

IPA
CPD Gold
Accreditation:
A guide
to submitting

What is CPD Gold Accreditation?

The IPA CPD Gold Accreditation scheme recognises and rewards member agencies who demonstrate a genuine and effective culture of learning, bettering the professionalism, development and reputation of the industry, enhancing clients' brands and agencies' worth as a result.

When submitting for CPD Gold Accreditation, agencies must demonstrate that CPD lies at the heart of their business. The submission should evidence a strong and innovative culture of professional development that supports real business objectives, and the development of employees.

Crucially, the submission needs to demonstrate the CPD contributes to business success.

How to submit

1. Using the template included in [Appendix 1](#), write a CPD Gold paper, outlining how you have met the [11 Gold criteria](#). Make your submission for CPD Standard *AND* Gold Accreditation via your CPD Dashboard by 5pm, Friday 7 February.
2. Remember to include all necessary appendices, e.g. appraisal form, induction documents.
3. Ensure someone in your agency has completed the IPA free online module in Evaluating Training, a prerequisite for entry.

Suggested next steps

1. Gather a team and assign roles.
2. Attend a Gold workshop, start drafting, and start working out what you can improve. You're encouraged to begin drafting by November 2019.
3. Complete the Evaluating Training module to enter.
4. If your agency has multiple agency brands/locations and you would like to make a network or group submission, ensure you contact the IPA to discuss the options available.
5. Contact the IPA CPD Consultant, Gwyn March, to arrange support. Gwyn can give you four free hours of consultancy time to discuss your submission, and can also read and feedback on two drafts of your submission.
6. Look at the key criteria checklist:
 - A Strategic Development Plan and Strategic Development Evaluation
 - Appraisal form, format and dates for each individual
 - Welcome pack
 - Proof of CPD hours completed per person (if not using IPA CPD diaries)
 - Welcome pack
 - 10% completion of LegRegs/Commercial certificate
 - Evidence of evaluation methods e.g. feedback forms, test of learning, testimonials of use of learning, ROI
 - Agency survey data (If available)
 - Clarity on senior management involvement

The marking scheme

Marks are allocated as follows:

CPD Culture: 50%

CPD Effectiveness: 30%

CPD Innovation: 20%

Please also note that you can receive marks in more than one category for your CPD

The CPD Gold Criteria



Evidence of a strong CPD Culture: 50%

1. What evidence is there that there is an embedded CPD culture; and that CPD is seen as a tool of business success?

Is it clear that CPD lies at the heart of the business, and that senior management regard it as a vehicle of commercial success?

Key indicators of success in this criteria are:

- Thoughtful measures of success, demonstrating where CPD contributed to the business and its performance.
- Examples of senior management's involvement in CPD planning and implementation, demonstrating that the CPD Manager is not operating in isolation.
- Time and/or money are spent on CPD, with evidently diverse ways to learn and embed learning.
- Staff consultation and surveys on CPD policies such as training, on-boarding and appraisal process.
- Evaluation of CPD informs future business plans, via appraisals, for example.
- Evidence that the agency has a creative and futureproof approach to CPD, with effort made to understand and implement CPD plans that secure a broader digital skillset for example, or a diverse and inclusive workforce.
- Efforts made to increase and celebrate the agency's number of Accredited MIPAs.

Please note: agencies often include material which show that they are a great place to work. If you would like to include these initiatives, always ensure you show how social or CSR activities are related to a business goal. In order to be counted, they must tangibly and measurably have contributed to business success, e.g. engagement/retention, diversifying skill-sets etc.

2. Are development opportunities available to everyone in the agency, and do Senior Management participate?

Does everyone have access to some appropriate training, and is training well attended?

Key indicators of success in this criteria are:

- Management make efforts to continue their own professional development, they share their knowledge, they are part of the welcomes, they are involved in CPD strategy, participate in appraisals and record their CPD hours.
- Senior staff take part in mentoring, in house or via industry initiatives.
- CPD initiatives are in place for 'forgotten departments' e.g. office services, production.
- High levels of professional qualifications, e.g. Squared Online, IPA Foundation Certificate, are all indicators of meeting this criteria.

3. A comprehensive induction programme for all new joiners

Every new joiner should have some sort of planned induction, which communicates not only their new role, and what to expect, but the agency's culture.

Key indicators of success in this criteria are:

- Tailored programmes for graduates, apprentices, or emerging talent scheme.
- A "return to work" programme for those taking parental leave.
- The welcome programme should include staff from across the business – particularly senior management.
- A feedback system which delivers ongoing improvements to welcomes.
- CPD and its importance is introduced early in the new joiners' journey.
- High probation pass rate.

Please include welcome documentation as an appendix.

4. A thorough appraisal system, with annual dates recorded in CPD Diaries or in-house records

All staff should have at least one opportunity annually to discuss their progress, with documentation, objectives, and action points. The appraisal can take any form that suits the agency's culture – from a group-wide system with a performance matrix, to an informal one-to-one with summary and agreed action points written up in an email.

