



OER Africa CPD Frameworks Academic Librarians

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What Is a Continuous Professional Development Framework and Why Should We Use One?

Continuous Professional Development

Continuous Professional Development¹ (CPD) is ‘the term used to describe the learning activities professionals engage in to develop and enhance their abilities’ (The CPD Certification Service, nd). In the context of CPD in higher education, we can use the following definition: ‘professional learning that results in changes to knowledge and practices, and *improvements in student learning outcomes*²’ (Darling-Hammond, Hylar, & Gardner, 2017).

CPD Framework

A CPD framework can be used across all disciplines but is commonly used in the context of education. It serves as a planning guide that supports the career development of higher education professionals. Although CPD can occur in an ad hoc and informal manner, having a structured framework ensures that professional development is more intentional and effective. Essentially, a framework can assist in the planning process.

The three key drivers that most commonly increase the demand for CPD in higher education globally are:

- The massification and marketisation of higher education;
- The digitalisation of higher education; and
- The value of professional success for individual academics.

(Inamorato, Gausas, Mackeviciute, Jotatutyte, & Martinaitis, 2019)

The same researchers also identify barriers that discourage higher education professionals from participating in CPD, such as:

- Reluctance to renounce (teaching) practices with which they are familiar;
- The absence of incentives for teaching development in higher education institutions;
- Lack of time; and
- A lack of pedagogical expertise and institutional capacity to develop effective CPD schemes.

Our experience over the past decade at OER Africa is that ad hoc CPD, which relies on individuals participating voluntarily, has seen limited adoption. To encourage academics to participate in CPD, a clear pathway that maps out the full spectrum of skills and competences required for different audiences within higher education institutions is a possible way forward to encourage participation in CPD and to make it more purposeful.

One of three CPD frameworks we have developed is for academic librarians. The other two are for academics and senior management.

¹ Here we refer to Continuous Professional Development. It is also known as Continuing Professional Development.

² Our italics. This is relevant for our CPD framework for academics.

Why Develop a CPD Framework For Academic Librarians?

Libraries and the role of librarians are impacted by the ever-evolving knowledge landscape. Traditionally, knowledge was accumulated and stored in tangible formats with standardised production methods and predetermined access points for dissemination and retrieval. Developments in information technology from the 20th century to the present day have caused seismic changes in the knowledge landscape. The changes in how knowledge is created, shared, accessed, and reused affect the expectations and usage behaviours of library users. These changes have become compounded in the age of smart technologies and generative Artificial Intelligence (AI). They have also significantly increased access to a wealth of digital resources and services, which, in turn, has created new learning and adaptation challenges for libraries.

Arguably, these challenges are most evident in academic libraries which serve as the nucleus of their parent institutions whose core activity is the pursuit of knowledge through teaching, learning, and research. Academic librarians are therefore obligated to keep learning to:

- Update their knowledge;
- Develop requisite skills that would enable them to expertly navigate the evolving landscape of knowledge and digital resources; and
- Provide high quality and current information services that meet the expectations of their user communities.

This requires a strategic CPD framework that empowers these professionals to engage in a structured learning and development process, enabling them to effectively provide resources and services that enhance rigorous research, quality education, and critical thinking within their institutions.

The proposed CPD framework differs significantly from ad hoc CPD initiatives that individual professionals often pursue when they come across advertised or available training opportunities which may or may not directly address the essential knowledge and skills needed for best practices in their areas of competence. A strategic CPD framework clearly identifies the areas of expertise that require continuous updating, along with the full spectrum of skills and proficiencies necessary for competence in these domains. Institutional adoption of such a framework could also create a pathway for incorporating the acquisition of these competences into assessment and promotion criteria.

The CPD Framework for Academic Librarians³

This CPD framework is for academic librarians¹ in all African tertiary institutions. Using the framework would bring about planned, ongoing, and continuous learning for African academic librarians for improved service delivery, better engagement with knowledge trends, and increased ability to integrate useful technology into information provision. The framework consists of domains and capability descriptors.

