

IPA Continuing Professional Education (CPE) Guidance

Approved by the Board: 27 September 2023

Effective from 1 January 2024

Introduction

Members are expected to take steps to ensure that they keep abreast of developments in statutory and case law, in professional practice and in the commercial environment relevant to the competent performance of insolvency administration.

CPE for authorisation applicants and authorisation holders

Members applying for, or applying to renew, an authorisation to act as an insolvency practitioner (IP) are required to show that they have undertaken the minimum level of relevant structured continuing professional education (CPE) as a necessary part of becoming, and continuing to be, fit and proper to be an IP.

In addition, the Regulation & Conduct Committee may require an authorisation holder to undertake specific CPE, as part of or additional to the minimum CPE requirement.

Minimum level of CPE

The minimum level of relevant structured CPE is 25 hours in the twelve months immediately preceding an application for, or to renew, an authorisation. In exceptional circumstances, and at the Regulation & Conduct Committee's sole discretion, it may permit the requirement to be fulfilled by averaging over a three-year period provided that the structured CPE in any one year is not less than 15 hours.

In the case of a career break such as maternity leave that minimum requirement may be further reduced for the period of the break.

Relevance of CPE

CPE should be relevant to the work that the applicant undertakes or intends to undertake. Thus for example for an IP who acts or intends to act in relation to individual voluntary arrangements, the major part of CPE would be expected to cover personal insolvency including alternative non-statutory solutions in order that they would be able to advise debtors on all the options available to them (subject to any restrictions under the Financial Services & Markets Act 2000 or exemptions therefrom) or otherwise be able to satisfy themselves that debtors have been so advised – that is, not limited to an IVA or bankruptcy. For an IP who specialises in liquidations and/or administrations, the major part of CPE would be expected to

cover corporate insolvency; but a part would also be expected to cover personal insolvency to warrant an authorisation which enables them to undertake any of the insolvency procedures.

All IPs are required to include AML and at least one hour of Ethics training within their CPE programme.

The IPA may require a member to provide further information about the relevance of particular parts of their CPE to the type and nature of the work which they undertake or intends to undertake. For this purpose, members may find it useful to carry out their own analysis of their knowledge and skills for the work they undertake or intend to undertake, and what might be expected of them; and to identify CPE aimed at developing or filling gaps in that knowledge and those skills. Such an analysis will be of particular relevance to those returning from a career break.

Structured CPE

Structured CPE will include:

- attending (including attending virtually) IPA Conferences and Members' Meetings.

Structured CPE may include:

- attending (including attending virtually) or speaking at courses, conferences, seminars and lectures
 - organised by the Association of Business Recovery Professionals (R3), other commercial course and conference providers, in-house or by other professionals or their firms
 - covering knowledge and application of technical and regulatory aspects of insolvency law and practice or
 - development of interpersonal, business and management skills and competences.

Structured CPE may also comprise, where the subject matter is insolvency related:

- research and preparation of papers for courses, conferences or seminars, lectures or articles
- attendance at technical or regulatory committees
- reading material provided in advance of attendance at a structured CPE course, conference, seminar or lecture or technical or regulatory meeting.
- Interactive Multi-media Learning, – the completion of interactive computer and multi-media based learning programmes.

Structured CPE may also comprise formal presentations, talks or discussions of insolvency related subjects at professional gatherings which may also be of a social nature.

Where members find it difficult, because of their geographical location, to attend sufficient courses, conferences, seminars and lectures without involving unreasonable time and cost, there may be scope to organise their own structured discussion group with fellow professionals in their locality which may count towards the minimum CPE requirement.

Members may use distance learning (including e-learning and virtual attendance) as readily accessed CPE also counting towards the minimum requirement: it should nevertheless be structured (by them). But, given the value attached to, and achieved by, interaction and networking with fellow professionals at courses, conferences, seminars and lectures, distance learning would be expected to account for no more than three quarters of the minimum CPE requirement; and it may be further restricted where the Regulation & Conduct Committee is of the view that the member should attend courses, conferences, lectures or seminars generally or in relation to specific aspects of insolvency in person.

Unstructured CPE

The minimum level of relevant structured CPE is likely to need to be supplemented by, unstructured CPE for example; .

- Individual Private Study – any form of learning where there is no interaction with other individuals and no assessment is provided.
- Network and Focus Groups – time spent participating in Network or Focus group meetings. If, however, an expert is talking on a particular relevant topic then the presentation would constitute structured CPE.
- Reading – It is accepted that general reading of the financial press (e.g. daily newspapers) is important but it should only constitute a small part of the CPE undertaken.

Calculation of CPE hours

The actual time spent on CPE will usually be the appropriate amount. However, unless the circumstances are demonstrably different, the following would generally apply:

- full day course – 6 hours
- half-day course – 3 hours
- breakfast briefing – 1 hour
- lunchtime briefing – 1 hour
- evening seminar/lecture – 1 hour

IPA One-Day Conferences are usually accredited for 6 hours CPE: IPA Members' Meetings are usually accredited for 2 hours CPE.

Records of CPE

Those applying for, or who have, an authorisation are required to maintain records of the CPE which they have undertaken; and should have available to produce to the IPA on request details and evidence of courses, conferences, seminars and lectures they have attended, including the topics covered, and of other CPE undertaken in relation to the last three years.

When planning and keeping records of CPE members will find it helpful to be able to demonstrate the relevance of their chosen CPE activities, recording why they selected that particular activity, what they learned or expect to learn from it, and how they have applied or will apply that learning.

Other Members

Members who do not have or who do not intend applying for an authorisation are not required to undertake CPE. But if they are in any way involved in insolvency administration or insolvency related work, then it is very much in their own interests and those of their firm, creditors, insolvents and others who are affected by an insolvency that they should maintain a knowledge of current insolvency law and practice.