Continuing Professional Development

A Guide – CPD Requirement 2020 - 2022

Background

This guide is based on the up to date bye-laws of the Institute. In the event of a conflict between this guide and the bye-laws, the bye-laws will prevail.

Continuing Professional Development is the maintenance of professional competence by continuous updating of knowledge and skills. It is the responsibility of the individual member to develop and maintain the professional competence necessary to provide high quality services to clients, employers and other stakeholders.

In May 2004, The International Federation of Accountants (IFAC) issued IES7 on Continuing Professional Development. This Standard requires all its member bodies, of which the CPA Institute is one, to implement mandatory CPD for members with effect from January 2006. As the Institute had already committed to mandatory CPD for all members in 1991, we were well positioned to meet its requirements.

Since 2006, the Institute's bye-laws have been revised and this Guide reflects the changes since then. The requirements from January 1st 2011 can be summarised as follows:

Members in business must complete 60 hours Structured CPD hours and 60 Unstructured CPD hours in each three year cycle. A minimum of 20 hours are to be completed in each year, of which 10 of these have to be structured hours

Practicing Members must complete 75 Structured CPD hours and 45 Unstructured hours over a 3 year cycle. A minimum of 30 hours are to be completed in each year, of which 15 of these have to be structured hours

In addition Practicing Members must complete 40 Structured CPD hours in six core competencies over a three year cycle; financial accounting, auditing, company law, taxation, professional ethics and, practice management.

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CPD Requirements

Members in Practice and members working in Professional Offices: These members must complete a total of 120 hours CPD over a 3 year period, of which at least 75 hours are Structured CPD and 45 hours are Unstructured CPD. The minimum requirement is 30 hours of CPD in any one year, of which at least 15 must be structured.

Core Competencies for Practicing Certificate Holders 40 hours of the Structured CPD requirement must be completed from any combination of the following six areas over a three year CPD cycle:

- Financial Accounting
- Auditing
- Company Law
- Taxation
- Professional Ethics
- Practice Management

Members who are authorised as Investment Intermediaries should refer to the Investment Business regulations for their CPD requirements.

Members not in Practice and not working in Professional Offices These members must complete a total of 120 hours CPD over a 3 year CPD cycle of which at least 60 hours are Structured CPD and 60 hours are Unstructured CPD.

The minimum requirement is 20 hours of CPD in any one year, of which a minimum of 10 must be structured.

Definitions

Structured

CPD
Structured CPD includes all CPD which has learning as the primary objective and which is measurable and verifiable. In order for Structured CPD to be accredited it must be measurable and verifiable.

There are two forms of Structured CPD:

1. Directed study:

This includes formal programmes designed with learning as the primary objective and requires at least one of the following;

physical attendance at group learning activities, for example lectures, presentations, or participation in technology assisted learning activities (including online, CD, audio or video training courses),

or

independent assessment of learning, for example the submission of assignments, research papers or examination.

Directed Study can be measured in terms of the hours spent on the learning activity and can be verified through attendance records, examination results etc.

2. Self-directed study:

This includes independent study with learning as the primary objective, including various forms of self-directed learning such as research (with published outputs), writing of articles, lecturing and, in specific circumstances, significant on-the-job training. In all cases, this form of study must have measurable outputs which can be verified by an independent and competent source. Self-directed study can be measured in terms of the hours spent arriving at an outcome that can be assessed and verified by an independent and competent source.

Unstructured CPD

Unstructured CPD can be defined as any form of informal learning or development of day to day working skills achieved through self-study and/or informal training. Unstructured CPD can be measurable but is not verifiable.

Accreditation of CPD Activities

The principal consideration in deciding whether or not a specific programme, course or activity qualifies for Structured CPD accreditation is that it should be a formal learning experience, which is measurable and verifiable and is calculated to contribute directly to the professional competence of a member.

Types of programmes which will qualify for structured CPD accreditation, provided the conditions below are satisfied, are:

- Institute Courses and Seminars
- Regional Society Courses and Seminars
- Relevant courses conducted by other recognised accountancy bodies
- Private training companies whose only or main business is professional level training
- Formal organised courses in house which have been organised by a training department
- Courses run by a University, Institute of Technology or Business School
- Courses organised by the Irish Management Institute and similar bodies

No more than 20 CPD hours can be claimed for any one course in any one year.