Domains are areas of expertise and capability that are considered critical for African academic librarians to competently deliver information services that drive teaching, learning, and research

³ This refers to librarians working in libraries within tertiary institutions, including universities, polytechnics, monotechnics, and other higher education institutions. Some also argue that library educators—those who teach in library schools—should be considered academic librarians.

for quality and inclusive education. The framework has ten domains, as outlined in Figure 1 below.

Each domain has **capability descriptors** that break the domain down into smaller units and which could also be regarded as knowledge, skills, and competences to be acquired for each indicated domain.

Figure 1 The CPD framework for academic librarians



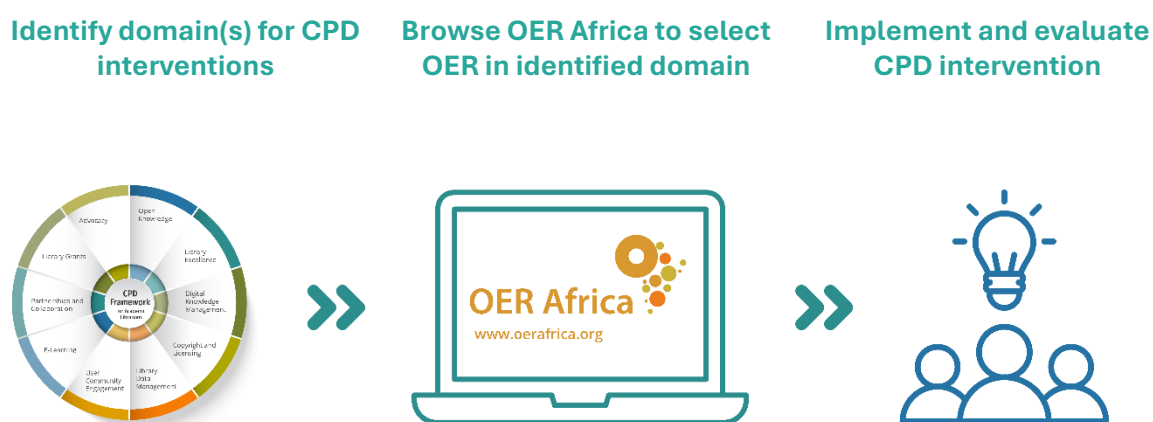
While ten distinct domains have been identified, they are interconnected and often overlap. For example, there are linkages between the *Open Knowledge* and *Copyright and Licensing* domains as they both have elements concerning the management of intellectual property. Also, there are linkages to AI in the *Copyright and Licensing*, *Digital Knowledge Management* and *Advocacy* domains. This is because academic librarians need to understand how to ethically manage AI authoring and should be involved in developing guidelines or policies to guide its use. Where there are such linkages, the capability descriptors can serve as guidelines that indicate the particular aspect of the overlapping subject being referred to.

Framework Purpose

This framework is designed to be used by those responsible for managing CPD at various levels within a tertiary institution, such as Deputy Vice Chancellors, Deputy Rectors, Human Resources Units, and Continuing Education Units, as well as academic library staff and faculty members in library schools who seek to advance their professional development. The CPD framework can be used by anyone responsible for designing CPD strategies and activities for academic librarians, for developing a CPD policy, and for providing CPD resources to academic librarians. The steps in using the framework are shown in Table 1 and summarised in Figure 2.

How To Use the Framework

Figure 2 Illustration of how a library or institution could use the CPD framework.



This framework can be used individually, by an academic library or adopted by the parent institution of an academic library for use in several ways including:

- An academic library may decide to conduct a workshop on *Open Knowledge* or *Digital Knowledge Management* or on any of the domains in Table 2 for its academic library. It can narrow the focus by choosing one or more capability descriptors for the corresponding domains as outlined in Table 2.
- An institution may wish to conduct CPD programmes for different professionals based on their own context. For example, a university in Kenya might adopt the framework for academic librarians and focus on domains such as *Copyright and Licensing*, *E-Learning*, and *Partnerships and Collaborations*, recognising the library's crucial role in supporting the launch of a distance education programme for select faculties. The institution could integrate the theme of distance education, for example, into one or more of the domains in the framework.

In the above instances, the CPD organizers could refer to Table 1 below to *plan* the professional development programme, then access resources from the OER Africa website to assist them to *implement* their intervention.

