

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) – Self-Assessment Tool

As detailed in our **Guide to CPD Reporting (Guide)**, the reporting of CPD hours requires the application of professional judgment.

Our CPD Flowchart includes the following guidelines for determining whether an activity meets the qualifications of CPD:

Did you **LEARN** something?

A learning activity includes either **maintaining** the continued relevance of your current knowledge and competencies or **enhancing** your knowledge and competencies.

Professional knowledge and competencies relevant to a CPA would include both technical and enabling competencies, as listed in the Guide.

When assessing if an activity qualifies as CPD, you first need to ensure that you can clearly describe the learning you have obtained and that you are able to categorize it under one or more of the technical or enabling competencies. Consider:

- Did you acquire a new skill or deepen your understanding of a technical concept?
- Did the activity allow you to update your knowledge in order to stay current with changing standards or regulations?
- Do you feel you are better equipped to handle your professional role now that you have completed this activity?

There are many activities CPAs engage in that may be better identified as volunteer activities rather than learning activities. Volunteering time on Boards or Committees, serving as a mentor for a CPA student, or facilitating a PD session may not always result in a learning activity. For example, while it may be reasonable to conclude that the time spent reviewing course material or researching technical components in preparation for the facilitation of a course would result in learning, by the time you move into the actual presentation time for this course it becomes less likely that you are still actively learning. When considering reporting CPD hours for these types of activities, you need to critically assess how your time has been spent. Consider:

- Was the entire duration of the activity an opportunity to grow your knowledge or refine your technical or enabling skills?
- Were you assisting others through their own learning activities, or were you actively learning yourself?

The determination of whether an activity qualifies as CPD begins with this fundamental question: How did this activity enhance your competency as a CPA?

Is it **RELEVANT** to your current or future professional situation?

Reflecting the rapid pace of change in our current economy, the value of a CPA now extends beyond what is often viewed as a traditional accounting role. CPAs find themselves engaged in every sector of the economy, serving as employees, consultants, educators, entrepreneurs, and business owners. Regardless of your role, you can draw an inherent link between the skills you utilize to serve your organization, clients, or stakeholders and the competencies associated with your CPA credential. The requirement to continuously invest in learning is essential to your identity as a CPA.

There are a variety of learning activities available, however not all learning activities are directly relevant to every member's current professional role or future professional aspirations. For example, there are a multitude of technical courses on international financial reporting standards and public company reporting requirements that would result in excellent learning opportunities. If your current role or future career plans do not require an in-depth understanding of these specific standards, it may be difficult to draw a linkage between the learning objectives of the course and the technical competencies required of your professional role.

Further, you need to ensure that the learning activities you report are relevant to the competencies required of a CPA. Consider training such as health, safety, and environmental compliance, occupational health and safety, or first aid training. While often required by an employer as a condition of employment, these types of courses may not directly support the specific competencies required of a CPA. This would also be true for music, fitness, or art classes. In assessing your learning activities, consider if you can draw a linkage between the learning obtained and one or more of the technical or enabling competencies required for your current or future professional role as a CPA.

When assessing the relevance of a learning activity, consider:

- Can you draw a clear linkage between the learning activity and the technical or enabling competencies required of your current professional role?
- How does this activity support the specific competencies required of your role as a CPA?
- For those seeking to transition into a new professional role, what gaps exist in your current knowledge or skill set, and how did the learning that resulted from this activity begin to bridge these gaps?

The role of a CPA can be technical, and a high level of reliance is placed on each member in the delivery of professional service to employers, clients, and the community. You are expected to **proactively** plan CPD activities to ensure you can obtain focused and relevant professional development to maintain and enhance the knowledge and skills needed to meet the expectations placed on you as a professional. This involves critically assessing your current knowledge and skill set against the requirements of your current or future professional roles and carefully choosing targeted learning activities to ensure that your knowledge stays relevant and up to date.

Balance is the key to sustaining or enhancing overall, well-rounded professional competency. You are encouraged to ensure there is an appropriate balance in your learning activities, including:

- CPD from various sources – including self-study, research, or instruction preparation (internal sources) and courses, conferences, seminars, and sessions delivered by another professional (external sources)
- CPD to support various types of competency development – including both the technical and the enabling competencies required of a CPA

Can you **QUANTIFY** the time period you were learning?

In order to report hours for CPD, you need to be able to quantify the time period or duration of your learning.

Based on the nature of the CPA profession, you are likely constantly learning as you encounter new experiences, seek to solve new problems, and work through new challenges or opportunities. CPAs are creative, practical problem-solvers and are relied on to innovate and respond to ever-changing environments. However, the CPD reporting requirements require that you can identify, describe, and quantify finite learning activities.

To facilitate reporting, you need to be able to identify both the date and the duration of the learning activity reported.

For learning activities that extend beyond a single day, this includes the requirement to maintain a log of hours by date to support the hours claimed.

Do you have **DOCUMENTATION** from an objective third party or employer to support your quantified and relevant learning?

Once you can quantify the hours for a learning activity that is relevant to your professional role as a CPA, you then must categorize the activity as either **unverifiable** or **verifiable** CPD. For a learning activity to be categorized as verifiable CPD, it must meet the following two criteria:

1 – There is an output to the learning activity

There are numerous outputs that can result from a learning activity. Consider:

- The confirmation of completion of the learning objectives by a course provider
- Copies of the course materials or course agendas to support the learning objectives
- Proof of the successful completion of an exam
- A written report or a copy of the presentation materials
- Copies of published materials or articles

The output of the activity is used to substantiate the completion of the learning activity. It must be capable of being observed or inspected should you be selected to provide support for the verifiable hours reported over a three-year reporting cycle. When reporting verifiable hours, ensure you retain a copy of the output for each activity and a log of hours by date in the event you are selected for verification. This documentation should be retained in an easily accessible location, which is important in the event of an employment change.

2 – The output can be verified by an objective party

An objective party is not a close family member to the CPA or a person who may be biased because of the relationship to the CPA (i.e.: a direct report to the CPA).

The requirement for the verification of output by an objective party exists to ensure that CPAs obtain a minimum number of hours annually from sufficiently high-quality sources to reinforce accurate, relevant, and current technical concepts. There is a significant difference in the quality of the learning obtained when you consider the difference between reading and interpreting a section of the CPA Handbook on your own versus attending a course provided by a subject matter expert or receiving feedback on a report on your research of a section of the CPA Handbook from another objective party, such as your supervisor or an external auditor.