

# Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Guidelines

# CPD Guidelines

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## 1.0 Introduction

AIA believes that in order to provide high quality services to clients, employers and other stakeholders professional accountants should continue to develop and maintain professional competence continually throughout their career.

In support of this belief, AIA has adopted the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC) International Education Standard 7, the International education Standard for Continuing Professional Development. Requirements for all members are set out in this guide.

## 2.0 Professional Responsibility

The knowledge needed to function effectively as a professional accountant in public practice, industry, commerce, education and the public sector continues to expand and change at a rapid rate. As a professional accountant you face increased knowledge and skill expectations.

In addition, the need to be competitive in a worldwide economy has prompted a more intense focus on the role and responsibilities of professional accountants in entities of all types. Continued development of professional competence and lifelong learning are critical if the professional accountant is to meet these expectations.

AIA has a responsibility to ensure that you continue to develop and maintain the competence demanded by your professional role and the users of your services. The AIA CPD programme is designed to help you to meet your professional and ethical commitment to lifelong learning. These guidelines set out what you are required to do and what AIA will do to help you meet these requirements.

## 3.0 CPD for All

AIA requires members to develop and maintain professional competence relevant and appropriate to their area of work and professional responsibilities. It is primarily your responsibility to develop and maintain your competence. CPD is applicable for all professional accountants, regardless of sector or size of business in which they operate, because:

- Professional accountants have an ethical obligation of due care to their clients, employers and relevant stakeholders and need to demonstrate their ability to discharge this responsibility in a competent manner.
- Professional accountants hold positions of importance involving financial reporting, public accountability and maintaining public trust.
- The public relies on the designation and professional standing of the professional accountant. All professional accountants carry the professional designation and any lack of competence or unethical behaviour has the same consequences to the profession, irrespective of the sector or role in which they operate.
- Employers hiring professional accountants rely to an extent on the professional designation as proof of professional competence.

## 4.0 Requirements

- You must ensure you have the knowledge and skills to fulfil your role and responsibilities.
- You are required to complete at least 120 units of relevant CPD activity in each rolling three-year period, of which 60 units should be verifiable.

- You must complete a minimum of 20 units of verifiable CPD each year.
- It is recommended you keep a continuous record of the CPD activities you have undertaken. The AIA provides an online facility to do this alternatively paper CPD Records are available on request.
- You are required to submit a CPD Declaration on an annual basis, the CPD declaration is available in electronic format via the members' area of the AIA website and you can also find a CPD declaration form on the reverse side of your annual membership subscription notice which is posted to you in August/September.
- You should maintain evidence supporting your CPD Record for each rolling three-year period. As part of AIA's monitoring process, a sample of returns will be selected and AIA may contact you to ask for evidence demonstrating that CPD units have been completed and are relevant to your development needs.

## 5.0 Measurement

AIA measures your CPD activity in units, each unit is equivalent to one hour of classroom time. You are required to complete at least 120 units of relevant CPD activity in each rolling three-year period, of which 60 units should be verifiable. You must complete a minimum of 20 units of verifiable CPD each year. Units will be considered as verifiable if you can prove that you were involved in an acceptable CPD learning activity. Acceptable CPD is a learning activity that is relevant to your current or future development needs. Units will be considered unverifiable if you are unable to prove that the CPD learning activity has taken place, for example general reading.

### 5.1 Rolling 3-year Period

AIA measures CPD on a rolling three-year period. If you have joined AIA in the middle of a year, the CPD requirements for the first year of the first rolling three-year period are pro rata.

2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
12UV+21V=33	16UV+20V=36	28UV+25V=53		
1: 56UV + 66V = 122				
	16UV+20V=36	28UV+25V=53	9UV+23V = 32	
2: 53UV + 68V = 121				
		28UV+25V 53	9UV+23V=32	15UV+20V=35
3: 52UV + 68V = 120				

UV = unverifiable units

V = verifiable units

## 6.0 Learning Activities

The following list provides examples of different learning activities you may undertake as part of your CPD. Any of these could be carried out by electronic means and e-learning opportunities.

- Participation in courses, conferences and seminars.
- Self-learning modules or organised on-the-job training for new software systems, procedures or techniques applicable to a professional role.
- Published professional or academic writing.
- Participation and work on technical committees.
- Teaching a course or CPD session in an area related to professional responsibilities.
- Formal study related to professional responsibilities.
- Participation as a speaker in conferences, briefing sessions or discussion groups.
- Writing technical articles, papers and books.
- Research, including reading professional literature or journals, for application in a professional role.
- Professional re-examination or formal testing.
- You should strive to achieve a balance of activities; one single, repetitive activity should not constitute your total CPD activity.

## 7.0 Plan your Development

As a professional accountant it is your responsibility to look after your career development and to use your judgement to make decisions on the relevance of your CPD activities. There are three important points to consider when planning CPD:

1. What do you want to achieve?
2. What do you need to learn?
3. How will you learn it?

The amount of assistance different members might need to identify relevant learning and development will vary. You may already work through your development needs on a regular basis with your employer; you may be self-employed or employed by an organisation that doesn't address these issues with you. Whatever your position, the following tools may assist you to identify learning and development needs and plan ways of addressing these needs.

### 7.1 Personal Development Plan

AIA recommends that you formulate a Personal Development Plan (PDP) to help plan your CPD and select activities which are relevant to your role and responsibilities.

If appropriate, your PDP should be drawn up in collaboration with your employer, for example, if your employer has a Training and Development Policy, your PDP should refer to this document.