The following steps can be applied flexibly and do not need to be completed in sequence. You can adapt them based on the type of CPD interventions you plan to implement.

Table 1 Steps in using the CPD framework by a library or an institution

Step	Description	Using the CPD framework and OER Africa CPD resources site
Develop CPD policy	Develop a new or review the existing CPD policy to create a conducive environment for CPD in the library and/or institution.	
Assess needs and outcomes	Conduct a needs assessment by identifying the specific skills, knowledge, and competences that academic librarians already have and what they need to develop.	Examples can be drawn from the Capability Descriptors in Table 2.
Determine relevant professional development domain areas	Determine the focus of your CPD interventions through a needs analysis, which can be conducted via stakeholder consultations with library educators and the National Library Association. Alternatively, you could benchmark professional development domains against those of other institutions.	Identify domains from the CPD framework provided in Figure 1.
Plan your CPD interventions	When planning your CPD interventions, consider the available resources, including resource persons, finances, space, format (online, physical, or hybrid) and the timeline during which you wish to execute the plan.	Refer to Table 2 for the detail on four domains from the framework.
Go to the OER Africa CPD collections website	Based on the CPD interventions you wish to implement, choose appropriate CPD OER on which to base your activities. The openly available courses or resources could be adapted to make them more inclusive with examples from the local context.	Search the OER Africa website for relevant resources to use for the interventions.
Market your CPD interventions and incentivise your staff	Raise awareness about the CPD framework by highlighting its benefits for staff and detailing the interventions you plan to implement. Encourage participation by offering incentives such as certificates of excellence for outstanding performance and off-duty days. Additionally, seek institutional support to incorporate CPD activities as criteria for promotion.	
Execute your CPD interventions	A CPD plan that is not implemented will not make any impact. Carry out the CPD interventions as planned.	Adapt (if necessary) and use resources on the OER Africa website.
Monitor and evaluate your CPD interventions	Monitoring and evaluation are crucial to ensure the interventions are successful and having the desired impact. The goal of a successful CPD intervention for academic librarians is to enhance service delivery by integrating current knowledge approaches, thereby promoting quality and inclusive education.	Review against the capability descriptors in Table 2 to see the extent to which academics have learnt new knowledge and skills.

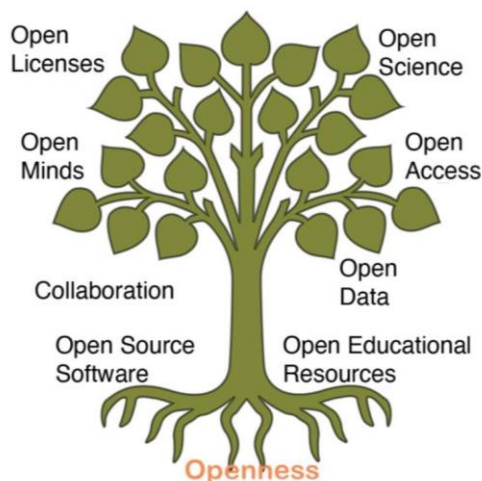
The Ten Domains

1. Open Knowledge
2. Copyright and Licensing
3. Digital Knowledge management
4. Library Excellence
5. Library Data Management
6. E-Learning
7. User Community Engagement
8. Partnerships and Collaborations
9. Advocacy
10. Library Grants

Five Key Domains from the Framework

Academic libraries are at the epicentre of research, teaching, and learning in tertiary institutions as they ensure equitable access and availability of knowledge. Digital transformations in the knowledge universe have thrown up new ways of acquiring, processing, storing, and making information and resources available. There is a need for targeted CPD for academic librarians so that they can function optimally in current times. Five crucial CPD domains have been listed as key areas for academic librarians. These domains are described in detail in Table 2. First, these professionals play crucial roles in creating awareness and buy-in to **Open Knowledge**. Openness is at the root level of the open knowledge tree shown below; all open content stems from this root.

Figure 3 Openness



Academic librarians ensure that their institutional repositories, which are important for collaborations among researchers and scientists, are maintained and properly indexed. Second, the internet and technological advancements have significantly impacted **Copyright and Licensing**, making it easier to access, disseminate, and duplicate knowledge resources in various formats, both legally and illegally. This shift comes as knowledge is increasingly recognised as a public good, even before being considered a private right.