Formal correspondence or other individual private study programmes which require registration and provide evidence of satisfactory completion including CD, DVD, online, video and audiotape packages

Programmes involving class attendance must satisfy the following conditions:

- The presenter must have qualifications and in-depth knowledge and experience appropriate to the subject to be presented and this should be fully documented in any course publicity or handout.
- There must be prepared course notes and a course outline which participants can retain for future reference.

- The presentation must be conducted in an appropriate location, which is separate to the participants' normal working area.
- The course must be at least one-hour in duration, which can include question and answer sessions etc.
- Records of registration and attendance must be maintained and made available to the Institute for verification if required.
- The presentation should be attended by a minimum of five delegates to ensure adequate participation.
- Any presentations used for in-house training must be given by the original creator of the materials in order to qualify as Structured CPD. Thus, training provided using materials created elsewhere will not be recognised as Structured CPD.

On-Line, CD-ROM, Video, DVD and Audio Courses

In order to qualify for CPD accreditation, courses must meet the requirements for Structured CPD as above, and in addition:

The presentation should be followed by a discussion of the key points of interest or concern with the discussion led by an acknowledged expert in the subject area. It is accepted that the opportunity to ask questions, and have them answered will suffice to meet this condition.

The learning session should be attended by a minimum of five participants to ensure adequate interaction

Where a course is completed only by the individual Member an assignment must be completed and passed, in order to qualify as structured CPD. This should be marked by the provider of the presentation. Copies of the marked assignment must be retained by participants for future reference.

CPD accreditation will be determined by the Institute in the case of Institute CD-ROM, DVD, online, audio and video courses. Where the course provider is other than the Institute, details of the course should be forwarded to the Institute for accreditation. Courses of this nature should form no more than 50% of the annual structured CPD requirements.

The Institute CPD Committee has determined that all "none-live" e-learning programmes are subject to the 50% cap, unless otherwise approved by the CPD Committee.

In order for "non-live" e-learning to have the 50% cap lifted, the programme provider (NB not the member) must make a submission to the Institute detailing why the programme in question should have the 50% cap removed. The CPD Committee may refer such a submission to a third party for review, and the costs of such a review will be borne by the provider.

In 2014, the CPD Committee determined that the 50% cap be lifted in relation to CPA's suite of online courses, and recorded webinars.

External Providers of CPD

Periodically, external providers of CPD promote their courses and seminars to CPA Members, and subject to these courses and seminars meeting the criteria laid down by CPA Ireland, the Institute will recognise them as meeting our CPD requirements. CPD accreditation of any course or seminar will be determined solely by the CPD Committee of CPA Ireland and not by any third party. A statement by an external provider that a course or seminar meets CPA Ireland CPD requirements does not oblige the Institute CPD Committee to approve it. Where an external provider wishes to promote a

particular course or seminar to CPA members, and wishes to advise prospective attendees that the course or seminar meets with CPA Ireland CPD requirements, details of the course/seminar must be forwarded in advance to the institute for accreditation.

Once courses or seminars put forward by the external provider are accredited by CPA Ireland the following wording may be used by the provider when promoting the event:

"This course/seminar is accredited for CPD purposes by CPA Ireland"

Accountancy Software Packages
Training on standard accountancy software packages is limited to a maximum of 3 Structured Hours CPD in a 3 year cycle.

ECDL & Similar Courses
ECDL & similar courses are not allowable for Structured CPD purposes. In exceptional circumstances the CPD Committee may relax this condition.

Lectures
A member may claim a maximum of 40 hours CPD credit per three year period for lecturing at accredited courses. In the case of lecturing, the initial delivery of a lecture aimed at qualified accountants and or final level professional accountancy students and/or students completing a Masters in Finance or Accounting count on an hour for hour basis towards the structured CPD requirement. The subject should be relevant to the lecturer's work. CPD hours cannot be claimed for any subsequent delivery of the same lecture. Lecturers should retain a copy of the notes produced for those attending the lecture and verification of his/her lecturing role. Members can claim no more than 40 hours Structured CPD for lecturing over a three year cycle.

Service on Technical Committees/Panels
Service on technical panels established by the profession and/or governmental bodies may count on an hour for hour basis towards the Structured CPD requirement. It is necessary that the committee can show a definite output such as a new standard or other form of guidance and that the committee member contributed original research or other work towards the end product. In many cases, however, service on technical panels is more likely to count as Unstructured CPD. A member can claim a maximum of 15 hours CPD Credit in a three-year period. Any potential claim in this respect for Structured CPD hours must be approved in advance by the Institute.

