

Going into Practice

CPA members in public practice work at the coalface of Irish business, assisting clients as they face the challenges of Brexit, the digitalisation of the taxation system and increasingly the impact of technology on business. The service range provided by CPA accountancy firms continues to evolve and the demand for forward looking business planning has become the norm as technology enables accountants to better position their clients for the future. While technology is providing for the automation of more traditional compliance services this is allowing practitioners shift their focus to more proactive solutions for clients. CPA accountants are uniquely positioned to bring such invaluable insights to their clients.

CPA members who engage in public practice and provide such services including tax planning, financial reporting, management consultancy and audit services require a practising certificate. This ensures that such services are provided to the highest standards and are appropriately and proportionately regulated.

Pathway to public practice

Establishing your own accountancy firm can provide a flexible and rewarding career.

There are a number of matters to consider and plan for if you decide this may be a route that you wish to explore.

As a practitioner you will need to obtain a CPA practising certificate. To be eligible, you must have two years approved post admission to membership experience working in an area that is relevant to the services that you intend to offer.

The following requirements must also be considered and met;

- Given that tax is a core service, an applicant must have completed CPA's Advanced Taxation examination at Professional 2 level.
- CPD is a vital component of eligibility and an applicant must have met the relevant CPD requirements for the previous two years. When planning your CPD, focus on CPD that will support your proposed service offerings.
- Designed to support the complex environment that a practitioner operates in, an applicant must also have completed within the previous 36 months, the Practice Orientation Online

Certificate and passed the associated online assessment. This online course over five modules provides essential technical and practice management information to assist with the navigation of the start-up phase and beyond.

As part of the application process a business proposal must also be submitted and requires the applicant to set out their service offering, marketing plan, resources plan, financing etc, a key skill for all future business advisors.

Other considerations for start-ups are professional indemnity insurance requirements and continuity of practice arrangements, details of which can be found on the CPA website.

Statutory Audit Services

With the ever-increasing audit exemptions thresholds, the number of audit firms in Ireland has decreased over the last number of years. However, the majority of CPA firms continue to hold audit registration.

To be eligible to act as a statutory auditor, you must hold a practising certificate with audit qualification. This will allow your firm to apply for an audit certificate and for you to engage in statutory audit work.



Emer Kelly, ACA, Quality Assurance Manager, Professional Standards Department, CPA Ireland.

An audit qualification is obtained by:

- Completing three years' experience working under the direct supervision of a Statutory Auditor, at least two of which must be post admission to Membership and at least 20% of the time spent during those two years must be in an area of Statutory Audit.
- Completion of the Practice and Audit Orientation Online Certificates.
- Completing eight hours of Structured Continuing Professional Development in the subject area of Auditing in the twelve months prior to the application to become a statutory auditor.
- Completion of CPA's Audit Practice Assurance Services examination at Professional 2 level.

There are currently 700 members holding CPA practising certificates and providing Irish business with vital services.

If you think that a career in public practice may be for you, further details can be found on the CPA website at www.cpaireland.ie