

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for practising members

ACCA requires all members¹, regardless of their role, to obtain CPD in areas relevant to their work; to maintain competence in professional ethics; and to keep their business and finance knowledge up to date.

It is essential that practising members maintain competence in their areas of technical specialism, and obtain an appropriate proportion of CPD in those areas. Members holding an ACCA practising certificate and audit qualification must ensure they maintain their competence in audit even if no audit work is currently being undertaken.

Members in spare-time practice who have other occupations outside of public practice must ensure that, in addition to maintaining their competence in the areas of their practice, they also undertake an appropriate proportion of CPD in relation to their other role or roles.

This guidance sheet has been designed to support practising members with planning, completing, and documenting their CPD activity in accordance with ACCA's CPD programme, *ACCA Realise*. A set of common misconceptions about CPD is also included.

RELEVANT CPD

It is important that you undertake sufficient and relevant CPD. In order to ensure that CPD is effective, it is recommended that you reflect on your learning needs, act on these and subsequently assess the effectiveness of the CPD undertaken. You must not only obtain relevant CPD, but also keep documentation which clearly sets out its relevance to your current or future role.

MAKING USE OF THE CPD LEARNING CYCLE

Approaching your CPD methodically will ensure that the CPD you undertake is relevant to your professional circumstances, and derives the most value for you.

The chart below will help you gain maximum value from your CPD, offering practical advice to help you think about maintaining and developing your knowledge and skills.

KEEPING EVIDENCE OF YOUR CPD

All members are required to keep evidence of their participation in the appropriate CPD route for three years as it may be required as part of ACCA's CPD review process.

- If you follow the unit route, you are required to maintain comprehensive evidence of your verifiable CPD units as well as a record of the non-verifiable CPD you have undertaken. You need to maintain evidence to show that your verifiable CPD was relevant and meaningful to your specific development needs. You should keep a record that shows why you chose the activity, how you will apply the learning, and evidence of the learning outcome. To help you, ACCA has developed an online evidence record which you can access by logging in to *myACCA*. ACCA has also developed paper forms, which are available for download. Alternatively, you may wish to keep records in your own format.
- If you are following the unit route – part-time or semi-retired, you must first ensure that you meet ACCA's guidelines for part-time/semi-retired status. Practising members may only take this route if they are not responsible for audit or other regulated report work, and can show that they have technical support in carrying out their duties. In addition, any member taking this route cannot be involved in the preparation or presentation of accounts of listed or other public interest entities; it is also closed to non-executive directors of listed companies. Members following this route will need to keep a summary of non-verifiable CPD and evidence of the verifiable CPD undertaken with an explanation as to why it is relevant and an appropriate amount. ACCA will expect members to provide evidence of the number of hours worked, and confirmation that they are not working in a role that requires them to follow the full unit route. To help you, ACCA has developed a CPD evidence checklist that you may wish to use to demonstrate why the activities you undertook were sufficient for your needs.

Planning your CPD	What are the areas you could develop to help you support your clients more effectively, or make a positive impact on your business? What are the technical and business skills you will need? What knowledge and skills will you need to maintain or develop in the next 6–12 months?
Completing CPD activities	Will the activities you have identified meet your and your clients' needs? Have you thought about a range of different learning activities (e-learning, coaching, networking)? Can you make an impact by developing skills to support others (your employer or business, junior staff or ACCA trainees, the community)?
Evaluating your learning	Did the activity meet your needs? Can you apply your learning in the workplace, for example by satisfying your clients' needs? Has there been a positive impact on your business?
Reflecting on the process	Do you need to undertake additional activity or was the CPD you undertook sufficient and effective? Would you do anything differently next time? Are there additional needs you have identified which you should act upon?

¹ Firms holding an ACCA auditing certificate and/or firms which are regulated by ACCA to carry on exempt regulated activities in the UK or holding an ACCA investment business certificate (Ireland) must require the individuals who are partners or directors or agents of the firm who are not members but who are responsible for the firm's audit work or carry on exempt regulated activities in the UK or investment business in Ireland on behalf of the firm to comply with ACCA's CPD requirements.

