

# CPA Competency Guide and Return

## Guide and Return form for CPA Students and Employers/Supervisors

Calendar Year of Return: \_\_\_\_\_ (specify months, if less than a full year)

Student Name: _____	Student ID Number: _____
Registered Private Address: _____	
Job Description: _____	
Email: _____	Telephone: _____

Employer/Supervisor Name: _____	Position: _____
Company Name: _____	
Company Address: _____	
Company Website: _____	

We confirm that we have discussed and critically reviewed this return, (pages 4 to 8), and believe all content to be a true reflection of the student's experience and competency development at this employment for the period of this return.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Employer/Supervisor

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Qualification: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Student

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### For official use only:

Received by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Reviewed by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ Approved: ☐ Y ☐ N

Re-reviewed by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ Approved: ☐ Y ☐ N

## CPA Competency Guide and Return

### Note to Students:

It is the responsibility of each CPA Student to ensure that he/she satisfies the competence profile required by the Institute to gain full admission to Membership. This can only be achieved by adopting a committed, responsible and proactive approach to the management of his/her training and the relationship with the employer/supervisor. The Institute offers support to CPA Students in the pursuit of the required competencies through the operation of an open door policy for advice and guidance in this area, throughout their training career.

### Note to Employers/Supervisors:

The CPA Institute encourages a committed and positive approach to the guidance and nurturing of our Students by their employers/supervisors in the workplace. The CPA Student will seek specific experiences and responsibilities to enable them demonstrate the required competence and behavioural attributes, and should be encouraged and supported wherever possible, through regular review and open discussion regarding their progress.

### Students – Please ensure that you complete all steps in this process.

**Step 1:** Read through this entire document and refer to the Guide to In- Depth Competency Fields.

**Step 2:** Complete the following forms

**Form 1:** Annual Training Summary (page 4)

**Form 2:** Record of In-depth Competence (page 5 - 8) - these must relate to the areas of In-Depth Competence as submitted on Training Records

**Form 3:** Record of Behavioural Attributes forms A, B & C (pages 9 -11).

**Step 3:** Submit to CPA fully completed return forms on pages 1, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 of this document.  
Forms must be signed by both student and supervisor

## CPA Competency Guide and Return

### Professional Competence

The professional competence of accountants should equip them to be effective in a number of roles in business. It has two elements – technical expertise and behavioural attributes and is influenced by two inter-related variables – range (breadth of knowledge and skills) and depth (level of expertise), each of which is developed over time through a process of formal study and practical experience.

Prior to qualification, this process is structured for CPA students through an examination syllabus and a defined training regime.

The minimum level of competence needed for admission to CPA membership represents a threshold which ensures that newly qualified CPAs are capable of meeting the expectations of the market place. Each student must acquire at least three years of relevant supervised experience. To fulfil the competency profile of the qualified CPA Accountant, six Competency Fields have been identified, which reflect the broad range of work areas to which accountants apply their expertise. Also, two levels of expertise have been specified – a Professional Level and an In-depth Level – within each field.

Newly qualified CPAs must have reached a Professional Level in each of six competency fields below and an In-depth Level in at least two of them.

1. Financial Accounting
2. Auditing & Statutory Compliance
3. Corporate Planning, Control & Treasury Management
4. Information & Financial Systems
5. General Management
6. Taxation

The Professional level of competence is achieved through the completion of the CPA examinations. The nature of their work experience and training environment will usually determine the areas of 'in-depth' competence. (For example, those intending to apply eventually for a practising certificate with audit qualification must have reached 'in-depth' competence in at least Auditing and Financial Accounting and successfully completed the Institute's Practice and Audit Orientation Course and pass the associated examinations).

'Professional Level' denotes that a person:

- Has a thorough understanding of and is able to apply the concepts and principles involved.
- Fully understands the legal/regulatory requirements, their application and can recognise when to seek expert assistance
- Performing most 'non-specialist' tasks in the area competently, without supervision.
- Communicate finance-related information clearly and succinctly both verbally and in writing.

'In-depth' competence denotes that a person (in addition to the above):

- Has had exposure to working, unsupervised, on complex tasks in the area in a variety of situations and can exercise sound professional judgement on issues arising.
- Possesses a high degree of expertise in technical aspects of the work and can readily source additional knowledge if required.
- Can relate to the business/operational imperatives of the organisation and apply professional input effectively.

### Behavioural Attributes:

In addition to the above levels of expertise, all CPAs, regardless of when qualified, should be distinguishable by their ethical values, professionalism and ability to work effectively with people. The skills and attributes required for this are identified in this document and referred to as 'Behavioural Attributes'. These are the distinctive behavioural attributes displayed by CPAs when applying their knowledge and skills to provide professional services. Essentially, they consist of those attitudes, values and skills that govern how the technical expertise is applied across all competency fields. They are grouped, for descriptive purposes, into three categories:

- 1) Professionalism and Personal Ethical Standards (covering the areas of values, objectivity, etc.)
- 2) Sensitivity to Business Needs (covering how CPAs view and interact with the business environment).
- 3) Inter-Personal Effectiveness (covering how CPAs work with others to add value).

In summary, the effectiveness of CPAs is achieved through the levels of expertise in the various competency fields applied by them, combined with their personal behavioural attributes.