The recognition that knowledge is critical for sustainable development and the availability of information and communication technologies have highlighted the need and increased understanding of why knowledge cannot wholly be a 'private good' but can also be regarded as a public good with non-rival and non-excludability qualities.

These developments have underscored the importance of democratising access to knowledge as a means of empowering individuals and communities to drive societal transformation.^{4,5} Twenty-first century librarians therefore need to learn how copyright provisions enable them to do their work, as well as the possibilities within the open licensing spectrum that promote knowledge as a public good. Third, proficiency in **Digital Knowledge Management** is essential as the continuously evolving methods of organizing, processing, preserving, and creating access points for digital knowledge in different formats, including online platforms and applications, are essential for enhancing information delivery to library users.

Fourth, benchmarking **Library Excellence** assists academic libraries to set standards, focus on targeting user satisfaction, improve performance, and identify gaps in services. This is deemed essential for academic libraries that would want to serve as the central hub of learning, teaching, and research. Fifth, the collection, processing, storage, preservation, accessibility, and usability of data generated within the research process by library users is an area that academic librarians need to know how to navigate. Therefore, being skilled in **Library Data Management** provides opportunities for these professionals to play an invaluable role in the research processes within their institutions.

Table 2 Five key domains and capability descriptors for academic librarians

Domain	Capability descriptor. Academic librarians can....
Open Knowledge The democratisation of knowledge boosts innovative solutions to development challenges.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explain the concepts of openness and knowledge as a public good. - Propagate the principles of open science, open data, open access, open education, open knowledge and implications for knowledge creation, scholarly communication, storage, dissemination, and libraries. - Explain the characteristics and advantages of open knowledge across different disciplines to support decision-making for its adoption. - Create clear pathways for library users to understand how to adopt open science, open licensing, open data, open access, open educational resources, and other open knowledge practices. - Find, use, and contribute to repositories of open resources. - Define indicators and keep track of progress towards awareness, adoption, and use of open knowledge practices within the institution. - Advocate and make inputs into institutional policies that support open knowledge.
Copyright and Licensing Understanding the different pathways for managing access and use of intellectual properties of authors and creators.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implement copyright and licensing practices in the knowledge landscape, including their application to contemporary knowledge formats. - Explain local implications of relevant treaties administered by the World Intellectual Property Organization.

⁴ Suber, P. (2009). Knowledge as a public good.

https://dash.harvard.edu/bitstream/handle/1/4391171/suber_public%20good.html

⁵ Archibugi, D., & Filippetti, A. (2015). Knowledge as a public good. In: The Handbook of global, science, technology and innovation. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118739044.ch23>

Domain	Capability descriptor. Academic librarians can....
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assist user communities to understand the principles and application of open licensing, and the entire spectrum of Creative Commons licences. - Show an understanding of how the technologies and licences within digital rights management operate. - Lead user communities to understand ethical copyright and licensing issues as they pertain to generative AI.
<p>Digital Knowledge Management Organizing, processing, preserving and creating access points for digital knowledge in different formats.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Show a firm grasp of the different levels of digital literacy skills and how to facilitate the acquisition of such skills for library users. - Understand how to create comprehensive (structural, descriptive, and content) metadata for digital resources and objects. - Acquire curation and sharing techniques for digital resources and objects. - Display basic repository management skills. - Display a basic understanding of the implications and applications of AI authoring, knowledge assistance, and learning. - Review features, accessibility, and usability of applications that provide digital access to books, journals, and reference sources e.g. R Discovery, Scribd, Headway, Researcher, Zotero, Blinkist, etc. - Explore integration of knowledge and e-books apps into regular library service e.g. Leganto (ProQuest), ePlatform Digital libraries, Libby, Ex Libris, Bookshelf, etc. - Provide resources and basic technical skills to users who create digital content, whether as standalone resources or integrated into other formats e.g. podcasts, videos, blogs, ebooks, memes, GIFs, presentations, newsletters, and infographics. - Secure migration and transfer strategies for digital resources. - Show familiarity with technologies and skills for digital preservation including web crawling and archiving tools, and digital content management systems.
<p>Library Excellence Benchmarking library services and librarian’s skills for excellence in academic library services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify and develop key metrics and indicators for skills and services that align with both the goals and resources of their libraries and the broader objectives of the institution. - Delineate and continuously update the expected outcomes of library services for each stratum of the user community, taking into account their perceived and actual knowledge needs. - Incorporate quality assurance processes to ensure that library services deliver positive outcomes that align with the expressed or expected goals of both the library and the institution. - Do a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis of internally generated data in comparison to peer institutions to benchmark library excellence. - Work with relevant human resources sections to align performance indicators to globally or nationally accepted standards for excellent academic library services.
<p>Library Data Management The collection, processing, storage, preservation, accessibility and usability of data generated within the research process by library users</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Describe the fundamentals of developing a data management plan. - Drive procedures and use tools that enable methodical and consistent research data collection. - Develop inclusive metadata for describing and creating access points for research data. - Understand the roles of Persistent Identifiers in data management and roles of organizations such as ORCID, Datacite, and Crossref.

