



**Always**  
Building



Professional competence  
and service excellence



# Always Building

CEA is committed to building a community of industry practitioners who share a common vision for professional competence and service excellence. Through continuous improvements in training and development programmes, and promotion of industry best practices, CEA aims to raise the professional stature of the real estate agency industry in Singapore.

In FY2014, CEA reviewed the Continuing Professional Development Training Roadmap and Real Estate Agency examination syllabus to ensure continued relevance and to further professionalise the industry. Embracing an infocomm technology-driven approach to training, CEA launched an interactive e-learning web application on advertising guidelines. In addition, guidelines and circulars were issued to promote professional practices in estate agency work.

## HIGH ENTRY QUALIFICATIONS



The RES examination syllabus was revised in response to industry developments (Photo: NTUC Learning Hub Pte Ltd)

All real estate salespersons are required to pass the Real Estate Salesperson (RES) examination before they can apply for registration to carry out estate agency work in Singapore. Likewise, Key Executive Officers (KEOs), practising directors and partners are required to pass the Real Estate Agency (REA) examination. To prepare new

entrants for the examinations, RES and REA courses are conducted by CEA-approved course providers (ACPs). In FY2014, a total of 2,751 individuals completed the RES course and 72 individuals completed the REA course.

During the year, CEA conducted five RES examinations and four REA examinations. The RES examination conducted from May 2014 was based on an updated syllabus revised in FY2013. A total of 4,563 candidates sat for the RES examination and another 88 candidates took the REA examination. These examinations ensure that new entrants to the industry have a competent understanding of industry regulations, policies and procedures.

To keep pace with ongoing industry changes and developments, the REA examination syllabus was revised in January 2015. This revised syllabus will take effect in July 2015. Similar to the revised RES examination syllabus, the revised REA examination syllabus provides clearer elaboration of the expectation of REA examination requirements. Learning outcomes and expectations of cognitive levels for each learning outcome were introduced to facilitate better appreciation by ACPs and REA examination candidates of the level of understanding required for each topic. With effect from July 2015, modular re-sitting for the REA examination will be allowed.



Continuing professional development is mandatory for the industry (Photo: Real Centre Network Pte Ltd)

As part of efforts to optimise the utilisation of resources for the conduct of examinations, the frequency of the RES and REA examinations was revised with effect from 1 January 2015. The RES examination was conducted once every three months while the REA examination was conducted once every four months.

## CONTINUOUS LEARNING

Continuing professional development plays a critical role in engendering and upholding high professional standards for estate agents and salespersons. The Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Training Roadmap, launched in October 2013, continues to be a definitive framework to guide industry practitioners in building capability and professionalism in a progressive and structured manner.

The Roadmap was updated in October 2014 to include new topics on the Practice Guidelines on Conduct between Salespersons and Practice Guidelines on Marketing of Foreign Properties. Topics related to the Personal Data Protection Act were also included. The CPD topics strongly recommended for salespersons were Practice Guidelines on Conduct between Salespersons and the Professional Service Manual (PSM), while the focus for KEOs was on the Code of Practice for Estate Agents.

In FY2014, CEA approved a total of 213 core CPD courses, of which 116 were new. The new courses ensured that salespersons were updated on the latest developments in

the industry. These included "Real Estate Skills - Law & Practice of Agency" conducted by The Law Society of Singapore in February 2015 and a four-day seminar on "Integrated Land Use Planning" conducted by the Urban Redevelopment Authority from 7 to 10 April 2015.

In October 2014, CEA conducted a joint outreach-cum-briefing session for KEOs in partnership with the Commercial Affairs Division, to enhance industry awareness of anti-money laundering/countering the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT) issues. The session was a core CPD activity. In addition to a briefing on CEA's Practice Circular on the Prevention of Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism, attendees were also reminded to undertake customer due diligence measures to mitigate the risk of money laundering or terrorism financing activities in property transactions. A total of 150 KEOs attended the event.



CEA-CAD joint industry outreach session on anti-money laundering and countering of financing of terrorism



In addition to working with core CPD activity providers to provide quality courses for the industry, CEA also recognises the efforts made by KEOs and salespersons who take up and complete relevant courses which will help them in their estate agency work or enhance their knowledge. Some of the courses attended by salespersons and accorded core CPD credit hours were the Specialist Diploma in Facility & Energy Management conducted by the Building & Construction Authority, the Graduate Certificate in Real Estate Finance conducted by the National University of Singapore and Mediation: Strategic Conflict Management for Professionals Modules 1 and 2 conducted by the Singapore Mediation Centre.

are able to take an interactive quiz to assess and reinforce their understanding of the topic.