- If you follow the ACCA Approved Employer – professional development route, you should keep evidence of your employment and evidence of your participation with your employer’s development and appraisal processes. ACCA reserves the right to confirm with your employer that you followed their learning and development programme.
- If you follow the other IFAC body route, you should keep evidence of your membership of your other accountancy body and evidence of compliance with their CPD requirements. If the other professional body has successfully reviewed your CPD evidence records, you should also keep a copy of the outcome letter. ACCA may ask for a copy of the outcome letter or alternatively a full set of evidence you have kept for your other professional body.

WHAT TO EXPECT IF YOUR CPD EVIDENCE IS REVIEWED

Promoting public confidence in professional accountants is vital. ACCA safeguards its reputation and that of its members by requiring that the highest professional and ethical standards are adhered to. In order to ensure that members maintain their knowledge and skills, ACCA conducts reviews of members’ CPD declarations, selecting a proportion of members annually.

It is therefore possible that ACCA will contact you to confirm that you are undertaking CPD activity, irrespective of the CPD route that you follow.

ACCA will provide feedback to you on your CPD activities and, where necessary, will give you guidance and support to enable you to meet the requirements. In cases where members do not cooperate with the review process (for example, by failing to respond to communications or submit CPD evidence), they may be removed from the register of members.

COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS	
I don’t really need to plan my CPD	<p>Planning your CPD will help you to ensure you identify relevant learning. Some members do not plan their CPD and then find themselves having to complete all their activity at the end of the year. Others find that events that are most relevant are already fully booked.</p> <p>Planning will also help you to think about learning mediums other than courses and events – while face-to-face may be best for some types of learning, e-learning, research, or learning on-the-job may be far more effective for others.</p>
If ACCA hosts a CPD event, it will definitely count as CPD	<p>It is important that you take personal responsibility for your own learning needs. While ACCA hosts a wide range of CPD events, it is up to you to discern whether the event is relevant and sufficient to meet the needs of your role, business and clients. If an event is not relevant to your role, it will not count towards your CPD. If only some sessions at a conference are relevant to you, you should only include those sessions as verifiable CPD.</p>
It doesn’t matter too much if the event didn’t meet my personal needs – I have got the units now	<p>If an event is not relevant to you, it will not count as CPD. If an event is relevant, but did not meet your learning needs, it is important that you consider further learning interventions. The purpose of CPD is to reassure the public that your professional knowledge and skills are up to date – if this may not be the case, consider what further CPD you need.</p>
If I have a certificate, I don’t need to do anything else in terms of evidence	<p>In order for a learning activity to count as verifiable CPD, you must be able to answer the following three questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 How was the learning activity relevant to your role? 2 Can you explain how you will apply the learning in the workplace? 3 Can you provide evidence that the learning took place? <p>The certificate only addresses the third question. You must also be able to answer the first two and keep a record of this information. If you attend an ACCA event, these questions will be on the reverse of your attendance certificate, so you can record your answers easily. Alternatively you can keep evidence in other formats.</p>
I have to attend face-to-face events in order to gain verifiable CPD units	<p>Any learning activity can count as CPD, on the condition that you are able to answer the first question set out above. Being able to also answer the second and third questions means that it is verifiable CPD. You are not restricted to face-to-face learning, but can take advantage of a wide range of different methods.</p> <p>Example: Lindsay has recently taken on a client who required support in an area Lindsay needed to research. Lindsay undertakes four hours of research and then prepares and delivers the work to the client. The four hours of research become four units of verifiable CPD. The work undertaken for the client is evidence of her learning activity. If this is highly sensitive, she could also ask a partner or colleagues to confirm her learning activity; notes from the client meeting and the firm’s subsequent invoice would also corroborate her learning.</p>

For more information, including full information on verifiable CPD, evidence examples, and a wide range of learning opportunities, go to www.accaglobal.com/members/cpd