



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Sustainable Farming Scheme – Universal Layer

UA4: Continuous Professional Development (CPD) – Guidance for External Learning 2026

March 2026



Introduction

The SFS places a strong emphasis on Continuous Professional Development (CPD) as a key component of delivering sustainable outcomes for Welsh agriculture. The learning completed can be provided through Farming Connect (FC) or delivered by a different and independent learning provider.

This guidance is only applicable to those who choose to complete all or part of their learning outside of Farming Connect.

The Welsh Government does not have an approval or accreditation process for CPD delivered by independent learning providers.

Farmers should ensure any learning they undertake meets the principles detailed in the SFS Universal Layer: Guidance 2026 to qualify for CPD. This guidance provides additional information to help assess whether the learning provision will meet the CPD requirements of the scheme.

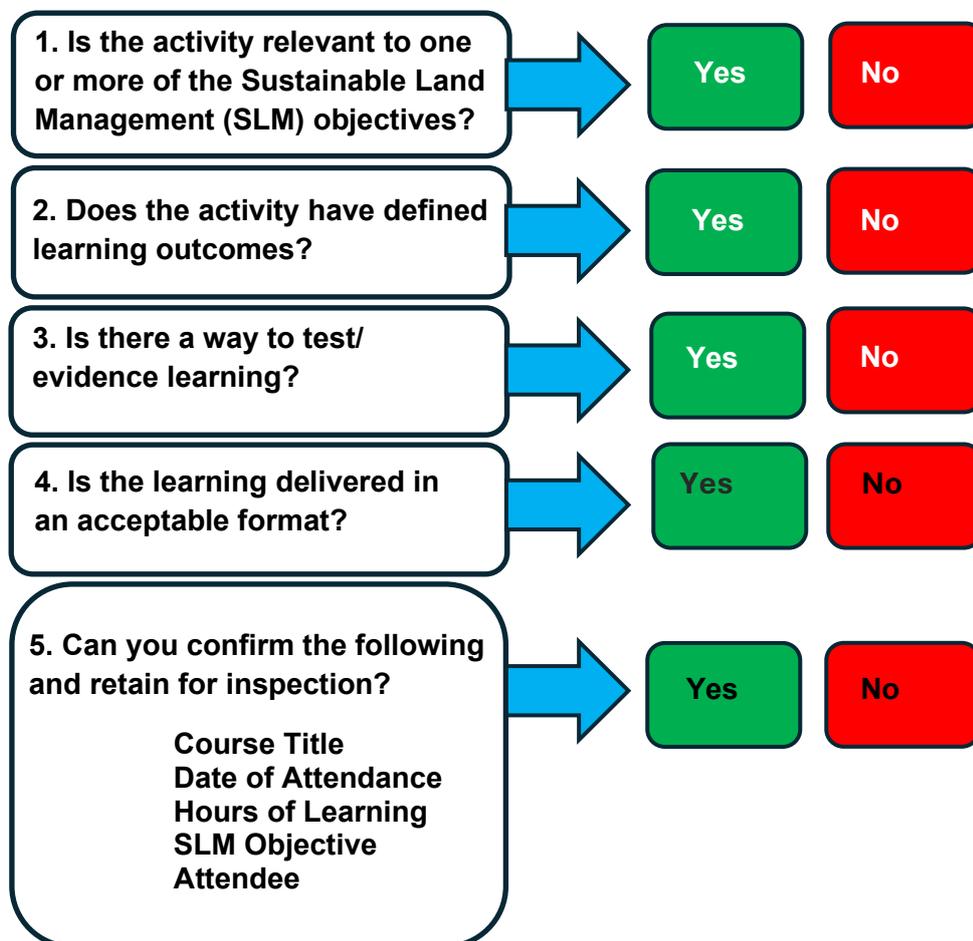
It is important to note that attending training by independent learning providers **will not** automatically update a participant's Storfa Sgiliau account on the Farming Connect or Business Wales website in the same way as Farming Connect attended learning events are updated.

Independent learning providers must provide evidence of attendance and participants will have to record these details on their SFS Universal Dashboard on RPW Online by **15 January**.

This evidence **must** then be retained on-farm for inspection for 5 years.

CPD Decision Tree

This decision tree is designed to help you quickly determine what activities qualify for UA4: CPD



✓ If ALL answers are YES → The learning counts towards UA4: CPD

✗ If ANY answer is NO → The learning does NOT count towards UA4:CPD

Glossary

Sustainable Land Management Objectives

The four sustainable land management objectives (SLM) are as below. All learning events or sessions must be relevant to one or more of these objectives:

- **sustainable production of food and other goods**

Producing food and other goods in a way that is environmentally, economically and socially sustainable, that promotes high standards of animal health and welfare and that safeguards the ability of future generations to do the same. Factors relevant to whether food and other goods are produced in a sustainable manner include, among other things, the resilience of agricultural businesses within the communities in which they operate and their contribution to the local economy.

- **mitigate and adapt to climate change**

Mitigating climate change is likely to involve reducing climate change through the reduction of operational and embedded greenhouse gas emissions as well as maintaining and increasing the capacity of agricultural land to drawdown and sequester carbon. Adapting to climate change is likely to involve taking action to minimise the effects of climate change.