Occupational or industry change
A major change in type of employment (e.g., from public practice to industry) or major changes in job responsibilities that require significant development of new skills (e.g., learning about a different industry, assuming increased responsibilities, moving to a new department that is significantly different) may count towards the Structured CPD requirement. A member can claim a maximum of 15 hours CPD Credit in a three-year period. Any potential claim in this respect for Structured CPD hours must be approved in advance by the Institute.

Responsibility for major corporate changes
Major involvement, for the first time only, in special projects such as mergers, takeovers, debt/equity issues, major financial re-organisations, research and installation of computer software systems and/or software applications may count towards the Structured CPD requirement as Self -directed study. A member can claim a maximum of 15 hours CPD credit in a three year period. Any potential claim in this respect for Structured CPD hours must be approved in advance by the Institute.

If a member is any doubt as to whether a particular programme satisfies the Institute CPD requirements, an outline of the programme should be submitted to the Institute for approval.

The following is categorized as Unstructured CPD

- Lecturing on certificate, diploma and technician programmes.
- On-the-job training which consists of informal briefings carried out by other staff members.
- Technical reading.
- Attendance at Practice Network Groups at Practice Network Groups.

Definition of a CPD „Hour"for Accreditation Purposes
Each completed period of 50 minutes' attendance at an accredited course will count as one hour (e.g. a total of 400 minutes = 8 hours); Attendance at an accredited course for less than 50 minutes will not be counted. Attendance at a normal one day course will be counted as eight hours. Attendance at a normal half- day course will be counted as four hours.

Recording and Reporting
A member will be required to submit to the Institute, in a manner prescribed by Council, a signed report outlining their CPD activity for the previous year on or before 31 January. Members are responsible for retaining appropriate records and documents so that they may provide sufficient evidence, on request, to demonstrate their compliance. If deemed appropriate by Council, a member may be called to provide such evidence to the Institute.

Failure to comply with CPD Requirements
Where a member fails to comply with any aspect of the CPD Regulations, the CPD Committee may refer the member to the CPD Compliance Committee. This Committee, in turn, has the authority to impose the following sanctions:

The CPD Compliance Committee on receipt of the complaint may in its absolute discretion at any stage refer the matter directly to the Institute's Investigation Committee.

- Lecturing on certificate, diploma and technician programmes
- On-the-job training which consists of informal briefings carried out by other staff members
- Technical reading.
- Attendance at Practice Network Groups.

Exemptions from CPD

Requirements Retired Members
Members who are not gainfully employed, who do not intend at any time thereafter to seek nor accept gainful employment either temporarily or permanently and who have made a written application for transfer to the retired membership category which has been accepted, are exempt from mandatory CPD requirements.

Maternity Leave, Adoptive Leave and Career's Leave
For the purposes of CPD only, the requirement of CPD hours shall in any year be reduced pro rata with the amount of statutory maternity leave, statutory adoptive leave or statutory career's leave taken by a Member.

Career Break
Each Career Break must be approved in advance by the Institute. Career Break status Members may opt to be exempted from the requirements for a total of two years. The application for exemption must be made in the first and/or second year of a career break period.

Serious Illness
A serious illness may prevent a member from meeting the requirements of mandatory CPD. In this case, the member should submit the CPD Return form, together with a letter of explanation (and appropriate medical documentation).

Other Exemptions
Members may require an exemption for a valid reason other than those set out above. If a Member seeks an exemption he should apply as soon as reasonably possible to the CPD Committee In Writing setting out the reasons that he seeks an exemption together with any appropriate documentation. The decision to grant or refuse the exemption shall be a matter solely at the discretion of the CPD Committee.

All applications for exemptions must be made in writing and must be approved by the Institute. When a member's status changes from any of the above exceptions, such that he or she no longer qualifies for exemption, the member is then required to meet the full CPD requirements of the Institute.

Members should note that in the exceptional circumstances whereby an exemption or other exception is granted in relation to CPD returns, that such exemptions etc. should always be confirmed by the Institute, in writing, to the member. In the event of a subsequent dispute, the member will be required to produce such written confirmation, and in the absence of same, the CPD rules, as published will strictly apply.

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