



**CPA**  
ONTARIO

# **A Simple Guide to CPD Requirements**

# What is CPD?

## **CPD Stands for Continuing Professional Development and It's Really All About Ongoing Learning.**

Professional development is a regulatory requirement of CPA Ontario membership and must:

- Be relevant to your professional responsibilities and competencies as a Chartered Professional Accountant.
- Be quantifiable, meaning that it must be expressed in terms of a specific time requirement.
- Contain significant intellectual or practical content.
- For members applying for or renewing a Public Accounting Licence (PAL), pertain to activities directly related to the competence areas and learning outcomes needed to engage in the practice of public accounting, as set out in [International Education Standard 8, Professional Competence For Engagement Partners Responsible For Audits Of Financial Statements \(Revised\)](#).
- Include learning in the area of professional ethics.

Members are also required to complete professional ethics CPD as explained later in this guide.

## **Relevant CPD**

Members should consider selecting and planning for CPD that is diverse. It should consist of activities to develop and maintain technical competencies such as Financial Reporting, Management Accounting, Audit and Assurance, and Strategy and Governance.

CPD should also include activities in enabling competencies such as leadership, professional and ethical behaviour, and communication.

The core purpose of mandatory CPD requirements is to help members meet the obligations under Rule 203 of the CPA Code of Professional Conduct to maintain professional competency. Members should use their professional judgment when selecting relevant and appropriate CPD to meet their regulatory requirements.

# How Many CPD Hours Must I Complete and When Do I Report?

CPD Declarations are submitted as part of the Annual Membership Dues payment process which begins in April of each year. Specifically, you will be asked to declare that you have met the annual minimum and three-year CPD requirements as set out below.

Minimum Annual Requirements	Rolling Triennial Requirements*
Reporting year - complete CPD hours between January 1 and December 31  Declaration period - report by June 1 following the reporting year**	Reporting triennial period - complete CPD hours between January 1, 2019 and December 31, 2021, and in each rolling triennial period thereafter  Declaration period - report by June 1 of the following year starting in 2022**
20 hours  50% must be verifiable	120 hours  50% must be verifiable including four (4) verifiable hours of professional ethics.
<p>* A rolling triennial period effective January 1, 2019 was introduced in order to harmonize CPD requirements with international standards as CPA Ontario is a member of the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC).</p> <p>** A late due will be applied to submissions received on or after June 2. Members with outstanding declarations after June 30 will be subject to membership suspension.</p>	

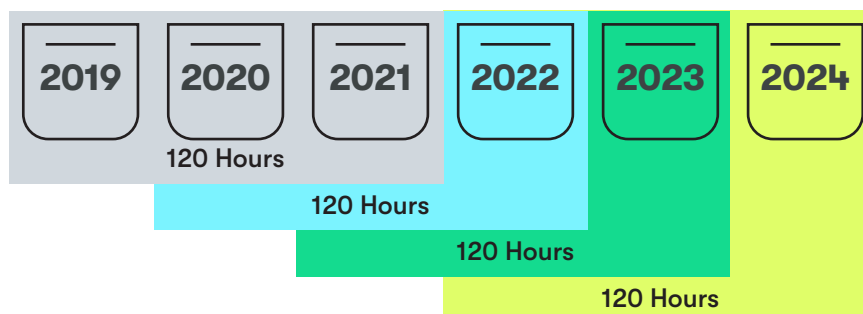
## TIP

Though you only need to complete a minimum of 20 hours per year, you need a total of 120 hours by the end of each rolling triennial period. To avoid having to complete a large number of hours in any one year and to simplify tracking of triennial hours, some members choose to complete 40 hours per year.

## Rolling Triennial Period: Implementation

The last fixed triennial period ended on December 31, 2018. A minimum of 120 CPD hours are required in a triennial period, at least half of which are verifiable. The first rolling triennial period began on January 1, 2019 and is phased in as follows:

Illustration of rolling triennial period starting January 1, 2019



Reporting Year	Declaration Year	What to Submit
		<b>*Note – 50% of all reported hours must be verifiable</b>
2019	2020	Annual Declaration - minimum of 20 CPD hours
2020	2021	Annual Declaration - minimum of 20 CPD hours
2021	2022	Annual Declaration - minimum of 20 CPD hours Triennial Declaration for 2019-2021 - minimum of 120 CPD hours, including 4 verifiable hours of ethics
2022	2023	Annual Declaration - minimum of 20 CPD hours Triennial Declaration for 2020-2022 - minimum of 120 CPD hours, including 4 verifiable hours of ethics
2023	2024	Annual Declaration - minimum of 20 CPD hours Triennial Declaration for 2021-2023 - minimum of 120 CPD hours, including 4 verifiable hours of ethics
	Future years	Annual Declaration - minimum of 20 CPD hours Triennial CPD Declaration for three previous calendar years - minimum of 120 CPD hours, including 4 verifiable hours of ethics