## CPA Competency Guide and Return

### FORM 1 – Annual Training Summary

The CPA Institute highly recommends that students maintain their training record on an ongoing and regular basis with the completion of the quarterly review in conjunction with their employer / supervisor where possible. This Annual Sign-Off form should be completed based on entries in the full training record. Available for download at the student training section of the CPA website at [www.cpaireland.ie](http://www.cpaireland.ie)

EXPERIENCE	Levels	No. of Weeks	EXPERIENCE	Levels	No. of Weeks
<b>1. FINANCIAL ACCOUNTING</b> 1.1 Preparation of basic accounting records 1.2 Preparation of control accounts and trial balance 1.3 Preparation of unincorporated entity accounts 1.4 Preparation of Statutory Financial Statements 1.5 Preparation of accounts for specialist organisations  <b>2. AUDITING &amp; STATUTORY COMPLIANCE</b> 2.1 Audit Planning 2.2 Audit Testing 2.3 Reporting 2.4 Statutory Compliance 2.5 Liquidations (Members or Creditors voluntary winding up)  <b>3. CORPORATE PLANNING, CONTROL AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT</b> 3.1 Standard Costing Systems 3.2 Management Reporting 3.3 Budgeting and cash flow analysis 3.4 Strategic Planning 3.5 Treasury			<b>4. INFORMATION/FINANCIAL SYSTEMS</b> 4.1 Process transactions 4.2 Systems analysis 4.3 Systems design and implementation 4.4 Evaluate of system requirements 4.5 Project work 4.6 Compilation of procedure manual 4.7 Programming 4.8 Maintenance of financial systems  <b>5. MANAGEMENT SKILLS</b> 5.1 Corporate planning 5.2 Performance management 5.3 HR Management 5.4 Project Management 5.5 Communication Skills  <b>6. TAXATION</b> 6.1 Income Tax 6.2 Corporation Tax 6.3 Capital Gains Tax 6.4 Other Taxes 6.5 Other relevant tax experience		

#### Other Training Activities:

(Please give details of any other practical training received during the year, e.g. project work, simulation, etc.)

## CPA Competency Guide and Return

### FORM 2 – RECORD OF IN-DEPTH COMPETENCE

A guide to the completion of this form, entitled **Guide to In-depth Competency Fields** is available for download on the CPA Website at [www.cpaireland.ie](http://www.cpaireland.ie). This guide outlines examples of the tasks in the workplace that fulfil the in-depth criteria.

**Use:** This form is used to describe how an in-depth competence, from the CPA competency profile for newly qualified CPA's, has been demonstrated by a CPA trainee in the workplace prior to admission to membership.

**Competence Field:**

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**In Depth Competence:**

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**Description:**

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## CPA Competency Guide and Return

### Form 3 (a) – BEHAVIOURAL ATTRIBUTES SIGN-OFF

#### Behavioural Attribute: Professionalism and Personal Ethical Standards

**CPA Definition:** *“Their approach is characterised by integrity, reliability and objectivity, driven by their personal commitment to the highest ethical principles.”*

**The main characteristics of Certified Public Accountants are:**

- They display reliability, objectivity and independence.
- Their actions are driven by high personal principles.
- They are aware of, reflect upon and uphold the ethics of the profession.
- They keep up-to-date on current ethical debate.
- They avoid any conflict of interest and maintain the integrity of the profession.

**Behavioural Examples of the above characteristic are:**

- Ethical dilemmas are identified, reflected upon and resolved, and advice sought where necessary.
- Quality and reliability are placed above personal gain and convenience.
- Infringements of laws and ethical standards are reported to the appropriate authorities.
- Objectivity and confidentiality are paramount.

Describe how you have met this mandatory requirement for this year:

## CPA Competency Guide and Return

### Form 3 (b) – BEHAVIOURAL ATTRIBUTES SIGN-OFF

#### Behavioural Attribute: Sensitivity to Business Needs

**CPA Definition:** *“They function effectively within the ambiguity and dynamism of the business environment, while valuing the human and social responsibility dimensions, in addition to responding to economic imperatives”.*

**The main characteristics of Certified Public Accountants are:**

- They recognise the dynamics of competition and the consequent value of knowledge creation and management.
- They fully understand the characteristics of their industry.
- They respond positively to change (and where necessary drive it).
- They recognise and reflect upon the importance of social responsibility.
- They possess a strategic perspective.

**Behavioural Examples of the above characteristic are:**

- Clients and colleagues are respected and their perspectives are given due weight.
- Human and social factors are reflected upon and balanced with financial considerations.
- Consistency, although valued, is tempered by the need for change and receptiveness to new thinking.
- Positive support is given to innovation, based on creative business ideas.

Describe how you have met this mandatory requirement for this year:

## CPA Competency Guide and Return

### Form 3 (c) – BEHAVIOURAL ATTRIBUTES SIGN-OFF

#### Behavioural Attribute: Inter-Personal Effectiveness

**CPA Definition:** *“They provide significant added value in the application of their technical expertise by working effectively with others.”*

**The main characteristics of Certified Public Accountants are:**

- They demonstrate effective communication and negotiation skills.
- They demonstrate effective decision-making skills.
- They display creative problem-solving skills.
- They coach, manage and motivate people effectively.
- They treat others with professional courtesy and value work/life balance.

**Behavioural Examples of the above characteristic are:**

- Financial considerations are clearly explained and advocated.
- Inter-personal skills are used effectively to persuade and negotiate.
- Long and short-term perspectives are balanced when facing or advising on business challenges.
- A leadership role is adopted where required.

Describe how you have met this mandatory requirement for this year: