



PEOPLE, CULTURE & EMPLOYMENT GOVERNANCE

Professional Development: When Your Staff's Own CPD Becomes Your Problem

A lapsed registration in a role that requires one isn't the employee's private issue. It's an operational risk

Staff professional development sits in two different categories that deserve separate governance attention, and conflating them leaves an association exposed on the first and underinvesting in the second. One is a mandatory, individually held obligation the employer has a real practical stake in. The other is a growth opportunity that is easy to neglect when budgets are tight.

Which rules apply to your association?

The law depends on how your association is set up. A **company limited by guarantee** follows the Corporations Act 2001 (Cth) and its constitution. An **incorporated association** follows its state or territory associations Act and its rules. A **registered charity** also follows the ACNC Act and the ACNC Governance Standards, and some Corporations Act rules are replaced for charities that are companies. Check your own governing documents, and get advice before decisions with legal consequences.

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When A Staff Member's Own CPD Becomes The Association's Problem

Where an association employs staff who hold their own professional registration, such as a registered tax agent preparing tax returns, an in-house lawyer with a practising certificate, or a health practitioner registered under the National Law who must meet their National Board's CPD registration standard, that individual carries a personal continuing professional development obligation tied directly to their own registration. This is not simply the employee's private concern. If that registration lapses because CPD requirements were not met, and the role requires the registration to be held, the association can find itself with a staff member unable to lawfully continue performing core parts of their actual job. Some enterprise agreements describe professional development as a shared responsibility between employer and employee. Check whether any award, agreement or contract that applies to your staff gives them paid study or CPD leave. An association that has never confirmed which of its own staff hold a personal professional registration, and what continuing obligation attaches to it, has a blind spot sitting quietly inside its own workforce, discovered only if and when a lapse actually occurs.

The Separate, Broader Growth Question This Series Has Already Flagged

Beyond mandatory, registration-linked CPD, general professional development and growth opportunity is a distinct governance question, and one the performance management discussion earlier in this quarter also flagged. Investment in staff development, connecting directly to the performance management discipline discussed earlier, is not simply a retention nicety. It is one of the more direct levers an association has for improving both individual performance and organisational capability over time.

- Confirm which staff members hold a personal professional registration requiring ongoing CPD, and understand what that obligation involves for each individual role.
- Build a clear policy on reasonable access to time and support for registration-linked CPD, treating this as a shared responsibility rather than assuming it is entirely the individual's private concern.

- Distinguish clearly between mandatory, registration-linked CPD and general professional development, since the two require different levels of urgency and different governance attention.
- Treat general professional development investment as a capability-building tool, connecting directly to the performance management discipline discussed earlier in this quarter, rather than an optional expense to trim when budgets tighten.
- Keep a simple register of roles that require registration, with expiry dates checked at each renewal against the relevant public register, such as the Ahpra register.
- Review this specific gap periodically as part of standing HR governance, since a lapsed registration discovered only after it has already affected the association's operations is an avoidable failure.

Professional development, in both its mandatory and its developmental form, is not a line item to manage passively. It is a direct input into whether an association's own staff remain both legally able and capable of doing the work the organisation depends on them for. This is one of the practical governance topics built into our Board Director course, alongside the papers, tools and frameworks that turn the principle into your board's actual practice. [Explore the course](#)

Annie Gibbins

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BOARDROOM ACTION WORKSHEET

Professional Development: When Your Staff's Own CPD Becomes Your Problem

Turn the resource into evidence, a decision and an accountable next step. Keep the completed record in your association's approved board records system.

1 What is the issue or decision?

State the governance question in one clear sentence.

2 What evidence do we already have?

Record the facts, source documents and stakeholder evidence available now.

3 What evidence is still needed?

Identify the legal, regulatory, financial, member or operational information still required.

4 What is the agreed next action?

Capture the owner, timeframe and how the matter will return to the board.

Action owner	Review date	Board decision or resolution

General education, not legal, financial, tax, clinical or governance advice. Confirm specifics at the relevant primary source or with your own qualified adviser. Nexus Leadership is operated by Lipstick Consulting Pty Ltd · ABN 15 619 120 482.

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