

Continuing Professional Education (CPE) Policy

POL 28/2019 Version 1/2019

Commencement Date	24 January 2019
Review Date	The review date is 12 months after the commencement date and every three years after that.

POLICY STATEMENT

1 Intent

The Office of the Auditor General (OAG) in every field of Auditing are committed to offering the highest quality professional services to the public. This commitment is expressed, in part, through the endorsement of the principle of lifelong learning and Continuing Professional Education (CPE) Practice.

This policy require auditors to enhance their knowledge, skills, and other competencies through continuing professional development. This requirement helps ensure that auditors remain competent in the growing and dynamic profession of auditing.

This policy is based upon an expansive and holistic vision of CPE. It endorses the principle of life-long learning and it recognizes that CPE also takes place outside of formal, structured events. It also recognizes the fact that while enhancing the professional competence of all audit staff employed by Office of the Auditor General learn in their day to day practice, continuing education should involve activities whereby learning is the major focus of the activity. CPE credits reflect the learning associated with an activity as opposed to the hours associated with that activity.

2 Scope

This policy sets out the OAG's general approach to create a culture of continuous education and improvement and is applicable to all audit staff employed within OAG.

3 Objective(s)

- To develop a policy that reflects the profession's ethical obligation to upgrade skills, knowledge and competency.
- To promote the evolution of a culture of "lifelong learning" in the auditing profession.
- To promote, within the audit staff of OAG, responsibility for the development and delivery of acceptable continuing education opportunities and programs.
- To set out the standards that Auditors have a responsibility to maintain professional proficiency, to continually strive to increase their professional knowledge and skills, and to apply new knowledge in practice commensurate with their level of professional education, skill and competency.

4 Definitions and Acronyms

Policy Maker Auditor-General

Management Approval of Executive Management Committee

5 Keywords

Continuing Professional Education (CPE)

CPE Credit

CPE Hours

6 Supporting Procedures and Guidelines

The guidelines to this policy are attached as Annexure I to this policy. This information will provide the background to the development of the policy should Officers need clarification.

RESPONSIBILITIES	
Implementation	The Corporate Services are responsible for implementing the policy.
Compliance	All audit staff are responsible for complying with the policy.
Monitoring and Evaluation	The Corporate Services are responsible for monitoring and evaluating the policy.
Development and/or Review	The Corporate Services division will be responsible for developing and/or reviewing the policy.
Interpretation and Advice	The Deputy Auditor-General is responsible for interpreting and advice on the policy.

ANNEXURE 1

Definitions

1.0 WHAT IS CPE?

CPE is a Programme which requires auditors to undertake ongoing professional education and is mandatory for all auditors. CPE is designed so that auditors take personal responsibility for their development and to ensure that they remain well-informed of the International Accounting Standards / International Financial Reporting Standards- full IFRS & IFRS for small medium enterprise, International Standard for Supreme Audit Institution (ISSAI) and International Standards on Auditing (ISA).

Continuing education provides the auditors with the opportunity to acquire new and necessary information; demonstrate a conscious self-directed and continuous effort toward personal and professional development; strengthen qualifications for professional licensure, certification, or registration and meet changing career demands

Attendance and participation at CPE-recognized courses will be a condition for contract renewal. Auditors must participate in CPE-recognized courses and programs in order to claim the required number of CPE points if they wish to renew their contract. The transition period will be 12 months before full implementation.

2.0 What is a CPE credit?

For the purposes of this policy, one CPE credit equals one hour spent in a CPE activity. Auditors can claim credit to the nearest. 0.5 credit (30 minutes). For example, if you completed a series of three 45 minute lunch hour seminars for a total of 2 hours and 15 minutes the credit would be for 2.5 CPE credits. If a category totaled 2 hours and 45 minutes it would be worth 3 CPE credits.

3.0 What are CPE hours?

Auditors are required to complete a minimum of 40 continuing professional education credits **each year**/ until contract renewal.

