

Continuing Professional Education

Guidance on Structured CPE

CPE 01/08

The Malta Institute of Accountants issued a new set of Regulations in 2007 amending its requirements on Continuing Professional Education (CPE). All of the Institute's Members need to comply with these Regulations in the maintenance and improvement of their professional competence and skills. The new requirements became effective as from calendar year 2007, subject to transitional arrangements. This information paper is not a part, or a substitute to any part, of the aforementioned Regulations. The scope of this paper is to give guidance to Members on the relevant sections of the CPE Regulations when assessing the eligibility of events, not organised nor accredited by the MIA, for structured CPE.

Numerous queries regarding the eligibility of events not organised, nor accredited, by the MIA for structured CPE have been received by the Secretariat at the Institute. As a result we feel that specific guidance needs to be given to Members on the relevant sections in the new CPE Regulations.

Paragraph 3.8 of the CPE Regulations 2007 lays down the overriding principle that continuing professional education is achieved when learning activities develop the professional knowledge, professional skills and professional values, ethics and attitudes (collectively referred to as professional competence) of the professional accountant, **relevant** to his or her current and future work and professional responsibilities. On the other hand, the definition of structured CPE in paragraph 4.2 states that “*Structured learning activities are **measurable, verifiable** activities that are designed to impart specific technical, professional and general knowledge to Members undertaking them*”. Learning activities that, although relevant, are not able to be verified, also contribute to the development and maintenance of professional competence, but would not be considered to qualify as structured CPE activities.

All MIA organised events would qualify as structured CPE. Other professional associations that provide courses, conferences and seminars normally seek accreditation from the MIA, following the MIA CPE Accreditation Rules which are the subject of a separate publication.

However, as also contemplated in paragraph 4.5 of the CPE Regulations, the fact that accreditation is not sought by the course provider would not disqualify an event from being eligible for structured CPE. In fact, in line with the above principles, and specific guidance in paragraph 4.5, there are three criteria that need to be satisfied for an event to qualify as structured CPE:

1. **Relevance:** given the different Members' needs it is up to the individual member to assess what courses and events (1) are relevant to his or her circumstances and to the exercise of the profession, and (2) increase his or her professional competence. Structured CPE also needs to be categorised under one of the Core Competency or Professional Competency areas under paragraphs 4.14 and 4.15, respectively, of the CPE Regulations 2007. If an event cannot be assigned under any of those areas, its relevance for continuing professional education purposes may be questionable. Where a CPE return is randomly selected for an audit in accordance with paragraph 7.4 of the CPE Regulations, and the relevance of any activity reported therein is not clearly apparent to the MIA reviewer, the Member may be asked to explain how the learning activity was relevant to his or her work and professional responsibilities.
2. **Measurability:** a defined number of hours (CPE units) can be attributed to the event. Members should note that certain courses that are of a relatively long duration may sometimes fall to be treated under paragraph 4.9 of the Regulations.
3. **Verifiability:** the learning can be objectively verified by a competent source. In the case of courses, conferences and seminars a certificate of attendance would normally satisfy this requirement.

Members should be guided accordingly.