

Still have questions about meeting your CPD requirements?
Sara Llewellyn answers them for you.

demystifying CPD

■ **CPD training becomes compulsory for all ACCA members from January 2007. However, feedback suggests that members still have some questions about ACCA Realise requirements, so we've addressed some common misconceptions to ensure that your experience of CPD is beneficial rather than burdensome.**

I need to attend courses to meet the CPD requirement

ACCA Realise is all about *your* personal development. You can develop your skills in a wide variety of ways – for example, a significant amount of learning and development takes place in the workplace. The key questions to ask are:

- was the learning activity relevant to my career?
- did I maintain or develop my skills?
- can I demonstrate this?

CPD activities could include:

- learning and development activities that occur in the workplace e.g. discussion groups, mentoring and coaching, briefings from auditors
- learning from participating in networks and discussion/working groups
- reading and research, and completing further study or qualifications
- e-learning via the internet or other multimedia
- writing and presenting in business or technical issues
- attendance at courses/seminars/conferences.

One example of workplace development occurs when a practitioner needs to undertake research to advise a client. This involves consulting relevant technical material, telephoning ACCA's technical advisory service and producing a recommendation report for the client. The practitioner notes the number of hours taken in research. The hours taken in research are the CPD units. The report is the demonstration that the research has taken place. The whole exercise is verifiable.

Another example involves an FD tasked with preparing a briefing for new board members. The FD has already identified that she has to develop presentation skills and ensure that the board members understand key company issues. The FD notes how many hours are spent developing the presentation and refining her presentation skills. The actual presentation power point slides and speaking notes are evidence of the learning activity.

does XYZ count as CPD?

Only you can answer this question. As general guidance, ask yourself:

- did I learn something?
- is it relevant to my current role or future career aspirations?
- can I demonstrate this?

If you have answered yes to the first and second questions, it is CPD. If you have answered yes to all three questions, it is verifiable CPD.

ACCA will require me to complete a complex annual return

You can either make your CPD return online at any point in the year, or you can complete the paper version which is linked to your subscription renewal. You just need to tick two boxes and sign a declaration to confirm that you have achieved the CPD requirements and are maintaining your competence in relation to professional ethics. There is no requirement to supply any supporting documentation unless ACCA requests this as part of its monitoring process.

CPD must cover technical accounting issues

CPD undertaken must be relevant to you. If you work for a cereal company a seminar on wheat may be relevant to you and develop your business knowledge. Therefore, it would constitute CPD. Similarly, you may be required to undertake a course on business French for a forthcoming business trip – again, if it is relevant to your career, it constitutes CPD. Practising members should still aim to ensure that the majority of their CPD consists of technical accounting.

I need a certificate to demonstrate I have undertaken CPD

CPD is verifiable if members can explain the relevance of the activity, show proof of involvement and explain how they will benefit from participating in the activity. Evidence to support verifiable CPD may include:

- hand-outs/notes from attendance at courses, conferences or seminars
- slides/notes from presentations
- materials/research notes and final pieces of technical or business articles
- records of mentoring or coaching, including objectives and progress
- materials/notes of participation in organised and monitored discussion groups
- materials/outputs or products from work, for example a business plan developed as a result of research and learning about how to prepare such a plan
- materials/attendance certificates from courses and workshops.

I am currently taking a career break to raise a family – how am I going to meet the requirements?

You can apply for a waiver that will relate to verifiable CPD units if you are following the unit route and taking a career break. You can also apply if you are on maternity or paternity leave, long term sickness leave, are unemployed, or have onerous caring duties for a close family member. Generally, a minimum period of one month's absence from work is required to be eligible for a waiver.

You can apply for a waiver using the online tool, downloading a form from the ACCA Realise website, or contacting ACCA Connect. If you are accepted for a waiver you must still complete a CPD return and complete the required 19 non-verifiable CPD units. ■

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