After the pilot, CEA introduced e-learning for two core topics under the CPD Training Roadmap - "Professional Service Manual" and "Practice Guidelines on Conduct between Salespersons". This is to encourage training providers to develop e-learning courses to enable KEOs and salespersons to learn at their own pace and place as users can access the web-based modules via computers and mobile devices.

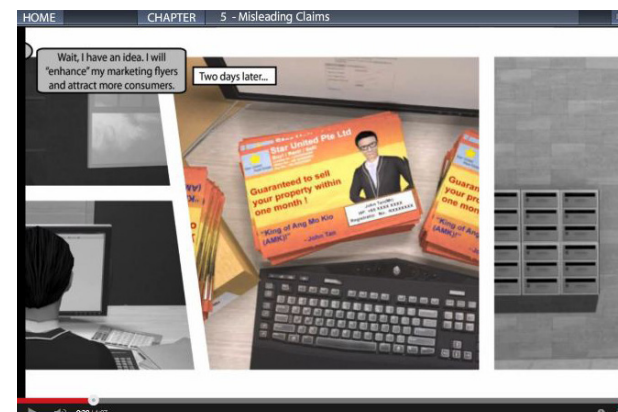
Similar to classroom-based courses, CPD credit hours will be awarded for completion of the e-learning courses. As an added functionality, users can also choose to go through the e-learning course modules more than once and take an interactive quiz at the end of each module to reinforce their understanding of the topic. Courses are being developed by CPD training providers in collaboration with e-learning vendors and will be made available by the fourth quarter of 2015.

## BUSINESS EXCELLENCE

In October 2014, CEA formed a working group to encourage the use of exclusive estate agency agreements by consumers. The working group, consisting of members from estate agents, industry associations and the Consumers Association of Singapore, will deliberate on measures to encourage greater adoption of exclusive agreements so as to minimise duplication of efforts in the conduct of estate agency work and to enhance industry productivity.



Online best practices depository for estate agents



Pilot e-learning web application on advertising guidelines

To facilitate learning on the move, CEA piloted an e-learning web application on the Practice Guidelines on Ethical Advertising in October 2014. Hosted on the CEA website, the application enables industry practitioners to gain a better understanding of the advertising guidelines via an interactive web interface. The application is also useful for consumers seeking to understand allowable practices for salespersons advertising properties for sale or rental.

The e-learning web application features 12 chapters of scenario-based comic strips that illustrate ethical advertising in different areas, such as on the description and correct use of property, claims in advertisements, seeking owner's consent and on different methods of advertising. The comic strips are accompanied by an audio narration which brings the characters to life and explains the guidelines in a lively and engaging manner. At the end of each chapter, users



CEA Executive Director Chioh Chye Khye chairs the quarterly dialogue session with industry associations

A Best Practices Depository was also established on the CEA website to serve as a resource for estate agents to adopt best practices and raise the professionalism of the real estate agency industry. The depository is a collation of the best practices that CEA had observed from visits to several estate agents over the course of two years.

## ACTIVE INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT

CEA regularly engages the industry through various platforms including dialogues, briefings, group discussions and work groups. This enables CEA to have better sensing of the needs and challenges of the industry in response to regulatory, governance and procedural changes. In FY2014, CEA organised a total of 10 dialogue sessions with KEOs to gather feedback and discuss initiatives, policies and guidelines being developed for the industry. Five focus group discussions with salespersons were also organised to gain a better understanding of ground issues and facilitate exchange of ideas on various issues and initiatives such as CPD courses, the licence renewal process, remuneration structures and the creation of a commendation scheme for salespersons.

CEA also held three dialogue sessions with the industry associations, namely the Institute of Estate Agents, SAEA Ltd and the Singapore Institute of Surveyors and Valuers (SISV). These dialogue sessions provide an additional channel for CEA to engage and work closely with the



Salespersons engaged in a focus group discussion

associations on initiatives to raise professionalism and address issues faced by the industry.

In the year ahead, CEA will work with the industry associations to introduce certificate CPD courses for salespersons handling commercial, industrial and foreign property transactions. These courses will help to equip salespersons with the requisite knowledge to carry out estate agency work in these niche areas.

CEA will also intensify its focus on promulgating industry-wide compliance and adoption of the AML/CFT requirements and the obligation to lodge suspicious transaction reports through regular engagement with KEOs and salespersons.