Domain	Capability descriptor. Academic librarians can....
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create or identify viable storage options for library research data that takes cognisance of large volume files including discoverable and accessible repositories. - Understand research security measures and subsisting management policies, regulations, and guidelines concerning data management. - Understand data management and how to help library users with making their own research data openly accessible. - Advocate for and practise ethical sharing of research data including linking, reuse, citations, and authenticity. - Advocate for and promote policies, while providing support services that emphasise responsible data management practices.

Five Other Domains from the Framework

Table 3 Five other domains and their capability descriptors

Domain	Capability descriptors. Academic librarians can:
E-Learning Harnessing e-learning resources, practices, and trends for qualitative, inclusive, accessible education and learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Access, review, adapt, and create courses that are openly licensed and available online for different disciplines. - Match and connect the faculty members and students to courses that could enhance and expand their learning experiences. - Create and facilitate tutorials or provide tips to enable understanding of different e-learning platforms. - Assist faculty members to develop blended learning practices and create hybrid course activities and online tutorials/courses for distant learning. - Transform library spaces into online classrooms as needed.
User Community Engagement Understanding the information priorities of diverse user communities and designing channels for inclusive service delivery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop competences in designing accessible and user-friendly library services, interfaces, and websites that answer directly to users' diverse needs. - Create inclusive communication channels for real and potential users, including those for inputs and feedback from users. - Develop pathways for addressing questions, challenges, and inquiries from all levels of the user community, ensuring they receive the necessary assistance. - Connect users for collaborations. - Incorporate cultural intelligence to understand and appreciate the diverse perspectives, experiences, and contexts of users.
Partnerships and Collaborations Working with other organizations within and outside of the library ecosystem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strategize on how to identify and attract possible partners in the knowledge sector within and outside the continent. - Align the objectives of libraries with organizations that have similar interests including other libraries. - Negotiate equitable partnership agreements, including those that enable resource sharing. - Frame and structure the purpose(s) and area(s) of collaboration.

Domain	Capability descriptors. Academic librarians can:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use library associations as a springboard for building collaborations. - Manage projects and know how to clearly communicate milestones, research communication, expected outcomes, and processes for the partnership and/or collaboration.
<p>Advocacy Influencing actions and decisions that impact the knowledge ecosystem.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Set the agenda for policies that promote digital inclusion and adaptability. - Make a case for library exemptions when digital knowledge is being censored through internet throttling or site blocking. - Drive mitigating initiatives against threats to knowledge integrity within the institution. - Suggest and initiate regulatory pathways for use of AI by faculty members, researchers, and students.
<p>Library Grants Engaging with fund giving bodies when there are service delivery ideas bigger than the budgetary allocation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Search for and understand calls for grant applications. - Develop the ability to align grant proposals with the grantors' expectations, the mission statement of your library, or specific library projects. - Develop strategies to maximise success when your government-funded library collaborates with non-governmental organizations to secure grants or run a crowdfunding campaign. - Write different types of grant applications as required by funding bodies. - Highlight clear, measurable value with the funds provided. - Produce insightful reports on funds received for both the funding organization and the library's parent organization.

Works Cited

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