

## Policy: APSCA Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

### Introduction:

Once a Member Auditor obtains the level of Certified Social Compliance Auditor (CSCA)<sup>1</sup>, there are ongoing requirements to maintain certification. In addition to the expectations of all levels of auditors, which includes payment of membership fees, providing Data Consent and upholding the APSCA Code and Standards of Professional Conduct, there is also a requirement that CSCAs keep their competencies up to date.

### What is CPD?

CPD is the continued maintenance and further development of the knowledge base and relevant skills needed to perform social compliance audits effectively in a professional manner. This could mean refining areas of improvement noted within the APSCA CSCA exam reports, expanding knowledge focused on emerging issues, or developing knowledge to a higher level of expertise.

CPD activities can range from formal educational activities such as instructor-led courses, workshops, or seminars, to more informal approaches such as work-based learning. CPD can also include self-directed study via e-learning courses and structured reading.

CPD can be provided by companies specializing in such training (e.g., commercial training providers, independent coaches), or provided internally by a Member Firm, Collaborative Programs (e.g., BSCI, SEDEX, SA8000, WRAP etc) or affiliated partner.

### Why is there a CPD Requirement?

CPD is intended to assist CSCAs to maintain and expand their knowledge; keep their skills up to date to ensure APSCA's professional standards are maintained, and to contribute to ongoing professional development. Completing CPD helps to build the

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<sup>1</sup> During the initial period Registered Level Auditors (RA) have the rights, responsibilities, and obligations of CSCA. Therefore, RA are also required to complete CPD per this policy.

CSCA's confidence and maintain their credibility, while allowing CSCAs to showcase their achievements to their Member Firm and peers.

CPD involves undertaking development activities which support CSCAs in ensuring maintenance of their skills, as well as expanding their professional knowledge and practice.

CSCAs are required to complete a minimum of 48 hours of CPD per calendar year.

### What is a CPD hour?

A CPD hour is the time spent either "actively learning" or "actively maintaining" something relevant to your social compliance knowledge, working on areas of improvement noted in the APSCA exam report, and/ or an emerging industry issue.

Improvement of individual skills and knowledge through CPD is the responsibility of every professional across all industries. When completing CPD, it is important to keep a record of the following:

- 1) training and other approved activity,
- 2) the learning objectives that have been met,
- 3) the skills that will be put into practice to improve and increase proficiency, and
- 4) the number of hours each element represents.

### What qualifies for CPD?

CPD activities should be designed around learning objectives and outcomes, including assessment tasks to validate knowledge retention and comprehension that link back to APSCA's Competency Framework. Training content should focus on areas of improvement noted within APSCA exam reports and/ or emerging issues.

### Categories

APSCA has 3 categories of CPD:

CPD Category	# hours	Description
Mandatory Training Topics	16 hours	2 hours on ethical training 14 hours on subject areas highlighted in APSCA exam reports specific to the CSCA.
Elective Training Topics	16 hours	Courses/ training that address topics related to social compliance auditing, including but not limited to the APSCA Competency Framework, subject areas highlighted in APSCA exam reports & emerging issues.

Audit (field)	16 hours	Conducting one or more Social Compliance Audits, amounting to a total time commitment of not less than 2 on-site audit days. Note: Remote or Virtual Assessments are not considered a full Social Compliance Audit.
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Any course/ training less than 1 hour (less than 1 credit hour) will not be recognized. Partial credit hours are permitted when the course/training is over 60 minutes long (example 1.5 hours, 2.5 hours etc.)

Time spent sitting an exam as part of the training, are not counted. Only active learning time is counted within the CPD hours.

## Training Types

When picking the training for the training portion of their CPD requirement, CSCAs should be aware that there are two different types of submission types: Recognized Training and Independent Submissions.



Recognized training has been submitted to APSCA in advance by the Training organization. Independent Submissions are training programs submitted by CSCAs which have not already been submitted to APSCA.

