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 (CPD) is learning and development that takes place after the Initial Professional Development (IPD) and that develops and maintains professional competence to enable professional accountants to continue to perform their roles competently.. 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 by undertaking relevant CPD activities. Professional competence goes beyond knowledge of principles, standards, concepts, facts, and procedures; it is the integration and application of learning outcomes for: (a) technical competence, (b) professional skills and (c) professional values ethics and attitudes.

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 CPD hours are to be completed in each year, of which 10 of these hours have to be structured CPD hours.

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

A member who is also a statutory auditor shall develop and maintain professional competence that is demonstrated by the achievement of the learning outcomes of Table A of IES 8, Professional Competence for Engagement Partners Responsible for Audits of Financial Statements (Revised). Such statutory auditors shall undertake CPD that develops and maintains the professional competence required for the role of an engagement partner.

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 three 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 verifiable participation in CPD activities delivered through Information Communication Technology (ICT) 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 (either physical or electronic)
- Regional Society Courses and Seminars (either physical or electronic)
- Relevant courses conducted by other recognised accountancy bodies (for example Law Society, Irish Taxation Institute etc)
- 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, Technological 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.

Other individual private study programmes which require registration and provide satisfactory evidence of completion.

CPD activities involving class attendance (which may be physical or electronic) 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 documented in any course publicity or handout.
- There must be prepared course notes and a course outline which participants can retain for future reference.
- A presentation attended physically, must be conducted in an appropriate location that allows for the optimal learning experience.
- 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.
- Facility should be available for learners to engage with other learners.

CPD Activities not involving class attendance

Such activities must meet the requirements for Structured CPD as above and in addition:

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 in accordance with the assessment protocols included in these Bye Laws or by assessments incorporated by the provider of a particular activity.

Accreditation of CPD activities will be determined by the CPD Committee of Institute online courses. Where the course provider is other than the Institute, details of the course should be provided to the Institute for accreditation. The CPD Committee may charge the external provider for costs associated with accreditation

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 three Structured Hours CPD in a three 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.

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, Paternity Leave, Parental Leave, Adoptive Leave and Carer'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 carer's leave taken by a Member. At the discretion of the CPD committee, CPD hours in any year may be reduced pro rata with the amount of parental leave taken provided it is taken as a block of time with the minimum length of leave to be determined by the CPD committee.

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 exemption application form together with a letter from their doctor confirming they are unable to complete CPD on medical grounds.

Other Exemptions
Members may require an exemption for a valid reason other than those set out above. If a Member seeks an exemption he/she should apply as soon as reasonably possible to the CPD Committee In Writing setting out the reasons that he/she 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 CPD Committee. If or when a Members status changes which results in him/her being no longer qualified for an exemption that Member is then required to meet the full CPD requirements of the Institute as set out in this bye law 8.

Members who are required to complete CPD requirements in order to apply for or renew a practising certificate and who have been granted a CPD exemption will have their application for initial grant or renewal considered by the Registration Committee in accordance with Bye Law 13. CPD requirements for Statutory Auditors will be in compliance with the policy set out by the registration committee.

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