

As phase 2 of ACCA *Realise* begins, Sara Llewellyn reminds members of their requirements and how to identify CPD opportunities.

realising your future

■ **Phase 2 of ACCA's mandatory CPD scheme – ACCA *Realise* – has now begun, which means that all members admitted since 1 January 1995 are now required to carry out continuing professional development (CPD). Therefore, it's a good time to recap how to meet the requirements and to identify appropriate CPD opportunities.**

CPD requirements

Extensive research which underpinned the development of ACCA *Realise* demonstrated that members wanted to complete their CPD in a number of different ways. In response, ACCA offers three possible routes:

- **unit route** – this route is designed for those members planning and organising their own CPD. This route requires members to complete 40 units of CPD a year (1 hour of activity = 1 unit), 21 of which must be verifiable (i.e. relevant to them and their career and supported by evidence of participation). Non-verifiable CPD can include general reading and research
- **employer route** – if a member works for an ACCA Approved Employer – professional development, they can achieve their CPD by participating in their organisation's staff development programme
- **International Federation of Accountants (IFAC) body route** – those members who also belong to another IFAC-member body can choose to follow that body's CPD scheme if it meets International Education Standard 7.

Identifying CPD opportunities

ACCA's Professional Development Matrix (PDM) will help ensure that your CPD activity is relevant to your work or future career aspirations, and is particularly useful if you are following the unit route. It also helps you develop your own personal development plan for the year.

How do you source activities (which will be accepted by ACCA)? ACCA will accept a vast range of learning activity, as long as you can show it is relevant to you. Some of these are listed below, and further guidance is available on the ACCA *Realise* website:

- **e-learning** – ACCA has partnered with expert e-learning providers to offer a broad selection of e-learning courses, including technical, business, management and soft skills
- **face to face courses and network events** – ACCA UK organises many events across the country via both its Professional Courses team and employment-based and regional members' networks. An online search facility helps you find relevant local events

- **researching and reading** – ACCA's online Knowledge Library draws together a wide range of documents into one searchable resource, including technical updates, research reports, consultation responses, commentaries, opinion pieces and magazine articles
- **maintaining and developing your professional ethics** – ethics lie at the heart of ACCA *Realise*. An extensive online ethics resource is available on the ACCA *Realise* website
- **additional qualifications** – you may wish to consider studying for other ACCA qualifications, such as the certificates in international auditing and financial reporting, diplomas in corporate governance and international financial reporting, or MBA.

keeping evidence and submitting your annual CPD return

Members following the unit route are required to maintain evidence to provide proof of relevance and proof of participation in the activity. Evidence should be kept safe for three years, as it may be required by ACCA for monitoring purposes. You don't have to send it into ACCA unless you are asked to. We recommend using the online evidence recording tool.

All members are required to make a CPD return by 31 December each year. You will need to declare your participation route and the maintenance of your professional ethics. If you use the online return tool you can complete your return at any point during 2006, once you have met the CPD requirements.

Complete information, guidance and learning opportunities can be found at www.accaglobal.com/cpdrealise. ■

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