Key indicators of success in this criteria are:

- Managers are provided with training, or at least guidance, on how to conduct motivational appraisals.
- Appraisals assess the effectiveness of training, encouraging appraiser and appraised to discuss training completed and how it is being used.

If you do not use the IPA's Diary system, please include proof of recorded appraisal dates for all staff in your appendix. Once annually is the minimum requirement, but please include information about more frequent performance reviews if applicable.

5. Maintenance of individual CPD diaries demonstrating a minimum 24 hours (or pro rata) of development activity

Has everyone at the agency completed their required CPD hours?

Key indicators of success in this criteria are:

- 100% of staff meeting or exceeding 24 hours of CPD person, or pro rata. The industry average is 35 hours.
- Testimonials to show that the diary has been completed by the individual, and that they value the process.
- Testimonials on how learning has been applied to the business.

If you do not use the IPA's Diary system, please include records showing CPD hours completed per staff member in your appendix. Averages or sum total hours across the agency will not meet the criteria.

6. 10% of the agency must have a mandatory free qualification; LegRegs and/or the Commercial Certificate.

The agency can decide how this 10% is allocated, e.g. 3% LegRegs, 7%, Commercial Certificate. The IPA highly recommends LegRegs for staff in all agencies (creative or media) that are involved in any form of content creation for clients.

Key indicators of success in this criteria are:

- Clever or generous ways of encouraging uptake of LegRegs and the Commercial Certificate, e.g. study groups or study leave.
- Encouraging uptake in other departments, not just account management, e.g. Production.
- Clear management support for the learning.
- Testimonials demonstrating application of the knowledge.

Effectiveness: 30%

7. Do the Strategic Development Plan and Evaluation demonstrate that CPD has a role in business success, and that there are methods to be sure it has contributed in some way?

The Strategic Development Plan and Evaluation are the foundations of the submission, they allow you to demonstrate the part professional development plays in business success, and how such success will be measured.

Key indicators of success in this criteria are:

- A Strategic Development Plan, identifying business objectives and opportunities for CPD, is submitted to the IPA in April.
- A Strategic Development Evaluation, summarising and reviewing the year's L&D, is included prominently in the Gold submission.
- The business goals are specific, ideally measurable, including YoY success metrics, and related to business performance, not HR requirements.
- Clarity on who is receiving what training and why.
- Success is measured by business metrics such as staff retention or pitch wins, not by L&D/HR metrics such as numbers attending the training or how they rated the training.

Please note: Repetition of goals year on year, and inclusion of long term CPD measures are more than acceptable.

8. How well does the submission prove that CPD contributed to the business need it was designed to help?

Are you able to examine the objectives from the Strategic Development Plan and provide evidence that CPD efforts had a positive impact on the business?

CPD will not be the only reason for business success, but you should be able to evidence that it contributed. You should take a sensible decision about what can be justified, and exemplify the return on your CPD investment through case studies, testimonials, and evaluation.

It is not sufficient to show that the agency had excellent CPD and had a good business year, strong links between the two must be established and evidenced.

Examples:

1. Your agency's staff retention has significantly improved YoY, and as a result, has saved £50,000 in recruitment costs. You feel that the CPD must have made a contribution as you invested heavily in training and mentoring for the planning and creative teams, which previously saw the bulk of the turnover. The teams give great feedback, and their heads of department report they are more committed and engaged. There are no other factors, such as pay rises. You decide that 50% of the recruitment savings can be attributed to this CPD, and calculate an ROI.
2. The agency wins a new client, worth £1 million. All stages of the pitch were staffed by employees who attended AAR training, Pitch in a Day Workshops and/or YouTube Creative Essentials training. Testimonials from the staff detail how the training improved their confidence and skillset. Testimonials from the new client show that the pitch was won by the enthusiastic presentation of innovative ideas, especially the extensive knowledge of YouTube. You decide that 20% of the new business can be attributed to this CPD, and calculate an ROI.

Key indicators of success in this criteria are:

- Someone at the agency has taken the IPA's free online module in Evaluating Training. This is a mandatory prerequisite for submitting for Gold Accreditation.
- Submission authors can demonstrate their understanding of the Kirkpatrick Levels of Evaluation: Reaction, Learning, Behaviour and ROI (See Appendix 2).
- Testimonials and case studies on use of the learning, and the business results.
- ROIs formed by dividing benefits by costs and taking a sensible view on the percentage contribution that the training has made to the benefits.
- Client feedback on the levels of knowledge and expertise at the agency, particularly if they can comment on an improvement or difference since previous projects.
- Staff survey or exit interview feedback that prove training is valued and has an impact on staff retention.

You are advised to start thinking about evaluation early. For example, the most effective case studies will assess the impact of the L&D by looking at performance pre and post training.

Make practical decisions about what can reasonably be evaluated, for example Lunch & Learn sessions will rarely render an ROI, but large scale programmes such as MBAs or leadership workshops should produce results that can be evaluated at all four levels.

