - Activity scheduling
 - Cognitive interventions
 - Cognitive therapy

Note: Approaches such as Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT), and Schema Therapy are considered to align with the principles of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT). These may be included in CPD where they are relevant to FPS components.

3. Relaxation strategies:
 - Progressive muscle relaxation
 - Controlled breathing
4. Skills training, which includes:
 - Problem solving skills and training
 - Anger management
 - Social skills training
 - Communication training
 - Stress management
 - Parent management training
5. Interpersonal therapy
6. Narrative Therapy (for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people)
7. Eye Movement Desensitisation Reprocessing (EMDR)

Members are required to assess whether a given CPD activity meets particular FPS areas. This may involve assessing whether a CPD activity covers components of FPS areas through a broader topic. For example, a 4-hour course on trauma may contain 2 hours specifically relevant to FPS. Please consult with your training provider for guidance on relevant FPS content.

6.0 Accredited Social Worker

Members who demonstrate that they meet the Accredited Social Worker CPD Goal (having uploaded relevant documentation supporting them meeting their CPD requirements) will be issued an [AASW digital badge](#), which serves as a recognised credential for their professional status. This badge communicates to clients, employers, and the public that the practitioner is a professionally trained social worker committed to ongoing professional development.

The digital badge can be displayed on professional profiles, resumes, and social media platforms, helping members showcase their qualifications to potential employers, clients, and professional networks. These badges replace the previous logo-based accreditation and provide verifiable proof of a member's compliance with CPD requirements.

Additionally, digital badges are issued through a secure, third-party credentialing system, ensuring authenticity and easy verification for external stakeholders. Members will receive guidance on how to access and utilise their digital badge effectively once they achieve the accreditation.

7.0 Credentials

The AASW's credentialing program enhances professional recognition for members by validating their specialised expertise in various fields of social work practice. These credentials serve as a formal acknowledgment of a social worker's knowledge, skills, and competencies within their area of specialisation. They assure clients, employers, and funding bodies that accredited social workers have undergone rigorous assessment, and continuous professional development and adhere to the highest standards of ethical and professional practice.

Furthermore, AASW credentials can provide career advancement opportunities, strengthen professional credibility, and contribute to the broader recognition of social work as a regulated and highly skilled profession.

Updated Credentials List:

- Accredited Mental Health Social Worker (AMHSW)
- Accredited Clinical Social Worker (ACSW)
- Accredited Family Violence Social Worker (AFVSW)
- Accredited Disability Social Worker (ADSW)
- Accredited Child Protection Social Worker (ACPSW)
- Accredited Older Persons Social Worker (AOPSW)
- Accredited School Social Worker (ASSW)
- Accredited Supervisor (AS)

For more information on credentials, visit the [Credentialing Program webpage](#).

8.0 CPD Goals and Hours Requirements

Members who are applying for or maintaining an AASW credential are required to complete a set number of CPD hours each financial year. All CPD activities, along with supporting evidence, must be recorded in the electronic CPD Record by 30 June.

When applying for a credential, members may use CPD hours from either the current or previous financial year, up to and including 31 January. From 1 February onwards, only CPD hours from the current financial year can be used in the application.

This table provides a summary of your requirements:

CPD Goal Type	Who is it for?	Category 1 Supervision	Category 2 Skills & Knowledge	Category 3 Professional Identity	Total CPD Hours Required
Accredited Social Worker	Any members seeking accreditation (excluding student & retired members)	10 Hours	15 Hours	5 Hours	30 hours
Accredited Mental Health Social Worker	Social workers applying for or maintaining AMHSW	10 Hours	15 Hours	5 Hours	30 hours
		20 hours of Category 2 and 3 CPD activities must be related to the Mental Health Practice Career, 10 of which must be Focussed Psychological Strategies under Category 2.			
Accredited Clinical, Family Violence, Disability, Child Protection, Older Persons, School Social Worker or Accredited Supervisor	Social workers applying for or maintaining: Accredited Clinical, Family Violence, Disability, Child Protection, Older Persons, School Social Worker Or Accredited Supervisor	10 Hours	15 Hours	5 Hours	30 hours
		20 hours of Category 2 and 3 CPD activities must be linked to the relevant Credential/Practice Career.			

Note to the table:

Those with multiple credentials may need to complete extra hours to meet set minimum required hours if the CPD they have completed is not relevant to multiple fields of practice.

Case example #1: Mary submits her application for the Accredited Family Violence Credential on 4 December 2025. She can choose to use her previous FY24/25 or the current FY25/26 CPD hours for her application. If she chooses to use the FY24/25 hours, she must also complete her FY25/26 hours in order to renew her credential by 30 June 2026.

Case example #2: Sam submits his application for the Accredited Child Protection Credential on 18 March 2026. He must use his current FY 25/26 CPD hours for his application. When it comes time for renewal of his credential by 30 June 2026, he will have already completed his CPD for that financial year.

Case example #3: Jane is an AMHSW and has completed a 5-hour course on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT). As CBT is on the Focussed Psychological Strategies list and the course was relevant to the Mental Health Practice Career, she is going to log her activity as a Category 2 Skills and Knowledge workshop and link it to both the Mental Health and FPS. This will count as 5 hours in total and have reduced her overall CPD requirements to 25 hours remaining. Jane still needs to link 15 hours of activities to Mental Health and 5 hours of FPS activities to meet AMHSW requirements.