Training which is provided by a Member Firm which addresses Mandatory or Elective Training topics can be included in CPD submissions. Elective topics related to the Competency Framework could also include business writing, communications, language training and interviewer training.

For more information on how to submit trainings to APSCA, please refer to the following:

- *Appendix A Recognized Training*
- *Appendix B Independent Submission*

## Methods

Structured CPD should address individual development gaps or update / expand professional knowledge. This type of learning includes many different methods and includes participation in:

- seminars,
- workshops,
- short courses,
- conferences,
- on-line courses,
- self-study,
- delivering presentations at workshops, seminars, or conferences,
- gaining additional formal qualifications or certifications,
- workplace training conducted by a Member Firm or a third party, and
- webinars related to an element within the Competency Framework, by a known organization.

Please note, CPD credit hours cannot ALL be from self-learning. CSCAs must participate in at least two different types of training for consideration within their 32-training hours.

## How can APSCA help?

APSCA supports CSCA CPD in the following ways:

1. APSCA maintains a catalogue of recognized CPD courses on the website including links to training providers.
2. APSCA includes recognized courses within the CPD tracking function in the Auditor's APSCA online account (My Account) to facilitate easier tracking for all Auditor levels.
3. Sharing CPD best practices with CSCA.

## CPD Tracking in Auditor's APSCA online account (My Account)

A structured and consistent approach to keeping track of your CPD makes it easier to manage throughout the year. This supports you attending training relevant to your learning objectives, which is more valuable than attending courses just for general interest. Tracking your CPD hours enables you to reflect on what has been gained from the CPD activities and what can be implemented in day-to-day practice, as well as which skill sets you can focus on developing next.

CSCAs are required to input and maintain their CPD training records in their Auditor's APSCA online account (My Account). This information is to be uploaded no later than 15 January of each year for the prior calendar year from 1 January – 31 December. APSCA encourages CSCAs to upload training courses throughout the year, as skills and certificates are obtained, and learning objectives met.

1. Log into APSCA - My Account <https://www.theapsca.org/apsca-member-auditors/>

2. Locate the CPD Tab on the far right

### APSCA AUDITOR PROFILE

Consent	My Profile	Membership Status	Education	Accreditations \ Schemes \ Skills	Languages Spoken
	Languages Written	Image	Code of Conduct	Invoices	CPD

3.

**Add New CPD Entry**

### 4. Add CPD Training Course

Year  
2021

CPD Category  
 Select...  
 Select...  
 Pre-Recognized Training  
 Onsite Audit  
 Independent Submission  
 Save

#### 5a) Recognized Training

If the training/ CPD hours you took were part of a Recognized APSCA course, then the course name will appear in the drop-down menu

CPD Training Course Selection

Select

Select

ABS-001 Compliance Counts Review

ABS-002 Code of Ethics Training

AM-001 BSCI Auditor Qualification

AP-001 Portuguese Labor Law (Annual)

APSCA-001 APSCA Annual General Meeting

Save

**OR**

#### 5b) Independent Submission

If the training/ CPD hours you took were based upon your own learning needs, based upon your exam feedback the Competency Framework, then a form will ask for some key information about the training course

APSCA will review the CSCA's CPD information to ensure they are meeting the annual requirements.

## Compliance with CPD requirements

As part of the APSCA membership renewal process, each CSCA's CPD record will be reviewed. CSCAs who do not upload their information or fail to provide additional information upon request, will be asked to provide an explanation and if the explanation is inadequate, the CSCA will be required to demonstrate their participation in CPD on a quarterly basis for the next 12 months to ensure adherence to requirements.

If the CSCA refuses to comply with submitting the requested documentation or if their experience does not meet expectations, the CSCA will be presented to the Disciplinary Board.

CPD Non-compliance sanctions may range in severity of consequence according to the significance of the infraction and past records, as applicable. Consequences may include:

- warning,
- suspension,
- demotion (from CSCA to ASCA), and
- revocation of APSCA membership.