Audit staff are required to attain 20 CPE credits for participating in activities in the required structured category. The remaining balance of CPE credits may come from unstructured category.

One of the most common ways certified individuals earn CPE hours is by completing educational programs. In fact, certified individuals may earn all of their required annual CPE hours by attending such programs. Therefore, the OAG has established criteria to ensure that educational programs maintain a high standard of quality. For a CPE program to be deemed acceptable by the OAG, it must meet all of the following criteria:

- Be a formal program of learning that contributes directly to the professional competence of the certified individual.
- Clearly state program objectives, which specify the level of knowledge the participants should have attained, or the level of competence to be demonstrated upon completion of the program.
- Clearly state education or experience prerequisites, if appropriate for the program.
- Be developed by individuals who are qualified in the subject matter and instructional design.
- Provide current program content.

- Provide evidence of program completion or participation and the appropriate number of CPE hours earned (e.g., a certificate of completion).

4.0 Qualifying CPE Activities.

The OAG expects auditors to maintain the high standards of the audit profession when selecting quality educational programs to fulfill their CPE requirements. It is the auditor's responsibility to ensure that their CPE hours conform to the guidelines established in this policy.

a) Structured category- minimum of 20 Hours

Required credits are obtained through structured activities such as conferences, courses, workshops, the provision of professional education services, and field instruction. Knowledge acquired is considered necessary for the profession and transferrable across a range of practice settings. It is important to recognize that although the completion of learning activities may be mandatory for one's employment, this does not necessarily mean that it qualifies as a required credit.

- **Seminars and Conferences (Local & Overseas):**

Provided by national, state, or local auditing or accounting organizations wherein a common theme is explored, possibly through the use of different presenters discussing a variety of topics of relevance to audit work practice. Generally, the goal of a conference is to increase a professional's knowledge of the thematic area.

- **Courses:**

College or university courses passed (credit and noncredit courses), excluding courses that a candidate must take to meet the examination requirement for a bachelor's degree or its equivalent. An academic course that enhances or relates to audit work practice, completed at an accredited university. For activities that are classified as a course but not completed at an accredited university, it may be possible for auditors to claim these credits under workshops. Other areas may include governance, IT/ Database Management, SQL, Data analysis, environment/ climate change, road works, engineering, project management, international trade, Public Policy, business processes, public financial management and analysis and others recognized courses.

Formal correspondence and self-study programs relevant as above that meet program criteria, including evidence of completion.

- **Ethics Training**

Auditors are required to complete at least 2 CPE hours focused on the subject of ethics. Ethics training hours may be applied toward the individual's total annual CPE requirement. The OAG does not prescribe where an individual must obtain this training. However, the training must occur annually, within the reporting period.

- **Standards Training**

The OAG encourages auditors to obtain training related to the Standards.

- **Attending In-House Training and Workshops:**

An educational event revolving around one topic with set learning objectives. Workshops focus on increasing skills in a particular area of auditing practice. Formal

in-house training programs that meet the aforementioned educational program requirements

1 CPE point for a minimum 1 hour full attendance

- **Undertaking Online Courses**

1 CPE points for each course if part of a recognized qualification

- **Attending CPE-approved Seminars / Workshops / Short Courses-face-to-face**

1 CPE point for attending a one hour session

- **Members of professional bodies and organizations**

1 CPE point to be a member of these similar related organizations.

b) **Unstructured category- minimum of 20 Hours**

Unstructured credits tend to be more informal, flexible or specific to one's employment. It refer to learning that takes place through such activities as reading journals professional/technical articles, educational videos/tapes, mentoring, committee work, and offering public presentations Reading.

- **Self-Directed Learning:**

Individual or group activities such as reading academic journals related to social work practice and course preparation.

- **Mentoring:**

Time spent mentoring social work and other auditors.

- **In-Service Training:**

Continuing education that is designed primarily to increase one's effectiveness in carrying out the tasks involved in one's specific job. The knowledge gained from in-service training is more specific to one's job rather than transferable to one's profession.