If you are self-employed, a sole practitioner or a partner in a practice and you do not have a Training and Development Policy in place, you can get information and advice on how to develop such a policy from your local Business Link in the UK or equivalent organisation overseas.

Alternatively, you could seek assistance from a private training and development company.

Your PDP will assist you in identifying training and development needs and ways in which to meet those needs. Your PDP should:

- Enable you to undertake your present role to a satisfactory standard;
- Enable you to develop skills and competencies to reach a standard of excellence in your current role and develop your abilities for the future;
- Link all training and development to both your business and personal objectives.

In compiling a PDP, you are encouraged to review your current skills and competences against a target. Once you have identified your development needs, you can then source relevant learning activities to help develop the required skills and competences.

To identify the knowledge and skills required of you, it is important to consider both what is expected of you in your current role and what knowledge and skills you might need in the future. There may be areas of knowledge or skills that you feel you particularly need to develop or that you should focus on.

Once you have gone through the process of deciding on the areas that are important for you to develop in, the next stage of the process is to consider the different ways you can achieve your development. For example, you may learn best in a particular environment or prefer a specific learning style.

When formulating your PDP, ask yourself the following questions:

- What development/training/further education do I require?
- How is it to be delivered?
- How does it link to my organisation's objectives?
- How will it improve my performance/competence?
- Why is the development needed?
- What do I hope to gain from the development activity? (This helps to measure impact).
- How will I measure the effectiveness of my investment? (e.g. feedback at the end of the activity, observation of performance, provision of opportunity to use the new skills).
- Is the development Mandatory [M], Essential [E] or Desirable [D]? (Using these codes should help you to establish your main priorities and ensure that all the mandatory and essential development is achieved).

## 7.2 Competence Map

A competence map can assist you to identify training and development needs before identifying relevant learning activities. The map can assist you to assess your current level of competence and identify targets for development.

A competence map is essentially a list of competences that are needed to perform your role and responsibilities effectively. It is not expected that you will already have achieved all the competences in

the map, but the goals should be challenging, yet achievable.

There are three types of competency, namely knowledge, skills and attributes. Knowledge, for example, might relate to standards and regulations, skills could relate to the ability to prepare financial statements and attributes would include team working and communications skills. Another way to look at the competences is as task-related competences (such as technical skills and knowledge) and function-related competences (such as behavioural skills and an ability to work with others at all levels).

When comparing your competences with the competency map there are three levels that could be achieved: knowledgeable, proficient and advanced.

At the knowledgeable level you will be able to demonstrate knowledge of the competence and an understanding of how it is used in the workplace, but you will be working under supervision.

At the proficient level you should demonstrate a sound level of understanding of the required competence, experience and have the confidence to work unsupervised.

At the advanced level you must be able to demonstrate a thorough understanding of the competence, be capable of performing the competency fully and independently and can act as an advisor, supervisor or trainer.

Finally, your competence map should include ratings of the relative importance of each competency and an indication of whether each is mandatory, essential or desirable.

Further guidance on Learning Outcomes, Competence Areas, and Proficiency Levels can be found in the International Accounting Education Standards Board, Handbook of International Education Pronouncements, 2017 Edition.

## 8.0 Reporting

All AIA members are required to complete and submit an Annual CPD Declaration confirming that they have met the AIA CPD requirements or the CPD requirements of another IFAC Member Body, unless there are exemption criteria and special circumstances.

The CPD declaration is available in electronic format via the members' area of the AIA website; you can also find a CPD declaration form on the reverse side of your annual membership subscription notice which is posted to you in August/September.

It is recommended that you keep a continuous record of the CPD activities you have undertaken and that you fill in your Record as and when you complete CPD activities.

You should maintain evidence supporting your CPD Record for each rolling three-year period. As part of AIA's monitoring process, a sample of returns will be selected, and AIA may contact you to ask for evidence demonstrating that CPD units have been completed and are relevant to your development needs.

## 8.1 Evidence

The following items will be accepted as evidence in support of your CPD Record:

- Course outlines and teaching materials.
- Attendance record, registration forms, or confirmation of registration forms.
- Independent assessments that a learning activity has occurred.
- Confirmation by an instructor, mentor or tutor of participation.
- Confirmation by an employer of participation in an in-house programme.

## 9.0 Exemption from the Requirements

AIA will consider special circumstances affecting your ability to complete CPD, which may include long term and/or serious illness, unemployment, maternity/paternity leave. In these circumstances you should contact AIA for guidance, and to receive confirmation of the exemption.

Members who are fully retired and undertake no accountancy work are exempt from the requirements.

There are no exemptions for Academic members, however it is likely that the majority of your CPD will be undertaken through routine academic work such as research and teaching.

## 10.0 Members in Practice

All members holding practising certificates should:

- Maintain competence in the specialised areas of their practice; and
- Complete an appropriate proportion of development activity in those areas. It is your responsibility to ensure that the necessary development needs are undertaken to meet practising certificate requirements.

Further information for practising members is available in the document 'Members in Practice Guidelines' available to download from the secure area of the website.

## 11.0 What CPD does AIA Offer?

**Events:** AIA host several events, including seminars and conferences, both in the UK and overseas throughout the year. These events are promoted on the AIA website and in International Accountant magazine.

**Webinars:** Webinars from AIA and other relevant sources are promoted under the Events section of the AIA website.

**Online CPD courses:** AIA has partnered with leading online CPD partners to provide you with an extensive range of online courses, covering a broad range of technical and professional development.

**Approved CPD providers:** AIA has accepts CPD from many other suppliers including other professional bodies.

**Tolley Online Seminars:** AIA members in practice (UK) are given free access to Tolley Online Seminars as part of their membership fee.





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