

## Key Findings from CPA Saskatchewan's CPD Verification 2020-21

The Continuing Professional Development ("CPD") cycle ended December 31, 2019 was the third CPD verification for members since unification. CPD verification requires that the member provide documentation to support their verifiable learning activities, including a linkage of the reported activities to their current or future professional role. In general, we were very pleased with the results. Below are some of the key findings of the CPD examination of documentation:

### Common Themes:

- Generally, our members continue to be diligent in maintaining their professional competence by pursuing relevant skill development, focusing on both the technical and enabling competencies required of their job functions and roles. Many members report significantly more than the minimum requirements for hours invested in learning activities throughout the three years of the cycle.
- We continue to be impressed with the broad and diverse CPD activities reported, reflecting the diversity in our members' roles and responsibilities. It is also encouraging to see that the majority of our members are able to access relevant learning activities to either maintain or develop their competencies as they grow and adapt with our evolving external environment.
- We were able to observe that most members were successfully able to demonstrate balance obtained within the CPD hours reported, with learning activities from various sources such as self-study, research or instruction preparation (internal sources), and courses, conferences, seminars and sessions delivered by another professional (external sources). As we reinforce in our Guide to CPD Reporting, balance is key to sustain or enhance overall, professional competency.
- Members generally took great care in completing the Practice of the Profession declarations, often linking their job functions and role directly to technical competencies and then explaining how the CPD hours supported their defined role. Many members were diligent in referencing and organizing the support provided to aid in an efficient review, which continues to be greatly appreciated.

### Some tips for all members regarding future CPD reporting requirements:

1. **Plan ahead.** We continue to strongly encourage members to take a proactive approach to the advance planning of their PD activities to ensure they are identifying and taking advantage of targeted opportunities to address gaps in technical knowledge. Proactive planning allows members to identify opportunities to both maintain and enhance their competence within their current and future planned roles. As we've seen significant upheaval in our economy and daily lives resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, the importance of advance planning to the ability to source relevant PD opportunities and to stay current with changing professional expectations and roles will become even more critical.
2. **Be Critical.** Activities that qualify as CPD must include a learning component. There are many activities that our members engage in that may be better identified as volunteer activities rather than learning activities. Volunteering time on community organizations or Boards, serving as a mentor for a CPA student, or facilitating a client or staff PD session may not always result in a learning activity. We encourage our members to critically assess

each reported activity, and only report the portion of the activity that resulted in learning for the member.

3. **Ensure it is relevant.** While our members have access to a vast variety of learning opportunities, not all learning activities are directly relevant to every member's current professional role or future professional aspirations. There needs to be a clear linkage between the learning objectives of each reported activity and the technical or enabling competencies required of the member's current or future professional role. In addition, reported learning activities are required to be relevant to the competencies required of a CPA. While occupational health and safety or first aid training may be required by an employer as a condition of employment, it may be difficult to support that these courses directly relate to the specific competencies required of a CPA.
4. **Have your documentation ready.** Members who are considering reporting hours for research, work-related projects, and course facilitation as verifiable CPD need to ensure they can meet the documentation requirements for verifiable CPD. CPD verification work on members reporting these types of activities included obtaining a copy of the output for the learning activities and ensuring this output could be verified by an objective party. While the majority of reported hours met the documentation requirements within our Guide on CPD Reporting, any hours that could not be supported by an objective output were removed from the member's CPD records.
5. **Find balance.** For all members, we would like to emphasize the importance of the need to obtain balance in the CPD activities obtained. CPD is a proxy for competence and it ensures that CPAs will continue to meet the expectations of the public when fulfilling professional roles. Members are encouraged to reflect on the competencies required of their professional role and ensure they are appropriately sourcing their CPD activities to support both the technical and soft skills required for the maintenance and enhancement of their professional toolbox.

Thank you to all the participants for your timely compliance with the CPD reporting requirements, the 2020-21 examination, and for making our profession stronger through our collective dedication to high quality CPD.