We understand life events can create unexpected difficulties; therefore, fairness will be applied throughout the process and exceptional circumstances will be considered.

## CPD exemptions

CPD requirements take effect once a Member Auditor becomes a CSCA<sup>1</sup>.

Member Auditors upgrading from ASCA to CSCA status, will attain the current calendar year CPD hour requirements on a pro-rata basis, only including the period of time from which they obtained their CSCA status until the end of the calendar year, 31 December. E.g., Obtained CSCA 15 June, 50% of the 48 hours would be required for that year, 8 hours on-site social compliance audit, 8 hours of Mandatory Training Topics and 8 hours of Elective Training Topics.

CSCAs who need to take a hiatus for between 3 and 12 months due to personal reasons, such as parental, compassionate, sick leave, or other similar reason, should request this

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<sup>1</sup> During the initial period Registered Level Auditors have the rights, responsibilities, and obligations of CSCA. Therefore, RA Level Auditors are also required to complete CPD per this policy.



by emailing the Data Administrator ([data.administrator@theapsca.org](mailto:data.administrator@theapsca.org)) requesting a move to “Inactive” . Inactive status requires 50%of the CPD Training hours be completed (8 hours of Mandatory Training Topics and 8 hours of Elective Training Topics) but has no requirement (zero hours) on-site social compliance Audit.

A Member Auditor returning to practice will be required to follow the steps within APSCA’s Member Auditor Status Policy (D-104)

### Best practice:

A CPD portfolio should demonstrate a range of methods of learning, along with the respective impacts on future capability which includes those areas noted as top 5 areas of opportunity from their ASPCA exam report. CSCAs are advised to update their CPD portfolios on an ongoing basis, as it is more difficult to record the accumulation of CPD at the end of the year. As soon as credits are completed, CSCAs should input the data to their APSCA on-line account.

## Appendix A – Recognized Training

### Recognized Training (Training Providers & Member Firms) – Application Process

Training organizations who seek to have their training offerings recognized by APSCA for CPD requirements are asked to submit their course information via [the on-line form](#).

Training organizations are reminded that the courses submitted should be a formal course or program of learning that contributes directly to the professional competence of a social compliance auditor. Courses or programs should relate directly to at least one element noted within the APSCA Competency Framework, or an emerging issue relevant to the social compliance audit industry.

Courses will be evaluated based upon their relevance to the APSCA Competency Framework / industry emerging issues. Note: Courses found to be not relevant to the social compliance audit industry will not be counted.

Course providers are encouraged to follow best practices for each offering such as:

- attendance records,
- written syllabus, education goal and specific learning outcomes,
- require frequent participant responses to questions to test for understanding, and
- issue Certificates of Completion.



## Appendix B – Independent Submission

### Independent Submission (Auditors) – Application Process

An Independent Submission is when a CSCA records CPD hours from training which was not pre-recognized by APSCA. For these types of submissions, the Member Auditor must be prepared to include the following information in their APSCA online account (My Account):

- date of CPD activity,
- title of CPD activity,
- host organization of CPD activity,
- if the CPD activity was in person / remote learning / self-study,
- brief description of the activity including learning objectives, course content, syllabus, the method of learning (i.e., training course, workshop, event, eLearning), and any other details relevant to the content,
- number of CPD hours, attach the schedule/ agenda and timing to support, and
- the overall learning outcomes and applicability to social compliance auditing referencing the Competency Framework category and/ or emerging issue by using the dropdown menu selections.

Supporting Documentation to be uploaded to the CSCA's APSCA online account (My Account) includes:

- certificate of attendance or completion,
- analyses and reviews,
- published papers, and
- reports by Member Firm

**REMINDER:** Time spent sitting an exam as part of a course or training, are not counted. Only active learning time is counted within the CPD hours.