Don't be hesitant to include more recent initiatives that haven't yet yielded a measurable return on investment, or training where the results are not easily measured. Think of other ways you can show how the training has impacted the business and the individual, such as testimonials from the learner, or feedback from line managers and clients.

Innovation: 20%

9. Has the CPD been implemented in a clever way?

How innovative is your agency's approach to CPD?

Key indicators of success in this criteria are:

- Motivational and creative marketing of in-house training, worthy of a creative industry.
- Low cost but innovative solutions to common problems.

10. Is the submission coherent, professional, entertaining and interesting?

Is the story of how the development activity benefited the business well told and professionally presented?

Key indicators of success in this criteria are:

- Page numbers, contents page, clear appendices.
- Thorough proof reading and sense checking.
- The required documents– appraisal format, welcome programme, CPD records – are not only included but easy to navigate.
- Photographs to demonstrate the agency's culture, and to illustrate to stories of CPD success.

11. Does the submission show us anything new about how CPD can be successfully applied into a business?

What can your submission teach the industry about successful CPD?

What do you do that is unique or noteworthy? The best way to address this criteria, is to talk about the initiatives of which you are most proud and/or are known to be difficult to achieve, e.g. an international placement scheme.

Things to remember



- Let the IPA know as early as possible that you are planning to submit for CPD Gold, there is plenty of support available – including free workshops and mentoring.
- Write with brevity and clarity. Before including a case study, think about which criteria it will support, and how you can explain it concisely to your assessor, who might read 10-15 submissions.
- Don't assume that you must have a big team and training budget. Some of the best CPD success stories come from low cost initiatives.
- Make sure you always come back to the business objectives, and how CPD supported them.
- Don't assume you will automatically fail if you're weak on one criteria.
- Focus more on content than design. Your submission needs to be coherent and professionally presented, your priority should be the material about CPD culture and effectiveness, rather than the appearance.
- Think carefully about what counts as a metric of success. For example, high numbers of training attendees shows scale and efficiency of CPD, but not any contribution to a business goal.

Agencies submitting for CPD Gold Accreditation are advised to protect themselves by ensuring they do not include the personal data of their staff if it is not a necessary requirement of entry. Their own privacy policies/arrangements with their staff should ensure that their staff are aware that the agency shares some of its staff's personal data with the IPA in order to enable its staff to benefit from the IPA's services.

Please remember that the inclusion of any personal data of your agency's staff in your submission will necessitate compliance with the GDPR/Data Protection Act 2018, including the data minimisation principle (by which the data being used should be limited to what is necessary). To see how the IPA processes personal data, please visit ipa.co.uk/privacy-policy.

Appendices



One

Structure for CPD Gold Entries

1. Foreword introducing CPD culture and its role in business success.
2. Contents page (page numbers throughout)
3. Strategic Development Evaluation (year end)

Follow steps 4-6 for each business goal

4. Identify Business Goal - explain why this is a business goal for the agency
5. How CPD was designed to help this business goal – overall theme and detail of key programmes, who activity was designed for
6. How we can prove CPD contributed in some way to the success of the business goal, for each key CPD activity show evaluation as appropriate.

CPD Activity A

Kirkpatrick Level One – Reaction

Kirkpatrick Level Two – Learning

Kirkpatrick Level Three – Behaviour

Kirkpatrick Level Four – Results

Repeat for each activity as appropriate, explaining what type of evaluation method was used

Repeat stages 4-6 until Strategic Development Evaluation is complete.

If not covered as CPD activities already please make sure you include:

7. Welcome Programme
8. Appraisal Programme and dates
9. CPD Hours for each member of staff, broken down by CPD activity
10. Detail of mandatory qualifications % – LegRegs and Commercial Certificate – and policies to increase uptake
11. Management Summary (and thoughts for the future)

Two

Principles of Measurement

Measurements should contain proof of link of cause and effect. Remember, your goal is to illustrate the impact of the training – establish the connection between the business performance, e.g. pitch win, and the skills learned, e.g. pitch staffed by those who went on new business training.

Examples of common measurements:

1. Staff Survey

Positive scores and YoY change in the following categories:

- Leadership
- View of company & engagement
- Personal value
- Manager
- Training/learning

2. Staff retention/turnover

- Percentage total, and YoY change
- Probation pass rate, and YoY change
- Number of internal promotions
- improvements in absence due to sickness

3. Client retention

- Percentage total and YoY change

4. Client Feedback

- Positive scores and YoY change

5. New Business

- Number of wins
- Pitch conversion rate

6. Organic Growth

- Percentage growth

7. Digital

- Percentage growth in digital or diverse media, e.g. dynamic OOH, and YoY change

8. Awards

- Total number won, with awards named and listed

9. Finance

- Any savings following commercial training e.g. on debt reclamation

10. Revenue

- Percentage increase and YoY change