## Example: Rolling Triennial Period

It is up to you to determine how you will complete the 120 CPD hours required in each rolling triennial period. However, you must complete at least a minimum of 20 hours, including at least 10 verifiable hours, in each year. See the example below of how this might work:

2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
40 hours	40 hours	40 hours E*					
	40 hours	40 hours E*	50 hours				
		40 hours E*	50 hours	30 hours			
			50 hours	30 hours	40 hours E*		
				30 hours	40 hours E*	50 hours	
					40 hours E*	50 hours	30 hours

E\* - denotes verifiable professional ethics

- **2019-2021:** In the first rolling three-year period, the member completes 40 CPD hours each year. The member completes 4 verifiable hours of professional ethics in 2021.
- **2022:** The member chooses to complete 50 CPD hours, for a total of 130 CPD hours for the 2020-2022 three-year period (which exceeds the 120 minimum). The member does not complete any CPD related to ethics.
- **2023:** To comply with the required 120 hours for the 2021-2023 rolling three-year period, the member needs to complete a minimum of 30 CPD hours. The member does not complete any CPD related to

ethics.

- **2024:** To comply with the required 120 hours for the 2022-2024 rolling three-year period, the member needs to complete a minimum of 40 CPD hours. To meet the ethics requirement, the member completes 4 verifiable hours of professional ethics.

## What Are Verifiable Hours?

At least 50% of your required annual and triennial period hours must be “verifiable”. What does that mean? It means you must have documentation from an independent provider to confirm your professional development hours. This chart will help you determine if your hours would count toward your verifiable hours requirement and help you ensure you maintain the documents needed to support your CPD declaration.

Verifiable CPD Activity	Qualifying Number of Hours	Acceptable Documentation
<b>Continuing Education</b>  Participation in a course, webinar, conference or seminar  Enrolment in a formal education program leading to a degree, diploma, certificate, re-certification or designation (hours counted upon successful completion)	Hours spent attending the course, webinar, conference or seminar provided that you are learning.  Hours spent preparing or studying for the course, conference, seminar or exam (to a maximum of 5 hours prep time for each hour of participation)	One of the following, as appropriate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Copy of course payment/invoice</li><li>• Certificate of completion or official transcript</li><li>• Confirmation of participation by provider or employer</li><li>• Attendance record (e.g., sign-in sheet)</li><li>• Course or exam results, confirmation of designation or certification</li></ul> To include prep/study hours, provide one of the above, as appropriate, as well as a log of your prep/study hours

Verifiable CPD Activity	Qualifying Number of Hours	Acceptable Documentation
<b>Instruction/Speaking</b>  Teaching a course or session in an area relevant to your professional role and CPA competencies  Participation as a speaker in a conference, briefing session or discussion group	Hours spent preparing for the course/session (to a maximum of 5 hours for every hour of teaching time)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of course or presentation material from the session including date and speaker details</li> </ul> AND <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A log of your prep hours</li> </ul>
<b>Committees</b>  Participation on a board or technical committee, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Audit Committee of a public company, registered charity or not- for-profit organization</li> <li>• CPA Ontario Council or Committee(s)</li> <li>• Does not include participation on boards of small community groups such as a local sports teams, and school councils, except for audit committees of such boards.</li> </ul>	Hours spent attending meetings provided that you are learning  Hours spent preparing for the meetings (to a maximum of 5 hours prep time for each hour of participation)	Any one of the following, as appropriate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Email confirming membership, role, and meeting(s) attended</li> <li>• Meeting agenda or minutes (redacted, if appropriate)</li> <li>• Letter from organization or employer confirming your role</li> <li>• Information circular for public companies</li> </ul> AND <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A log of the hours you spent attending/preparing for meetings</li> </ul>

Verifiable CPD Activity	Qualifying Number of Hours	Acceptable Documentation
<p><b>Research and Publications</b></p> <p>Conducting research in an area that expands your knowledge for a specific application in your professional role that results in a presentation or report</p> <p>Writing or publishing technical articles, papers, books or academic work</p>	<p>Hours spent preparing or researching the presentation or report (to a maximum of 5 hours prep time for each hour of presentation)</p> <p>Hours spent researching, authoring, or contributing to the publication</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A copy of the presentation, report or published material (redacted, if appropriate), or confirmation from third-party or employer</li> </ul> <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A log of hours for your presentation and/or prep/research hours</li> </ul>

