



PRACTISING AND AUDITING CERTIFICATES

PUBLIC PRACTICE – A DEFINITION

The Institute's Registration Committee is authorised under the Bye- Laws to grant practising and auditing certificates. In determining whether a member is engaging in public practice the decision of the Registration Committee shall be final.

Meaning of "Public Practice"

For the purposes of Institute Byelaws and regulations:

"Public Practice" means practice as a public accountant in the capacity of sole principal, in partnership or through the medium of a body corporate or otherwise and practice as applied to an accountant shall have the same connotation; and the decision by Council as to whether or not a person is engaged in Public Practice shall be conclusive.

Examples of what is considered to be public practice:

- a) Accepting an appointment as an auditor;
- b) Signing any report or certificate of accounts concerning any person, whether an individual sole trader, partnership, incorporated body of company, or any such person's affairs, in circumstances where reliance is likely to be placed on such report or certificate by any other person; or
- c) holding oneself out or allowing to be held out as being available, or to be reasonably understood to indicate that one is available to undertake the activities referred to in paragraphs (a) and (b) above (and allowing oneself to be known as a, or a firm of, "Certified Public Accountant(s)" or any similar description may itself be regarded as an example of such a holding out).

Members engage in public practice within the meaning of the Institute's Byelaws if, otherwise than as employees, they hold themselves out as offering services to the public normally performed by a Certified Public Accountant. Examples of such services include Auditing, Accounting, Taxation, Management Consultancy and Company Secretarial Services.

Practising without a practising certificate where one is required is a breach of the Institutes Bye Laws and such breaches are dealt with through the disciplinary process. If you are in any doubt about whether you require a Practising Certificate you should contact the Professional Standards Department who would be delighted to discuss your circumstances with you.

PRACTISING CERTIFICATES

Any member who wishes to engage in Public Practice must hold a Practising Certificate. Where a member does not intend to provide audit services they will be required to obtain a Practising Certificate without Audit qualification. Where a member intends to provide audit services they will be required to obtain a Practising Certificate with Audit qualification.

Obtaining a Practising Certificate without Audit Qualification:

You must complete and submit the application form for a Practising Certificate. A copy of this is available on our website or can be requested from the Professional Standards Department. (Please note an application for the grant of a practising certificate must be received at least 8 weeks before the date the member intends to commence Public Practice. In addition, incomplete applications shall not be considered by the Registration Committee.

To qualify, you must have 2 years Approved Post Membership Experience working in the area in which you intend to practice and complete the Practice Orientation Course.

What is approved post membership experience?

Approved Post Membership Experience (APME) is supervised experience obtained by a Member after admission to the profession which is relevant to their intended area of Public Practice, as an employee of an accountant in Public Practice or as an employee in Commerce or Industry. This experience must be signed off by the supervising accountant who must be qualified. While the Approved Post Membership Experience can be obtained any time after admission to membership greater emphasis will be placed on relevant experience obtained in the four years preceding the application

What is the Practice and Audit Orientation Course?

All applicants for a CPA practising certificate are required to have completed the Practice Orientation Online Certificate and to have successfully passed the associated assessment. Those requiring audit qualification must also complete the Audit Orientation Online Certificate and pass the associated assessment. All applicants must pass the associated assessment no more than three years prior to the date of application for audit qualification.

To **book**

1. [Practice & Audit Orientation Online Certificates](#)
2. [Practice Orientation Online Certificate](#)
3. [Audit Orientation Online Certificate](#)

The CPA Ireland Skillnets Practice and Audit Orientation Online certificates bring with it the flexibility to complete the courses at a time and a location that **suits you**. The online course offers a blended learning style of webinars, reading materials and activities to engage you throughout.

