

MMSA's Continuing Professional Development Program

Professional Practice Issues

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An increasing number of professional organizations—AusIMM, European Federation of Geologists, Geological Society of London, etc.—are requiring the reporting of professional practice hours as part of their Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programs. The addition of professional practice hours recognizes that in doing one's professional work, one gains additional experience, knowledge, and insight in the areas of practice. While logical and laudable, the addition of professional practice hours to CPD programs presents two problem areas that have not been thoroughly thought out: 1) the definition of professional practice (what hours are counted) and 2) who should the professional practice hours be melded into traditional CPD programs in manner that neither gives too much or too little weight to professional practice hours. Considering the hours worked by a salaried employee, a fully employed consultant, a partially employed consultant, and the semi-retired consultant quickly illustrate the problems of an equitable melding of CPD and professional practice hours. I believe these problems stem in part by the fact that most CPD programs focus on the minimum number of required hours and fail to consider the effects of someone who logs CPD hours that substantially exceed the minimum requirements. My recommended resolution of these issues is set out below.

Defining Professional Practice Hours or Which Hours Count

Professional Practice hours record the time spent on normal work-related activities. They cover time billed to a particular project or activity recorded on time sheet completed for either an employer or client. However, and particularly for consultants, there are a wide variety of non-billable hours that count as professional practice. For the salaried professional, "overtime" hours can count as professional practice hours. These can include hours spent for a client or on a project but that are not billed for one of a variety of reasons like business development hours. Unpaid hours spent on a particular individual professional specialty can count. For example, unpaid time spent on drafting papers or presentations on professional ethics or time spent drafting documents for a professional organization, for example, proposed changes to the *SME Guide for Reporting Exploration Information, Mineral Resources, and Mineral Reserves* or revisions to standard definitions such as those issued by the CIM, or best practice guidelines or the time spent drafting the details of MMSA's CPD program. Also included is the time spent on the preparation of publications devoted one's QP specialty on nights and weekends.

Time spent in training about the NI 43-101/JORC report is relevant for the QP members. Time spent in a NI 43-101/JORC course, conference, webinar, etc. (to be specific) in the list of Main CPD Activities should be flagged as professional practice in column B.

The Geological Society of London’s Mind Map, which is on the GSL’s website and which will be placed on MMSA’s website with other CPD documents, includes the activities shown in Figure 1 as Professional Practice activities.

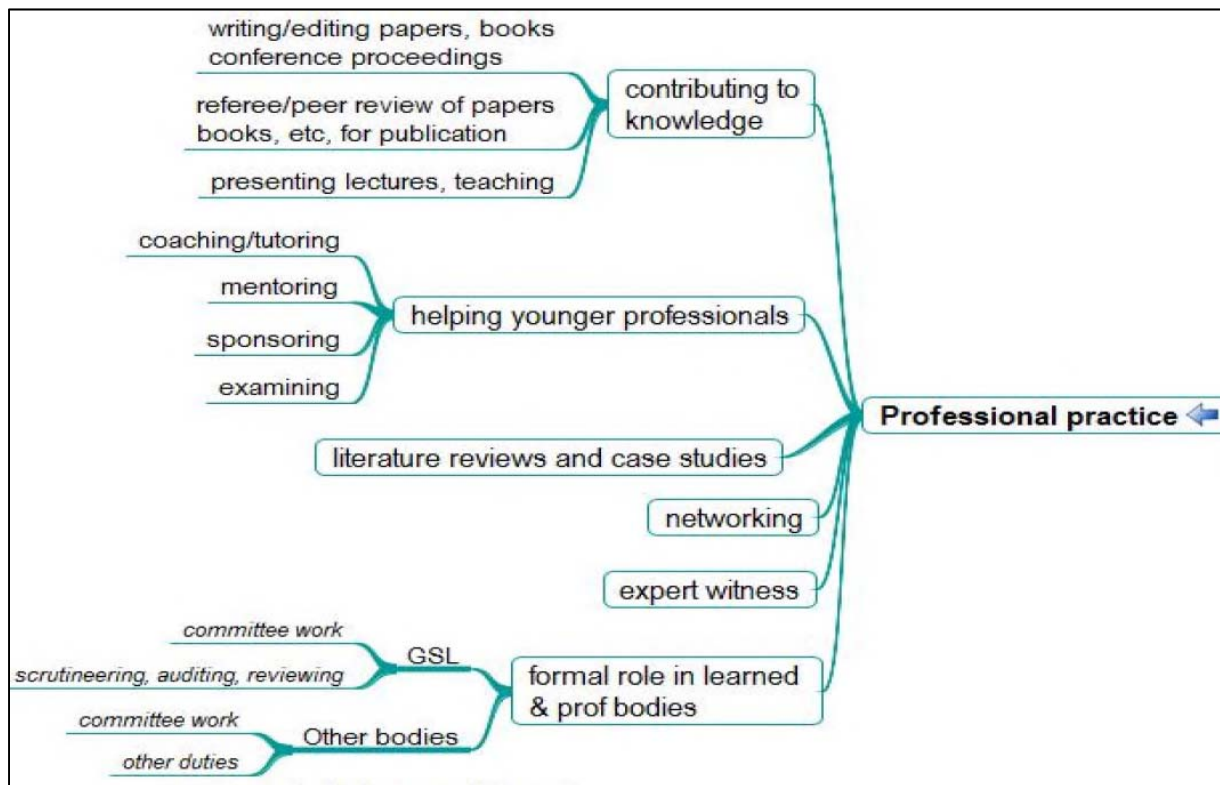


Figure 1. The professional practice activities from the GSL’s Mind Map.
<https://www.geolsoc.org.uk/~media/shared/images/Fellowship/Chartership/CPD%20Mind%20Map%20-%202017%2001%2012.png?h=424&w=613&da=en>

As can be seen in Figure 1, many of the activities recognized as professional practice are Main CPD Activities on the MMSA CPD Log including contributing to knowledge (CK) and formal committee work in learned societies and professional bodies (IE). Recognizing these activities as also counting as Professional Practice (PP) on the MMSA CPD Log requires use of the “flagging” column (column B) to count all professional practice hours.

Combining Professional Practice and CPD Hours in a CPD Program

I understand the reasons for recording professional practice hours as part of a CPD program. The problem is avoiding giving too much or too little weight to professional practice hours when combined with “traditional” Main CPD Activity hours, particularly in CPD programs like MMSA’s that allow reporting of an unlimited number of CPD hours rather than focusing on a minimum number of hours. My proposed solution for moment is to record professional practice hours in the CPD Log. MMSA’s CPD Log v 8 does this (row 18). But the professional practice hours and traditional CPD activity hours are not combined and the required minimums are for traditional CPD activities only. After a few years of collecting data from these CPD logs, MMSA will have a much

better basis for deciding if and how professional practice and traditional CPD activity hours can be combined.

Logging Professional Practice Hours

Professional Practice hours can be designated using the “PP” code on the CPD log. They are not combined with other CPD hours. Professional practice hours can be summarized by job or by month in a manner that does not disclose confidential information but does disclose the type of work being done. For example: “reserve audit in a 43-101-format report for client 1” or “worked on upgrading comminution system,” or “prepared environmental compliance reports for state DEQ” or “drafting paper on an improved technique for preventing slime formation during comminution.” “Drafting paper on an improved technique for preventing slime formation during comminution” is an example of an activity that can be logged twice, once as PP and once as CK, Contributing to Knowledge. Because PP coded hours are not combined with CPD hours, this double logging does not double the number of total CPD hours.