

Latest Update in Continuing Professional Development Programme for Professional Engineers



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Board of Engineers Malaysia (BEM) has introduced a policy on Continuing Professional Development (CPD) to further enhance professionalism among the professional engineers since 2003. As engineering is facing rapid changes, the policy enables engineers to instill and uphold a greater level of professionalism and professional expertise in view of globalisation and challenges associated with it in the international services sector.

After 3 years of voluntary implementation, it became mandatory requirement for professional engineers to renew their registration starting 1st January 2006.

The policy is aimed at further improving and broadening the knowledge and skill of engineers in performing their duties in line with current practice and regulations. On the implementation side of this CPD policy, a well-structured organisation backed by strong membership support is crucial in order to provide sufficient and appropriate training programmes for the profession.

At the moment, there are more than 10,000 professional engineers registered with the Board. With its large membership base and the pool of expertise available, the Institution of Engineers, Malaysia (IEM) was appointed by BEM on 2006 as the Certifying Body (CB) in the implementation of the CPD policy and programme.

2.0 CPD'S POLICY AND REQUIREMENT

The BEM CPD requirement is for professional engineers to keep up with knowledge of the field that they are engaged in. This is in line with a global trend requiring engineers to equip themselves with the latest development in their field of specialisation. To ignore the requirements is to the detriment of the engineer as far as renewing the practicing certificate for continued professional practice is concerned. The best bet is to take an active part in activities organised by IEM or other CPD service providers. Becoming an active member of IEM and its technical divisions is a good start.

The Training Board (Training Sub-Committee then) of IEM under the Standing Committee on Admission and Practical Training was given the task to formulate the guideline on eligible CPD activities. The main objective was to standardise and streamline various IEM activities in line with BEM CPD policy and requirements. Under the guidelines, a table with CPD Hours was produced and published in IEM bulletin (October 2005 issue) for member

usage/guidance. Based on advice by BEM, the IEM Training Board reviewed the table in which CPD Hours were based the actual contact hour accomplished.

All IEM CPD approved activities as itemised in the Table, are eligible for CPD Hours under BEM's requirement. Members are therefore encouraged to participate in these activities so that they can achieve the annual CPD Hours requirement for renewal of Professional Engineer Registration or application for International/Regional Professional Engineer Registration.

In order to uphold the quality of the programme delivered, IEM has set guidelines for the speakers. As CPD programmes are targeted at Professional Engineers, it is expected that the speakers themselves would be Professional Engineers or of equivalent status. Nonetheless, speakers of certain standing are also able to deliver their programmes in IEM.

3.0 PROOF OF ATTENDANCE

Professional engineers are again reminded that the onus is on them to obtain proof of having attained the annual CPD minimum requirement. As such, it is imperative that an engineer keeps a proper record of the activities that he or she may have taken part in or shall be taking part in. This can be in hardcopy or digital form. It is also to the benefit of engineers to acquire a thorough understanding of the concept of Continuing Professional Development and its implication to his or her professional career, especially the prospects of enjoying continued recognition as a practising professional engineer registered with the Board of Engineers Malaysia.

However, when in doubt, check with IEM about the CPD validity of any activity, especially if it is not organised by IEM, before actually committing to it, as the cost can be substantial in the event it is not CPD relevant.

4.0 IEM ACTIVITIES

CPD Hours have been pre-approved for most activities organised by IEM and the number of CPD Hours would be stated in brochures or flyers. Examples of these are technical visits, technical talks, short courses, conferences and seminars organised by the various committees, technical divisions or branches of IEM. Attending engineering-related activities such as representing IEM at external meetings, attending internal meetings as a committee member,

assisting to organise IEM activities, serving as technical paper reviewers, technical competition judges will qualify for CPD.

In an effort to help members to keep track of CPD achievements, IEM is implementing the following mechanisms for Approved CPD Activities organised by IEM only. They are categorised as follows:

4.1 Endorsements on Brochures or Flyers of Activities

Under this format, participants who attend an activity at IEM will have to bring along the original flyer circulated by IEM for the event. The participant shall sign in under the 'List Of Participants' for the said event at the registration first. The participant may then complete his or her particulars in the flyer and at the end of the event, bring the flyer to the registration counter for endorsement.

This endorsement will only be given to those who attend the full event. Upon endorsement, the participant keeps the flyer as evidence. Endorsement of flyers for technical visits will be done at IEM at the end of the visit. This endorsement will only be given on the day of the event. No fee is required for this endorsement.

4.2 Assistance by Secretariat

Under this mode, a participant who attends the IEM CPD approved activity but has lost the endorsed flyer above can request for a Certificate of Attendance for the event. He or she will have to complete a request form after the event and a fee of RM5 will be imposed. The issuance of the certificate is also on the premise that the participant has attended fully the event and has registered under the 'List Of Participants'. The certificate will be mailed to or collected by the member.

At the end of the year, members who have taken part in IEM activities can request for a complete list of activities participated for the year. A request form has to be completed and submitted with a payment of RM50 as administration fee. The complete list would be mailed to or collected by the member concerned.

4.3 IEM Multicentrix System

IEM has also taken the initiative to keep track of programmes attended by engineers by scanning on membership cards. On registration, the members present their membership cards for clocking in and, at end of program, again for clocking out. An attendance record is generated at the end of the programme. Upon request, IEM can generate a record for programmes that the members have attended in a particular year – this is typically done in late December.

5.0 NON-IEM ACTIVITIES

If members attend activities organised by other providers but which are not previously certified for CPD Hours by either BEM or IEM, they can record the equivalent CPD Hours on their own. However they must be able to justify why these activities are acceptable for CPD if and when

they are audited by BEM. Members are advised to keep all documentary evidence of the event, such as details of the event, organisers, contents of the activity, notes and whatever information that can support the case. However, it is recommended that endorsement be sought prior to the event so as to avoid non-CPD-recognition after the event has taken place.

CPD Hours may also be allocated for seminars, conferences, short courses, workshops etc. organised by training providers or institutions of higher learning that have been approved to carry out CPD activities. The CPD Hours allocated would also be indicated in their respective brochures prior to commencement of the activity. These functions would have been earlier approved by either BEM or IEM.

Activities such as writing of journal papers that are published in respectable publications, books on engineering subjects, special research reports, specific standards of practice, courses leading to a higher degree, continuing education programmes and activities in other disciplines which have a direct contribution to the development of the engineering profession are also accepted for CPD Hours.

In general, it is to the advantage of the engineer to keep a copy of brochures, announcements, certificates, notes obtained or handouts and a certified document of having participated in any activity as these may be required when seeking approval for CPD Hours later on.

6.0 CONCLUSION

An important reason why the IEM is well-placed to manage BEM's CPD programmes is that IEM is already internationally recognised by many organisations in Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs) and other arrangements within the globalisation framework. IEM is the secretariat for the registration of International Professional Engineers (IntPE) under The Engineers Mobility Forum (EMF) as well as of APEC Engineers (APEC Eng) under APEC arrangement. Under this framework, the IntPE and APEC Eng are already required to prove CPD for reregistration.

All professional engineers are therefore encouraged to actively support the CPD efforts now spearheaded by BEM so as to be on par with international professional standing in meeting the necessary practice benchmarking.

IEM activities are organised to facilitate the implementation of this CPD effort and members should take every opportunity to be a part of this effort to maintain a high standard of engineering in Malaysia. ■

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