Case example #4: John has two credentials - AMHSW and Accredited Clinical Social Worker. John has a minimum requirement of 30 hours of CPD; however, he must also link 20 hours of activities towards Mental Health, 10 hours of activities towards FPS and 20 hours of activities towards Clinical. John has found a course on Conducting a Mental Health Assessment that runs for 8 hours. John will log the activity as a Category 2 Skills and Knowledge workshop and link it to both the Mental Health and Clinical Practice Careers. This will count as 8 hours in total and have reduced his overall CPD requirements to 22 hours remaining. John still needs to link 12 hours of activities to Mental Health, 12 hours of activities to Clinical and 10 hours of FPS activities to meet his requirements. In John's situation, due to his Practice Career requirements with two credentials, John may need to undertake more than a total of 30 hours of CPD to meet his requirements.

9.0 Evidence

You are required to keep evidence of all CPD activities for a minimum of 2 years. You are required to upload your evidence to your electronic CPD record in your [MyAASW account](#). You may be required to provide evidence of CPD to the AASW at any time. Evidence can include, but is not limited to: a certificate of attendance; signed supervision attendance record/invoices or receipts; a letter from a supervisor confirming dates and times; [Evidence of Supervision Template](#), [Evidence of Self-directed Learning Template](#), journal subscription receipts or a statutory declaration (in cases where other forms of evidence are not available).

10.0 CPD Audits

The AASW will conduct annual CPD audits, at its discretion, to ensure members are providing details and evidence of their CPD requirements in order to maintain their entitlement to the use of the AASW digital badges and Credentials. It is a mandatory requirement that members comply with the CPD audit procedure.

Members will be notified in writing if they are to be part of any CPD audit process. Members will have the opportunity to provide additional activity and evidence within the audit process timeframe. The AASW will provide assistance and guidance throughout the audit process. Following the completion of the audit process, audited members will be notified of the outcome. Failure to provide details and evidence of all CPD activities may result in a loss of the credential and the use of the AASW digital badge. For AMHSWs and other credential holders, non-compliance may also result in a notification to Medicare, health insurers, and/or relevant government authorities. The AASW Privacy Policy outlines the circumstances and nature of any information being provided to a third party under statutory, legislative or contractual obligations.

It is the responsibility of the member to ensure that details and evidence of all CPD activities are entered accurately into their electronic CPD Record to meet CPD requirements by 30 June of the relevant CPD cycle. Extensions to update the electronic CPD Record will be considered at the discretion of the AASW Audit Team.

Failure to meet CPD requirements may result in a loss of use of the AASW credential/s and digital badge/s.

11.0 Special Circumstances

11.1 Part-time versus full-time requirements

The CPD requirements are the same for part-time workers as they are for full-time workers. It is the view of the AASW that it is equally important for all social workers to remain up to date with the latest theories and practice, and the requirements outlined in this document are the minimum expectations that are achievable over a year period.

11.2 Reduced CPD hours

Should a member experience difficulty in achieving their CPD requirements due to professional or personal circumstances, they may be eligible for reduced requirements in exceptional circumstances.

Professional or personal exceptional circumstances include, but are not limited to, prolonged illness, family obligations and circumstances, financial or other hardship, and career transition. Please note that the full requirement for FPS related CPD for AMHSWs must be met regardless of circumstances.

Special circumstances enquiries should be directed to membership@aasw.asn.au.

Please include the following details:

- Reason for not being able to engage in CPD
- Dates in which CPD is not able/was not able to be engaged in
- Written evidence of time away from work/from being able to engage in CPD.

Examples of evidence: a letter from the employer confirming dates of leave, a letter from a medical provider confirming dates unable to work, or a statutory declaration.

CPD Reduction requests must be submitted to the CPD Team by **no later than 31 May** each year for consideration. Enquiries should be directed to membership@aasw.asn.au.

11.3 Extensions

Extensions to update the electronic CPD Record will be considered. Determination of any extension is at the discretion of the AASW CPD Audit Team.

Enquiries should be directed to membership@aasw.asn.au.

12.0 Version Control

Version 4.2 effective date: 13.06.2025

Document Owner: GM, Education and Business Development Strategy

Version	Date	Description	Author
4.2	13.06.2025	Updated links and references to AASW documents and webpages Revised wording for clarification to Categories Removed use of word logos, replaced with digital badges Addition of three credentials, Older Persons, School, Supervisor Updated email address	GM, Education and Business Development Strategy
4.1	23.02.2023	'Field of practice' terminology replaced with 'Practice/Career' throughout document. 4.0 Categories table; 20 hours relevant to the credential Practice/Career must be achieved in Category 2 and Category 3 CPD activities	CPD Program Manager
4.0	19.09.2022	Fully revised policy	CPD Program Manager
3.4	05.04.2022	8.0 Updated dates in case examples	CPD Program Manager
3.3	19.01.2021	4.2 Additional text and clarification on Category 2 and Category 3 activities	CPD Program Manager
3.2	18.11.2020	2.0 Remove reference to CPD Endorsement 7.0 Minor wording change 8.0 Additional text and clarification	CPD Program Manager
3.1	17.09.2020	Update to Cover note Terminology of trademark/logo	CPD Program Manager
3.0	15.07.2020	Refreshed policy, revised credential CPD hours, and revised Learning Plan requirements.	CPD Program Manager

Review period: Annual (12 months) or as required

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