- **Committee Work:**

Involvement in a committee that is working on tasks that relate to the purpose and function of the professional practice of audit work. Committee work should involve either furthering the audit work profession or representing the audit work profession.

5.0 APPROVED COURSES AND TRAINING

Points will only be rewarded for attending CPE-approved courses and trainings that are approved by the Office of the Auditor General.

The OAG will recognize the programs provided by the following providers:

- Fiji Institute of Accountants (FIA)
- Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA)
- Certified Public Accountant (CPA)
- Professional bodies – local or abroad
- Industry association – local or abroad

6.0 Monitoring of CPE Points

Audit staff are still strongly encouraged to acquire verification (signatures, receipts, and letters/certificates of completion) and complete the annual CPE form & submit to registry for filing at the end of each year upon completion of 40 CPE hours annually. The same will be referred to for renewal of contract purpose.

As stated earlier, the supporting documentation (such as certificates of training completion that an individual may use to calculate the number of CPE hours earned), shall be maintained by individuals. Corporate Services shall also maintain per staff record for CPE hours.

The records maintained by the individual must include the following information, as appropriate:

- Title of program and/or description of content.
- Dates attended.
- Location of course or program.
- Sponsoring organization.
- Contact CPE hours of credit, as recommended by the course or program sponsor.
- A letter, certificate, or other written independent attestation of course completion.
- Documentation supporting publications, oral presentations, committee involvement, or other participation.

7.0 How do I submit my CPE credits?

Auditors are responsible for managing their CPE. The responsibilities of auditors are:

- To complete 40 CPE credits **each year** until contract renewal
- To maintain a personal record that contains documentation verifying all CPE activities in which one has been involved.
- The Annual Continuing Professional Education (CPE) Tracking Form must be completed by December ending each year and submitted to Training Department for maintaining database and the originals can be filed in Personal files at registry
- To make a written request for deferral of CPE credit hours if the minimum 40 credit hours annually has not been attained within OAG. Individuals who are not in compliance with the CPE Policy, they can make a deferral request with the genuine reasoning and approval can be granted on the extended period at the discretion of the Auditor General.

Note: Professional Membership renewal shall be completed in Local/overseas Institution's standard form.

7 Review

This policy will be reviewed 12 months after implementation and every 3 years after that.

8 Who to Contact About this Policy

Any queries is directed to Deputy Auditor-General.

10 Approval

The Continuing Professional Education Policy becomes effective on the date approved by the Executive Management Committee.

11 Revision/Change Log

Version 1.0	
Policy endorsed by:	Executive Management Committee
Policy approved by:	Auditor-General
Policy effective from:	24 January 2019
Policy to be reviewed by:	24 January 2020
Policy prepared by:	Senior Admin Officer (Training & Policy)
Manager responsible for policy:	Manager Corporate Services

Appendix II

Annual Continuing Professional Education (CPE) Tracking Form

It is your responsibility to maintain CPE hours you have completed and to be up to date with the recent development in the accounting/auditing field.

There is an obligation placed with all audit staff to maintain & improve their level of professional knowledge & skills and to complete the minimum:

“Structured Hours” 20 Annually

“Unstructured Hours” 20 Annually

A. Staff Details

For the Calendar Year _____

Name: _____

EDP No: _____

Contact No: _____

Email: _____

Contract Dates: _____

B. Details of Training Attained

Type of Training	Particulars/Topic	Date/ Duration	Location / Sponsor	CPE Hours	Documents Attached
Structured Hours					
Seminars and Conferences (Local & Overseas)					
Courses					
Ethics Training					
Standards Training					

Attending In-House Training and Workshops					
Undertaking Online Courses					
Attending CPE-approved Seminars / Workshops / Short Courses-face-to-face					
Members of professional bodies and organizations					
Unstructured Hours					
Self-Directed Learning					
Mentoring					
In-Service Training					
Committee Work					

Undertaking

I, _____, hereby declare that I have undergone the structured & unstructured learning activities as indicated by me in this form above.

Sign: _____

Date: _____