## What is Not Considered CPD?

- Volunteering does not generally count as CPD hours. However, if the volunteer work results in one of the above verifiable activities then it can be counted towards your CPD.
- Networking hours (social functions, lunch, dinner, etc.) generally do not count as CPD, unless it can be demonstrated that there was learning involved, such as if there is a speaker for the duration of the networking event.
- Activities that are unrelated to the CPA competencies listed above, or for members who are applying for or who have a PAL, that are unrelated to the PAL Competencies as set out in International Education Standard 8 (IES 8).
- Exclusively taking language courses would not count as professional development towards maintaining your CPA designation.

## What Are Unverifiable Hours?

Up to 50 per cent of your CPD hours in any reporting period may consist of independent and informal learning activities. These hours must be tracked, but unverifiable means that you don't need to provide supporting documentation. Unverifiable hours may include the following:

- On-the-job training for new software, systems, procedures or techniques for application in a professional role.
- Self-study that does not involve an examination or other objective certification of completion.
- Casual reading of professional journals or magazines that is not part of research for a specific application in a professional role.

## What Qualifies as Professional Ethics CPD Hours?

For the triennial period ending on December 31, 2021, and for each rolling triennial period thereafter, the 120 hours of continuing professional development that a member completes must include four verifiable hours of professional ethics.

Professional ethics is the study of the values that guide the choices and behaviours of professionals. Ethics training ensures that professionals acquire the tools, methods and/or frameworks that enable them to make decisions based on their moral principles. Professional ethics CPD can cover a wide range of topics related to ethics and must be relevant to a member's responsibilities and competencies as a CPA to develop and maintain professional competence.

The four hours do not have to be obtained in one single program, but can be accumulated through ethics components in any number of seminars or courses. Professional ethics learning activities must go beyond an awareness of the rules, standards or guidelines. The learning activity must provide examples or scenarios that address the application of rules, standards, guidelines, or ethical decision making relevant to a member's role and professional responsibilities.



Examples of professional ethics topics include, but are not limited to, the following:

- CPA Ontario regulatory updates covering the Act, Bylaws, Regulations and Code of Professional Conduct
- Regulatory updates that are relevant and appropriate to the member's role or industry
- Corporate codes of conduct
- Independence/conflict of interest
- Ethical business culture
- Corporate social responsibility
- Whistleblowing
- Anti-money-laundering
- Bribery and corruption, etc.

## I'm Retired, What Are My CPD Requirements?

To file a retirement CPD exemption, you must:

- meet the definition of retired set out in Regulation 7-2; AND
- must not have provided any Reliance Services in the reporting year

### Retired Members Are Defined As:

You have ceased full-time work		
<b>AND</b>		
You do not hold a PAL		
<b>AND</b>		
You are at least 55 years of age as of December 31st in the CPD reporting year		
<b>AND</b>		
The sum of your age and years of membership in CPA Ontario or another provincial or international Recognized Professional Accounting Body is 70 or more	Before April 1, 2014, you were a retired member of CMA Ontario	Before July 2, 2014, you were a retired member of CGA Ontario
<b>RETIRED</b> > Also refer to table below to determine if you qualify for an exemption		

## CPA Requirements for Retired Members Based On Reliance Services.

Reliance Services <sup>1</sup> Provided:	CPD Requirements, revised: effective January 1, 2022
<b>Serving on a Board</b> of a reporting issuer	Full CPD
<b>Serving on a Board</b> of a Public Interest Entity <sup>1</sup>	Full CPD
<b>Providing accounting services to the public</b> <sup>2</sup> (no income threshold)	Full CPD
<b>Providing other professional services</b> <sup>3</sup> and the gross annual income from these services equals or exceeds the Income Test Amount <sup>4</sup>	Full CPD
<b>Providing other professional services</b> <sup>3</sup> and the gross annual income from these services is less than the Income Test Amount <sup>4</sup>	Exempt
No Reliance Services provided	Exempt

<sup>1</sup> As defined in Regulation 7-2 Continuing Professional Development

<sup>2</sup> As defined in By-law 1.1.53

<sup>3</sup> Professional services as defined in the preamble to the [CPA Code of Professional Conduct](#).

<sup>4</sup> Income Test Amount is adjusted annually and published on the [CPA Ontario website](#).