- **maintain and enhance the resilience of ecosystems and the benefits they provide**

For the purposes of the third objective, factors relevant to the resilience of ecosystems include, among other things, their diversity within and between ecosystems, the connections within and between them, their scale, their condition (including structure and functioning), and their adaptability.

- **conserve and enhance the countryside and cultural resources; and promote public access to and engagement with them; and to sustain the Welsh language and promote and facilitate its use**

For the purposes of the fourth objective, “cultural resources” include, among other things, cultural heritage and the historic environment.

Defined learning outcomes

The ability to define what knowledge the participant will have acquired and what they will be able to do upon successfully completing the activity or attending the event.

For example, “By the end of the session, you will be able to take a soil sample in line with industry best practice and label it for testing.”

Test/evidence learning

Definition: providing opportunity to gauge participant understanding of the learning

Examples of ways of testing/evidencing learning can include (but not limited to):

- Q&A prompts
- Case study discussion
- Structured assessment
- Record of defined learning outcomes
- Reflective log
- Practical demonstration with instructor feedback

Acceptable learning formats

We will accept learning in a range of formats and settings including:

- e-learning
- discussion groups/seminars/workshops
- on farm demonstrations
- accredited training
- masterclasses
- mentoring

Specific sessions within conferences or other educational events are also accepted provided they are relevant to a SLM objective.

Confirmation of attendance and evidence retention

Evidence must be retained, for example, an attendance certificate, letter or event confirmation, detailing the provider’s name, date, time, duration, named individual attending, and the SLM objective covered. This detail will need to be entered on the SFS Universal Dashboard on RPW Online by **15 January**.

There is no requirement for a specific format for the evidence, provided it includes the details above.

Participants must retain evidence of any courses attended and completed with external learning providers and make available at inspection, as requested.

Non-Compliant Activities

The following activities are not accepted as CPD for the purposes of UA4.

Category	Activities NOT accepted
Social or non-learning events	Attending agricultural shows, markets, or events for social purposes or buying/selling/judging livestock. Networking sessions without structured learning content.
Travel time	Time spent traveling to and from a learning event.
Unstructured or passive attendance	Sitting in on a meeting or briefing without defined learning objectives or engagement.
Purely promotional or commercial sessions	Sales pitches or product demonstrations without educational content linked to SLM objectives.
Activities unrelated to SLM objectives	Any training or event that does not support one or more of the statutory SLM objectives.

Example Learning Topics by SLM Objective

To aid understanding of what topics could be relevant to the SLM objectives and therefore count as CPD, the examples below are given. These are for illustrative purposes and is **not an exhaustive list**. There may also be topics that could support multiple SLM objectives.

SLM Objective	Examples of learning activities/topics
Sustainable production of food and other goods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farm business planning and performance as part of sustainable production systems • Nutrient management planning and precision application • Integrated pest management and reduced pesticide use • Animal health and welfare best practice • Improving water use efficiency • Diversification and sustainable supply chain development • Reducing food waste and improving resource efficiency • Converting to Organic or Regenerative Farming • Horticulture start-up and development
Mitigating and adapting to climate change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carbon footprint reduction strategies • Soil carbon sequestration and regenerative practices • Low-emission livestock systems

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renewable energy generation and energy efficiency on farms • Climate risk assessment and adaptation planning • Agroforestry and tree planting for carbon storage • Energy efficiency and producing renewable energy • Reducing Emissions and Improving Sequestration on Farm • Efficient Water Use (Including Harvesting and Storage)
<p>Maintaining and enhancing the resilience of ecosystems and the benefits they provide</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habitat creation and restoration (e.g. hedgerows, wetlands, woodlands) • Enhancing soil biodiversity and structure • Pollinator-friendly farming practices • Landscape conservation and connectivity • Sustainable grazing systems to protect habitats • Farming in Protected Sites • Habitat identification • Semi Natural Habitat Creation - In-field Options
<p>Conserving and enhancing the countryside and cultural resources; promoting public access and engagement; sustaining the Welsh language and promoting and facilitating its use</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing historic features and cultural heritage on farmland • Public access planning • Welsh language integration in training and farm communications • Protecting and Enhancing the Historic Environment • Understanding Landowner Responsibilities for Public Access and Opportunities for Engagement

CPD Compliance Checklist

This checklist (alongside the information above) is designed to be a quick reference in helping you determine whether externally delivered learning meets the standards and requirements specified for UA4.

(Tick all that apply for the overall offer)

- Activities are relevant to one or more **SLM objectives**:
 - Produce food and other goods in a sustainable manner
 - Mitigate and adapt to climate change
 - Maintain and enhance the resilience of ecosystems
 - Conserve and enhance the countryside and cultural resources, including sustaining the Welsh language and promoting engagement.
- Defined learning outcomes for each session.
- Ability to test learning (e.g., Q&A, discussion prompts, case studies, formal assessment).
- Proof of attendance, learning objectives, link to SLM objectives and duration can be given (and then retained by the participant for inspection).