

Continuing Professional Development – A Requirement for Professional Engineers

S. Naranjit

Abstract

Traditionally, there are three specific aspects of training and continuing development which are recognised as being essential for ensuring competence in the practice of any profession. These are Formal Education (in the principles and fundamentals of the profession), Structured Training and Continuing Professional Development (CPD). The Formal Education is traditionally provided by an undergraduate degree programme at a university. Structured Training relates to the apprenticeship which graduates are required to undergo before they may be considered suitably qualified to hang out their shingles and enter into the practice of the profession. Having completed this apprenticeship, however, it is important for the practitioner not to remain static, but to continue to aggressively monitor developments in his particular field in order to ensure that he remains up-to-date. This third aspect is referred to as Continuing Professional Development.

While these elements of education and training are equally important in the development of the professional, this paper focuses on the third, continuing professional development, since this is the one which is least structured, least monitored, and for which least guidance is available for the individual professional. This issue has been receiving much attention by engineering institutions and licensing agencies across the globe in recent years. One major question which is being addressed is whether CPD should be a mandatory requirement for membership of engineering institutions and for licensing purposes.