## I'm Taking a Leave, Can I Reduce My CPD Hours?

CPD exemptions are available if you have not worked for six months or more in the reporting year as a result of:

- Unemployment
- Maternity, parental, or family care leave
- Medical leave (letter from physician is required in case of audit; keep on file for five years)

**AND** you have not been involved in any activity where it is reasonable to believe another party relied on your skills as a CPA during that period of time.

Members whose ability to practise or earn a livelihood has been significantly interrupted or impaired, who do not meet the criteria noted above can seek a reduction in CPD hours due to compassionate or extraordinary circumstances at the discretion of the Registrar. You will be required to submit a letter through My Portal at the time of declaration, outlining your reasons for seeking an exemption.

### TIP

If you claimed an exemption for any year in the triennial period, your overall hours will be pro-rated (e.g., if you are exempt for one year, the three-year requirement is reduced to 80 hours, of which 50% must be verifiable).

## I'm a New Member, Am I Required to Complete CPD Hours?

Former CPA Ontario students who have been admitted to membership during the CPD reporting year:

on or before September 30 of the reporting year, **must complete the full CPD** requirements in the year of admission, **OR**

after September 30 of the reporting year **are exempt from CPD** for the year of admission only.

New members admitted under any other pathway (for example, via provincial transfer or mutual recognition agreement with an international accounting body) must complete full CPD in the year of admission.

## I Have a PAL, What CPD Do I Need to Take to Maintain PAL Eligibility?

PAL holders and members applying for a PAL must undertake CPD activities directly related to the competencies needed to engage in the practice of public accounting, as set out in [International Education Standard 8 \(IES 8\), Professional Competence For Engagement Partners Responsible For Audits Of Financial Statements \(Revised\)](#). Please note hours in taxation (e.g., annual personal and corporate tax updates) do not count towards CPD for licensure, unless they meet the learning outcomes identified in IES 8.

Members who have not completed the required hours in the annual or triennial period are not eligible to apply for or renew a PAL.

However, for PAL renewals only, if a member has not completed hours due to a documented absence from the practice of public accounting as a result of parental leave, medical or compassionate circumstances, the PAL Board may exercise discretion if satisfied that the Member otherwise has the required capabilities, competence and current skills to engage in the practice of public accounting.

## Can My CPD Declaration Be Audited?

Yes. Each year, CPA Ontario performs CPD audits of selected members. You may be audited at any time, so it is important to keep records and supporting documents related to your CPD activity for at least five years.

If audited, you will be asked to provide your CPD information through My Portal. You will be given notice by email, with 30 days to complete the audit. Please ensure your email address and contact information is up to date at all times. You must provide the specific course details for each activity, including: course name, research area, method, CPD provider, start date, end date, and the number of verifiable hours or unverifiable hours, as appropriate. You may also be required to submit documentation to support verifiable hours.

### TIP

If selected for audit, you will be asked to enter the specific courses you completed. Entering “various courses” will not be accepted. If you completed ten 25-minute podcast sessions, you will be required to list each podcast as a separate line item.

## How Do I Track My Hours?

You should track the details of your CPD activities using your preferred method. You must retain all documentation for five years. Regardless of how you track your hours, if you are selected for audit, you will be required to enter the CPD details in My Portal.

## What If I Do Not Meet the CPD Requirements?

You need a Plan of Action (POA). If you did not complete the CPD requirements by the end of the calendar year, you will need to submit a POA which sets out the activities or courses you will take or have taken to complete the CPD requirements. This POA is due within 14 days of your CPD Declaration, and you must provide sufficient detail in relation to how you intend to remedy your non-compliance with the CPD requirements, including names and providers of any planned learning activities, as well as hours and end dates.

Within 120 days of filing the POA, you must complete your required CPD and submit a CPD POA Compliance Declaration via My Portal. If the POA is incomplete or the learning activities set out in the POA are not met within 120 days, your membership may be suspended.

### TIP

If you did not complete the required hours during the reporting year, complete the hours as soon as possible, so that when you make your CPD Declaration the following year, you can declare your POA as complete.

**Track your hours. Submit your declaration. Stay in good standing.**

## Need More Information?

Refer to [Regulation 7-2: Continuing Professional Development](#) for more information.

For frequently asked questions, visit [www.cpaontario.ca/members/regulations-guidance/continuing-professional-development](http://www.cpaontario.ca/members/regulations-guidance/continuing-professional-development).

If you have other questions, please [contact us](#).

This guide is provided for general information purposes and information has been summarized and paraphrased for ease of use. Responsibility for compliance with CPA Ontario Bylaws and Regulations remains with the member.