Obtaining a Practising Certificate with audit qualification:

Where a member intends to engage in Statutory Audit Work they will be required to obtain a Practising Certificate with Audit qualification. In addition to the requirements for "Obtaining a practising certificate without audit qualification", as set out above, there are also notable additional requirements as follows:

- A member will be required to obtain 3 years experience (as opposed to 2 years where a Practising Certificate without Audit Qualification is required) under the direct supervision of a Statutory Auditor. At least two of those years should be post admission to membership. 20% of the time spent during those 2 years must be in the area of Statutory Audit.
- The member will be required to complete both the Practice Orientation course and the Audit Orientation Course and pass the associated examinations. These courses run concurrently. As mentioned above the Practice Orientation is a 1 day course. The Audit Orientation Course is a half day course. There is a short examination at the end of both days which all applicants must pass no more than three years prior to the date of application for audit qualification.
- The member will be required to complete 8 hours CPD in relation to audit in the 12 months period prior to making an application. (Please note that the Audit Orientation Course will provide for 5 hours if completed in the 12 month period preceding the application).

AUDITING CERTIFICATES

If a member wishes to engage in Statutory Audit work, then the Firm through which the member practices must hold an Auditing Certificate. The Institute of Certified Public Accountants in Ireland (the Institute) is a Recognised Accountancy Body and as such is permitted to authorise its members and firms as statutory auditors under the Companies Act 2014.

The Institutes' Regulations are set out in Bye Law 13 "Practice and Audit Regulations". Under the Regulations, if a Statutory Audit Firm is registered with the Institute, then CPA will regulate the entire Firm. Each partner in a registered firm must be either a CPA practising certificate holder or an Affiliated Partner. This means that all non-CPA partners/ Directors (whether a qualified accountant or not) will have to become an Affiliated partner of the Institute and agree to be bound by the Code of Professional Ethics, Conduct and Practice.

If the Firm is to be regulated by the Institute at least one partner must be a CPA and to obtain an Auditing Certificate the Firm must be controlled by Practising Certificate holders. In practice this will mean that Practising Certificate holders must hold 51% of the voting rights. If a firm decides to operate through a company structure, the company

will be required to have a second Director. This second Director must become an Affiliated Partner if they are not a CPA member.

Responsible Individuals

In accordance with the Bye-Laws the Registration Committee may also grant authorisation to 'Responsible Individuals'. This means that senior members of staff, who are not partners, will be able to take responsibility for audit work. To be granted responsible individual status, an individual must first obtain a practising certificate with audit qualification from their membership body. They must then make the relevant application to the Registration Committee.

Firm Registration

Please note that in accordance with Bye Law 13.38.1 any firm which is offering services to the public (in accordance with Bye Law 13.15.3) must register that firm in accordance with Bye Law 13. This means that both audit firms and non audit firms will be required to register. Either a partnership or a body corporate may be a registered firm.

Guidance on Public Practice

Practice is the provision of services; including accounting and related services, for which the relevant skills have been acquired by a Member by reason of his training and qualification; to persons other than his employer. Members engage in Public Practice in accordance with bye law 13.15.3 if, otherwise than as an employee, they hold themselves out as offering services to the public normally performed by a Certified Public Accountant. Examples of such services include Auditing, Accounting, Taxation, Management Consultancy and Company Secretarial Services.

The services described above can be deemed to be core services, however members in practice frequently provide related services such as book-keeping and payroll services, company secretarial support services and consultancy where the principal consultancy activity is not accountancy related. A Member will not be deemed to be in practice when carrying out related services alone, provided the nature of these services is assisting clients in the maintenance of books and records and does not include the provision of further advice, and these services are not promoted in such a way as to create the impression of a connection with the supply of a core service or in circumstances referred to below.

Members are also deemed to be in Public Practice if they conduct a part-time practice while in full time employment with a public accountant or in industry, commerce or the public sector.

Accountancy services include preparing and advising on accounts (including management accounts) or financial information, auditing and financial reporting, taxation, and financial and management consultancy where the principal consultancy activity is accountancy related.

A Member will be deemed to be in practice if he holds himself out in such a way as to create an impression to the public that the quality of services provided will be enhanced by virtue of the provider being a Certified Public Accountant.

A Member who gratuitously or for a nominal fee

(i) provides accountancy services to a small charitable, community, religious or sporting body, or to similar bodies of a non-profit making nature, or

(ii) provides accountancy or tax services for family Members or friends provided these third parties are aware that the services are not being provided by way of a business and no fee is charged or a nominal fee is charged;

is not engaged in Public Practice virtue by only of so providing or so acting.

For the avoidance of any doubt please contact the professional standards department to discuss your particular circumstances.