

CPD in Cartography



ICA, as part of its international remit, recognises there may be many cartographers in member nations who are not exposed to the educational and training facilities and opportunities appropriate for professional certification and development. The ICA Commission on Education and Training (CET) has developed guidelines for a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programme which allows individuals to accumulate professional development points, potentially leading to national certification. Such a programme could help people gain employment or promotion, and show that a cartographer has been actively involved in improving his/her cartographic education and skills despite lack of a formal programme.

Cartographic activity is often undertaken by individuals who would not consider themselves cartographers, whilst many who identify themselves as cartographers are employed in different areas of the geographic information sciences industry. So, before engaging in curriculum design, it is important to define the scope of the programme: this has been set wide-ranging, embracing workers in fields as diverse as hazard mapping and multimedia, data capture and network analysis, marine charting and community services.

The specific objectives are to initiate CPD as a valid activity, formalise activities, serve ICA member nations and maintain the leading role of ICA; this would supply a template, along with advice from an ICA representative before and during programme development and implementation. CET wants to ensure that each national CPD programme is relevant to contemporary cartographic practice and satisfies international standards and criteria; note, CPD programmes would be managed by member nations, the majority of activities provided by national government, academia and private organisations and widely publicised nationally to ensure acceptance.

CET has identified competencies contributing to the continuing professional development of a cartographer, and devised a tentative scheme of activities and credit-points allocation. The 'continuing' component is stressed; point scores at varying levels need to be renewed over a rolling two-year period. Contributory activities may include conference attendance/organisation, awards and prizes, attaining formal qualifications, participation in seminars/training programmes, publications, holding office in ICA, research or industry projects, and technical visits.

From the participant's point of view, the CPD programme should be seen as reward for maintaining a personal professional development programme. Continual upgrading of knowledge and skills will ensure national recognition for the competent practicing cartographer, a certificate to this effect being awarded every two years. Perceived benefits include this acknowledgment of lifelong education and training, and commitment to maintaining and improving professional status. Plus meeting the needs of professionals, the industry in general, and ensuring the leading role of ICA.