

Monitored Professional Development Scheme (MPDS) Previous experience claim guidelines for Mentors

Introduction

The process for claiming previous experience is unique to the IMechE's MPDS process and has no reference within UK-SPEC or other Institutions. It is associated with a Developing Engineer who wishes to make a genuine claim of competence gained in a previous role and/or company as they embark on MPDS. The granting of exemption is entirely at the discretion of the Mentor and he/she is under no obligation to grant any exemption at all.

However it should not be confused with a transfer of MPDS schemes from one company to another at some point during their MPDS progression.

Background - Previous Experience Claims

Developing Engineers can claim up to a maximum of 18 months (6 quarters) previous experience if applying through the CEng route, or 12 months (4 quarters) if through the IEng route. This needs to be done upon registration. Mentors will need to make a professional judgement about the relevance and level of the experience to date and assess that experience against the UK-SPEC competences before deciding how much previous experience to credit. If, for example, the Developing Engineer has been with the organisation for two months, the mentor may consider this time to be a 'settling in' period rather than recorded professional development.

If exemption based on previous experience is claimed, this will affect the reporting dates. Exemption granted by the Mentor is viewed by the IMechE as period completed on MPDS and falls outside the reporting requirements. E.g. if 12 months are claimed, the first report due will be Year 2 Quarter 1. If a Developing Engineer starting MPDS on January 1st 2016 and is claiming 6 months previous experience, their first quarterly report will be started from Year 1 Quarter 3 and the first annual assessment will be due 1st July 2016.

MPDS registration form – Section 4b detail

This section must be completed by the mentor even if no previous experience is being claimed. Previous experience should not be confused with a change of employer. If the DE is already registered on MPDS and wishes to transfer to an MPDS at another organisation, they should complete a transfer form. Once registered they may upload evidence of previous experience onto the evidence section of their MPDS account.

Evidence and Assessment

Experience within the Institution would typically suggest that one year in industry is usually grounds for a claim ranging between 6 and 12 months, dependant on just how much interaction and responsibility the Developing Engineer has undertaken. If the Developing Engineer has completed four placements of three months which covered differing topic areas then 12 months may be justified. The decision is purely at the discretion of the mentor as a professional engineer. Assuming the Developing Engineer must complete approximately 4 years on the Scheme for Chartered Engineer, then you may consider whether the Developing Engineer's year in industry submission is worthy of 12 months out of 48 (25%) of the total competence development required to directly satisfy the UK-SPEC competences. It is about ensuring the correct balance for the Developing Engineer and the ultimate objective which is a successful Professional Review Interview at the end of the nominal 4 year MPDS period (for CEng).

The Developing Engineer must produce a written report on the experience gained and how it relates to UK-SPEC. The Mentor can assess and quantify whether a 1:1 exemption can be granted. The Mentor should consider the aspects of the Company MPDS scheme and if the Developing Engineer would be missing out by granting an exemption and may decide to grant a lesser exemption, which would be in the best interests of the Developing Engineer's development. Similarly the Mentor should consider the impact on the Developing Engineer's ability to progress up the scoring system with all of the UK SPEC competences in the reduced time. In order to justifiably claim previous experience on a full 1:1 basis the Developing Engineer should provide competence based evidence which has been verified by a professional engineer. In the event that the Developing Engineer cannot provide this verification it is suggested that the mentor work on a 2:1 basis (i.e. 12 months unverified evidence would equal a previous experience claim of 6 months). The responsibility is then with the Developing Engineer to provide evidence to satisfy their mentor.

FAQs for DEs

Can I claim for any previous experience?

Yes, if the experience gained can be directly linked to the UK-SPEC competences and is approved by your Mentor.

If I register on to MPDS can my previous experience in mechanical engineering be taken into account?

When you register onto MPDS you should provide verified records of your previous experience to your Mentor. If the experience is relevant to your current organisation then your Mentor can allow your previous experience to be taken into account. The maximum amount of previous experience that may be claimed is 12 months, if working toward IEng, and 18 months if working toward CEng. Your Mentor will want to see evidence of your experience e.g. your log books, project/assignment notes and learning experiences, quarterly reports and interim reports signed by your line manager or the supervising professional engineer within the company. These should have clear references to the UK-SPEC competence you have attained through this experience. Your Mentor's assessment is based on an ethical and professional judgement. This assessment must be carried out on/or before your registration onto the company MPDS scheme. The approved period will be noted on your registration form. We do not generally accept claims for previous experience if they are requested after you have registered on MPDS for more than one year.

Should I summarise my previous training? Do I fill in the Quarterly Reports?

You have been asked to summarise the previous training claim that your Mentor has authorised. If you have written records of this then log the details online in MPDS as a piece of 'Evidence' clearly stating the period claimed. Your mentor will then sign off online. Then start your quarterly reports at the appropriate period e.g. if 12 months previous training claim is approved, you will start records from Year 2 Quarter 1.

I've received my assessment dates but I have some previous experience, does this count?

You can claim up to 18 months (for CEng) previous experience. If you are making the claim after registration you need your Mentor to write confirming the number of quarter's previous experience and where this took place. Please be aware previous training claims can only be accepted in the 1st year of registration.

Summary Guidelines for Mentors

- There is no obligation on the mentor to grant any exemption at all
- It is unlikely that DEs will be granted exemption in the ratio of 1:1 compared with their prior experience.
- The Mentor will want to see evidence of the DE's experience e.g. log books, project/assignment notes, learning experiences and any reports signed by the DE's line manager or the supervising professional engineer within the company.
- The Mentor should check whether there are company norms regarding MPDS exemption
- It is good practice to upload the exemption claim document to Career Developer as Evidence, and for the mentor to add a comment noting his or her decision. This creates an audit trail.
- It may be helpful to seek the opinion of an experienced fellow Mentor when first considering exemption claims, to ensure consistency of approach.